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Lucia Espinosa-Brisset, Anne Saint-Eve

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Are citizens motivated to join participatory research in order to create sensory and consumer databases?

Lucia Espinosa-Brisset, Anne Saint-Eve

Univ Paris Saclay, UMR SayFood, AgroParisTech, INRAE, France.

Participatory research actively engages citizens in scientific inquiry to produce new knowledge. In this type of research, citizens participate consciously. Several levels of participation can be distinguished based on the degree of their involvement, including data collection, data analysis or definition of the research question. Different methods can be found such as co-creation, crowd science or action-research. Citizens' involvement in research is increasingly calling for innovative research methods and they include voluntary recruitment and active participation in the research design.

As citizens' engagement is key for participatory research, the main objective of our work was to better understand citizens' familiarization and motivations to be involved in participatory research (PR) in order to build a sensory and consumer databases.

A participatory workshop with 13 students and a quantitative study conducted online with a representative sample of the French population (n=500) made it possible to establish an initial diagnosis about motivations and barriers of taking part in PR about food and sensory perception.

Results revealed that citizens are still unfamiliar with PR, 72% of participants had never heard of it. Although 82.8% are interested in participating, 43.4% would only do so if they were remunerated or given feedback on the results. The main reasons for participating in PR in the food sector are to increase their knowledge (31%), curiosity (30%), to have access to information on the products consumed (29%), to help research (24%) and to acquire knowledge in nutrition (22%). Almost half of participants read reviews when buying food products. Participants would like information on products that are easy to prepare (71%), original (58%), and appealing to the greatest number of people (58%).

PR might be a valuable way to create sensory and consumer databases if it is possible to capture citizens' motivation and attention (e.g interactive, playful questionnaires).

Keywords: Participatory research, citizens, motivations, sensory and consumer databases.

Pangborn topics: Collecting and communicating sensory properties in the global village.

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