

NT8: Online experiment on effects of different messages

Intervention design ●

Objective. The intervention was in the form of a series of online experiments, with participants recruited through an online platform.

— **Experiment 1.** There were two intervention groups and one control group. Participants received messages and images linking meal planning with climate change and tasty food.

— **Experiment 2.** There were two intervention groups and one control group. Participants received messages and images linking wasting food with climate change and financial burden. Aim. The aim was to examine how environmental and taste-oriented messages affect behavioural intentions to reduce food waste and to plan meals (experiment 1) and how environmental and financially oriented messages affect interest in food waste reduction efforts (experiment 2). The intervention were based on the theory of planned behaviour.

Monitoring. Monitoring involved surveys on meal planning habits.

Drivers. Drivers were a lack of intention to reduce food waste, a lack of intention to plan meals in advance and interest in food waste reduction efforts.

Levers. Sharing messages (and images) linking meal planning with climate change and tasty food or financial burden will change consumers’ intentions regarding food waste.

Effectiveness:

An environmental message promoted higher interest in food waste reduction efforts than when there was no message. In addition, an environmental message was as effective as a message that conveys the financial burden of food waste. Results suggest that messages that associate food waste with its impact on the environment are: — more effective than no message at affecting intentions regarding food waste and meal-planning behaviour. — at least as effective as taste-oriented messages at affecting intentions regarding food waste reduction and meal-planning behaviour. — at least as effective as financially motivated messages at influencing citizens’ interest in food waste reduction efforts.

COUNTRY ●

United Kingdom

DURATION ●

December 2021 to February 2022, reporting December to October 2022

Information sourced from:

Swannell, R., Bruns, H., Brüggemann, N., Candeal, T., Casonato, C., Diercxsens, C., Garcia Herrero, L., Gil Roig, J.M., Haglund, Y., Van Herpen, E., Kaptan, G., Kasza, G., Mikkelsen, B.E., Miranda Pires, I.M., Obersteiner, G., Vainioranta, J., Vittuari, M., Watanabe, K. and Sala, S., Evaluation of consumer food waste prevention interventions, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, doi:10.2760/224541, JRC133003

Efficiency●

Approximately GBP 33 120.6 was spent. (This figure was estimated based on 3 months of work out of an 18-month project with a larger budget – the actual intervention’s implementation was less costly, but the costs were mostly allocated to labour.) Incentives paid to the participants equalled approximately GBP 4 500.

Transferability and scalability●

Transferability: the intervention was conducted before the cost-of-living crisis hit the United Kingdom and the financial lever for food waste reduction might have been less relevant at that point. It would be helpful to conduct a similar intervention in the United Kingdom and Europe, as the financial consequences of COVID-19.

Scalability. This was a sufficiently big intervention. The next step should be updating the intervention or sample composition, rather than increasing the sample size. Although the sample was big and diverse enough, and the biospheric values of the participants were controlled for in all analyses, we cannot conclude that linking food waste to the environment in communications and interventions will work in different contexts. Rather, messages of information-based intervention campaigns may need to be aligned with the values of the target audience. This suggests a need for further research to examine which groups of individuals would respond positively to environment, taste and finance-oriented messages.