
Menu 2 - Paper 2

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Evaluation of Food-Related Risks in the Catering Sector

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Abstract: Specialists of food safety underline the importance of psychological aspects of good hygiene practices application. Sanitary risks perception is considered as an important determinant of these practices. Studies in psychological framework have demonstrated that errors are likely to occur when people reason under risk.

We propose an alternative approach of good hygiene decisions in the catering sector, based on a modern dual process model of memory and reasoning, the fuzzy trace theory (FTT). According to FTT, reasoning under risk is affected by knowledge deficit but also by failure of knowledge retrieval, representational biases and processing interferences. We tested the hypothesis that expertise in sanitary risks could decrease errors linked to knowledge deficit but increase errors linked to the cognitive process of knowledge retrieval. One-hundred- eleven catering sector professionals (38 auditors, 37 managers and 36 operators) completed a questionnaire exploring their perceptions of specific food-related risks. Based on two criteria of expertise, status and experience, we assume that expertise in risk perception increases from operators to managers, auditors being considered as the expert group for questions which are not linked to a specific place of work.

The results confirm the specific predictions of FTT. Auditors made less errors linked to knowledge deficit than Managers and Operators. Furthermore, for the two groups of professionals of catering, the more expert professionals made more errors linked to retrieval failure and less errors linked to knowledge.

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