



Health And Taste Attitudes (HTA) Of Millennial Consumers: Is It Time for A New HTA Scale?

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Abstract

Health and taste are two important food choice factors. In an effort to measure the relative extent and importance of health and taste factors in consumers when it comes to food choice, Roininen *et al.* (1999) developed a health (with three factors: general health interest, natural product interest and light product interest) and taste (with three factors: craving for sweet foods, using food as a reward and pleasure) attitudes (HTAs) questionnaire. This questionnaire has been used worldwide but not yet in Africa. The objective here was to determine the HTAs of South African (SA) millennial consumers.

Participants ($n = 354$) were mostly female (66.6%) and students with grade 12 as their highest qualification (68.6%). The mean ratings indicated that taste of food was more important to consumers than health aspects. The general health interest factor was the most reliable (Cronbach's alpha 0.83). Pleasure had the lowest alpha (0.51) which increased to 0.54 after removing item 5 (*I finish my meal even when I do not like the taste of a food*). Item 5 of the pleasure factor may have represented other inherent values such as food waste consciousness. A new factor, "emotional eating", was formed by three items from the "using food as a reward" and "pleasure" factors. These items may be interpreted as emotionally driven food choice factors.

The HTAs scale has been shown to be useful in characterising and segmenting consumers according to their HTAs and also for predicting food choice. However, it was developed over 20 years ago and the statements were based on responses from Finnish consumers (aged 18 to 81 years). Emerging factors such as the shift towards plant-based diets, emotional eating and the perceived high cost of a healthy diet by consumers in SA may influence HTAs. The HTAs of South Africans may not necessarily be reflected by the statements used in the original questionnaire by Roininen *et al.* (1999). Therefore, a current, more country specific HTA scale needs to be developed and validated for future studies.

Biography: Nomzamo Magano

Nomzamo Magano is a PhD Food Science student from the University of Pretoria. She considers herself a sensory scientist with a special interest in consumer behaviour.