

Understanding the Factors That Impact on Household Food Waste

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Abstract

World's population will be about 9 billion in 2050, which highlight a challenge of feeding a rapidly increasing population. However, about 1/3 of the total food produced is discarded. In Brazil, the situation is not different. From its 268.1 million tons of available food, approximately 10% is wasted. Food losses and waste occur in all supply chain points, however, the largest amount of food waste occurs in households. Therefore, it is important to study individual's behaviour for a better understanding of food waste prevention. One of the theories that can be used to understand the psychological factors that influence an individual on wasting food is the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). In the light of the foregoing, the general objective of our study was to identify the factors that influence food waste at the household level. The specific objectives were to identify the socio-demographic characteristics that influence on household food waste and to identify the psychological factors that influence on the food waste behaviour. To achieve the objectives of this research we developed a survey, separated in three groups of questions. The first group consisted of socio-demographic questions, the second group consisted of questions measuring the total amount of food waste and the third part of the survey consisted of questions about the psychological factors that drive people regarding to their quantity and frequency of the households' food waste. We perceived a tendency of people to waste more fruits, vegetables and salads. Our results showed that education, income, age and gender have significant correlation with household food waste generation. In relation to the psychological factors, our study showed that intention, personal attitudes, perceived behavioural control, subjective norms, the good provider identity and the household planning habits have significant correlation with food waste for all the six food groups we analysed.

Keywords: food waste prevention, theory of planned behavior, household food waste, food waste in Brazil