



Press Release

Study by SMU researchers reveals positive relationship between people’s psychological well-being and their willingness to consume cultivated meat; and the factors that can motivate this willingness

Singapore, 8 March 2023 (Wednesday) – Researchers from Singapore Management University (SMU) have released a study that reveals a positive relationship between people’s psychological well-being and their willingness to consume cultivated meat. The research, titled [***‘Higher well-being individuals are more receptive to cultivated meat: An investigation of their reasoning for consuming cultivated meat’***](#), which has been published in international research journal, *Appetite*, provides the first ever empirical evidence to support this correlation.

The research also found that individuals’ higher willingness can be motivated by the perception that cultivated meat is as healthy and nutritious, as safe as, and has the same sensory quality as conventional meat, and is beneficial to the society.

Conducted by SMU’s Professor of Psychology [Angela Leung](#), Associate Professor of Communication Management [Mark Chong](#), research fellow Tricia Marjorie Fernandez and Psychology PhD student Shu Tian Ng, the study surveyed 948 adults in Singapore in June and July 2022. It follows a first study by Assoc Prof Chong and Prof Leung published in 2022 titled [‘A cross-country investigation of social image motivation and acceptance of lab-grown meat in Singapore and the United States’](#).

Their research is timely given the recent developments in the sector. In 2020, [Singapore became the first country in the world to allow the commercial sale of cultivated meat](#) to diners and shoppers. The year after, the sector attracted US\$1.9 billion of venture capital. In November 2022, the Food and Drug Administration in the USA announced that it had completed a “pre-market consultation” on cultivated chicken, and raised no safety concerns with its maker, Upside Foods. In December 2022, the [Singapore Food Agency \(SFA\) announced that it allows Eat Just’s cultivated chicken - which will be labelled to indicate they are cultivated meat - to be sold in Singapore, now that its evaluations have determined that it is safe.](#)

On what motivated this study, Prof Leung said, “Our earlier research examined the motivational variable of social image concerns that tend to promote Singaporeans’ acceptance of cultivated meat. In this current research, we examined the role played by the psychographic variable of psychological well-being and explored what drives higher well-being individuals to be open to the alternative food choice of cultivated meat.”

“Currently available research literature mainly focuses on the demographic factors that can influence people’s acceptance of cultivated meat, such as age, gender, dietary preference, education. This study, however, approached the topic with an understudied angle by examining one of the important psychographic characteristics that apply to everyone – psychological well-being. It also suggests that food consumption is a meaning-making process where higher well-being

individuals, compared to their lower well-being counterparts, are more likely to recognise the societal, health, and safety benefits associated with cultivated meat,” she added.

On the practical impact of this study and what cultivated meat companies and ecosystem players can take away from this research, Assoc Prof Chong said, “Cultivated meat companies can target information related to the health, safety and societal benefits afforded by cultivated meat to higher well-being consumers, and leverage channels such as search advertising.”

He added, “They may also consider the happiness or well-being index of countries when decided where to focus their promotion efforts. They can seek to first promote greater awareness of cultivated meat in these societies, and over time higher public acceptance can be picked up by other countries to make advocacy efforts more effective.”

[Appetite](#) is an international research journal specialising in cultural, social, psychological, sensory and physiological influences on the selection and intake of foods and drinks. It covers normal and disordered eating and drinking and welcomes studies of both human and non-human animal behaviour toward food.

Enclosure:

- Research paper available here - <https://authors.elsevier.com/c/1geveiVKThKoh>

About Singapore Management University

A premier university in Asia, the Singapore Management University (SMU) is internationally recognised for its world-class research and distinguished teaching. Established in 2000, SMU’s mission is to generate leading-edge research with global impact and to produce broad-based, creative and entrepreneurial leaders for the knowledge based economy. SMU’s education is known for its highly interactive, collaborative and project-based approach to learning.

Home to over 12,000 students across undergraduate, postgraduate professional and postgraduate research programmes, SMU is comprised of eight schools: School of Accountancy, Lee Kong Chian School of Business, School of Economics, School of Computing and Information Systems, Yong Pung How School of Law, School of Social Sciences, College of Integrative Studies and College of Graduate Research Studies. SMU offers a wide range of bachelors', masters' and PhD degree programmes in the disciplinary areas associated with the six schools, as well as in multidisciplinary combinations of these areas.

SMU emphasises rigorous, high-impact, multi- and interdisciplinary research that addresses Asian issues of global relevance. SMU faculty members collaborate with leading international researchers and universities around the world, as well as with partners in the business community and public sector. SMU’s city campus is a modern facility located in the heart of downtown Singapore, fostering strategic linkages with business, government and the wider community. www.smu.edu.sg

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