



Putting Brand Loyalty to the Test Through Blind Taste Testing:

A Research on Heinz and Knorr

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Abstract

The determination of this study, consequently, is to inspect the effect of the connection between perceptual and preferential assessments in light of branding data done through taste test judgment as it advances from the blind to the non-blind test. Keeping some factors constant for both the products under consideration, the tests aimed to conclude if consumers leaned towards the brand image or the attributes of the product itself.

Introduction

Various factors influence the consumer's decision and preferences of products and services. Some of the factors include product attributes while others are dependent on the personal attitude towards the product in question. Another very popular factor is the unique features of the product which may or may not be shared by other products of the same category. Hence, the shared characteristics of the product such as its quality, brand name and several other unique characteristics come into play when a consumer is in the process of determining which product he or she should purchase.

It should be noted however that the personal characteristics of the purchaser is also a significant factor. Some of the examples of personal characteristics include socio economic level, personality, purpose of purchase and several other individual characteristics. In addition to this, the interaction between these characteristics also have an influence on the end result.

When more than one type of product characteristics are involved, the task of choosing a product becomes even more daunting. Hence, ones' own perception regarding the brand also has a major impact on the end decision. These perceptions may be either objective, subjective or they may involve intangible qualities. (Lowengart, 2012)

Academics and researchers have frequently emphasized the significance of understanding how consumers decide between varying alternative products. Investigation on the matter emphasizes the physical features of a product especially its quality, durability, robustness and the interplay of personal

differences of an individual in terms of gender or other socio-demographic variables affect choice.

For this reason, the sample size selected for the test also plays a crucial role in order to keep the personal biasness and perceptions from effecting the study and skewing the results. Stone and Sidel (2004) evaluated that 25-50 subjects per product in laboratory testing proved to give accurate results without any biasness or vagueness being drawn in the conclusions.

However, when it comes to food products, there is an added variable that a consumer considers when making a purchase decision. That is, the consumer will use their senses. Through the use of their senses, the consumer will smell and taste the product especially if the product is unpackaged in order to evaluate its quality and liking.

A recent research by Holm and Kildevang states that taste is the most significant variable when choosing food items. Hence, it is reasonable to conclude that consumers view taste tests as a form of product evaluation while marketers believe it is an important step to introducing a new product in the market and to gauge feedback from the target audience. In the past, marketers have been successful in convincing potential customers about the superior qualities of their products as opposed to their competitors. In addition to this, taste tests are an excellent strategy for new product development as well as test marketing.

In general, these tests can be distributed into two main categories:

1. Perceptual discrimination tests

This test is carried out to inspect whether the respondent is able to distinguish between the two or more brands in question. Hence the main aim of the study is to evaluate whether the consumer can sense dissimilarities in terms of taste of the two different brands of the same category.

2. Preference tests (Batsell and Wind, 1979).

The aim of this type of taste test is to define how the consumer ranks the products in terms of and with respect to other competing products of the same category. This interrogation is also relevant especially when a firm is introducing a new product in the market. Hence, the preference test can be useful when a firm is designing a new product or upgrading an existing one. Naturally, such preference assessments are reflected to be pointers and signs of choices made by consumers in the market.

It should be noted however, that marketers use the preference tests more often as compared to the perceptual test. It can then be concluded that when it comes to food items, there are two factors that are most significant. First being the consumers' perception of the difference between the two product and second being the preference of the consumer in general. However, both types of taste tests should result in a change in positioning plans of the product. Hence, it is essential for firms to understand and interpret the relationship between these factors and how they affect the assessment of the products. Also, the

characteristics of the products should also be considered as vital and an understanding of how these have an effect on the purchasing choice of the consumer. In other words, determining exactly how a product's brand affects the purchase choice. This can be determined by using blind and non-blind taste tests. The variance between the blind and the non-blind taste test in terms of positive or negative fluctuations in preferences or perceptions is the supplementary evidence the brand offers to consumers.

Brands are used to recognize a product in order to generate differentiation through numerous means such as rational reasoning and affective connotations. Academics have agreed that brands assist in acting as a signal of quality and hence impact the choice of purchase through their reliability. Consequently, brands can affect and alter the consumers' preferences and expectations. Therefore, countless customers may appraise a Tommy Hilfiger dress shirt as being of superior quality than that of a nonspecific brand. Hence, blind and non blind tests can help determine the effect of branding.

In the case where consumer evaluation gets altered when switching from blind to non blind test, it is safe to assume that the change is merely due to the added information of the brand name.

This subject is of precise interest when it comes to investigating buyers' sensory evaluations. Preceding research has revealed that branding, on its own, or through blind taste testing can affect the perception of the buyer to a larger degree and hence ultimately affecting the intention of buying.

The joint effect of both of these theories, though, can deliver more understanding into the dynamic forces behind consumer behavior. By defining the significant factors that aid in making a purchasing choice of food products especially done with a taste test, one may be able to classify how branding affects this choice process.

The texts overall have devoted substantial consideration to how branding affects fluctuations in the evaluation of a product's characteristics and the subsequent consumer behavior. Nevertheless, these readings assessed these factors independently. Earlier academic studies on taste tests have observed either perceptions only or preferences only, or both however it should be noted that these were carried out in a different setting. Though, few studies have made an attempt to expose the dormant competitive market structure that occurs in consumers' minds. However, there is no work that caters to these factors in a choice condition where both blind and non-blind outcomes are used to narrate perceptions to preferences.

Furthermore, there is negligible research that combines brand information and relates it to consumers' choice through taste testing. To be precise, almost no research exists that scrutinizes the effect on the assessment of the product's endogenous characteristics which are those qualities that are typical of the product's generic benefits and are merely a result of the consumers' sensory evaluation. The study talks regarding this issue by formulating product attributes that are affected by the non-blind test as opposed to with the blind test. Such an investigation delivers understandings into how this connection can be used to

surge the efficiency of competitive branded product positioning strategies and in turn increase our understanding of the consumer's choice.

Role of Brand Equity

Defining brand equity is essential for understanding the perception of consumers and predicting their likely response. Essentially, Brand Equity is defined as the differential effect that knowledge through marketing of a particular brand can have which in effect can cause an altering response among consumers. Brand equity is accumulated overtime and a product gains it through past investments that help change the perception of the brand in the eyes of the consumer or potential customer. This brand perception becomes the identity of the product which means that the consumer starts to relate the functional experiences as well as the emotional experiences with the product. There are many ways to test brand equity including product sampling and different forms of comparison tests. However, one of the best ways to grasp the intensity of brand perception is through blind taste tests.

Blind taste test includes two steps whereby the consumers are required to taste a product without knowing which brand they are consuming and the second step is to make them taste the brand knowingly. The differences in opinions in both settings reflects a certain "biasness" towards the same product brand. This is especially true in the circumstance when the answers provided by the respondent is different in both scenarios.

Competing brands often have share attributes which becomes challenging for the consumers to differentiate. Such is the case for Coke and Pepsi. The customer

differentiates the product through the brand, this in turn is known as brand equity. A result of previous marketing campaigns by the brand which results in a particular image in the minds of the customer and/or potential customer. This association with the brand is essential as it can cause one to prefer one brand over the other.

The change in perception can be noted due to the differing responses once the respondent is made aware of the brand in question. Hence, a study by Dr Ramanjaneyalu claims that a consumers' perception of the products performance is highly affected and dependent upon previous experiences and encounters with the brand. (Dr. N. Ramanjaneyalu, December 2013)

Brand Equity is not easy to measure however through product sampling and comparison tests, one can arrive at a simple method of measuring the result of branding.

Blind Test is one form of measuring brand equity which includes

- 1) Consumer sampling a product without knowing the name of the brand that they are consuming, also known as open test
- 2) The second sampling will include the consumer knowing the brand that he or she is consuming.

Collecting data on perceptions of the consumers and comparing the result would show varying opinions even though the same product was sampled under two different conditions.

Problem Identification

Consumers over the course of time have developed preferences resulting in some brands being blindly favored over others. Despite maintaining multiple conditions constant such as pricing, placement at stores, the packaging etc. consumers have shown that they are still able to associate with particular brands and products more.

The two brands that have been considered for this study are both international brands functioning throughout the world since the late 1800's yet there is a huge difference in how both the brands are perceived by the general audience in Pakistan. The brands in question have identical offerings with identical promotions running but yet there is a clear difference in the choices that consumers make, considering they are both fast moving consumer goods that require minimum decision-making effort.

It needs to be identified whether it's the product attributes that have caused this change in purchase behavior or the non-physical attributes of the products such as branding, marketing or customer experiences with the brand that's causing this shift.

Statement of problem: How does brand matter?

Brand matters especially in terms of how it has been differentiated from other competing brands and or to a created competitive advantage. This development could take years before taking effect or happen overnight depending on the interactions of the consumers.

Competitive advantage can be established in two ways;

- 1) some brands create with product performance
- 2) While other brands build competitive advantage through non-product-related performance.

Objective of the Study

- Analyzing the taste preferences of individuals by undertaking blind taste tests
- Search for consistencies in brand preference
- The respondent's ability to recognize preferred brand in blind taste testing.
- Highlight the importance of Brand Awareness and Brand Loyalty

Scope of the Study

With hundreds of ketchup brands taking up most of the shelf space in marts and grocery stores, it is imperative to understand the reasons behind their choice or purchasing habit. Blind taste testing will help define the aspects that are important to a consumer irrespective of brand loyalty, keeping in mind that both the brands selected are similar in many ways since they are both international brands operating within Pakistan since many years.

The tests will prove whether it's the brands that hold a higher value in the eyes of the customers or if the individual attributes i.e. taste, aroma, texture and color matter more.

Limitations of the Study

- The study merely focused on the population based in Islamabad to ensure consistency of the data collected and avoid any deviations due to cultural and behavioral changes due to shifts in the population.
- The sample size was above the minimum threshold of people required to ensure all the individuals selected in the sample had experienced consuming both the products in question and the data collected was valuable and decisive.
- Due to time and monetary constraints locations only closely accessible were considered for the tests.
- Considering the cultural and societal behavior of the sample, and considering the previous studies conducted, only 4 major categories were selected for the products to be testes on; aroma, taste, texture and color.

Literature Review

Taste Tests

Taste Tests or popularly known as blind testing is a method whereby respondents are unaware of the product brand being tasted so that it eliminates any form of bias that might otherwise incur due to the preconceived notions and expectations of the individual about a particular brand.

There are mainly 2 types of taste tests that are conducted by firms. The first one being the Single Product Test where the respondent is given only one product and is asked to provide their views on it. This may or may not be repeated over a period of time. In case it is repeated, it is usually to gain useful feedback about any product changes and whether the respondent notices them and approves of the alterations. A positive feedback can lead to thousands of dollars being spent on mass producing a new and improved version of the product. Hence, it is essential to get a true and honest feedback from the respondents. In addition to this, the sample should be such that it should represent the whole populations' opinion and choices.

Another type of taste test is the Comparison Test whereby respondents are asked to taste 2 or more different types of a product and are asked to state their preferences. This method, although is ideal for making comparisons and listing down preferences of individuals however it does not produce enough data regarding the qualities of a single product and hence there are gaps in the information being gathered. For example, the respondent could state that he or she preferred B over A however not answering the question of whether they would actually buy the preferred product or whether they liked the product at all.

Hence, there should be an option of choosing “neither” product and the respondent should be asked whether in a real setting they would purchase the product or not.

Adding on the criteria on which the subjects have to be judged need to be carefully selected and have to be relevant to the products under study. It has been noted in multiple studies that people are heavily dependent on visual information and cues to navigate in their daily lives. These cues generally serve particularly well when aligned with other sensory cues such as smell and touch. However, if these cues are intentionally mismatched in order to create exaggerated feelings then evidence points towards visual cues overpowering other sensory cues (Posner, Nissen, and Klein 1976). This is exactly why color was one of the judgment criteria since being visually appealing is a crucial aspect to any consumables of any nature.

Similarly ever since the beginning of time the sense of smell has been used vastly and with evolution the receptors in our nose have also evolved and increased thus allowing humans to smell better and stronger as studied by (Gordon M. Shepherd 2004). This is exactly why aroma plays a vital role in the initial impression that sets itself in our minds and instantaneous expectation of things to proceed is set, and being a taste test the taste of the products could be predetermined by their aroma.

Importance of Taste Tests

Taste tests are commonly used by marketers to show potential customers how one brand has superiority over the other brand (Dr Sanjoy Ghose, August 2001). The usefulness of the taste test is to show consumers whether they can differentiate the brand of their preference from other similar brands.

Businesses can gain valuable and insightful information as well as data regarding the product in question. In addition to this, reliable comparisons can be made between 2 or amongst 3 or more similar products.

Blind Taste Testing can also aid in getting relevant views from those individuals who are loyal customers of either brand and hence are most likely to prefer one brand over the other. This helps to identify the group from which an appropriate sample can be taken for testing. By using the questionnaire that fully covers the different aspects of the product in question, one can gauge the reasons behind an individuals' preference or purchase.

Testing is a rather expensive and daunting task as it takes a lot of time and effort. Although it is advised to carry out the test on a smaller sample (30 people) as it makes economic sense and then move onto a larger sample size. However, this may be true for a new product in order to get initial feedback. Moshe Givon (1989) conducted a similar test on the streets where 50 pedestrians were stopped to test two chocolates and the results were conclusive.

Taste test is also a good method of introducing new products to the target audience who already consumes a similar product.

Although taste tests are conducted under a controlled setting however, they are useful when in need to track views of a particular product over time. In addition

to this, it is also important in assessing the alterations or changes in the product and to record reactions of new and potential customers.

The needs of the customers and their preferences are easily identified through this exercise. Firms have used this methodology as a way to gauge consumers' views and to apply them into developing a product according to the popular vote and opinion.

Gaps in Literature

Through out the course of history, taste tests have been focusing more on products that have developed a large scale fan following which has resulted in the tests not giving any attention to products that are more impulse based purchases. Products that are bought purely based on impulse also have a thought process and certain conditions have led to people preferring one over the other, this study aims to understand if it's the physical properties of the products in question that causes this action or non physical aspects such as the brands positioning and marketing exercises the undergo.

Rules for Accurate Taste Testing

1. Location

It is preferred to provide an isolated facility to the respondents whereby they have individual privacy and hence one respondent will not be able to affect the other.

2. Equipment

The products should be carefully and neatly placed on the table. In addition to this, the respondents should be provided with a glass of water and/ or crackers in order to cleanse their palate after each tasting. The respondent should also be allowed to have a second taste of the product if need be in order to get accurate results.

3. Respondents

Unbiased opinion is vital and hence it is essential to choose respondents that are in no way associated with the brands under study.

4. Sample Size

Ideally a smaller sample should be tested initially and gain feedback. In the case where the small sample proves successful, one can move onto a larger sample size.

5. Questionnaire

The questions should be unambiguous so that clear answers can be given by the respondent. In case where the respondent does not understand the question at hand, it is vital for the interviewer to explain what exactly is being asked.

6. Carrying out the test

The respondent should be provided with water before tasting the product. In addition to this, the questions should only be asked once the individual has tasted the product so that he or she has ample time to form an opinion.

In case of drawing comparisons between or amongst products, it is vital for the respondents to taste ALL of the products in question.

It is also essential for the interviewer to rotate the products so that there is no bias.

7. Incentive

It is also advised to provide an incentive for the respondent to undergo such a long taste test.

[Comparison of Studies](#)

Another study by Larry Percy tested this phenomenon through a beer tasting experiment. The study showed how

The beverage industry has long taken help from the taste tests to distinguish between competitive brands. Diet Pepsi claims to have an edge over Diet Coke by highlighting the results of a given blind taste test.

. (Dr. N. Ramanjaneyalu, December 2013)

For understanding consumer attitudes, it is essential to study different aspects that affect buying behavior including emotions, unconscious motives as well as automatic processes. (Dominika Maison)

Implicit influences, in one study claimed to play a major role in affecting the information being processed by the consumer. Janiszewski (1988) studied the implicit influence of ads being displayed in magazines. It was concluded that even

though the consumer was not paying full attention to the ad, even then it influences its attitude towards the ad as well as the brand. (Janiszewski, 1988,1990). It should be noted however, that the participant showed no signs of an explicit memory of the ad. This shows that through ads, consumers have a perception about the brand. It may be judgments and preferences that the consumer has formed about the brand before even consuming the product or brand in question. This also helps in forming a brand image and is often “automatic”. Research shows that testing the perception of the product feature and the results of which depend upon whether the product test is blind.

However, there is an ongoing debate amid the academic counterparts as they are trying to look for alternative methods for assessing brand equity and perception. Many researchers have attempted to develop qualitative techniques that would help in eradicating issues that may occur due to consumers’ consciousness and hence arrive at more accurate results. One of the qualitative techniques included a projective technique called anthropomorphization or popularly known as animalization. This technique required the respondent to assign or imagine the brand as either a person or an animal. The study concluded that respondents were only able to assign strong brands with the appropriate and consistent images in terms of gender, life style, age in case of a person. Marketers are able to take such data and make inferences about unconscious barriers that the consumer might face. The respondent is asked to elaborate on the characteristics of the person and animal chosen for a particular brand in order to know their cognitive process as well. This has been a lucrative step for proposing an effective marketing strategy that could in effect alter the preconceived notions and perceptions that acted as barriers to purchasing a given brand. It should be noted

that even though projective techniques such as this is popular in the marketing field however, the results are not accepted in academic research due to the subjectivity involved in their construction and interpretation.

There are many uses of blind taste tests especially for firms who are either trying to lower costs or introducing a new product in the market. It is routine for companies to experiment with different ingredients to lower cost but maintain high quality flavor and prolong shelf life of the product. The main aim of such taste tests is to increase the profitability without altering the taste of the product so that the customer is satisfied. The blind taste test helps the marketer to understand whether a change in ingredients can be detected by the consumer. In case the consumer is unable to tell the difference, then it is safe to reproduce the product using cheaper ingredients. However, given the case that the consumer is able to detect the difference, it is advisable not to reformulate the product in order to retain consumers and develop a standard taste. Hence, it is essential to run taste tests from time to time in order to determine strategy and in turn product marketing. (Kin Nam Lau, May 1995)

Minute Maid, an orange soda, was introduced to the Canadian market after the company carried out a series of blind taste tests (Brennan, 1986).

Labatt Breweries also used a mixture of blind and non-blind taste tests in the Canadian market. The company asked the respondents to choose between Labatt X and Labatt Y (Barrington, 1995).

Taste tests can vary from small in-house panels which are mainly used for planning product design to large-scale test markets. Essentially the complexity of taste tests varies in terms of the staff. From trained, experienced, panels to

consumer laboratory or market tests. Given the prominence of this subject in educational research and real-world events, numerous educational studies have observed several characteristics of taste testing.

The most relevant type of research when it comes to blind taste testing is the “paired comparison” test and some variation of it. This test involves conducting the test on a sample of respondents who are given two products without any brand identification. The respondents are asked to try the two products in the prescribed sequence and given time period and their answers are recorded. This sort of blind taste testing is easy to conduct and gives more or less authentic results.

After conducting the blind taste test, the respondents are also asked to state their product preferences on an overall basis as well as state reasons for choosing one product over the other. The respondents state their reasons for choosing or not choosing a given product as well as state their preferences as ratings and taste criteria, which is then further analyzed in order to learn what changes could be made so that a given product tastes better. (Collins, Feb 1966)

The result of the taste tests leads to decisions that have real consequences. This essentially means that a firm has to make relatively grave decisions which may affect the future of the product while also increasing the capital expenditure. (Collins, Feb 1966). The drawback however is that the results may not justify these significant changes and actions especially when the products in question

are those that have little or no difference for example beer, whiskey, butter, margarine, cola, toothpaste and several others. (Collins, Feb 1966)

The contention still remains of whether the answers were based purely on real preference or whether the respondent is unable to distinguish between the two products. Assuming that 50 percent of a given population prefers Product A to Product B, can it be inferred from this data that the results are purely based on guess work? This may be true as when one is faced with a product such as a beverage or food, it is rather difficult to make an absolute conclusion after a single taste test. However, in the case where the results are based on a combination of both guesswork and preference then one can assume that the effect of preference is minimal.

To analyze this phenomenon, a study divided the population into discriminators and non-discriminators. The separation of the two groups was based primarily on the reaction of whether the group was able to discriminate and those who were able to do so were further isolated. This is because, the ratings and reasons of those who could discriminate would be of more value in bringing about adequate changes in the product.

A study conducted a statistical analysis of how many and who can discriminate especially when there is a choice difference. It is essential to define the relationship due to the fact that in case of low discriminatory power, the individuals who could discriminate and their reasoning should be thoroughly assessed as majority of the market cannot distinguish between the products. However, in the case where the ability to discriminate is relatively high, then it can be inferred that the market contains a preference group that is real and

distinct. (Collins, Feb 1966). Given that the ability to discriminate is high, one must consider the thoroughly the impact of a product change and the resulting effect on the market share. High discrimination combined with low difference in preference can mean that one should resort to marketing a second product which could target a different segment.

Distinguishing the discriminators can also help define factors such as psychological as well as demographic. However, distinguishing the nondiscriminators from the discriminators can be a daunting task. The study offered a paired comparison taste test along with an interview to this problem especially when the product in question does not differ greatly.

The two step test has an advantage over a single paired comparison. This was proved in a study carried out by Allan Greenberg on beer testing. This is because in the second step, the respondents were given two similar beers and one different one and were asked to choose the beer that was different. This helped in differentiating between those who had distinguishing tastes from the ones who were merely doing guesswork. The study conducted the preference test as well as the discrimination test twice to get accurate data. Hence, the purpose of conducting a discrimination test was merely to determine the extent of the discriminators that were shortlisted from the preference test. (Collins, Feb 1966).

Essentially the two trial preference test was said to isolate a large group of non-discriminators. However, a major problem remained which was the difficulty in identifying the number of guessers who were included in the group called potential discriminators. The study stated in its first law that in case the

proportion of non discriminators of a two trial preference test are more than the discriminators, then there is a greater likelihood that respondents cannot tell the difference between the two products.

The study concluded that only 45% of the sample could consistently choose the same beer. It should be noted however that even the respondents who were shortlisted as consistent in their preferences turned out to be nondiscriminators. (Collins, Feb 1966). Another conclusion from the study was that the discrimination test was a bit tough for an average consumer while those with consistent preferences were able to discriminate between the two beers.

1. A one-trial taste test is only partly satisfactory in terming "real" preferences.
2. A two-trial taste test is a much more powerful instrument of analysis.

Another study by Whitmore studied the physical characteristics and taste of beer in the Canadian market to understand what drives the consumer to purchase one brand as opposed to the other. Matching the beer chemistry to the preference of the consumer could lead to an optimal mix. (G. A. Whitmore, Jun 1990). The study also pointed out that the preferences of the consumer are not static. Hence, they vary and evolve over time. in addition to this, preferences also vary depending on the market segment, age, gender, consumption level of beer as well as education. The study also took into account differences within a homogenous group as well.

The study by Whitmore tried to maintain a uniform taste test so that the personal profiles of individuals do not have an impact on the results.

While most taste tests consider each response as an equal utility, a study by Alin Gruber and Barbara Lindberg disagree. The study focuses on taste sensitivity and considers it to be a vital component when evaluating new products in contrast to competitive products. Alin Gruber in his article discusses the importance of reliability of taste testing through repeated tasting. (Lindberg, August 1966)

It is essential for tests such as blind taste testing to be conducted repeatedly to increase reliability. Alin and Barbara in their research carried out a similar approach whereby if the respondent rated the same product as best and least preferred then the individual was deemed as insensitive. products. By inquiring respondents to repeat the taste judgments with what respondents believed were three different formulations, it was perceived to define those persons who inverted their preference judgments and were, therefore professed as unreliable. Accordingly, it was easy to identify those individuals who were sensitive as well as reliable in their taste preferences. (Lindberg, August 1966)

Coca-Cola, a beverage that undertakes research and spends thousands of dollars trying to understand the basic motivations of consumers as well as their desires and what would appeal to them. The company has been successful in creating appealing images of their products which attract customers.

These intangible image associations often may be the only way to differentiate between various brands in a product category especially true in the case of Coca Cola and Pepsi. Another study tried to recognize how these imagery associations or non-product-related performance plays important role in product differentiation.

The main aim of firms spending thousands of dollars on advertisements is to generate a form of brand awareness. Repeated advertisement is used to make the consumer consciously aware of the brand. It is believed by advertisers that repeated advertisements are essential in order to keep the brand in the consumers evoked set. However, this does not guarantee sales as the consumer needs to have a positive perception of the brand in question as well. (Wayne D. Hoyer, Effects of Brand Awareness on Choice for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product, Sep 1990)

Awareness and Consciousness represents the lowest end of a continuum of brand knowledge. This continuum ranges from basic recognition of the brand name in question to a highly comprehensive cognitive structure based on detailed information. Here, recognition is considered to be a method of identifying and distinguishing a brand as previously encountered (Mandler 1980). Thus, the distinction between awareness and recognition is merely subtle one.

Previous research on the subject has shown the same results overtime. That is that the consumers undergoing a blind taste test fail to detect their preferred brand in real life

Allison and Uhl (1964) conducted a study on beer drinkers to test whether given several brands in a blind taste test, the respondent is able to detect and select the one that the consumer actually prefers. Similarly, the same respondents are given the same brands however, this time the respondent is aware of the brand name and hence, their actual preferences are recorded and compared to the ones that were recorded before. Any deviances from the actual preferences and the answers recorded under a blind taste test is then studied. The study concluded

that the beer drinkers were inclined towards rating the taste of their preferred brand significantly higher when it was identified than they did in the blind taste test. In addition to this, the beer drinkers were not capable of distinguishing their preferred brand from the others tasted in the blind taste test. The reason behind this could be several and companies need to look into the matter to make sure that the consumer even during a blind taste test is able to distinguish their preferred or liked brand from others. However, it should be noted that this study did not examine and explore questions related to choice and sampling of brands.

Another study investigated the effects of brand awareness on choice. It also studied other aspects such as effects of brand sampling, and the rate of recurrence with which the highest-quality brand is selected after undergoing a series of trials. In addition to this, the respondents in the Allison and Uhl study were highly experienced drinkers meaning that they drank beer at least 3 to 4 times a week. The study also aimed to isolate the effects of brand awareness as well as study the novice consumers who had no prior experience with the product in question.

Psychology states that when a person comes across similar situations especially related to purchasing, the consumer relies on simple heuristic that is choose a brand based on brand awareness and other variables such as pricing and packages among several others. As a result of these purchases, the study concluded that repeat purchases based on heuristics is grounded upon exposure from advertising and information gained from other sources. (Ray et al. 1973).

According to a study by Hasher and Zacks (1984), there is an automatic frequency counting mechanism which is said to record relative frequency information

concerning the instantiation of various phenomena which in turn is used to make inferences about the product quality of the given products in question. (Baker et al. 1986). An example can help explain this phenomenon better. In case the automatic frequency counting mechanism picks up more hits from one brand as compared to the other, for example brand A gets more hits than brand X, then an inference that Brand A is more liked can be made regarding the two brands. Hence brand A must be more popular and better known. (Wayne D. Hoyer, Effects of Brand Awareness on Choice for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product, September 1990)

Hence, it is more likely that the respondent will choose according to their brand awareness and the products that they have been introduced to previously. This was tested through observing actual choices made by the respondents which were elicited of the subjects' own choice and strategy that is there was no bias.

over 93 percent of the respondents initial choice was a familiar brand when exposed to the awareness condition however, it should be noted that only 1.1 percent chose unknown brand A while only 5.4 percent of the respondents chose unknown brand B. this shows that the inexperienced decision makers would always choose the known brand as compared to other unknown brands. (Wayne D. Hoyer, Effects of Brand Awareness on Choice for a Common, Repeat Purchase Product, Sep 1990).

To get a better insight of the answers of the respondents and to assess whether "awareness" was used as a choice heuristic, the respondents were asked a number of questions as to why they selected a particular brand as opposed to the other.

The results show that there was substantial reliance on awareness as a tactic used by subjects in the condition where they were aware of the brand. Over 60% applied this tactic whereas only 22% applied both, awareness as well as some other mode. The remaining population used a combination of awareness and other tactics to answer questions. However, it should be noted that the majority, about 45.2 percent, based their answer merely on liking of the packaging, while the second largest group which was approximately 14 percent said that they based their answers on a combination of price and an added variable. Lastly, over 10 percent respondents who were unaware of the products based their answers on the ingredients. To summarize, the study concluded that the first time buyers merely relied on awareness as a cue especially since there is no clear distinction between competing brands or at least on the given dimension. In the case where none of the brands are known, other criteria such as price, ingredients, packaging or an amalgamation of variables are employed to come up with an answer.

The study concluded that over 17.8 percent of the sample size based their decision solely on awareness of the brand while the no awareness condition respondents based their answers on just taste. This is often more useful as the respondents are made aware of their preferences based on just taste and not of their prior brand preference. Expanding the respondent's horizon through such tests can also help gain a positive feedback about a particular product.

In marketing literature, it is broadly recognized that the achievement of branding is usually a consequence of the right blend of several marketing variables. Hence it is important for marketers to recognize the marketing mix variables and define their relative effect on a brand's triumph.

As mentioned earlier, one of the vital elements which is exclusive to the food industry is the sense of smell and taste. Classifying the effect of these elements along with any potential haloing effect which may impact the designing of products as well as brands. Previous literature has emphasized on instances in which there is a huge divergence between consumer preferences in blind taste tests and non-blind ones. The Pepsi Challenge which was taken up in the 1970's against Coca Cola was a reflection of this. It should be noted however that the non blind results are a better depiction of reality but the results on its own have little value as compared to the blind taste test.

The various exogenous variables, for example exposure to a television ad or to an eye-catching in-store point of purchase exhibition may account for the choice of one brand over another.

Another indicator for consumers is price. A study by Schnabel and Stotchmann discovered that in case of wine, price serves as a signal of quality. However, the relationship is less strong in case of consumers who are well informed and knowledgeable of wine quality in general especially wholesalers and those who are able to taste the wine before making a purchase. This helps in shedding light on the prominence of taste testing in buying decisions, particularly for multi-sensory products for example such as wine.

Increase in the exposure to the product's brand will no doubt have a lasting impact on the choice behavior of consumers. Erdem and Swait (1998) in their study determined that brands deliver certain cues and information to potential and actual consumers that results in reduced search costs and a more simplified decision process. The brand, therefore, delivers indirect information about the

characteristics of a product. Hence, identifying the endogenous variables is essential as they can affect the preferences and perceptions of a consumer. These endogenous variables can be discovered through the blind taste tests

The test should first differentiate between the effect of the non-blind taste test and the blind taste test and then separate the influence of branding on the consumers' sensory evaluation of the product's qualities.

Given that there is no prior investigation on the influence of branding on the procedure of selecting food products centered on their sensory-based qualities, the first research question is to discover whether branding on a more general basis has an influence on the choice process. This is the same as to make an attempt in revealing consumers the product's label. The next step is to observe whether there is a distinctive branding influence. This means that, the second steps emphasizes on the research interrogation of whether various brands have a different influence when making a purchase decision. In turn it also observes the relative importance that consumers give to various attributes. Preceding studies on branding specifies that this effect is not constant. Consequently, we assume that if there is an influence on the relative prominence of the sensory based qualities, it will be a differential one.

[How to Avoid Biases in Blind Taste Testing](#)

It is rather easy for the researcher to subconsciously effect the result of experimental observations through the way they conduct the survey by either subconsciously paying more attention to or emphasizing one product as compared to the other. Due to this subconscious bias that blind taste testing

surveying through an interviewer can have, hence mostly companies rely on double blind experiment or use of computers to gather data.

<https://explorable.com/double-blind-experiment>

The Blind Experiment

The minimum standard used for any test which involves getting the opinion of respondents is considered as the Blind Experiments. It is essential for the test to adhere to the basic principles as failing to do so would result in experimental flaws.

The control group should not be made aware of which group they are being placed in. thereby, the placebo variable must look and taste the same as the actual product being studied. The placebo effect is a fact which has been proven time and time again under blind experiments.

It is crucial to maintain uniformity in the testing conditions and the stimuli that could potentially affect both the products. For this the procedure implemented by Moshe Grovin (1989) was used in which the products were poured into similar containers and before and in between testing the subjects were asked to rinse their mouths in order to avoid any leftover taste from previous samples.

The Double Blind Experiment

This type of experiment takes more precaution, by guaranteeing that the researcher is also unaware in which group a respondent is in.

While the majority of researchers are specialists, there is always a slight possibility that the researcher might subconsciously tip off the respondent about the product that they were receiving. The researcher may even be biased and might

give the pill or the product under question to specific patients which would skew the results.

Hence, there is often pressure on the researchers especially those who are working for billion dollar companies or are in the running towards getting a research grants which is why there is a need or a drive to generate positive results.

Therefore, it should always be kept in mind that the researcher might manipulate the results. However, demonstrating that the researcher conducted a double blind experiment decreases the chance of criticism.

Other Applications

Although these methods are more popular in the field of medicine, double blind experiments are also used in other fields. Other applications such as market research, surveys and questionnaires all use this technique to preserve credibility.

One needs to pay particular attention to keeping the same packaging especially when there are two different brands under consideration. A customer might have an inbuilt brand identity awareness which could lead to biases and favoritism to a certain extend.

Methodology

In terms of methodology, a descriptive research approach was used which was based on conducting 2 taste tests on the same set of consumers; one being a blind test and the other a non-blind test. A list of variables was shortlisted which included aroma, taste, color, tartness and smell and the questions were formed

so that one can get better insight on these given variables. These attributes, it should be noted, are also the common accepted convention for taste testing of food items.

Conducting a blind taste test involves following a particular process. It is important to identify a similar competing brand when it comes to conducting a Comparison Test.

First a sample selection was conducted through a systematic sampling based procedure. For 2 days, potential respondents were asked to be a part of the taste test. After conducting an initial taste test which was done in order to get feedback from the respondents about the questionnaire, the way the taste test was conducted and how it could be improved, I went onto increasing the size of the sample.

The respondents were asked to rate their responses on a 5 point Likert scale with 1 representing a very low level of attribute or highly disagree while 5 representing a high level of attribute or highly agree with the given statement. For example the respondents were asked to rate 1 if they highly disagree with the statement or 5 if they highly agree with the given statement which was “Does the product have a distinctive smell?”

In case the respondent was unable to understand the question, the researcher helped in elaborating and describing what the question really means.

Other preparations that were essential to carry out the blind taste test included a researcher to set up a table with two blank cups: one containing Knorr Ketchup and the other with Heinz. In addition to this, crackers and some water were kept so that the respondents did not confuse the taste of both ketchups.

The respondents were encouraged to taste both the ketchups and simultaneously were required to fill the questionnaire and answer any questions about their responses.

First, the blind test was conducted after which the same respondent underwent an open test and answered the same questions as before.

1) Blind Test:

Here respondents were given the sample, a spoon of both ketchups one after the other and were required to fill in the questionnaire simultaneously in order to find out the perception of the consumer irrespective of any biases. Since the consumers were unaware of the brands they consumed, this test is known as a blind taste test.

2) Open Test:

Here the same respondents were given the same quantity of both the brands of ketchup and were asked to answer the same questions as before. Their responses were recorded and were asked to give reasons for their stated responses.'

3) Analysis

Lastly the two responses were analyzed to see whether there are any deviations from the blind test to the open test. If there are any deviations in responses, then the respondent was further questioned to understand why.

Identifying a Similar Competing Brand

A blind taste test was conducted to assess the preferences of individuals and whether they can discriminate between the two brands, Heinz and Knorr. The latter is a brand that came to Pakistan in 1992 and introduced its "Chicken Cubes"

first. However, over the years Knorr has introduced a variety of products, one of which include its ketchup. The rationale for choosing Knorr and Heinz was a result of considering factors such as the ones mentioned below. The main shortlisting factors include:

1. Ease of availability of the product in the market.

After visiting the local drug stores and grocery stores including Best Price Shopping Center, Shaheen Chemist, D. Watson, Sauda Sulf Grocery Store, Esajee's, Shams, Al Fatah, Hyperstar, Metro Cash and Carry and several others, it had been concluded that almost all of these grocery stores and supermarkets kept both Heinz and Knorr Ketchups.

2. Knowledge of the Brands

An initial survey was also done at the grocery stores to find out whether the sample population had knowledge of both the brands in question so that the only reason for opting one over the other would be based on taste and preference.

History of Heinz and Knorr

Heinz

The Kraft Heinz is a globally renowned brand, specializing in an array of food products. 'Grown not made', the motto of Heinz Ketchup has been famous for

decades and has altered the standards of what the real Ketchup should taste like. First launched in 1876, Heinz is an icon and is known to be an organic choice that consumers know and love.

Knorr

Established at the start of the year 1873, Knorr was a brand that was initiated with the intention of providing the population with high quality soup. Carl Heinrich Knorr was the pioneer of the secret recipe that Knorr is popular for today. Even though Carl passed away shortly after the inception of the brand, his legacy still lives on.

Knorr is a brand that is owned by the English-Dutch company, Unilever since the year 2000. Today, Knorr is Unilevers biggest selling brand.

In 1992, Knorr was introduced in Pakistan where it launched its Knorr Chicken Cubes first and soon it introduced several other products including its famous Ketchup.

Made from the freshest and titillating cherry picked tomatoes, Knorr Ketchup is one of the popular and preferred brands of Pakistanis when it comes to adding the perfect flavor to our snack.



Comparison between Knorr and Heinz

Both Knorr and Heinz are renowned brands and more popularly are known by the target market. This study will involve understanding the perception of the consumers of each brand through blind taste testing.

Questionnaire

The next step is to develop a questionnaire that would cover all of the aspects and variables under study. One should make sure that the questions are well structured and easy to understand by the audience. In addition to this, open ended questions should be avoided or limited at best.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections. The first section takes the basic information of the respondent including age, gender, the frequency of ketchup consumption and whether the individual has knowledge of both the brands.

The other four sections are divided into two blind tests of two different ketchup brand taste testing while the other two are exposed tests where the individual is told of the brand that they are being provided in order to get feedback on the brand in question.

The blind taste test is compared to the exposed test to find consistency in results. This is because knowledge of the brand itself can have an effect on the answers.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the questions focus on the sweetness, tanginess,

The respondents were also asked whether they were likely to consume the product in question again with their favorite snack. The answers to this question

Each respondent is given a questionnaire, which is finished without any help from other tasters and is asked to undergo the test in isolation. The atmosphere of the tasting room is quiet, sunny and the respondents are not permitted to smoke during the test. The purpose of having such an environment is to have authentic results and so that the respondents are not distracted by any external variables hence the subjects are without distraction or contamination from unnecessary factors.

Respondents were told that they were to sample two products at a time. The respondents were provided with a sip of water and a cracker in order to clear his or her palate between tastings. After the water and cracker were consumed, the respondent was given one of the products and were asked for his or her preference rating. It should be noted however, that the samples were rotated from respondent to respondent.

The 4 variables that were taken under consideration in this study were:

- Aroma
- Color
- Taste
- Texture

Other questions which were pertinent to the study were whether the respondent would be willing to purchase the product again. This was essential to determine repurchasing habits and popularity of the product.

After developing a questionnaire, one should prepare for the materials needed for the test. In addition to this, it is important to determine the test group. This means that the identification of the target market and number of respondents to interview (sample size) should also be determined.

The last step is to execute the test, gather and analyze the data to make inferences.

Results

Our panel of tasters were asked to evaluate each ketchup under the following variables;

- Its sweetness,
- Tartness, tanginess and overall flavor.
- Aroma
- Texture

A brand of ketchup is considered to be of good quality when it is seasoned with the perfect dash of salt mixed with the ideal amount of sugar, giving it the combo of enough acidity that it should not leave an overly sweet aftertaste. In general, the selected population preferred the brand which was high in tanginess with a mixture of sweetness.

Texture was also of importance to the sample population as they were particular of how the ketchup looked and felt while having their favorite snack. The preferred texture was smooth, glossy and creamy while pulpy and wet tasting ketchup were not liked by the audience. Upon inquiry it was realized that the respondents preferred their ketchup to be “clean tasting”. This means that ketchup flavors that contained a lot of spices were not preferred by the sample population.



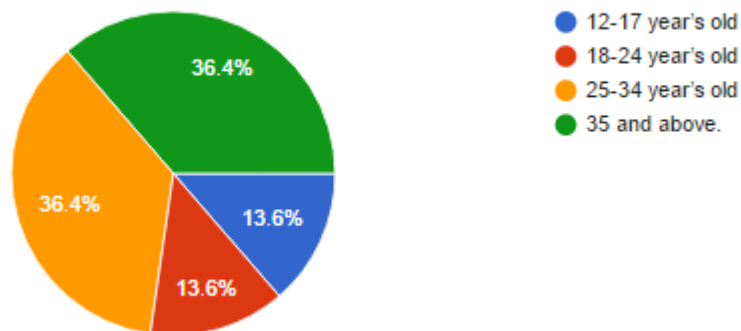
For most of us, Heinz seems like the default choice when it comes to choosing a brand of ketchup. Our Samosas, fish and salted fries would be left empty without the tangy taste of ketchup.

Results

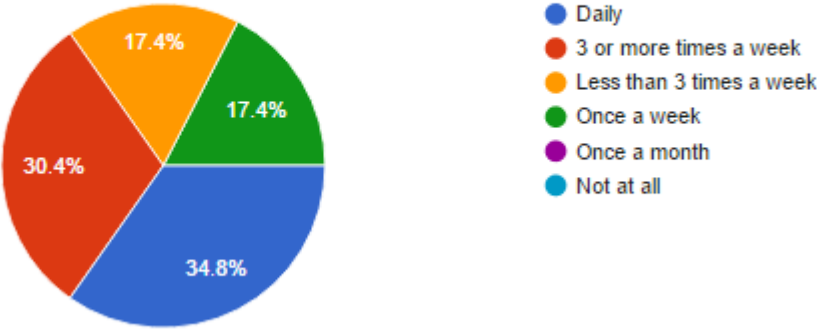
Initial Test Run

An initial test run of the questionnaire was carried out of approximately 22 respondents. Studies have shown that doing so helps in determining whether the questions are understood by the respondents and whether the methodology needs some tweaking.

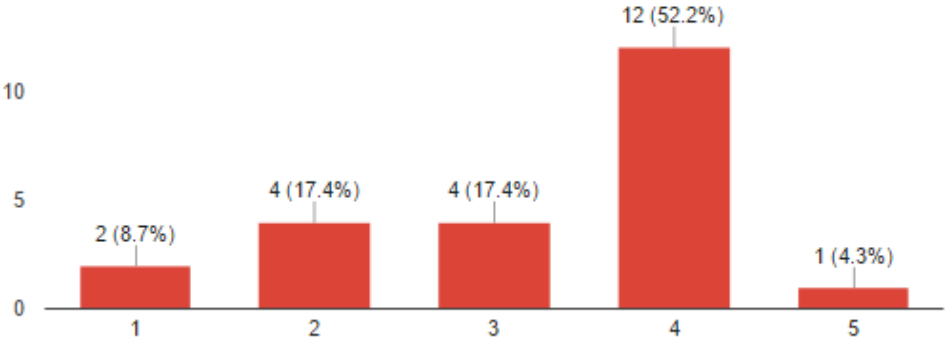
What age group do you fall into? (22 responses)



How often do you use ketchup? (23 responses)

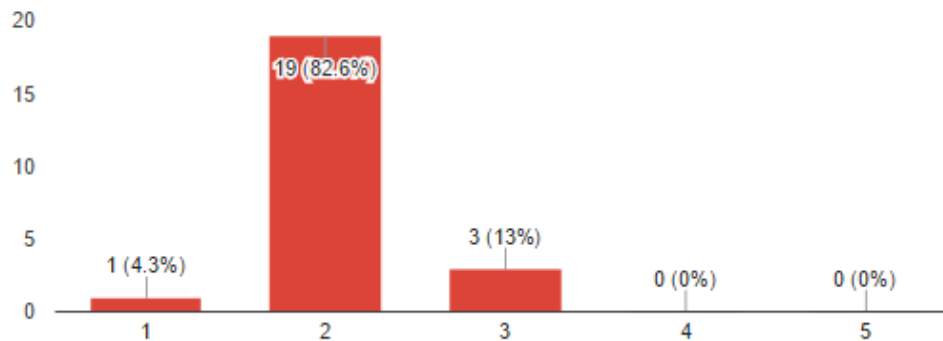


Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (23 responses)



FigA

Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (23 responses)



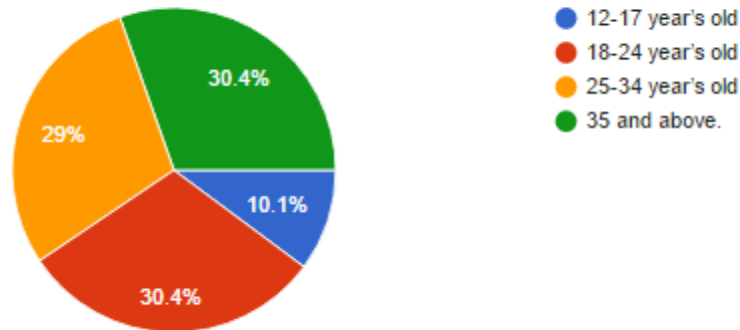
FigB

Figure A shows a scattered response from a blind test when the product under investigation was Knorr. However, in Figure B, the same product is being handed over to respondents and the results, as we can see are skewed. This effect, as explained by studies is due to the perception of the brand among several other reasons.

[Final Results](#)

[General Results](#)

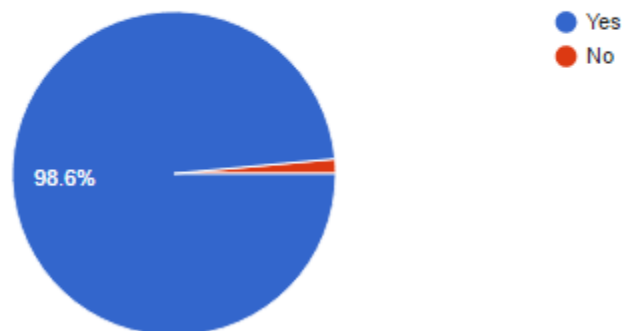
What age group do you fall into? (69 responses)



The figure above shows that out of the sample population of 69 individuals, 30.4 percent consisted of both 18 to 24-year old and 35 and above while 29 percent comprised of 25 to 34 age group and only 10.1 percent of the respondents belonged to the demographic group 12 to 17. A majority of the sample group with ages below 26 consisted of students either in their early Under Graduate programs or Post Graduate students from various universities around the twin cities. The entire population of ages 27 and above belonged to either a corporate occupation or being small business owners.

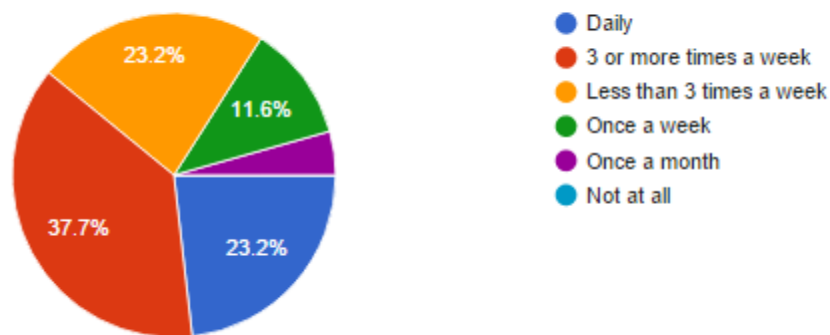
This is a fairly diverse sample population and hence the study should be able to predict accurate results. The study aimed to focus on the age group starting from 24 and above due to the fact that most of the individuals are able to make purchasing decisions at this age and hence can influence which brand of ketchup has to be bought for family use. In addition, before starting the survey all the respondents were asked whether they consume fast food products or any type of food that complements the use of ketchup to which there was a 100% positive response from all 69 people.

Do you use ketchup? (69 responses)



98.6 percent of the respondents who were interviewed stated that they use ketchup and were fond of it. This was particularly important since the individuals who like the taste of ketchup would be a better judge of the quality of it.

How often do you use ketchup? (69 responses)

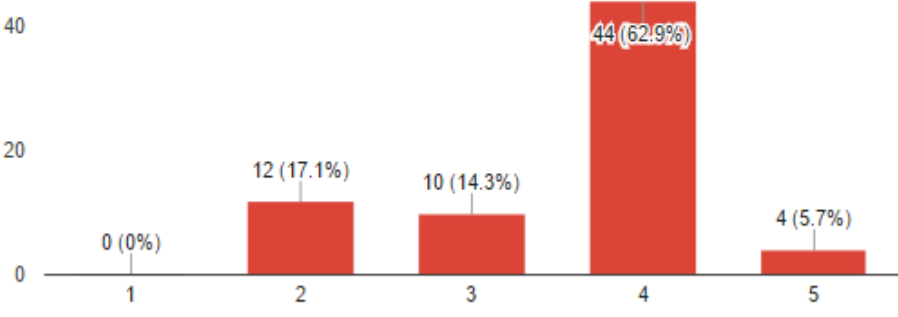


The above figure shows the frequency of use of any brand of ketchup. Most of the answers revolved around either Daily, 3 or more times in a week or less than 3 times a week. Only 11.6 percent or less of the respondents had low frequency of use that is once a week or once a month. This is also a fair representation of the population and the target audience.

Comparison of Results of Brand A and Knorr

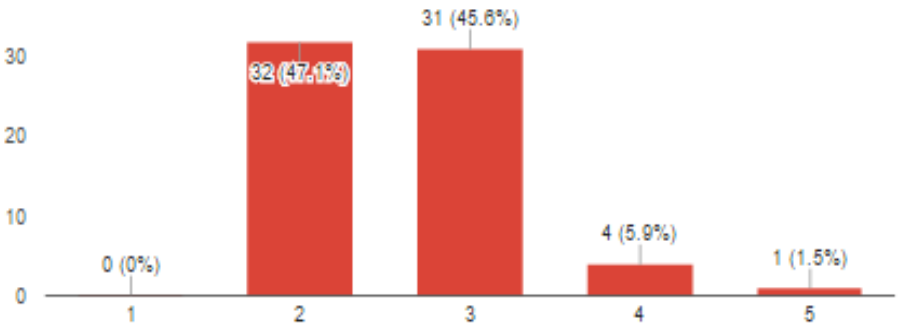
Brand A which was Knorr under the blind test experienced varying results under both conditions; exposed and blind test. The following is a comparison between questions under both conditions. It should be noted however that the answers under blind taste testing differ significantly from those under exposed test that is when the brand name is known by the respondent.

Does the product have a strong smell? (70 responses)



Brand A

Does the product have a strong smell? (68 responses)



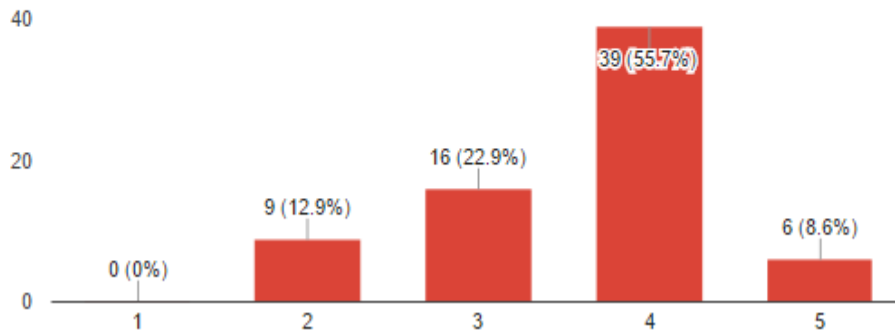
Knorr

Approximately 62.9 percent of the sample population agreed to the statement “does the product have a strong smell?” when the brand was unknown however,

in the exposed test this figure went down to 5.9% as only 4 respondents agreed to the statement.

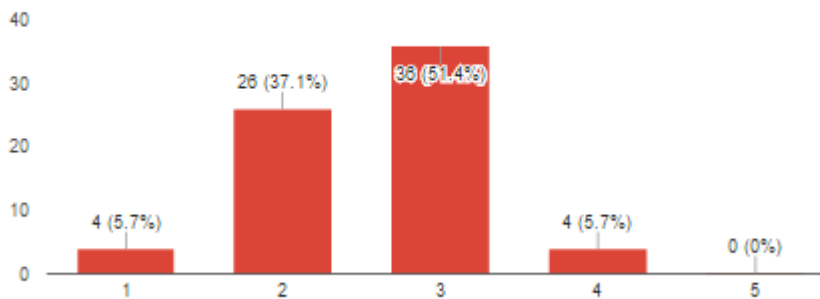
However, it should be noted that now majority (approximately 47 percent) of the sample population disagreed to the statement during the exposed test. While the remaining were neutral.

Does it smell appealing? (70 responses)



Brand A

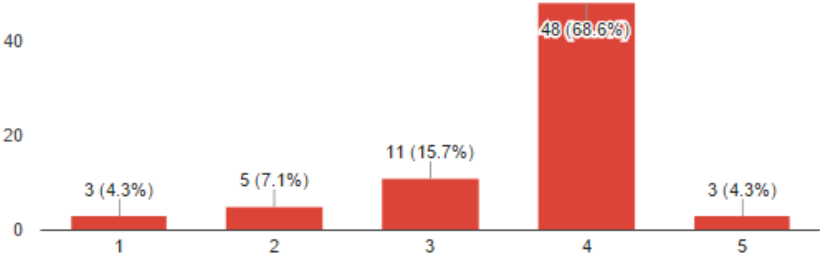
Does it smell appealing? (70 responses)



Knorr

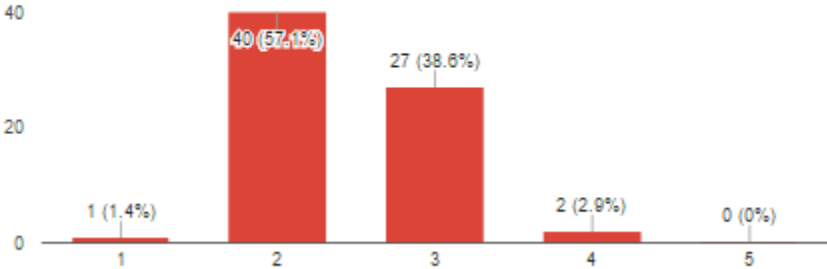
In the two figures above, again we can see a pivot in the answers provided by the respondents under the two scenarios for Knorr. The response was highly positive of whether the ketchup smelled appealing, however due to several reasons after knowing the brand name, the perception of the respondents changed. 37 percent of the population disagreed while the majority remained neutral.

Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (70 responses)



Brand A

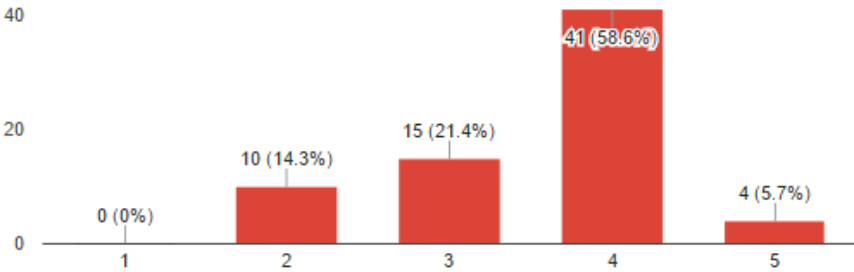
Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (70 responses)



Knorr

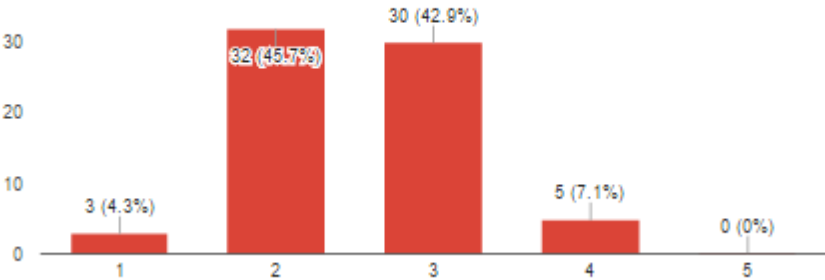
Here we can see that although the respondents were willing to consume the product under the blind taste test however, this perception changed after the brand was revealed. One of the reasons may be that the brand Knorr was not popular amongst the sample population and/ or they did not perceive the brand positively.

Does the product smell rich and full of flavor? (70 responses)



Brand A

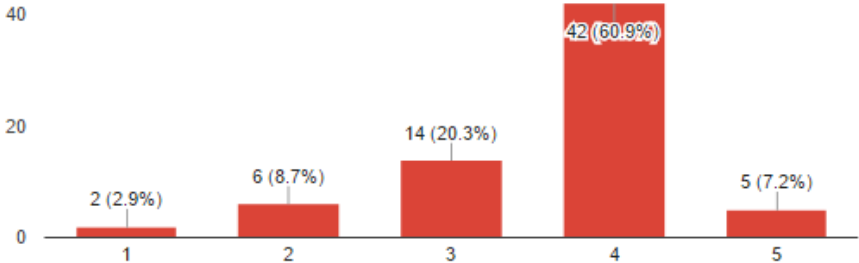
Does the product smell rich and full of flavor? (70 responses)



Knorr

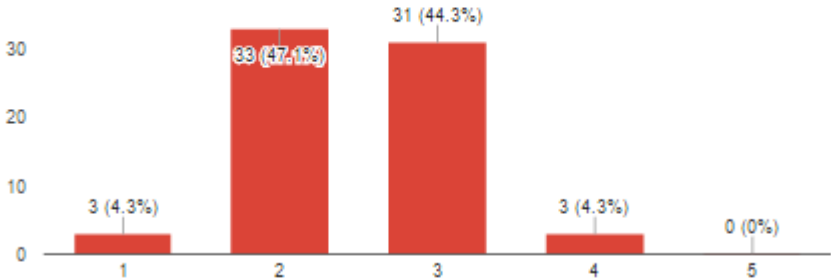
The previous finding is again reinforced in the question “does the product smell rich and full of flavor. That is the respondents shifted towards the negative continuum when the brand was unveiled.

Does the product taste appealing? (69 responses)



Brand A

Does the product taste appealing? (70 responses)

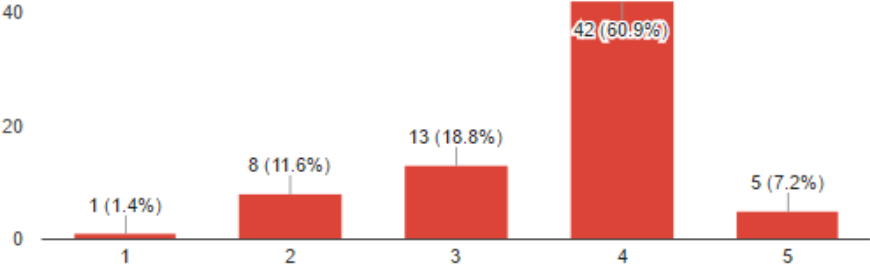


Knorr

The respondents particularly liked the taste of Knorr during the blind taste. This shows that any changes in the answers during the exposed test is merely due to

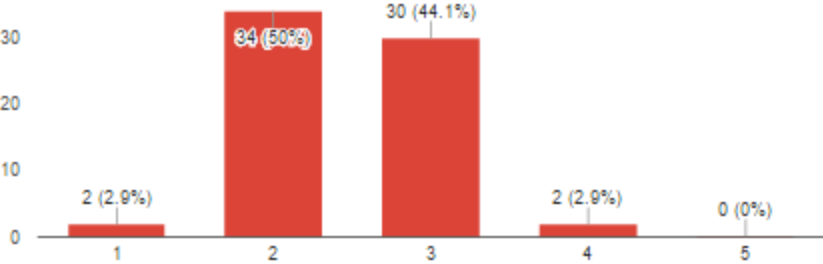
the perception of the brand. Hence, Knorr would need to work on its advertising strategy to change this negative perception.

Would you eat it again? (69 responses)



Brand A

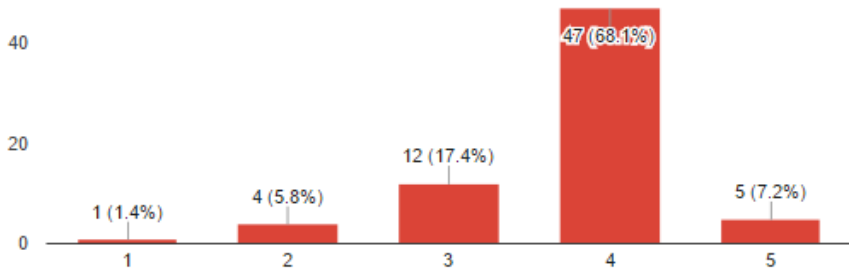
Would you eat it again? (68 responses)



Knorr

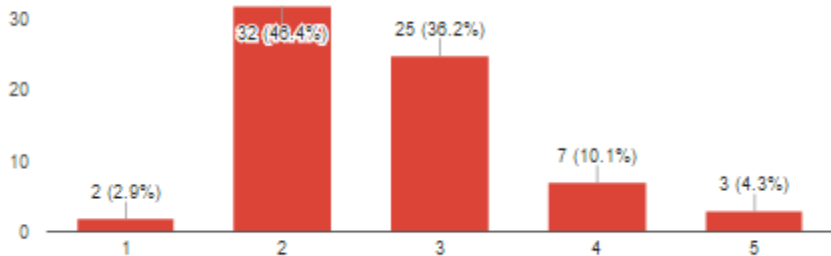
Even though the respondents liked the taste of the product A and approximately 61 percent stated that they would consume the product again however, this opinion again changed under the exposed state. This also shows that the respondents do not have any brand loyalty as such and cannot tell the difference between their preferred brand and any other brand for that matter.

Does it taste very sweet? (69 responses)



Brand A

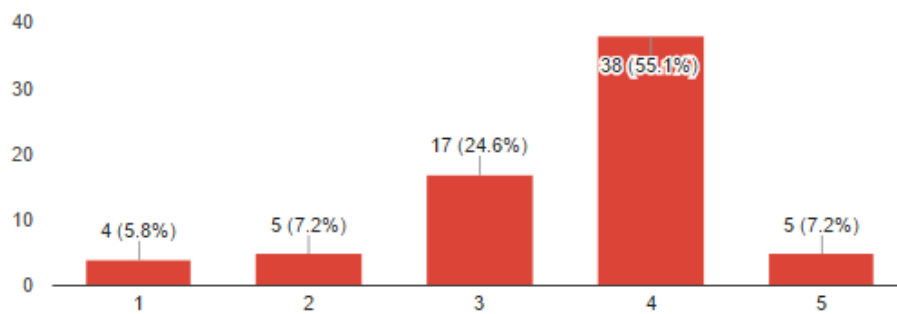
Does it taste very sweet? (69 responses)



Knorr

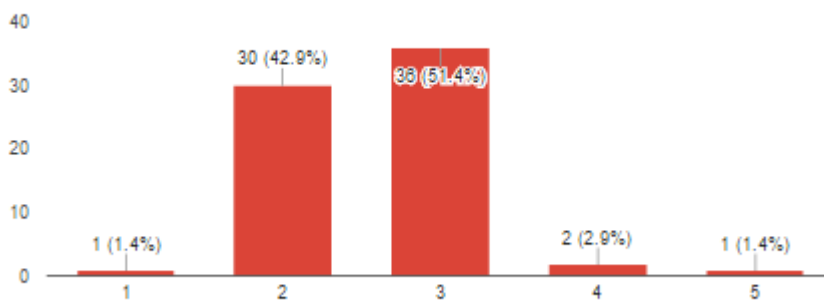
Most studies state that ketchup should not be very sweet but it should rather have a perfect mix of salty and sweet. The question of whether the ketchup tasted sweet has conflicting results. Even though the respondents thought that Knorr was not very sweet in the exposed test which is the preferred choice.

Does it taste fresh? (69 responses)



Brand A

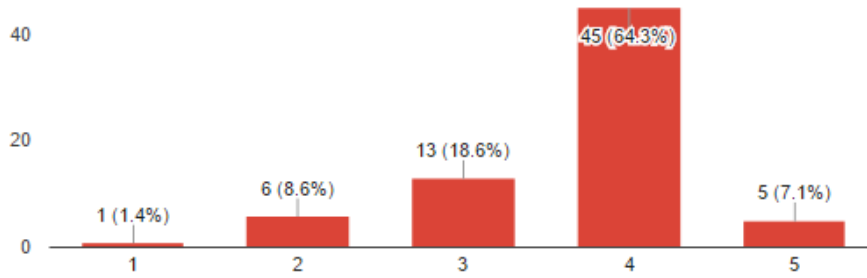
Does it taste fresh? (70 responses)



Knorr

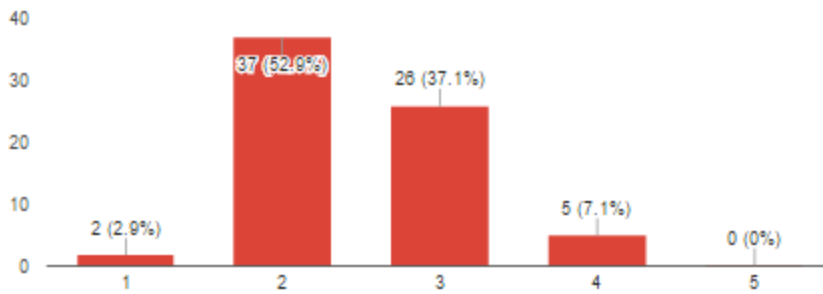
The two figures above show that during the blind taste test, 38 respondents claimed that Brand A tastes fresh however, during the exposed test where the brand name was known to the respondent, there was a change from 38 to only 2 respondents who agreed to the statement. More than 30 respondents disagreed to the statement during the non blind taste testing.

Is the flavor strong? (70 responses)



Brand A

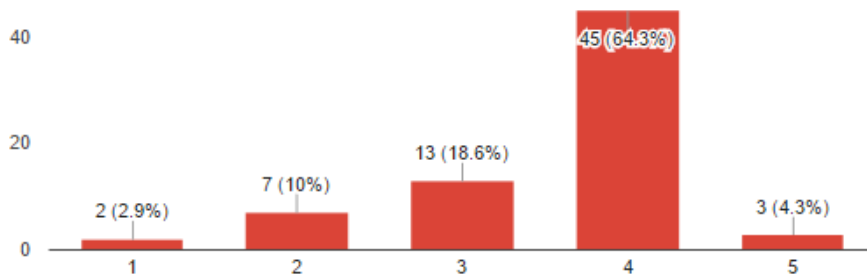
Is the flavor strong? (70 responses)



Knorr

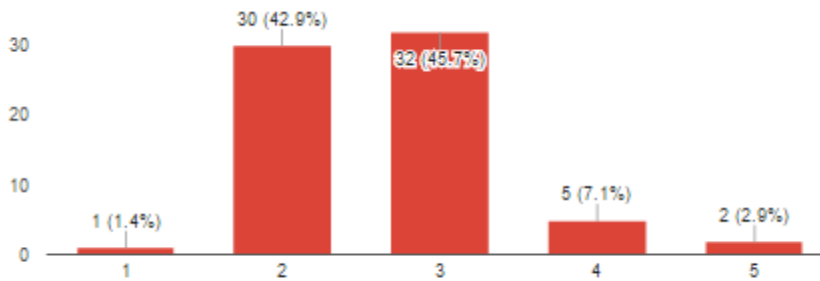
Here again, the respondents altered their answers under the two scenarios even though they were tasting the same brand.

Is the texture very soft and light? (70 responses)



Brand A

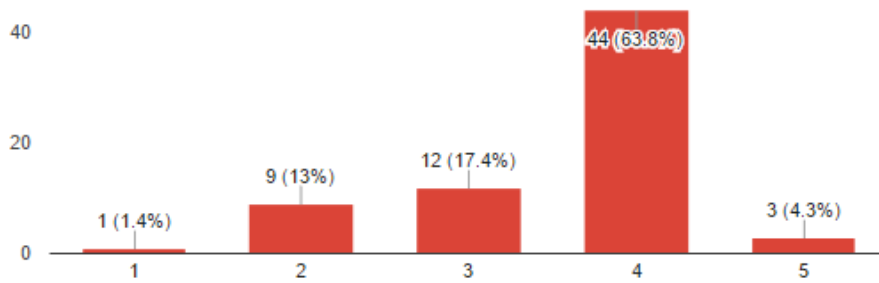
Is the texture very soft and light? (70 responses)



Knorr

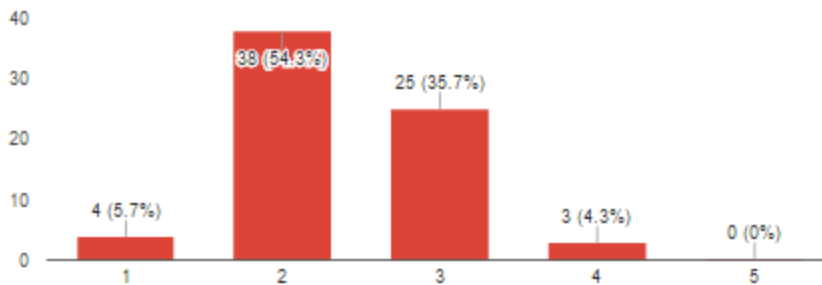
More than 30 individuals claimed that the texture of Knorr is not adequate while at the same time 45 respondents during the blind testing stated that the texture was soft and light. Here, again we see the effects of brand bias.

Is the product viscous and thick enough? (69 responses)



Brand A

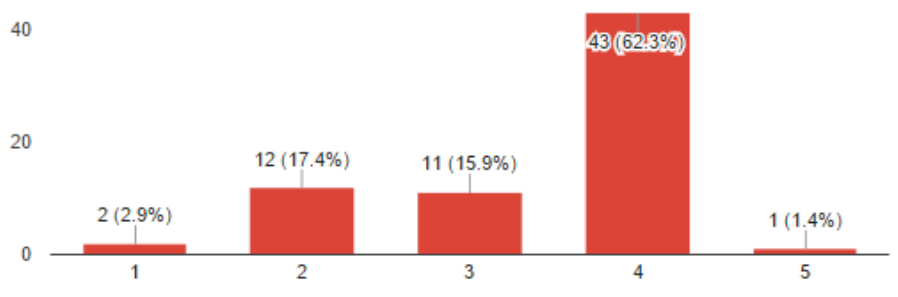
Is the product viscous and thick enough? (70 responses)



Knorr

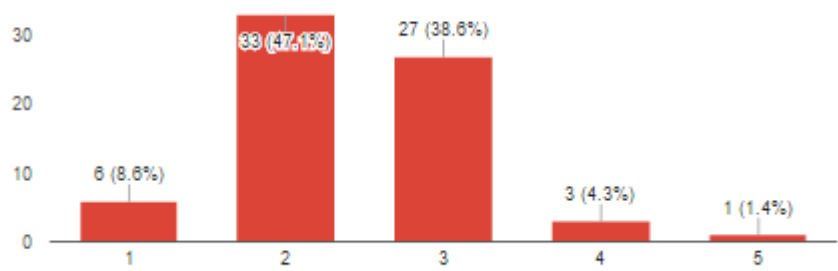
The respondents who altered their answers were asked to give explanations and reasons for their choices who stated that Knorr's ketchup had a very "thin" texture as compared to Heinz.

Is the product grainy\chunky? (69 responses)



Brand A

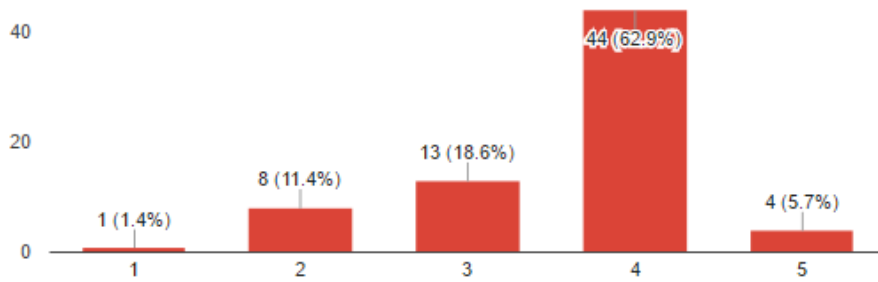
Is the product grainy\chunky? (70 responses)



Knorr

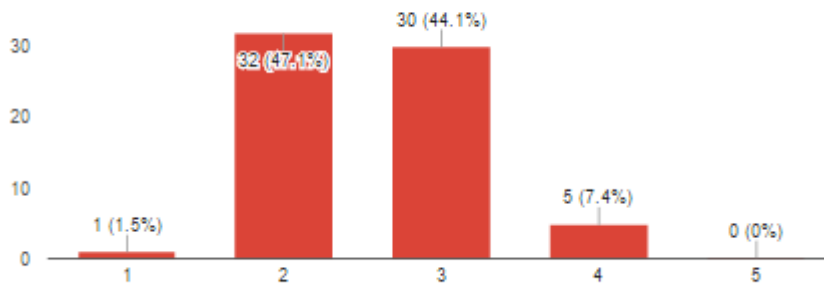
Although during the blind taste testing, 43 respondents claimed that Brand A was grainy and chunky however after revealing the brand, this opinion also changed. However it should be noted that 27 respondents remained neutral.

Is the color suitable for a product like this? (70 responses)



Brand A

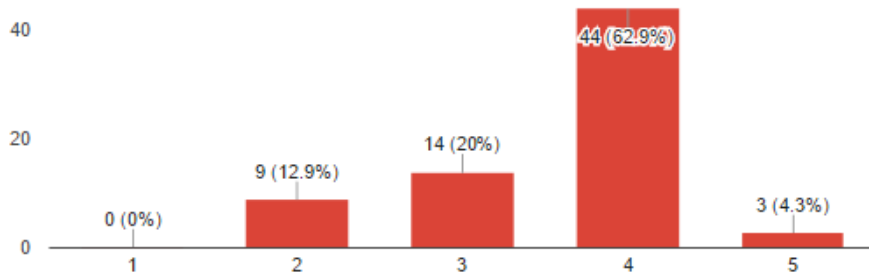
Is the color suitable for a product like this? (68 responses)



Knorr

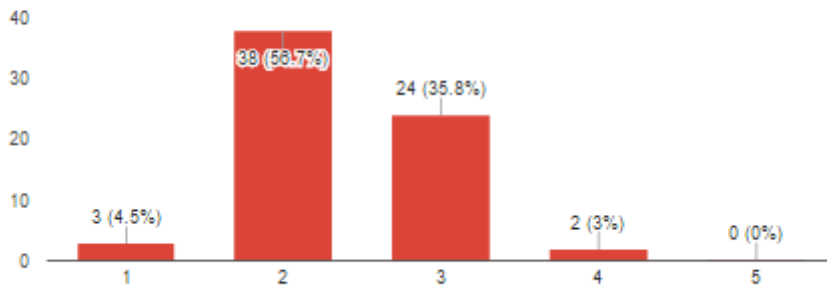
The respondents also disagreed with the color of Knorr however at the same time 44 of the respondents claimed otherwise during the blind taste test.

Does the color look appealing? (70 responses)



Brand A

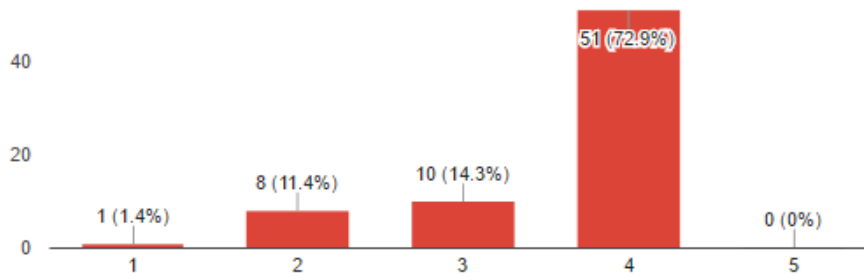
Does the color look appealing? (67 responses)



Knorr

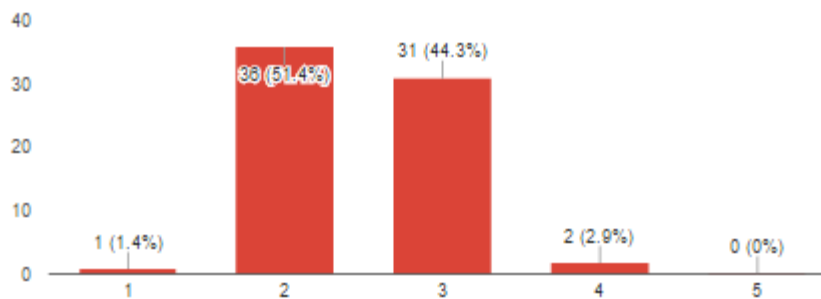
The reversal of answers can be seen clearly from the two graphs above. There seems to be a common dislike for the brand Knorr however, during the blind testing, the respondents were unable to differentiate.

Is the color rich enough? (70 responses)



Brand A

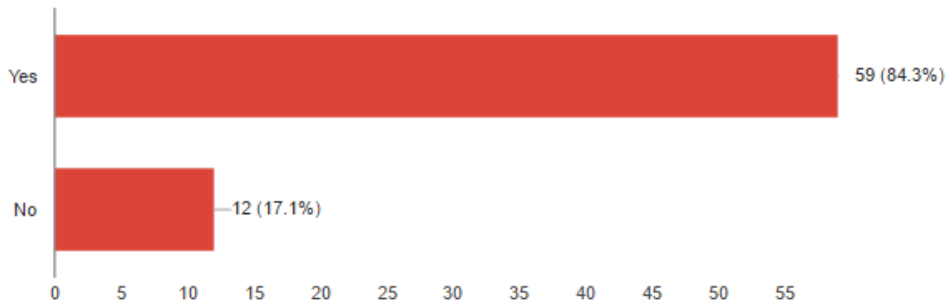
Is the color rich enough? (70 responses)



Knorr

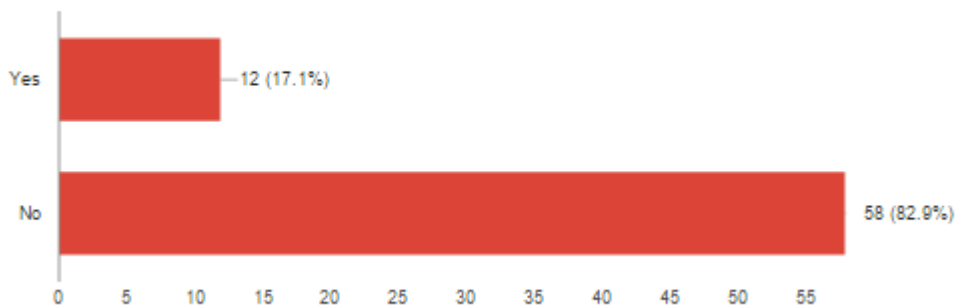
The richness of the ketchup was also tested which revealed similar results. The results were inverted after the respondents were made aware of the brand in question. hence, a respondent's perception of the brand has a huge impact on the results.

Does the product have a distinctive smell? (70 responses)



Brand A

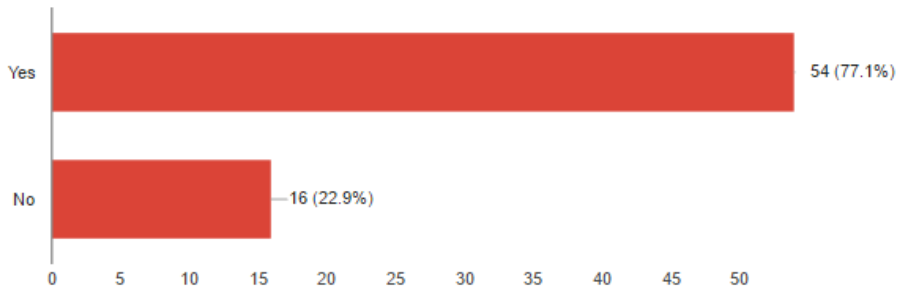
Does the product have a distinctive smell? (70 responses)



Knorr

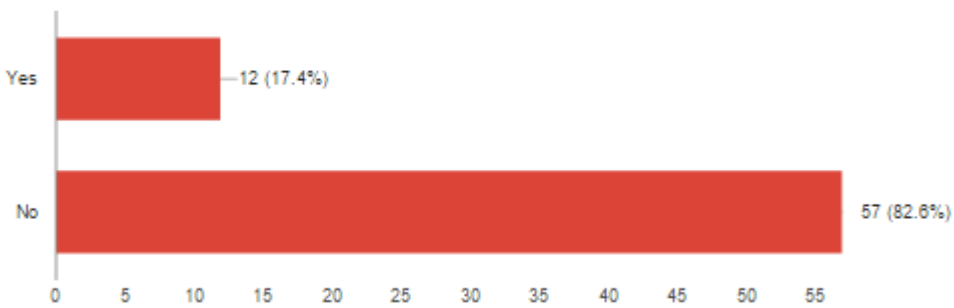
The figures above show the results of the question “Does the product have a distinctive smell?” the drastic change from 84% of the respondents answering with a yes changing to 82% disagreeing with the statement shows the effect of a brand bias. Brand A which was Knorr under the blind taste was well received however once the brand was exposed, the same respondent changed his or her answer.

Does it have a unique taste? (70 responses)



Brand A

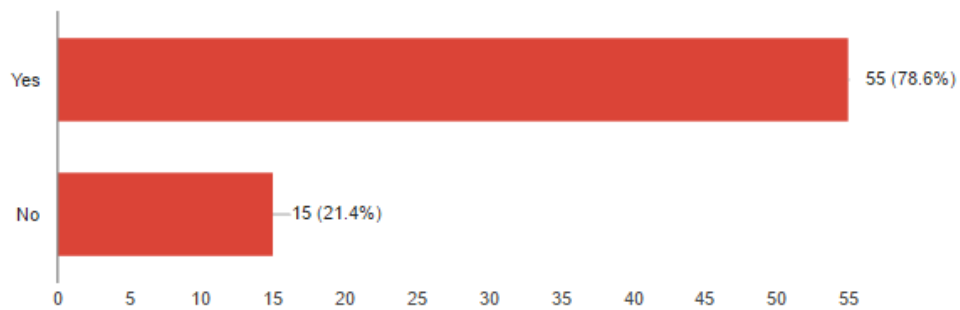
Does it have a unique taste? (69 responses)



Knorr

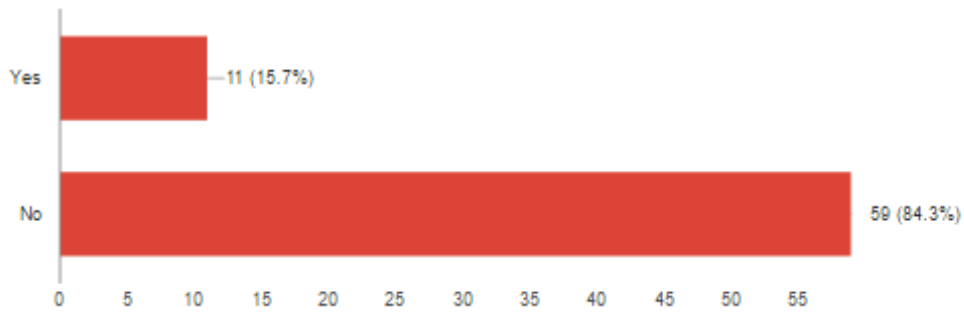
During the blind test, 54 of the respondents said that they thought that Brand A had a unique taste, however the results changed to only 12 respondents agreeing with the statement during the exposed test.

Is the texture what you expect from a product like this? (70 responses)



Brand A

Is the texture what you expect from a product like this? (70 responses)



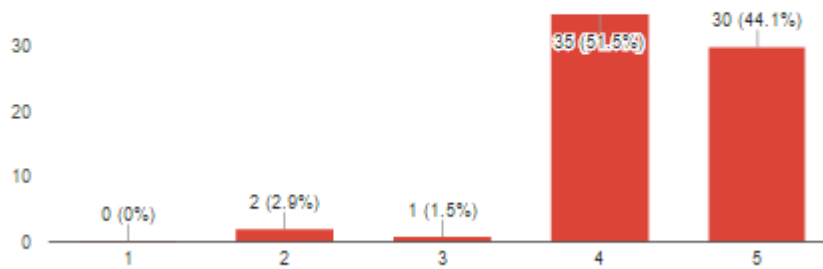
Knorr

Lastly, the exposed test the consumers also stated that they were not entirely satisfied with the texture of Knorr.

Results of Brand B and Heinz

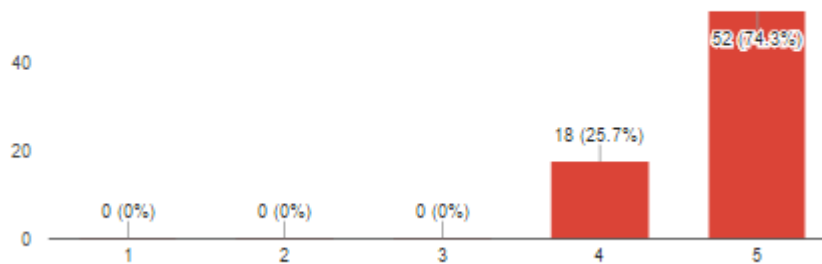
When analyzing the resulting of Brand B and Heinz, it was noticed that the respondents did not vary or alter their answers during the change from blind to exposed situations. Contrary to common literature regarding branding and blind taste testing, the results are a perfect depiction of high quality taste irrespective of its brand name.

Does the product have a strong smell? (68 responses)



Brand B

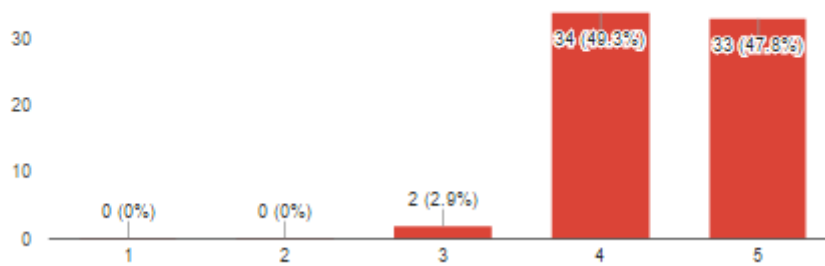
Does the product have a strong smell? (70 responses)



Heinz

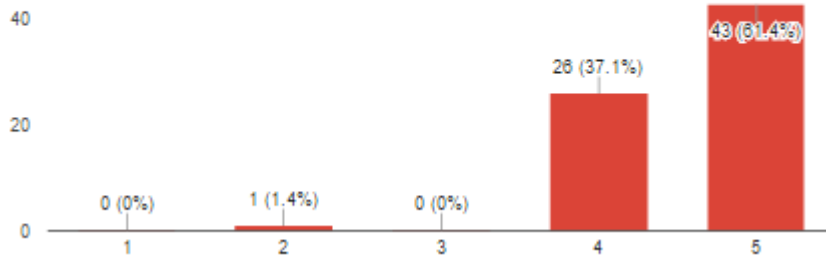
In the figure above, we can see a slight effect of the brand name as the 3 respondents that answered with “disagree” and “neutral” changed their answer to a positive during the exposed test.

Does it smell appealing? (69 responses)



Brand B

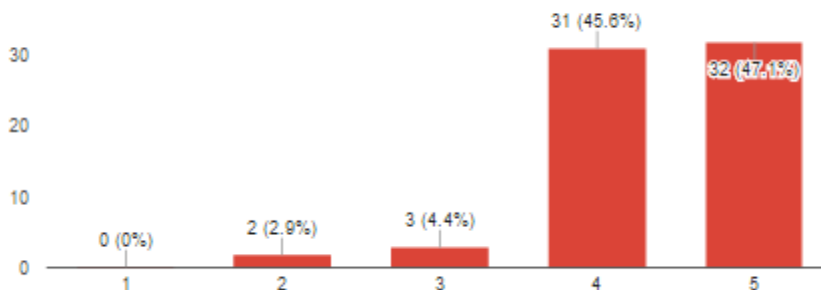
Does it smell appealing? (70 responses)



Heinz

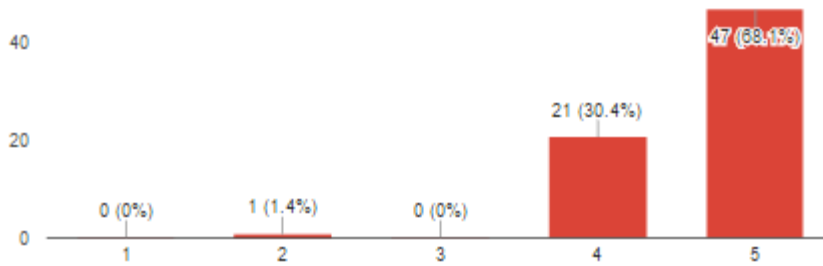
The respondents generally answered positively for both blind and non blind taste testing for Brand B and Heinz. However, it should be noted that during the exposed test, there has been a shift from “agree” to “strongly agree” which could be attributed to the brand name or branding effect.

Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (68 responses)



Brand B

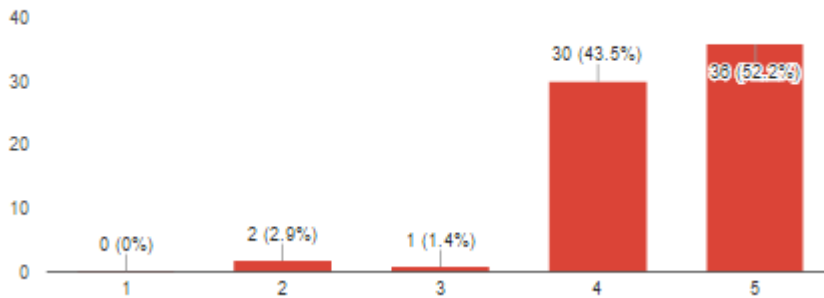
Does the smell make you want to consume the product? (69 responses)



Heinz

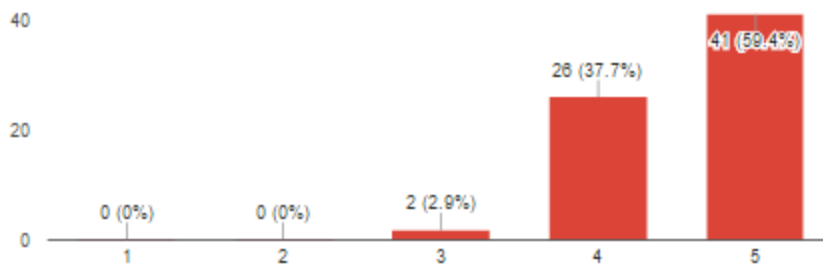
Here, we can see that there has been a shift in the number of individuals who would want to consume the product due to its smell. The number of respondents who strongly agreed increased from 32 to 47 individuals. (approximately 69 percent).

Does the product smell rich and full of flavor? (69 responses)



Brand B

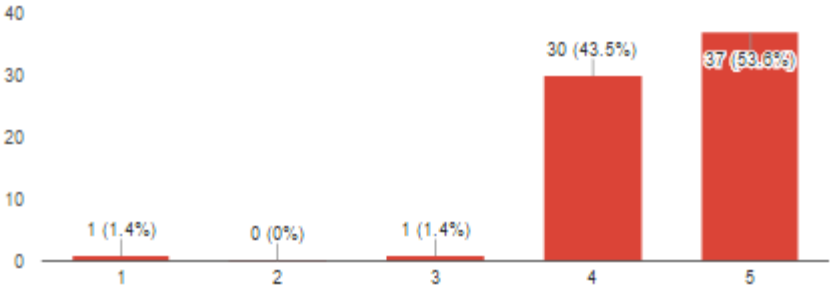
Does the product smell rich and full of flavor? (69 responses)



Heinz

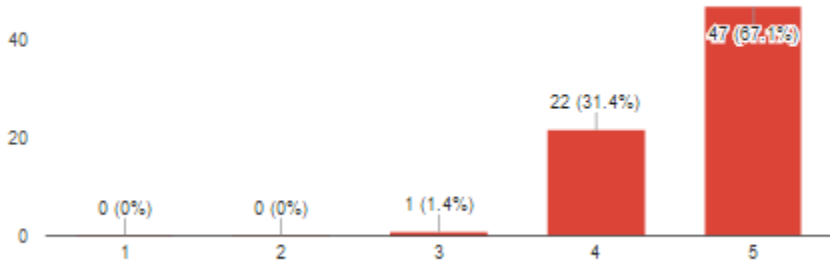
Although the two figures are clearly skewed however, the respondents remained firm on their stance in both scenarios with a slight increase in the exposed test due to the brand effect. We can note that the smell of Heinz is well liked under both blind as well as non blind test.

Does the product taste appealing? (69 responses)



Brand B

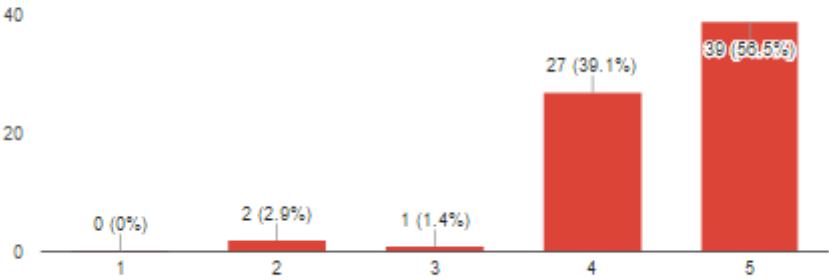
Does the product taste appealing? (70 responses)



Heinz

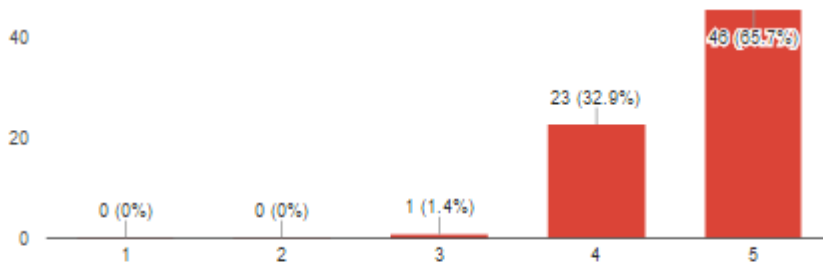
The two figures above depict how under the blind test individuals responded positively to Brand B and this number only increased during the exposed test. The sample population can be said to have a general liking for Heinz if the answers recorded during the blind test had differed. One can also assume that the respondents are able to differentiate between their preferred brands without being exposed to the brand name. However, it should be noted that these individuals also rated Knorr positively as well under the blind taste test. Hence, we cannot conclude that each respondent is able to differentiate and identify their preferred brand.

Would you eat it again? (69 responses)



Brand B

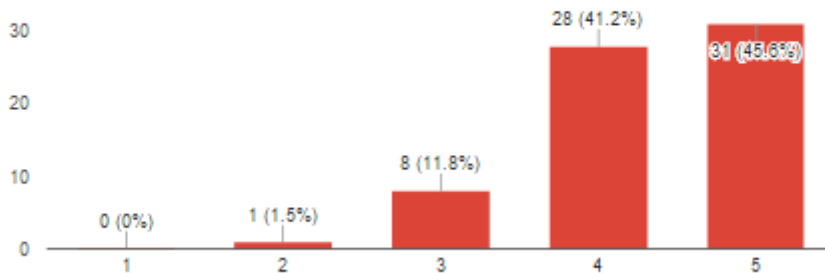
Would you eat it again? (70 responses)



Heinz

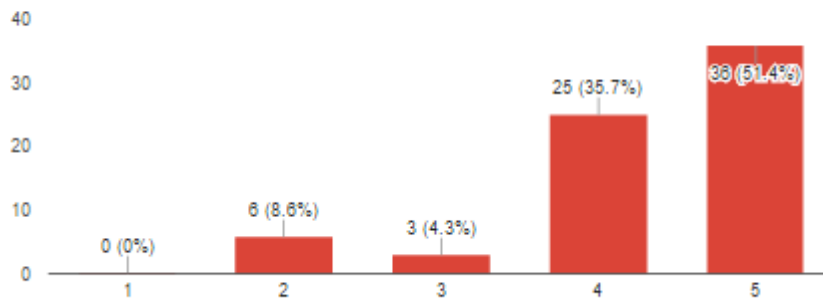
Over 50 percent of the sample population responded positively under both scenarios regarding whether they should eat the ketchup again. Since over 50 percent of the respondents also answered positively during the blind taste test we can assume that this is purely due to the qualities of the ketchup itself.

Does it taste very sweet? (68 responses)



Brand B

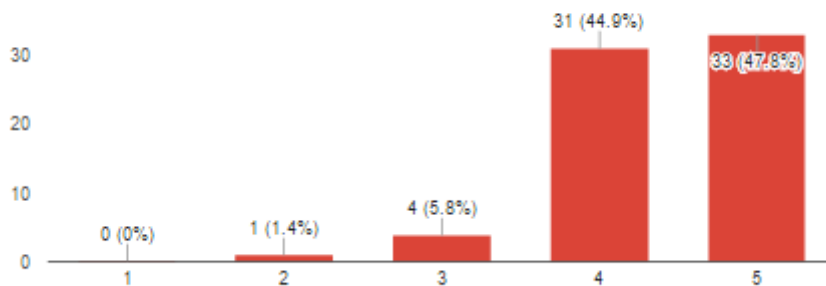
Does it taste very sweet? (70 responses)



Heinz

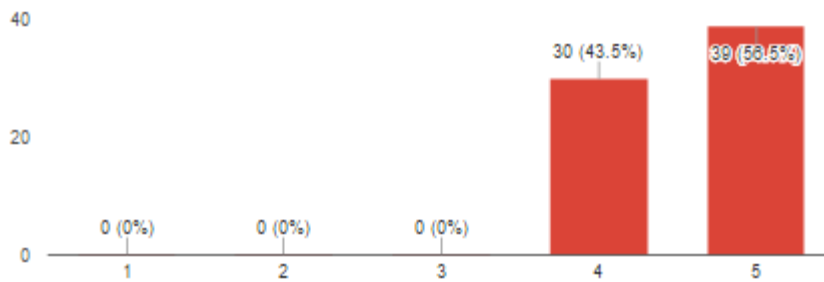
According to prior research regarding the taste of ketchup, it was discovered that ketchup lovers preferred their ketchup to be a bit sweet and of course tangy. Heinz passed this test under the blind taste test as well as 41 percent agreed with the statement that it was sweet and over 45 percent strongly agreed to the statement.

Does it taste fresh? (69 responses)



Brand B

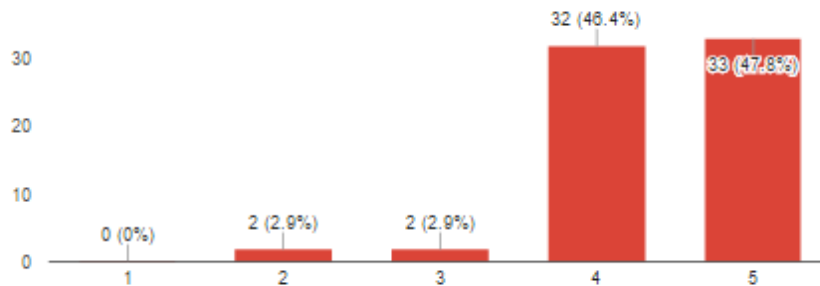
Does it taste fresh? (69 responses)



Heinz

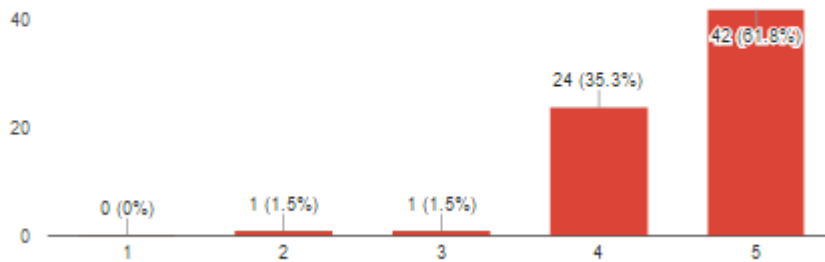
There was a unanimous agreement on the freshness of Brand B which was also consistent during its exposed test. It is essential for the ketchup to taste fresh which Knorr failed to do.

Is the flavor strong? (69 responses)



Brand B

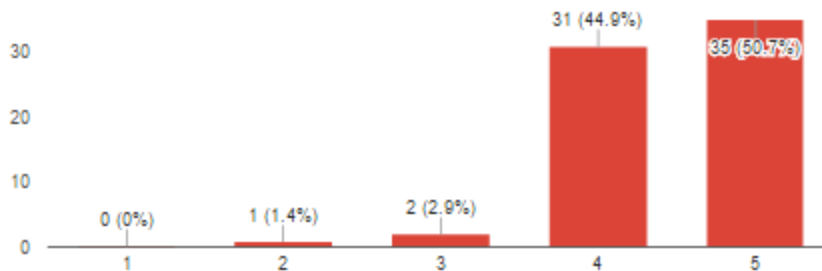
Is the flavor strong? (68 responses)



Heinz

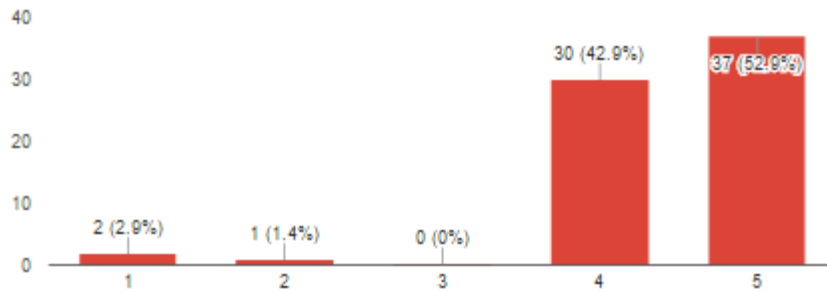
The tangy flavor needs to be at the forefront when considering which ketchup is of high quality. The respondents were asked whether the flavor was strong enough and again, majority answered positively in both scenarios.

Is the texture very soft and light? (69 responses)



Brand B

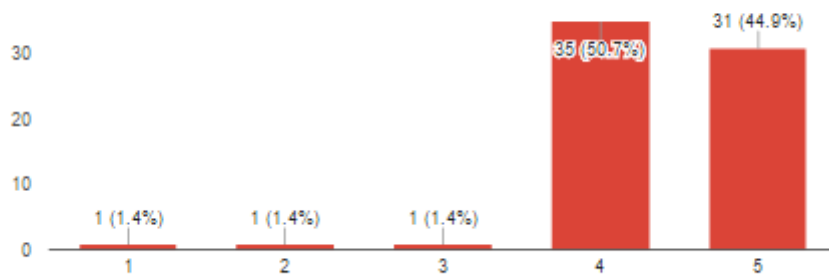
Is the texture very soft and light? (70 responses)



Heinz

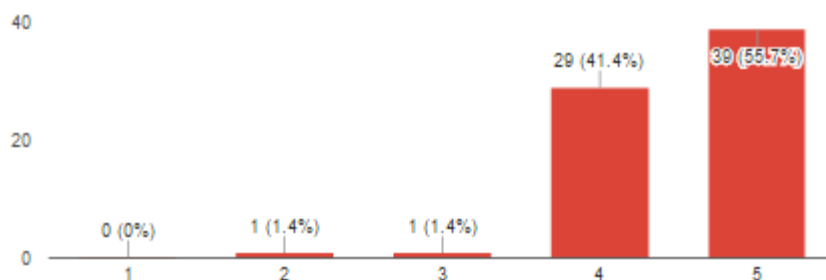
The second variable which was tested was the texture of the ketchup. Here, again the respondents more or less stayed consistent in their answers.

Is the product viscous and thick enough? (69 responses)



Brand B

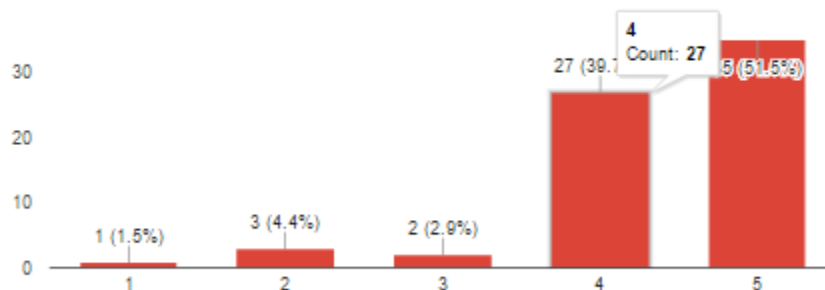
Is the product viscous and thick enough? (70 responses)



Heinz

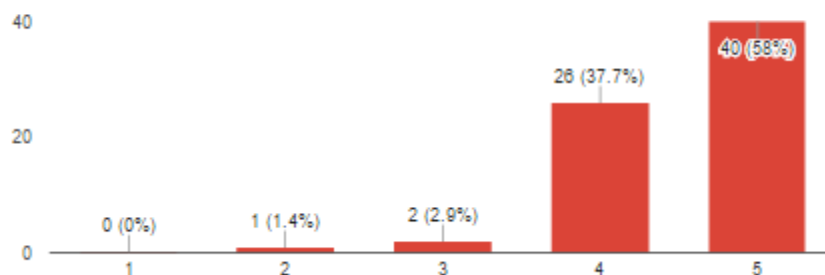
The viscous nature and the thickness of the texture was also well received by the sample population under both conditions. When probed for further explanation, the individuals responded with expressions such as “Heinz is the thickest and juiciest ketchup and I can spot it anywhere”. This shows that brand loyalty actually exists and when it comes to texture and taste, Heinz has no parallels.

Is the product grainy\chunky? (68 responses)



Brand B

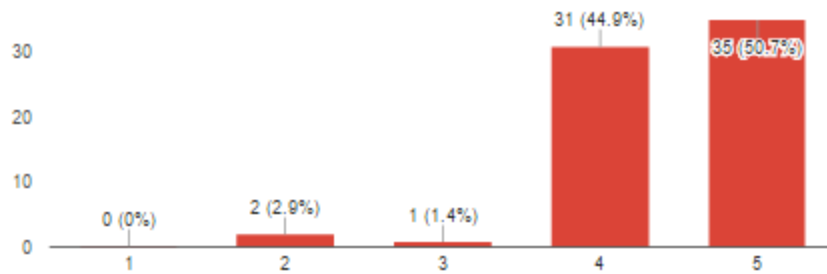
Is the product grainy\chunky? (69 responses)



Heinz

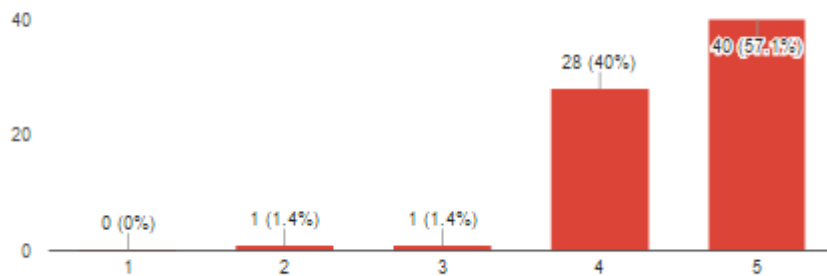
Over 60 out of 68 respondents thought that Brand B or Heinz was grainy and chunky. This is debatable since Heinz claims to have a smooth texture. However, the respondents seem to love this about the brand.

Is the color suitable for a product like this? (69 responses)



Brand B

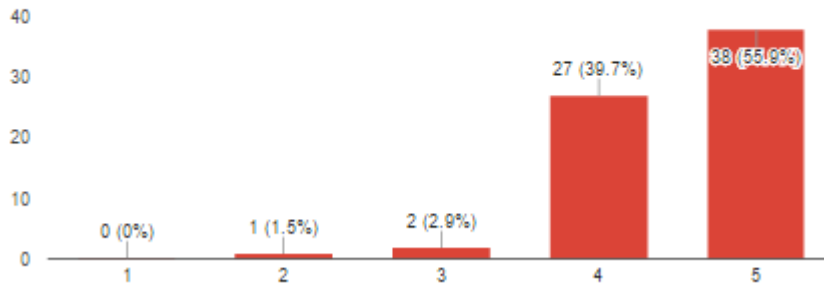
Is the color suitable for a product like this? (70 responses)



Heinz

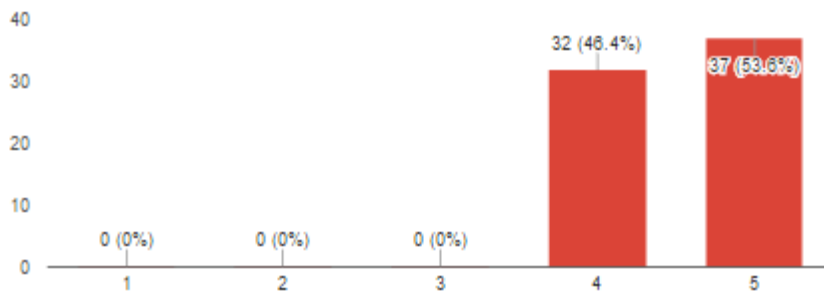
In terms of color, Heinz had a unanimous vote. The respondents loved the richness and thick texture of the brand which other brands such as Knorr was unable to meet the standard of.

Does the color look appealing? (68 responses)



Brand B

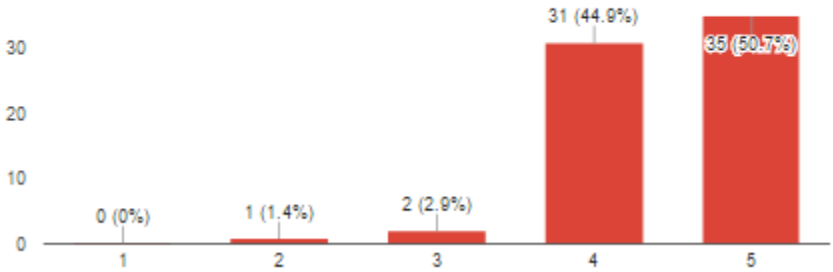
Does the color look appealing? (69 responses)



Heinz

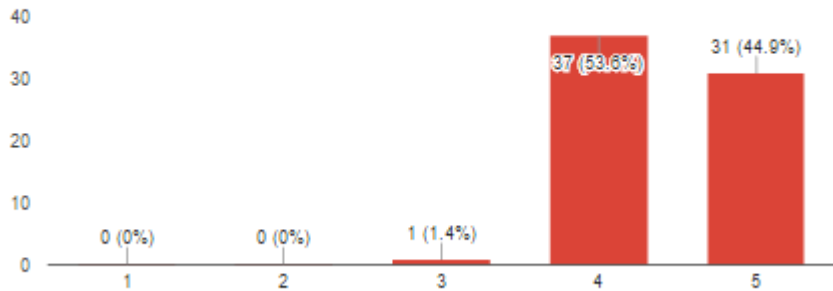
37 out of 68 respondents strongly agreed to the color of Brand B to look appealing and this stance remained consistent under the exposed test. With 32 respondents answering with “agree” while 37 individuals “strongly agreed” to the statement under the exposed test and 27 and 38 individuals agreed to the statement under the blind test. This shows that more or less the results were the same under both scenarios.

Is the color rich enough? (69 responses)



Brand B

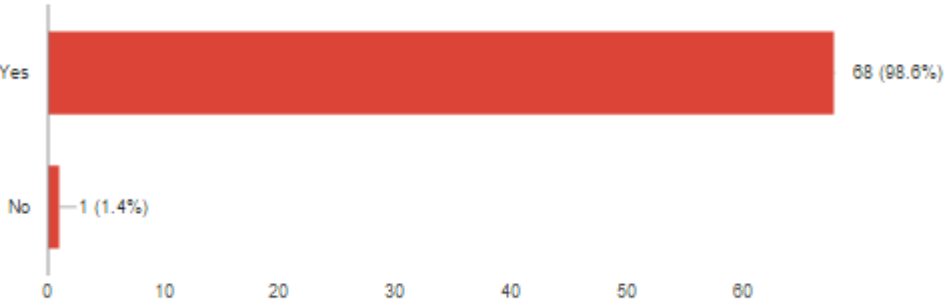
Is the color rich enough? (69 responses)



Heinz

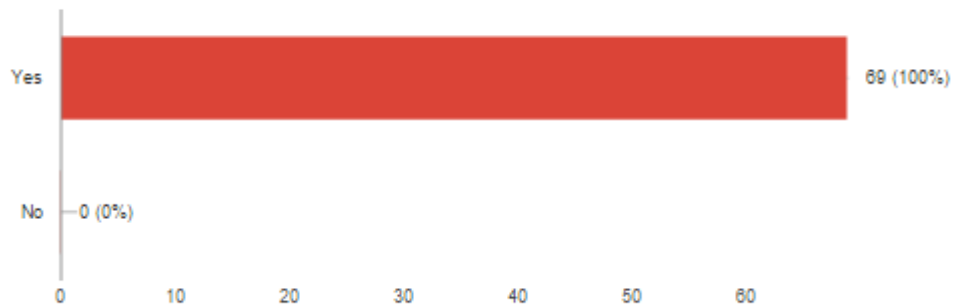
The richness of the color was also well received by the respondents. There was a marked difference in the results of Knorr and Heinz in terms of texture and color.

Does the product have a distinctive smell? (69 responses)



Brand B

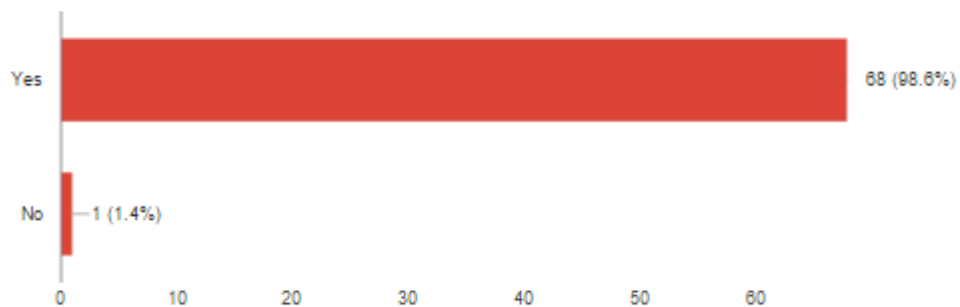
Does the product have a distinctive smell? (69 responses)



Heinz

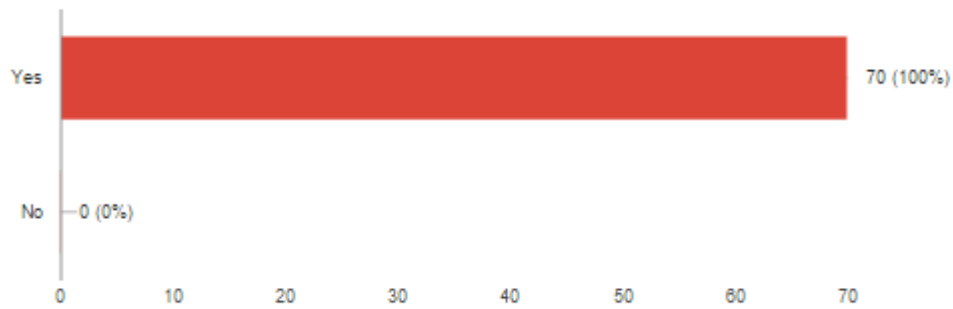
The respondents were asked reasons for their answers regarding whether the product had a distinctive smell and most of the answers revolved around the fact that one can sense and smell the freshness of the ketchup due to its aroma. Others claimed that the strong smell was one of its most distinctive features.

Does it have a unique taste? (69 responses)



Brand B

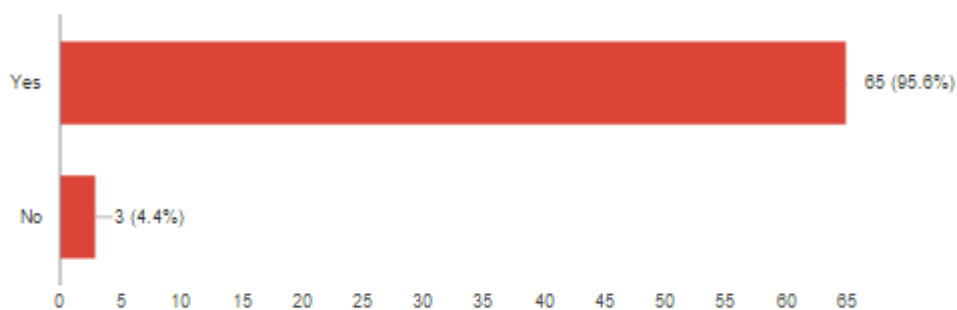
Does it have a unique taste? (70 responses)



Heinz

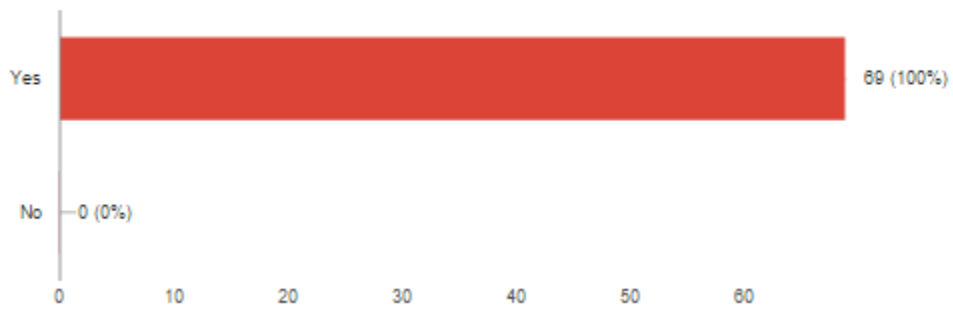
In addition to the strong smell, another distinctive feature of Heinz is its unique taste. The strong tangy with a perfect mixture of sweetness gave it an edge over other competing brands.

Is the texture what you expect from a product like this? (68 responses)



Brand B

Is the texture what you expect from a product like this? (69 responses)



Heinz

With 100 percent positive responses in the exposed test as compared to 95 percent in the blind taste, it can be concluded that Heinz has set standards.

Conclusion

Analysis of Results

The in-depth analysis of the consumers responses to both blind taste testing and exposed sheds light on one important notion of perception and brand management. Marketers need to be especially careful when building or rebuilding a brand because once a perception is made, it is difficult to alter it unless drastic changes such as reinventing and rebranding the product takes place which essentially means starting from scratch. This in effect costs a lot of time and effort which makes it even more essential for the company to build its brand in a manner that it is met with a positive attitude by the target market. Once this has been established, the brand will sell itself.

Conducting this test and looking at the results clearly portrays the fact that before the brands were revealed, all the individuals participating in the test scored both the brands high in each of the 4 categories the judgement was based on. This showed that both the brands have products that are tailored to the taste of the market that they function in and are thus preferred by the audience. Multiple brands exist that lack in one or multiple categories for example Kinza Tomato Ketchup has a very pinkish color and the texture is too thin thus it is perceived as a low-grade product, this aids in further proving the brands selected for the comparison in this study are both high tier premium products.

As soon as the brands were revealed the results changed completely as the scores dropped drastically for Knorr whereas Heinz remained virtually unchanged. Given that Knorr has had its presence in Pakistan much longer than Heinz and the fact

that in addition to ketchup Knorr has many more product offerings, the results were a bit shocking. The reasoning for this could be the brand not investing more on branding its ketchup or slowly developing an image that is less relevant as perceived by the consumer. Heinz has always focused on remaining the premium choice throughout the globe and its evident that the same is perceived by the consumers in Pakistan as they consistently scored Heinz highly in each regard.

[What should be done in the future?](#)

The result of this study needs to be highlighted more by the brands in order to study the changing dynamics of the market. Consumer needs and expectation change continuously with the course of time and it is of utmost importance for companies to adjust to those changes so they remain an appealing option. An in depth analysis of the

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