

When Unfamiliar Ingredients Meet Social Media Influencers: Shaping Consumers' Intention to Purchase Upcycled Food

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Abstract

To combat food waste, companies are offering upcycled food as a promising solution, as it allows by-products to be reused. However, unfamiliar ingredients can lead to skepticism and influence the perception and thus purchase intention of upcycled food negatively. To address consumers' insecurity, a communication strategy is required, with social media influencers offering a promising option. Therefore, our research examines the influence of ingredient unfamiliarity and social media influencer recommendations on purchase intention of upcycled food. An online experiment ($n = 233$) reveals that ingredient unfamiliarity has a central role in the acceptance of upcycled food by influencing purchase intention via expected taste and perceived healthiness. Ingredient unfamiliarity reduces the expected taste and perceived healthiness, while a social media influencer recommendation mitigates the negative influence of ingredient unfamiliarity on perceived healthiness and purchase intention.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics