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

By

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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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