

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: The role of construal level in reducing the "beauty-is-good" bias contributing to food waste reduction

**Ana Castagna**

Universidade Nova de Lisboa

**Diego Costa Pinto**

NOVA Information Management School

**Marcia De Barcellos**

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul / PPGA

Cite as:

Castagna Ana , Costa Pinto Diego , De Barcellos Marcia (2019), Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: The role of construal level in reducing the "beauty-is-good" bias contributing to food waste reduction. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 48th, (8231)

Paper presented at the 48th Annual EMAC Conference, Hamburg, May 24-27, 2019.



# Beauty is in the eye of the beholder: The role of construal level in reducing the "beauty-is-good" bias contributing to food waste reduction

## **Abstract**

Evolutionary needs have a profound influence on consumer choices. Unconsciously, the quest for the perfect appearance, as an attribute of quality and security, increases the waste of food with low aesthetics, products with different color or shape, usually called suboptimal food. However, there is an urgent need to improve food systems and food inequality, which waste reduction is a crucial calling. Drawing on construal level theory, this paper discusses that the level of abstractness can generate a reduction in the perceived risk of those products. Findings of two experiments show that construal level influences the way consumers perceive the risk when faced by products with low aesthetics. Specifically, we show that abstract construal can diminish the "beauty-is-good" bias and consequently, reduce waste behaviors. Our findings have critical implications for researchers, managers and public policy on how to engage consumers in sustainable and social responsible habits.

**Keywords:** *food waste; aesthetics; construal level*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics