School milk consumption in Germany – which product attributes are important for children and parents?
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BACKGROUND
- milk products: important part of balanced diet
- milk consumption declines, quite often becomes insufficient with age
- especially girls do not consume enough milk or milk products
- reason: preferences and needs change over time
- (new) products have to meet these changes
- to support milk consumption the EU School Milk Scheme was developed: 250ml school milk per pupil and school day is subsidized

OBJECTIVES
- how do preferences for milk products differ between parents, youths and children?
- how do preferences for product attributes differ between parents, youths and children?
- could new products contribute to higher sales of school milk?

METHODS

Pair comparison (children, 10-14 years)
- principle: two products are always compared with each other, the preferred one is chosen
- products: flavoured milk, drinking yoghurt, yoghurt and curd

Choice Experiment for milk products (youths, 15-18 years and parents)
- Theoretical guideline:
  - consumers choose the product that gives the maximum utility
  - product utility arises from product attributes (e.g., type of product, fat content, price)
  - attributes might have different levels
- In this study:
  - six attributes: product, price, fat content, sweetening agent, calcium content, lactose free
  - (the last two just for parents)
- two to three levels per attribute
- respondents choose one of three alternatives
- 32 different choice experiment questions for the parents, 27 for the youths available
- division into: 8 groups of parents (4 questions per parent), 9 groups of youths (3 questions per youth)

DATA
- online surveys in Germany in 2010
- 1000 parents of school children, 500 children
- 909 youths (15-18 years), 509 youths (15-18 years)
- equally distributed regarding age, gender and regions

RESULTS

Pair comparison (children, 10-14 years)
- flavoured milk is most preferred
- drinkable products are preferred over those that are consumed with a spoon

Figure 3: Relevance of selected product attributes (children and youths)

Figure 4: What children and youths would like to have in their yoghurt

SUMMARY + CONCLUSIONS
- increasing fat content and price as well as artificial sweetener result in lower expected utility for parents and youths in general
- flavoured milk is preferred by children, youths and parents for consumption in school
- focus on drinkable products for consumption in school

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