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Sustainable Food: Leveraging Shared Identities to Promote Plant-Based Food Consumption.

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Abstract

Heart disease, some types of cancer, and obesity are just a few of the health issues that eating meat has been connected to. Additionally, the production and distribution of meat contribute to environmental issues such as water pollution, deforestation, and greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the mass production of meat poses issues about the treatment of animals, who are frequently confined in terrible conditions and exposed to cruel methods. Shifting towards plant-based food is a simple yet powerful step towards improved health, a healthier planet, and compassionate living. Even though it has been extensively examined what have been meat eaters' barriers to transitioning to plant-based diets, there have been few attempts to determine whether a shared identity might lessen these obstacles and reduce meat consumption. To fill this gap, this study investigates the assumption that leveraging a common identity during the promotion of plant-based food products will lead to a higher willingness to buy them. The data used in this study was collected by means of a survey on 167 meat-eating Italians. The data analysis revealed no significant differences in willingness to buy plant-based foods based on identity. On the other hand, the results showed that individual differences, such as concerns about animal welfare, and brand identity can have a big impact on how consumers perceive and feel about plant-based foods. The research presented in this thesis can help marketers create communication strategies that will effectively promote plant-based foods.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Contrary to popular belief, humans did not primarily evolve as herbivores in the "Garden of Eden" setting, at least not over the last three to four million years of evolutionary adaptation (Mann, 2018). Instead, archaeological and anthropological evidence points to a totally different reality (Mann, 2018). Our ancestors' hominin line emerged during this period from Africa's vanishing wetland woodlands to become bipedal, open-grassland inhabitants. Digestible plant meals were less easily accessible than in the wetland woods in this drier, dryer habitat, yet there were many grazing animals (Mann, 2018). It was in that period that the human history of meat consumption began.

Understanding the factors that influence meat intake is a crucial first step in learning how to promote meat consumption decrease. Western diets are frequently characterized by an excess of meat consumption that outdoes dietary requirements (Sans and Combris, 2015; Westhoek et al., 2014). In Western nations, eating meat is a frequent activity that is heavily routinized and essential to the composition of meals (Lentz et al., 2018). For instance, a UK survey revealed that 81% of participants consumed meat at least once a week (Benson et al., 2019). Furthermore, meat is widely thought to be delicious and healthy (Ruby, 2012).

Many people believe that meat is necessary for a healthy diet because it is thought to be a significant source of nutrients (Piazza et al., 2015). Many people also believe that eating meat is healthy, normal, necessary, and enjoyable (Piazza et al., 2015). As a result, they may experience an emotional attachment to meat and difficulty altering their eating patterns (Graça, Calheiros, and Oliveira, 2015). In fact, eating meat is so ingrained in society that many people do not view it as a morally dubious behavior (Loughnan, Haslam, and Bastian, 2010).

Following what has been mentioned above, it is easy to see how the very same reasons that promote meat consumption also prevent people from eating less meat. For example, research has revealed that people are often hesitant to cut back on their meat consumption since it is perceived as being natural, pleasurable, traditional, and socially acceptable (Macdiarmid et al., 2016). Another example of this phenomenon is the fact that people are unable to cut back on their consumption of meat because of the perceived nutritional benefits of meat and worry that a diet lacking in meat would leave them deficient in certain nutrients (Piazza et al., 2015). As a result, eating meat is ingrained in culture, and a number of obstacles may make people hesitant to alter their eating patterns.

After having analyzed the reasons for which meat plays such an important role in our society, it is crucial to understand why people are increasingly reducing their intake of meat. According to research by Skeie et al. (2009), Van Duijnhoven et al. (2009), and Pan et al. (2012), red meat and saturated fat intake are disproportionately high in Western diets due to a large intake of animal products. According to Warner (2010), the use of meat, dairy products, and eggs is rising globally, which is expected to worsen the environmental effects of raising livestock (Bouwman et al., 2013). Reactive nitrogen, reactive oxygen species, and greenhouse gas emissions worries have sparked a public discussion about consuming less meat and dairy in Europe (Deckers, 2010, Deemer and Lobao, 2011).

Given that a higher demand for meat requires more animals to be raised and killed, resulting in more intensive production methods, greater confinement, and lower welfare standards, reducing meat consumption would be beneficial for animal welfare (Bonnet, Bouamra-Mechemache, Réquillart, and Treich, 2020). Additionally, limiting meat intake would greatly improve people's health because most individuals in high-income nations already consume amounts of meat that are excessive by nutritional standards and linked to a number of

detrimental health effects (Sans and Combris, 2015). This is especially true for red meats and meats that have undergone processing to increase flavor and shelf life (Pierre, Santarelli, Taché, Guéraud, and Corpet, 2008). For instance, consuming red and processed meat has been linked to a higher risk of developing heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, obesity, and colon cancer (Bernstein et al., 2011). However, it should be emphasized that processed meats typically have a more detrimental effect on health than red meat that has not been processed (Rohrmann and Linseisen, 2016).

To understand the reasons why people decide to reduce their meat intake, it is useful to look at a study conducted by De Backer and Hudders in 2014. This research revealed that participants on semi-vegetarian diets, in which they reduced their meat consumption to a lesser extent, tended to be driven by health concerns, whereas those on vegetarian diets tended to be driven by concern for animal welfare and the environment. The literature, therefore, implies that many factors may be pertinent for encouraging meat reduction among people with various dietary patterns. Since frequent meat consumers would be the target audience for measures meant to encourage meat reduction, it is necessary to further examine the variables that might motivate them to cut back on their meat consumption.

One of the variables this study investigates to thoroughly understand meat consumption, is the concept of identity. Identity is a general term that refers to a prominent feature of one's self-perception. Moreover, the sense of self can be viewed as a social construct connected to their various social roles (Carfora, Caso, and Conner 2017). Roles are created by internalized expectations of behavior that is consistent with those roles (Simon, 1992). As a result, the more meaningful the identity, the stronger the intention to adopt the corresponding behaviors should be (Charng, Piliavin, and Callero, 1988).

"Food is central to our sense of identity," writes Fischler (1988). Any human group can assert the otherness of anyone who eats differently by looking at how that group eats. For groups that are outliers or minorities, identities are typically far more prominent (Fishler, 1988). Both meat eaters and vegetarians are likely to adhere to their diets more because of how the term "vegetarian" was created (Carfora, Caso, & Conner, 2017). However, if identifying as a vegan or vegetarian becomes a requirement for engaging in the behavior, it may deter some people from cutting back on their meat consumption (Kurz, Prosser, Rabinovich, and O'Neill, 2020). If a meat-reducer needs to identify themselves as a vegetarian or vegan in order to order from the restaurant's vegan menu during a family lunch, this may discourage other diners who are not firmly identified. When eating meat is culturally significant or considered the norm, meat-reducers may want to avoid the stigma and interpersonal difficulties that come with "becoming a vegetarian or vegan" in social contexts (Minson & Monin, 2012).

For example, in a choice task based on menu selection, Krpan and Houtsma (2020) experimentally altered the labeling of meat-free alternatives. When meatless alternatives were marketed as "vegetarian," they discovered, fewer people chose them than when they were marketed as "environmentally friendly" or "refreshing." This could be a sign that the term "vegetarian" is particularly offensive to those who do not identify as such. Such a label could be interpreted as saying "for vegans only."

Following these insights, it is clear why transitioning to plant-based diets has been a topic of interest for many researchers, particularly in understanding the barriers that prevent meat eaters from making the switch. The potential contribution of shared identity to removing these barriers is one aspect that has received scant consideration in earlier study which provides a gap in the literature that this study addresses.

In order to fill this gap, this study concentrated on examining the connection between identification and willingness to buy plant-based food products. 167 Italian residents who identified as meat eaters participated in a survey for the study. The poll assessed respondents' desire to purchase plant-based foods and controlled for two variables: *type of brand* and *identity*. By showing participants a visual stimulus that promoted a plant-based burger and either a travel enthusiast identity or being a vegetarian, the identity aspect was altered.

The study's findings imply that a person's willingness to buy plant-based foods may not be considerably impacted by identity alone. Individual preferences, such as those related to animal welfare, and brand recognition, however, can have a big impact on how consumers perceive and feel about plant-based foods. Important ramifications come from these findings for plant-based food marketers. Finally, this research provides marketers with information that they can use to create persuasive communication plans that encourage plant-based diets and lower meat consumption.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.1 Drivers of Meat Consumption and barriers to reduction

2.1.1 The role of Meat in Our Society

Food is more than just a means to an end because decisions about food preferences are influenced by factors other than the need for nutrition (McDonagh and Prothero, 2005). A strong indicator of who we are and what we believe can be found in what we choose to eat and how much of it we consume (Cronin et al., 2014). This same premise applies to meat intake, as people find identity and significance in their decisions to either avoid or embrace it, ranging from complete avoidance to enthusiastic engagement (Fox and Ward, 2008).

Eating meat has been linked to a variety of psychosocial values and beliefs, including those related to power (Gaard, 2002), masculinity (Kildal and Syse, 2016), and wealth (Cronin, McCarthy, and Collins, 2014). For example, many cultures hold that the intake of powerful animals like beef contributes to strength, a quality associated with men (Adams and Calarco, 2019). These ideas are supported by Fiddes (2004), who looked at historical literature, contemporary scientific assessments, meat retailing, and other sources and discovered a recurring theme of meat symbolizing the dominance of men over women, humans over animals and nature, as well as other types of hierarchy. This means that eating meat serves as a means of fulfilling the aforementioned psychological values and beliefs (Joy, 2011), in addition to its function as a source of energy and nutrients for the human body.

Furthermore, even though the prevalence of high rates of meat consumption is a relatively new phenomenon, it has become firmly integrated into Western ideals of good meal organization, nutrition, and cookery in addition to its prestige and psychosocial relevance (Cross et al., 2011).

Attempting to cut back on meat intake is a complex and challenging job since meat's status as a "default" in the diet and the positive qualities associated with it have had more time to become embedded in Western society and permeate through psychological beliefs. The research by Lusk and Norwood (2009) supports this claim by demonstrating that consumers continue to place a value on the status of meat that outweighs concerns about cost, even though they are aware of the economic advantages of a plant-based diet. This shows that eating meat is in fact a structure-agency dialectic because it is not only a logical choice made by people who weigh costs and benefits, such as financial disincentives, but it is also a partially ingrained habit brought on by the association of eating meat with desirable traits and attributes, such as status, wealth, and tradition.

2.1.2 Enjoyment of Eating Meat

Food science and psychology have both shown an interest in the question of meat consumption. According to existing research, people's appreciation of meat is most strongly influenced by its flavor and taste (Kubberød, Ueland, Rødbotten, Westad, and Risvik, 2002). This is supported once again by Piazza et al. (2015), who showed that one of the main reasons people were not willing to cut back on their meat consumption were to be found in its taste.

Moreover, it is common to believe that a vegetarian diet is prone to becoming monotonous and flavorless (Lea and Worsley, 2001). In order to support this claim, Mullee et al. performed an online questionnaire-based study among Belgian consumers. They found that the factors that were the most significant barriers to adopting a vegetarian diet were a lack of enthusiasm and willingness, poor taste, and inadequate cooking abilities.

The appreciation of meat may also be influenced by cultural and traditional customs in addition to its taste and flavor. For instance, meat may play a significant role in religious or ceremonial rituals in various cultures, and this may explain why people appreciate meat in these settings

(Swatland, 2010). Other times, eating meat may be associated with family customs, such as cooking a certain cut of meat on important occasions (Nam, Jo, and Lee, 2010).

2.1.3 Nutritional factors

Diets based on plants are frequently criticized for having inadequate nutritional intake (Marsh, Zeuschner, and Saunders, 2012). On the subject of the protein content of plant-based diets, experts have differing opinions. According to various studies, there is no discernible difference in the amount of protein found in diets based on plants and those derived from animals (Thomas; Erdman; Burke, 2016). In fact, research shows that there is a wide variety of plant-based meals that are high in protein, including soy products, tofu, seitan, and tempeh (Lea, Crawford, and Worsley, 2006).

Apart from the protein intake, there are other nutritional concerns with plant-based diets. For example, it is believed that vegetarians may quickly develop nutrient deficiencies due to inadequate consumption of micronutrients such as vitamin B12, as well as iron, calcium, and zinc (Candy, Turner, Larsen, Wingrove, Steenkamp, Friel, and Lawrence, 2019). Since it can be consumed by the body through water-soluble meals, primarily those of animal origin, vitamin B12 is of particular relevance (Balk et al., 2006). However, nori sheets composed of dried seaweed, which are widely consumed in Japan, may serve as a significant source of vitamin B12, according to the results of a research study conducted in 2014. (Watanabe, 2007).

Moreover, it is generally believed that those who are vegetarians or vegans may be more susceptible to iron deficiency (Saunders, Craig, Baines, and Posen, 2013). However, vegetarian diets can contain as much iron or more than mixed diets. This is because vegetarian and vegan diets tend to contain more whole grain cereals and breads, especially fortified cereals, which contain large amounts of iron (Davey, Spencer, Appleby, Allen, Knox, and Key, 2003).

Lastly, another health concern preventing meat reductions is bone density in relation to calcium intake. However, vegetarians and nonvegetarians generally consume similar amounts of calcium (Weaver, Proulx, and Heaney, 1999), while vegans frequently consume less (Davey, Spencer, Appleby, Allen, Knox, and Key, 2003). However, according to a review of the research, although vegetarians and vegans do indeed have lower bone mineral densities (BMDs), these variations are not significant, and there are no discernible differences between vegetarians and meat eaters in terms of bone health indicators (Ho-Pham, Nguyen, and Nguyen, 2009).

*2.1.4 Perceived Threat as a Driver of Bias Towards the Veg*n Culture*

Social pressure, particularly from friends and family, is typically viewed as a significant factor influencing our dietary choices (Ruby, 2012). Although vegetarianism and veganism are becoming more and more mainstream in the Western world, animosity toward them is frequently expressed. As a result, people who opt for a meat-free diet claim to have experienced prejudice and marginalization due to their affiliation with vegetarian and vegan groups, similar to other minority groups (Ruby, 2012). The underlying reason for such behavior is that people tend to treat members of their own group more favorably than they treat members of other groups (Tajfel et al., 1971). This is supported by MacInnis and Hodson (2017), who showed that both vegetarians and vegans reported feeling negative attitudes toward their particular diets and that these attitudes were caused by meat-eaters' perception of vegetarianism as a moral or culturally symbolic threat to the status quo.

Stephan, Diaz-Loving, and Duran’s (2000) intergroup threat theory defines symbolic risks as imperceptible dangers to the beliefs, values, attitudes, or moral standards of an ingroup. The perception that an outgroup's views, values, attitudes, or moral standards contradict those of one's own group gives rise to these dangers. As a result, groups that pose a symbolic danger

may be seen as weakening the ingroup's core principles (Biernat, Vescio, Theno, and Crandall, 1996).

The perception of an outgroup as a symbolic threat predicts negative attitudes toward the group across different groupings (e.g., Biernat, Vescio, Theno, and Crandall, 1996; Stephan et al., 2002). Furthermore, according to Minson and Monin (2012), when meat eaters anticipated that vegetarians would view themselves as morally superior to non-vegetarians, their negative attitudes toward vegetarians grew. In addition to this, MacInnis and Hodson (2015) argued that those who are threatened should be the ones who are most biased. Additionally, Dhont and Hodson (2014) showed that beliefs in the superiority of humans over animals and the perceived danger of vegetarianism and veganism both contributed to increased meat consumption and animal exploitation.

2.1.5 Meat Replacement Foods

It might be difficult to create new food products that appeal to people (Costa and Jongen, 2006). However, it becomes even more complicated when these new foods are intended to replace items that are highly valued, like meat (Wansink, Sonka, Goldsmith, Chiriboga, and Eren, 2005). Beginning in the early 1960s, Western markets began to see the emergence of meat substitutes, which, according to Davies and Lightowler (1998), are predominantly vegetable-based dietary items that contain proteins derived from pulses (mostly soy), cereal proteins, or fungi. Because of the wide availability of nutrients in meat substitutes, there is evidence to support the claim that people who eat less meat tend to eat more plant-based alternatives (Hoek et al., 2011). However, evidence suggests that meat substitutes are not widely adopted by meat eaters due to consumer skepticism, a perceived lack of sensory appeal, and high prices (Elzerman, Hoek, Boekal, and Luning, 2011; Hoek et al., 2011).

2.2 Reasons Driving Reductions in Meat Consumption

2.2.1 Human Health

Maintaining a vegetarian diet demands a great deal of control, especially if it's done for health reasons rather than moral ones. A vegetarian or vegan diet also needs the formation of new habits, the acquisition of new skills, the suppression of meat desires, and the handling of novel and uncomfortable social situations (Hodson and Earle, 2018). It is for these reasons that understanding the health benefits of a plant-based diet is vitally important to facilitate the change.

First, red and processed meat consumption has been linked to all-cause mortality, with the impact being especially noticeable in cases of malignancy (Rohrmann et al., 2013). Red meat has been shown to be harmful to humans (International Agency for Research on Cancer), notably for colorectal cancer but also for pancreatic cancer and prostate cancer. Moreover, processed beef is known for having a high level of saturated fat and cholesterol, both of which have been linked to obesity, diabetes, and coronary and ischemic heart disease (Micha, Michas, and Mozaffarian, 2012; Wolk, 2017).

On the other hand, the overall cancer rate is typically lower in vegetarians than in the general population (Craig, 2010). The lower BMI (body mass index) of vegetarians may partially account for the lower cancer risk in vegetarians compared to nonvegetarians, even though obesity is a substantial risk factor for cancer in a variety of sites (American Institute for Cancer Research, 2007). Moreover, according to data from the Adventist Health Study (2017), vegetarians had a considerably lower incidence of colorectal and prostate cancer than nonvegetarians.

Furthermore, when people choose a vegetarian diet or one with fewer animal products, weight loss seems to be more successful (Rosell, Appleby, Spencer, and Key, 2006). In fact, according to reports, BMI values are higher in nonvegetarians than in vegetarians for both men and women, and they tend to rise as meat consumption frequency rises (Fraser, 1999). Between vegetarians and vegans, the latter seems to have the lowest BMI (Tonstad, Butler, Yan, Fraser, 2009). However, the benefits of a vegetarian diet are usually not realized until after 5 years (Brathwaite, Fraser, Modeste, Broome, and King, 2003).

Similarly, compared to omnivores, vegetarians have a much-reduced incidence of type 2 diabetes. (Tonstad, Butler, Yan, and Fraser, 2009). It could be argued that this is possibly partially caused by omnivores having a higher BMI than vegetarians. However, research has shown that even after adjusting for BMI, the consumption of meat and processed meats itself was discovered to be a significant diabetes-related risk factor (Vang, Singh, Lee, and Haddad, 2008). Consequently, increased consumption of plant-based foods like vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts has been linked to a significantly lower risk of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, as well as better glycemic control in both healthy and insulin-resistant people (Bao, Hu, Giovannucci, Wolpin, Stampfer, Willett, and Fuchs, 2013).

Finally, the strongest support for a vegetarian diet's health advantages comes from studies that show lower rates of coronary heart disease (CHD) and ischemic heart disease (IHD). In fact, when compared to non-vegetarians, vegetarians and vegans have a lower risk of dying from CHD (Appleby, Davey, and Key, 2005). Furthermore, research found that vegetarians have a 24% lower risk of dying from IHD than meat eaters, with lacto-ovo vegetarians having a 34% lower risk and vegans having a 26% lower risk (Key et al., 1999).

2.2.2 Animal Welfare

Animal welfare has been defined by the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) as "how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives." "An animal is in a good state of welfare if it is healthy, comfortable, well-nourished, safe, able to express innate behavior, and not suffering from unpleasant states such as pain, fear, and distress." […] Good animal welfare requires disease prevention and appropriate veterinary care; shelter, management, and nutrition; a stimulating and safe environment; humane handling; and humane slaughter or killing."

Moral concerns about animal welfare are among the most significant justifications for reducing meat consumption and take precedence over worries about health impacts and the environment (de Boer, Schösler, and Aiking, 2017; Ruby and Heine, 2012). The fundamental justification for rejecting any animal product is the concern for the animal welfare of an increasing number of customers who adhere to vegan diets (Janssen, Busch, Rödiger, and Hamm, 2016).

The concerns around animal welfare in relation to food production encompass various aspects. First, for many centuries, there has been debate on whether animals are sentient and therefore able to feel suffering (Proctor, 2012). However, there is now a broad acceptance of animal awareness, particularly in vertebrate species (Broom, 2007). In fact, the Cambridge Declaration on Consciousness, which was signed by a number of eminent scientists from around the world, also affirmed support for the premise that animals have consciousness and are aware to the same extent as humans are (Low, Panksepp, Reiss, Edelman, and Van Swinderen, 2012). Nevertheless, given that fish lack the intricate neuroanatomical mechanisms linked to conscious subjective states in humans, there is still some controversy about whether fish are sentient (Rose, Arlinghaus, Cooke, Diggles, Sawynok, Stevens, and Wynne, 2014).

Another divisive topic in farm animal welfare is the appropriate density at which animals should live. Many individuals believe that crowding animals together is a significant factor in low welfare, as it can cause discomfort, a restriction of normal behavior, and misery (Appleby 2004). In fact, as Febrer, Jones, Donnelly, and Dawkins (2006) pointed out, animals would be healthier if given more space since high stocking densities, measured as body weight (kg) per unit area, result in poor physical health and high mortality. However, in order to save money on space, labor, and heating, producers seek to house a significant amount of animals in a small area (Appleby 2004). In conclusion, animal welfare is a significant concern that needs to be addressed in order to ensure the humane treatment of animals used for food and other purposes. A number of issues, including the conditions in which animals are raised and slaughtered, need to be addressed in order to improve animal welfare and protect the health and well-being of animals.

2.2.3 Environmental Sustainability:

Almost every area of the environment is significantly harmed by the raising of animals for meat and dairy consumption. Large amounts of land and water are needed to raise livestock, which puts an unsustainable strain on natural resources (Alexander, Brown, Arneth, Finnigan, and Rounsevell, 2016; Wirsenius, Azar, and Berndes, 2010). For instance, the amount of water needed to produce beef, pork, and chicken is nine, three, and four times, respectively, that of cereal (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley; Mekonnen and Hoekstra, 2012). Additionally, compared to soy, beef generates around 12 times as much carbon dioxide for a 50 g protein equivalent (Parodi et al., 2018). Additionally, problems with global food security are impacted by the production of meat. For example, a third of the world's cereal crops are used to feed animals, even though many of them might be used to feed people (Godfray et al., 2010). In

fact, it is predicted that by 2050, animals may consume more crops than people (Pradhan, Lüdeke, Reusser, and Kropp, 2013).

In addition, altering land for livestock rearing contributes to a number of other environmental problems. For instance, poor livestock management can result in soil degradation due to overcrowding and overgrazing (Fao, 2009). As forests are destroyed to make way for pastures and agricultural land for cattle, meat production is a significant contributor to deforestation (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014). Water pollution and loss of aquatic biodiversity can also result from the runoff of toxic compounds stored in soil via livestock manure and fertilizer used to grow animal feed (Tamminga, 2003). Additionally, raising livestock can lead to the emission of toxic compounds into the atmosphere, lowering air quality and accelerating the formation of acid rain, which can impact crops, the environment, and water supplies (Steinfield, Wassenaar, and Jutzi, 2006). Additionally, raising cattle for meat and milk results in the generation of strong greenhouse gases (GHGs), which have a huge impact on climate change.

At almost every stage of livestock production, from the creation of animal feed through the delivery of finished animal products to grocery store shelves, greenhouse gasses are emitted (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014). Methane is generated by the digestive processes of cattle, nitrous oxide is released by fertilizer used on feed crops, and carbon dioxide is released by changes in the land as well as the processing and transportation of animal products (Gerber et al., 2013).

For example, increasing farmland to make room for grazing results in the annual emission of about 2.4 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide (Steinfield, Wassenaar, and Jutzi, 2006). Methane and nitrous oxide, which have warming potentials 23 and 296 times greater than carbon dioxide, are produced primarily by cattle, making it the major worldwide producer of both gasses (Steinfield, Wassenaar, and Jutzi, 2006). In particular, the cattle sector is projected

to be responsible for 37% of methane emissions, 65% of nitrous oxide emissions, and 9% of all anthropogenic carbon dioxide emissions (Steinfield, Wassenaar, and Jutzi, 2006). Approximately 14.5% of all anthropogenic GHG emissions worldwide are produced by livestock, which is more than the transportation industry (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014). Methane dominates the greenhouse gas emissions from the cattle industry, making up roughly 44% of total emissions. Nitrous oxide comes in second with 29% of total emissions, while carbon dioxide comes in third with 27% of total emissions (Gerber et al., 2013).

It is critical to recognize that the type of livestock raised, and the animal products produced affect the amount of GHGs emitted. Pork, chickens, and other mammals each contribute to around 10% of the livestock emissions, whereas cattle account for 64% of those emissions. In 2013, Gerber et al. In terms of commodities, beef, and dairy account for 41% and 20%, respectively, of the sector's overall emissions. Pig meat constitutes 9% of emissions, followed by meat and milk from buffalo, which make up 8%, chicken and eggs, which make up 8%, and meat and milk from small ruminant animals, which make up 6%. Non-edible goods and six other species of birds make up the remaining emissions (Gerber et al., 2019). According to the data, it can be concluded that producing red meat, which includes cattle, veal, hogs, lamb, and other small ruminant animals, results in significantly higher GHG emissions than producing white meat, which includes poultry and rabbit (Becerra-Tomás et al., 2016).

Additionally, the production of plant-based proteins produces far fewer GHGs than the production of both white and red meat. GHG emissions from the production of beef, for instance, are 250 times higher than those from the production of soy products (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014). However, despite the enormous amount of evidence supporting the negative impact that meat production has on the environment, a study conducted by MacDiarmid, Douglas, and Campbell (2016) showed that participants tended to be uninformed about and skeptical of the link between meat consumption and environmental sustainability.

On the other hand, a global survey done in 13 different nations discovered that respondents overestimated the environmental impact of other industries while significantly underestimating the impact of meat and dairy intake (Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014). This is significant since voluntary action requires knowledge of the connection between meat consumption and climate change, and readiness to consume less meat is linked to the perception of its influence on climate change mitigation (de Boer et al., 2016).

2.3 The Role of Identity:

2.3.1 Identity and Consumption

Consumption is a complex phenomenon having several effects on people's daily lives. The literature surrounding the topic, which extensively examines the role consumption plays in consumers' identity expression in daily life, seems to go unchallenged (e.g., Arnould and Price 2000; Berger and Heath 2007). Moreover, the act of consumption allows a consumer to express their identity (Uusital, 1995). As a result, people communicate the symbolic meanings associated with chosen commodities by consuming them, making them part of their identity (Belk, 1988).

According to Elliot and Wattanasuwan (1998), when given the opportunity to choose what to purchase, people will buy items that have specific symbolic meanings and that will project the desired perception of their identity. To put it differently," A businessman can magically be another person by wearing a leather outfit instead of his business suit and riding a Harley-Davidson instead of driving his BMW" (Wattanasuwan, 2005). According to Price, Arnould, and Folkman Curasi (2000), the effect of consumption on identity may even be seen as an "authenticating act," providing the buyer with a strong sense of self-conception and individuality.

Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, and Scabini (2006) argued that the main motive behind identity expression through consumption is the need for distinctiveness. Furthermore, three types of distinctiveness were argued to exist: difference, separateness, and position "Difference" refers to how people see the unique qualities or characteristics of themselves and others, and how those perceptions can be used to group people into different categories. (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell, 2000). "Separateness" includes feelings of confinement, independence, or disconnection from others. So, it refers to how people see themselves as independent entities. As a consequence, separateness tries to dissociate, while difference can also be utilized to identify with others. The final category, "position," depicts relationships between individuals in intra- and intergroup contexts, such as between teachers and pupils or superiors in a workplace. People express their identities through all three categories of distinctiveness in a variety of contexts (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell, 2000).

A significant portion of consumer behavior is motivated by the desire to display unique identities because customers want to stand out. This self-expression only succeeds because people frequently infer character from outward manifestations (Chernev, Hamilton, and Gal, 2011). These cues are intentionally formed and managed by consumers in order to express a desired identity (Schau, 2000). But not all items are equally effective at communicating one's own identity. In fact, although all commercial products have a symbolic quality, some product categories are more commonly used for identity signaling than others (Levy, 1959). Since these domains are frequently quite apparent, others tend to assume identities based on them (Berger and Ward, 2010).

2.3.2 Identity and Meat Consumption

In a study conducted by Bisogni et al. (2002), the relationship between food and identity is discussed in an intriguing manner. They made the claim that diet and identity are mutually constitutive and that identities were both formed by and impacted by dietary choices, based on qualitative research of eating behavior. Other personal traits, the social and physical surroundings, reference groups, and societal categories all have an impact on identities, making them both stable and very individual. Dietary decisions help shape self-images throughout time and serve as a constant prompt for introspection and self-reflection (Bisogni et al., 2002).

Existing research has discovered a connection between identity and food intake (e.g., Fox and Word, 2008). People's food intake changes depending on the conduct of in-group and not out-group members, demonstrating how group norms influence how much people eat (Cruwys et al., 2012). When their favorite team loses, sports fans eat more unhealthily as a result of suffering a vicarious defeat, which suggests that group events can affect individuals' food intake (Cornil and Chandon, 2013).

Identity is especially important for meat-eating behavior since it can convey qualities of the self like wealth, power, and masculinity (de Boer et al., 2017; Povey, Wellens, and Conner, 2001). Therefore, it's feasible that firmly identifying as a meat eater may have a significant impact on behaviors related to meat consumption and meat reduction. Indeed, previous meat studies have shown that meat-eater identification adversely affects intentions and readiness to limit one's meat consumption and positively predicts intent to eat meat (e.g., Carfora, Caso, and Conner, 2017; De Groeve, Bleys, and Hudders, 2019). These ideas are supported by Allen and Ng (2003), who found that when meat-eater identification grew, the importance of nutrition and the related health effects of meat eating decreased. Carfora, Caso, and Conner (2017) took

this idea a step further and discovered that the willingness to reduce meat consumption can be predicted by one's level of self-identification as a meat eater.

Moreover, it has been shown that the concept of meat-eater identity is also correlated with other dimensions of one's identity, supporting the widely accepted idea of identity as a multi-dimensional construct connected in a cognitive schema (e.g., Linville, 1987; Roccas and Brewer, 2002). For example, Sleboda, De Bruin, Arangua, and Gutsche (2022) found positive correlations between the meat-eater self-identification and self-reports of being younger, male, and non-Hispanic, showing associations between dietary identity and age, gender, and racial identification.

Other research has studied the relationship between omnivore identity and meat-eater identity (e.g., Blake, Bell, Freedman, Colabianchi, and Liese, 2013; Carfora, Caso, and Conner, 2017). The Oxford English Dictionary defines omnivores as “an animal or a person that eats all types of food, especially both plants and meat,” and therefore it seems logical to assume that the meat-eater identity and the omnivore identity are two faces of the same coin. However, although in theory a title like "omnivore" could serve as a self-label, research has not been able to pinpoint individuals who identify as omnivores. According to Joy (2009), the reason for this is that few people, particularly in Western countries, question the norm of eating meat, making meat intake too "typical" to be a sign of a unique personality. As a result, research has shown that being omnivore is more a measure of frequency of meat intake, than it is a self-identity (Randers and Thøgersen, 2022).

Avoiding meat may also play a significant role in defining one's self (Carfora, Caso, and Conner 2017). According to Rosenfeld and Burrow (2017), a vegetarian identity encompasses “a multidimensional framework that captures one’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors regarding being a vegetarian." Moreover, when people make a decision that is in line with who they are,

they feel satisfied, whereas if they select a course of action that compromises their sense of self, they feel uneasy (Schenk, Rössel, and Scholz, 2018). This is in line with the argument brought up by Fox and Ward in 2008, according to whom, regardless of any ethical, environmental, or health benefits, a veg*n diet can become its own goal. Theoretically, this does not rule out the idea that the veg*n self-identity could develop over time from strong convictions in particular advantages, social pressure, or previous behavior, and is reliant on the perception of being able to engage in a behavior due to advantageous constraints (Hitlin, 2003; Van der Werff, Steg, Keizer, 2013).

Another identity that is strongly related to meat consumption is the “Flexitarian” identity. The term flexitarian refers to those who “actively limit their consumption of meat and do not eat it every day," and is being used more frequently to describe these people (Dagevos and Reinders, 2018). Such a compromise diet has been proposed as a more practical and, hence, more effective vision for persuading meat-eaters to consume less meat (Spencer, Cienfuegos, and Guinard, 2018). Similarly to vegetarians and vegans, flexitarians reduce their meat consumption for reasons related to their health, the environment, and animal welfare (Mullee et al., 2017). Flexitarians still consume some meat for a variety of reasons, such as custom, upbringing, taste, and the fact that someone else prepares their meals (Mullee et al., 2017). Therefore, flexitarianism emphasizes knowledge of the drawbacks of excessive meat intake while combining this with other objectives and concerns.

Additional abstract identities may also influence whether someone chooses to consume meat or not (Randers and Thøgersen, 2023). For example, it has been shown that people identifying as men have a tendency to consume more meat than those identifying as women, showing that gender identity can influence meat consumption (Graça et al., 2015).

Furthermore, there is research that suggests a connection between national identification and meat intake (Nguyen Platow, 2021). For example, Denmark has a strong tradition related to pork consumption (The Ministry of Environment and Food of Denmark, 2014). In this case, the consumption of foods containing pork may be regarded as a component of the national identity (Randers, Grønhø, and Thgersen, 2021).

Moreover, given that many religions exclude eating particular types of meat or encourage moderation, it is possible that religious identification and meat intake are related (Beardsworth and Bryman, 2004). However, single-country studies in nations where the vast majority of the religious population practices the same religion find it challenging to capture such impacts. According to research, environmental self-identity has a considerable influence on pro-environmental behavior, such as meat reduction (Van der Werff, Steg, and Keizer, 2014). Given that red meat is frequently cited as the food category with the highest GHG content (Godfray et al., 2018), it is hypothesized that consuming red meat has a detrimental impact on one's environmental identity.

A new and promising psychosocial diet factor called "healthy-eater identity" may help us better understand why people eat what they do and make predictions about their food consumption, including attitudes towards meat consumption (Bisogni et al., 2002). Health-eater identity is a domain-specific self-identification based on experience that highlights a part of the self that is significant to the individual (Kendzierski and Costello, 2004). People who identify as healthy eaters are more likely to show a lower meat intake level and, in general, exhibit healthier dietary habits. (Kendzierski, 2007; Kendzierski and Costello, 2004).

2.4 Hypotheses Development and Conceptual Framework

Self-identification has been identified as a key factor that influences consumer behavior in general (Johe and Bhullar, 2016). Identity theory proposes that individuals form their sense of

self based on their membership in various social groups (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). As a result, people are more likely to be open to new ideas and products when they feel a sense of commonality with the group promoting them (Tajfel and Turner, 2004). This idea is particularly relevant when it comes to promoting plant-based food products among meat-eaters, as there is often a perceived cultural division between vegans and meat-eaters (Edwards, 2013). In fact, meat-eaters may perceive veganism as a threat to their dietary habits and cultural identity (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017).

Moreover, it is commonly known that identity priming may activate particular consumer identities, altering consumer desire for identity-relevant goods (Mercurio and Forehand, 2011). Priming is a notion that's frequently utilized to look at how identities affect behavior (Janiszewski and Wyer, 2014). It refers to the process of exposing a person to a signal that frequently subconsciously interacts with identities and then influences behavior, including dietary choices and purchase behavior (Sela and Shiv, 2009). The signal first raises identity salience, which is the likelihood that a certain identity would have an impact on behavior at a given time (Reed, 2004). However, an identity connection with said signal is required for the prime to gain salience. The conspicuous identity then influences behavior if it is appropriate in the current setting (Reed, 2004). When the prime is working properly, behavioral changes might be caused by two different things. Primes can, on the one hand, trigger semantic constructions. These constructions include knowledge of how to behave in accordance with a person's self-concept and are based on it. On the other hand, they have the ability to activate objectives that are predicated on desired end-states that are inconsistent with the persons' current identities (Sassonko 2020).

Consequently, this study proposes that inducing consumers to prime a common identity has a counteracting effect on the perceived threat of veganism, which in turn increases meat-eaters'

willingness to buy for plant-based food products. In this study, the common identity of travel lover will be used in opposition to the veg identity.

> **H1**: A promotional message that elicits a common identity (travel lover) will increase the willingness to buy a plant-based food product.
>
> **H2**: A promotional message that elicits a common *identity (travel lover)* will increase the *willingness to buy* a plant-based food option among meat-eaters through a decrease in the *perceived threat* of veganism

The assumption behind the choice of eliciting the travel lover identity is that it may decrease perceived threat compared to the veg*n identity because it is not directly associated with a specific dietary lifestyle or political stance. In fact, people who identify as travel lovers have been shown to be more curious and therefore open to trying new things (Jani, 2014), whereas the veg*n identity may be associated with a specific set of beliefs and behaviors that some meat-eaters may perceive as a threat to their own lifestyle (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017). By priming the travel lover identity, the promotional message may appeal to meat-eaters' sense of adventure and curiosity, rather than potentially triggering negative associations with the veg*n identity.

In addition, Thürmer, Stadler, and McCrea (2022) demonstrated that, compared to a fellow meat eater, vegans and vegetarians are more likely to be ignored when they advocate a plant-based diet. This shows that the identity of the sender of the message plays a role in the consumption choices of the receiver. However, the current research does not identify the effect that a generic brand, in opposition to a veg brand, has on consumption. Accordingly, this study proposes that a promotional message communicated by a generic brand moderates the relationship between the elicited identity and the *willingness to buy* plant-based food.

H3: *The type of brand* (generic vs. veg) moderates the relationship between the *common identity* (*travel lover*) and the *perceived threat* of veganism. The message presented by a generic brand will lead to a *higher willingness to buy plant-based* food products through a decrease in the *perceived threat* of veganism.

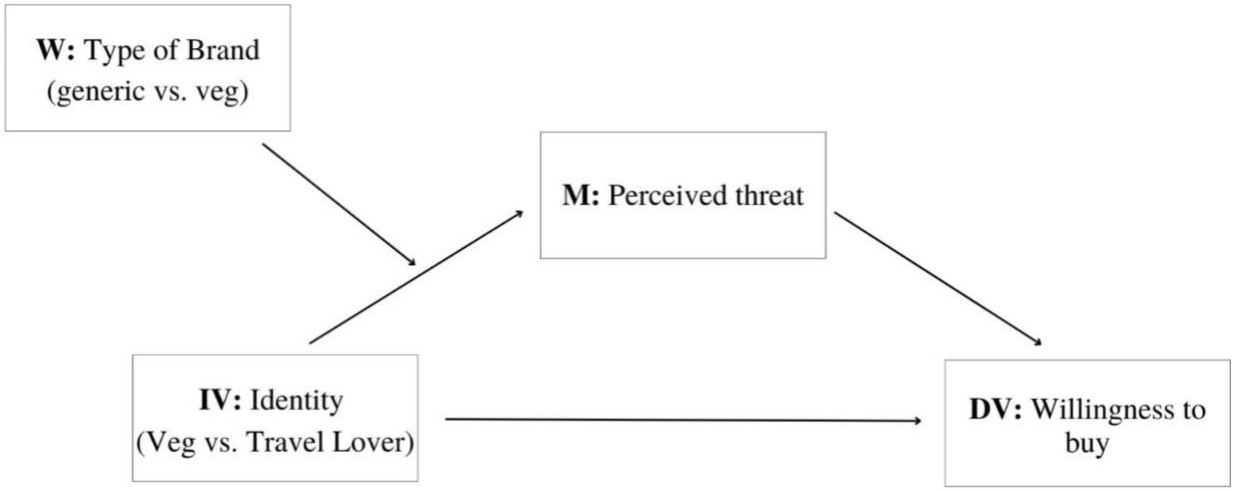

Image 1: Conceptual Framework

Chapter 3: Methodology and Results

3.1 Research Design and Procedures

This study followed a quantitative design, and all the measurements were carried out by means of a 68-question survey (Appendix, Figure 1). The sampling method used was snowball sampling. The survey was sent to an initial sample of 50 people who met the predetermined demographic requirements. The initial sample then distributed the survey to more participants who met the same requirements. This sampling method resulted in the survey being received and opened by 340 people, of whom only the 167 who identified as omnivores, completed the survey, and passed the attention check were included in the final study.

As discussed in *Chapter 2*, this study investigates the relationship between *identity*, *type of brand*, and the *willingness to buy* in a 2x2 structure. Respondents were presented with a random combination of the two factors: *identity* (*veg vs. travel lover*) and *type of brand* (*veg vs. generic*). Therefore, each participant was randomly shown one of the following four conditions:

1. *Generic brand; Veg identity*
2. *Generic brand; travel lover identity*
3. *Veg brand; veg identity*
4. *Veg brand; travel lover identity*

The four conditions were shown to participants with the following distributions: the condition *generic brand; veg identity* was shown to 48 participants (28.5%) while *generic brand; travel lover identity* was shown to 38 participants (22.8%). On the other hand, the condition *veg brand; veg identity* was shown to 34 respondents (20.4%) while the condition *veg brand; travel lover* identity was shown to 47 respondents (28.1%) (Appendix, Figure 2)

The brand manipulation was performed through a written message at the beginning of the questionnaire. The message presented the brand as either *generic* or *veg*.

In the conditions showing the *generic brand* the presentation message was the following:

> *"Brand X is a brand that has been active in the country for several years. Its mission is to offer products for a wide and diverse range of consumers. For this reason, the entire production line is dedicated to a multiplicity of products of different kinds. Brand X gathers raw materials of the highest quality and processes them according to the standards and needs of anyone, regardless of their diet type. Today, Brand X is launching a new line of all-vegetarian burgers on the market."*

In the conditions showing the *veg brand,* the presentation message was the following:

> *"Brand X is a brand that has been active in the country for several years. Its mission is to offer products for vegetarians and vegans. For this reason, its entire production line is dedicated to plant-based products. Brand X gathers the highest quality raw materials and processes them according to the standards and needs of those who eat only plant-based diet-related products. Today, Brand X is launching a new line of all-vegetable burgers on the market."*

On the other hand, the identity manipulation was performed through one visual stimulus per identity type. More specifically, respondents were shown an Instagram story promoting a plant-based burger with a promotional message.

In the conditions showing the *veg identity,* the promotional message presented was the following:

> *"The Pumpkin Burger is a new hamburger made of pumpkin, potato puree, and chopped walnuts. This hamburger is designed for vegan and vegetarian people: that is,*

those who only consume plant-based products, are critical of market-driven food norms, are ethically concerned about their consumption, and engage in a wide variety of political activities. If you are the same way, you should try the Pumpkin Burger now!"

In the conditions showing the travel lover identity, the promotion message was the following:

"The Pumpkin Burger is a new hamburger made of pumpkin, potato puree, and chopped walnuts. This hamburger was designed for people who love travelling that is, for those who love exploring hidden locations, getting to know new cultures, and have a strong adventure interest and a great adaptation spirit. If you are the same way, you should try the Pumpkin Burger now!"

Image 1: Travel Identity Stimulus

Image 2: Veg Identity Stimulus

Moreover, two manipulation checks were included in the study to verify the participants perceived the manipulations. The manipulation checks were performed as follows:

- *Identity Manipulation Check:*
    - *Veg identity check*: participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) with the following statement: “Brand X's promotional message represents all the values of vegetarians and vegans."
    - *Travel lover identity check:* participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) with the following statement: “Brand X's promotional message represents all the values of travel lovers”.
- *Brand Manipulation Check:*
    - *Generic brand check:* participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) with the following statement: “Brand X is a generic brand that produces foods of all kinds”.
    - *Veg brand check:* participants were asked to rate on a 7-point Likert scale the degree to which they agreed or disagreed (1= strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) with the following statement: “Brand X is a brand that produces mainly plant-based food”.

In order to have a robust dataset and allow for a comprehensive investigation of the research question, a total of 13 variables were measured through the survey. Out of these variables, 12

were measured on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) and one was measured on a bipolar scale.

Dependent variables:

- *Willingness to Buy*: Measured on a three-item 7-point Likert scale (Dodds, Monroe, and Grewal, 1991).
- *Attitude Towards Plant Based Food:* Measured on a three-item 7-point Likert scale.
- *Perceived Quality:* Measured on a three-item, 7-point Likert scale
- *Perceived Taste:* Measured on a three-item, 7-point Likert scale.

Mediators:

- *Meat-Eater Identification:* Measured on a three-item 7-point Likert scale (MacInnis & Hodson, 2017).
- *Perceived Threat:* Measured on an eight-item 7-point Likert scale (Dhont & Hodson, 2014).

Control variables:

- *Perceived Healthiness:* Measured on a five-item, 7-point Likert scale.
- *Plant-Based Food Familiarity:* Measured on a three-item, 7-point Likert scale.
- *Travel Lover Identification:* Measured on a three-item, 7-point Likert scale.
- *Animal Concern:* Measured on a two-item, 7-point Likert scale (Lindeman and Väänänen, 2000).
- *Health Concern:* Measured on a 11-item, 7-point Likert scale (Hong, 2009)
- *Environmental Concern:* Measured on a six-item, 7-point Likert scale (Taufique, Siwar, Talib, and Chamhuri, 2014).

- *Perceived Fit:* Measured on a three-item, bipolar scale (not Coherent/Coherent, not logic/logic, not appropriate/appropriate). (Keller and Aaker, 1992).

Finally, seven additional questions were asked to get a socio-demographic picture of the sample. Participants were asked about their age, gender identity, nationality, level of education, type of job, and type of diet.

3.2 Sample Description

As previously indicated, a survey was used to carry out this investigation. A total of 340 people were contacted to take part. 182 of them answered the questionnaire. Ten of the 182 individuals who self-identified as vegans and one who did so as a vegetarian were not taken into account for the research. Participants also had to pass an attentiveness test as part of the research. Only participants who successfully completed the attention test were included in the final sample, yielding a total of 167 participants. The low completion rate of the survey was, as some participants explained, mainly due to its relatively long duration, which was around 10 minutes for most participants.

Only Italian people took part in the study, so that there wouldn't be any cultural bias in the results. The sample was evenly split between men and women, with 49.1% of men and 49.7% of women saying they were men. Only 1.2% of people did not specify their gender (Appendix, Figure 3). The participants' ages ranged widely from 18 to 65 years of age *(M_{age} = 32.5, SD = 11.8*) (Appendix, Figure 4). Most participants (34.7%) were students, followed by full-time employees (33.5%), self-employed people (16.2%), part-time employees (9%), and unemployed people (6.6%) in order of profession (Appendix, Figure 5). Most participants had either a high school diploma (37.1%) or a bachelor's degree (26.3%) in terms of education. Many of the people who took part (28.1%) also had a master’s degree, but only a small number

(4.2%) had a PhD. Finally, 4.2% of participants have at least a middle school diploma (Appendix, 6).

3.4 Results

The measurement instruments used to collect the data for the study were all sourced from existing literature, and therefore validation was not required. As a consequence, the analysis of the results started by checking the internal consistency of the items making up the scales. Therefore, the Cronbach Alpha of each scale was measured (Appendix, Figure 7). The results are shown in *Table 1*.

Variable	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items
Willingness to Buy	0.951	3
Attitude Towards Plant Based Food	0.870	4
Perceived Quality	0.910	3
Perceived Taste	0.921	3
Meat-Eater Identification	0.855	3
Perceived Threat	0.906	8
Perceived Healthiness	0.613	5
Plant-Based Food Familiarity	0.911	3
Travel Lover Identification	0.889	3
Animal Concern	0.870	2
Health Concern	0.799	11
Environmental Concern:	0.925	6
Perceived Fit	0.865	3

Table 1. Reliability test results

The minimum accepted Cronbach Alpha was set at 0.7, and therefore perceived healthiness could not be considered a reliable measurement. On the other hand, the remaining 13 variables had Cronbach Alphas > 0.7 and were therefore reliable.

After having assessed the reliability of the measuring instruments, two manipulation checks were performed to ensure that participants correctly perceived the manipulations of the 2x2 structure. The manipulation check was performed by means of an independent sample t-test. Results from both manipulation checks show that the manipulations were significantly perceived by the respondents. In fact, in terms of *identity*, results show that when shown the promotional message pivoting both the *travel lover identity* and the *veg identity*, participants were able to correctly identify the condition they were presented *(M_{veg_id} = 4.78, SD = 1.618 vs. M_{trav_id} = 4.05, SD = 1.661; t = 2.889 p = 0.004 < 0.05) and (M_{trav_id} = 3.85, SD = 2.087 vs. M_{veg_id} = 2.41, SD = 2.087; t = -5.230, p = 0.000 < 0.05)* (Appendix, Figure 8). Similarly, the manipulation at brand level was positively perceived *(M_{gen_brand}= 3.98, SD = 1.821 vs. M_{veg_brand} = 2.47, SD = 1.666; t = 5.571, p = 0.001 < 0.05) and (M_{veg_brand}= 5.86, SD = 1.456 vs. M_{gen_brand} = 4.56, SD = 1.857; t = -5.037, p = 0.001 <0.05)* (Appendix, Figure 9).

Since all the manipulations were correctly perceived, the result analysis moved forward with the test of the hypotheses developed in the previous chapter:

> **H1**: A promotional message that elicits a common identity (travel lover) will increase the willingness to buy a plant-based food product.
>
> **H2**: A promotional message that elicits a common *identity (travel lover)* will increase the *willingness to buy* a plant-based food option among meat-eaters through a decrease in the *perceived threat* of veganism

H3: *The type of brand* (generic vs. veg) moderates the relationship between the *common identity* (*travel lover*) and the *perceived threat* of veganism. The message presented by a generic brand will lead to a *higher willingness to buy plant-based* food products through a decrease in the *perceived threat* of veganism.

First, the dummy variables *identity* (*Id_binary, 0 = veg; 1 = travel lover*) and *brand* (Brand_binary, *0 = veg; 1 = generic*) were created. Then, a 2-way ANOVA was performed to test the direct effect of *identity* on *willingness to buy* (H1) (Appendix, Figure 10). The ANOVA showed no significant effects of *travel lover identity* on *willingness to buy* ($M_{travel\_id} = 3.94$, *SD = 1.78 vs.* $M_{veg\_id} = 4.28$, *SD = 1.67; F(1,163) = 1.122, p = 0.291 > 0.05*). Following these results, H1 was rejected.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	dF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared	Noncent. Parameter	Observed Power[b]
Corrected model	12,681[a]	3	4,227	1,424	,238	,026	4,272	,373
Intercept	2773,630	1	2773,630	934,361	<,001	,851	934,361	1,000
Identity	3,332	1	3,332	1,122	,291	,007	1,122	,184
Brand	6,593	1	6,593	2,221	,138	,013	2,221	,316
Identity*Brand	483,862	1	1,233	,415	,520	,003	,415	,098
Error	3317,222	163	2,968					
Total	3317,222	167						
Corrected total	496,543	166						

Table 2. 2-Way ANOVA - DV: Willingness to buy

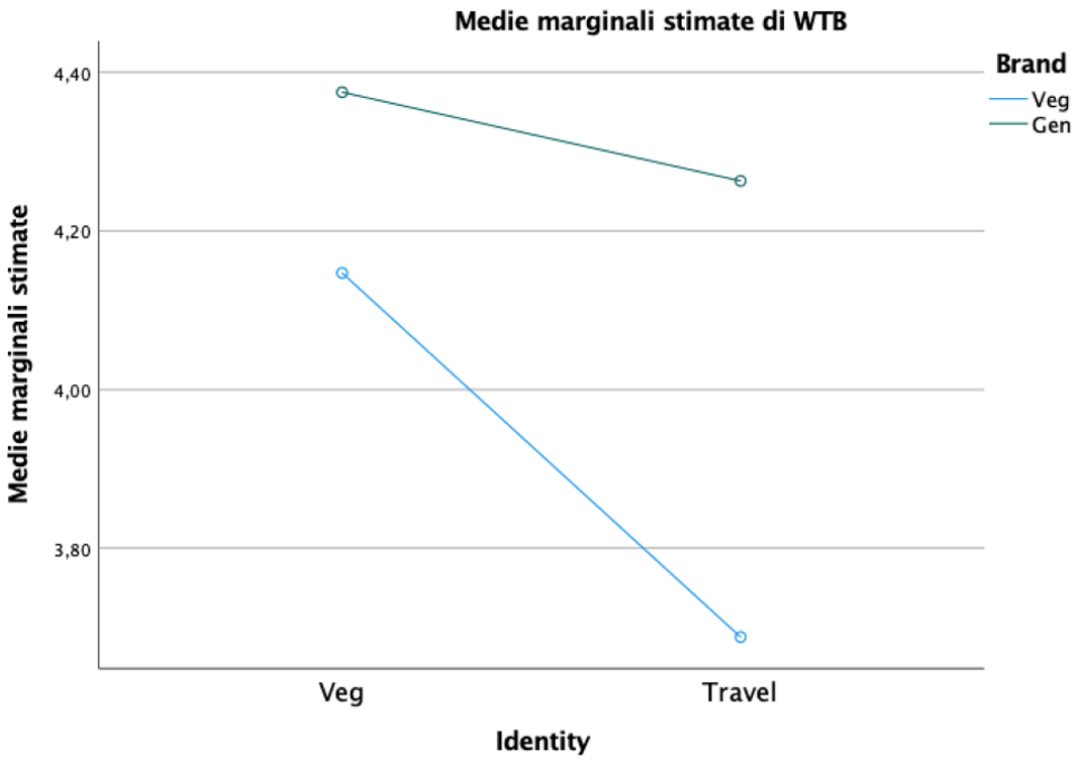

Image 3. 2-way ANOVA interaction graph - DV: Willingness to buy

Following these results, the effects of *identity* were tested on the three additional dependent variables the survey measured, namely: *attitude towards plant-based food, perceived quality, and perceived taste*.

The results show no significant direct effect of *travel lover identity* on *attitude towards plant based food* (M_{travel_id} *= 4.90, SD = 1.44 vs* M_{veg_id} *= 5.72, SD = 1.45; F(1,167) = 2.760, p = 0.099 > 0.05*) and no significant interaction effect (M_{gen_brand} *= 4.91, SD = 1.50* M_{veg_brand} *= 4.89, SD = 1.40; F(1,167) = 0.064, p = 0.80 > 0.05*) (Appendix, Figure 11). Similarly, the ANOVA analysis found no significant effects on *perceived quality* (M_{travel_id} *= 4.38, SD = 1.31 vs* M_{veg_id} *= 4.51, SD = 1.30; F(1,167) = 0.589, p = 0.44 > 0.05*) and no significant interaction effect (M_{gen_brand} *= 4.30, SD = 1.23* M_{veg_brand} *= 4.44, SD = 1.38; F(1,167) = 0.91, p = 0.76 > 0.05*) (Appendix, Figure 12). Finally, an ANOVA was performed to test the effects of *travel identity* on *perceived taste* and found no significant direct effect (M_{travel_id} *= 4.66, SD = 1.39 vs.* M_{veg_id} *= 4.87 , SD = 1.46; F(1,167) = 0.75, p = 0.39 > 0.05*) and no significant interaction

effect (M_{gen_brand} *= 4.72, SD = 1.31* M_{veg_brand} *= 4.61; SD = 1.46; F(1,167) = 0.69, p = 0.79 > 0.05*) (Appendix, Figure 13)

After having tested H1, a regression analysis was performed to test the mediating effect of perceived threat on willingness to buy (H2) and the moderating effect of the *type of brand* on *perceived threat* (H3*).* The study used model number 7 from the SPSS extension PROCESS, developed by Andrew F. Hayes, to perform a moderated mediation regression analysis.

The regression analysis found that the model was not significant (R^2 = 0.139, F(1,167) = 1.504, p = 0.215 > 0.05). In fact, there were no significant effects of *identity* on *perceived threat* (b = -0.157; t(167) = 0.538; p = 0.591 > 0.05) and no moderation effect of *type of brand* on *perceived threat* (b = -0.462; t(167) = -1.248; p = 0.214 > 0.05). Finally, the interaction effect of *identity* and *brand* on perceived threat was also not significant (b = -0.519, t(167) = -1.248, p = 0.214) (Appendix, Figure 14). Following these results, both H2 and H3 were rejected.

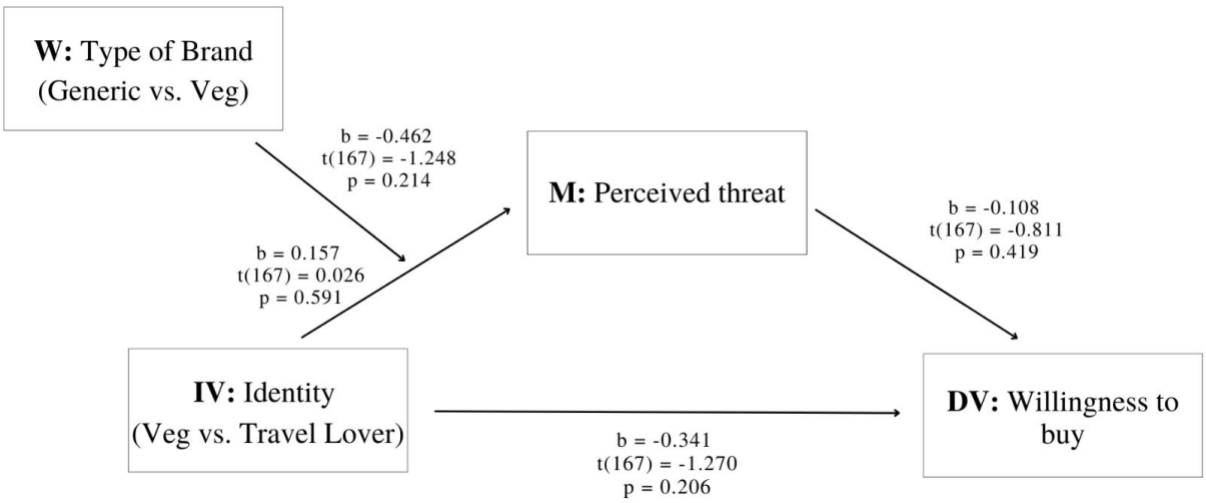

Image 4. Moderated Mediation - M: Perceived Threat

As previously mentioned, the survey also gathered data to measure a second possible mediator: *meat eater identification.* Therefore, the study moved forward with a regression analysis having *meat eater identification* as the mediating variable on the relationship between *travel lover*

identity and *willingness to buy.* The analysis showed that the model was not significant (R^2 = 0.118, F(1,167) = 0.767, p = 0.514 > 0.05). Similarly, the analysis of the mediation effect did not produce significant results for the effect of *travel lover identity* on *meat eater identification* (b = 0.035; t(167) = 0.115; p = 0.908 > 0.05) and no significant effect of the *type of brand* on *meat eater identification* (b = -0,116, t(167) = -0.369 p = 0.713 > 0.05). Finally, no significant interaction effect of *travel lover identity* and *brand* on *meat eater identification* was observed (b = -0.327; t(167) = -0.724; p = 0.470 > 0.05) (Appendix, Figure 15).

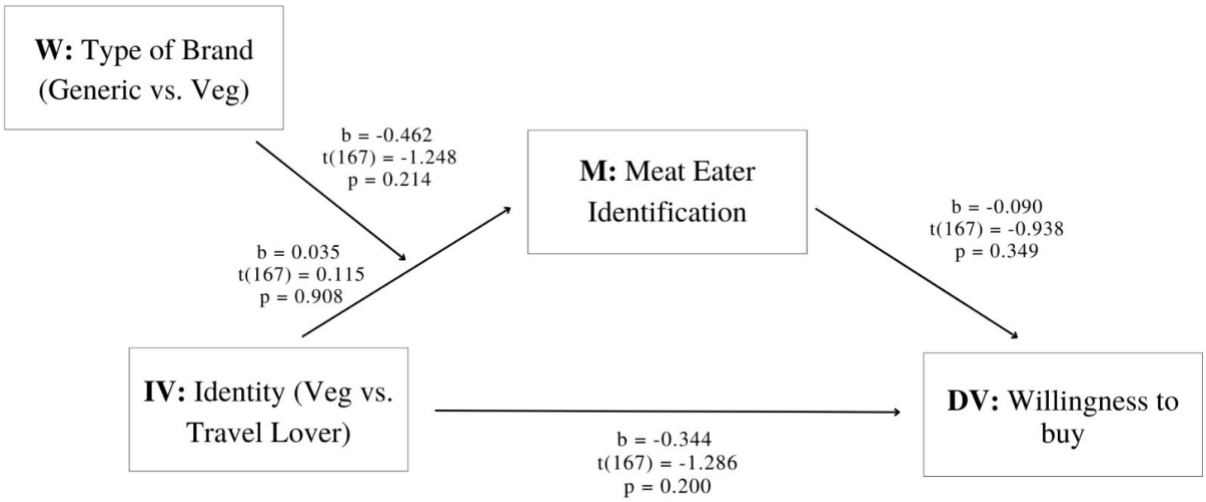

Image 4. Moderated Mediation: M = Meat Eater Identification

Due to the lack of statistically significant moderated mediation effects, the study moved on to investigate the potential moderated moderation effect of brand and animal concern on the relationship between *identity* and *perceived quality*. The regression analysis was performed through model number 3 of PROCESS. The regression results indicated that the model was significant (R2 = 0.1661, F(1,167) = 4.52, p = 0.0001 < 0.05).

The direct effect of t*ravel lover identity* on *perceived quality* was significant (b = -1.747, t(167) = -2.177, p = 0.031 < 0.05), as was the interaction effect of *travel identity* and *brand* on *perceived quality* (b = 2.827, t(167) = 2.355, p = 0.019 < 0.05). Furthermore, the regression analysis discovered that *animal concern* had a moderating effect on the interaction between

travel lover identity and brand on perceived quality (b = -0.499, t(167) = -2.166, p = 0.031 0.05). More specifically, the results show that the combination of *veg brand* and low levels of *animal concern*, results in relationship between *travel lover identity* and *perceived quality* being weakened (b = -0.955, t(167) = -2.460, p = 0.0149 < 0.05) (Appendix, Figure 16).

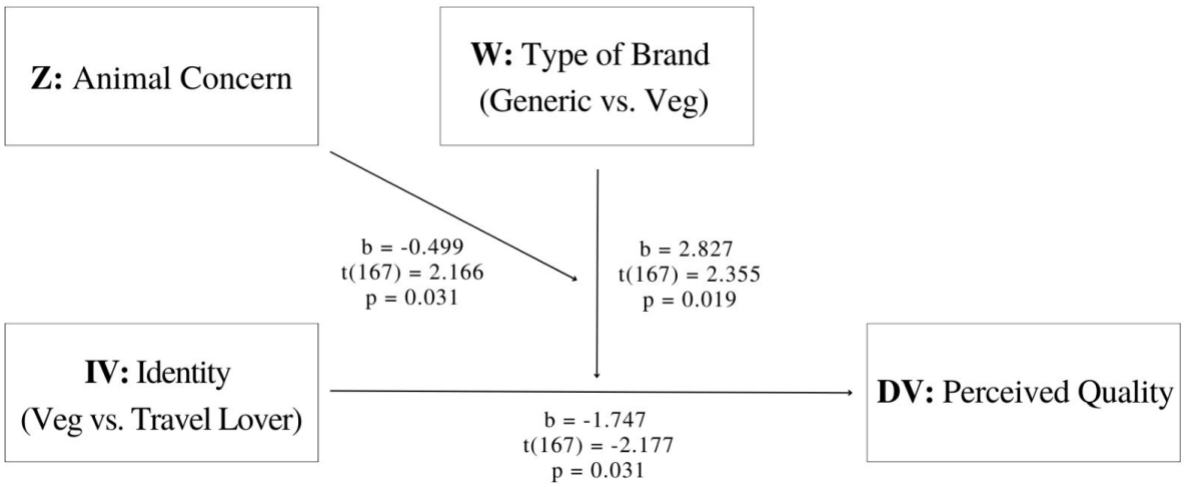

Image 5. Moderated Moderation: Z = Animal Concern

Following these results, a second moderated moderation regression analysis was performed to test the effect of the *type of brand* and *environmental concern* on the relationship between *travel lover identity* and *perceived quality.* The analysis showed that the model was significant (R^2 = 0.205, F(1,167) = 5.860, p = 0.0001 < 0.05). The model presents an insignificant direct effect of t*ravel lover identity* on *perceived quality* (b = -1.975, t(167) = -1.765, p = 0.079 > 0.05) and a significant interaction effect of *travel identity* and *brand* on *perceived quality* (b = 4.678, t(167) = 2.870, p = 0.005 < 0.05). Moreover, the regression analysis found a moderation effect of *environmental concern* on the interaction between *travel lover identity* and *type of* brand on *perceived quality.* In particular, the combination *generic brand* and high level of *environmental concern*, results in the relationship between *travel lover identity* and *perceived quality* being negatively affected (b = -0.733, t(167) = -2.066, p = 0.04 < 0.05) (Appendix, Figure 17).

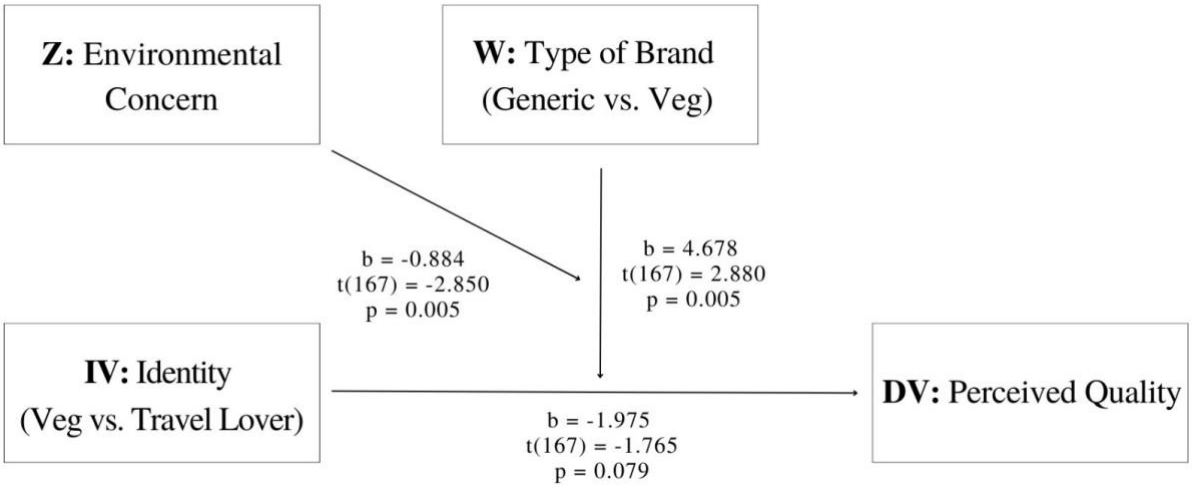

Image 5. Moderated Moderation: Z = Environmental Concern

CHAPTER 4: CONCLUSIONS

4.1 General Discussion

The primary objective of this thesis is to provide marketers with a theoretical foundation upon which to build marketing communication campaigns aimed at bringing meat eaters closer to eating plant-based foods. Previous research has shown that there are several benefits associated with plant-based diets, in terms of environmental sustainability (e.g., Warner, 2010; Bouwman et al., 2013; Bailey, Froggatt, and Wellesley, 2014); human health (e.g., Rohrmann et al., 2013; Micha, Michas, and Mozaffarian, 2012; Tonstad, Butler, Yan, and Fraser, 2009); and animal welfare (e.g., Bonnet et al., 2020; Ruby and Heine, 2012; Réquillart, and Treich, 2020. Nevertheless, despite these benefits, many meat eaters are still hesitant to switch to a plant-based diet.

According to the literature reviewed, one cause of this resistance is the feeling of threat coming from the vegetarian and vegan cultures (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017). The research focuses on how this phenomenon pertains to the interaction between meat eaters and the veg* community since humans have a natural predisposition to feel threatened by outgroups (e.g., Biernat, Vescio, Theno, and Crandall, 1996; Stephan et al., 2002).

To address this issue, the study focused on the concept of identity, more specifically the use of a common identity and communication strategies to reduce meat eaters' feelings of threat toward the veg*n culture. More specifically, the study proposes that, by designing a promotional message that elicits an identity common to veg*ns and meat eaters, the plant-based product being promoted would not be perceived to be as threatening to meat eaters, resulting in a higher likelihood of being purchased.

The common identity used to run the experiment was the identity of *travel lover*, which was selected since it is not directly associated with a specific dietary lifestyle or political philosophy. Additionally, it has been shown that those who identify as travel lovers are more inquisitive and thus more willing to try new things (Jani, 2014). In contrast, the veg*n identity may be connected to a particular set of beliefs and behaviours that some meat eaters may view as a threat to their own way of life (MacInnis and Hodson, 2017).

4.2 Main Findings

As previously mentioned, the goal of this thesis is to give marketers a theoretical basis for making marketing plans to get people who eat meat to eat more plant-based foods. To expand the existing knowledge and fulfil this objective, three hypotheses were developed.

> **H1**: A promotional message that elicits a common identity (travel lover) will increase the willingness to buy a plant-based food product.
>
> **H2:** A promotional message that elicits a common *identity* (travel lover) will increase the *willingness to buy* a plant-based food option among meat-eaters through a decrease in the *perceived threat* associated with the veg*n culture.
>
> **H3:** *The type of brand* (generic vs. veg) moderates the relationship between the *common identity* (*travel lover*) and the *perceived threat* of veganism. The message presented by a generic brand will lead to a *higher willingness to buy plant-based* food products through a decrease in the *perceived threat* of veganism.

However, the investigation did not produce any significant results to support the three hypotheses, which were therefore rejected. In fact, the analyses performed did not find the elicitation of the *travel lover* identity to significantly impact participants' *willingness to buy* the plant-based burger. However, although it was not statistically significant, the effect of *travel*

lover identity elicitation on *willingness to buy,* was found to be positive and so in line with the hypothesis proposed. The same procedure was followed to test the direct effect of *identity* on *perceived taste,* and *attitudes towards plant-based food*. The results show positive, although statistically not significant, effects of the elicitation of the *travel lover identity* on *perceived taste,* and *attitudes towards plant-based food.*

After having found no direct effect of *identity* on *willingness to buy,* the study proceeded with testing H2, attempting to find a full mediating effect of *perceived threat*. The results showed no significant mediating effect, meaning that electing a common identity does not have the expected negative impact on *perceived threat,* which in turn does not have a positive impact on *willingness to buy* plant-based foods. Since the regression analysis did not find a significant mediating effect of *perceived threat,* the model was tested again with *meat eater identification as the mediating variable.* The results showed that meat eater identification is not significantly impacted by the elicitation of the common identity of *travel lovers*.

Similarly to H1 and H2, also H3 was rejected since it was found that a message presented by a generic brand does not result in lower *perceived threat* compared to a message shown by a veg brand.

After having rejected the three hypotheses, the study moved on to the analysis of different models and testing different dependent variables, mediators, and moderators. A significant effect was found when analysing the effects of *identity, brand,* and *animal concern* on *perceived quality.* In particular, the results show that the interaction between *type of brand* and *animal concern* moderates the relationship between *identity* and *perceived quality.* More specifically, it was shown that low levels of animal concern and the veg brand make the relationship between *identity* and *perceived quality* significantly weaker. Similarly, the interaction of *type of brand* and *environmental concern* significantly affects the relationship

between *identity* and *perceived quality* so that for high levels of environmental concern and for the message promoted by the veg brand, the relationship is negatively affected.

4.3 Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

Previous research has not analysed the effects of a common identity, such as a travel lover identity on willingness to buy plant-based food. Although the direct effect of travel lover identity on willingness to buy is not significant, it is positive. The results show that willingness to buy is slightly higher when the common identity is elicited. The same results are also true for the other dependent variables analysed. In fact, eliciting the common identity has produced positive effects also on perceived taste, and attitudes towards plant-based food. Similarly to the direct effect analysis, the moderation analysis showed that the sample's willingness to buy, perceived taste, and attitudes towards plant-based food were, to a certain degree, higher when the message was shown by the generic brand.

These results show that plant-based food consumption is indeed identity-based, and the reason for the statistically insignificant results could be that the manipulations were not effective enough to produce significant increases in the means of the dependent variables. Moreover, it could be argued that by eliciting a common identity different from travel lover could potentially lead to significant results.

The results from the mediation analyses showed that, indeed, the elicitation of a common identity has negative effects on the perceived threat associated with the vegetarian and vegan identities. Moreover, this effect was stronger when the promotional message was communicated by the generic brand. These findings strongly support the idea of outgroups being perceived as a threat and apply it in the context of meat consumption.

This research also contributes to the existing knowledge of the relationship between animal and environmental concern and the perceived quality of plant-based food. In fact, leveraging a common identity in the communication phase has negative effects on perceived quality of plant-based foods if the message is shown by a veg brand and if consumers have low levels of animal concern. This shows that a veg brand identity can assist in reducing the detrimental effect of the travel identity on perceived quality, particularly among people who have little concern for the welfare of animals. This underlines both the possible impact of individual variations like worries about animal welfare and the significance of brand identification in influencing consumers' perceptions and attitudes toward plant-based food items.

In contrast, the interaction of generic brand and high levels of environmental concern negatively affects the relationship between the travel lover identity and the level of perceived quality of plant-based food. According to this, the marketing of the plant-based burger as being suitable for travel lovers may not be well received by people who value the environment and who believe the omnivorous brand is at odds with their beliefs.

This thesis showed that, although pivoting the common identity of travel lovers has led to higher *willingness to buy*, *attitude towards plant-based food*, and *perceived taste*, the effect is not intense enough to be a generalizable trend. From a management point of view, this suggests that other things, like how the food looks, the ingredients it contains, and the price, might have a bigger effect on how people feel about plant-based foods. To maximise the impact of marketing efforts, food companies may need to concentrate on improving the product itself, such as through taste tests and quality assurance procedures, or delivering competitive prices. It may also be worthwhile to look into alternative marketing tactics, such as emphasising the advantages of plant-based foods for health or the environment.

Furthermore, the research conducted for this thesis shows that leveraging a common identity in the promotion strategies of plant-based food products has a negative effect on the level of threat meat eaters perceive from vegetarians and vegans. Also here, the effect was not strong enough to significantly reduce the perceived threat. However, since the results are in line with the existing literature on the topic and with the hypotheses developed, marketers could use such insight as a further confirmation of a concept that was already well known. In practice, this result could be used in developing communication strategies in geographical regions where vegetarians and vegans are perceived as a bigger threat. Food companies operating in such environments, could use common identities to decrease the negative feelings meat eaters have towards veg*n products and therefore increase their willingness to try them.

The study also showed that, on average, meat eaters showed lower levels of perceived threat when the plant-based burger was promoted by a generic brand, although not in a statistically significant way. This finding may be especially important for veg*n brands that want to reach out more to meat eaters. In fact, these brands may see better results in selling to meat eaters if they did not present themselves as vegan brands, which might immediately repel meat eaters, who would see the brand as an outgroup.

On the other hand, the results of the moderated moderation analysis show that the kind of brand and the degree of animal or environmental concern can influence the relationship between identity and perceived quality of plant-based food. This shows that marketers should consider the values and beliefs of their target audience as well as the context in which the product is presented in order to effectively sell plant-based food products. For instance, those who care about the environment might be more likely to buy a plant-based burger if it is sold under a generic name rather than a vegan one. In addition, the results imply that it can be more successful to market to people who have little sympathy for animals and promote the product as a vegan brand, as this may result in a weaker link between identity and perceived quality.

In terms of communication, this demonstrates how crucial it is to consider the degree of environmental awareness of the target audience when developing advertising materials. Promoting plant-based food goods as a means of reducing their environmental impact may be a more successful strategy to raise the perceived quality of the product and their willingness to buy it for people who are extremely worried about the environment. On the other side, the message could not have the same impact on people who are less worried about environmental issues, and alternative tactics, like highlighting the taste or health benefits, might be more successful.

4.4 Limitations

The results of this study show some shortcomings that must be fixed in order to improve the reliability of the conclusions. The small sample size of the study is one of its key weaknesses. In fact, although 340 people started the survey, only 167 completed it. Therefore, expanding the sample size and obtaining more responses would be essential for improving the outcomes. Additionally, because only Italians participated in the current study, it is important to broaden the sample to include people from other European nations. This will give a thorough grasp of the beliefs and practises of various populations regarding the use of plant-based foods.

Another limitation of this study is that the stimuli used may not have been strong enough to produce significant effects on the variables analysed. To enhance the results, the stimuli could be made more engaging and appealing to the participants, which could result in stronger effects on the variables studied. Additionally, the identity stimuli used in the study were mock-ups of Instagram stories, which might have produced bias among older participants who may not be as familiar with social media platforms. To mitigate this bias, the study could consider using alternative stimuli that are more relevant to older participants and that are less likely to elicit a response that is influenced by age.

Finally, the snowball sampling method has important drawbacks, including a lack of representativeness, a tendency toward selection bias, a time commitment, and ethical issues. It is a potentially unreliable and biassed way of gathering data for study because of these shortcomings. To guarantee reliable and representative results, alternative techniques like random or stratified sampling should be taken into consideration.

4.4 Future Research

The findings of this study shed important light on how shared identities affect people's perceptions of plant-based foods. However, there are a number of directions that more research may go in order to better explain this phenomenon. One such approach is to replicate this study in a global setting. The participants in the current study were all Italian, so it will be interesting to see if the findings hold true in other cultural settings. Determining the validity and robustness of the findings requires an understanding of their generalizability.

Future studies could also look into the impact of shared identities using different stimuli. The current study concentrated on Instagram stories as the platform for promoting plant-based foods, but it would be worthwhile to investigate how shared identity affects people's impressions of other forms of advertising, like out-of-home advertising. This might offer a more thorough knowledge of how shared identities influence how people view foods made from plants.

Examining the impact of other common identities besides travel enthusiasts is a fascinating area for future research. Examining the impact of identities like national identity or music fan identity, as suggested by Lonsdale and North (2009), could offer fresh perspectives on how people's sense of who they are affects how they judge others. This could lead to a better understanding of how shared identities influence our perceptions and emphasise the significance of self-identification in social interactions. Similarly, the next step for research in

this area could be to consider alternative mediators or moderators that may impact the relationship between identity and *willingness to buy*

Finally, the results of this study could be further validated, and their generalizability increased by being repeated using a larger sample size and a random sampling technique. In order to portray the results more accurately, a larger sample size would offer a completer and more representative sample of the population.

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Appendix:

Figure 1: Survey Measurement Scales

- Willingness to buy

1. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - La probabilità di acquistare questo hamburger è alta

2. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - La probabilità che prenderei in considerazione l'acquisto di questo hamburger è alta

3. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - La mia disponibilità ad acquistare questo hamburger è alta

- Meat Eater Identification

1. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Per la mia identità è importante essere un consumatore di carne

2. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Mi percepisco simile ai consumatori di carne

3. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Sono affezionato ai consumatori di carne

- Perceived Threat

1. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - L'ascesa del cibo a base vegetale rappresenta una minaccia per i costumi culturali del nostro paese.

2. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Importanti tradizioni culinarie tipiche del nostro paese cominciano ad estinguersi a causa dell'aumento del cibo a base vegetale.

3. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Mangiare carne fa parte delle nostre abitudini culturali e della nostra identità e alcune persone dovrebbero essere più rispettose di questo.

4. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Le persone che mangiano cibo a base vegetale dovrebbero avere più rispetto per le nostre abitudini alimentari tradizionali, di cui il consumo di carne fa semplicemente parte.

5. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Tradizioni familiari importanti sono sempre più rovinate e stanno scomparendo a causa della presenza di persone che mangiano cibo a base vegetale in certe famiglie.

6. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Il cibo a base vegetale ha un'influenza negativa sull'economia.

7. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Il movimento intorno al cibo a base vegetale è troppo coinvolto nella politica locale e nazionale.

8. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Al giorno d'oggi, quando si parla di nutrizione e di pasti, la gente ascolta troppo quello che vuole una minoranza di persone che mangia cibo a base vegetale.

- Attitudes Towards Plant-based Food

1. In che misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Non appetibile:Appetibile

2. In che misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Disgustoso:Non disgustoso

3. In che misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Sgradevole:Gradevole

4. In che misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Rivoltante:Non rivoltante

- Perceived Quality

1. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Questo prodotto è di alta qualità

2. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Questo è un prodotto di qualità superiore

3. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Questo prodotto è di ottima qualità

- Perceived Taste

1. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Penso che questo prodotto potrebbe essere gustoso

2. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Penso che questo prodotto potrebbe essere delizioso

3. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni riguardo il nuovo hamburger del Brand X: - Il sapore di questo prodotto potrebbe piacermi

- Perceived Healthiness

1. In che misura pensi che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Salutare

2. In che misura pensi che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Nutriente

3. In che misura pensi che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Buono per me

4. In che misura pensi che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Grasso

5. In che misura pensi che il nuovo hamburger del Brand X sia: - Calorico

- Plant-Based Food Familiarity

1. Riguardo i cibi vegetali (es. hamburger vegetale), indica in che misura tu ti consideri: - Poco familiare:Familiare

2. Riguardo i cibi vegetali (es. hamburger vegetale), indica in che misura tu ti consideri: - Inesperto:Esperto

3. Riguardo i cibi vegetali (es. hamburger vegetale), indica in che misura tu ti consideri: - Non informato:Informato

- Travel Lover Identification

1. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Amare viaggiare è una parte importante della mia identità

2. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Mi piace essere definito/a come una persona che ama viaggiare

3. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Sono un/un' amante dei viaggi

- Animal Concern

1. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Per me è importante che il cibo che mangio sia stato prodotto in modo che nessun animale sentisse dolore.

2. In che misura sei d'accordo da 1 ("completamente in disaccordo") a 7 ("completamente d'accordo") con le seguenti affermazioni: - Per me è importante che il cibo che mangio sia stato prodotto in modo che i diritti degli animali venissero rispettati.

- **Perceived Healthiness**

1. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Sono molto consapevole della mia salute.

2. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - In genere sono attento alle mie sensazioni interiori riguardo alla mia salute.

3. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Rifletto molto riguardo alla mia salute

4. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Sono sempre preoccupato per la mia salute.

5. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Mi accorgo di come mi sento fisicamente durante la giornata.

6. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Mi assumo la responsabilità del mio stato di salute.

7. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
   - Una buona salute richiede una partecipazione attiva da parte mia.

8. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
   - Mi preoccupo della mia salute solo quando sono malato

9. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
   - Vivere la vita senza malattie e disturbi è molto importante per me.

10. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
    - La mia salute dipende da quanto mi prendo cura di me stesso.

11. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
    - Vivere la vita nella migliore salute possibile è molto importante per me.

- **Environmental Concern**

1. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
   - Per me è importante che i prodotti che uso non danneggino l'ambiente.

2. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni.
   - Quando prendo molte decisioni considero il potenziale impatto ambientale delle mie azioni.

3. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Le mie abitudini di acquisto sono influenzate dalla mia preoccupazione per l'ambiente.

4. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Mi preoccupa lo spreco delle risorse del nostro pianeta.

5. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Mi descriverei come una persona responsabile nei confronti dell'ambiente

6. Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d’accordo) in quale misura sei d’accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Sono disposto a subire disagi per intraprendere azioni più rispettose dell'ambiente.

- **Perceived Fit**

1. Indica in quale misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger di Brand X sia, rispetto a Brand X: - Coerente:Non coerente

2. Indica in quale misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger di Brand X sia, rispetto a Brand X: - Logico:Non logico

3. Indica in quale misura ritieni che il nuovo hamburger di Brand X sia, rispetto a Brand X: - Appropriato:Non appropriato

Figure 2: Conditions Distribution

Statistiche

Conditions

N	Valido	167
	Mancante	0
Media		2,48
Mediana		2,00
Modalità		1
Deviazione std.		1,181
Varianza		1,396
Minimo		1
Massimo		4

Conditions

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	1	48	28,7	28,7	28,7
	2	38	22,8	22,8	51,5
	3	34	20,4	20,4	71,9
	4	47	28,1	28,1	100,0
	Totale	167	100,0	100,0	

Figure 3: Gender Distribution

Statistiche

Genere

N	Valido	167
	Mancante	0
Media		1,53
Mediana		2,00
Modalità		2
Deviazione std.		,568
Varianza		,323
Minimo		1
Massimo		4

Genere

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	Maschile	82	49,1	49,1	49,1
	Femminile	83	49,7	49,7	98,8
	Preferisco non dichiararlo	2	1,2	1,2	100,0
	Totale	167	100,0	100,0	

Figure 4: Age Distribution

Statistiche

Quanti anni hai?

N	Valido	167
	Mancante	0
Media		32,50
Mediana		27,00
Modalità		22
Deviazione std.		11,771
Varianza		138,553
Minimo		18
Massimo		65

Figure 5: Employment Status Distribution

Statistiche

Lavoro

N	Valido	167
	Mancante	0
Media		2,57
Mediana		3,00
Modalità		1
Deviazione std.		1,437
Varianza		2,065
Minimo		1
Massimo		6

Lavoro

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	Studente	58	34,7	34,7	34,7
	Lavoratore Part-time	15	9,0	9,0	43,7
	Lavoratore Full-time	56	33,5	33,5	77,2
	Libero professionista	27	16,2	16,2	93,4
	Disoccupato	11	6,6	6,6	100,0
	Totale	167	100,0	100,0	

Image 6: Education Distribution

Statistiche

Educazione

N	Valido	167
	Mancante	0
Media		2,91
Mediana		3,00
Modalità		2
Deviazione std.		,993
Varianza		,986
Minimo		1
Massimo		5

Educazione

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	Terza Media	7	4,2	4,2	4,2
	Diploma di Maturità	62	37,1	37,1	41,3
	Laurea Triennale	44	26,3	26,3	67,7
	Laurea Magistrale/Quinquennale	47	28,1	28,1	95,8
	Dottorato di ricerca/Master	7	4,2	4,2	100,0
	Totale	167	100,0	100,0	

Image 7: Reliability Tests Results

- **Willingness to Buy**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,946	3

- **Meat Eater Identification**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,840	3

- **Attitude towards plant-based food**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,864	4

- **Perceived Quality**

Scala: Perceived Quality

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,905	3

- **Perceived Taste**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,917	3

- **Perceived Threat**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,901	8

- **Perceived Healthiness**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,622	5

- **Plant-Based Food Familiarity**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,901	3

- **Travel Lover Identification**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,888	3

- **Animal Concern**

Scala: Animal Concern

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,865	2

- **Health Concern**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,794	11

- **Environmental Concern**

Scala: Env Concern

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,922	6

- **Perceived Fit**

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	167	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	167	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabili...

Alpha di Cronbach	N. di elementi
,865	3

Figure 8: Identity Manipulation Check

Statistiche gruppo

	Identity	N	Media	Deviazione std.	Errore standard della media
Man Check: Veg ID	Veg	82	4,78	1,618	,179
	Travel	85	4,05	1,661	,180
Man Check: Travel ID	Veg	82	2,41	1,685	,186
	Travel	85	3,95	2,087	,226

Test campioni indipendenti

		Test di Levene per l'eguaglianza delle varianze		Test t per l'eguaglianza delle medie							
						Significatività		Differenza della media	Differenza errore std.	Intervallo di confidenza della differenza di 95%	
		F	Sign.	t	gl	P unilaterale	P bilaterale			Inferiore	Superiore
Man Check: Veg ID	Varianze uguali presunte	,042	,838	2,889	165	,002	,004	,733	,254	,232	1,235
	Varianze uguali non presunte			2,890	164,984	,002	,004	,733	,254	,232	1,234
Man Check: Travel ID	Varianze uguali presunte	5,490	,020	-5,230	165	<,001	<,001	-1,538	,294	-2,119	-,958
	Varianze uguali non presunte			-5,250	160,072	<,001	<,001	-1,538	,293	-2,117	-,960

Figure 9: Brand Manipulation Check:

Statistiche gruppo

	Brand	N	Media	Deviazione std.	Errore standard della media
Man Check: Generic Brand	Gen	86	3,98	1,821	,196
	Veg	81	2,47	1,666	,185
Man Check: Veg Brand	Gen	86	4,56	1,857	,200
	Veg	81	5,86	1,456	,162

Test campioni indipendenti

		Test di Levene per l'eguaglianza delle varianze		Test t per l'eguaglianza delle medie							
						Significatività		Differenza della media	Differenza errore std.	Intervallo di confidenza della differenza di 95%	
		F	Sign.	t	gl	P unilaterale	P bilaterale			Inferiore	Superiore
Man Check: Generic Brand	Varianze uguali presunte	,012	,914	5,571	165	<,001	<,001	1,508	,271	,973	2,042
	Varianze uguali non presunte			5,585	164,866	<,001	<,001	1,508	,270	,975	2,041
Man Check: Veg Brand	Varianze uguali presunte	8,851	,003	-5,037	165	<,001	<,001	-1,306	,259	-1,818	-,794
	Varianze uguali non presunte			-5,073	159,804	<,001	<,001	-1,306	,257	-1,814	-,798

Figure 10: Regressions Analysis - DV: WTB

Fattori tra soggetti

		Etichetta valore	N
Identity	0	Veg	82
	1	Travel	85
Brand	0	Veg	81
	1	Gen	86

Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: WTB

Identity	Brand	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
Veg	Veg	4,1471	1,54220	34
	Gen	4,3750	1,76601	48
	Totale	4,2805	1,67075	82
Travel	Veg	3,6879	1,76712	47
	Gen	4,2632	1,76410	38
	Totale	3,9451	1,77866	85
Totale	Veg	3,8807	1,68185	81
	Gen	4,3256	1,75565	86
	Totale	4,1098	1,72952	167

Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: WTB

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.	Eta quadrato parziale	Parametro noncent.	Potenza osservata[b]
Modello corretto	12,681[a]	3	4,227	1,424	,238	,026	4,272	,373
Intercetta	2773,630	1	2773,630	934,361	<,001	,851	934,361	1,000
Identity	3,332	1	3,332	1,122	,291	,007	1,122	,184
Brand	6,593	1	6,593	2,221	,138	,013	2,221	,316
Identity * Brand	1,233	1	1,233	,415	,520	,003	,415	,098
Errore	483,862	163	2,968					
Totale	3317,222	167						
Totale corretto	496,543	166						

Figure 11: Regressions Analysis - DV: Attitude Towards Plant-Based Food

Fattori tra soggetti

		Etichetta valore	N
Identity	0	Veg	82
	1	Travel	85
Brand	0	Veg	81
	1	Gen	86

Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: AttitPBF

Identity	Brand	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
Veg	Veg	5,3235	1,38379	34
	Gen	5,2344	1,50832	48
	Totale	5,2713	1,44988	82
Travel	Veg	4,8883	1,40245	47
	Gen	4,9145	1,50369	38
	Totale	4,9000	1,43987	85
Totale	Veg	5,0710	1,40270	81
	Gen	5,0930	1,50589	86
	Totale	5,0823	1,45242	167

Test di Levene di eguaglianza delle varianze dell'errore[a,b]

		Statistica di Levene	gl1	gl2	Sig.
AttitPBF	Basato sulla media	,940	3	163	,423
	Basato sulla mediana	,590	3	163	,623
	Basato sulla mediana e con il grado di libertà adattato	,590	3	159,399	,623
	Basato sulla media ritagliata	1,005	3	163	,392

Verifica l'ipotesi nulla che la varianza dell'errore della variabile dipendente sia uguale tra i gruppi.

a. Variabile dipendente: AttitPBF

b. Disegno: Intercetta + Identity + Brand + Identity * Brand

Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: AttitPBF

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Modello corretto	5,928[a]	3	1,976	,936	,425
Intercetta	4237,201	1	4237,201	2006,271	<,001
Identity	5,828	1	5,828	2,760	,099
Brand	,041	1	,041	,019	,890
Identity * Brand	,136	1	,136	,064	,800
Errore	344,253	163	2,112		
Totale	4663,813	167			
Totale corretto	350,180	166			

a. R-quadrato = ,017 (R-quadrato adattato = -,001)

Figure 12: Regressions Analysis - DV: Perceived Quality

Fattori tra soggetti

		Etichetta valore	N
Identity	0	Veg	82
	1	Travel	85
Brand	0	Veg	81
	1	Gen	86

Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: QualityP

Identity	Brand	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
Veg	Veg	4,6667	1,26598	34
	Gen	4,4028	1,34210	48
	Totale	4,5122	1,30966	82
Travel	Veg	4,4468	1,38012	47
	Gen	4,3070	1,23848	38
	Totale	4,3843	1,31284	85
Totale	Veg	4,5391	1,32975	81
	Gen	4,3605	1,29071	86
	Totale	4,4471	1,30890	167

Test di Levene di eguaglianza delle varianze dell'errore[a,b]

		Statistica di Levene	gl1	gl2	Sig.
QualityP	Basato sulla media	,192	3	163	,902
	Basato sulla mediana	,213	3	163	,887
	Basato sulla mediana e con il grado di libertà adattato	,213	3	162,203	,887
	Basato sulla media ritagliata	,210	3	163	,889

Verifica l'ipotesi nulla che la varianza dell'errore della variabile dipendente sia uguale tra i gruppi.

a. Variabile dipendente: QualityP

b. Disegno: Intercetta + Identity + Brand + Identity * Brand

Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: QualityP

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.	Eta quadrato parziale	Parametro noncent.	Potenza osservata[b]
Modello corretto	2,479[a]	3	,826	,478	,698	,009	1,433	,145
Intercetta	3246,905	1	3246,905	1877,324	<,001	,920	1877,324	1,000
Identity	1,018	1	1,018	,589	,444	,004	,589	,119
Brand	1,666	1	1,666	,963	,328	,006	,963	,164
Identity * Brand	,157	1	,157	,091	,763	,001	,091	,060
Errore	281,915	163	1,730					
Totale	3587,111	167						
Totale corretto	284,394	166						

a. R-quadrato = ,009 (R-quadrato adattato = -,010)

b. Calcolato utilizzando alfa = ,05

Figure 13: Regressions Analysis - DV: Perceived Taste

Fattori tra soggetti

		Etichetta valore	N
Identity	0	Veg	82
	1	Travel	85
Brand	0	Veg	81
	1	Gen	86

Statistiche descrittive

Variabile dipendente: TasteP

Identity	Brand	Medio	Deviazione std.	N
Veg	Veg	4,7451	1,48178	34
	Gen	4,9722	1,45351	48
	Totale	4,8780	1,46051	82
Travel	Veg	4,6099	1,46013	47
	Gen	4,7193	1,31182	38
	Totale	4,6588	1,38871	85
Totale	Veg	4,6667	1,46154	81
	Gen	4,8605	1,39041	86
	Totale	4,7665	1,42436	167

Test di Levene di eguaglianza delle varianze dell'errore[a,b]

		Statistica di Levene	gl1	gl2	Sig.
TasteP	Basato sulla media	,298	3	163	,827
	Basato sulla mediana	,659	3	163	,578
	Basato sulla mediana e con il grado di libertà adattato	,659	3	161,983	,578
	Basato sulla media ritagliata	,320	3	163	,811

Verifica l'ipotesi nulla che la varianza dell'errore della variabile dipendente sia uguale tra i gruppi.

a. Variabile dipendente: TasteP

b. Disegno: Intercetta + Identity + Brand + Identity * Brand

Test di effetti tra soggetti

Variabile dipendente: TasteP

Origine	Somma dei quadrati di tipo III	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.	Eta quadrato parziale	Parametro noncent.	Potenza osservata[b]
Modello corretto	3,284[a]	3	1,095	,535	,659	,010	1,605	,158
Intercetta	3707,894	1	3707,894	1812,269	<,001	,917	1812,269	1,000
Identity	1,539	1	1,539	,752	,387	,005	,752	,139
Brand	1,157	1	1,157	,566	,453	,003	,566	,116
Identity * Brand	,142	1	,142	,069	,793	,000	,069	,058
Errore	333,497	163	2,046					
Totale	4130,889	167						
Totale corretto	336,781	166						

a. R-quadrato = ,010 (R-quadrato adattato = -,008)

b. Calcolato utilizzando alfa = ,05

Figure 14: Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis - M: Perceived Threat

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 7
    Y  : WTB
    X  : Identity
    M  : ThreatP
    W  : Brand

Sample
Size:  167

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 ThreatP

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE      F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
      ,1393      ,0194     1,7396     1,5042     3,0000   163,0000      ,2154

Model
              coeff    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     2,6397      ,2670     9,8874      ,0000     2,1125     3,1669
Identity      ,1768      ,3284      ,5384      ,5911     -,4716      ,8252
Brand         ,0087      ,3317      ,0263      ,9790     -,6462      ,6637
Int_1        -,5193      ,4161    -1,2480      ,2138    -1,3410      ,3024

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        Identity x        Brand

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng     F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
X*W      ,0095     1,5574     1,0000   163,0000      ,2138

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 WTB
```

```
Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE     F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
      ,1218      ,0148     2,9828     1,1590     2,0000   164,0000      ,3164

Model
              coeff    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     4,5348      ,3569    12,7070      ,0000     3,8301     5,2395
Identity     -,3408      ,2684    -1,2700      ,2059     -,8708      ,1891
ThreatP      -,0962      ,1186     -,8108      ,4186     -,3303      ,1380


****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
     -,3408      ,2684    -1,2700      ,2059     -,8708      ,1891

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
 Identity    ->    ThreatP     ->    WTB

      Brand     Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
      ,0000     -,0170      ,0524     -,1413      ,0862
     1,0000      ,0329      ,0501     -,0614      ,1462

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
           Index     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
Brand      ,0499      ,0801     -,0915      ,2367

*********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: A heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator
was used.

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Figure 15: Moderated Mediation Regression Analysis - M: Meat Eater Identification

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 7
    Y  : WTB
    X  : Identity
    M  : MeatID
    W  : Brand
```

```
Sample
Size:  167

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MeatID

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE      F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
      ,1180      ,0139     2,0709      ,6867     3,0000   163,0000      ,5614

Model
             coeff    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3,8725      ,2346    16,5065      ,0000     3,4093     4,3358
Identity      ,0353      ,3059      ,1152      ,9084     -,5688      ,6393
Brand        -,1156      ,3136     -,3687      ,7129     -,7348      ,5036
Int_1        -,3273      ,4522     -,7238      ,4702    -1,2201      ,5656

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        Identity x        Brand

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
       R2-chng     F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
X*W      ,0032      ,5239     1,0000   163,0000      ,4702

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 WTB

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE      F(HC4)        df1        df2          p
      ,1226      ,0150     2,9822      1,2554     2,0000   164,0000      ,2877

Model
             coeff    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     4,6227      ,3976    11,6262      ,0000     3,8376     5,4078
Identity     -,3439      ,2674    -1,2861      ,2002     -,8720      ,1841
MeatID       -,0899      ,0959     -,9382      ,3495     -,2792      ,0993


***************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y *****************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect    se(HC4)          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
     -,3439      ,2674    -1,2861      ,2002     -,8720      ,1841

Conditional indirect effects of X on Y:

INDIRECT EFFECT:
 Identity    ->    MeatID      ->    WTB

      Brand     Effect     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
      ,0000     -,0032      ,0408     -,0950      ,0867
     1,0000      ,0263      ,0542     -,0428      ,1729

Index of moderated mediation (difference between conditional indirect effects):
           Index     BootSE   BootLLCI   BootULCI
Brand      ,0294      ,0685     -,0722      ,2116

********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
```

```
  95,0000

Number of bootstrap samples for percentile bootstrap confidence intervals:
  5000

NOTE: A heteroscedasticity consistent standard error and covariance matrix estimator
was used.

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Figure 16: Moderated Moderation Regression Analysis - W: Type of Brand; Z: Animal Concern

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 3
    Y  : QualityP
    X  : Identity
    W  : Brand
    Z  : AniConc

Sample
Size:  167

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 QualityP

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      ,4075      ,1661     1,4916     4,5236     7,0000   159,0000      ,0001

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     3,9269      ,5413     7,2548      ,0000     2,8578     4,9959
Identity    -1,7474      ,8025    -2,1774      ,0309    -3,3323     -,1625
Brand       -1,0685      ,7297    -1,4642      ,1451    -2,5098      ,3727
Int_1        2,8272     1,2000     2,3559      ,0197      ,4571     5,1973
AniConc       ,1771      ,1195     1,4822      ,1403     -,0589      ,4132
Int_2         ,2641      ,1624     1,6264      ,1059     -,0566      ,5849
Int_3         ,1286      ,1498      ,8581      ,3922     -,1674      ,4245
Int_4        -,4997      ,2307    -2,1663      ,0318     -,9554     -,0441

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        Identity x        Brand
 Int_2    :        Identity x        AniConc
 Int_3    :        Brand    x        AniConc
 Int_4    :        Identity x        Brand    x        AniConc

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
         R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W*Z      ,0246     4,6930     1,0000   159,0000      ,0318
----------
    Focal predict: Identity (X)
```

```
          Mod var: Brand    (W)
          Mod var: AniConc  (Z)

Test of conditional X*W interaction at value(s) of Z:
    AniConc     Effect          F        df1        df2          p
     3,1822     1,2369     4,8455     1,0000   159,0000      ,0292
     4,9461      ,3554      ,8055     1,0000   159,0000      ,3708
     6,7101     -,5261      ,8413     1,0000   159,0000      ,3604

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

      Brand    AniConc     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
      ,0000     3,1822     -,9069      ,3688    -2,4592      ,0150    -1,6352      -
,1786
      ,0000     4,9461     -,4410      ,2907    -1,5169      ,1313    -1,0151      ,1332
      ,0000     6,7101      ,0249      ,4440      ,0561      ,9553     -,8520      ,9018
     1,0000     3,1822      ,3301      ,4240      ,7785      ,4375     -,5073     1,1674
     1,0000     4,9461     -,0856      ,2689     -,3183      ,7507     -,6166      ,4455
     1,0000     6,7101     -,5012      ,3631    -1,3802      ,1695    -1,2184      ,2160

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):
      Value    % below    % above
     3,7872    24,5509    75,4491

Conditional X*W interaction at values of the moderator Z:
    AniConc     Effect         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
     1,0000     2,3275      ,9852     2,3624      ,0194      ,3817     4,2733
     1,3000     2,1775      ,9223     2,3611      ,0194      ,3561     3,9990
     1,6000     2,0276      ,8603     2,3570      ,0196      ,3286     3,7266
     1,9000     1,8777      ,7995     2,3487      ,0201      ,2988     3,4566
     2,2000     1,7278      ,7401     2,3344      ,0208      ,2660     3,1895
     2,5000     1,5778      ,6827     2,3113      ,0221      ,2296     2,9261
     2,8000     1,4279      ,6276     2,2753      ,0242      ,1885     2,6674
     3,1000     1,2780      ,5755     2,2206      ,0278      ,1413     2,4147
     3,4000     1,1281      ,5275     2,1387      ,0340      ,0864     2,1698
     3,7000      ,9781      ,4845     2,0188      ,0452      ,0212     1,9351
     3,7872      ,9346      ,4732     1,9750      ,0500      ,0000     1,8692
     4,0000      ,8282      ,4482     1,8479      ,0665     -,0570     1,7134
     4,3000      ,6783      ,4202     1,6141      ,1085     -,1517     1,5083
     4,6000      ,5284      ,4023     1,3132      ,1910     -,2663     1,3230
     4,9000      ,3785      ,3959      ,9559      ,3406     -,4035     1,1604
     5,2000      ,2285      ,4015      ,5692      ,5700     -,5644     1,0215
     5,5000      ,0786      ,4186      ,1878      ,8513     -,7481      ,9053
     5,8000     -,0713      ,4459     -,1599      ,8731     -,9520      ,8093
     6,1000     -,2212      ,4817     -,4593      ,6466    -1,1725      ,7301
     6,4000     -,3712      ,5242     -,7081      ,4799    -1,4064      ,6641
     6,7000     -,5211      ,5719     -,9111      ,3636    -1,6507      ,6085
     7,0000     -,6710      ,6237    -1,0758      ,2836    -1,9029      ,5608

************************ ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS ************************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95,0000

Z values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

------ END MATRIX -----
```

Figure 17: Moderated Moderation Regression Analysis - W: Type of Brand; Z: Animal Concern

```
Run MATRIX procedure:

*************** PROCESS Procedure for SPSS Version 4.2 beta ***************

          Written by Andrew F. Hayes, Ph.D.       www.afhayes.com
    Documentation available in Hayes (2022). www.guilford.com/p/hayes3

**************************************************************************
Model  : 3
    Y  : QualityP
    X  : Identity
    W  : Brand
    Z  : EnvConc

Sample
Size:  167

**************************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 QualityP

Model Summary
          R       R-sq        MSE          F        df1        df2          p
      ,4529      ,2051     1,4218     5,8601     7,0000   159,0000      ,0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p       LLCI       ULCI
constant     2,7870      ,8113     3,4352      ,0008     1,1847     4,3894
Identity    -1,9755     1,1191    -1,7652      ,0794    -4,1856      ,2347
Brand        -,5377     1,0815     -,4972      ,6198    -2,6737     1,5983
Int_1        4,6779     1,6297     2,8704      ,0047     1,4593     7,8964
EnvConc       ,3800      ,1587     2,3941      ,0178      ,0665      ,6935
Int_2         ,3404      ,2176     1,5644      ,1197     -,0893      ,7701
Int_3         ,0419      ,2090      ,2003      ,8415     -,3710      ,4547
Int_4        -,8838      ,3101    -2,8497      ,0050    -1,4963     -,2713

Product terms key:
 Int_1    :        Identity x        Brand
 Int_2    :        Identity x        EnvConc
 Int_3    :        Brand    x        EnvConc
 Int_4    :        Identity x        Brand    x        EnvConc

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):
         R2-chng          F        df1        df2          p
X*W*Z      ,0406     8,1207     1,0000   159,0000      ,0050
----------
    Focal predict: Identity (X)
          Mod var: Brand    (W)
          Mod var: EnvConc  (Z)

Test of conditional X*W interaction at value(s) of Z:
    EnvConc     Effect          F        df1        df2          p
     3,8821     1,2470     5,4207     1,0000   159,0000      ,0212
     5,1018      ,1691      ,2027     1,0000   159,0000      ,6532
     6,3215     -,9088     2,9348     1,0000   159,0000      ,0886

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):
```

Brand	EnvConc	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
,0000	3,8821	-,6541	,3614	-1,8099	,0722	-1,3678	,0597
,0000	5,1018	-,2389	,2697	-,8858	,3771	-,7716	,2938
,0000	6,3215	,1762	,3947	,4466	,6558	-,6032	,9557
1,0000	3,8821	,5929	,3953	1,4999	,1356	-,1878	1,3736
1,0000	5,1018	-,0698	,2614	-,2672	,7897	-,5860	,4464
1,0000	6,3215	-,7326	,3545	-2,0665	,0404	-1,4327	-,0324

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
4,2706	20,9581	79,0419
6,6480	90,4192	9,5808

Conditional X*W interaction at values of the moderator Z:

EnvConc	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
1,0000	3,7941	1,3298	2,8531	,0049	1,1677	6,4204
1,3158	3,5150	1,2362	2,8435	,0050	1,0736	5,9564
1,6316	3,2359	1,1432	2,8305	,0052	,9780	5,4938
1,9474	2,9568	1,0512	2,8127	,0055	,8806	5,0330
2,2632	2,6778	,9604	2,7882	,0059	,7810	4,5746
2,5789	2,3987	,8711	2,7536	,0066	,6782	4,1191
2,8947	2,1196	,7839	2,7040	,0076	,5714	3,6678
3,2105	1,8405	,6995	2,6312	,0093	,4590	3,2220
3,5263	1,5614	,6191	2,5220	,0127	,3387	2,7842
3,8421	1,2823	,5445	2,3551	,0197	,2069	2,3577
4,1579	1,0033	,4784	2,0972	,0376	,0584	1,9481
4,2706	,9037	,4576	1,9750	,0500	,0000	1,8074
4,4737	,7242	,4247	1,7050	,0902	-,1147	1,5631
4,7895	,4451	,3888	1,1449	,2540	-,3227	1,2129
5,1053	,1660	,3756	,4420	,6591	-,5757	,9078
5,4211	-,1131	,3875	-,2918	,7708	-,8784	,6522
5,7368	-,3921	,4224	-,9283	,3546	-1,2264	,4421
6,0526	-,6712	,4753	-1,4123	,1598	-1,6099	,2675
6,3684	-,9503	,5409	-1,7570	,0808	-2,0185	,1179
6,6480	-1,1974	,6063	-1,9750	,0500	-2,3947	,0000
6,6842	-1,2294	,6151	-1,9986	,0474	-2,4443	-,0145
7,0000	-1,5085	,6953	-2,1697	,0315	-2,8816	-,1353

********** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS **********

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95,0000

Z values in conditional tables are the mean and +/- SD from the mean.

------ END MATRIX -----

Summary

Chapter 1: Introduction

Understanding the factors that influence meat intake is a crucial first step in learning how to promote meat consumption decrease. Red meat and saturated fat intake are disproportionately high in Western diets due to a large intake of animal products (Skeie et al.,2009). Following these insights, it is clear why transitioning to plant-based diets has been a topic of interest for many researchers, particularly in understanding the barriers that prevent meat eaters from making the switch.

The potential contribution of shared identity to removing these barriers is one aspect that has received scant consideration in earlier study which provides a gap in the literature that this study addresses. 167 Italian residents who identified as meat eaters participated in a survey for the study. By showing participants a visual stimulus that promoted a plant-based burger and either a travel enthusiast identity or being a vegetarian, the identity aspect was altered.

Individual preferences, such as those related to animal welfare, and brand recognition, however, can have a big impact on how consumers perceive and feel about plant-based foods. Finally, this research provides marketers with information that they can use to create persuasive communication plans that encourage plant-based diets and lower meat consumption.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Drivers of meat consumption and barriers to reduction

Attempting to cut back on meat intake is a complex and challenging job since meat's status as a "default" in the diet and the positive qualities associated with it have had more time to become embedded in Western society and permeate through psychological beliefs. Moreover, the

appreciation of meat may also be influenced by cultural and traditional customs in addition to its taste and flavor. On the subject of the protein content of plant-based diets, experts have differing opinions. Apart from the protein intake, there are other nutritional concerns with plant-based diets. However, vegetarian diets can contain as much iron or more than mixed diets. As a result, people who opt for a meat-free diet claim to have experienced prejudice and marginalization due to their affiliation with vegetarian and vegan groups, similar to other minority groups (Ruby, 2012).

The underlying reason for such behavior is that people tend to treat members of their own group more favorably than they treat members of other groups (Tajfel et al., 1971). This is supported by MacInnis and Hodson (2017), who showed that both vegetarians and vegans reported feeling negative attitudes toward their particular diets and that these attitudes were caused by meat-eaters' perception of vegetarianism as a moral or culturally symbolic threat to the status quo. The perception that an outgroup's views, values, attitudes, or moral standards contradict those of one's own group gives rise to these dangers. For example, according to theory, people who embrace right-wing ideologies like political conservatism, right-wing authoritarianism, or social dominance orientation (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth, and Malle, 1994) are especially vulnerable to such threats.

2.2 Reasons Driving Reductions in Meat Consumption

It is for these reasons that understanding the health benefits of a plant-based diet is vitally important to facilitate the change. As a consequence, increased consumption of plant-based foods like vegetables, whole grains, legumes, and nuts has been linked to a significantly lower risk of insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes, as well as better glycemic control in both healthy and insulin-resistant people (Bao, Hu, Giovannucci, Wolpin, Stampfer, Willett, and Fuchs, 2013). Finally, the strongest support for a vegetarian diet's health advantages comes

from studies that show lower rates of coronary heart disease (CHD) and ischemic heart disease (IHD). Another divisive topic in farm animal welfare is the appropriate density at which animals should live. In conclusion, animal welfare is a significant concern that needs to be addressed in order to ensure the humane treatment of animals used for food and other purposes. A number of issues, including the conditions in which animals are raised and slaughtered, need to be addressed in order to improve animal welfare and protect the health and well-being of animals. Almost every area of the environment is significantly harmed by the raising of animals for meat and dairy consumption. Additionally, raising cattle for meat and milk results in the generation of strong greenhouse gases (GHGs), which have a huge impact on climate change. However, despite the enormous amount of evidence supporting the negative impact that meat production has on the environment, a study conducted by MacDiarmid, Douglas, and Campbell (2016) showed that participants tended to be uninformed about and sceptical of the link between meat consumption and environmental sustainability.

2.3 The role of identity:

Consumption is a complex phenomenon having several effects on people's daily lives. The literature surrounding the topic, which extensively examines the role consumption plays in consumers' identity expression in daily life, seems to go unchallenged (e.g., Arnould and Price 2000; Berger and Heath 2007). Moreover, the act of consumption allows a consumer to express their identity (Uusital, 1995).

According to Price, Arnould, and Folkman Curasi (2000), the effect of consumption on identity may even be seen as an "authenticating act," providing the buyer with a strong sense of self-conception and individuality. Furthermore, three types of distinctiveness were argued to exist: difference, separateness, and position. People express their identities through all three

categories of distinctiveness in a variety of contexts (Vignoles, Chryssochoou, and Breakwell, 2000).

In a study conducted by Bisogni et al. (2002), the relationship between food and identity is discussed in an intriguing manner. They made the claim that diet and identity are mutually constitutive and that identities were both formed by and impacted by dietary choices, based on qualitative research of eating behavior.

Following this literature, this study proposes that inducing consumers to prime a common identity has a counteracting effect on the perceived threat of veganism, which in turn increases meat-eaters' willingness to buy for plant-based food products.

H1: A promotional message that elicits a common identity (travel lover) will increase the willingness to buy a plant-based food product.

H2: A promotional message that elicits a common identity (travel lover) will increase the willingness to buy a plant-based food option among meat-eaters through a decrease in the perceived threat associated with the veg culture.

This shows that the identity of the sender of the message plays a role in the consumption choices of the receiver. However, the current research does not identify the effect that a generic brand, in opposition to a veg brand, has on consumption. Accordingly, this study proposes that a promotional message communicated by a generic brand moderates the relationship between the elicited identity and the willingness to buy plant-based food.

H3: The type of brand (generic vs. veg) moderates the relationship between the common identity (travel lover) and the perceived threat of veganism. The message presented by a generic brand will lead to a higher willingness to buy a plant-based food product through a decrease in the perceived threat of veganism.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Results

3.1 Research Design and Procedures

The study aimed to investigate the effects of brand identity and brand type on consumers' willingness to buy, attitude towards plant-based food, perceived quality, and perceived taste. Brand identity was manipulated by presenting the promotional message of a fictitious brand, Brand X, as representing either the values of vegetarians and vegans or the values of travel lovers. Brand type was manipulated by presenting Brand X as either a generic brand that produces foods of all kinds or a brand that produces mainly plant-based food.

To ensure that participants perceived the manipulations, two manipulation checks were conducted. The first check measured the participants' perception of Brand X's promotional message representing the values of vegetarians and vegans or travel lovers. The second check measured the participants' perception of Brand X as a generic brand or a brand that produces mainly plant-based food.

In total, the survey measured 13 variables, including dependent variables, mediators, and control variables. The dependent variables measured were participants' willingness to buy, attitude towards plant-based food, perceived quality, and perceived taste. Mediators included meat-eater identification and perceived threat, while control variables included perceived healthiness, plant-based food familiarity, travel lover identification, animal concern, health concern, environmental concern, and perceived fit. Most of the variables were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, with one variable measured on a bipolar scale.

3.2 Sample Description

Although the survey had a reach of 340 people, after eliminating individuals who failed an attentiveness test, the final sample only contained 167 participants. The lengthy nature of the

survey, which took about 10 minutes to complete, was blamed for the poor completion rate. To prevent cultural prejudice, the sample was limited to Italians only, with an equal number of males and women, and a wide age range of 18 to 65. The majority of participants had a high school diploma or a bachelor's degree, and the majority were either students or full-time workers. Most participants also possessed a Master's degree, but very few additionally held a PhD, and just a small percentage had at least a middle school graduation.

3.3 Results

The measurement instruments used to collect the data for the study were all sourced from existing literature, and therefore validation was not required. Only 13 of the 14 variables had trustworthy Cronbach Alphas when each scale's reliability was tested, with perceived healthiness being the only problematic scale. To make certain that the participants correctly understood the manipulations of the 2x2 structure, two manipulation checks were carried out using independent sample t-tests. The findings demonstrated that respondents had a favorable opinion of the manipulations at the level of both the brand and identity. The hypotheses were examined after ensuring that all manipulations were accurately perceived. Through a 2-way ANOVA, the first hypothesis (H1) examined the direct impact of identity on willingness to buy. H1 was rejected because the ANOVA revealed no discernible impact of travel lover identity on willingness to buy. Three additional dependent variables, including attitude toward plant-based foods, perceived quality, and perceived taste, were examined. The findings revealed no significant interaction effects for brand perception and no significant direct effects of travel lover identity on attitude toward plant-based food, perceived quality, or perceived taste.

Chapter 4: Conclusions

4.1 General Discussion

The primary objective of this thesis is to provide marketers with a theoretical foundation to build marketing communication campaigns aimed at bringing meat eaters closer to eating plant-based foods. Previous research has shown that there are several benefits associated with plant-based diets, such as environmental sustainability, human health, and animal welfare. However, many meat eaters are still hesitant to switch to a plant-based diet due to the feeling of threat coming from the vegetarian and vegan cultures. To address this issue, the study focused on the concept of identity and communication strategies to reduce meat eaters' feelings of threat toward the veg*n culture. The common identity used to run the experiment was the identity of travel lover, which was selected since it is not directly associated with a specific dietary lifestyle or political philosophy. Additionally, those who identify as travel lovers are more inquisitive and thus more willing to try new things.

4.2 Main Findings

The goal of this thesis is to give marketers a theoretical basis for making marketing plans to get people who eat meat to eat more plant-based foods. Three hypotheses were developed, but the investigation did not produce any significant results to support the three hypotheses. The effect of the travel lover identity elicitation on willingness to buy was found to be positive and so in line with the hypothesis proposed. The same procedure was followed to test the direct effect of identity on perceived taste, and attitudes towards plant-based food. The results showed positive, although statistically not significant, effects.

The study then tested H2, attempting to find a full mediating effect of perceived threat, but the results showed no significant mediating effect. The regression analysis did not find a significant

mediating effect of perceived threat, so the model was tested again with meat eater identification as the mediating variable. Results showed that meat eater identification is not significantly impacted by the elicitation of the common identity of travel lovers. H3 was rejected since it was found that a generic brand does not result in lower perceived threat compared to a veg brand. The study then moved on to the analysis of different models and found that the interaction between type of brand and animal concern moderates the relationship between identity and perceived quality, while environmental concern significantly affects the relationship.

4.3 Theoretical Contributions and Managerial Implications

This research examined the effects of a common identity, such as a travel lover identity, on willingness to buy plant-based food. The direct effect analysis showed that willingness to buy is slightly higher when the common identity is elicited. The moderation analysis showed that the sample's willingness to buy, perceived taste, and attitudes towards plant-based food were higher when the message was shown by the generic brand. The mediation analyses showed that eliciting a common identity has negative effects on the perceived threat associated with the vegetarian and vegan identities. These findings support the idea of outgroups being perceived as a threat and apply it in the context of meat consumption.

This research also contributes to the existing knowledge of the relationship between animal and environmental concern and the perceived quality of plant-based foods. This thesis examines the relationship between the travel lover identity and the perceived quality of plant based food. It found that pivoting the common identity of travel lovers has led to higher willingness to buy, attitude towards plant based food, and perceived taste, but the effect is not intense enough to be a generalizable trend. To maximise the impact of marketing efforts, food companies may need to concentrate on improving the product itself, such as taste tests and

quality assurance procedures, or delivering competitive prices. Additionally, leveraging a common identity in the promotion strategies of plant-based food products has a negative effect on the level of threat meat eaters perceive from vegetarians and vegans.

Meat eaters showed lower levels of perceived threat when the plant-based burger was promoted by a generic brand, although not in a statistically significant way. This finding may be important for vegan brands that want to reach out more to meat eaters. The results of the moderated moderation analysis show that the kind of brand and the degree of animal or environmental concern can influence the relationship between identity and perceived quality of plant-based food. This suggests that marketers should consider the values and beliefs of their target audience as well as the context in which the product is presented in order to effectively sell plant-based products. It is also important to consider the degree of environmental awareness of the target audience when developing advertising materials.

4.4 Limitations

The results of this study show some shortcomings that must be addressed in order to improve the reliability of the conclusions. The small sample size of the study is one of its key weaknesses and expanding the sample size and obtaining more responses is essential for improving the outcomes. Additionally, the stimuli used may not have been strong enough to produce significant effects on the variables analysed. To mitigate this bias, the study could consider using alternative stimuli that are more relevant to older participants and that are less likely to elicit a response that is influenced by age. Finally, the snowball sampling method has important drawbacks, including a lack of representativeness, a tendency toward selection bias, a time commitment, and ethical issues. To guarantee reliable and representative results, alternative techniques like random or stratified sampling should be taken into consideration.

4.5 Future Research

The findings of this study shed important light on how shared identities affect people's perceptions of plant-based foods. However, there are a number of directions that more research may go in order to better explain this phenomenon. One such approach is to replicate this study in a global setting. The participants in the current study were all Italian, so it will be interesting to see if the findings hold true in other cultural settings. Future studies could also look into the impact of shared identities using different stimuli. The current study concentrated on Instagram stories as the platform for promoting plant-based foods, but it would be worthwhile to investigate how shared identity affects people's impressions of other forms of advertising, like out-of-home advertising. This might offer a more thorough knowledge of how shared identities influence how people view foods made from plants. Examining the impact of other common identities besides travel enthusiasts is a fascinating area for future research. This could lead to a better understanding of how shared identities influence our perceptions and emphasise the significance of self-identification in social interactions.