

Exploring Consumer Motives for Food Rescue through Food Rescue Apps: The Moderating Role of Quality Orientation

Kaniz Fatema

University of Eastern Finland

Anushree Tandon

University of Eastern Finland

Heli Hallikainen

University of Eastern Finland

HELEN REIJONEN

University of Eastern Finland

Cite as:

Fatema Kaniz, Tandon Anushree, Hallikainen Heli, REIJONEN HELEN (2026), Exploring Consumer Motives for Food Rescue through Food Rescue Apps: The Moderating Role of Quality Orientation. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 55th*, (133707)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



Exploring Consumer Motives for Food Rescue through Food Rescue Apps: The Moderating Role of Quality Orientation

Abstract

Food rescue apps are viable digital solutions to counteract food waste, yet consumers differ in the motives that guide their use. This study examines how competing motives, i.e., perceived economic benefit versus ethical concern, shape consumers' purchase intention and corresponding behavior when using a food rescue app. Analyzing data collected from 245 app users via a two-wave survey we find that ethical concern significantly increases purchase intention, whereas economic benefit does not. Intention strongly predicts surplus food purchases a month later. A multigroup analysis shows that these effects differ by quality orientation. For low-quality oriented consumers, economic benefit drives intention, while for high-quality oriented consumers, ethical concern is the key predictor. Across both groups, intention consistently predicts behavior. The findings highlight the importance of considering quality-orientation when promoting food rescue app purchases and offer guidance for adapting economic versus sustainability-focused communication.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics