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Headline: Lab-grown meat more accepted in Singapore than US, motivated by 'kiasu-ism': study

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SINGAPOREANS have greater acceptance of lab-grown meat compared to Americans due to stronger social image eating motivations, a Singapore Management University (SMU) study finds.

This means that more Singaporeans are motivated to eat for a favourable social image as compared to Americans, causing them to differ in their acceptance towards lab-grown meat.

The study, which was published in peer-reviewed journal *Appetite*, revealed that Singaporeans are also potentially motivated by "kiasu-ism" - a cultural trait exemplified by the fear of losing out or being left behind.

This cultural trait may explain why Singaporeans desire to project an image of being "trailblazers" and to be quick to experience or try new things, such as expressing a greater acceptance of novel foods such as lab-grown meat.

Associate professor of communication management (practice) Mark Chong noted that the study was motivated by the lack of knowledge about consumer perception and acceptance of lab-grown meat in Singapore amid growing promotion of the food technology.

Chong spearheaded the study along with associate professor of psychology Angela Leung and their student Verity Lua. They surveyed 616 Singaporeans and 759 Americans for the study from July to August 2021.

Participants were asked to rate their attitudes towards lab-grown meat, their willingness to try and buy the product, as well as their willingness to eat lab-grown meat as a replacement for normal meat and plant-based meat substitutes. A social image eating motivation scale was used to understand why participants eat what they eat.

This study comes after lab-grown meats have gained traction over the past few years with food technology startups scaling up operations here.

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US company Eat Just makes its lab-grown chicken products in Singapore, where it operates a headquarters. The company received approval for commercial sales of its products in Singapore in December 2020.

Other homegrown startups such as Umami Meats and Shiok Meats have a presence in the country, producing cell-cultured fish and offering cultivated red meat and seafood.