

May 28 – 31, 2019

48TH EMAC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

UNIVERSITÄT HAMBURG, GERMANY

Proceedings



**Beauty is in the eye of the beholder:
The role of construal level in reducing the "beauty-is-good" bias
contributing to food waste reduction**

Abstract

Evolutionary needs have a profound influence on consumer choices. Unconsciously, the quest for the perfect appearance, as an attribute of quality and security, increases the waste of food with low aesthetics, products with different color or shape, usually called suboptimal food. However, there is an urgent need to improve food systems and food inequality, which waste reduction is a crucial calling. Drawing on construal level theory, this paper discusses that the level of abstractness can generate a reduction in the perceived risk of those products. Findings of two experiments show that construal level influences the way consumers perceive the risk when faced by products with low aesthetics. Specifically, we show that abstract construal can diminish the “beauty-is-good” bias and consequently, reduce waste behaviors. Our findings have critical implications for researchers, managers and public policy on how to engage consumers in sustainable and social responsible habits.

Key Words: food waste, aesthetics, construal level

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics