

The Habitual Self: Counter-Intentional Habits as Main Barrier for Sustainable Food Choices

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Abstract

Numerous studies on sustainable food choices analyzed the drivers of behavioral intention, yet the so-called intention-behavior gap in sustainable choices has received little attention. Building on the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) the authors propose that the cognitive low involvement characterisation of food purchase and consumption is likely to 'lock' consumers in unsustainable dietary habits (counter-intentional habits), despite their manifested intention of consuming sustainable. Using a Latent Markov Model, the authors analyse the latent dynamics of food consumption of one million users in three online recipes communities, over almost ten years. The results show that when counter-intentional habits are strong, the intention-behaviour relation becomes weak and highlight the drivers to a sustainable consumption. Unlike most studies using the TPB, the current study allows the authors to use empirical behavioral data to operationalize the constructs, traditionally survey based.

Keywords: *Sustainable Consumption; Intention Behaviour Gap; Latent Markov Model*

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