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Pictures in consumer research

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Introduction

In the search of new sensory methods for consumer research, pictures reflecting certain moods, e.g. mood boards, have proved useful in capturing consumer preference towards a given product. The question is: can consumers themselves generate associations using pictures? This was tested by a group of young consumers who tasted and evaluated the eating quality of traditionally cooked Danish pork roasts with cracklings from pigs of five different cross-breeds.

Materials and Methods

The pool of pictures were initially selected based on a brain storm, starting with 45 photos, followed by a test session removing the photos that no one could associate with or that immediate gave the same association. The final set of pictures consisted of 34 photos reflecting as much variation as possible.

Pork roasts from pigs of five different cross-breeds (DLY, ID, ILY, MD and MLY) were cooked in an oven, and the young consumers (n=19, aged between 17 and 20) tasted one slice of each of the two types of roasts with cracklings.

The consumers each had a set of selected pictures. Typically they tasted the meat and crackling and started searching for the picture by which they associated the taste. They had to choose only one picture per roast and describe their association with the selected picture in a few words.

Results

Based on the selected photos and the related description of associations, roasts of the cross-breed "ID" received most positive associations while "DLY" received the most negative associations.

Photos used for **ID** (best liked)   Photos used for **DLY** (least liked)

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Interestingly, the photo of an older man cooking meat balls was frequently used, but this photo induced different associations related to the different cross-breeds.

DLY: dry, old and traditional, boring, not appetizing
MD: Classic, simple, safe, home-made, good, reminds me of my grandparents, dry
MLY: dry, old fashion, boring
ID: familiar, tastes like my grandmothers cooking

Conclusion
Pictures generated different and very useful associations in terms of describing the experienced eating quality of pork roasts. Based on the described associations it was also possible to interpret consumer preferences.