Implicit measurement of the impact of different concept attributes using "Forced" Choice-Based Conjoint Analysis (CBC)

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1. Introduction

➢Most of the time consumers are not able to verbalize their reasons during their consumption or purchase behaviour. The findings of neuroscience and brain research show that 90 to 95% of the decision-making is unconscious (Zaltman, 2003) and implicit methods can cover this aspect of consumer research (Scarabis & Heinsen, 2008). On the one hand the important concept drivers for a new juice range under the brand hohes C should be detected. On the other hand an method should be integrated in conventional market research that reflects the fast and unconscious purchase decisions at the Point of Sales (PoS) better. Another aspect was to find an approach that is easy to implement into concept testing with Conjoint Analysis (Johnson & Orme, 1996).

2. Main Objectives

➢The purpose of a cooperation project between Eckes-granini and isi GmbH was to detect the important concept attributes for a new juice range under the juice brand hohes C. Furthermore the implicit approach should highlight the unconscious part of the purchase decisions better than the conventional approach.

Attributes	Attribute levels			
Brand	hohes C	Amecke	Real Bio	Kelterei Heil
Flavour	apple-pear	apple-cassis	pear-elderberry	apple-blackthorn
Product Name	local harvest	full ripeness	harvest time	our harvest
Claim	local harvest healthy	gentle treatment without additives	full ripeness full aroma	knowing where the fruits are harvested
Packaging	PET	carton	glass	
Price (€)	1,19 1,29 1,39 1,49 1,59 1,69 1,79			

Table 1: Attributes and attribute levels of CBC

3. Methods/ Procedure

➢Six different attributes: brand, flavour, product name, claim, packaging and price (see table 1) were evaluated via Choice-Based Conjoint Analysis (CBC). Out of these six attributes and 26 attribute levels each respondent evaluate 14 individual choice sets created by a complete enumeration design (see figure 1). The choice sets allow a realistic presentation of the stimuli that is closed to the situation in the product shelf. For this research a Computer Assisted Web Interview (CAWI) was used. A representative sample was recruited from the isi online panel. For the implicit measurement the experimental group (n=254) evaluated the CBC under time-controlled conditions. For the experimental group a time pressure of 8 seconds per choice set was conducted via a pre-test. The control group (n=254) evaluated the CBC without time pressure.

Figure 1: Example of a CBC choice set

4. Results

➢For both groups a significant influence for the concept attributes brand, flavour and price can be proven. These attributes have an high positive impact on consumers purchase decisions whereas the product name, packaging and the claim are less important for a successful product concept (see table 2).

➢There are significant differences between both groups. Particularly noticeable is that at the time-controlled approach the importance of brand increases. This strengthen the assumption that the a well-known brand, that is trusted, can be selected without high cognitive effort.

	control group (conventional CBC)	experimental group (reaction time < 8 sec)	
Brand *	26,6	31,0	⬆
Product Name *	6,0	7,5	⬆
Packaging *	8,0	9,4	⬆
Flavour *	20,5	14,6	⬇
Claim *	7,5	9,4	⬆
Price *	31,5	28,0	⬇

Table 2: Relative Importance of the concept attributes (Hierarchical Bayes estimation)
* significant differences (p < 0,05)

➢The well-known brand hohes C has a huge positive impact on consumers decision (see figure 2). The implicit approach shows that the brand hohes C is unconsciously more present and easier to identify and to classify for consumers. The results support the assumption that the consumer used a well-known and trusted brand like hohes C unconsciously as information chunk for decision making.
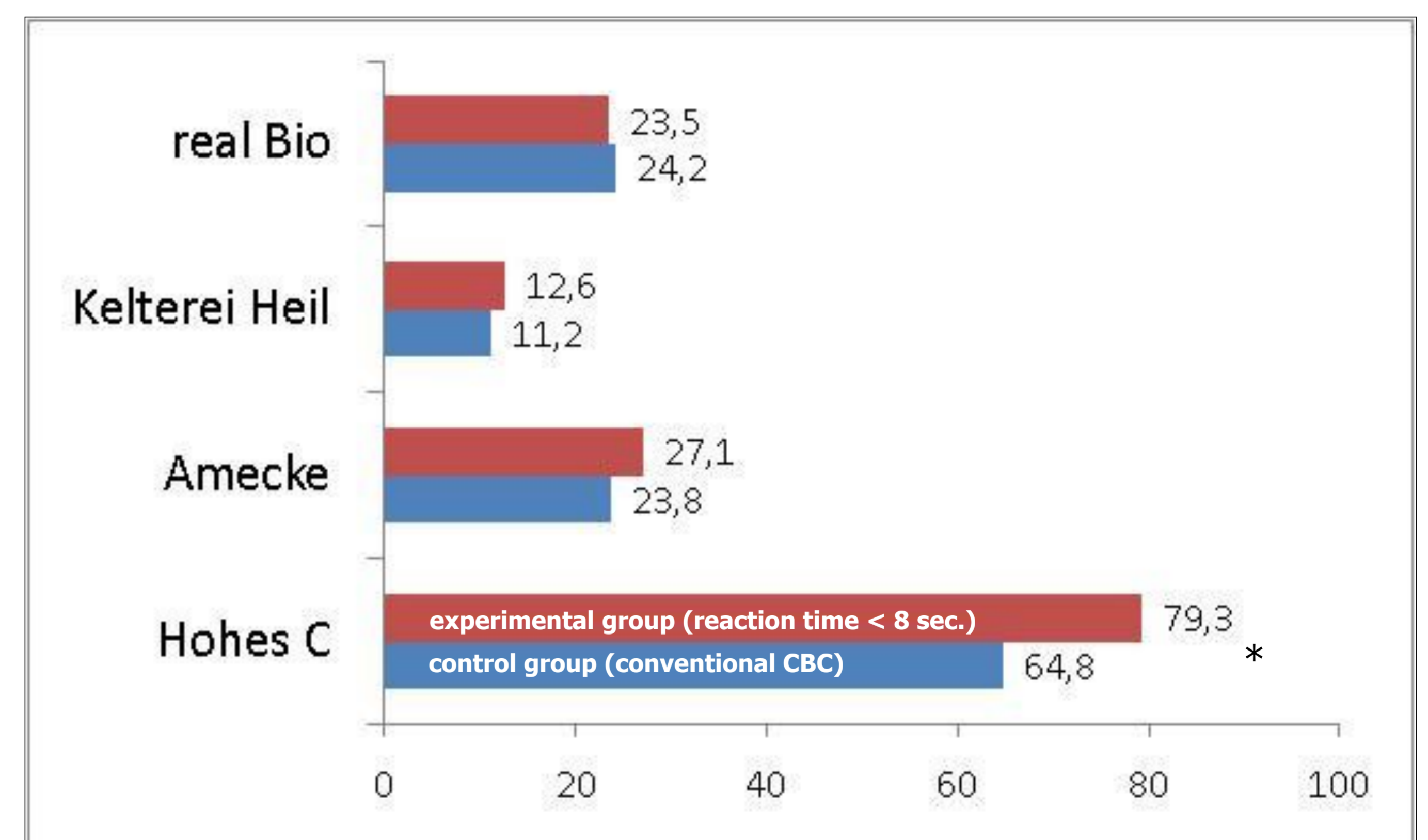

Figure 2: Partworth utilities for different brands (Hierarchical Bayes estimation)
* significant differences (p < 0,05)

5. Conclusion

➢In comparison to other implicit methods that are already established, the time-controlled "Forced" CBC approach can be integrated easily in concept testing and is cost- and time effective. This study gives first indications that the real purchase situation can be evaluated with higher validity especially for low involvement products. The limited time for decision-making that was used in this study simulates the situation at the PoS better than the conventional CBC. Thus, the new approach is capable of detecting the product attributes that were REALLY used as information chunks by the consumer. As a result the "Forced Choice Conjoint" shows the attributes and the attribute levels that have a high influence on the success of a product concept but also identifies the attributes that are less important in a unconscious decision-making process.

Sources:
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