

## Sensory attributes and consumers' willingness to pay for apple varieties grown at different altitudes

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Previous studies on the consumers' acceptance of apples varieties state that sensory properties of the products have a large influence on consumers' willingness to pay (WTP). These studies found that perceived superior textural (e.g., firmness) and flavour (e.g., sweetness) positively impact consumers' WTP. Following this previous evidence, our objective is to study the effect of apples sensory properties in consumers' WTP for apples in Spain. Two apples varieties ("Golden Delicious" and "Reineta") grown at two different altitudes (higher and lower altitude) were investigated. First, we tested whether the WTPs and the effect of sensory properties and consumers' characteristics on these WTPs differs among apple varieties and growing altitudes. Second, these effects were measured. A total of 195 untrained apple consumers participated in the experiment conducted in Zaragoza (Spain). The experiment consisted of two steps. In the first, participants were asked to rate four textural and flavour attributes (firmness, juiciness, mealiness and sweetness) for the four apple samples. In the second step, participants should indicate their maximum WTP for each sample. Finally, socio-demographic information, fruit and apple consumption and purchase habits data were collected. Results indicated that the WTP and the effect of sensory properties and consumers' characteristics on the WTPs were different among the four analyzed apple samples. The WTPs for "Golden" was higher than for "Reineta" and, higher for the apples grown in high altitude than for the ones grown in low altitude. The only sensory property that influenced the WTP for the four apples was the sweetness with a positive impact while the mealiness did not influence the WTP for any of them. Juiciness positively influenced the WTP for all the apples except for "Golden" grown in low altitude. Firmness negatively influence the WTP for "Golden" variety and positively for "Reineta", regardless of the growing condition. These findings indicate that sweeter and juicer apples might be marketed with higher prices and that firmness is only appreciated in the case of specific cultivars. •