The Interaction of Testing Context and Variety Seeking Type on Consumer Cracker Liking

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INTRODUCTION

- Numerous studies have shown the influence of environment on consumer hedonics
- Several studies have also demonstrated consumer liking is modulated by variety seeking propensity
- Interactions (*combined effects*) of testing context and variety seeking orientation isn't widely documented

OBJECTIVE

Understand the interaction between testing context and variety seeking orientation on consumer liking, specifically:

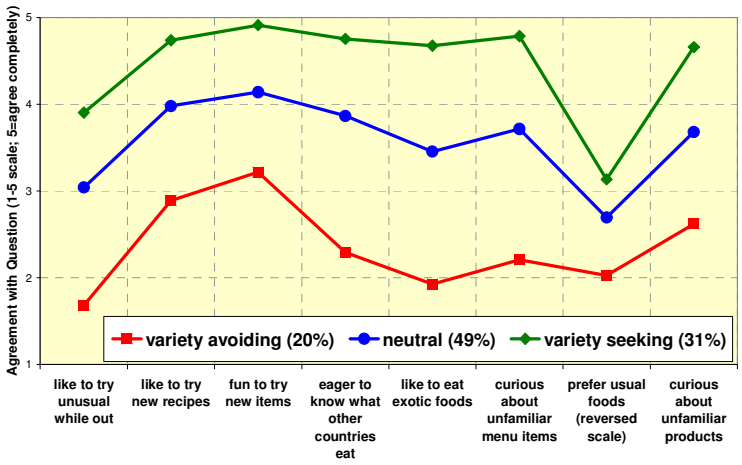
- Assess CLT versus TV viewing versus IHUT
- Assess Variety seeking orientation (seekers, neutral, avoiders)
- Examine the interaction of context and type
- Contrast in liking between two cracker products

METHODOLOGY

- Two commercially available cracker products shown in a variety of testing contexts
- Study testing environments included:
  - Traditional CLT: standard sequential monadic CLT, n=200
  - TV Viewing:
    - Split into two sub-groups of 100 each (to evaluate cracker 1 or cracker 2)
    - Each sub-group given an ample supply of one cracker and allowed to eat as much as desired while viewing a TV program
    - TV viewing consisted of two 20-minute segments
  - IHUT: in-home use test
    - Sub-groups sent home with additional supply of crackers
    - After 1 week, called back to determine hedonics
- Recruiting
  - N=200 total consumers
  - Pre-recruited via phone from a database of respondents
  - Users of the product category and acceptors of the variety
- Questionnaire
  - Standard hedonic ballot
  - Eight-question 'variety seeking' instrument

RESULTS

Mean Latent Class Cluster Profiles



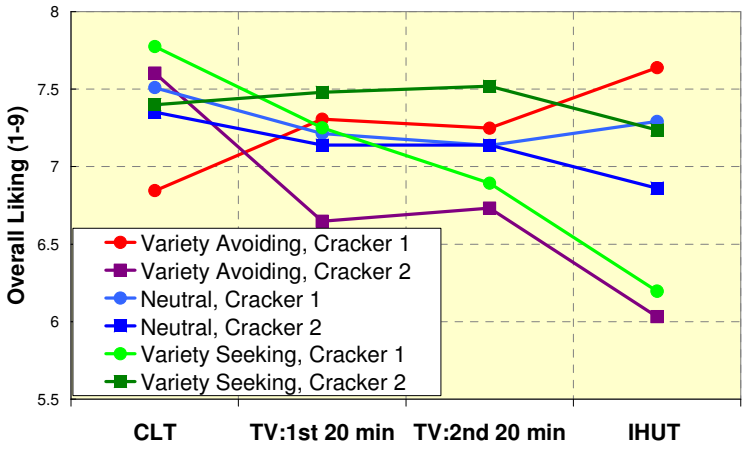
Variety Seeking Orientation

- Latent class clustering on the 8 question instrument across 200 consumers yielded three segments
- Segments were identified as variety avoiders (20%), neutral (49%), or seekers (31%)
- Good agreement between the latent class clusters and published '*variety seeking score*' was found (Spearman r=0.9)

Overall Liking Results

- Liking of cracker 1 versus 2 varies by context, variety seeking orientation, and also by their combination
- Liking for neutral consumers (blue colors) was mostly flat across the three testing situations
- Liking for avoiders (red or purple) increased for cracker 1 but fell for cracker 2
- Liking for seekers (green colors) fell for cracker 1 but was stable for cracker 2

Liking by context and variety seeking type



CONCLUSIONS

- Testing context (CLT, TV viewing, IHUT) and consumer orientation (variety seeking propensity) interact in their influence on consumer liking of crackers
- Looking at either context or orientation separately would give a misleading picture of consumer liking of the two crackers

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