



Title of research project

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN REFLECTING TRENDS OF SUSTAINABLE FOOD CONSUMPTION

Description of research project

Aim:

- To explore how social media can both reflect and influence consumer trends in sustainable food consumption

Background:

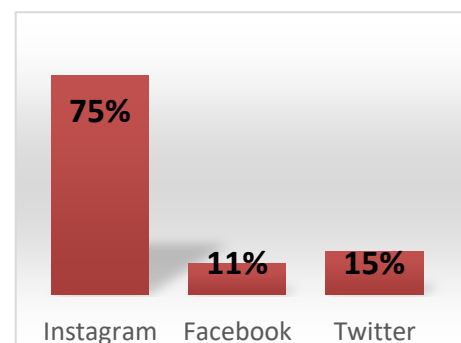
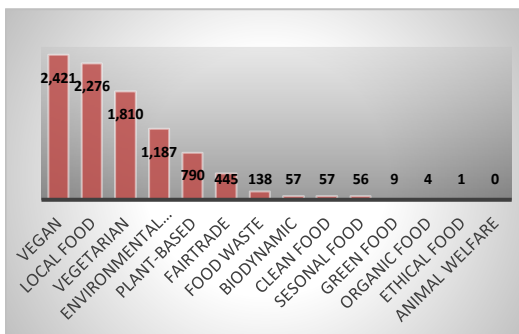
- An increasing number of consumer conversations happens online, and the social media represents a crucial communication channel to investigate when exploring consumer behavior

Method:

- Norway as a case representing a country with a growing sustainable food market
- Data extracted from three social media channels (Instagram, Twitter and Facebook) by using a set of 24 sustainable food-related keywords on Pulsar's platform for social media listening
- Analysis of the extracted posts by grouping the comparable keywords (e.g., short-travelled food and local food) into 14 main topics and user network analysis (R Studio and package "networkD3")

Results:

- Topics «vegan food» and «local food» dominate in the social media discourse on sustainable food
- Instagram is by far the largest channel when talking about sustainable food online, as it accounts for 75% of the activity
- The activity around various topics differs across the social media channels: «local food», «organic food» and «Fairtrade» on Instagram, while «food waste» on Twitter and Facebook
- Key influencers in the social media discourse on sustainable food are news media, lifestyle bloggers, political parties, politicians and NGOs



Conclusion:

- The current study provides good indications for what sustainable food-related topics consumers care about and therefore contributes to the existing literature on sustainable food
- Food businesses can tailor their social media and marketing strategies based on the identified trends concerning main topics, key influencers, and peculiarities of different social media channel

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