

Category	: International Rice Research Conference
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Title of Entry	: Consumer valuation of rice cultural heritage: Evidence from the Philippines
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Abstract : The Cordillera Administrative Region is known for its incredible terrain and topography inhabited by diverse groups of indigenous people cultivating heirloom rice as a primary livelihood. Through the years, they have become part of vulnerable communities exposed to environmental stresses and an alarming pace of outmigration displacing them to non-agricultural pursuits which further leads to not sustaining their indigenous systems and putting a blur on the preservation of their cultural heritage. One of the ways to level off socioeconomic pressures that have arisen in the indigenous community is through increasing access of heirloom rice to urban markets incentivizing farmers to cultivate rice terraces and uphold to their indigenous farming knowledge and practices. This study estimated the inherent existence value urban consumers place on cultural heritage in the Philippines through carrying out an experimental auction in a supermarket in Metro Manila participated by shoppers grouped according to their preference towards brown or white rice. We exposed the participants to a visual and auditory experience of heirloom rice culture and tested intrinsic information framing in gain and loss – where the former focused on a message that tackles a positive outcome should they patronize heirloom rice while the latter on message that perceives negative consequences otherwise – and elicited consumers’ willingness to pay for substituting their preferred rice with heirloom rice. Results indicate at most 40% of the participants were willing to substitute with heirloom rice. White rice consumers were more influenced by gain framing on cultural heritage than brown rice consumers garnering relative increase in market penetration by at least 20% and paid price premiums between USD 0.82 – 1.02. Consumers who were not willing to substitute generated negative WTP with loss frame yielding the largest discounts generally placing heirloom rice as inferior type. Econometric analysis of the data reveals that exposure to visual and auditory experiences of cultural heritage significantly increases consumer WTP for heirloom rice if the story is framed as a gain. This provides crucial insights for marketers and policy makers in their struggle to increase market access of heirloom rice to preserve cultural heritage in the Cordillera.

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