

Extended Abstract

Please do not add your name or affiliation

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| Paper/Poster Title | Changing Climate, Changing Diet – Consumer Adaptation |
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Abstract prepared for presentation at the 96th Annual Conference of the
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| Abstract | 200 words max |
| In the light of the Global Climate Change – that is expected to greatly affect the Carpathian Basin – consumers' may also need to adapt, since choices related to food (and beverages) have a severe impact on the environment. Plant-based diets are considered to be environmentally more advantageous strategies. Using a large survey data, in this paper we test whether the willingness to adopt environmentally friendly diets depends on the actual diet. | |
| Keywords | Climate change, Consumer Behaviour, Willingness to adopt |
| JEL Code | D12, Q00 see: www.aeaweb.org/jel/guide/jel.php?class=Q |
| Introduction | 100 – 250 words |
| <p>Hungarian agriculture faces enormous challenges due to climate change. Emerging climate factors, such as increasing number of heat days and the decreasing number of frosty days are expected to affect both traditional and intensive crop production. Choices related to food (and beverages) considered to have a severe impact on the environment; plant-based diets are often mentioned as environmentally advantageous strategies while positive impact is attributed to locavore diets, too. Local food purchases are often motivated by product quality and personal health considerations, the desire of supporting the local economy and caring for the environment due to reduced food mileage; in spite of the fact transport was found to be not a major cause of GHG-emission (Weber and Matthews, 2008). Thus the combination of both, i.e. the adoption of a locally sourced, plant-based diet (amended by further measures such as technological changes) is expected to provide the best outcome, environmentally speaking.</p> <p>There is growing evidence that 'green identity' is not necessarily reflected in the overall behaviour. Although there are some issues that reduce the probability for purchasing local food (such as inconvenience, e.g. reduced opening hours, typically cash-only paying possibilities, etc.), very little is known about the actual barriers of adopting local-focused and/or plant-based eating habits despite the acknowledged benefits.</p> <p>Thus we test the following hypothesis: The willingness-to-adopt very much depends on the actual diet: willingness is higher when only slighter changes are to be addressed, as opposed to drastic changes, e.g. quitting meat-eating as such.</p> | |

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| Methodology | 100 – 250 words |
| <p>A large, representative survey was conducted amongst adult Hungarian consumers in June 2021 (N=1031 observations). The survey focused on socio-economic status, shopping habits, diet and the impact of the COVID crises on all the above. In addition, a section was devoted to uncover psychological profile. The Theory of Basic Human Values of Schwartz (2012) is a theory of cross-cultural psychology, including ten universal values that are stable across cultures. In the current study, the Schwartz Portrait Values Questionnaire was applied to measure these ten basic values.</p> <p>A variety of choice models, including ordered and generalised ordered logit were applied to estimate the willingness to adapt, subject to personal characteristics.</p> | |
| Results | 100 – 250 words |
| <p>Currently preliminary results are available. In general, Hungarian adult population seems to be conservative, and unwilling to reduce meat consumption, irrespective of whether environmental, health or animal welfare issues are concerned. Besides gender, and to a lower extent, age and the level of education, self-transcendence values appear to have an impact on the willingness-to-adopt environmental-friendly diets, regardless of whether quitting meat consumption completely, or only its reduction is at stake. The impact of the value ‘power’ seems to be controversial across the models with its sign changing.</p> | |
| Discussion and Conclusion | 100 – 250 words |
| <p>The common motivational force behind self-transcendence values (‘universalism’ and ‘benevolence’) is the promotion of the wellbeing of society and nature above one’s own interests. The importance of the value ‘power’ shows the extent to which a person values dominance and control over other people and resources – and processes. Consumers placing higher importance on self-transcendence values are more likely to adopt pro-environmental behaviour in order to mitigate climate change impacts. Those who value power are more likely to stop eating meat than to reduce their consumption, which might be due to climate anxiety – changing behaviour more profoundly might be a psychological coping strategy.</p> | |

