

Introduction

Veganism is understood to be a way of living and adhering to a strict dietary style of only eating plant-based foods in avoiding all forms of exploitation of, and cruelty to, animals for food, clothing and other purposes (Newton E. David, 2019). Veganism is also described as a way of giving back to the earth; in making nutritional choices that benefit the planet and its resources. Keeping in mind the ethical issues about animal care and the fact that a plant-based diet is considered to have various health advantages.

The purpose of this article is to comprehensively evaluate the marketing trend of veganism and its impact on society. This will be done by identifying the trend's behaviour through the use of marketing theories and literature. It continues with the discussion of why veganism matters for marketers. The article will discuss how and why it is essential to capitalise on the trend — providing information to create a strategic advantage for the future.

Veganism Literature

'Vegan' is the word that was thought out by Donald Watson, in combining the beginning and the end of the word vegetarian. Watson and his wife, along with many others who advocated for non-dairy vegetarian, formed a new society in London in 1944 soon to be called the Vegan Society (Mann E. Sarah, 2014). In conjunction with the Vegan Society, there are many underlying reasons why people are choosing to become vegan and join this society, the main reasons being;

- Concerns over the harm done to animals raised for meat-based diets;
- A belief that a plant-based diet is healthier than an animal-based diet;
- Worries about the environmental effects resulting from the farming of animals for food (Newton E. David, 2019);

Sixteen years after the vegan society was formed, in 1944, Hom Jay Dinshah was influenced so profoundly that he founded a movement 'the American Vegan' (Clark, 2012).

It was in the 90's when veganism had become more widespread, although it remained a relatively rare phenomenon. Until the 2000s, in which veganism became increasingly popular in many countries, and vegan food became more available in supermarkets and restaurants.

Target Market

Considering the veganism trend, food marketers must accompany for the individuals that make up this trend using the four main types of market segmentation. Concerning the demographic segment, a source by Nathan Griffin states that veganism appears to be primarily driven by young people, where in the UK, 42% of vegans are ages 15-34 (Griffin, 2017). A source written by Cory King delves into both the demographic and psychographic segments; by stating that more females and young people buy organics regularly, as do more liberal and moderately religious respondents (King, 2014). King also acknowledges behavioural segmentation in mentioning that individuals who identify as vegetarian or vegan would be more inclined to have pro-environmental attitudes and green purchase behaviours.

As vegans continue to express concerns for the environment, there has been increased demand in the production of organic foods. Therefore, more companies have the opportunity to find profit, as well as sustainability through engaging in green marketing and green business. Prominently meat-oriented Restaurants are taking on board the vegan trend, and offering vegan menus in order to promote forward-thinking and innovation to the target market. Examples of this adoption can be found in fast-food restaurants such as MacDonald's and Hungry Jacks, that offer vegan burgers.

Impact of Veganism

Ethical Impact

Veganism's trend has created awareness and effected the public's perception of how meat and dairy products arrive at their local supermarkets.

The trend has influenced society to criticise and evaluate their own moral and ethical personification when concerning the food industry and what they decide to consume. Assessing the morality of whether meat is a necessity or not, comes down to your morals and beliefs.

This awareness was produced through media publications such as Cowspiracy, Earthlings, and What the Health; as well as many other documentaries and News publications. These publications provided the disturbing and graphic footage of how animals are bred, treated and slaughtered, prior to arriving at supermarkets. While also articulating the health benefits and influences that veganism produces.

These publications have been effective, as market research has determined that more people in Australia are eating vegan products while simultaneously having the consumption of red meat decline (Kilvert, 2019). When questioned about why these consumers had adopted a vegan diet? Their response was because of the sustainable and health benefits that the food had produced, veganism also influences consumers to partake in healthier activities such as sports and gym.

Environmental Impact

Veganism has provided an ulterior diet that accommodates for environmental issues, from that of a mainstream diet that includes meat and dairy. Through media awareness, it was determined that there was a correlation between climate impacts and diet (Hallstrom, Gee, Scarborough, & Cleveland, 2017). This correlation

was justified through the procedure that is undertaken to produce non-vegan foods. As the production of meat and dairy results in an immense amount of greenhouse gasses that contribute to Global Warming. Vegan diets were identified as producing around 42-48% less impact upon the environment compared to an omnivore diet (Tuomisto, 2018).

Economic Impact

Other effects of veganism include economical, by integrating a new demand for plant-based food, this has led to plenty of mainstream food outlets implementing vegan-based meat and options. Because of the different process of making vegan products, this has led to new jobs being created to make these products. Vegan products have, therefore, contributed towards stimulating the economy, increasing the GDP for Australia.

Future of Veganism

It is evident because of environmental and ethical influences that veganism will grow in the future, with research indicating an estimate of 25% of the global population will consume vegan products by 2040 (AT Kearney, 2019). Reports also suggest that the Vegan market is projected to reach \$24.3 billion US dollars by 2026; this is supported evidently as more companies are investing money into plant-based product segments of the market. As more scientific evidence supports the health, economic and environmental benefits of veganism, more consumers will be more likely to incorporate a vegan diet.

It is plausible to hypothesise that vegan food will be indoctrinated to become a prominent diet in the future, instead of merely being an atypical ulterior diet. This statement could be reinforced with the sustainable issues of over-population and food exhaustion foreshadowing a future where a vegan diet could be mandatory.

Relevant Theory

This section of the article will discuss the influencing factors that contribute to a vegan's behaviour. This will be done with marketing theory and frameworks.

Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour

The first theory that will be implemented and explored is the Theory of Goal-Directed behaviour. The theory uses internal and external influences to predict intentions and future behaviour, explaining how people are influenced to adopt a desirable behaviour (Ajzen and Madden 1986). The theory incorporates the following

- attitudes,
- emotions,
- subjective norms,
- perceived behavioural control,
- desires
- past and recent behaviour.

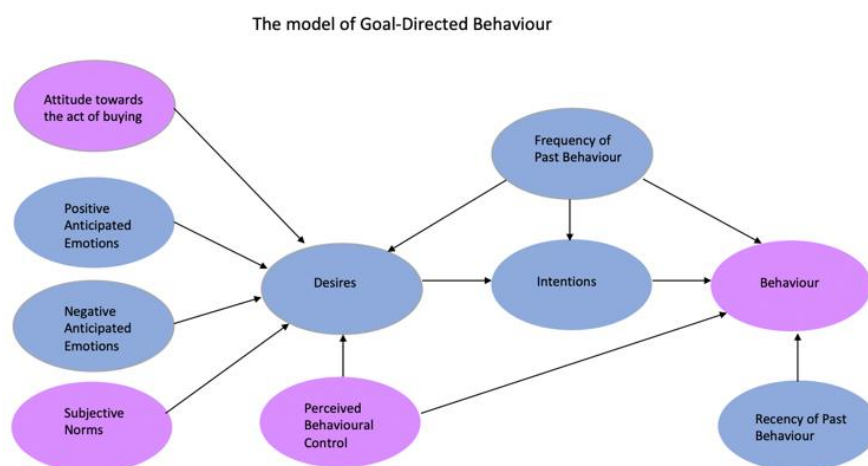


Figure 1: Model Of Goal-Directed Behaviour (Ajzen and Madden 1985)

In this case, the external factors of a vegan's etiquette will be evaluated to understand what influences specific behaviour.

Transtheoretical Model of Change

The transtheoretical model of change; is a model of behavioural change that incorporates different stages; like how an individual moves from an unhealthy behaviour to a healthy one. The transtheoretical model construes change as a five-stage process. The five steps are; pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance (Mendes Elisabeth, 2013). This model is applied to a person's determination to become a vegan.

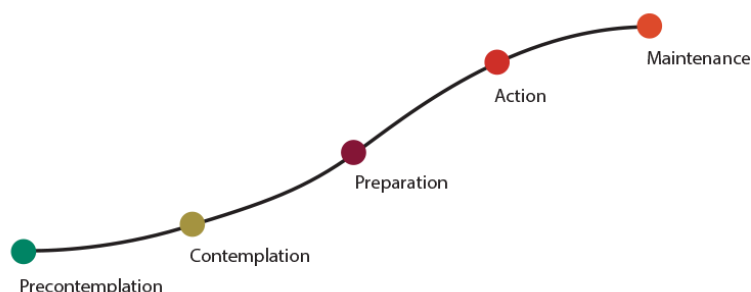


Figure 2: Transtheoretical Model of Change (SBCCimplementationkits.org, 2011)

Application of Relevant Theory / Conceptual Framework

This section will elaborate on how the theory is relevant to the trend, depending on the application of the frameworks.

Model of Goal-Directed Behaviour Applied

The theory of Goal-Directed Behaviour is relevant due to the internal and external factors. This is as the method included allows for further understanding of the influences, that results in a person conforming to a trends behaviour. View the image provided at the end of the section for the conceptual framework that is comprised of this section.

Veganism begins with the desire to acknowledge that the life of an animal is higher than the pleasure of consumption. Attitude towards the desire to eat ethically and morally is positive; this is created because of the awareness generated from media publications. The ethical awareness of veganism has been broadcasted on leading News channels and through documentaries, e.g. Earthlings, Cowspiracy, Dominion, and What the Health. These publications provide a moral and ethical reality that comes with the food industry.

The attraction to eat morally comes from the expectation to achieve satisfaction and self-actualisation. Satisfaction is contrived from the fact of knowing that personal actions result in the production of good; this is the utilitarian aspect of implementing the trend — the perception of self-actualisation results from having a purely healthy lifestyle, creating a sense of purity.

All vegans evaluate their morality before adapting the diet, thus leading to self-criticism of their actions. Subjective norms regarding the desire are conflicting because vegans place immense pressure towards indoctrinating the behaviour of veganism. Contradicting this statement are people who identify as non-vegans, these individuals do not have much solicitude regarding others decision to adopt a vegan lifestyle — believing that it is a personal choice to choose the vegan lifestyle and that there are no social issues with either choosing or excluding the dietary lifestyle.

The perceived behavioural control depends on personal taste and the ability to cook. Perceived behavioural control affects both the desire to eat morally and ethically and the commitment of it. Those who enjoy the cooking and the palate of vegan foods will result in the commitment of eating ethically and morally. Those who do not, however, will result in the desire and not the commitment.

Before perceiving the ethical awareness that veganism portrays, people would eat as they please without pre-contemplation. Because of this past behaviour, people would be more enticed to change, so that past behaviour is not replicated. This would be out of guilt due to the knowledge of how their previous meals

came to be. Thus, their prior actions would result in enticing said person to change. The recency of past behaviour prior to adopting the vegan lifestyle is the frequency of eating ethically and morally. To elaborate, these people eat mostly vegan products but also use minimal products that are classed as non-vegan. Furthermore, these people will have around 80% of their products vegan approved, while 20% of their products will not be.

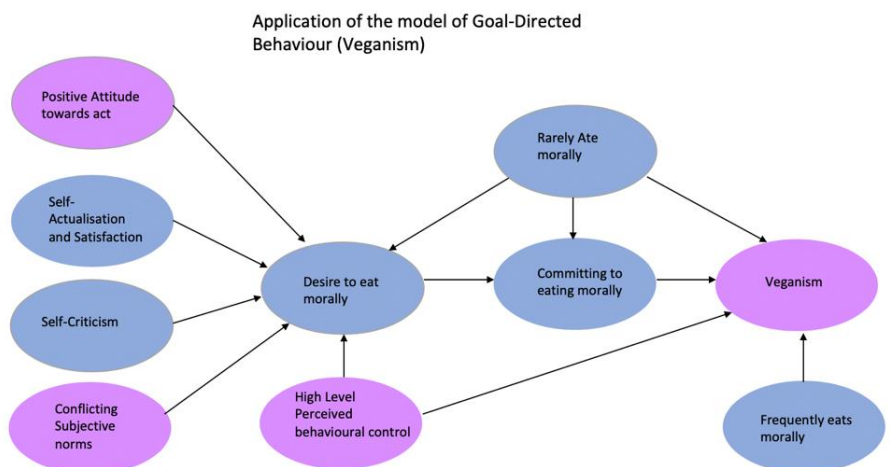


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework 1

Transtheoretical Model of Change Applied

As seen in the model, the precontemplation stage, people do not realise that veganism exists, also being unaware that there are disadvantages to the way that they are eating, or that veganism is a possible way for them to improve their health. In the contemplation stage, people intend to change within the next six months. Therefore, they may be learning about the benefits of becoming vegan and whether it would fit into their lifestyle.

When entering the preparation stage, it indicates that the individual has decided to become vegan. Therefore, he or she may begin to investigate ways to make the transition from eating meat to becoming vegan more natural. The action stage represents that the individual no longer eats meat, dairy or anything containing animal products. The last stage, maintenance, is where people are working to continue following diet modifications without relapsing to their old behaviour. However, when at this stage, they are less likely to return to their past, unhealthy habits.

The Transtheoretical Model of Change

TTM Stages	Definition	Intervention Strategies
Precontemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They do not realise that veganism exists They do not realise that there are possible disadvantages to the way they are eating or that the option of being vegan is a possible way to improve their health. In denial about the fact that his or her diet is not healthy not acknowledging the risks associated with poor nutritional choices. <p>(Mendes Elisabeth, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> increase users' awareness about the issue highlight social norms and the benefits of changing behaviour ensure a balanced argument and limited detail
Contemplation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> becoming aware that being vegan is a trend that many people have begun to participate in. learning the benefits to becoming vegan and whether it would fit into their lifestyle. <p>(Mendes Elisabeth, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appeal to values, use persuasion strategies such as cognitive dissonance.
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The individual has decided to make the change to becoming vegan is intending to act in the immediate future (next month) beginning to investigate what foods will be bought, different recipes etc. researching into the social implications of the choice to become vegan. <p>(Mendes Elisabeth, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education Increase the importance of the cognitive dissonance Persistent visual feedback to increase users' awareness of their current behavioural patterns. Help plan for change; implement persuasion strategies such as goal setting and commitment.
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> no longer eating meat, dairy or anything containing animal products. Obvious actions have been taken to incorporate the change. the person has implemented the change of being vegan into his or her life. the individual should start to see some marked differences in his or her health, such as weight loss, lower cholesterol and other health benefits. <p>(Mendes Elisabeth, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> social influence persistent visual feedback to monitor health and to track progress gamification (app tracker with a point system) provide positive reinforcement for targeted actions encourage intrinsic motivation through personalisation
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the individual is working to continue following the modifications that have been made to the diet. the goal for the individual at this stage is to not relapse back to eating dairy and meat products the temptation to eat food that is not considered vegan is reduced and the more time the person remains vegan, the easier it becomes for them to maintain the diet changes that were implemented. <p>(Mendes Elisabeth, 2013)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overcome problems arising Stronger elements of social influence Help individuals form new habits Use reminders and feedback toward goals

Figure 4: Conceptual framework 2

Why Veganism Matters from a Marketing Perspective

Veganism matters because of the increase of people adopting the diet; this increase has affected the food industry as most food outlets have already conformed and provided meals that are classed as a vegan.

From this, it is evident that having an understanding of influences will be more critical for food marketers, demonstrating that the knowledge will be mandatory for creating brand equity and brand communications with consumers.

From a business point of view, understanding veganism is crucial because it can be used to reinforce or create a sustainable perception of your company.

The implementation of vegan products and meals will also reinforce the company's ethical and sustainable perception and will demonstrate a sense of ownership and responsibility.

As discussed in the future of veganism, it is evident that veganism is growing and will continue to grow with having an estimate of 25% of the globe adopting a vegan-based diet by 2040

Food marketers will have a strategic advantage by understanding the target market.

The growth of the trend indicates that in the future, there will be high pressure for companies to incorporate vegan food, otherwise leading to an environmentally negative perception and creating a strategic disadvantage for the company.

Because of foreshadowed environmental issues, such as over-population and food-exhaustion, it is clear that vegan products will become more prominent in the food industry in the future. From this, marketers will have to understand the target market and their desires in order to create brand equity and establish brand communication with consumers.

Not having the knowledge will lead to a disconnect of communication and will create a significant disadvantage in the future for food marketers who will need to attract and appeal to the target market of veganism.

How Might Marketers Capitalise on this Trend?

Marketers can capitalise on this trend as of now and within the near future using strategies outlined in the transtheoretical model of change. These strategies can be classed as direct or indirect strategies. Some more direct strategies that marketers may adopt to increase revenue through this vegan trend could include; displaying plant-based dairy alternatives with meat substitutes and other vegan products, as it allows consumers to shop for all of their items within the one place and highlights the growing importance of ensuring vegan consumers can shop for product just as easily as non-vegans. Another direct strategy may include introducing celebrity endorsements to create awareness for veganism which can be done through product placement using media platforms such as; Instagram or Facebook. The less direct strategies to be used by marketers could be; paying attention to patterns and making adjustments where necessary, talking to potential customers to gain an insight into their needs regarding veganism and influencing their current knowledge and skills to remain relevant by implementing a goal-based incentive.

Futureproofing

Marketers may ask themselves the question of, what will veganism be like within five years? Marketers face the challenge of keeping up with trends like veganism and find it even more of a problem in knowing how to react to them. However, ways in which marketers may be able to future proof themselves is through:

- using technology to build a tech infrastructure, and then insuring to go with a choice that can either last indefinitely or be upgraded in the future.
- Ensure not to make any drastic changes as it can lead to confusion and a loss for profits.

- Instead of focusing on individual conversions, gear your efforts towards building brand relationships. Consumers will stick with your brand far longer if they feel close to your brand, whether there may face competition or not.
- Offer an experience rather than a product; products can easily be replicated or replaced; however, experiences cannot.
- Hedge your bets by using multiple channels. If one strategy starts to flounder, you will have more time to pivot and more options for meaningful long-term changes.

Conclusion

Although veganism has a small population, its mark on society has resulted in the ethical and moral evaluation of consumers and businesses personification. This evaluation has led to the criticism of immoral practice, with companies responding with altercations to their business models. It is evident to suggest that lacking the knowledge of veganism will cause a strategic disadvantage, now and in the future. With its Growth and environmental influences, veganism will result in an increased population.

About the Authors



Dylan Enstrom

Dylan is a 3rd year marketing student, studying at the University of the Sunshine Coast. Dylan is eager to cultivate his knowledge of marketing and brand management. He is motivated to further develop the skills required to attain a full-time position in brand management.



Lucinda Kittel

Lucinda Kittel is a Guest Service Agent at a Corporate Hotel and a Student@work member for the University of the Sunshine Coast (SouthBank). She holds a Certificate III in Business, Certificate II in events and Certificate III in tourism. Lucinda has a keen interest in marketing, and is therefore currently studying a Bachelor of Business, majoring in marketing at the University of the Sunshine Coast (SouthBank).

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