

# Female consumers' health consciousness: Does it reflect in their food decisions?



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# 1. Background

## Health consciousness (HC)

attentive, personal responsibility & motivation to be healthy (Hong, 2009:14; 2011:345)

- Improve & maintain: physical & emotional wellbeing
- Basic knowledge: health-related aspects
- Concern for personal health & wellbeing
- Engage in health-related activities
  - ✓ Physical activities
  - ✓ Healthy diet



# 1. Background (continues)

**Working female consumer:** A woman working full-time to earn an income; household care-giving / housekeeping (Mkhize & Msomi, 2016:331; Raninger, 2014:273).

- Resources to purchase food
- Household food shopping
- Time-constraints
- Prevalence of NCDs
- Level of health consciousness



# 1. Background (continues)

**Health perceptions:** Subjective rating - health benefits, status or properties of a food product (Ares *et al.*, 2016:65)

**Low in claims:** “*Low in sugar*”

**Naturalness:** “*Fresh*”

**Other claims:** “*Functional food*”

**High in claims:** “*High in vitamins*”

**Label info:** “*Ingredient list*”



# 1. Background (continues)



## Selection of packaged food

- **Decision (selection):** Identifying & choosing preferred product from a range to address a need (Sethna & Blythe, 2016:87; Ungerer, 2014:406).
- **Packaged foods:** Pre-packed; label (DoH, 2010:10; Whitney & Rolfes, 2015:54).

# Background – Problem

Paucity in literature

Unique SA context

Health perceptions

Health consciousness

Packaged food selection

Working female consumers

Household food purchasers

High incidence: obesity; diet-related NCDs

## 2. Main research question

**Does working female consumers' HC reflect in their health perceptions and selection of packaged food?**



# 3. Research objectives



**Categorise working female consumers based on HC**

**Describe working female consumers':**

- **Health perceptions of packaged food**
- **Packaged food selection**

**Compare HC of working female consumers based on:**

- **Health perceptions**
- **Packaged food selection**



## 4. Research methods

**Cross-sectional online survey**

**Purposive sampling**

- SA female consumers
- Aged 18-65
- Food shoppers

**Ethical approval:  
NWU HREC**

**Online targeted advertisement:  
Facebook®**

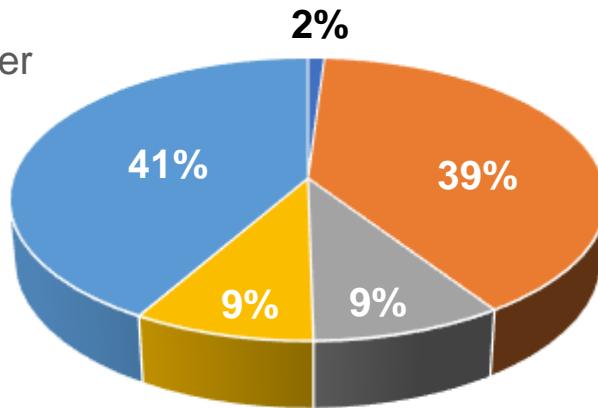
# 5. Results (1)

## Demographics (N=416)

- Age: well-distributed

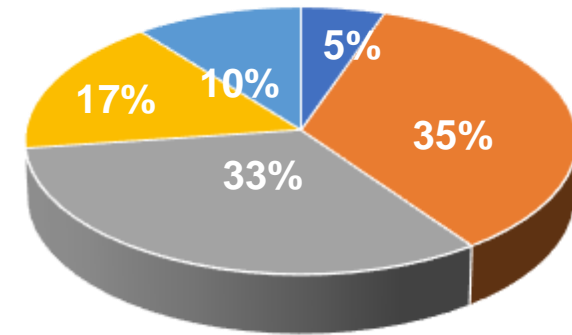
### Ethnicity

- Asian & Other
- Black
- Coloured
- Indian
- White



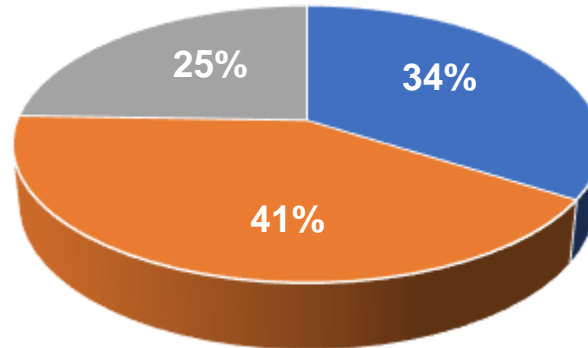
### Education

- Lower than grade 12
- Grade 12 /equivalent
- Certificate/ Diploma/ equivalent
- Degree / equivalent
- Postgraduate qualification



### Monthly disposable income

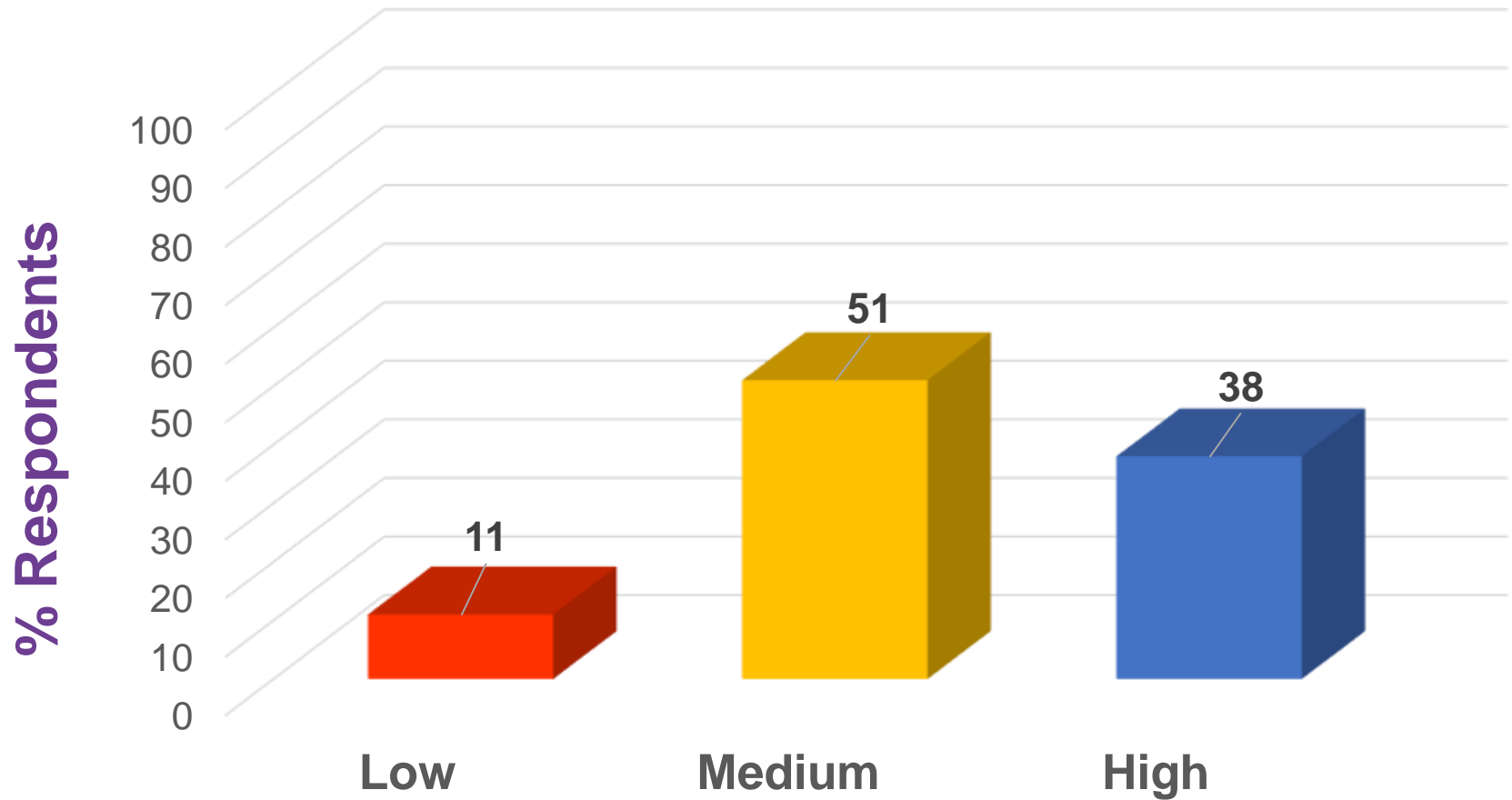
- Less than R5 000
- R5 001 – R15 000
- Above R 15 000



## 5. Results (continues)

### Categorising respondents according to their HC

- Cronbach  $\alpha = 0.84$ , EFA



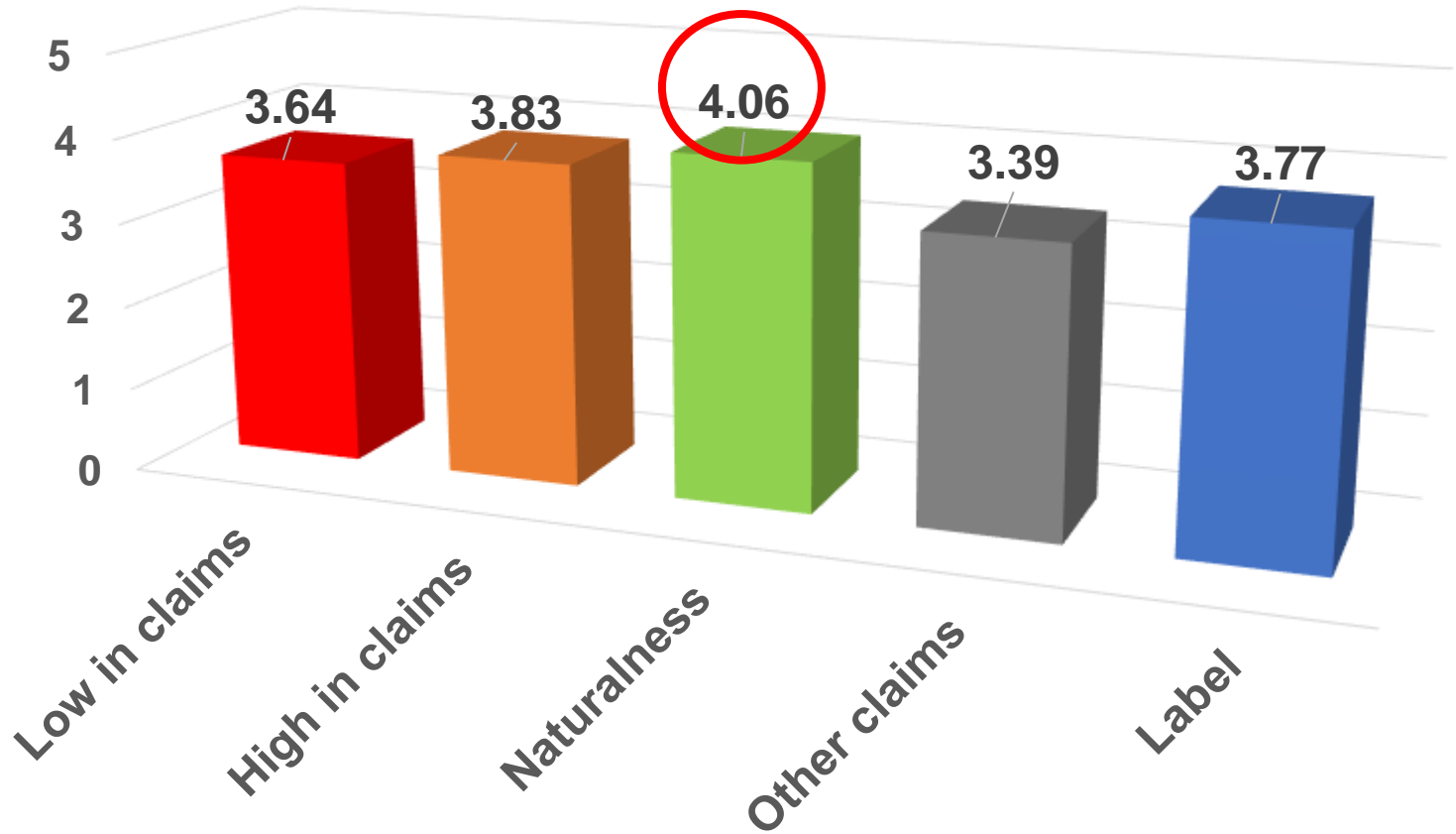
Levels of health-consciousness

# 5. Results (continues)

## Respondents' health perceptions of packaged foods

- Cronbach  $\alpha$  =0.70-0.88; EFA: 5 Factors

Scale: 1=not at all; 5=great deal



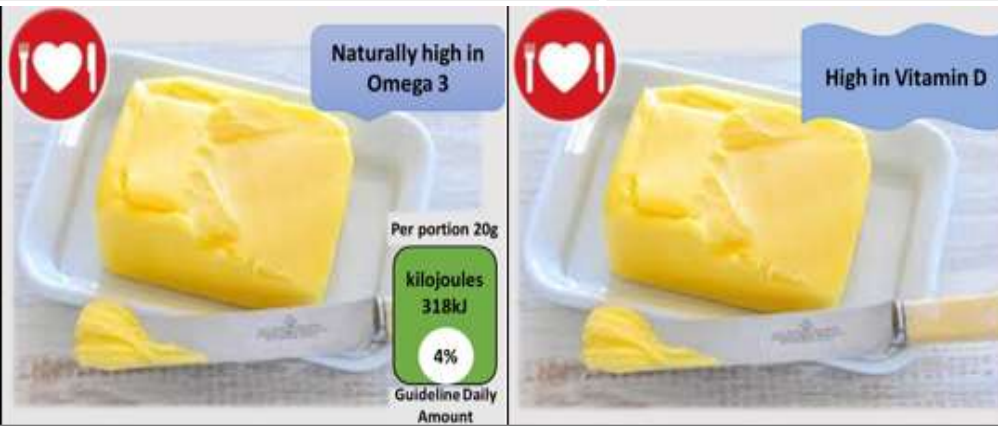
Health perceptions



# 5. Results (continues)

## Respondents' food product selection

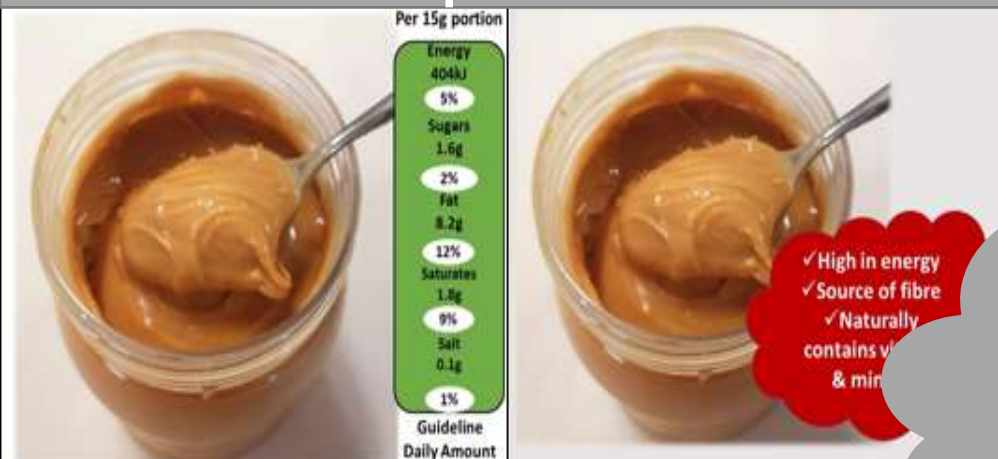
### Medium fat spread



### Quick cooking oats



### Smooth peanut butter



### Low fat flavoured yogurt



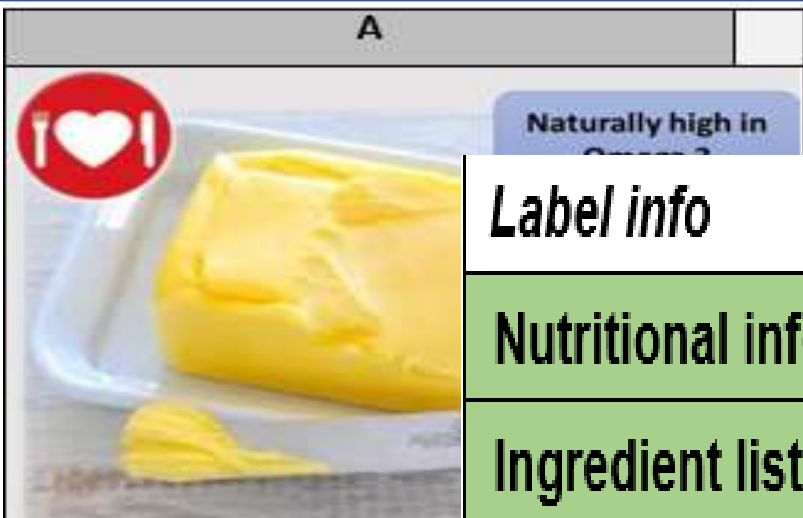
- Ingredients list
- Nutritional info table

# 5. Results (continues)

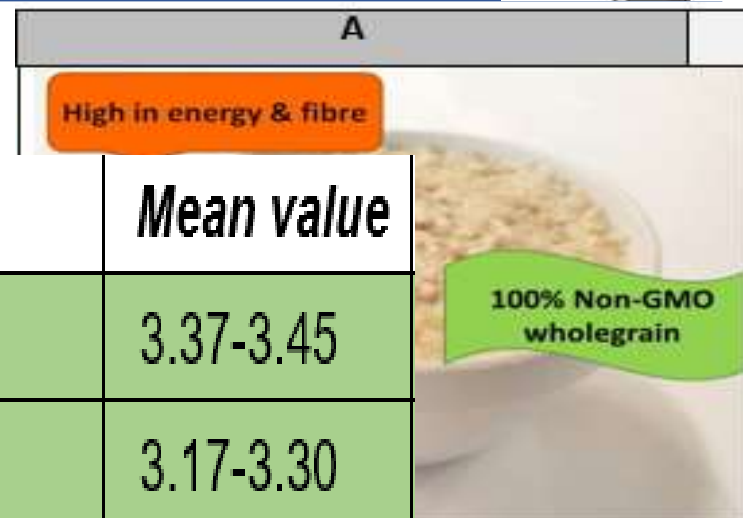


## Respondents' food product selection

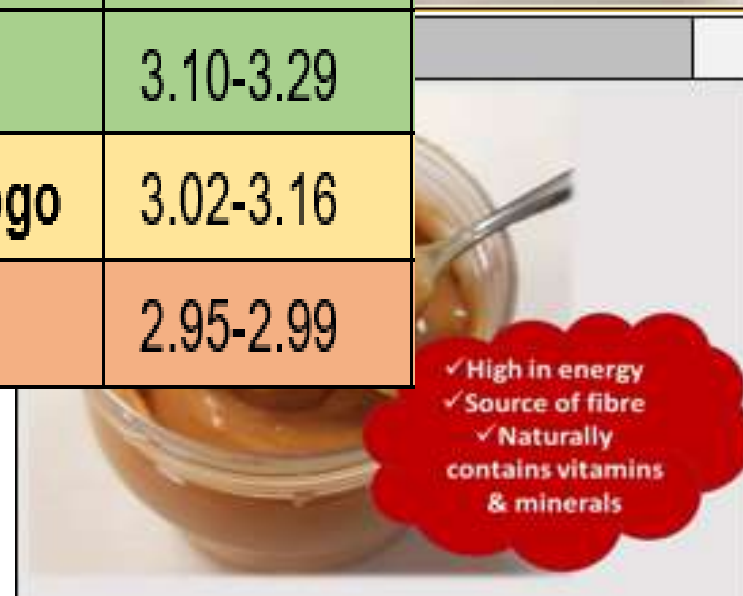
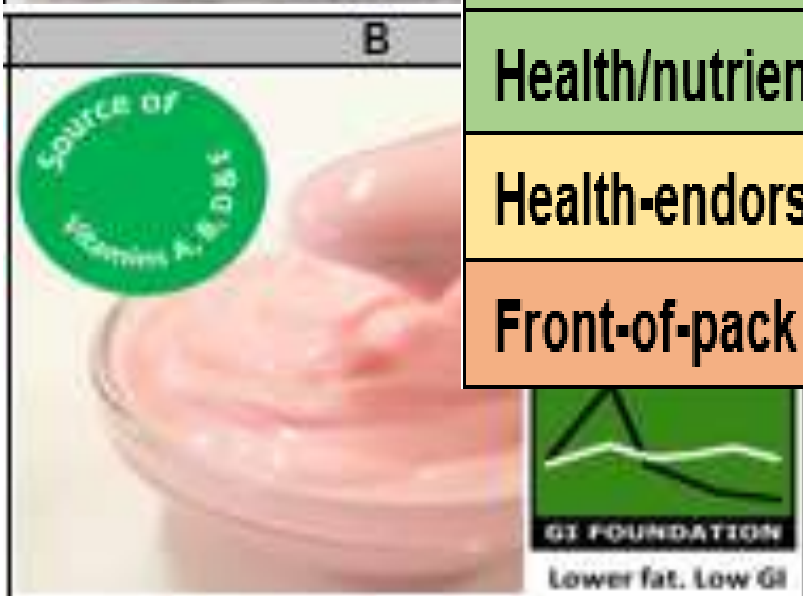
63%



59%



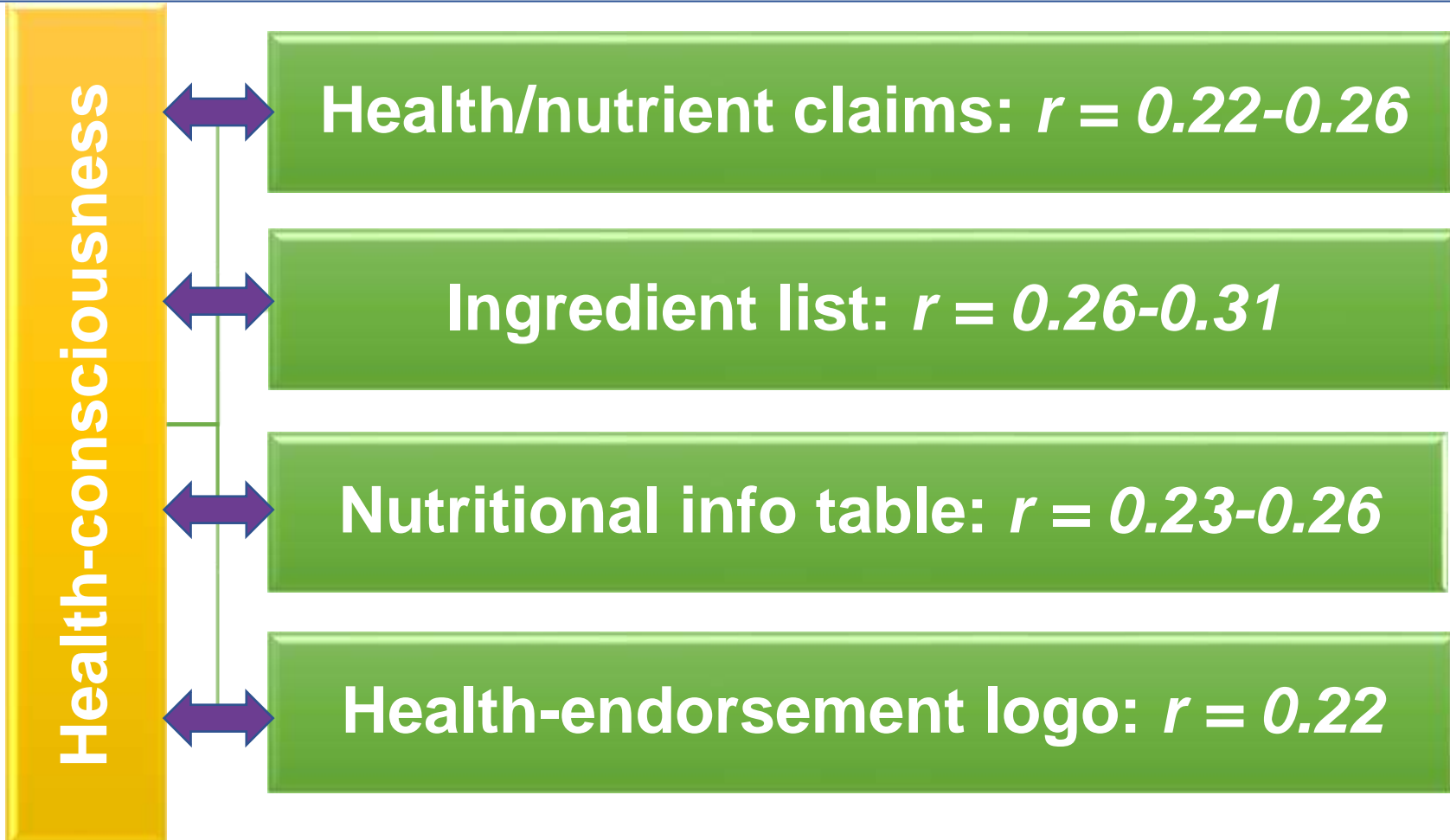
58%



<i>Label info</i>	<i>Mean value</i>
Nutritional info table	3.37-3.45
Ingredient list	3.17-3.30
Health/nutrient claim	3.10-3.29
Health-endorsement logo	3.02-3.16
Front-of-pack label	2.95-2.99

## 5. Results (continues)

**HC vs food product selection: correlated – reasons for product selection**



## 5. Results (continues)

HC vs Health perceptions: correlated; on par

Label info  
( $r=0.36$ )

Other claims  
( $r=0.33$ )

High in claims  
( $r=0.31$ )

Low in claims  
( $r=0.30$ )

Naturalness  
( $r=0.30$ )



## 6. Conclusion

**Self-perceived HC = actual levels of HC**

**Health perceptions: Naturalness & High in claims**

**Food product selection: Ingredient list & Nutritional info table**

**Health perceptions = HC**

**Food selection = HC re. ingredient list & nutritional info table**



# 6. Conclusion & Recommendation

Interest and attention to food label info

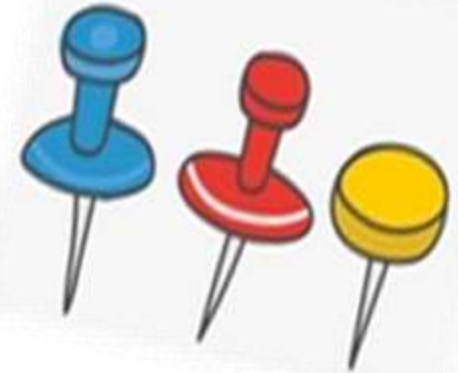
HC ≠ healthy food product selection

Comprehend food labels

Improved food labels

Consumer education

HC culture



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**Thank you!**