The role of context in consumers' responses

Think out of the booth!

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Outline

• Why/when should we involve a context? What is worth evoking?
• Methods to evoke a context
• Methodological issues: effectiveness, vividness, relevance to the consumer, level of detail, appropriateness
• Comparisons with natural settings: what have we learnt?

Why involving context?

Pre-consumption

Food consumption

Post-consumption

Emotional state A

Physical state A

Physiological state A

Emotional state B

Physical state B

Physiological state B

Emotional state C

Physical state C

Physiological state C

Internal conditions

Food's influences (exp)

Context External conditions

Why do YOU consume a product?

What is a context?

The eight interacting dimensions and features of eating and drinking episodes that characterized situational food and beverage consumption among a sample of working adults in the US.

From Bisogni et al. 2007
Why/when should we involve a context? What is worth evoking?

- To make subjects ignore that they are in a lab /less awkward
- To have more product discrimination
- To increase external validity
- To put subjects in a certain mindset
- To determine under which conditions a product is more liked (mkt)

Methods to evoke a context

Simulated context – physical “fake” setting, imagined, Virtual Reality

“Ok, so if I were in these conditions... how much would I like this product.”

Methods to evoke a context

Written scenarios

A brief statement asking consumers to imagine a consumption context and provide written description.

- Think about an occasion when you want something refreshing to drink. Clearly imagine you are experiencing this occasion.
- Now, write down a detailed description of the occasion you are imagining. Please take your time and provide a description that is as complete as possible.

- Unique, personalised contexts
- Written descriptions

Methods to evoke a context

Written scenarios

'I have just been mowing the lawns on a hot summer’s day. It has been hard work and taken about an hour and something cold and refreshing would be perfect.’

‘A sunny summer day, late afternoon a gathering of friends, conversation, music, smell of food being barbequed in the air.’

Methods to evoke a context

Written scenarios

Wanting a refreshing drink (study 1) Having a refreshing drink (study 2)

'It’s a hot, humid summer afternoon and I have just biked home for a game of tennis at the local courts. I’m thirsty and hot, and want a cold drink to quench my thirst, cool me down, and give me some post-exercise energy boost.’

'Drinking from a water bottle or a bottle of some cold beverage mid-way up walking the Bethune's Gully walking track (Dunedin). Cold wind but overly hot from the hike and stopping to have a drink. Not an athletic hike but more of a recreational walk up a hill. Probably standing up and a bit exhausted.'
Methods to evoke a context

**Brief description + picture**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weekday breakfast</th>
<th>Lunch outdoors</th>
<th>Dinner with friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) 7.2 (1.9)</td>
<td>b) 7.2 (1.8)</td>
<td>c) 6.4 (2.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) 7.2 (1.9)</td>
<td>b) 7.3 (1.8)</td>
<td>c) 5.9 (2.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Methods to evoke a context

**Virtual Reality**

Think about an occasion when you are having a family dinner during the week.

**Virtual Reality vs. Video vs. CLT**

Liking and satisfaction ratings were not the highest in VR.

MS thesis van Hooft, 2017

Methods to evoke a context

**Self-reported presence**

- Virtual reality
- Picture
- Mock shelf

Van Herpen et al. 2016, Appetite

Methods to evoke a context

**Number of products purchased**

Van Herpen et al. 2016, Appetite
Methods to evoke a context

Virtual Reality vs. picture vs. mock shelf

Purchase of A brands

So is there a best technique?

Best in terms of what?
• Predicability of outcome (compared to reality)
• Closeness to the set up consumers would usually face?
• Closeness to the mindset people would be in?

What is the process?

Product
Choice
Product liking
Emotional state

Why/when should we involve a context?
What is worth evoking?

Product
Appropriateness
Choice
Product liking
Emotional state
Aspects to consider when evoking/simulating context consumptions

❖ Effect on hedonic response / choice
❖ Ease of consumer use
❖ Product-to-context (or context-to-product?) match
❖ Wording of written scenario: broad or detailed?
❖ Hedonic method (not so relevant for sensory optimisation).

Concluding remarks

➢ Contextual effects clearly exert an impact on product experience in natural settings.
➢ How can we best (and easily) capture it for research?
➢ What are we interested in?
➢ Avoid standardisation, create contexts (and questionnaires) meaningful to the consumer.
➢ As product-context appropriateness increases so does positive feelings, liking of product, likelihood of choice...

Thank you!

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