

HEALTHIER.. BUT STILL TASTY?

Design of Kombucha packaging to communicate Health, Naturalness & Taste

When Packaging Speaks

Kombucha, a fermented tea, is growing in popularity due to its probiotic content and unique taste. But how can these qualities be communicated through packaging? Health-centered packaging often lacks cues for taste rewards, relying instead on consumers' self-control, which is frequently unsuccessful. Research shows that promoting healthier choices requires balancing health and taste cues, rather than focusing solely on health benefits (Li et al., 2024; Turnwald & Crum, 2018). However, tension arises because of the consumer belief that "healthy = less tasty" (Raghunathan et al., 2006). Possibly certain packaging cues can help resolve this tension, with naturalness offering a promising bridge: consumers often associate "natural = tasty" and "natural = healthy" (Wang et al., 2022).

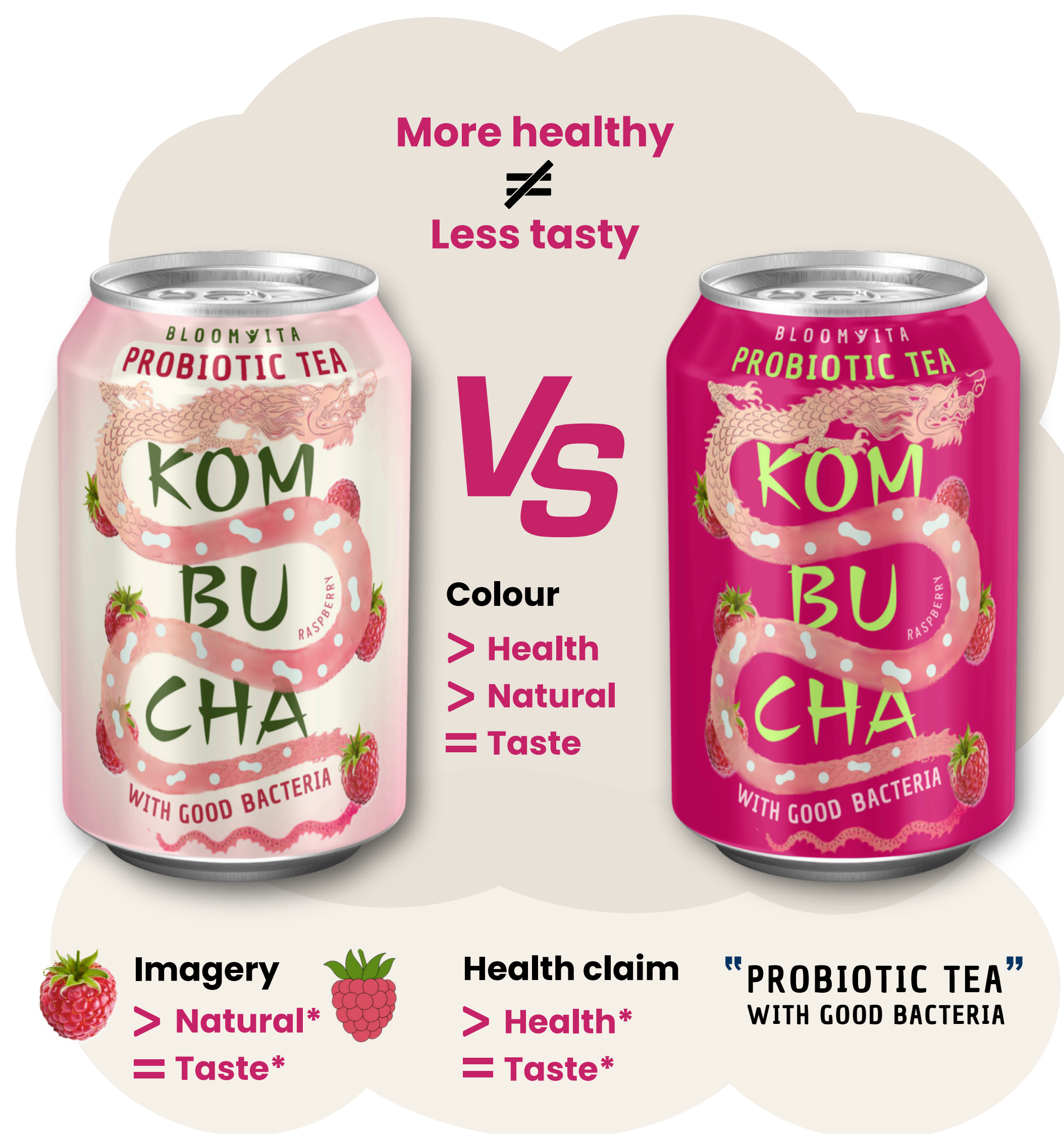
Research Question

How do colours, imagery, shape, and verbal claims on kombucha packaging influence consumer perceptions of healthiness and taste, and to what extent is this relationship mediated by perceived naturalness?

Method

- Literature review
- Study 1: Qualitative research; Focus group
- Study 2: Quantitative research: Survey
 - Cues studied: Colour, Shape, Imagery (health & ingredient), Claims (health & taste).

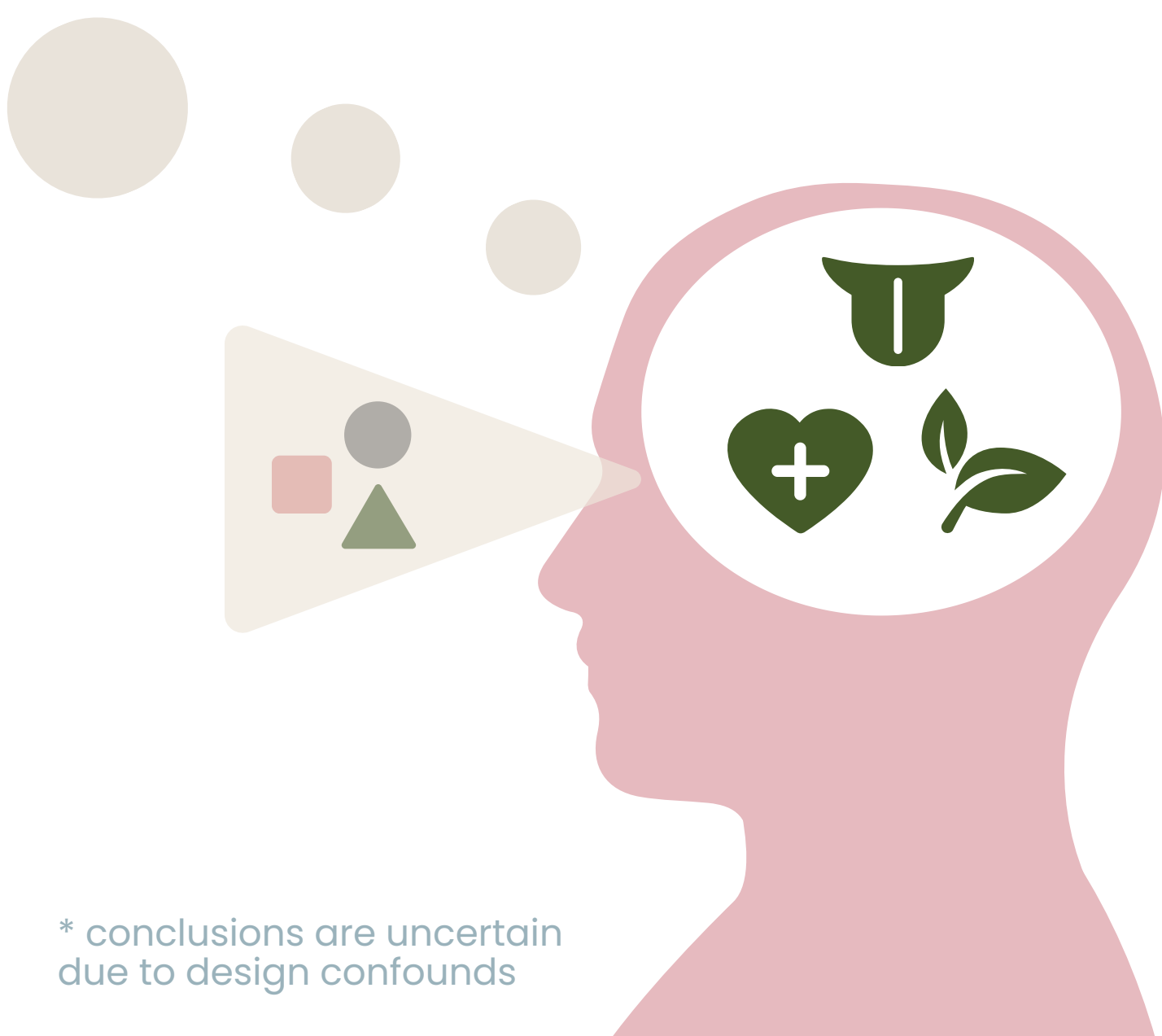
Findings



Takeaways

Design can guide healthier choices: Packaging can signal health without sacrificing taste appeal. To support this, designers must balance health and taste cues, positioning them carefully within the visual hierarchy. Naturalness cues can act as a bridge between packaging and health. Finally, future studies need to test packaging cues in real-life settings to see what consumers truly notice.

- 🎨 **Muted pastels → healthier & more natural**
- 💬 **Probiotic Health claim → healthier***
- 🍓 **Photographic fruit boosts naturalness***
- ⚠️ **Taste claims lower purchase intention**
- 🔨 **Better regulation for probiotic content needed:** Regulatory bodies should be careful allowing 'probiotics' to be considered as just a category classifier, consumers may interpret it as a health claim.



* conclusions are uncertain due to design confounds

Sophie Ngan
Design of Kombucha packaging to communicate consumer benefits
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Msc. Strategic Product Design

Committee
Dr. ir. Sijja Bakker-Wu
Dr. ir. Rick Schifferstein

TU Delft