Food science product evaluation

How might we compare different products in the same category?

There are multiple brands of products of the same type. The labels, packaging and other characteristics of a favorite cracker, chip, dip or dressing will appear differently. What else distinguishes these products one from another? In this activity you will evaluate a set of similar products from a single category, such as four different brands of ranch dressing by observing various aspects of the packaging, organoleptic qualities, and chemical composition (sugar content, pH, etc).

Materials
4 similar products
pH meter or strips
refractometer
microscope
microscope slides
coverslips

Procedure

1. Gather a set of similar products from a category that you will evaluate. Example: 4 Ranch Dressings
2. Use the following tables to evaluate the similarities and differences in the products.

PACKAGING EVALUATION

Product name				
Bottle size and shape				
Label and tamper evident seal				
Cap and usability				

NUTRITION EVALUATION

Product name				
Serving size				
Calories				
Fat				
Sodium				
Carbs				
Sugar				
Protein				
Ingredient statement				

ORGANOLEPTIC SENSORY EVALUATION

Product name				
Color				
Appearance				
Texture				
Aroma				
Flavor				
Other comments				

ANALYTICAL EVALUATION

Product Name				
pH				
Brix				
Oil Droplet Size				

3. Determine the qualities you prefer for your ideal product by circling them in the tables.

4. Summarize your findings and describe your ideal product to develop.

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