

Abstract

The meat consumption as food by people increased with their concerns towards animal welfare by establishing relevant laws and the increasing money spending on pets, which created a dissonance between the meat eating behaviors and the concerns towards animals. To understand the effects of the perception of animal capacities on people's choices of diets, this study asked the Hong Kong participants to select a food, either plant product or meat product, as a gift before and after completing a survey which required the rating of animal mental capacities as a complimentary gift. Participants significantly changed their choices of food from meat product to plant product after the rating of animal mental capacities, suggesting the dissonance brought by providing chances for people to consider the mental capacities of animal motivated people to bring their eating behaviors consistent with their beliefs. However, unlike past researches, the choices of food by the participants did not have an impact on their ratings of animals' mental capacities revealing the cultural influence of collectivism.

Keywords: diet, choice, animal, mental capacities, dissonance, Hong Kong