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BSc (Hons) Animal Behaviour and Welfare

## Introduction

People's perceptions and knowledge around welfare labelling can affect purchasing behaviour. Studies have been done to establish if people are aware of current issues and knowledge of the welfare of the animals they consume. One recent study by Donald Broom evaluated sustainability, food processes, and future food production (Broom, 2022). The environmental and welfare issues surrounding intensive farming are more prevalent than ever before, with public concern, greenhouse gas emissions, the extent of plastic pollution, and how widespread it has become even to the point it has got into the food chain, the air we breathe and the concern over the impact pollution is having on the ecosystem (AHBD, 2021; Lu *et al.*, 2022).



Figure 1: Intensive Pig Farming (Farms not factories, 2016)



Figure 2: Extensive Pig Farming (Cranswick, 2019)



Figure 3: Ghost Net from the great pacific garbage patch (TheOceanCleanup, 2023)



Figure 4: The Ocean Cleanup Design U-shaped barrier (TheOceanCleanup, 2023)

## Aims, Objectives and Hypothesis

The principal aims of the research project were to determine whether labelling and financial status affect purchasing behaviour. Also, if people are aware of the welfare and environmental issues related to intensive factory farming and plastic pollution.

**Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant difference in purchasing animal products because of welfare labelling.

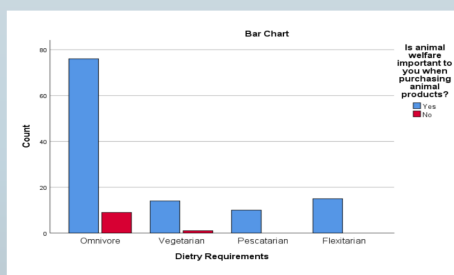
**Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** There is a significant difference in purchasing animal products because of welfare labelling.

## Methodology

Participants 18- 75+ years of varying dietary requirements were recruited for the study.

(n=156) respondents answered questions in a cross-sectional mixed method survey on a social media platform.

The responses were later analysed on SPSS statistical analysis software using the Chi-square test to find the P value to reject or accept the hypothesis to ascertain if welfare affected purchase.



## Results

There was a significant difference therefore rejecting the null hypothesis with omnivores being the highest responses from (n=76) Yes respondents and (n=9) No. Vegetarians (n=14) Yes (n=1) No. Pescatarians (n=10) Yes and (n=0) No. Thus, Chi-Squared test showed a significant difference with a P>0.3 with 3 degrees of freedom (df). Accepting the Alternate Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>) There is a significant difference in purchasing animal products because of welfare labelling. Meaning people respond to welfare labelling and it influences people to purchase animal products with welfare standards on the labels (See bar chart).

## Discussion and Conclusion

According to the study, a person's financial status does not determine whether they will buy cheaper animal products with lower welfare. However, their attitudes, perceptions, and subjectivity towards the issue of social conformity can play a role. To ensure high animal welfare for farmed animals, incentives, public education, knowledge, and government policies need to be updated and reviewed based on scientific evidence. This will continue to help meet the needs of farmed animals now and hopefully will continue to be improved upon as we strive for all farmed animals to a decent quality of life. Extensive farming methods (See figure 2) have higher welfare than intensive farms (See figure 1). Additionally, plastic pollution and ghost nets (See figure 3) are becoming a more pressing issue with evidence of trash and debris washing up on coasts and marine life ingesting it, resulting in starvation. Fortunately, there are organisations helping clear the oceans (See figure 4). Pollution is affecting the food chain and climate. It is necessary to conduct further research to address this global problem.

## References

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