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THE REDUCING EFFECT OF SOCIAL NORMS CONFLICT ON MEAT CONSUMPTION INTENTION OF MEAT EATERS

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Introdução

Eating meat is not only part of most diets in Western societies but is also the socially accepted and expected behavior, part of the culture and tradition of many countries. However, the current climate crisis needs changes both in production and consumption and behaviors, including a global reduction in animal meat consumption. This discussion has grown in recent years and has been considered not only complex but controversial. Considering that consuming meat is the current social norm, groups that embrace the "anti-meat agenda" started to have norms that are unfavorable to consumption.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

As human beings are simultaneously part of different groups, it is reasonable to predict that two or more groups may have conflicting norms regarding meat consumption. Normative conflict situations mobilize people emotionally, and to solve this conflict, people seek to implement emotional and behavioral strategies that can affect intention and behavior. Thus, the objective of this study is to understand the effect of social norms conflict of different groups on meat consumption intention.

Fundamentação Teórica

Based on the focus theory of normative conduct, social norms are prevailing rules and behavior expected of members of a particular group. We proposed four hypotheses to the study, two related to the effect of conflicting norms on meat consumption intention, considering the consumption pattern (if full meat-eater, decrease of intention; or if reducer, increase of intention); and two hypotheses predicting pro-environmental self-identity and self-transcendence as moderation variables.

Metodologia

We conducted a one-factor experimental design research (N=267) with two conditions between participants (1x2), consisting of a control group (without normative message) and an experimental group (with conflicting norms between family and peers). We tested the moderation role of pro-environmental self-identity and self-transcendence, measured by an adapted 4-item scale each. Demographic data were collected (age, sex, educational level, frequency of current meat consumption, if deliberately reduce meat consumption, and types of animal protein consumed).

Análise dos Resultados

For the test of hypotheses H1a and H1b, a one-way ANOVA was performed, indicating significant differences in means between conditions, but no interaction between the consumption group and intention. A Tukey test revealed a significant difference between the mean intention of full meat-eaters in the conditions. To verify the moderation relations of pro-environmental self-identity and self-transcendence, a linear regression analysis was carried out, followed by a Spotlight analysis. In both cases, the interaction between the variables remained without statistical significance.

Conclusão

Our study identified that the conflict between salient norms of different and relevant groups affects meat consumption intention. However, the effect is different depending on the dietarian pattern. Among unrestricted meat-eaters, the conflict has a reducing effect on the intention to eat meat (H1a, supported); among reducers, the conflict does not seem to significantly affect the intention, not

supporting the H1b hypothesis. Pro-environmental self-identity and self-transcendence do not moderate the relation between the conflict between the social norm of different groups and intention.

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