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Title:

Contribution of mindfulness-based theory to product testing: a pilot study

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Abstract: (Your abstract must use **Normal style** and must fit in this box. Your abstract should be no longer than 300 words. The box will 'expand' over 2 pages as you add text/diagrams into it.)

Mindfulness allows enhancing one's sensitivity to one's perceptions by adopting an open-minded and non-judgmental approach. Indeed, the mindfulness concept, which comes from classical Buddhist meditation, refers to a distinction between two different meditative categories: focused attention (samatha) and open monitoring (vipassana), which themselves refer to two mental abilities. In particular focused attention consists in engaging and sustaining attention on an object, while detecting mind wanderings and disengaging the attention from distractions.

Effectively predicting final consumers experience and their willingness to like, consider or even buy a product by actual sensory testing is not always easy to investigate and find. Indeed, consumers may not be able to access consciously to their subjective experience because their ability in focusing attention is not so developed or trained. Moreover, a contextual framework of product testing is not effective enough to prevent the participant to escape from the pure description of the experience to go and use his comments, assessments or judgments about the experience, or digressions in relation to its current concerns. Some methods are needed to help stabilizing his attention. Our proposal was to test one of them, an exercise of focused attention on a currant coming from mindfulness programs, in which the participant is encouraged to explore the currant through his different senses, one by one, while observing that his mind sometimes quickly associates sensory information to ideas, and consequently goes away from direct experience.

Results from an experimental protocol allowing implicit, explicit and behavioural data collection associated with new product testing, and with or without this focused-attention exercise, demonstrate that a mindfulness induction transfer is possible in a product degustation test within a few minutes. Thus, the research provides the market research community with innovative ideas contributing to the improvement of data collection among consumers experiencing a new product.