



Investigating the simultaneous influence of
intrinsic and extrinsic cues:
An examination of the interaction between
country of origin, price and selected sensory variables

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Abstract

The research was undertaken to quantify the power of selected extrinsic (price and country of origin) and intrinsic cues (acid in chardonnay and fat in brie) on consumer evaluations of both experienced and expected product quality, and further, to measure the respective influences of objective knowledge, subjective knowledge and self-confidence on these quality assessments. The study also seeks to determine if a survey conducted measuring expectations of quality would yield comparable results with quality assessments based on actual product experience. The study was comprised of sensory experiments using full profile conjoint analysis experimental design to measure quality perception, followed by a survey where only product description profiles were provided. The analysis from both stages show findings that are remarkably similar in most respects.

Results of the sensory experiment for chardonnay show both extrinsic cues tested to be more important than acid levels, while results for the survey show price maintained the strongest influence, with comparable expectations regarding the importance of country of origin and acid. For brie (both stages) consumer opinions were consistent; with price found the most influential; and while country of origin was considered relatively important, fat levels were more influential for both groups. Whilst for chardonnay (both stages) respondents held consistent beliefs regarding each acid level tested, for brie respondents experiencing the highest level of fat held an opposite view to respondents assessing quality based on their expected liking for this type of product. The influence of knowledge (objective and subjective) and self-confidence was found to be sporadic and weak, likely due to respondents' general lack of objective knowledge in both stages of the survey. In the case of self-confidence, results are surprising given that respondents in both studies exhibited reasonably healthy degrees of self-confidence. The research provides important information to marketers seeking to exploit the most attractive aspects of their products and platform for a number of subsequent studies.

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Table of Contents

Chapter		page
	ABSTRACT	i
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
	TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
	LIST OF TABLES	xi
	List OF FIGURES	xxi
1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH	1
1.2	RESEARCH JUSTIFICATION	3
1.3	OBJECTIVES AND CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH	5
1.4	THESIS OUTLINE	6
1.5	SUMMARY	8
2	LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1	CONSUMER USE OF INTRINSIC AND EXTRINSIC CUES	9
2.1.1	Extrinsic cues and sensory perceptions	11
2.2	COO AS AN EXTRINSIC CUE	12
2.2.1	Introduction to the COO construct	12
2.2.2	How country images are developed	15
2.2.3	Building country equity through international brands	17
2.2.4	Consumer bias against products from developing countries	18
2.2.5	The challenge of marketing 'hybrid' products	21
2.2.6	Effect of market specific attributes on use of CI	24
2.2.7	Effect of CI on commercial customers	28
2.2.8	Effect of consumer knowledge on use of CI	29

2.2.9	COO summary	30
2.3	PRICE AS AN EXTRINSIC CUE	35
2.3.1	The role of price in consumer buying decision making	35
2.3.2	Effect of consumer knowledge on use of price	37
2.3.3	Price summary	37
2.4	CONSUMER EXPERTISE AND SELF-CONFIDENCE	38
2.4.1	Two dimensions of knowledge	38
2.4.1.1	Objective knowledge	40
2.4.1.2	Subjective knowledge	42
2.4.2	Consumer self-confidence	44
2.4.3	Consumer knowledge and self-confidence summary	45
2.5	GAPS IN THE EXISTING LITERATURE	46
2.5.1	Towards a conceptual framework	47
2.6	SUMMARY	48
3	CAUSAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT	49
3.1	INTRODUCTION	49
3.2	RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	49
3.2.1	Testing the power of extrinsic cues	49
3.2.2	Testing the influence of consumer characteristics	50
3.2.3	Use of sensory experiments	51
3.2.4	Suitability of conjoint analysis experimental design	51
3.2.4.1	Formulating a conjoint analysis design	52
3.2.5	Expected quality vs perceived quality	54
3.2.6	Development of causal model and hypotheses	54
3.2.6.1	Causal model and hypotheses	54

3.2.6.2 Hypotheses	57
3.2.7 Research paradigm	58
3.2.8 Justification for the model	59
3.2.9 Stimuli used	60
3.2.9.1 Wine and cheese	60
3.2.9.2 COO and price	61
3.2.9.3 Hypotheses summary	62
3.3 OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH DESIGN	64
3.4 STAGE 1 – QUALITATIVE STUDY	66
3.4.1 Sampling	66
3.4.2 Data collection	67
3.4.3 Results	68
3.4.3.1 Taste testing	72
3.4.3.2 Country rankings (survey of students)	73
3.4.4 Qualitative data analysis summary	75
3.5 SUMMARY	76
4 QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY	77
4.1 INTRODUCTION	77
4.2 SAMPLING METHODS	77
4.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS	78
4.3.1 Use of full profile conjoint analysis	78
4.3.2 Orthogonal fractional factorial design	79
4.3.3 Training respondents	80
4.4 MEASURES USED FOR CONSUMER CHARACTERISTICS	80
4.4.1 Subjective knowledge	80

4.4.2	Objective knowledge	81
4.4.3	Self-confidence	86
4.5	SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS	87
4.5.1	Correlations and factor analysis	88
4.5.2	Objective knowledge	88
4.5.3	Conjoint analysis	89
4.6	DETERMINING ATTRIBUTE IMPORTANCE	89
4.6.1	Non-parametric tests	91
4.7	VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENTS	92
4.7.1	Normality testing	92
4.7.2	Subjective knowledge and self-confidence scale	92
4.7.3	Objective knowledge questions	93
4.7.4	Conjoint analysis	93
4.8	SUMMARY	94
5	QUANTITATIVE CONJOINT PILOT STUDY	95
5.1	INTRODUCTION	95
5.2	CONJOINT ANALYSIS SURVEY (PILOT)	95
5.2.1	Sample (pilot)	95
5.2.2	Data collection instrument (pilot questionnaire)	96
5.2.3	Intrinsic and extrinsic cues - wine	97
5.2.4	Intrinsic and extrinsic cues - cheese	98
5.2.5	Questionnaire pre-test	101
5.3	VALIDATION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (PILOT)	103
5.3.1	Subjective knowledge and self-confidence scales	103
5.3.2	Objective knowledge tests (pilot)	109

5.3.3	Conjoint analysis fractional factorial design (pilot)	110
5.4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (PILOT)	110
5.4.1	Sample (pilot)	110
5.4.2	Conjoint analysis results (pilot)	113
5.4.3	Results knowledge and self-confidence (pilot)	115
5.5	PILOT STUDY RESULTS SUMMARY	116
5.5.1	Needed changes to questionnaire (pilot)	116
6	SENSORY EXPERIMENT METHODOLOGY	118
6.1	INTRODUCTION	118
6.2	SAMPLE (SENSORY)	118
6.3	DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT (SENSORY)	119
6.3.1	Intrinsic and extrinsic cues – wine	120
6.3.2	Triangle and paired sample tests	120
6.3.3	Intrinsic and extrinsic cues – cheese	123
6.3.4	Change of rating scale ‘anchors’	125
6.3.5	Knowledge and self-confidence	126
6.3.6	Changes to questionnaire layout and format	127
6.3.7	Group briefings	127
6.3.8	Conducting the experiment	129
6.4	VALIDATION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (SENSORY)	132
6.4.1	Subjective knowledge and self-confidence scales	132
6.4.2	Objective knowledge tests	137
6.4.3	Conjoint analysis fractional factorial design	137
6.5	SUMMARY	138
7	SENSORY DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS	139

7.1	INTRODUCTION	139
7.2	SAMPLE PROFILE	139
7.3	CONJOINT ANALYSIS RESULTS (SENSORY)	140
7.3.1	Chardonnay	140
7.3.1.1	Chardonnay profiles and likelihood of purchase	141
7.3.1.2	Knowledge and self-confidence levels	142
7.3.1.3	Influence of knowledge and self-confidence	143
7.3.1.4	Objective knowledge segments (chardonnay)	147
7.3.1.5	Subjective knowledge segments (chardonnay)	148
7.3.1.6	Self-confidence segments (chardonnay)	150
7.3.1.7	Chardonnay summary	152
7.3.2	Brie	153
7.3.2.1	Brie profiles and the likelihood of purchase	155
7.3.2.2	Knowledge levels brie	155
7.3.2.3	Influence of knowledge and self-confidence (brie)	156
7.3.2.4	Objective knowledge segments (brie)	159
7.3.2.5	Brie subjective knowledge segments	162
7.3.2.6	Brie self-confidence segments (sensory)	164
7.3.2.7	Summary of test results Brie	165
7.4	SENSORY ANALYSIS SUMMARY	166
8	CONJOINT ANALYSIS SURVEY AND RESULTS FOR CHARDONNAY	168
8.1	INTRODUCTION	168
8.2	METHODOLOGY	168
8.2.1	Sample (conjoint survey)	168
8.2.2	Data collection instrument (conjoint survey)	170

8.3	VALIDATION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS (SURVEY)	171
8.3.1	Subjective knowledge and self-confidence scales	171
8.3.2	Objective knowledge tests	172
8.3.3	Conjoint analysis fractional factorial design	173
8.4	CONJOINT SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS	173
8.4.1	Sample profile	173
8.4.2	Chardonnay conjoint analysis results	174
8.4.3	Chardonnay profiles and likelihood of purchase	176
8.4.4	Knowledge and self-confidence levels	177
8.4.4.1	Influence of knowledge and self-confidence	178
8.4.5	Objective knowledge segments (chardonnay)	181
8.4.6	Subjective knowledge segments (chardonnay)	184
8.4.7	Self-confidence segments (chardonnay)	187
8.5	CHARDONNAY SUMMARY	189
9	CONJOINT ANALYSIS SURVEY RESULTS FOR BRIE	192
9.1	INTRODUCTION	192
9.2	BRIE CONJOINT ANALYSIS RESULTS	192
9.2.1	Brie profiles and likelihood of purchase	194
9.2.2	Knowledge levels brie	194
9.2.2.1	Influence of knowledge and self-confidence (brie)	195
9.2.3	Objective knowledge segments (brie)	198
9.2.4	Subjective knowledge segments (brie)	200
9.2.5	Self-confidence segments (brie)	203
9.3	BRIE SUMMARY	206
10	CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	209

10.1	INTRODUCTION	209
10.2	OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH AND FINDINGS	209
10.3	CONTRIBUTION TO THE LITERATURE	213
10.3.1	Consumer reliance on extrinsic cues: COO and price	214
10.3.2	Knowledge and self-confidence	215
10.4	IMPLICATIONS FOR MARKETERS	217
10.5	LIMITATIONS	220
10.6	DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	222
10.7	SUMMARY	223
11	REFERENCES	225
12	APPENDICES	242
1	FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE	242
2	PILOT STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE	245
3	NORMALITY ASSUMPTIONS AND TESTING	257
3.1	ASSUMPTIONS FOR NORMALITY	258
3.2	PILOT STUDY DATA	259
3.3	SENSORY EXPERIMENT DATA	260
3.4	CONJOINT SURVEY DATA	261
4	SCALE RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY	262
4.5	RELIABILITY ANALYSIS FOR ALL SCALES	263
4.6	CONSTRUCT VALIDITY	264
4.6.1	Assumptions	265
4.6.2	Subjective knowledge scale test results (Chardonnay)	268
4.6.3	Subjective knowledge scale test results (camembert/brie)	271

4.6.4	Self-confidence scale	274
4.6.5	Discriminant validity	278
5	INFORMATION PACK AND REGISTRATION FORM	282
6	TASTING REGISTRATION SPREADSHEET AND RESPONDENT CONFIRMATION NOTICE	285
6.1	SPREADSHEET FOR REGISTRATIONS	286
6.2	CONFIRMATION NOTICE	287
7	SENSORY EXPERIMENT QUESTIONNAIRE	288
8	CORRELATION MATRICES (CHARDONNAY)	307
8.1	SENSORY EXPERIMENT	308
8.2	CONJOINT SURVEY (CHARDONNAY)	314
9	CORRELATION MATRICES (BRIE)	320
9.1	SENSORY EXPERIMENT	321
9.2	CONJOINT SURVEY (BRIE)	327
10	INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN SURVEY	333
10.1	ELECTRONIC INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE	334
10.2	CLASS ROOM INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE (TRANSPARENCY SHOWN BY LECTURERS)	336
11	CONJOINT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	337

List of Tables

Table 3.1 Hypotheses tested	63
Table 3.2 Demographic profile of focus group participants	67
Table 3.3 Important product attributes for wine	68
Table 3.4 important product attributes for cheese	69
Table 3.5 Countries suggested by participants as indicators of quality for wine and cheese	69
Table 3.6 Taste tests - wine	72
Table 3.7 Taste tests - cheese	73
Table 3.8 Country rankings for chardonnay	74
Table 3.9 Country rankings for camembert	75
Table 4.1 Subjective knowledge scale items	81
Table 4.2 Objective knowledge questions wine/chardonnay	84
Table 4.3 Objective knowledge questions cheese/camembert	85
Table 4.4 Self-confidence scale items	87
Table 5.1 Specification of chardonnay attributes and levels	97
Table 5.2 Fractional factorial design chardonnay	97
Table 5.3 Specification of camembert attributes and levels	99
Table 5.4 Fractional factorial design camembert	99
Table 5.5 Total variance explained (pre-test)	101
Table 5.6 Reliability coefficients of scales (pre-test)	101
Table 5.7 Summary of part worths for chardonnay (pre-test)	102
Table 5.8 Summary of part worths for camembert (pre-test)	103
Table 5.9 Conjoint analysis internal validity tests (pre-test)	103

Table 5.10 Reliability coefficients of scales (pilot)	104
Table 5.11 Construct reliability for subjective knowledge and self-confidence	104
Table 5.12 Subjective knowledge chardonnay (pilot)	105
Table 5.13 Subjective knowledge camembert (pilot)	106
Table 5.14 Self confidence factors (pilot)	107
Table 5.15 Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test – Self-confidence	108
Table 5.16 Conjoint analysis internal validity tests (pilot)	110
Table 5.17 Sample demographic profile	112
Table 5.18 Summary of part worths for chardonnay (pilot)	114
Table 5.19 Summary of part worths for camembert (pilot)	114
Table 5.20 Equivalent mean scores for knowledge and self-confidence	115
Table 6.1 Specification of chardonnay attributes and levels	123
Table 6.2 Fractional factorial design chardonnay	123
Table 6.3 Specification of brie attributes and levels	124
Table 6.4 Fractional factorial design brie	124
Table 6.5 Reliability coefficients of scales (sensory)	132
Table 6.6 Construct reliability for scales (sensory)	132
Table 6.7 Self-confidence factors (sensory)	133
Table 6.8 Reliability tests of self-confidence items (sensory)	134
Table 6.9 Descriptive statistics self-confidence items (sensory)	135
Table 6.10 Comparison of item groupings (sensory)	135
Table 6.11 Significance testing of average item scores	136
Table 6.12 Conjoint analysis internal validity tests (sensory)	137
Table 7.1 Profile demographic profile (sensory)	139
Table 7.2 Summary of part worths and utilities chardonnay (sensory)	140

Table 7.3 Average values per profile chardonnay (sensory)	141
Table 7.4 Average chardonnay profile values by purchase intentions	142
Table 7.5 Mean scores for knowledge and self-confidence (sensory)	142
Table 7.6 Spearman's rho – Average importance chardonnay	143
Table 7.7 Spearman's rho - Utilities chardonnay	144
Table 7.8 Quartile values for knowledge and self-confidence (chardonnay)	147
Table 7.9 Comparison of part worths and utilities objective knowledge	147
Table 7.10 Utility comparison between high and low objective knowledge groups	147
Table 7.11 Comparison of part worths and utilities subjective knowledge	149
Table 7.12 Utility comparison between high and low subjective knowledge groups	150
Table 7.13 Comparison of part worths and utilities self-confidence	152
Table 7.14 Utility comparison between high and low self-confidence groups	152
Table 7.15 Summary of part worths and utilities brie (sensory)	154
Table 7.16 Average values per profile brie (sensory)	154
Table 7.17 Average brie profile values by purchase intentions	155
Table 7.18 Mean scores for knowledge (brie)	156
Table 7.19 Spearman's rho – Average importance brie	157
Table 7.20 Spearman's rho – Utilities brie	157
Table 7.21 Quartile values for knowledge and self-confidence (brie)	158
Table 7.22 Comparison of part worths and utilities brie – objective knowledge	161
Table 7.23 Utility comparison between high and low objective knowledge groups	161
Table 7.24 Comparison of part worths and utilities brie – subjective knowledge	163
Table 7.25 Utility comparison between high and low subjective knowledge groups	163
Table 7.26 Comparison of part worths and utilities brie - self-confidence	165
Table 7.27 Utility comparison between high and low self-confidence groups	165

Table 8.1 Reliability coefficients of scales (survey)	171
Table 8.2 Construct reliability for scales (survey)	172
Table 8.3 Conjoint analysis internal validity tests (survey)	173
Table 8.4 Profile demographic profile (survey)	173
Table 8.5 Summary of part worths and utilities chardonnay	175
Table 8.6 Comparative average values per profile chardonnay	176
Table 8.7 Average chardonnay profile values by purchase intentions	177
Table 8.8 Mean scores for knowledge and self-confidence (sensory and survey)	178
Table 8.9 Mann-Whitney U test for comparison of knowledge and self-confidence	178
Table 8.10 Spearman's rho - Average importance chardonnay	179
Table 8.11 Spearman's rho - Utilities chardonnay	180
Table 8.12 Quartile values for knowledge and self-confidence (chardonnay)	181
Table 8.13 Comparison of part worths and utilities objective knowledge chardonnay	182
Table 8.14 Utility comparison between high and low objective knowledge groups	182
Table 8.15 Objective knowledge summary comparison of significant correlations	183
Table 8.16 Comparison of part worths and utilities subjective knowledge	184
Table 8.17 Utility comparison between high and low subjective knowledge groups	185
Table 8.18 Subjective knowledge summary comparison of significant correlations	186
Table 8.19 Comparison of part worths and utilities self-confidence	187
Table 8.20 Utility comparison between high and low self-confidence groups	188
Table 8.21 Self-confidence summary comparison of significant correlations	188
Table 8.22 Hypotheses testing outcomes (chardonnay)	191
Table 9.1 Summary of part worths and utilities brie	193
Table 9.2 Comparative average values per profile brie (sensory and survey)	193

Table 9.3 Average brie profile values by purchase intentions (survey)	194
Table 9.4 Mean scores for knowledge (sensory and survey)	195
Table 9.5 Mann-Whittney U test for comparison of knowledge between groups	195
Table 9.6 Spearman's rho – Average attribute importance brie	196
Table 9.7 Spearman's rho – Utilities brie	197
Table 9.8 Quartile values for knowledge and self-confidence (chardonnay)	198
Table 9.9 Comparison of part worths and utilities objective knowledge	198
Table 9.10 Utility comparison between high and low objective knowledge groups	199
Table 9.11 Objective knowledge summary comparison of significant correlations (brie)	200
Table 9.12 Comparison of part worths and utilities subjective knowledge	201
Table 9.13 Comparison between high and low subjective knowledge groups	201
Table 9.14 Subjective knowledge summary comparison of significant correlations (brie)	203
Table 9.15 Self-confidence summary comparison of significant correlations (brie)	204
Table 9.16 Utility comparison between high and low self-confidence groups	205
Table 9.17 Hypotheses testing outcomes (brie)	205
TABLES FROM APPENDICES	
Table A 1 Normality tests (pilot)	259
Table A 2 Normality tests (sensory)	260
Table A 3 Normality tests (survey)	261
Table A 4 Reliability Coefficients of Scales	263
Table A 5 Construct validity summary for all scales	265
Table A 6 Factorability of subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (pilot)	268
Table A 7 Spearman's r correlation coefficients - Subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (pilot)	268

Table A 8 Factorability of subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (sensory)	269
Table A 9 Spearman's r correlation coefficients - Subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (sensory)	269
Table A 10 Factorability of subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (survey)	270
Table A 11 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Subjective knowledge scale chardonnay (survey)	270
Table A 12 Factorability of Subjective knowledge scale camembert (pilot)	271
Table A 13 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Subjective knowledge scale brie (survey)	271
Table A 14 Factorability of Subjective knowledge scale brie (sensory)	272
Table A 15 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Subjective knowledge scale brie (sensory)	272
Table A 16 Factorability of Subjective knowledge scale brie (survey)	273
Table A 17 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Subjective knowledge scale brie (survey)	273
Table A 18 Factorability of self-confidence scale (pilot)	274
Table A 19 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Self-confidence scale (pilot)	274
Table A 20 Factorability of self-confidence scale (sensory)	275
Table A 21 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Self-confidence scale (sensory)	275
Table A 22 Factorability of reduced self confidence scale (sensory)	276
Table A 23 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Reduced self-confidence scale (sensory)	276
Table A 24 Factorability of reduced self confidence scale (survey)	277
Table A 25 Spearman's r correlation coefficients – Reduced self-confidence scale (survey)	277

Table A 26 Discriminant validity chardonnay and self confidence (pilot)	278
Table A 27 Discriminant validity brie and self confidence (pilot)	279
Table A 28 Discriminant validity chardonnay and self confidence (sensory)	279
Table A 29 Discriminant validity brie and self confidence (sensory)	280
Table A 30 Discriminant validity chardonnay and self confidence (survey)	280
Table A 31 Discriminant validity brie and self confidence (survey)	281
Table A 32 High objective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	308
Table A 33 High objective knowledge and utility values	308
Table A 34 Low objective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	309
Table A 35 Low objective knowledge and utility values	309
Table A 36 High subjective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	310
Table A 37 High subjective knowledge and utility values	310
Table A 38 Low subjective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	311
Table A 39 Low subjective knowledge and utility values	311
Table A 40 High self-confidence and average importance chardonnay	312
Table A 41 High self-confidence and utility values	312
Table A 42 Low self-confidence and average importance chardonnay	313
Table A 43 Low self-confidence and utility values	313
Table A 44 High objective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	314
Table A 45 High objective knowledge and utility values	314
Table A 46 Low objective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	315
Table A 47 Low objective knowledge and utility values	315
Table A 48 High subjective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	316
Table A 49 High subjective knowledge and utility values	316
Table A 50 Low subjective knowledge and average importance chardonnay	317

Table A 51 Low subjective knowledge and utility values	317
Table A 52 High self-confidence and average importance chardonnay	318
Table A 53 High self-confidence and utility values	318
Table A 54 Low self-confidence and average importance chardonnay	319
Table A 55 Low self-confidence and utility values	319
Table A 56 High objective knowledge and average importance brie	321
Table A 57 High objective knowledge and utility values	321
Table A 58 Low objective knowledge and average importance brie	322
Table A 59 Low objective knowledge and utility values	322
Table A 60 High subjective knowledge and average importance brie	323
Table A 61 High subjective knowledge and utility values	323
Table A 62 Low subjective knowledge and average importance brie	324
Table A 63 Low subjective knowledge and utility values	324
Table A 64 High self-confidence and average importance brie	325
Table A 65 High self-confidence and utility values	325
Table A 66 Low self-confidence and average importance brie	326
Table A 67 Low self-confidence and utility values	326
Table A 68 High objective knowledge and average importance brie	327
Table A 69 High objective knowledge and utility values	327
Table A 70 Low objective knowledge and average importance brie	328
Table A 71 Low objective knowledge and utility values	328
Table A 72 High subjective knowledge and average importance brie	329
Table A 73 High subjective knowledge and utility values	329
Table A 74 Low subjective knowledge and average importance brie	330
Table A 75 Low subjective knowledge and utility values	330

Table A 76 High self-confidence and average importance brie	331
Table A 77 High self-confidence and utility values	331
Table A 78 Low self-confidence and average importance brie	332
Table A 79 Low self-confidence and utility values	332

List of Figures

Figure 2.1 Conceptual framework- effect of consumer characteristics on assessment of product quality	47
Figure 3.1 Causal model- moderating effects of consumer characteristics on product cue usage	56
Figure 3.2 Stages of the research	64
Figure 5.1 Pilot study questionnaire format	96
Figure 5.2 Example of wine product profile (pilot)	100
Figure 5.3 Example of cheese product profile (pilot)	100
Figure 6.1 Example of wine product profile (sensory)	126
Figure 6.2 Example of cheese product profile (sensory)	126
Figure 6.3 Amended questionnaire structure:	129
Figure 6.4 Numbering wine glasses	130
Figure 6.5 Pouring wine samples	130
Figure 6.6 Treated and untreated chardonnay	130
Figure 6.7 Preparing brie samples	130
Figure 6.8 Preparing trays for a tasting session	131
Figure 6.9 Sample order	131
Figure 6.10 Tray with samples	131
Figure 6.11 Experiment in progress	131
Figure 8.1 Example of wine product profile (survey)	170
Figure 8.2 Example of cheese product profile (survey)	171