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Jobs to Be Done Case Study Analysis

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Executive Summary:

Domenici et al. (2025) claim that they use the Jobs-to-Be-Done framework throughout this paper. I see no evidence to back up this statement. I see the authors use requirements, state they are using jobs, and spend a lot of time and effort uncovering consumer preferences and ideas that already exist, rather than pursuing novel solutions.

Case Overview:

Domenici et al. (2025) used a three-phase study (idea development, idea refinement and concept development, and concept validation) combined with the Jobs-to-Be-Done framework to devise new ways to get consumers to buy meat. Phase 1 involved interviews with 40 subjects: 20 "flexitarians" and 20 "omnivores," selected from a Tuscan consumer cooperative. The researchers then used semiotic analysis to develop theme cards, which were consolidated into product ideas. In Phase Two, the researchers engaged industry experts to assess the validity and viability of these product ideas. Phase Three validated these concepts through questionnaires sent to 247 consumers.

Critical Analysis:

Methodological Rigor:

My biggest problem with this paper, and there are many, is that I do not see any actual evidence that the authors used the Jobs to Be Done framework. They state they are using it, but they do not. Let's look at Table 5 in Section 3.1.1. "It should be easy and quick to prepare (as a product)", "The dish preparation should be guided", "It should elicit positive emotions", "It should be more sustainable and

ethical (and this should be clearly communicated)" (Domenici et al., 2025), along with every other Jobs to Be Done listed are not actually JTBD. These are requirements. While they may play to ideas of functional, emotional, and social ideas, they do not follow the "When I am in [context], I want to [job] so I can [outcome] because [motivation]." format. I do not see the actual "JTBD" format followed anywhere in this study.

From what I understand about JTBD, you start with observation. You watch the subjects until you come up with questions, then ask them. In this study, there was no observation; the researchers went straight to the interviews. Repertory Grid, Open-Ended Questions, and Free-Elicitation are not in themselves going to lead to novel solutions.

I'm not an expert on semiotic coding, so I had to look up the meaning to understand this paper, but I'm not sure they are actually using that method, either. It seems like they are doing something more akin to standard thematic analysis than semiotic coding.

This study was robust and complex, but I do not see how these approaches would lead to a breakthrough product. In my opinion, they did not even come close to doing so.

Strategic Insight:

Did this analysis generate an innovation? No. It did not. The concepts that they came up with: meal boxes and recommendations. Those things already exist. There are multiple meal box companies providing vegetarian and meat-inclusive meals, and they have been around for a while. "Concept testing provided a quantitative assessment of consumer interest in the concepts. Remarkably, five out

of six assessed product concepts generated high levels of interest among both omnivores and flexitarians" high levels of interest are not new and exciting products. I do believe this goes back to the fact that anything I see listed in their charts is just a simple requirement. Basically, what I see is that this elaborate study uncovered consumer preferences —and nothing else.

Critical Assessment:

The size and regional scope of this study are issues. It starts with a small number of subjects, in a limited place, and it doesn't really go anywhere from there. Saying you picked subjects with "high food innovativeness is meaningless. How would you justify that statement? How they went from their 54 theme cards to 5 product ideas is not transparent. So much of the study is based around the classifications of "flexitarians" and "omnivores", but most of all people on earth already fall into those categories. Sure, there are a handful of people who eat only vegetables or only meat, but they're in the minority. Finally, the authors never really get around to classifying their "jobs" as functional, emotional or social. It seems like they just read about JTBD and threw it into the paper, and never really attempted to do what the framework is meant to do.

References

1. Domenici, M., Pierguidi, L., Spinelli, S., Dinnella, C., & Monteleone, E. (2025). Innovating meat products: guiding tailor-made new product development for flexitarians and omnivores through a Jobs-To-Be-Done co-creation approach. *Food Quality and Preference*, 128, 105473.
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