

Behavior of Greek Households on Food Waste Generation

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Abstract

The factors that contribute to the formulation of food waste generation behavior at the household level, have begun to be investigated in recent years, as food waste has emerged as a stream with many environmental, economic and social impacts. The aim of this study is to develop appropriate methods for the introduction of food waste prevention, as a conscious behavior integrated into the daily activities and choices of Greek citizens. To achieve this goal, the Theory of Planned Behavior was used, which is the predominant approach of environmental psychology for understanding, interpreting, predicting and modifying environmental behavior. Through this approach, the mechanisms of behavioral change were sought, in an attempt to clarify the forms of intervention to which the strategy for the prevention of waste generation should be oriented, with the ultimate expected result of their minimization. The research data were collected through the self-completion of a structured questionnaire, from 921 people aged 18-75 years, during the period April - July 2017. The statistical analysis of the results was done using STATA 12 software. The research results showed that while the attitude of Greek households towards the general environmental issues is positive, the same does not happen with their attitude towards the adequacy of the natural resources of the planet. Conflicting perceptions were identified about the degree of household involvement in the amount of food waste generated, as respondents appear to be aware of the problem in general, but do not realize their own involvement in it. 61% of the sample know that most food waste in developed countries is generated by households, but 46.4% consider that they discard little food and 32.5% little or no food. No statistically significant difference was found in food waste prevention behavior between the two sexes, while the correlation between age and food waste was found to be negative, as young people appear to waste more food than older people. The results showed that the extended TPB model applied is useful in predicting consumer waste behavior. Intention has a positive effect on food waste prevention behavior. The strongest predictive factor of food waste prevention intention is the general environmental attitude and attitude towards food waste, followed by perceived behavioral control. In conclusion,

the attitude of people (especially young people) towards food waste and their environmental impact should be given priority in the design of intervention programs to reduce food waste generation.

Keywords: Food waste, Prevention, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Factor Analysis