

Title:

Environmental and animal welfare issues in food choice: The case of farmed fish

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Abstract:

Purpose – The primary purpose of this study is to investigate whether welfare issues are important to consumers also relating to fish. Second, it aims to identify segments based on animal and fish welfare issues, environmental concerns and ambivalence about farmed fish.

Design/methodology/approach – A questionnaire was designed to investigate consumers' concern for environmental and animal and fish welfare issues together with variables used in profiling segments in the study. The measurement scales used here are adapted from validated scales in previous studies. The survey was conducted in Valencia, Spain, among 450 randomly-chosen respondents.

Findings – Animal welfare issues related to farmed fish do not seem to be important for the consumers in Valencia. There are, however, differences among the consumers relating to general environmental and animal welfare concern, and ambivalence. Three segments were identified: the unconcerned (27 per cent), the wild fish concerned (34.5 per cent) and the ambivalent (38.5 per cent). Attitudes toward farmed fish, the importance of natural food and social class were most important in profiling differences between clusters.

Practical implications – The findings indicate that the animal welfare issue has not yet become a barrier for farmed fish in Valencia. The results may help fish-farming companies to find their target group among the consumers, based on environmental and animal welfare issues. The results also indicate that there are consumers who are somewhat ambivalent about farmed fish. For this group, more information and knowledge can change their attitudes so they become more positive toward farmed fish in the future.

Originality/value – The paper provides useful information for fish-farming companies or the authorities planning healthy-eating campaigns targeting fish.

Keywords:

[Consumer behaviour](#), [Environmental regulations](#), [Fish farming](#), [Issues](#), [Spain](#)

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