

Exploring Consumers' Implicit and Explicit Associations Towards Sugar Reduction Claims on Breakfast Cereals

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Abstract

Past research has shown that nutrition claims such as 'sugar-reduced' have varying effects on consumer behavior. While some consumers seek healthier products, others may believe that sugar-reduced products are less tasty. We conduct an implicit association test for breakfast cereals to investigate consumers' implicit associations towards cereals with and without a sugar reduction claim. In a subsequent survey, we measure consumers' explicit associations towards the same products. In addition, we examine the contribution of explicit and implicit associations and other product attributes to the prediction of product liking and purchase intention. Our results confirm the unhealthy-tasty intuition, even for highly health-interested subjects. Moreover, we find that taste expectation and health perception positively influence product liking, which in turn leads to a higher purchase intention. In addition, claim presence and national brands were related to a higher purchase intention.

Keywords: *Implicit Associations; Explicit Associations; Nutrition Claims*

Track: Transformative Consumer Research