

Healthy vs. Wholesome :

Exploring Differences and Desired Product Attributes for Healthy and Wholesome Snacks

Introduction

“Healthy” and “wholesome” are terms frequently used by consumers and manufacturers in the snacking category. However, the meanings and roles of these terms are not fully understood within the behavior of consumers. This research will allow the team to uncover the types of snacks consumers consider “healthy” and “wholesome” as well as the differences and intersections between these two ideas.

The methodology utilized in this research allows the research team to discover attributes, consumer language, and sensory cues of “healthy” and “wholesome” within the snacking space. Understanding the meaning and language behind these terms will allow for better product marketability and more precise targeting of desired consumer spaces. We designed our research to explore options for a new healthy or wholesome snack bite with fruit flavor, but before we could explore the snack bite landscape, we needed to determine how consumers differentiate between healthy and wholesome, if at all.

Objectives Include:

- Discover which snacks consumers consider “healthy” or “wholesome” and where they intersect.
- Explore the role of “healthy” and “wholesome” snacks in consumers’ snacking behavior.
- Uncover attributes, consumer language, and sensory cues of the terms “healthy” and “wholesome” within the snacking space
- Examine each term’s independent characteristics and where they overlap
- Discover what consumers are looking for in a healthy/wholesome snack bite with fruit flavor

Methodology

Phase I: Quantitative Snack App

Quantitative data was collected using Blueberry’s Snack App - a mobile survey platform. The research was conducted in the U.S., with geographically diverse respondents between the ages of 18-75. The subjects (n=150) were asked to log their snacks for 24 hours, and were asked 15 questions for each snack. Data capture included daypart, snack category, emotions before and after eating, satiety levels, and energy levels, among others. Data was analyzed by isolating healthy and wholesome snack categories individually and combined to find similarities and differences between the two. This data was then used to inform lines of questioning and stimuli for the focus groups.



Screenshots of Blueberry’s Snack App.

Phase II: Qualitative Focus Groups

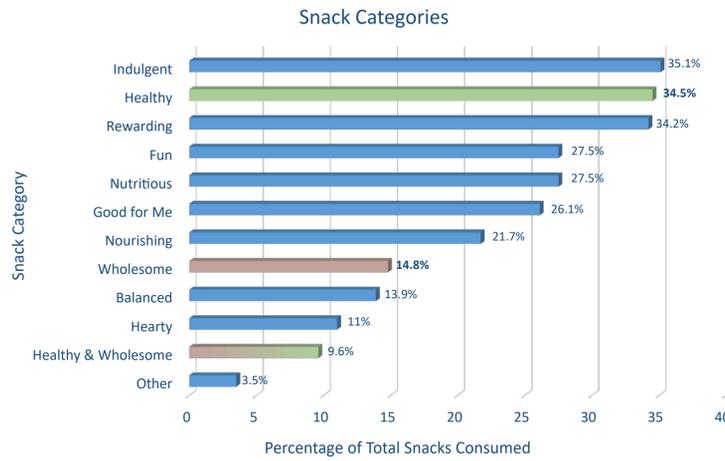
Respondents were asked to complete two pre-work assignments prior to the groups:

- Respondents spent a week journaling all of their snacking, answering several questions about each snack.
- ½ of respondents spent the next week uploading 6-10 photos they would categorize as healthy, and the other ½ of respondents spent the next week uploading 6-10 photos they would categorize as wholesome.

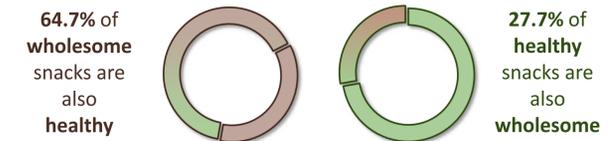
Code	Photo	Product Name/Brand	Description	Prep Protocol
513		Bitty Bits Strawberry Fruit Bar	Strawberry Bite	1/2 Bar
525		Rakend Raspberry Tartlettes	Raspberry Bite	1 Cookie
594		Kellie's Special K Strawberry Puffery Chips	Strawberry Bite	1/2 Bar
567		JCS Strawberry Cream Caramel Truffles Pita Bites	Strawberry Bite	1 Truffle
Y26		Sun Maid Strawberry Greek Yogurt Covered Raisins	Strawberry Greek Yogurt Covered Raisin	1 Spoonful
Y41		Lychee Fruit	Lychee Fruit	1 Piece
Y79		Garden of Eatin' Strawberry Yogurt Melts	Strawberry Yogurt Bite	1 Spoonful
807		PREPARED BY HNDI Cherry Apple Chia Bar	Cherry Apple Chia Bite	1/2 Bar
832		Garden of Eatin' Tart Berry Bites Bar	Berry, Nut & Seed Bite	1/2 Bar
848		Mission St. Balducci's Super Seed & Fruit Granola	Fruit & Granola Bite	1 Spoonful
818		Freedom Foods Chia, Apple & Cinnamon Chewy Granola Granola Bar	Apple, Oat & Cinnamon Bite	1/2 Bar

Three different stimuli flights were tested and discussed in the context of a snack bite with fruit flavor.

Four, 2-hour focus groups were conducted, two containing respondents who uploaded wholesome pictures, and two containing respondents who uploaded healthy pictures. The groups were separated by age, with a healthy and wholesome group conducted with each age range (18-24, and 30-55).

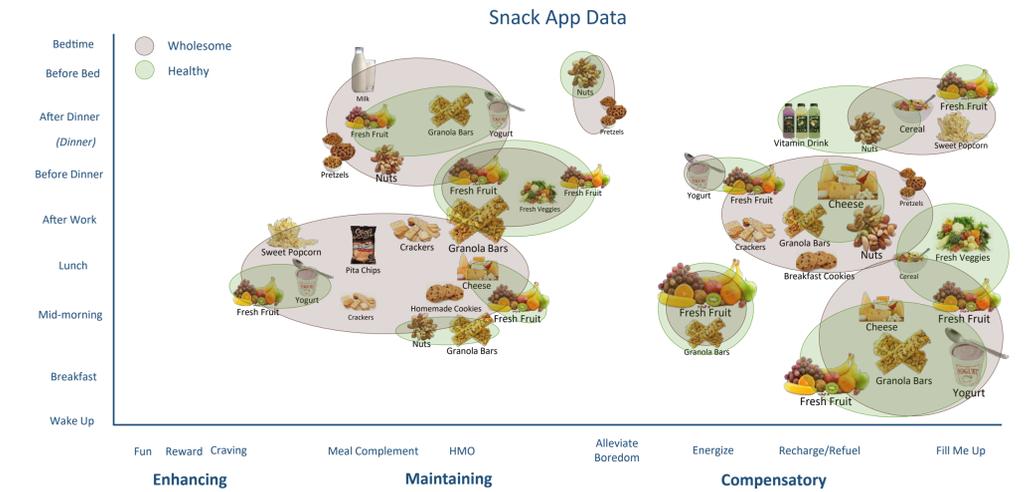


The graph to the left shows the percentage of snacks consumed from each category using data collected from the Blueberry Snack App. The total number of snacks logged was 345, and the total number of respondents was 150.



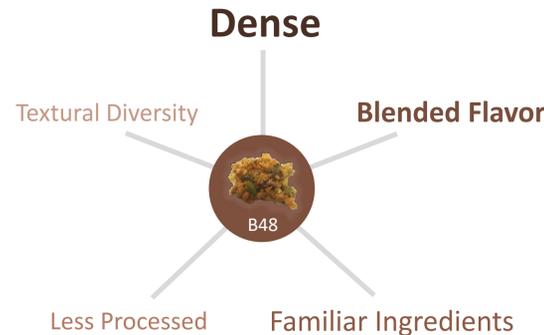
A landscape map was created from the Blueberry Snack App data, showing consumer snacking behavior with regard to healthy and wholesome snacks. While the two categories have large areas of overlap, there are key areas of differentiation.

Wholesome snacks are often incorporated into lunches as meal complements because they pair well with other elements of the meal.



Wholesome Priorities

- ✓ **Dense**
 - Oats, grains, and other bread-like qualities cue filling / satisfying
 - Consumers don't want to be hungry again quickly
- ✓ **Blended Flavor**
 - Multiple flavors blended together
 - Diverse flavor = more enjoyment
- ✓ **Familiar Ingredients**
 - Simple ingredients that are recognizable (e.g. fruits, grains, oats, etc.)
 - Familiar pantry ingredients
 - Gives consumers a feeling of comfort
- ✓ **Less Processed**
 - Not raw, but not perfectly-formed/uniform
 - Looks handmade
- ✓ **Textural Diversity**
 - Visible ingredients create diverse texture
 - Diverse texture cues fun and enjoyable



“Natural” Ingredients



- ✓ **“Natural” Ingredients**
 - No chemicals or preservatives
 - Visible ingredients let consumers know exactly what is in the snack
- ✓ **Unprocessed**
 - Ingredients in their raw or untouched form cue healthy
- ✓ **Singular Flavor**
 - Singular, dominant, identifiable flavor
 - Continuous, unchanging flavor character
- ✓ **Limited Sweetness**
 - Only comes from visually identifiable ingredients
 - Intensity matches expectations for visible ingredients
- ✓ **Simplicity**
 - Limited ingredients
 - Easily recognizable
- ✓ **Freshness**
 - Crisp and juicy texture cues fresh
 - Reminiscent of fresh fruit



Comforting - Filling - Satisfying

Conclusion

While the occasions for healthy and wholesome snacks are the same, there are some differences in the sensory attributes and emotional benefits of each. In developing a snack bite with a “healthy” or “wholesome” positioning, product development should focus on the prioritized sensory cues in order to create an aligned and satisfying experience. For more information and detailed findings, please contact us at: info@blue-berry.com \\ +1 267 954 0440