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Using completion test to estimate price levels for frozen hamburger

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Price plays an important role on consumer food choice. But what is the best value to charge a product or the appropriate price levels to be considered in a consumer research (e.g., direct methods or conjoint analysis)? Projective techniques can uncover consumer deeper thoughts, and may be used as an exploratory research tool to help understand how subjects deal with a product value. This study aimed to estimate price levels for frozen hamburger through completion test.

Data were collected via online questionnaire, and 357 people (63% female and 37% male) participated in the study. Stimulus was an image of a couple in a supermarket frozen aisle with a dialogue balloon. Participants responded: "Among industrialized frozen hamburgers, with 12 units and 672 grams, the most expensive costs... and the cheapest costs...". Valid answers were turned into numerical prices (Reais, the Brazilian currency). Data were treated separatedly, as low prices (LP) and high prices (HP). For both groups of data, it was calculated the mean and the standard deviation (SD). It was then used a two standart deviation method to exclude outliers. The mean and the SD were recalculated for the remaining data, until values were within the range of two SD from the mean. Finally, each mean indicated a price level (LP/HP). A medium price (MP) was obtained by the median of LP and HP.

Estimated prices for frozen hamburger via completion test were R$ 5.85 (LP) and R$ 10.44 (HP). MP was calculated in R$ 8.15. The price range was similar to that found in Brazilian retailers websites and the levels were comparable to those frequently used in conjoint analysis: LP (-30%), MP (+0%), HP (+30%).

Price levels derived from consumers via projective technique yielded valuable information, suggesting that completion test may be an useful technique to estimate price levels.

Keywords: Projective Technique, Completion Test, Price Levels, Frozen Hamburger