Relationship between understanding of food labeling and degree of awareness of eating habits in young people

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#### Abstract

#### Relationship between understanding of food labeling and degree of awareness of eating habits in young people

This study aimed to clarify whether the understanding of food labeling is proportional to degree of awareness of eating habits in young people. A questionnaire survey was conducted on 117 young people ranging from 20 to 29 years old. Two questionnaires were conducted a survey on the degree of understanding of food labeling among young people and a survey on the degree of awareness of eating habits. There are 7 questions about knowledge and 6 questions about eating habits. Specifically, it is the degree of understanding of the displayed contents of food labels, the presence or absence of recognition, and the degree of awareness in eating habits. The results showed that there was no correlation between the understanding of food labeling and degree of awareness of eating habits in young people (p > 0.05). These results suggest that understanding of food labeling is not related to degree of awareness of eating habits in young people.

#### 若者の食品表示の理解度と食生活の意識の高さの関係性

本研究の目的は、若者の食品表示の理解度が食生活の意識の高さに比例しているのかを明らかにすることであった。アンケート調査を20歳から29歳の若者117名(女性76名、男性41名、その他0名)を対象として行った。アンケートは若者の食品表示の理解度について調査と食生活への意識の高さについて調査の2種類を実施した。知識問題全7問、食生活の意識の高さを問うもの全6問となっている。具体的には食品ラベルの表示内容の理解度、認知の有無や食生活における意識の高さである。結果は、若者の食品表示の理解度と食生活への意識の高さは統計的に有意な相関関係は見られなかった(p>0.05)。これらの結果から、若者の食品表示の理解度と食生活への意識の高さの間に関係性がないことが示唆された。

# Relación entre la comprensión de los jóvenes sobre el etiquetado de los alimentos y la alta conciencia de los hábitos alimentarios

El propósito de este estudio fue aclarar si el grado de comprensión del etiquetado de los alimentos entre los jóvenes es proporcional al grado de conciencia de los hábitos alimentarios. Se realizó una encuesta a 117 jóvenes de 20 a 29 años (76 mujeres, 41 hombres y otros 0). Se realizaron dos tipos de cuestionarios: una encuesta sobre el grado de comprensión del etiquetado de los alimentos entre los jóvenes y la otra sobre el alto nivel de conciencia en los hábitos alimentarios. Hay 7 preguntas acerca de los conocimientos alimentarios y 6 preguntas sobre la costumbre alimentaria. En concreto, es el grado de comprensión de los contenidos mostrados en las etiquetas de los alimentos, la presencia o ausencia de reconocimiento y el alto nivel de conciencia acerca de los hábitos alimentarios. El resultado fue que no hubo una significación estadística entre el grado de comprensión del etiquetado de los alimentos y su alta conciencia de los hábitos alimentarios entre los jóvenes (p> 0,05). Estos resultados sugieren que no existe relación entre la comprensión de los jóvenes sobre el etiquetado de los alimentos y su alta conciencia de los hábitos alimentarios.

#### Introduction

The appearance of adulthood is an important stage for health as it is often combined with the transition to unhealthy eating behavior and can adversely affect health (Stock, 2018). However, the rate of skipping breakfast is highest for both men and women in their twenties and tends to decrease with age (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 2014). Compared to other age groups, the number of people in their twenties are the lowest among those who answered, "I think I am careful my eating habits for my health (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare 2014). Breakfast skipping is associated with weight gain and then leads obesity (Smith et al, 2017). Therefore, it is necessary to change the behavior of diets in young people in order to have a healthy life Smoking is also one of the causes of unhealthy life that causes illness (West, 2017). There is a TTM-like approach to quit smoking, no such approach is taken in the diet. In the case of smoking, there is established evidence that no smoking can be effectively promoted by using a behavior modification called TTM (Prochaska et al ,1997). In addition to TTM, behavioral transformation models include health belief models and preseed / pro-seed models. In the transtheoretical model, knowledge is acquired by collecting information in the first stage of the pre-contemplation period. And at a later stage, they are taking action(Rahimi et al,2019). Also, I am conscious by imagining myself when I take action in the process of re-evaluating myself. In the health belief model, knowledge is acquired by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of good health behavior (Aldohaian et al, 2019). Moreover, he is aware of the seriousness by feeling a sense of danger and recognizing the threat. (Aldohaian et al, 2019). In the pre-seed pro-seed model, knowledge is acquired by knowing what the target group thinks about their own needs and QOL in the first stage of social diagnosis (Cereda et al, 2020). In the second stage of epidemiological diagnosis, we are conscious of clarifying health issues and their indicators and setting target values to be achieved (Cereda et al, 2020). What these three behaviors modification models have in common is the acquisition of knowledge and awareness of behavior. Based on National Examination for Management Dietitians, knowledge about food includes food and health basic nutrition, applied nutrition, eternity education theory, clinical nutrition, public nutrition, and food management theory (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, 4th year of Ordinance, National Examination for Management Dietitians) Food labeling is the only information that consumers can know when selecting food. "A food labeling system between white person in the United States and Latin Americans and Mexicans Previous studies on understanding and use" have shown that food labeling can guide consumers by allowing them to select informed foods (Nieto et al, 2019). Depending on the characteristics of foods, it is necessary to label items related to quality such as name, place of origin, name of raw material, allergens, expiration date, items related to ensuring safety such as storage method, and nutritional components (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, 2016). Food labeling is an important source of information for consumers to correctly understand the content of food

when purchasing food, to ensure the selection of food and the safety of ingestion (Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, fact-finding survey on food labeling, 2016). However, young people tend to be less in aware of food labeling than older people, both men and women (Consumer Affairs Agency, 2018).

The aim of this study is to make clear the relationship between the degree of understanding of food labeling and the degree of awareness of eating habits. The present study set four hypotheses based on previous studies. First hypothesis is people with a high level of understanding of food labeling are also highly aware of their eating habits. Because it is recognized that it is necessary to acquire knowledge and be conscious in the process of behavioral transformation leading to behavior, I thought that people with more knowledge are also more conscious (Rahimi A et al, 2019). Second hypothesis is women have a stronger correlation with food labeling comprehension and dietary consciousness than men. Women are more likely to eat in groups and stressful situations, with greater confidence in healthy nutrition, greater involvement in weight control, higher social pressure and attempts to reduce the joy associated with eating. Often experience frustration because of their reflected nutritional behavior. Men, on the other hand, prefer a fatty diet with a strong taste, dictated primarily by the joy of consumption. They eat sweet foods often, use more dietary supplements, and visit fast food restaurants more often while watching TV. Nutritional behavior, nutritional patterns, dietary profiles, approaches to nutrition, approaches to places

of dietary consumption, and sources of nutritional knowledge all indicate a relationship with gender (Małgorzata et al,2020). Third hypothesis a stronger correlation between the degree of understanding of food labeling and the degree of awareness of eating habits in people living alone than in people living together. It was found that the eating habits of students living at home and those living alone are different. Therefore, I thought that there would be a difference in this study as well (Silvia et al,2015). Fourth hypothesis is those who have received specialized education in nutrition and cooking have a stronger correlation between their understanding of food labeling and their awareness of eating habits than those who have not received specialized education in nutrition and cooking. A study examining the effects of nutritional counseling interventions on children's diets found that their diets improved more positively than those without counseling (Dike et al, 2021). From this study, it is considered that the dietary habits also change depending on the presence or absence of specialized knowledge about nutrition.

#### Materials and Methods

## **Participants**

The target audience is young people in their twenties. The total number of survey respondents was one hundred seventeen (seventy-six women, forty-one men and zero other).

Experimental design

This study conducted a questionnaire survey. This questionnaire was conducted on an internet survey (Google form). There are two major categories in this questionnaire surveys. It takes about 15 minutes.

#### Questionnaire

The first is a survey of young people's understanding of food labeling. The present study asked gender from male, female, or others. Other questionnaires were also shown like this format. I asked about the attributes of other survey respondents, whether they live alone or at home, and whether they have received specialized nutrition education. Based on a survey by the Consumer Affairs Agency, we asked a total of 7 questions about the question of how much knowledge we have about food labeling (Consumer Affairs Agency,2019). Next, as a question of awareness of eating habits, a total of 6 questions were asked based on a survey by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Cabinet Office (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries 2015, Cabinet Office 2015). The contents of the questions are listed in Tables 1-5.

### Statistics

The Shapiro-Wilk test was a nonparametric test for all factors. Therefore, I investigated Spearman's rank correlation coefficient.

Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software (version 25.0, SPSS, Tokyo, Japan).

· male
· female
• others
· living alone
· living together
Have you ever been in a department of nutrition or cooking at a university, junior college,
or vocational school and have received specialized education?
·Yes
· No
1Have you ever used "food labeling"?
·Yes
· No
2 Regarding the explanation of "additive labeling", please answer one that you think is
correct.
· All the additives used are displayed on the display of additives.
• The labeling of additives is displayed in order from the one with the highest effect among
the additives used.
• The labeling of additives is displayed in order from the one with the highest weight ratio
to the additives used. Correct answer
All additives are labeled with the substance name.
• I don't know

Table 1 Questionnaires used in this study in English (1/5)

3 "Please answer the combination you think is correct for the amount of nutritional				
components and the amount of heat (nutritional component labeling) that are required to				
be labeled on processed foods for general consumers. (One answer)."				
· Calorie, protein, fat, carbohydrate, sodium (salt equivalent)				
· Calorie, protein, lipid, cholesterol, sugar, sodium (salt equivalent)				
· Calorie, protein, fat, sugar, vitamin C, sodium (salt equivalent)				
· Calorie, protein, fat, carbohydrate, calcium, sodium (salt equivalent)				
· Calorie, protein, lipid, cholesterol, sugar, calcium, sodium (salt equivalent)				
• I don't know				
4 Please answer what you think is correct about the explanation of "Food for specified health				
use (Tokuho)".				
The national government is examining the displayed effects and safety.				
• If it contains a certain standard amount of nutritional components whose scientific basis				
has already been confirmed, it is not necessary to report it.				
• If the nutritional components (vitamins, minerals, etc.) required for one day tend to be				
insufficient, this food can be used to supplement or supplement the nutritional components				
(vitamins, minerals, etc.).				
(				
• It is the responsibility of the business operator to display the functionality based on				
scientific evidence.				
ocionimo oriadireci				
• I don't know				

Table2 Questionnaires used in this study in English (2/5)

- 5 Please answer what you think is correct about the explanation of "nutritional functional foods". (One answer) "
- The national government is examining the displayed effects and safety.
- If it contains a certain standard amount of nutritional components whose scientific basis has already been confirmed, it is not necessary to report it.
- It is recognized based on scientific evidence that it is useful for maintaining and improving health, and expressions such as "conditioning the stomach" are permitted.
- Before the sale, information on the basis of safety and functionality was notified to the Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency.
- · I don't know
- 6 Please answer what you think is correct about the explanation of "foods with functional claims". (One answer) "
- The national government is examining the displayed effects and safety.
- If it contains a certain standard amount of nutritional components whose scientific basis has already been confirmed, it is not necessary to report it.
- · A mark (figure) is displayed on the product itself.
- It is the responsibility of the business operator to display the functionality based on scientific evidence.
- I don't know

Table3 Questionnaires used in this study in English (3/5)

7 Please answer all the labeling explanations for "genetically modified foods" that you think					
are correct. (Any number of answers) "					
· Soybeans made from genetically modified soybeans are required to be labeled as					
"genetically modified" or "genetically modified unclassified".					
· There is no obligation to label non-genetically modified agricultural products and					
processed foods made from them that have been separately produced and distributed.					
· "Genetically modified unsorted" means that genetically modified crops and non-					
genetically modified crops are not separated and are distributed and managed.					
• If the crop is not genetically modified, it can be optionally labeled as "not genetically					
modified" even if it is not the eight types of crops for which labeling is obligatory.					
• I don't know					
The second is a survey on the height of awareness of eating habits.					
This is the actual questionnaire item.					
1 "Are you trying to maintain a healthy diet on a daily basis?"					
① I always keep in mind.					
② I keep in mind					
③ I don't keep much in mind					
④ I haven't tried at all					
2 "Do you feel that you can't wait for mealtime?"					
• Applicable					
If anything, it applies					
If anything, it doesn't apply					
• Not applicable					

Table4 Questionnaires used in this study in English (4/5)

3 "What do you think of your current diet?"
· Very good and satisfied
• I think it's generally good
There are some problems / improvements
There are many problems and I think it is better to improve
4 "Are you conscious of paying attention to nutritional balance in your diet?"
· Very conscious
• I am a little conscious
• I'm not very conscious
• I'm not conscious at all
5 "Are you interested in dietary education?"
• There is so much
• Yes
· Not much
· No
6 "What kind of food do you eat so as not to adversely affect your health in the future?
Would you like to better understand what choices you should make and what kind of
cooking you need? "
• I think very much
• I think to some extent
• I don't think so much
• I don't think at all

Table5 Questionnaires used in this study in English (5/5)

#### Results

A total of 117 young people, (seventy-six women, forty-one men and zero other), answered the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between young people's understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of dietary habits. (r = 0.086, p > 0.05) n.s.=not significant (Figure 1.)76 women answered the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between young women understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of dietary habits. (r = 0.087 p > 0.05) n.s.=not significant (Figure 2).41men answered the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between young women understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of dietary habits. (r = 0.101 p > 0.05) n.s.=not significant (Figure 3). In this study, 37 people of participants living alone answered the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between participants living alone understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of dietary habits. (r = 0.188, p > 0.05) n.s.=not significant (Figure 4). In this study, 80 people of participants living with others answered the questionnaire. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between participants living with others understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of dietary habits. (r = 0,021, p > 0.05) n.s.=not significant (Figure 5).13 participants with specialized nutritional knowledge answered the questionnaire in this survey.

Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between expert knowledge participants' understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of their diet. (r= 0,259, p> 0.05) n.s. = Not significant (Figure6).104 participants without specialized nutritional knowledge answered the questionnaire in this survey. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient did not show a significant correlation between expert knowledge participants' understanding of food labeling and their high awareness of their diet. (r= 0,043, p> 0.05) n.s. = Not significant (Figure7). Comparing the correlation, significance probability and parameter, none proved a statistically significant hypothesis (Table 6).

#### Discussion

In this study, there was no significant correlation between high level of understanding and awareness of food labeling in young people. (r = 0.086, p> 0.05) In the first hypothesis, it is recognized that it is necessary to acquire and be aware of knowledge in the process of behavior change, so I thought that the more knowledgeable people are, the higher the awareness. (Rahimi A et al,2019). However, the reason why the hypothesis is not supported from the previous research is that not only knowledge, but also other factors have a great influence on the cause of raising awareness (Medina et al,2020). In the second hypothesis, all sources of nutritional knowledge indicate a relationship with gender (Małgorzataetal,2021), suggesting that females are more correlated than males. However, the reason why the hypothesis is not supported from the previous research is that even if the

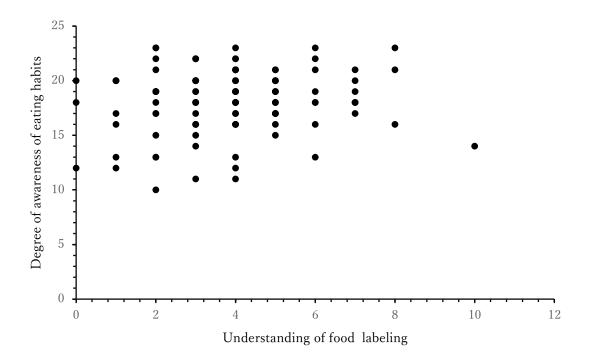


Figure 1. Correlation between understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits for all participants (n=117)

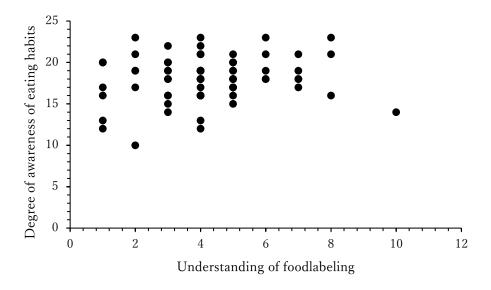


Figure 2. Correlation between women's understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits (n=76)

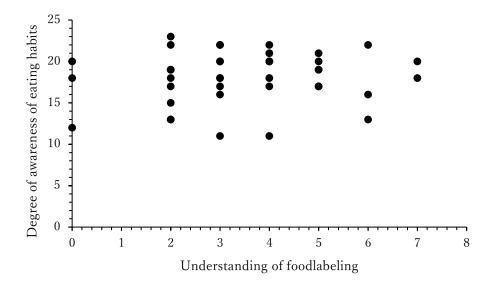


Figure 3. Correlation between men's understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits (n=41)

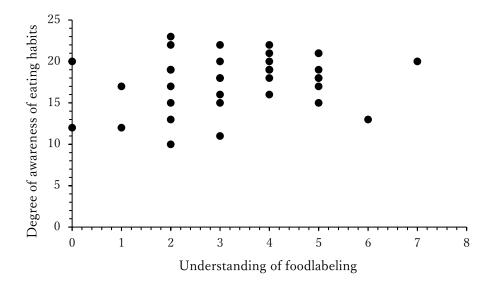


Figure 4. Correlation between the understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits in living alone (n=37)

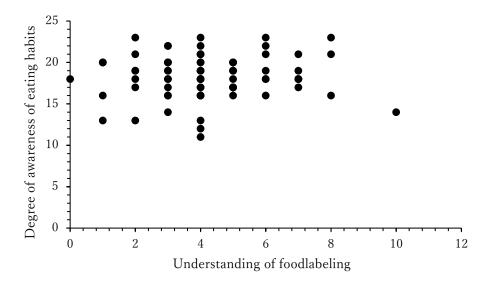


Figure 5. Correlation between the understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits participants living with others (n=80)

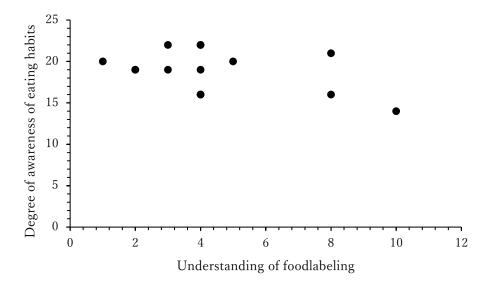


Figure 6. Correlation between the understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits participants with specialized nutrition education (n=13)

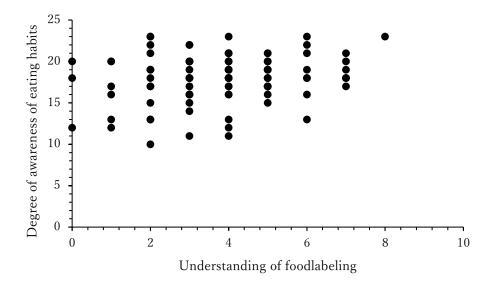


Figure 7. Correlation between the understanding of food labeling and high awareness of eating habits participants without specialized nutrition education (n=104)

Table6 Comparison of correlation, significance probability, and population parameter

	Correlation	Significance probability	Population parameter
Entirety	r= 0,086	p=0,354	n=117
Women	r= 0,087	p=0,454	n=76
Men	r=0,101	p=0,529	n=41
Living alone	r=0,188	p=0,266	n=37
Living with others	r=0,021	p=0.857	n=80
With specialized nutrition education	r=0,259	p=0,371	n=14
Without specialized nutrition education	r=0,043	p=0,665	n=103

eating habits differ between men and women, there is no gender difference within the limited range of knowledge of food labeling (Jovičić et al,2015). In the third hypothesis, the eating habits of home-based students and those living alone are different (Silvia et al, 2015), so we thought that students living alone had a stronger correlation than students living at home. However, the reason why the hypothesis is not supported from the previous research is that the health consciousness of students living alone declines (Kobayashi et al, 2017). In a study examining the effects of nutritional counseling interventions in the fourth hypothesis, their diet was more positively improved than a diet without counseling (Dike et al, 2021) and received specialized nutrition and cooking education. People believed that there was a stronger correlation between understanding food labeling and awareness of eating habits than those without specialized nutrition and cooking education. However, the reason why the hypothesis is not supported from the previous research is that not only knowledge, but also other factors have a great influence on the cause of raising awareness (Medina et al,2020).

In conclusion, the results of this study examined that a high level of understanding of food labeling does not necessarily mean a high level of dietary awareness, and that the first hypothesis of this study was not supported. This is study provided an opportunity to clarify that there was no relationship between food labeling comprehension and dietary awareness. It became clear that the recognition rate of correct knowledge was low as an issue for food

labeling in the future. We must reconsider the way food labeling should be. In the future, if the difference between healthy life expectancy (the period during which daily life is not restricted due to health problems) and life expectancy widens as the average life expectancy increases as in the past in Japan, medical expenses and long-term care will be required. It is expected that the burden of benefit costs will also increase. Especially in Japan, where the aging of the population is progressing rapidly, healthy life expectancy is achieved through the health promotion of each and every citizen, not only to prevent the deterioration of the quality of life of individuals, but also to improve the sustainability of the social security system. It is important to extend the life expectancy and reduce the difference from the average life expectancy. First of all, it is necessary to raise awareness of eating habits in order to lead healthy life for the people. It is necessary to consider what kind of efforts should be taken for that purpose.

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### **Appendix**

# 若者の食品表示の理解 度と食生活への意識の 高さの関連性について

若者の食品表示の理解度が食生活への意識の高さ に比例しているのかを明らかにすることを目的と する。アンケート調査を20代の若者を対象として 行う。

所要時間は15分程度です。

本調査の回答結果や回答を拒否することによって 不利益を被ることはございません。

国際教養学部国際教養学科 4年 河合彩水

#### \*必須

該当するものに○を付けてください。\*

- 〇 男
- 〇 女
- その他(答えたくない人も含む)

居住状況\*

- 独居(1人暮らし)
- ( 同居(実家暮らし)

大学や短大、専門学校において栄養や料理 関する学科に属しており、専門教育を受け ことがありますか。\*

- 〇 はい
- 〇 いいえ

1あなたは「食品表示」を活用したことがご

〇 はい

りますか。\*

〇 いいえ

2「添加物表示」の説明について、あなたが正しいと思うものを1つお答えください。\*

- 添加物の表示は、使用された添加物が全て 表示されている。
- 添加物の表示は、使用した添加物に占める 効果の高いものから順に表示されている。
- 添加物の表示は、使用した添加物に占める 重量の割合の高いものから順に表示されて
- 添加物の表示は、全て物質名で表示されて いる。
- 分からない

3一般消費者向けの加工食品への表示が義務付けられている栄養成分の量及び熱量(栄養成分表示)について、あなたが正しいと思う組み合わせをお答えください。(答えは1つ)\*

- 熱量、たんぱく質、脂質、炭水化物、ナト リウム(食塩相当量)
- 熱量、たんぱく質、脂質、コレステロー ル、糖質、ナトリウム(食塩相当量)
- 熱量、たんぱく質、脂質、糖質、ビタミン C、ナトリウム(食塩相当量)
- 熱量、たんぱく質、脂質、炭水化物、カル シウム、ナトリウム(食塩相当量)
- 熱量、たんぱく質、脂質、コレステロー ル、糖質、カルシウム、ナトリウム(食塩相 当量)
- 分からない

4「特定保健用食品(トクホ)」の説明について、あなたが正しいと思うものをお答えくさい。\*

- 表示されている効果や安全について国が審 査を行っている。
- 既に科学的根拠が確認された栄養成分を一 定の基準量含んでいれば、届け出しなくて
- 1日に必要な栄養成分(ビタミン、ミネラル 等)が不足しがちな場合、その補給・補完の ために利用出来る食品である。
- 事業者の責任において、科学的根拠に基づ いた機能性を表示したものである。
- 分からない

5「栄養機能食品」の説明について、あなたが正しいと思うものをお答え下さい。(答えは1つ)\*

- 表示されている効果や安全性について国が 審査を行っている。
- 既に科学的根拠が確認された栄養成分を一 定の基準量含んでいれば、届け出しなくて もよい。
- 健康の維持・増進に役立つことが科学的根 拠に基づいて認められ、「お腹の調子を整 える」等の表現が許可されている。
- 販売前に、安全性及び機能性の根拠に関す る情報等が消費者庁長官に届け出されたも のである。
- 分からない

Appendix1 Questionnaires used in this study in Japanese (1/2)

6「機能性表示食品」の説明について、あなたが正しいと思うものをお答え下さい。(答えは1つ)*  素示されている効果や安全性について国が審査を行っている。  既に科学的根拠が確認された栄養成分を一定の基準量含んでいれば、届け出しなくても良い。	7 「遺伝子組み換え食品」の表示説明について、あなたが正しいと思うものを全てお答えください。(答えはいくつでも)* 遺伝子組み換え大豆を使用したしょうゆは、「遺伝子組み換えである」旨又は「遺伝子組み換えである」旨の表示が義務付けられている。 分別生産流通管理が行われた非遺伝子組み換え農産物及びこれを原材料とする加工食品については、遺伝子組み換えに関する表示義務はない。	①日頃から健全な食生活を実施することを心掛けていますか。 *  常に心掛けている  心掛けている  あまり心掛けていない  全く心掛けていない
● 製品自体にマーク(図)が表示されている。     事業者の責任において、科学的根拠に基づいた機能性を表示したものである。     分からない	「遺伝子組み換え不分別」とは遺伝子組み 換え農作物と非遺伝子組み換え農作物を分別せず、流通管理していることをいう。 遺伝子組み換えでない農作物であれば、表 示義務のある8種類の農作物以外であって も、任意で「遺伝子組み換えでない」旨の 表示ができる。	②食事の時間が待ち遠しいと考えますか。*      あてはまる     どちらかといえばあてはまる     どちらかといえばあてはまらない     あてはまらない
③ご自分の現在の食生活をどう思いますか。  *  大変いい・満足している  おおむね良いと思う  少し問題がある・改善点がある  問題が多く、改善した方がよいと思う  ④食生活の中で栄養パランスに気をつけようと意識していますか。 *	(5)あなたは食育について興味がありますか。 *食育とは、生きる上での基本であって、知育、徳育及び体育の基礎となるべきものと位置付けられるとともに、様々な経験を通じて「食」に関する知識と「食」を選択する力を習得し、健全な食生活を実施することができる人間を育てるもの。  (2) とてもある (3) ある (3) あまりない (5) ない (6) あなたは、今後健康に悪影響を与えないよ	
<ul><li>○ とても意識している</li><li>○ 少しは意識している</li><li>○ あまり意識していない</li></ul>	うにするために、どのような食品を選択すると良いかや、どのような調理が必要かについて理解を深めたいと思いますか。*	
全く意識していない	<ul><li>○ とても思う</li><li>○ ある程度思う</li><li>○ あまり思わない</li></ul>	
	○ 全く思わない	

Appendix2 Questionnaires used in this study in Japanese (2/2)