Altenatives to Just About Right Scales for Obtaining Feedback on Product Diagnostics

C. Ledeker, T. Aldredge, A. Weigand; McCormick & Company, Inc., MD, USA
Email: christie_leadeker@mccormick.com

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study was to identify alternatives to the Just About Right (JAR) scale that provide more information on product diagnostics by:

- Diagnostic questions were developed that allowed consumers to rate attributes with the option to indicate that certain terms did not apply to the samples, differing from traditional JARs which force ratings for each attribute. These alternatives to JARs allow consumers to select attributes which they associate with each sample, allowing for more attribute options within a ballot.

Using priming to increase differentiation among samples

Priming was also investigated to determine if eliciting memories of previous experiences with the products assisted in differentiating sample ratings.

METHODS

Six ballots were evaluated in Central Location Tests on 2 gravy samples served over mashed potatoes in balanced order. Unique respondents were used to evaluate each ballot, and each ballot was evaluated by 80 to 107 respondents. Respondents were screened to like and eat brown gravy on mashed potatoes.

Ballot diagnostics included the following:

| Standard JAR: 5-point JAR (6 attributes total) |
| Rate All: 3-point JAR with an option to indicate that attributes did not apply (23 attributes total) |
| RATA: 2-point ratings presented as rate all that apply (9 attributes) |

Each ballot was presented with and without priming:

| Priming: | Prompted respondent to think about the last time they ate dish |
| Please take a moment to try the Brown Gravy sample. Think about the last time you ate Brown Gravy as you answer the following questions... |

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

As shown in Figure 1, results showed that broader attribute selections in the alternative diagnostic questions led to more significant differences (p<0.05) between samples in diagnostic feedback. Priming tended to show less differentiation between samples based on diagnostic attribute ratings.

Comparison of results from Standard JAR and RATA diagnostics

Tables 2-4 show a comparison of feedback obtained on significant differences between samples in attribute ratings focusing on Standard JAR vs. RATA comparison, which is an alternative to Standard JAR that provides detailed attribute feedback and slightly less time to complete the ballot than Rate All.

CONCLUSIONS

Alternative diagnostic questions:

- provide more flexibility with terminology, allowing respondents to only rate attributes that apply to the sample being evaluated and providing the researcher opportunity to expand attribute terminology on ballots.
- tended to provide the most information about diagnostic attributes and led to more differentiation between samples when presented without priming.
- led to longer ballot completion times and heightened perceived tediousness due to additional attributes; however, less time was spent rating each attribute.
- when presented as RATA questions, ballot completion times were slightly reduced.

Alternative diagnostic questions can increase feedback available for formula optimization.

REFERENCES