



**Consumer research: Context effects in meal appreciation
and real-life testing solutions for consumer studies**



In real meal situations, several contextual factors come into play, collectively shaping the dining experience and influence consumer behavior. Most important ones are **the physical context** -light, music... and the **social context** - interaction with other guests, staff.

As context impacts consumers' perception and judgment, it is important to pay attention to testing environment when evaluating food liking. A variety of options exist from **fully controlled** settings e.g. **sensory labs** with individual booths, to **real-life environments** e.g. restaurants.



Living Labs and **immersive rooms** provide an intermediate solution allowing a natural consumption experience in a semi-controlled setting.

At **LYFE Institute** (Lyon, France), an **immersive room** is used to bring people in a specific context supporting the proposed **meal storytelling**.

This **multisensory experience room** is equipped with screen-walls and video projectors, allowing image projection on walls; sound system allowing diffusion of ambiance sound or dialogues contributing to the room experience; smells diffusors in several places in the room...

Additionally, the Living Lab is a modular restaurant with flexible settings such as light intensity, music or ambiance sounds, room disposition for guest tables, service setting as buffet or at the table depending on the project objective and the food offer.

This ad hoc eating environment offers the capability to **observe consumer behavior in real-meal situations** using audiovisual recording of consumer behaviour in a variety of eating environments.

The HortiFoodTrends project relies on the Lyfe Living Lab to collect consumers appreciation of experimental recipes in real eating situations. Innovative desserts based on berries were developed by the culinary department after a co-creation phase involving consumers and experts.

Beside product testing in real eating environment, it is of particular interest to conduct specific studies to better understand the **context** impact on consumers, should it concern emotional status, food choice, consumed quantities, liking or even biological markers.

Thus, the physical surrounding control together with the restaurant concept flexibility makes **Living Lab a powerful tool** for relevant ad hoc studies on eating in context.

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