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SUSTAINABILITY AND NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION INFLUENCE MEAT AND MEAT ANALOGUES PURCHASING DECISION: GENDER EFFECT.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers' purchase decisions towards plant-based meat analogues are influenced by different key factors including environmental and health concerns [1,2]. Moreover, gender shapes dietary choices and attitudes towards meat and meat analogues consumption, with men generally being more attached to meat and less inclined to reduce their meat intake compared to women [1,2].
This study seeks to expand on existing research by examining how gender influences the perceived importance of different types of available information (nutritional, environmental and processing) in purchasing decisions for meat and plant-based meat analogues.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Commercial chicken meat (Avinatur®) and chicken meat analogue (Sensational filet®) were sensory evaluated by 378 consumers (57.14% females and 91.8% omnivorous). Information of nutritional profile (nutritional composition and NutriScore®), carbon footprint (eq CO_2/kg product) and NOVA classification (product classification system based on the level of processing) was provided to participants before product evaluation together with a description of the meaning of each information [3,4,5]. First, the consumers completed a general questionnaire (name, age, gender, dietary habits, marital status, educational level and annual income) and informed consent. Importance of each type of information on consumers´ purchase decisions were collected using a 5-point scale (1 = not important, 2 = not very important, 3 = neutral, 4 = important, and 5 = very important/decisive) [6]. To evaluate the gender effect on the importance of the different types of information in the purchase decision of the products, the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test for independent samples was used. The importance given by each gender to the different types of information on the purchase decision in each product was analyzed using the non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test, followed by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test. The significance level was set at $p \leq 0.05$. All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS software (v 27, IBM® SPSS® Statistics).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Figure 1 shows the importance of each type of information on the purchase decision by gender in chicken meat and chicken meat analogue. No significant differences were found between male and females for any information in any evaluated product, chicken meat and chicken analogue. For chicken meat, men significantly gave more importance to nutritional information (4.29±0.87), followed by NOVA (4 ± 0.96), and finally to carbon footprint information (3.45±1.10). Women significantly gave less importance to carbon footprint (3.48±1.04) compared to nutritional information and NOVA information (4.36±0.67 and 4.20±0.77, respectively). Similar patterns were obtained for the chicken meat analogue in relation to the differences between information for each gender. Accordingly, in previous studies, nutritional impact on health has been confirmed to significantly impact consumers 'purchasing behavior towards plant-based meat alternatives [7,8]. Boukid (2021) reported that consumers still do not have a clear knowledge regarding the environmental impact of meat production systems and if plant-based meat analogues are good alternatives in this context. Sensory and nutritional aspects related to meat consumption are the main motivators for eating meat and surpassed demotivators environmental aspects [10].

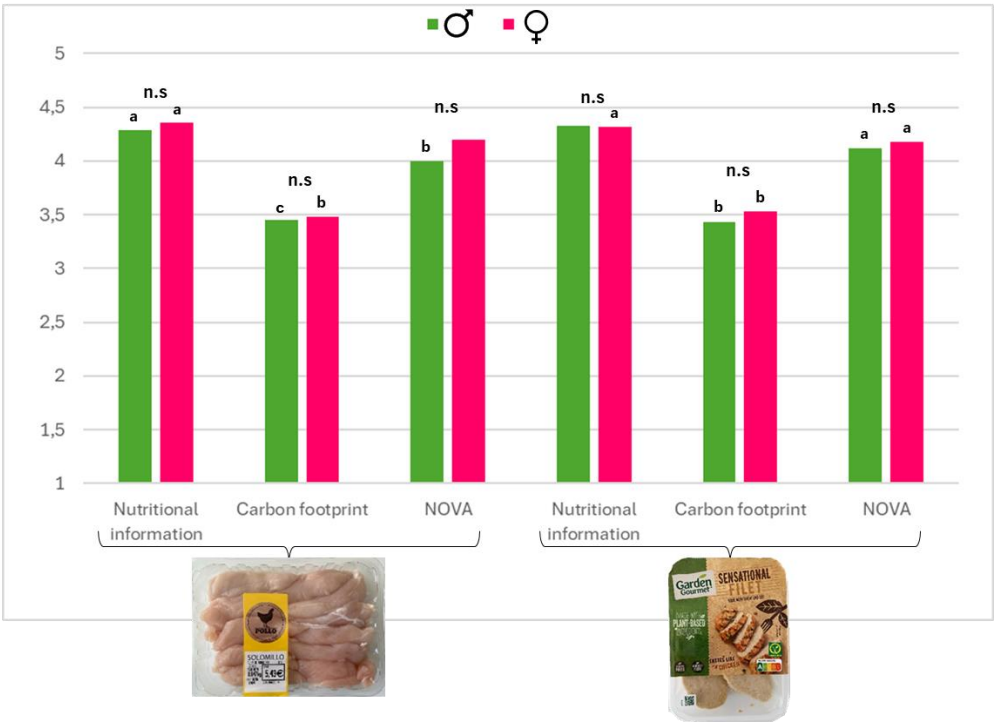


Figure 1. Impact of gender (female vs male) on the importance of different types of information in the purchase decision of chicken meat and chicken meat analogue (1 = not important; 5 = very important/decisive). N.s indicate no significant differences between female and male. [a] Lowercase letters indicate significant differences between information within the same gender.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study revealed a lack of differences in the impact of the type of information on consumers purchases decision between male and females showing both genders a similar behavior. However, information regarding nutritional profile is considered most important compared to sustainability information in both chicken meat and chicken analogue purchasing decisions. By emphasizing nutritional content and NOVA classification, companies can better align their communication with consumer priorities, potentially enhancing product appeal and influencing purchasing decisions.

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