

“Vegetarian” or “Suitable for Vegetarian”? How Framing Influences Plant-based Consumption

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Abstract

Dietary choices based on animal-based products (e.g., red meat) are one of the main contributors to global environmental and health challenges. The incorporation of more plant-based foods (PBF) in the diet is seen as a feasible solution to these problems. However, acceptance of PBF is still low; this is due to the stigma and negative bias associated with vegetarian diets and frames. The authors propose that the consumption of PBF can be more effectively encouraged by using labels that promote the idea of inclusion (e.g., “suitable for vegetarians”) rather than exclusion (e.g., “vegetarian”). By targeting both vegetarian and meat-eating consumers, inclusive message framing increases consumer-product fit, which increases preference towards PBF among meat eaters. This positive effect is attenuated for consumers who score high on vegetarianism threat. The paper provides practical implications for policymakers and companies interested in promoting plant-based consumption.

Keywords: *plant-based foods, vegetarian framing, perceived fit*

Track: *retailing*