

Rescued or Rejected? The Contradictory Impact of “Rescued” Claims on Consumer Evaluations of Upcycled Foods

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Abstract

While upcycled foods offer an effective solution to the problem of food waste by utilizing ingredients that would otherwise be discarded, consumer evaluations of such products remain subject to debate. Unlike prior studies, this research examines the impact of the “rescued” claim, which is commonly used by marketers, on product perceptions across different food types (hedonic vs. utilitarian). Contrary to marketers’ intentions, the findings reveal that the “rescued” claim can backfire by evoking feelings of disgust, thereby reducing purchase intention for hedonic foods, while showing no such effect for utilitarian foods. In contrast, the “rescued” claim positively influences perceived healthiness only for utilitarian foods, which in turn increases purchase intention.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics