

The Canadian Consumer's Food Waste Concerns

Douae El-laia (della084@uottawa.ca) supervised by Dr. Leila Hamzaoui Essoussi (hamzaoui@telfer.uottawa.ca)

Résumé de recherche :

Le gaspillage alimentaire devient une grande préoccupation à travers le monde, incluant le Canada. L'objectif de cette recherche est de mieux comprendre les sensibilités individuelle et globale du consommateur canadien vis-à-vis du gaspillage alimentaire et leurs effets sur les pratiques de non-gaspillage. Sur la base des réponses de 176 participants interrogés par le biais d'un questionnaire, les résultats montrent que la sensibilité individuelle et la sensibilité globale influencent similairement l'importance accordée au non gaspillage alimentaire lors de leurs achats; néanmoins, ces sensibilités ont encore peu d'effet sur d'autres bonnes pratiques soulignées comme importantes par les consommateurs.



Introduction:

In most developed countries, excluding the agricultural sector, about 40% of the food wasted happens within households. Depending on studies and countries, households waste around 14% to 25% of what they buy (Laisney et al., 2013). Though consumers seem to be averse to wastefulness particularly when it comes to food products (Bolton and Alba, 2012), their lack of time and convenience seems not to allow them to put good practices into action. If behavioral measures were created and used to study the link between some practices and real or declared food waste practices of certain households (Hoj, 2011), not enough focus was put on the concept of consumers' concern towards food waste. According to Leborgne, Sirieix and Costa (2015), consumer's concern for food waste is defined as "the importance given to food waste and its consequences, and being affected by food waste."

Indeed, food waste has a direct effect for the consumer: if food waste is considered a loss for society, it first corresponds to a decrease of scarce resources which leads to a negative impact on our environment; but it is mostly a lost resource for the consumer that can lead to personal anger, culpability etc. The definition of the concern component in this study implies that these different levels may lead to different behavioral implications. This highlights the importance of better assessing consumer's level of concern about food waste and its consequences on various behaviors aiming at food waste reduction.

Research Question:

The purpose of this research is to better understand Canadian consumers' concerns towards food waste and its effect on their behavior. In other words: what is the importance of each dimension of food waste (at an individual and global level) in consumer's behavior? What are the effects of those concerns on the adoption of "good practices" against food waste in households?

Methodology:

To conduct this study, we prioritized the use of a quantitative method. Following a literature review on environmental concern and food waste, a survey was elaborated and data collection was conducted as following: a bilingual survey administered online to consumers in Quebec and Ontario, and at the Dining Hall of the University of Ottawa. The food waste concern scale developed by Leborgne et al. (2015) was used in this study. A total of 209 responses were collected. Results were based on data analysis of 176 usable responses using SPSS software to determine the influence of global and individual food waste concerns on various food wasting behaviors (correlations and regressions).

This research aims at providing a better understanding of the role of consumer's concern on food waste behavior and adoption of good practices, and providing ways to find the most convenient solution to better manage food waste.

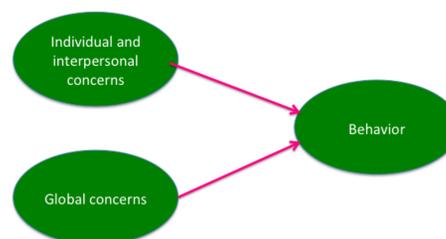
Conclusion:

Although consumers seem to be concerned by food waste and are knowledgeable about the various food waste reduction practices, results indicate that food waste concerns (individual and global) influence differently the various practices, showing that these dimensions do not have the same behavioral implications. Results also suggest that further analysis could lead to some differences among consumers based on their characteristics that are worth exploring. Last, these results call for further studies in order to identify: the origin of the food waste concerns, and the role of these concerns on real behavior as social desirability might affect declared behavior.

Abstract:

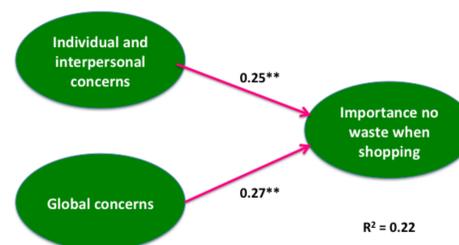
Food waste is becoming a major concern around the world as well as in Canada. The purpose of this research is to better understand the effect of both individual and global concerns towards food waste and their effects on consumers' food practices. Based on 176 collected answers using a questionnaire, the main results show that individual and global concerns similarly influence the importance of no waste during shopping; but these concerns still have no significant impact on other good practices considered as important by consumers.

The research Model:

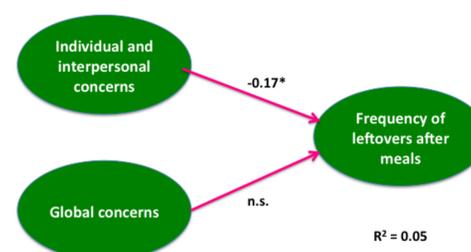


Results:

Effect of the two types of concern on the importance given to the No risk of waste when shopping



Effect of the two types of concern on the Frequency of disposing leftovers after meals



A Two Dimensional Concern for Food Waste

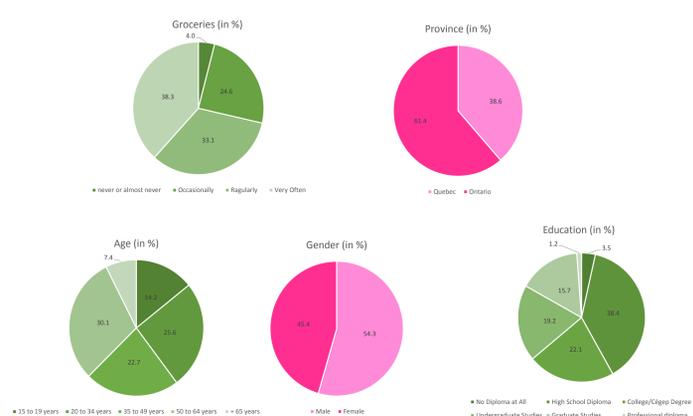
Latent Variables	Reliability	Items	Loadings
Individual Concern (13% var.)	$\alpha = 0.754$	I would feel ashamed if someone saw me getting rid of edible food	0.888
		Managing food properly in order to waste as less food as possible is a real concern for me	0.585
		I am really affected when I see someone throwing edible food away	0.731
Global Concern (57% var.)	$\alpha = 0.785$	Food waste poses problems for waste management in cities	0.788
		Today food waste is a great issue in Canada	0.784
		Food waste has really harmful consequences on planet earth	0.804

The various « waste-reducing » behaviors and their various antecedents

Behavior	No-Risk-Of-Waste Attribute	Disposal of Leftovers	Shopping Lists	Planning Meals	Putting Fridge in Order	Consuming leftovers ASAP	Priority to close expiry date
Variable							
CPP*	+	-				+	+
Involvement With Food				+	+	+	+
Individual Concern	+	-				+	+
Global Concern	+				+	+	+

*CPP = Consumer Purchasing Power

Respondents characteristics:



Thank You for Making This Research Possible:



G. Leborgne et Prof. L. Sirieix de