

Accepted Manuscript

Personality and meat consumption: The importance of differentiating between type of meat

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PII: S0195-6663(17)31836-6

DOI: [10.1016/j.appet.2018.07.007](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.appet.2018.07.007)

Reference: APPET 3954

To appear in: *Appetite*

Received Date: 11 December 2017

Revised Date: 8 June 2018

Accepted Date: 4 July 2018

Please cite this article as: Pfeiler T.M. & Egloff B., Personality and meat consumption: The importance of differentiating between type of meat, *Appetite* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.appet.2018.07.007.

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PERSONALITY AND MEAT CONSUMPTION

Abstract

Recent research has shown that sociodemographic factors and the Big Five personality traits are related to people's overall level of meat consumption. However, there are important differences among various types of meat (e.g., red meat, poultry, and fish) that might lead to differential patterns in how the consumption of specific types of meat is associated with personality and sociodemographic factors. To disentangle these general and specific relationships, we conducted two studies using two large-scale representative samples from different countries: Germany ($N = 13,062$) and Australia ($N = 15,036$). Mostly consistent with our expectations, personality and sociodemographic variables showed specific associations with meat consumption, depending on type of meat. For example, in both studies, openness was negatively associated with red meat consumption but positively related to fish consumption, whereas it was unrelated to poultry consumption and overall meat consumption in hierarchical regression analyses in which we controlled for sociodemographic factors. By contrast, extraverted people reported both more consumption of each individual type of meat and more overall meat consumption. In sum, results were largely consistent between the samples, but effect sizes were generally small. Taken together, these two studies underscore the importance of differentiating between meat types when examining individual differences in meat consumption. Implications and future avenues for investigating the link between personality and dietary habits are discussed.

Keywords: personality traits, meat consumption, different types of meat, representative samples; socio-demographic factors.

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