
Menu 4 - Paper 2

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Size matter! A choice architectural field experiment in reducing food waste

P.G. Hansen 1
A.M. Jespersen 2
L.R. Skov 3

1. Department of Communication, Business and Information Technologies, Roskilde University, Roskilde, Denmark
2. Initiative for Science, Society and Policy, Denmark
3. Faculty of Engineering and Science, Department of Development and Planning, Aalborg University, Copenhagen, Denmark

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Abstract:

Objectives: We examined how a reduction in plate size would affect the amount of food waste from leftovers in a field experiment at a standing lunch for 220 CEOs.

Methods: A standing lunch for 220 CEOs in the Danish Opera House was arranged to feature two identical buffets with plates of two different sizes. One buffet featured standard sized plates that served as control (standard size as provided by the caterer, 27cm). A second buffet featured smaller sized plates (24cm) that served as the intervention. After the lunch concluded (30 minutes), all leftover food was collected in designated trash bags according to size of plates and weighed in bulk.

Results: Those eating from smaller plates (n=145) left significantly less food to waste (aver. 14,8g) than participants eating from standard plates (n=75) (aver. 20g) amounting to a reduction of 25,8%.

Conclusions: Our field experiment tests the hypothesis that a decrease in the size of food plates may lead to significant reductions in food waste from buffets. It supports and extends the set of circumstances in which a recent experiment found that reduced dinner plates in a hotel chain lead to reduced quantities of leftovers.

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Research & Innovation Center - Institut Lyfe

Château du Vivier - Ecully - France
Tel: +33 (0)4 72 18 02 20

Contact

Raphaëlle Mouillefarine
Partnerships Development
[Send an email](#)
+33 (0)4 26 20 97 63

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