

Food and Consumers: Current Issues and Future Directions

Friday 6th April, University of Kent

Iain Fraser, School of Economics, University of Kent

Ben Lowe, Kent Business School, University of Kent

Diogo Souza-Monteiro, School of Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University



Research Forum

Food and Consumers: Current Issues and Future Directions

On Friday 6th April Professor Iain Fraser (Economics, University of Kent), Professor Ben Lowe (Kent Business School, University of Kent) and Dr Diogo Souza-Monteiro (Natural and Environmental Sciences, Newcastle University) are hosting a one-day inter-disciplinary workshop on consumer choice and food. The workshop brings together an exciting group of researchers from a range of disciplinary areas (e.g., marketing, environmental economics, agribusiness, psychology, development and social policy) who will examine various aspects of consumer choice as it relates to food. Based on the presentations the forum will cover themes from *Consumer Food Security and Nutrition*, *Economics and Food Choice* and *Framing of Information and Consumer Choice*. **The keynote address is to be given by Professor Klaus Grunert (Aarhus University)**. A draft schedule with titles and abstracts is provided below with location details.

The event will run from 10am until 5pm with lunch and refreshments provided for all participants. If you would like to attend please register your interest by following the link below:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/consumers-and-food-current-issues-and-future-directions-tickets-43975377538>

Iain Fraser
School of Economics
University of Kent

Ben Lowe
Kent Business School
University of Kent

Diogo Souza-Monteiro
Natural and Environmental Sciences
New castle University



Keynote Speaker

Professor Klaus Grunert

Department of Management, MAPP Centre, Aarhus University



Biography: Klaus G. Grunert is Professor of Marketing at Aarhus University, and is the founder and director of the MAPP Research Center. He has done extensive research in the area of consumer behaviour, mostly with regard to food, and in making consumer insight useful in areas like new product development, market communication and public policy campaigns aimed at healthy eating or other socially desirable behaviours. In particular, he has done research on quality perception and food choice, healthy

eating, effects of nutrition labeling and of health claims, public acceptance of biotechnology, on how insight into consumer behaviour feeds into product development processes in food producing companies, and on competence development in the food industry. As director of MAPP, he has carried out more than 80 collaboration projects with the food industry, including several pan-European studies, and has participated in or led numerous EU FP projects. Having an h-index of 69, he is the author of 12 books, more than 200 academic papers in international refereed journals and numerous other publications. Klaus is a past president of the European Marketing Academy and was professor of the European Institute for Advanced Studies in Management.

Klaus is a German citizen who has lived in Denmark since 1987. His research and visiting appointments at other universities have taken him around the world.

Abstract: Food quality has traditionally been viewed as consisting mainly of experience qualities, such that quality is uncertain before the purchase and needs to be inferred from quality cues, but is revealed during consumption, such that quality expectations can be confirmed or disconfirmed, resulting in (dis-)satisfaction. However, current food trends towards more focus on healthiness, responsibility and authenticity imply that food is increasingly positioned in terms of credence qualities. Drawing on a number of studies carried out at the MAPP Centre, it is argued that there is a need for improved understanding of quality perception processes both before and after the purchase. Before purchase, the strong focus on the role of labelling and claims has resulted in much attention being given to the cognitive processes preceding food choice, with correspondingly lesser attention given to affective routes to the formation of quality expectations. After purchase, the interaction of informational cues and sensory properties needs more attention. The presentation closes with implications for future research on consumer food quality perception and food choice.

Schedule

9:30-10:00	Coffee/registration	
10:00-10:15	Introduction	Alastair Bailey, University of Kent
10:15-11:15	Presentations: Consumer Food Security and Nutrition	Nigel Poole, SOAS University of London "Livin' is more than stayin' alive: tackling MNDs in South Asia" Noel Russell, University of Manchester "Consumers, food and the evolution of global food security"
11:15-11:30	Refreshment break	
11:30-12:15	Keynote Talk	Klaus Grunert, Aarhus University "Consumer food quality perception and food choice: The rise of credence qualities and the role of labelling information"
12:15-13:00	Lunch	
13:00-14:30	Presentations: Economics and Food Choice	Ariane Kehlbacher, University of Reading "The relationship between time scarcity and expenditure on takeaway food – A smooth mixture approach" Seda Erdem, University of Stirling "Do food labels influence our choices and the way we make decisions? Evidence from food choice experiments" Luca Panzone, Newcastle University "Nudging, taxing, moral recall and the carbon footprint of supermarket shopping"
14:30-14:45	Refreshment break	
14:45-15:45	Presentations: Framing of Information and Food Choice (a)	Kishore Gopalakrishna Pillai, University of East Anglia "Regulatory focus, nutrition involvement, and nutrition knowledge" Sarah Hotham, University of Kent "Using novel methods in psychology to explore factors that influence food choices: The contribution of eye-tracking and neurophysiological measures"
15:45-16:00	Refreshment break	
16:00-17:00	Presentations: Framing of Information and Food Choice (b)	Diogo Souza-Monteiro, Newcastle University; Ben Lowe, University of Kent; Iain Fraser, University of Kent "Changing Consumers' Food Choices Using Calorie Counters" Monique M. Raats, University of Surrey "Enhancing the impact of nutrition labels on food products"
17:00-17:30	Wrap up	Discussants: Iain Fraser, Diogo Souza Monteiro, Ben Lowe

Themes and Abstracts

Consumer Food Security and Nutrition

Livin' is more than stayin' alive: tackling MNDs in South Asia

Nigel Poole (SOAS, University of London)

Abstract

'Assuring global food security' is in the Sustainable Development Goals and about 800 million people today are hungry and lack food security. Nutrition security focuses on micronutrient deficiencies (MNDs) which affect 2 billion people and in the first 1000 days of life cause irreversible damage to a child's growth and development. This paper will report research which aims to improve nutrition outcomes for vulnerable consumer groups in South Asia. Afghanistan has high rates of child stunting, where public health policies are primarily therapeutic and there is little action to address micronutrient deficiencies through food-based approaches. We will comment on the need for better policy linkages.

Consumers, food and the evolution of global food security

Noel Russell (University of Manchester)

Abstract

The recent reversal of many decades improvement in global food security is raising some concerns. This presentation takes a broad-brush approach and considers how consumer related processes may have contributed to this reversal through the four pillars of food security; food availability, food affordability, food utilisation and nutrition, and stability/sustainability. Even if we do not yet know whether the observed trend reversal is more than just a blip, it would appear that a focus on relevant consumer processes can contribute to our understanding of how global food security may evolve over the next decade as we approach the Sustainable Development Goal targets for 2030.

Economics and Food Choice

The relationship between time scarcity and expenditure on takeaway food – A smooth mixture approach

Ariane Kehlbacher (University of Reading)

Abstract

Households attempt to economise on their time by purchasing foods that require less time investments. This behaviour differs between households depending on their time scarcity. This paper investigates how Engle curves of takeaway food consumption differ between households experiencing different levels of time scarcity. A smooth mixture of regressions is estimated which is a finite mixture of component models with covariate-dependent mixing weights.

Do food labels influence our choices and the way we make decisions? Evidence from food choice experiments

Seda Erdem (University of Stirling)

Abstract

This research investigates whether front-of-pack labels can be considered as educative visual nudges. It explores consumers' preferences for different labelling formats, such as colour-codes, descriptor texts and numbers, and how different labelling formats influence consumers' choices and the way they make decisions. Using an integrated method that brings together techniques used in behavioural science and economics, we provide insights into explaining food choices and decision-making.

Nudging, taxing, moral recall and the carbon footprint of supermarket shopping

Luca Panzone (Newcastle University)

Abstract

This study uses an incentive-compatible experimental online supermarket to assess the extent by which prior environmentally-friendly behaviour, carbon taxes, and nudges motivate sustainable consumption. Previous research suggests that consumers may compensate past (current) morally desirable with current (past) undesirable acts over time; while carbon taxes and nudges have been promoted as effective tools to reduce the carbon footprint of food baskets, despite limited empirical evidence. Results show that all instruments can reduce the carbon footprint of the basket, but their dynamics can vary: nudges tend to be short-lived, while taxes and choice architecture tend to have a more persistent effect.

Framing of Information and Consumer Choice

Regulatory focus, nutrition involvement, and nutrition knowledge

Kishore Gopalakrishna Pillai (University of East Anglia)

Abstract

Few studies have examined the antecedents of nutrition involvement. Similarly, conflicting results have been recorded on the relationship between nutrition involvement and nutrition knowledge. This paper addresses these research gaps by exploring the role of regulatory focus as an antecedent of nutrition involvement. It also examines the effect of nutrition involvement on nutrition knowledge. A large-scale study with 1125 Taiwanese consumers confirms a positive effect of promotion focus and no significant effect of prevention focus, on nutrition involvement. Gender and income moderate the effect of promotion focus on nutrition involvement, which in turn has positive effects on nutrition knowledge.

Using novel methods in psychology to explore factors that influence food choices: The contribution of eye-tracking and neurophysiological measures

Sarah Hotham (University of Kent)

Abstract

Individuals typically make over 200 food-related decisions each day. Choosing what type of food to consume is complex and influenced by multiple factors, as acknowledged by the influential Foresight obesity report. To explore how these factors affect behaviour, one avenue of emerging research focuses on the role of conscious and non-conscious processes in the brain. This talk will highlight the potential of novel research methods, specifically eye-tracking and neurophysiological techniques, to explore the role of these processes when choosing food. The applicability of this research to broader issues on obesity and population-level behaviour change interventions will also be discussed.

Changing consumers' food choices using calorie counters

Diogo Souza-Monteiro (Newcastle University), Ben Lowe (University of Kent) and Professor Iain Fraser (University of Kent)

Abstract

A common way to provide consumers with nutritional information has been through nutritional labels on individual food packages. However, though commonplace such practices have attracted a great deal of debate in the academic literature, leading to questions about their effectiveness. One

particular issue that has been raised is that consumers ultimately need to make decisions about food products in the context of their diet rather than on an individual basis. Technology may assist consumer information processing in this regard by providing more customised and relevant information about the basket of goods being purchased at the point of decision. To assess how the provision of basket level nutrition information influences choice outcomes we designed an online shopping experiment that aimed to determine whether a calorie counter (with basket level nutritional information) would change the total calories participants add to their basket and how healthy that basket was perceived to be. We also manipulated time pressure and the size of the shop. The experiment was first administered on representative sample of British consumers and then on a more nutritious conscious sample of consumers. Our results suggest that subjects with dietary health conditions had a significantly lower number of calories in their shopping baskets. This effect is moderated by concerns with health, time pressure and size of shop (more or less meals to buy for). These results are promising and the first to reflect how consumers make food choices for baskets of food products rather than individual food products in a retail setting; they suggest opportunities to improve the dietary choices that consumers make through providing more relevant and useful information facilitated through technology. However, the results need to be tested in more realistic settings to establish their generalisability.

Enhancing the impact of nutrition labels on food products

Monique M. Raats (Food, Consumer Behavior and Health Research Centre; University of Surrey)

Abstract

Nutrition labelling can be viewed as a way of reducing the information asymmetry between producers and consumers, where producers provide consumers with information they would not otherwise have about a product. Evidence shows that companies are manufacturing products in an attempt to display more favourable front of pack labels through reformulation and new product development. Research indicates that simply providing nutrition information on the back of pack and highlighting it on the front of pack is not effectively resulting in more healthful food purchasing behaviour as in real life settings as personal and contextual factors can take precedence over health consideration in driving choice. Findings from a UK pilot randomised controlled trial of an intervention to increase the use of traffic light food labelling in UK shoppers (the FLICC trial) will be presented.

University of
Kent