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Motivational Interviewing to Reduce Household Food Waste

Marleena Lonna, Hanna Hartikainen and Inkeri Riipi

Natural Resources Institute, Finland

Abstract

Household food waste is a result of a complex series of individual behaviours and social interactions. Tackling household food waste is essential, as it accounts for over half of food waste generated in the EU (Eurostat, 2023). Different types of households vary in their routines and root causes of food waste, as well as their values and motivations to avoid food waste. Motivational interviewing is a behaviour change method that has been successfully applied in several areas of health behaviour change (Rubak et al., 2005), and, to a lesser extent, environmental behaviour change (e.g. Herzing et al., 2023). Based on self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2024), the method aims to support one's intrinsic motivation to change behaviour, through empathetic listening and encouraging change talk. The aim is to support the interviewee to pick their goals and actions themselves, to achieve changes that are meaningful for them and fit their personal values and goals. In Wastefocus project, we are exploring the possibilities of motivational interviewing to strengthen motivation to avoid food waste and to encourage changes in daily routines that result in household food waste. We conduct a survey (N=1000), household motivational interviews (N=6), and an intervention (N=100) to reduce household food waste in Finland. To achieve household food waste reductions at a societal level, scalability of the behaviour change method is essential. In this presentation, I will present preliminary results from the household interviews and discuss how these results will be used to formulate an AI assisted intervention procedure that scales up the method at the next phase of the project.

Keywords: motivational interviewing, household food waste, behaviour change, intervention development

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