

Willingness to Pay for a Certification Scheme Against Food Waste: The Influence of Perceived Behavioural Control and Perceived Responsibility

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Abstract

Food waste is a very relevant topic in the context of food consumption sustainability. Many studies have explored individuals' attitudes and willingness to pay (WTP) in relation to certification schemes related to diverse ethical attributes, such as organic, fair trade, locally grown, and so forth. Little research has been conducted on the effect of a certification scheme based on food waste prevention, and the premium price individuals may be willing to pay for it (see La Barbera et al., 2014; Del Giudice et al., 2016). In the current study, a five-round experimental auction has been conducted with 79 participants to assess their willingness to pay a premium price for bread certified against food waste. The auction was non-hypothetical and subjects received an endowment to participate. In addition, we sought to explore the influence of personal sense of control, intended either as perceived behavioural control or perceived responsibility. This distinction has never been explored, even if previous research has shown the significance of control in relation to food waste (e.g., La Barbera et al., 2022). Perceived behavioural control is the individual's belief of being capable of implementing a behaviour, such as reducing food waste. Perceived responsibility is the personal sense of being responsible, directly and at least partially, of a certain situation or behaviour. In other terms, perceived behavioural control is connected with sense of efficacy, whereas perceived responsibility has more to do with the locus of control. Results show that participants are willing to pay more for bread certified against food waste. Premium price for the certified product is positively affected by perceived behavioural control ($\beta = .25, p < .05$): when individuals think they are able to reduce food waste, and reducing food waste does not appear as a too difficult task, they are willing to pay a higher premium price for the bread certified against food waste. On the contrary, the premium price is not affected by perceived responsibility ($\beta = .04, p = ns$). Results are robust as regards participants' income and gender. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords: consumer behavior, locus of control, self-efficacy, experimental auction

References

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