DRINKABLE YOGURTS

Contract Testing Inc.

INTRODUCTION

One of the forces behind the growth of the yogurt category over the past decade is drinkable yogurts. Whether at home or on-the-go, yogurt drinkables are one of the most convenient, nutritional, and kid-endorsed options for parents today.

This research aims to explore the differences in flavour and textural profiles of drinkable yogurt and to determine which attributes drive preference among kids. We also explored what factors drive choice of brands among their mothers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research recruited 50 children between the ages of 9 and 12 years old, evenly split between boys and girls, and their mothers to our Central Location Testing facility in the Greater Toronto Area. All the children had consumed drinkable yogurt in the past month.

The test included four popular brands of strawberry flavoured drinkable yogurts. The children evaluated 75 ml servings of the yogurts portioned out into 4oz. translucent plastic cups. The samples were served one at a time in varied order with the first sample removed before the next sample was presented. The children first evaluated the samples, blind, based on a comprehensive series of attributes and measures. They were then shown packaging images of the four brands and asked to rank them in order of preference.

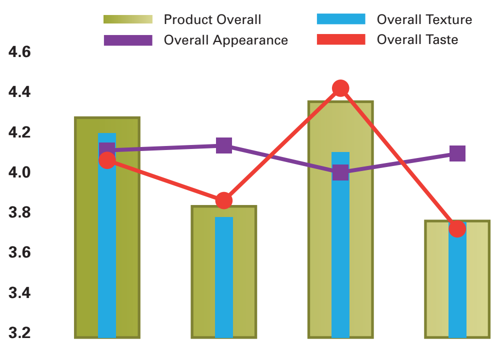
The mothers were asked a series of questions about their usage of and attitudes towards the drinkable yogurt category and their preference for specific brands.

RESULTS

Kids

While all of the samples were well-liked among kids, when tested on a blind basis, there were some significant differences between them on liking of the taste and texture – and no differences on appearance. (See graph 1)

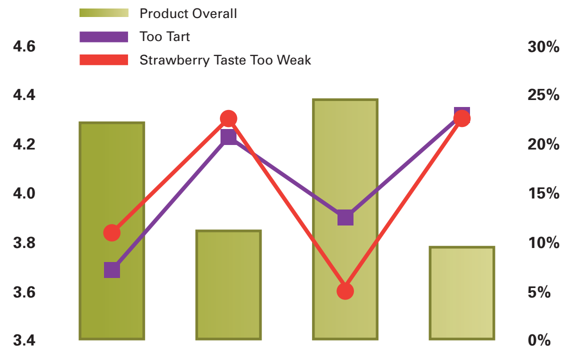
Graph 1 – Drivers of Overall Liking



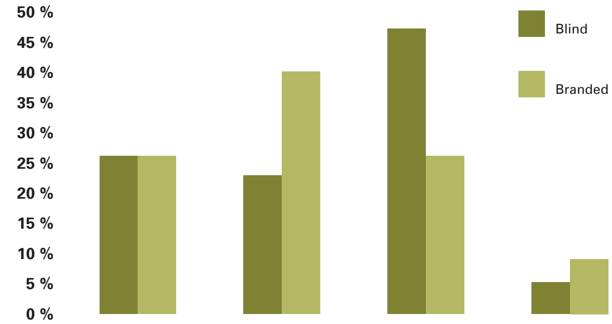
Differences in liking appear to be driven by strength of the strawberry flavour and tartness. The two weaker performing products had weaker strawberry flavour and were too tart. (See graph 2)

When the four brands were revealed, preferences shifted and one of the weaker performers in blind tasting was actually the brand kids prefer, a testament to the strong influence of branding and packaging in this category. (See graph 3)

Graph 2 – Drivers of Overall Liking – Strength of Strawberry Taste and Tartness



Graph 3 – Yogurt Liked Best – Blind vs. Branded

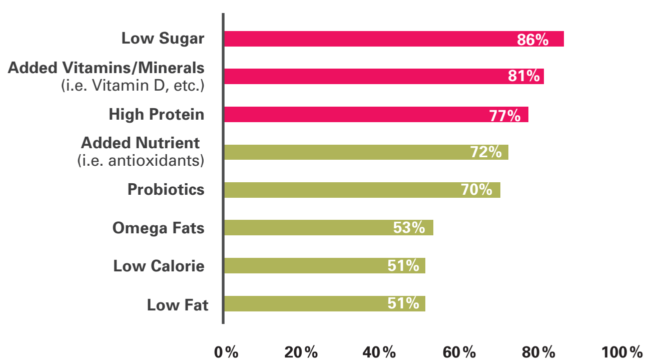


Mothers

While the kids evaluated the products, we asked their mothers about their reasons for purchasing drinkable yogurt.

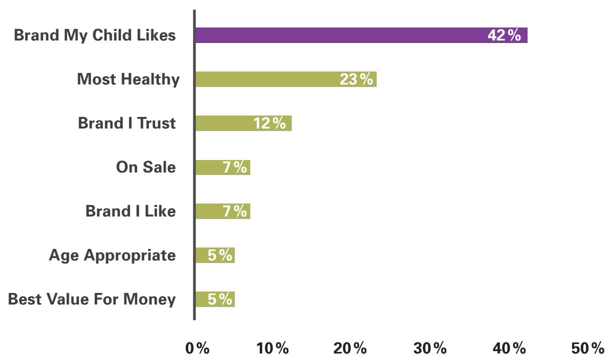
61% of mothers said the main reason they buy drinkable yogurts is because they are a Nutritious/Healthy choice. When asked specifically which nutritional benefits were most important, low sugar, added vitamins/minerals, and high protein were the main mentions. (See graph 4)

Graph 4 – Important Nutritional Benefits



However, although mothers claim that nutrition is important, when it comes to choosing a specific brand of drinkable yogurt, "A brand my child likes" is the most important driver of purchase. (See graph 5)

Graph 5 – Most Important Factors Driving Purchase Decision (claimed)



Furthermore, our research indicates that mothers are open to more occasions to serve their kids drinkable yogurts. While most do not find them readily available on restaurant menus, more than 2/3 of mothers would be likely to order them for their kids if they were. (See table 1)

Table 1 Likelihood of Purchasing Drinkable Yogurts in Restaurants

Extremely likely	30%
Very likely	35%
Somewhat likely	35%
Not very likely	0%
Not at all likely	0%
I don't know	0%

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The objective of this research was to explore the differences in flavour and textural profiles of drinkable yogurt and to determine which attributes drive preference among kids. We also explored what factors drive choice of brands among their mothers.

Within this framework it was revealed that, on a blind basis, kids do perceive differences in both flavour and texture among four leading brands of strawberry flavoured drinkable yogurt. Differences in preference appear to be driven by the strength of strawberry flavour (more flavour the better) and by the level of tartness (less tartness the better). However, branding is very powerful in this category. Once brands are revealed kids preference for one of the weaker performing products improves.

Clearly brand purchase decision in this category is influenced both by the kids who are consuming it and the mothers who are buying it. And while there is generally high taste appeal in the category – kids also seem to know what they like, and not all brands appear to be making the grade. For mothers on the other hand, as long as they deliver the same nutritional benefits, most mothers are willing to support their kids' brands choices - and would be happy to see these choices more available on kids menus.

For questions about this research, or how you can leverage consumer taste buds in your business, contact Andrew Scholes at andrew.scholes@contracttesting.com.

Contract Testing Inc. is an industry leader in sensory evaluation and consumer product testing. We are the only sensory evaluation and consumer product research company with corporately managed test sites in both Canada and the United States. With nearly 30 years of experience, we are innovators in testing with consumers across all major food, beverage and household and personal care categories.

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