

Editorial

Eliciting preferences using stated choice experiments

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Stated choice experiments are nowadays widely used in different fields ranging from marketing and transport economics to health and environmental economics. They are a survey-based preference assessment technique that presents respondents with mutually exclusive alternatives described by attributes and their levels and asks them to choose the most preferred of those alternatives. Subsequently, the choices recorded enable estimates of the trade-offs among attribute levels respondents are willing to make, giving insights into their preferences. If one of the attributes is a cost variable, marginal willingness to pay estimates can be calculated, representing peoples' preferences for different attributes on the same monetary unit. Due to the comprehensive information choice experiments can provide such as marginal and non-marginal welfare measures, they have recently become a favored method to evaluate individual preferences. However, stated choice experiments are by no means a method that can be employed by simply following standard recipes from a cookbook. Understanding participants responses to the designed choice tasks presented in surveys and their adequate analysis still requires further research to achieve validity and reliability of the requested results such as welfare estimates.

This special issue wants to contribute to the development of choice experiments by presenting a number of selected papers that present results from methodological investigations as well as from policy-oriented applications of choice experiments in the area of environmental and agricultural economics. The authors are mainly members of a group of academics who have met regularly over the last decade as members of the ENVECHO network, which is a scientific network of researchers using discrete choice modelling in the field of environmental valuation (www.envecho.com).

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