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Non-sensory characteristics and consumer perception

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Non-sensory characteristics influence the perception of sensory attributes and food acceptance. These external factors are related to the consumption context, the consumer, and the food itself, influencing emotions, actions, preferences, acceptance, purchase intention, and repurchase intention. Ethnic, cultural, and religious concepts; health concerns; age; gender; household income; social factors; convenience; practicality; price; origin; type and production technology of the food; stability; safety; nutritional value; brand; and even packaging are all aspects that exert this influence. Packaging plays a key role, not only in ensuring safety and preservation but also in communicating directly with consumers through design, typography, colors, texture, nutritional information, and other elements, such as the brand and preparation instructions. Because it creates expectations even before consumption, the impact of its characteristics on consumer behavior has been extensively studied. Different visual and auditory stimuli can shape the sensory experience: colors and saturation levels evoke perceptions of sweetness, bitterness, flavor notes, aroma, and emotional meanings; typography subtly shapes expectations about the product; and even the sound of opening the packaging can alter perceptions—high-pitched sounds, for example, can intensify the perception of sweetness compared to low-pitched sounds and improve the product's evaluation. Understanding the interaction of these various factors and how they influence consumers is essential for anticipating their behavior and planning effective strategies for innovation, marketing, and market differentiation.

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