

The Impact of a Salient Vegetarian Identity on Sustainable Consumption

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Abstract

Many situational cues could make vegetarians be aware of this important aspect of their identity while making decisions. The current research explores how an activated vegetarian identity influences subsequent decision-making in a sustainable consumption context. We provided evidence that motivation to be a vegetarian determines whether vegetarians behave identity-consistently by demonstrating sustainable purchase intention or behave inconsistently with their identity by deviating from sustainable behavior. Our findings suggest that health-motivated vegetarians whose identities become salient are more likely to purchase a sustainable product (e.g. a low-energy light bulb) rather than a conventional one (e.g. a bright light bulb) compared to ethical-motivated vegetarians. However, priming vegetarian identity licenses ethical-motivated vegetarians to have non-sustainable intentions. Theoretical contributions and marketing implications are discussed.

Keywords: *licensing effect; identity; vegetarianism*

Track: Consumer Behaviour