

Effect of consumer experience of food on sensory expectation

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Abstract

Personal experience can affect food sensory expectations in terms of situational appropriateness, nutrition, food pairing and context. Personal experience relates to many factors such as consumption frequency, custom, tradition or environment. For example, daily exposure to food has been shown to influence preference, satiety, or other perceptual processing.

This study aimed to examine the association between consumers' perception and consumption frequency of pasta having different shapes (Farfalle, Spaghetti, Trofie, Penne, Coquillettes, Tagliatelle, Fusili, and Orecchiette). It particularly focused on the perception of consumers in terms of products' outward form, nutritional, and social value.

A questionnaire with pictures of pasta shape without any seasoning or sauce was proposed to consumers. The study was conducted online with a sample of 1501 consumers representative of the French population. Results were analyzed according to the consumption frequency of the eight pasta types that were divided into frequently, occasionally or rarely consumed.

Frequently consumed pastas have overall negative responses to perception in terms of outward form, nutritional and social value. For instance, consumer perceived it as less-balanced, and wouldn't consume them at the restaurant. Although, rarely consumed pastas have negative responses to perception as well, they are perceived as 'craft' products. Lastly, occasionally consumed pastas are perceived as suitable for social value, the form looks natural and good quality of nutrition. All of these pasta groups also can be characterized by consumption habit linked to way to cook, association of sauce or seasoning, or knowledge of pasta in their society from experience.

Studying consumer's perception about daily meal is important and is a first step to understand food behavior and health-related choices. Our data may also give insights into determinants of food waste and sustainability.