

Food Waste | From Excess to Enough



No Waste Like Home - How The Good Provider Identity Boosts Household Food Waste

Many of us feel bad about wasting food and want to do better. However, our desire to ensure our families have plenty to eat often leads to excess food that is at risk of being thrown away. Our research explored how this “good provider” identity affects food waste and developed a practical intervention to help reduce it.

We conducted two studies: an online survey about food waste habits and a field study examining actual food waste. Both studies showed that the good provider identity is an important driver of excessive purchasing that subsequently results in household food waste.

Next, we developed an intervention in the form of a package size swap to address this behavior at the point of purchase. By including messages such as “sufficient amount for household” and “food waste reduction,” we encouraged consumers to swap to smaller package sizes. The results were promising, showing an average reduction of 8% in the total amount of food purchased. The food waste reduction message was particularly effective among

consumers with a lower good provider identity. Thus, by suggesting smaller packages, retailers can help consumers purchase in more appropriate amounts and reduce their food waste.

Message Type	Recommended Package Size	Price
Sufficient amount for household message	Fresh gnocchi 600 gram	5,40
Sufficient amount for household message	Fresh gnocchi 400 gram	3,80
Food-waste reduction message	Fresh gnocchi 600 gram	5,40
Food-waste reduction message	Fresh gnocchi 400 gram	3,80

Source

A. Werkman, J. van Doorn, K. van Ittersum, and A. Kok. No waste like home: How the good provider identity drives excessive purchasing and household food waste. *Under review.*



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