INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

CPG companies conduct preference mapping to monitor competitors, guide product improvement, and identify innovation opportunities. In addition, learning from this research provides recommendations for quality and cost optimization. While original research encompassed all product attributes—appearance, flavor, and texture—this paper highlights only texture.

OBJECTIVES

- How do consumers talk about texture in the chocolate chip cookie category? How can that language be leveraged to build a more robust research narrative for product optimization?
- Which sensory attributes drive consumer liking of chocolate chip cookie texture?
- How can multivariate methods integrate to provide clear guidance in optimizing product formula for cost reduction, quality improvement?

CONCLUSIONS

Statistical techniques employed include PCA, Bayesian modeling, and Preference Mapping with Multiple Factor Analysis (PrefMFA). The multivariate results coupled with consumers’ ideal product plot and qualitative learning tell a rich story. This multifaceted research allowed the research team to optimize the texture of the product (as well as other attributes) which has led to improved products and an ability to match liking of market leaders with decreased cost formulas.