

Waste not, want not! How to design an effective information-based food waste campaign

Webinar (27th September) - Questions & Answers

1. Do you have the learnings/outcomes of your literature review exercise on consumer food waste available for the public?

The outcomes of our literature review exercise are incorporated into our webinar and toolkit that we have been made publicly available.

2. Can food waste impact also be assessed by how it is wasted? For instance, recycling for growing fresh food is more acceptable than throwing it in the bin for incineration.

Yes, an argument can be made for distinguishing between different types of waste disposal based on their differing environmental impact. Concerns have been raised, however, that informing consumers about composting and recycling for growing may make them feel less motivated to prevent food waste in the first place, but I don't know if these concerns are substantiated.

3. Have you tried campaigns at primary schools? What about educational materials?

No, we haven't targeted children in our campaigns.

4. Are there actually people weighing and doing all the stuff you mentioned to estimate the success of the campaign? How do you recruit them?

In the studies I described, the people who weighed the garbage were either the researchers (or people associated with the research team) or participants.

E.g. in the In van der Werf et al., 2019 study I referred to, the study team collected the garbage samples from the intervention households. They also weighed and manually sorted it.

In the Wharton et al. study I referred to, participants were trained to weigh their garbage. According to the paper "Participants were recruited through social media (e.g., Facebook, Craigslist), flyers, community events, and farmers' markets from May 2019 to September 2019."

If you were doing an intervention in a cafeteria/restaurant, the staff working there might be recruited to weigh the garbage.

5. If people aren't able to do the studies that go along with the campaign (surveys, measurements) are there simpler ways to check effectiveness?

The only way I can think of is if the information you want to know could be available in some other way, e.g., public records on food waste or statistics on waste disposal from the local municipality.

6. Is the energy crisis of 2022 an opportunity to frame reducing food waste as a measure to save money? Or is it still better to emphasize wins for society (e.g., climate)?

Perhaps a safer approach is to highlight both benefits if there is no need to choose one over the other. That way you can address a wider range of motivations.

7. I see a lot of the results are around a 30% reduction in food waste. Is that the maximum that is possible?

The time period of the interventions described here ranged from 2- 5 weeks. It may be that interventions that go for a longer period may increase the opportunity for people to improve on their food waste reduction methods even more, as they may take on a wider range of food waste behaviour over time, or perform them more effectively. Furthermore, I still see the potential for these interventions to be improved, which may in turn reduce food waste even further.

8. Is there any initiative to establish official methods to measure food waste for a more standardized approach?

Yes! Some examples are:

- Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard (World Resources Institute, 2016): [FLW Standard final 2016.pdf \(flwprotocol.org\)](#)
- EU-FUSIONS Quantification Manual: [FUSIONS Food Waste Quantification Manual.pdf \(eu-fusions.org\)](#)

9. Would you be interested in co-conducting (or able to conduct an) intervention in corporate restaurants?

This is something we could potentially do. We would be open to discussing this possibility.

10. Was the Portuguese school intervention done through food teachers in the school?

It appears that intervention was done through the researcher, with the participation of teachers at the school. Here is the link to the study in question, with a description of the methodology: [untitled \(archive.org\)](#)

All references are at the end of the webinar PPT.