Effect of sensory and non-sensory factors on consumer choice of potato chips.

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Food choice is one of the complex decisions people have to make on a daily basis. It involves both consumption and purchase actions, which are influenced by many factors, ranging from sensory to non-sensory factors. Despite the influence of product extrinsic factors, sensory properties of food are considered to be important determinants of food choice. The objective of this research is to determine the contributions of sensory and non-sensory factors to choice of potato chips. A combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches like focus group and conjoint analysis were employed to explore food choice factors that involve in decision making process and to measure the relative importance of those factors. Focus groups revealed a mixture of sensory and non-sensory factors governing consumer’s choice and preference in which five were shown to be important, including price, calories and calories from fat, taste/flavor, processing style and packaging. Full-profile conjoint approach was used and product tasting was incorporated into the experiment. The products used in conjoint analysis differed in their sensory properties, mainly on flavor such as starchy, cooked potato and rancid and on texture such as crispiness, crunchiness and oiliness. Conjoint analysis (n=120) showed taste/flavor or the sensory properties of potato chips to be important to consumers. Yet, consumers were not willing to compensate price for inferior products.