

Beyond the plate: How dietary choices and stereotypes affect stigmatization

Nadine Benninger

Technical University of Munich

Kelly Haws

Owen Graduate School of Management

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Abstract

Consumers who are shifting their diets away from traditional means due to environmental and health concerns report experiencing stigmatization. Still, no research has looked into the intersection of dietary restrictions and weight stigmas and how the presence of an intersection affects stereotypes and, in the next step, stigmatization. Across one pre-study and four studies with US consumers, this research finds that individuals are judged based on their typicality for a social category. Higher typicality reduces stigmatization. Furthermore, if a food restriction and a weight stigma intersect, social norms are seen as being violated more heavily, leading to lower levels of trustworthiness. With these findings, we emphasize that individuals who deviate from typicality on several dimensions might experience negative social consequences. The findings can be used for developing educational and political measures that promote an inclusive, open, and sustainable society.

Track: Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing