

The Perception and Experience of Taiwanese Youth Related to Vegetarian Culture

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Submitted to the Faculty of
Department of International Affairs in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs

Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages
2021

WENZAO URSULINE UNIVERSITY OF LANGUAGES
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2021

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Yin-Hsuan Tsai

Abstract

My thesis is mainly to explore the perception and experience of the vegetarian culture of young people in Taiwan. 2019 was celebrated as the year of vegan. According to the "World Vegetarian Population Report", the vegetarian population in countries around the world continues to increase. Taiwan's total population reached at 13% (2.5 million) of vegetarians. It is among the top three vegetarian countries in the world and is recognized as one of the most vegetarian-friendly countries. What strikes me is that more and more young people have decided to become vegetarian.

Through this research, one can understand the motivation, experience and influence of young people aged from 15 to 44 who are experiencing vegetarian culture. I draw on surveys to analyze everyone's ideas of such trends, and then use online interviews to gain insights into their vegetarian experiences. Finally, the results show key factors other than family and religion that lead to many people to become vegetarians. That involves people following trends, their own values, and care for the natural environment and animals. My research witnesses a concern of young people who seek to change their eating habits in order to make the environment less harm and destruction.

Key words: Vegetarian, Perception, Vegetarian Culture

INTRODUCTION

Background

There's an old saying that Goes Bread Is The Staff Of Life(民以食為天), so diet is very important to our lives. Different diets not only reflect the living habits of different nations, but also represent people beliefs, values and influence of family and friends. According to the study of the Vegetarian Option: Varieties, Conversions, Motives and Careers, respondents' accounts of their motives and of the impact of their dietary stance upon their relationships with kin, friends and colleagues.¹ Internet media constantly cover and offer information on popular food shops, and I review and find that vegetarian cuisine is the most interesting trend to me.

My grandmother has been a vegetarian for 20 years. She has been a devout Buddhist, so she accepts vegetarianism to do with non-killing diet in order to live with God's blessing. Later, my parents also began to follow my grandma's eating habits. My family become vegetarians on the first and the 15th of each lunar month. In the past two decades, my grandmother often said that it is easier to buy vegetarian food. In the past, it was necessary to cook the food by herself, but now there are many restaurants for her to choose food. With research for medical applications, the nascent biotechnology of tissue culture² confirms that many vegetarian foods are developed and produced. At that time, I was convinced that vegetarianism is a common

¹ Alan Beardsworth and Teresa Keil, "The Vegetarian Option: Varieties, Conversions, Motives and Careers," *The Sociological Review* 40, no. 2 (1992).

² Patrick D Hopkins and Austin Dacey, "Vegetarian Meat: Could Technology Save Animals and Satisfy Meat Eaters?," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 21, no. 6 (2008).

dietary habit of Buddhists. I never thought about the reasons why other people would become vegetarians, nor did I realize what factors might cause the vegetarian restaurants spring up like mushrooms. Later when I observed those vegetarian restaurants, they no longer have a store name related to Buddhism, and there are many posters related to environmental protection and body slimming programs. I have discovered that the vegetarian culture has become so popular in recent years.

In addition, I met some vegetarian classmates during high school and college. Different factors make them vegetarians. Different values based on conservation of the natural environment, animal care, religious beliefs, cardiovascular diseases, etc.

The vegetarian youths around me definitely come from their family members or their own life experiences. Although they are often unable to participate in dinners with their peers, they still adhere to this eating habit. People with religious beliefs believe that the non-killing element in a vegetarian diet is consistent with respect for animals and compassion. For young vegetarians who value environmental conservation, they think that animal husbandry has brought excessive environmental damage. From the perspective of animal conservation, eating meat is certainly a very cruel behavior that harms animal life. Young people who are concerned about cardiovascular disease achieve their body health by reducing the intake of fat in meat.

Regardless of whether the vegetarian food culture can really achieve the expectations of different values, it is undeniable that the vegetarian population is constantly getting younger.

Motivation

First, some young people are vegetarians because of the influence of family and religion. Furthermore, some young people feel that the global natural environment is constantly suffering from disasters, and pay more and more attention to the importance of sustainable development.

When I chat with classmates or friends who are vegetarians, I am always curious about their eating habits. Even though I am a vegetarian on the first and the fifteenth day of the lunar calendar, I still admire the young people who have insisted on a vegetarian diet for a long time. I want to further understand their mental journey and various influences of becoming vegetarians, and then analyze the reasons for the popularity of vegetarianism among young people, and the meaning behind this food culture and its contribution to the natural environment.

Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to understand the perception and experiences of young people in Taiwan on vegetarian culture. In fact, the eating habits of vegetarians are often related to family, religion, personal values, and trends. Through my observation, we can understand the life details, ideas and care of the natural environment of the vegetarians.

Research Questions

1. What are the motivations for young people to choose vegetarian diet?
2. What experience do young people have in the trend of vegetarian diet?
3. What is the impact of vegetarian diet on youth?

Contribution

Diet is closely related to our lives, not just one's tastes and consumption habits.

Conduct questionnaire surveys and online interviews with Taiwan youth to understand their perception and experience of vegetarian culture, and then discuss various related global issues behind this trend of food culture. I hope that through this research, more young people can understand the reasons for the vegetarian trend. And recognize the benefits of this diet.

Limits

The research objects mainly focus on the cognition and experience of the vegetarian culture of Taiwanese youth. They all have experience in consuming vegetarian food, so they will have personal views and feelings about vegetarian food. However, I will face a problem. Not everyone has experience of being vegetarian. Some people have stereotypes about vegetarianism, and some people are not interested in vegetarianism. So some people will reject my questionnaire survey. Despite this, I still believe that the trend of vegetarian diets will make

many people willing to understand the content of the research and provide a lot of information.

So I can still rely on the collected data for useful analysis

Delimits

The research population is mainly young people from Taiwan who have vegetarian experience or are interested in vegetarian food. So some people who are not interested in vegetarian food or have negative opinions will rarely accept my questionnaire. I can also ensure that interviewees can provide effective information and share personal experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vegetarian Culture

Introduction

In this chapter, I will find review academic articles, newspapers and magazines to elaborate features and elements of the vegetarian culture. First of all, I will mention its basic definition, type, historical background and controversy regarding vegetarianism. The historical background includes how the concept of vegetarianism was formed in historical context, why it was advocated and when it flourished. It also elaborates its trends through the vegetarian population and vegetarian business opportunities. Talking about some details of the impact of vegetarianism on the natural environment, I will further mention the motives and matters in regards of this food culture. Explore the values behind different food cultures in society. Finally, we deeply discuss the reasons for young people to become vegetarian and the factors for diet development.

The concept of vegetarian culture

Vegetarianism is a dietary culture that advocates not eating the bodies of animals. Of course, it contains common meat and seafood. Vegetarians usually only eat plants and their products such as grains, vegetables and fruits. Different types of vegetarians have different definitions of vegetarianism. Vegetarians are divided into vegans and semi-vegetarian. First,

when it comes to vegans, they do not eat any food related to animals, including products. But semi-vegetarian such as lacto-vegetarians, they eat milk, cheese, eggs and other animal products. Moreover, some religions also advocate a way of living against the consumption of plants with strong irritants, like Spring onions, garlic, leeks, onions. The reasons for vegetarianism include environmental protection, health, and animal rights.

Vegetarian history

When it comes to the origin of vegetarian culture, in 1840, the term "vegetarian" was born, but Tristram Stuart authoritative social history work explained how Western culture has been widely influenced by vegetarians since the 17th century. Thinkers believe that vegetarianism can not only make people live longer, but also purify their souls. Tristram Stuart followed the footsteps of vegetarians, from Shelley and Rousseau, until the nineteenth century medical community determined that the human body structure is more similar to herbivore than carnivore. From the perspective of society and cultural history, Tristram Stuart observed how the vegetarian movement shaped how people think about the food in front of them today.³ Moreover, ethical and spiritual concerns have motivated abstention from meat since ancient times, dating back to Greek philosophers Pythagorus, Plato, Plutarch, and Porphyry.⁴

Tristram Stuart, *The Bloodless Revolution: A Cultural History of Vegetarianism from 1600 to Modern Times* (2013).

⁴ Matthew B Ruby, "Vegetarianism. A Blossoming Field of Study," *Appetite* 58, no. 1 (2012).

From the above literature, the history of vegetarianism is closely related to ancient thinkers. They believe that being a vegetarian is a good way to prolong life and purify souls. At that time, the promotion of vegetarianism came from the spiritual level. Until the 19th century, medicine showed that vegetarian food is beneficial to the human body.

Vegetarian controversy

However, there are many controversies in the food culture that is highly regarded by the public. For instance, there was the religious question, concerning the implications of Scripture for human alimentation; there were medical questions about the effect of eating meat on human health and character; and there was a philosophical debate about the proper relationship between man and other animals. And arguments about vegetarianism, by drawing attention to rights that we claim for ourselves but deny to other animals, inevitably involve basic questions about what it is to be human.⁵

At the same time, many people doubt that vegetarian food will affect physical growth. The health risks and advantages of alternative nutrition-lactovegetarian, lacto-ovo vegetarian and vegan are dietary patterns that involve risk in particular during pregnancy, lactation and for the growing organism. Veganism excluding all foods of animal origin involves the greatest risk.⁶

⁵ Steven Shapin, "The History of Vegetarianism," *New Yorker* (2007).

⁶ M Krajcovicová-Kudláčková, R Simonic, and A Béderová, "Risks and Advantages of the Vegetarian Diet," *Casopis lekaru ceskych* 136, no. 23 (1997).

The Trend of Vegetarian Diet

Vegetarian population

The vegetarian population is constantly increasing, and everyone decides to be a vegetarian because of different factors. Recent polls indicate that approximate 8% of Canadians (Ipsos-Reid, 2004) and 3% of US Americans are identified as vegetarian. Additional polls show estimate rates of 3% in the UK (UK Food Standards Agency, 2009), 1–2% in New Zealand (Bidwell, 2002), and 3% in Australia, with markedly higher rates of 6% in Ireland, 9% in Germany, 8.5% in Israel, and 40% in India (European Vegetarian Union, 2008).⁷ Although these numbers are minorities within their societies, they are not small minorities. Thus, vegetarianism stands as an important phenomenon that is well worth empirical investigation. Indeed, numerous scholars have begun the process of formalizing the study of vegetarianism, and their results have far-reaching implications for the ways we think about meat consumption and the reasons that many are beginning to eschew it.

Vegetarian food is also popular with Americans. The American diet has changed substantially over the last few decades. These changes provide a test for social theory and have substantial effects on the demand for various food products, thus impacting U.S. agriculture. In this paper, rapidly growing dietary choice-vegetarianism-is explored. The prevalence of vegetarianism is not influenced by age, gender, or education, but individuals holding traditional

⁷ Ruby.

values are less likely to be vegetarian than others.⁸

Vegetarian business opportunities

Furthermore, the market finds that the vegetarian population has increased and put into production related products. To make a long story short, vegetarian business opportunities are constantly expanding. Vegetarian eating is higher profile than ever. Movies, books, articles, and celebrity interviews tout how vegetarian foods reduce disease and obesity. More and more people are aware of how standard American fare not only hurts our health but also harms the environment and supports cruelty to animals. It's easier to eat vegetarian or vegan now than ever. Specialized products have expanded from natural foods stores to mainstream grocers, discount chains, and club stores. From fast food to five-star restaurants, vegetarian options are becoming more commonplace. Experts estimate the failure rate for new products of all types may exceed 80 percent. As many as 60 to 80 percent of new restaurants may close given that the trends driving interest in vegetarian eating appear likely to continue, savvy businesspeople can not only profit by catering to this need but also build demand by offering delicious, convenient, and affordable plant-based foods.⁹

The impact of vegetarian culture on the environment.

There are many vegetarians who attach great importance to environmental conservation. Furthermore, it is well known that food choices are strong determinants of human health, but

⁸ Thomas Dietz et al., "Values and Vegetarianism: An Exploratory Analysis 1," *Rural Sociology* 60, no. 3 (1995).

⁹ Caryn Ginsberg, "The Market for Vegetarian Foods," *age* 8 (2017).

recently awareness has grown about the fact that the foods and beverages we produce, choose and consume may significantly affect the environment. Since plant-based diets often emerge as nutritionally and environmentally advantageous, a potential strategy to reduce both the rate of many human non-communicable diseases and prevent environmental deterioration might lie in promoting the consumption of plant-based instead of animal foods.¹⁰

It's almost a well-known fact that vegetarian food is good for the environment, but how does it affect the environment? Actually, research shows that vegetarian diets are well suited to protect the environment, to reduce pollution, and to minimize global climate changes. Vegetarian diets built on these conditions are scientifically based, socially acceptable, economically feasible, culturally desired, sufficiently practicable, and quite sustainable.¹¹ When it comes to the impact of vegetarian food and meat on the environment, Carbon emissions are a priority. In average, the global warming potential of meat meals was 3 kg CO₂-eq compared to 0.9 kg CO₂-eq for the vegetarian choice. Also, other environmental impacts of vegetarian meals are considerable lower.¹²

When discussing the environmental impact of vegetarian food, food supply, population changes and social education also need to be considered. A strict vegan diet would nearly halve

¹⁰ Marianne Leuenberger, Niels Jungbluth, and Sybille Büsser, *Environmental Impact of Canteen Meals: Comparison of Vegetarian and Meat Based Recipes*, vol. 22, *International Conference on LCA in the Agri-Food, Bari, Italy* (2010).

¹¹ Claus Leitzmann, "Nutrition Ecology: The Contribution of Vegetarian Diets," *The American journal of clinical nutrition* 78, no. 3 (2003).

¹² Leuenberger, Jungbluth, and Büsser.

the agricultural GHG (Green House Gas) emissions, but reduction of the total emissions would be about 8%.¹³

Consumption and diet

As a matter of fact, vegetarian not only eat a lot of vegetarian but also avoid many junk foods. This phenomenon can be observed through this research mentioned below. The percentages of excessive eating by the vegetarian children were lower compared to the non-vegetarian children. Vegetarian children ate more bread, potato, and fruits as snacks than non-vegetarian children. Furthermore, non-vegetarian children consumed more carbonated beverages and ice cream than the vegetarian subjects.¹⁴ At the same time, the results of the study show that vegetarians are less likely to feel tired, and the immune system is better.¹⁵

Consumption habits have a real impact on pesticide exposure in terms of intake levels, numbers and types of pesticides, with a potential risk of dietary exposure. Thus, this population should be considered for risk assessment of pesticide residues.¹⁶

Different eating habits in society

¹³ Helmi Risku-Norja, Sirpa Kurppa, and Juha Helenius, "Dietary Choices and Greenhouse Gas Emissions—Assessment of Impact of Vegetarian and Organic Options at National Scale," *Progress in Industrial Ecology, an International Journal* 6, no. 4 (2009).

¹⁴ Kyung-Soon Choi et al., "A Study on the Differences in the Dietary Habits, Nutrient Intake and Health Status of Vegetarian (Lacto-Ovo Vegetarian) and Non-Vegetarian Korean Elementary School Children," *Journal of the Korean Society of Food Science and Nutrition* 40, no. 3 (2011).

¹⁵ Michael J Orlich et al., "Patterns of Food Consumption among Vegetarians and Non-Vegetarians," *British journal of nutrition* 112, no. 10 (2014).

¹⁶ Marieke Van Audenhaege et al., "Impact of Food Consumption Habits on the Pesticide Dietary Intake: Comparison between a French Vegetarian and the General Population," *Food Additives and Contaminants* 26, no. 10 (2009).

In fact, every diet contains a rich culture. Nowadays, with the deepening development of economic globalization, the dietary behavior and dietary habits of a certain nation inevitably affect the survival and lifestyle of other nations, and are even closely related to the future of humanity. Food issues are continuously discussed not only within health sociology where concerns with healthy eating have come to the fore, but also in relation to emerging food markets, identity and food consumption, a renewed interest in food governance and diminishing trust in the food supply.¹⁷

The development of dietary anthropology comes from many different reasons, including religious beliefs and ritual rules, political and economic development, and ideological connections. Furthermore, people pursue a delicious diet and value taste. In the past, this trend has changed very slowly, and many people have always insisted on their original preferences. In the era of globalization, many different food cultures communicate or combine with each other. It used to be said that a society's taste in food was one of the most slowly changing element, which reflects most conservative, aspects of its culture.

That may, at a deep level, still be true of some underlying attitudes towards eating and its pleasures but, on the surface, eating seems to have become a part of fashion, which not only changes but changes at an accelerating rate.¹⁸

¹⁷ Paul Ward, John Coveney, and Julie Henderson, *A Sociology of Food and Eating: Why Now?* (SAGE Publications Sage UK: London, England, 2010).

¹⁸ Stephen Mennell, "Taste, Culture and History," *Petits Propos Culinaires* 78 (2005).

At the same time different food culture come from different groups and personal experience. We can learn more about others through these observations. Through food studies, one examines the relationships between consumer and food, and analyzes how this association discloses an enormous amount of information about them. The food choices made by people, either as individuals or as a group, can reveal views, passions, background knowledge, assumptions and personalities. Food choices tell stories of families, migrations, assimilation, resistance, changes over times, and personal as well as group identity.¹⁹

Motivation to consume vegetarian products

To tell the truth, everyone decides to become a vegetarian for different reasons. Moreover, it has closely related to their motivation to consume vegetarian product. At the same time, they are deeply convinced that vegetarian food is a better dietary choice. Health and the ethical treatment of animals were the main motivators for participants' vegetarianism, participants reported a range of commitments to environmental concerns, although in only one case was environmentalism a primary motivator for becoming a vegetarian.²⁰

From a medical point of view, compared with non-vegetarians, Western vegetarians have a lower mean BMI (by about 1 kg/m²), a lower mean plasma total cholesterol concentration (by about 0.5 mmol/l), and a lower mortality from IHD (by about 25 %). They may also have

¹⁹ Gina M Almerico, "Food and Identity: Food Studies, Cultural, and Personal Identity," *Journal of International Business and Cultural Studies* 8, no. 1 (2014).

²⁰ Nick Fox and Katie Ward, "Health, Ethics and Environment: A Qualitative Study of Vegetarian Motivations," *Appetite* 50, no. 2-3 (2008).

a lower risk for some other diseases, such as constipation, diverticular disease, gallstones and appendicitis. The evidence available suggests that widespread adoption of a vegetarian diet could prevent approximately 40 000 deaths from IHD in Britain each year.²¹ So people with these diseases will increase their motivation to consume vegetarian food.

As a matter of fact, vegetarian diet is good for the stomach. The relationship between diet and the intestinal microbial profile appears to follow a continuum, with vegans displaying a gut microbiota most distinct from that of omnivores, but not always significantly different from that of vegetarians. Reduced levels of inflammation may be the key feature linking the vegan gut microbiota with protective health effects.²²

In addition to the consideration of health factors, many people's consumption motivation comes from family and friends around them. According to the paper reports the findings of a vegetarians and vegans. The dynamics of the process of conversion are examined, along with respondents' accounts of their motives and of the impact of their dietary stance upon their relationships with kin, friends and colleagues.²³

Whether it is the pursuit of a healthy diet or a common diet between family and friends, all of the above will increase their motivation to consume vegetarian food. However, different motives form different types of vegetarian food.

²¹ Timothy J Key, Gwyneth K Davey, and Paul N Appleby, "Health Benefits of a Vegetarian Diet," *Proceedings of the Nutrition Society* 58, no. 2 (1999).

²² Marian Glick-Bauer and Ming-Chin Yeh, "The Health Advantage of a Vegan Diet: Exploring the Gut Microbiota Connection," *Nutrients* 6, no. 11 (2014).

²³ Beardsworth and Keil.

A study explores vegetarians' and semi- vegetarians' motives for reducing their meat intake. Most differences appear between vegetarians and both groups of semi-vegetarians. Animal-rights and ecological concerns, together with taste preferences, predict vegetarianism, while an increase in health motives increases the odds of being semi-vegetarian.²⁴

The values of vegetarians

The habits in daily life come from different personal experiences and values. Of course, the reason why vegetarians choose vegetarian food also has their belief in value. The diet of vegetarians has changed from general preference to value and always chooses vegetarian food. Few vegetarians change their original diet and eat meat.

*We believe that moralization is common, at both the cultural and the individual levels, and that it has significance for understanding norms, socialization, and, particularly, health-related behaviors and attitudes on health issues. The significance of moralization is that it converts preferences into values. Values are more durable than preferences, more central to the self, and more internalized.*²⁵

To make a long story short, values are closely related to dietary choices. Value

²⁴Charlotte JS De Backer and Liselot Hudders, "From Meatless Mondays to Meatless Sundays: Motivations for Meat Reduction among Vegetarians and Semi-Vegetarians Who Mildly or Significantly Reduce Their Meat Intake," *Ecology of food and nutrition* 53, no. 6 (2014).

²⁵ Paul Rozin, Maureen Markwith, and Caryn Stoess, "Moralization and Becoming a Vegetarian: The Transformation of Preferences into Values and the Recruitment of Disgust," *Psychological Science* 8, no. 2 (1997).

judgments are particularly important in food choices and have played a role for millennia.

The practice of eating diets composed largely of vegetables, fruits, and grains even when other foods were available began in ancient times not for scientific, economic, or practical reasons, but primarily for philosophical ones. From the time of Pythagoras to the present day in Western countries, different philosophical and religious groups have advocated vegetarian diets for philosophical as well as health reasons.²⁶

At the same time vegetarian behavior is seen as a way to judge the degree of cognition.

*Males, those who are high in cognitive restraint are more likely to exhibit a vegetarian dietary style than those low in cognitive restraint. Among women who are high in feminist values, those with high cognitive restraint are more likely to exhibit a vegetarian dietary style than those with low cognitive restraint, whereas for women low in feminist values those with high and low cognitive restraint are equally likely to exhibit vegetarian and non-vegetarian dietary styles. It is suggested that for some individuals, adoption of a vegetarian dietary style is an attempt to mask their dieting behavior from others.*²⁷

This paper also analyzes some of the links between feminism and vegetarianism. It mentioned that this diet is often seen as a way to maintain body shape. And there are also some people who stick to their diet plan through vegetarian diet. Different types of vegetarians have

²⁶ Johanna T Dwyer, "Vegetarian Eating Patterns: Science, Values, and Food Choices—Where Do We Go from Here?," *The American journal of clinical nutrition* 59, no. 5 (1994).

²⁷ Y Martins, P Pliner, and R O'connor, "Restrained Eating among Vegetarians: Does a Vegetarian Eating Style Mask Concerns About Weight?," *Appetite* 32, no. 1 (1999).

different values. Of course, the social issues they value are different. According to the following data, most of them value vegetarian rights and become vegetarians, accounted for 67%. Furthermore, many people become vegetarians for their own health and religious beliefs, the two factors account for 38% and 17% respectively. People who dislike meat or unable to eat meat accounted 12%.

A smaller number of people are vegetarian for pursuit of personal growth, a concern about world hunger, a desire for a nonviolent lifestyle, an interest in improving the environment, a belief that meat-eating is unnatural for human beings, the high cost of meat, and social conformity. Although they are still important issues.²⁸

Youth's vegetarian

It is known from the above literature that the vegetarian diet comes from everyone's values, and these values are closely related to each person's background. When it comes to how young people choose their diet, it involves many reasons. Young people are not just about several sources – parental, school, peers, commercial, the mass media and health. According to the concept, we can learn that these factors are the key to the diet of youth. Maintenance and retention required two factors: first, social support from friends and family, and second, cultural tools that provide the skill and motivation to remain a vegan, which were found by participating

²⁸ Peter Singer, "Becoming a Vegetarian," *Cooking, eating, thinking: Transformative philosophies of food* (1992).

in the “virtuous circle”. Moreover, friends and family are the main reasons for youth become a vegetarian.

In a 2009 Vegetarian Resource Group Harris poll, a similar 8% of adults said they never eat meat. Note that other surveys which don't use the word "never," are likely to find even more people don't eat meat. In the poll, 3% of U.S youth indicated they never eat meat, poultry, and fish/seafood. They were classified as vegetarian. About 1/3 of the vegetarians (1% of the U.S. youth population) also never eat dairy, eggs, and honey, and were classified as vegan. One-third of the vegetarians (1% of the U.S. youth population) were vegan, except for honey.²⁹

Through this survey, we know the proportion of young vegetarians in the United States. The analysis of young vegetarians shows that there are vegetarians of different ages. In fact, this is already a global trend. However, there are many reasons for obstruction. There are many barriers to consuming this diet such as health concerns, an unwillingness to make dietary changes, and an enjoyment of eating meat.³⁰

²⁹ Charles Stahler, "How Many Youth Are Vegetarian," *Vegetarian Journal* 24, no. 4 (2005).

³⁰ Tricia Corrin and Andrew Papadopoulos, "Understanding the Attitudes and Perceptions of Vegetarian and Plant-Based Diets to Shape Future Health Promotion Programs," *Appetite* 109 (2017).

METHODOLOGY

Research design

According to the aforementioned motivation and research purpose in Chapter 1, my research will explore how Taiwanese young people perceive and experience vegetarian culture. I would like to understand how much they know and participate vegetarian culture.

Sources of Data

My research methods include questionnaire surveys and In-depth interview, which enable me to examine views and perceptions of Taiwanese youth on vegetarian culture. The questions in the questionnaire are divided into five parts: (1) basic information, (2) basic knowledge of vegetarianism, (3) vegetarian trends, (4) consumption motivation, and (5) obstacles.

The first part is related to demographic information: gender, age, education, residence, occupation, income and religion. This helps me to map social identity of these samples. In the second part, I will ask about the extent to which people has a willingness to pay attention to vegetarian issues. It shows how much they engage in this trend. The third part will mention how the interviewees make sense of the increasing vegetarian population, the growth of business opportunities and the promotion of the media. The fourth part is a discussion of the factors that determine people to eat vegetables, such as religion, morality, environment and animal conservation, family, friends and media on consumption motivation. The fifth part will address the obstacles that limit this trend, including personal eating habits, family, medical,

social, living environment.

This questionnaire will be conducted by using Google form. It is transmitted via social media platforms such as LINE, Facebook, Instagram. In addition, I will post a link to the questionnaire in a message room on the Go vegan channel. That is the vegetarian channel I usually watch in which there are members from social media and fans group helping me fill out the questionnaire.

Furthermore, I also interview with people. Some of them are vegetarians who I know, so they help to introduce other friends and relatives for me. The questions during the interview are open-structured ones, and offer deeper explanations to compare with questions via the questionnaire.

Instrument and Data Collection

Questionnaire

After putting a link in the story section of Instagram, I found few people came to fill out the questionnaire. The story has a time limit so I kept repeating the stories and accumulated some samples for my questionnaire. Eventually, I collected 123 responses before the morning of August 28. I tried to send the questionnaire link to different places, including some clubs on Facebook. Some are activities that I have participated in, or where I got information. My posts usually not only include a link to the questionnaire, but also share my current research with members of the group. Here is one example.

Hello everyone, I am a student of International Affairs Department of Wenzao Ursuline University of Languages. Fortunately, through the production of the graduation project, I can get to know this club that shares the vegetarian life. My graduation project is to explore the perception of vegetarian culture among young people in Taiwan (15-44 years old). The following is a link to the questionnaire. Please, help me fill in the answers for academic research purposes only, and will never be made public. Although the research subjects in the questionnaire are young people aged 15-44 in Taiwan, everyone can leave a message to share their thoughts on vegetarian life. The graduation project will be published in November, and I look forward to sharing my research results with you in the future. Wish you all peace and happiness.

The questionnaire is designed according to Likert's five-point scale, with five options of "strongly agree", "agree", "no opinion", "disagree", and "strongly disagree", giving them quantitative scores as 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.

Although initial trial of putting questionnaire via Go vegan, which has 100,000 followers, ended up with few replies, my further post got much more responses in a group called vegetarian food. Nearly 500 questionnaire responses arrived by the evening of August 28. In addition, the number of vegetarian population samples has also increased significantly. In the end, I collected 622 samples.

In-depth interview

My interview started with young vegetarians around me. Some are relatives and some are friends, and then they introduced their friends to me. In fact, I got to my interviewees by asking my friends. I requested them to introduce young vegetarians. Two of the interviewees were found in the breakfast shop where I was working. Both of them choose vegetarian meals every

day, such as vegetable toast or vegetable burger. One of them also wore a t-shirt with the word "No meat" printed on it. Through the observation of these details, I left their contact information and used LINE for conducting interview. The way I used the communication software LINE to conduct interviews is different from ordinary face-to-face interview. For example, the conversations on LINE do not distinguish between time and place. I can ask questions and return to ask more extended questions at any time. Interviewees will not feel embarrassed and are willing to share their experience of being a vegetarian.

I interviewed six young vegetarians in total. I conducted my first interview on September 20. The first interviewee was my English classmate. The second to sixth interviews will be conducted in the last week of September. They are my relatives, friends of friends, customers of my part-time job shop.

During the interview, I asked the interviewees about the types of vegetarians, how long they have been vegetarians, the reasons for being vegetarians, where they can obtain vegetarian-related information, consumption habits, and their views on vegetarian diets. I will also ask some extended questions according to their responses. In addition, they will also be asked to share any personal experience of being vegetarian. Moreover, before the start of the interview, I will greet the interviewee, even though there are a few people I already know. Then I will then ask questions and collect information. Because I hope to get more details, the questions are all open questions. Although I got a reply on the day I asked the question, the

extended question was not answered positively. Respondents only responded to my extended question after two or three days. Fortunately, they all share their vegetarian experience as much as possible.

To tell the truth we use questionnaires to understand the perception of respondents, but we can only use graphs or data to see trends. As for the experience and details of the interviewees, more in-depth information can be obtained through the interview. In an academic article from South Korea, this method is used to collect information. In this article about Factors Influencing University Students' Perception on Vegetarian Restaurants, the author uses in-depth interviews to analyze the key factors forming cognition and divides it into five categories.

The article mentioned the number of vegetarian restaurants in Malaysia has been increasing as people are motivated by various reasons to consume vegetarian foods. In addition, university students contribute to the economy, hence it is important for investors or owners of vegetarian restaurants to understand university students' perceptions on vegetarian restaurants based on their own experiences. This research provided an insight of factors influencing university students, such as family members, religion, trend and health.³¹

To make a long story short, questionnaire is a common method of perception analysis, and face-to-face interviews make up for the lack of questionnaires because it can collect detailed experience sharing.

³¹ Hyojin Kim, Sang-Hyeop Lee, and Pei-En Goh, "Factors Influencing University Students' Perception on Vegetarian Restaurants," *Culinary Science & Hospitality Research* 23, no. 1 (2017).

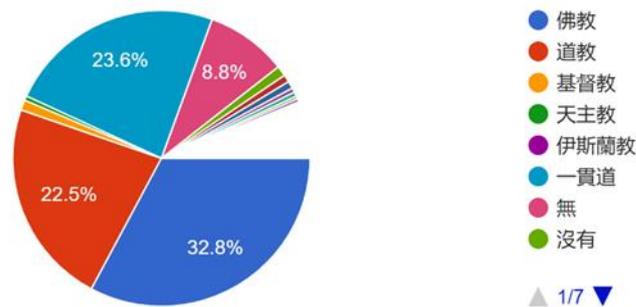
Tools for Data Analysis

The collected samples will be used for basic description and statistics. And use the table provided by Google to describe and analyze to understand the views of young people in Taiwan on vegetarianism. A pie chart is used to show the number of vegetarians and non-vegetarians, the types of vegetarians, consumption willingness, gender, age, occupation, income, residential area, and religion. Use bar graph analysis to understand the willingness of vegetarian issues, the willingness to try vegetarianism, vegetarian trends, consumption motivations, and obstacles. As for the analysis of the interview. After completing the interview, I will classify their responses according to my questions. Divided into the types of vegetarianism, time, reasons, channels for obtaining relevant information, consumption habits, troubles and obstacles, and opinions. I use their replies to analyze and observe their vegetarian background and experience.

DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic information of the collected data

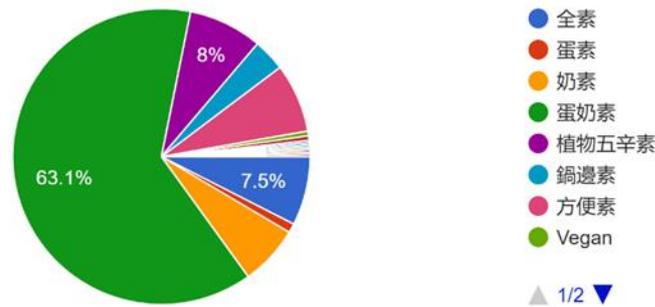
宗教religion
622 則回應



A total of 622 valid questionnaires were collected. The respondents were mostly female. For the age group, 36 to 44 years old respondents were the largest percentage. In the occupational distribution, the students are the most, the service industry ranks second and the manufacturing industry third. Other occupations accounted for a small part, including civil servants and finance. Most of the interviewees live in northern Taiwan. Since the respondents are the majority of students, the average monthly income of 20,000 to 39,999 is the highest, followed by income of less than 20,000. In the distribution of religions, Buddhism is the most, followed by I-Kuan Tao, and Taoism third.

Respondents' types and consumption of vegetarian food

素食的種類Types of vegetarian
398 則回應



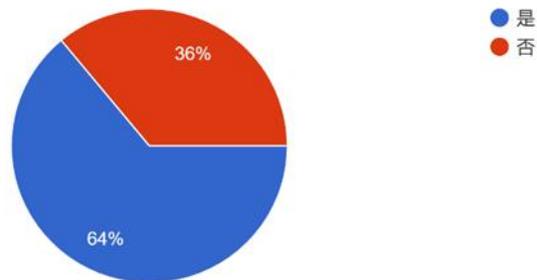
In addition to basic demographics, the study also investigated whether the respondents were vegetarians, the types and consumption of vegetarians. Among the interviewees, vegetarians accounted for 64% and non-vegetarians accounted for 36%. Among the types of vegetarian, ovo-lacto vegetarian accounts for the highest proportion. There are also vegetarians who choose flexitarian or vegan. Most of the respondents are willing to spend NT\$100 to NT\$200 for a vegetarian meal, followed by only NT\$100 or less. Very few people are willing to spend more than NT\$400 and less than NT\$500 for a vegetarian meal.

Survey

The questionnaire that analyzes the respondents' perception of vegetarian culture is divided into four parts. The first part is the respondents' level of interest in related topics, the second part is the vegetarian trend, the third part is consumption motivation, and the fourth part is the obstacles.

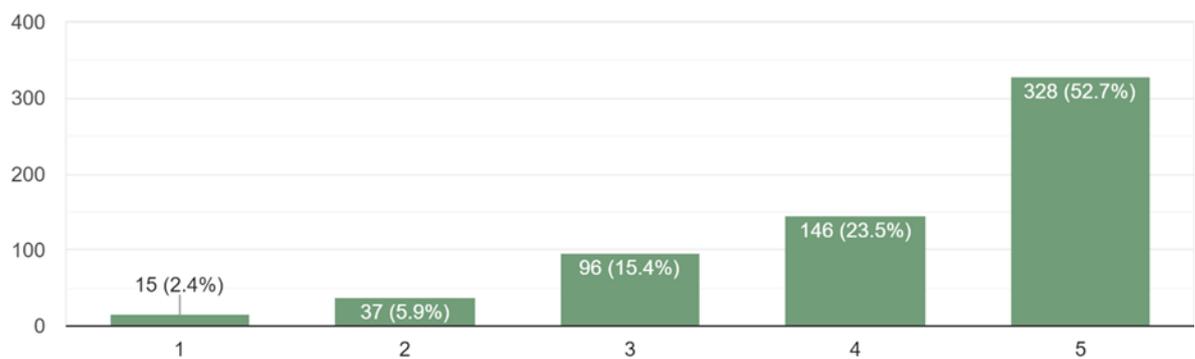
Degree of interest in vegetarian diet

是否為素食主義者(Are you vegetarian?)
622 則回應



我對素食的相關議題感興趣(I'm interested in vegetarian issues.)

622 則回應



Although 36% of the 622 respondents were not vegetarians, 76% expressed interest in vegetarian issues, 23% agreed, and 52% strongly agreed. Very few respondents disagree and strongly disagree, accounting for 2.4% and 5.9% respectively. 15% of those who have no opinion on vegetarian issues. In the question of whether they are willing to try a vegetarian diet, as many as 73.5 percent of those who strongly agree, and 23.5 percent of those who agree. A very small number of people who expressed very disagreement, disagreement, and no opinion on this question are 1.4%, 3.2%, and 15.4%. I learned from these two questions that there are

many people who are interested in vegetarian issues and are willing to try vegetarianism, whether they are vegetarian or not. However, vegetarians accounted for only 64% of the respondents, after adding up the number of people who strongly agree with and agree with the two questions, the proportion. are 76.2% and 87.2% respectively.

Vegetarian trend

The second part of the questionnaire explores vegetarian trends. The content includes whether an increase in vegetarian population, restaurants and meals has been observed. Have you observed that the news media and newspapers and magazines are promoting vegetarian diets and whether you will watch the vegetarian videos of youtubers?

The first question asked the interviewee whether they felt the increase in the vegetarian population around them. 31.7% of those who strongly agree. And 23.2% of respondents agreed. However, 24.4% of those who did not feel the increase in the vegetarian population in the surrounding area. The replies that disagree and strongly disagree accounted for a minority, 14.1% and 6.6% respectively.

The second question is whether it is observed that more and more vegetarian restaurants are opened. Different from the previous question, respondents who said they had no idea accounted for a large proportion. In this question, a high percentage of people expressing strong agreement and agreement, 44% and 34.1% respectively. Only 13.3% of the replies said they had no special feelings. As for those who strongly disagree and disagree, only 1.6% and 6.1%.

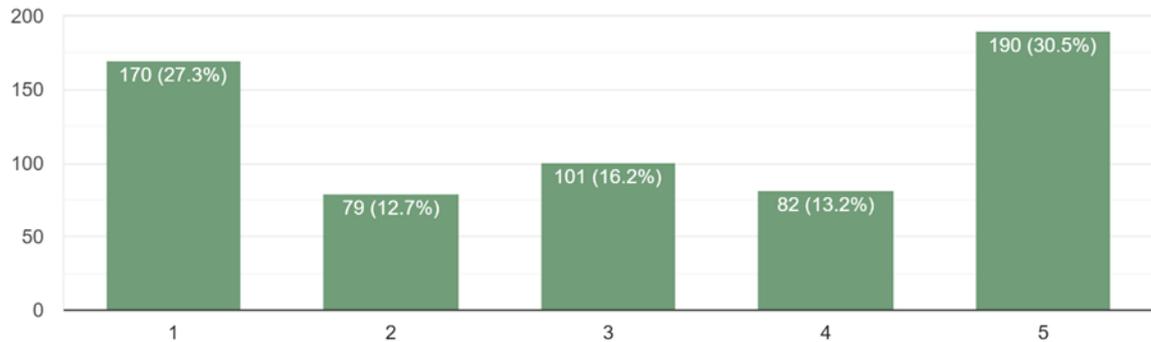
The third question is whether it has been observed that many restaurants offer vegetarian meals. With many restaurants offering vegetarian meals one after another, everyone is very impressed with this trend. More than half of the replies strongly agreed, it accounts for 51.1%. At the same time, 33.3% of respondents agreed. However, 11.9% of the people said they had no opinion, 3.2% said they disagree and very disagree only 0.5%.

The fourth and fifth questions are about the promotion of vegetarian food by the media, they are whether you notice that the news media and newspapers and magazines are promoting vegetarian diets and whether you will watch vegetarian-themed videos by youtubers. The former is based on passively receiving information and the latter is based on active search. Feelings about the promotion of vegetarian diets in both the news media and newspapers and magazines, among them, 36.2% said they strongly agreed, 26.2% agreed, and 26% had no opinion. Disagreement and very disagreement accounted for 9% and 2.6% respectively, very few. In the question of whether you will watch vegetarian videos of youtubers, as many as 43.2% of people strongly agree, and 23% agree. There are also 17.7% of people who have no opinion. There are also people who disagree and strongly disagree with this issue, which are 8.5% and 7.6% respectively.

Consumption motivation

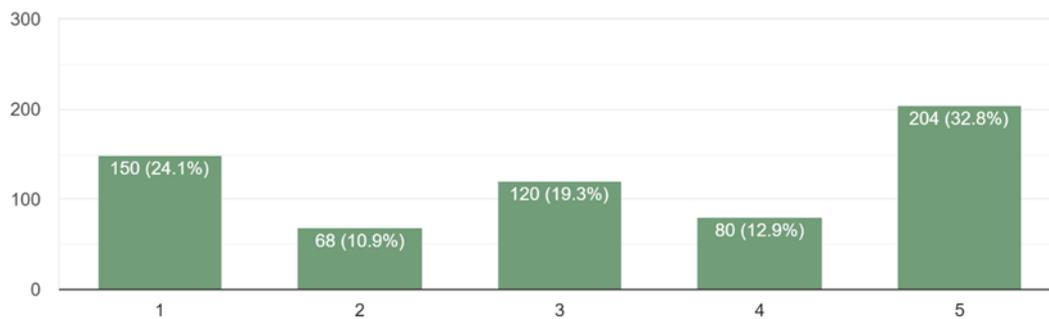
因為家人影響所以吃素(Be a vegetarian because of family influence)

622 則回應



我吃素的習慣來自我的宗教信仰(My vegetarian habit comes from my religious beliefs)

622 則回應



The third part is the discussion of consumption motivation. It contains five factors, Religion, family, environmental protection, animal conservation, health. Although our basic concept of vegetarianism is based on a meatless diet, everyone has different consumption motives. The first and second questions in this section are to ask the interviewees whether their vegetarian habits come from religion or family. Different from the previous part, people who

agree strongly account for the majority. The bar graphs for these two questions are M-shaped distributions. In these two questions, both strongly agree and strongly disagree replies accounted for the majority.

In discussing the influence of religion on vegetarian diets, 32.8% of the people strongly agreed that their eating habits of consumption came from religion, but 24.1% of the replies strongly disagree. The highest point distribution of the bar graph presents an M shape at both ends. Excluding some people who have never consumed a vegetarian diet, it can be seen from this bar graph that some young vegetarians have become vegetarians not because of religious factors. In addition, no opinion, strong agreement and strong disagree accounted for 16.2%, 13.2% and 12.7% respectively.

In the question of whether you are vegetarian because of your family, Those who strongly agree and strongly disagree accounted for the most, showing an M-type distribution. They accounted for 30.5% and 27.3% respectively. Respondents who expressed no opinion, agree or disagree are relatively few. They are 16.2%, 13.2% and 12.7% respectively. Except for some respondents who have never tried a vegetarian diet, the distribution of the bar chart shows that some people are vegetarian not because of family influence.

The third and fourth questions in this section ask the interviewees whether they agree that vegetarianism can protect the natural environment and animals. 61.7% of people agree that a vegetarian diet can protect the environment, and 64.3% agree that diet can promote animal

conservation. To make a long story short, whether you are a vegetarian or not, the positive impact of vegetarianism on the natural environment is a fact that is obvious to all. The last question is whether you agree that vegetarian food is good for your health. 56.6% of the people agreed, 20.4% agreed, and 15% had no opinion. Very few people disagree and strongly disagree, accounting for 5.5% and 2.6% respectively.

Obstacles

The fourth part is to analyze the obstacles encountered by vegetarians in implementing this eating habit. Questions include personal eating habits, family eating, doubts about nutrition, socializing, and location.

The first question is related to personal eating habits. In the question of whether you are accustomed to having meat at every meal, up to 62.5 percent of the replies strongly disagree. Of course, a large part of this response comes from vegetarians. Other options account for a very small number. The second question is related to family diet. Ask the respondents whether their families have few vegetarian diets. The most people said they strongly disagree, accounting for 42.3%. Among 60% of vegetarians, there are still some people who have different diets from their families. The third problem is the question of vegetarian diet. Because of the lack of meat intake, this diet is often thought to cause an imbalance in the diet. However, 50.3% of people said they totally disagreed with this misunderstanding of vegetarianism. Only

a small number of people are concerned about nutritional inetrophicisim caused by vegetarianism.

The fourth question is whether being a vegetarian will prevent me from participating in dinners with friends. This question discusses the social dilemma that a vegetarian diet brings to people. Those who disagree very much accounted for the majority, a total of 36.7%. Although this situation will improve as more restaurants produce vegetarian meals, there are still some people who agree with this dilemma. Those who strongly agree accounted for 7.1%, and those who agreed accounted for 14.3%. The fifth question, whether the place where I live is not easy to buy vegetarian food. Forty-three percent said they strongly disagreed. As the number of vegetarians increases, so do the number of vegetarian restaurants. Even convenience shops offer a lot of vegetarian food. There are very few people who have had this condition. Through the collection of questionnaires, I can learn about the trend of vegetarianism and the public's thinking on vegetarianism. However, this information is limited to understanding the dietary experience of vegetarians. So the data analysis in the second part will describe the details I got in the in-depth interview. Through these contents, you will learn about life experiences and personal stories that are not available in the questionnaire analysis.

In-depth Interview

First of all, I will mention the basic information of the six interviewees. The content includes how long they have been vegetarians, type of vegetarian, religion, age, and place of

residence Among them were relatives, friends, classmates, but two strangers I met at work. They come from different backgrounds, and what they have in common is that they are vegetarians, and each person has been vegetarian for different lengths of time and has many different experiences.

Table 1. Background of the six interviewees.

	How long has been a vegetarian	Vegetarian types	Religion	Age	Place of residence
A	10 years	Flexitarianism	Taoism	19	Kaohsiung
B	3 months	Ovo-lacto vegetarian	Taoism	21	Chiayi
C	22 years	Ovo-lacto vegetarian	I-Kuan Tao	22	New Taipei
D	1 year	Vegan	None	18	Chiayi
E	Half a year	Vegan	None	22	Taichung
F	18 years	Flexitarianism	Buddhism	18	Taichung

Critical Factor 1: Family Influence

In my questionnaire survey, half of the replies agreed that their vegetarian diet came from the influence of the family, while the other partner disagreed. It shows that our eating habits are often closely related to the family. Among the six interviewees, three of the vegetarian diets were influenced by their family members, namely A, C, and F. They have all been vegetarians for a long time. In fact, the family plays an important role in our growth. From birth, our family

is the first person we come into contact with. We learn our lifestyle and behavior through observation. Of course, eating habits are no exception. So, these three interviewees became vegetarians under the influence of their families. They are vegetarian because of the same factors, but there are many different stories when implementing this diet.

Respondent A recognized her flexible vegetarian diet. The vegetarian habit comes from family members, and the family's vegetarian habit comes from Taoist beliefs. On the first day and fifteenth day of the lunar calendar, when she was at home, she would eat ovo-lacto vegetarian with her family. When outside, she will be based on her own preferences, not necessarily vegetarian. To make long story short, when respondent A obeyed the eating habits of her family, she also kept his own preferences.

Also affected by the family is the interviewee C. She has always adhered to the habit of vegetarianism since she was a child, and her family has always believed in I-Kuan Tao. In her sharing, it was mentioned that her mother still adhered to a vegetarian diet when she was pregnant and never thought that a vegetarian diet would cause malnutrition. As for respondent E, while following his family's eating habits, he did not like the taste of meat. In her memory, her family would take her to many vegetarian meals since she was young. Although she is a ovo-lacto vegetarian, she can eat cakes.

On the whole, it is natural that our diet comes from the influence of family. Despite this, not everyone follows the family's vegetarian diet completely. Some people not only match their

family's diet but also develop their own preferences. In their thinking, that is not conflicting. I think in their view, respecting family is as important as pursuing oneself.

Critical Factor 2: Religious influence

In addition to family influence, religious factors are often closely related to a person's diet. Many religions promote vegetarianism, but they all have different concepts. In the second key factor, I will delve into the influence of religious beliefs on the interviewees and learn about their experiences along the way from their stories.

Unlike most other interviewees who have been on a vegetarian diet for a long time, interviewee B is a short-term vegetarian. When she was nineteen years old, her mother had a nightmare and the gods also predicted that she would have some accidents, so she must be vegetarian to resolve this disaster. She is a Taoist, and in her beliefs often regard vegetarianism as a way to resolve difficulties. In my observation, she strictly followed the ovo-lacto-vegetarian diet during the three months of being a vegetarian. Although she decided to become a vegetarian because of her family's advice, in fact she still believes in the positive effects of this diet.

Interviewee B is a devout believer of I-Kuan Tao. Although she is a strict ovo-lacto-vegetarian, she believes that this belief promotes vegetarianism rather than compulsion. I think her religious beliefs highly praise the benefits of vegetarianism and explain the shortcomings of meat eating, which prompted the believers to follow this eating habit. In my previous

stereotypes, I often associate vegetarian diets with Buddhist beliefs. However, among the six interviewees, only respondent E is vegetarian because of Buddhist beliefs. By analyzing the second key factor, religion, I learned from different religious beliefs about vegetarianism and also observed its influence on the interviewees.

When we are all convinced that a person's eating habits come from his family and religion, two of the interviewees decided to become vegetarians only after being promoted by the information media. In the questionnaire asking people about their religious beliefs, I set another option, which is an open form. Except for rare religions, many people indicated in this table that they are not vegetarian because of any religion. I am convinced that their belief comes from values. However, as mentioned in my questionnaire survey, nearly half of the replies indicated that it was not because of family or religious factors that they became vegetarians. I think a large part of the perception is affected by trends. Through the analysis of the next key factor, I will prove how trends affect young people's perception of vegetarianism.

Critical Factor 3: Trend

In the third part we will explore trends. Everyone knows the damage caused by animal husbandry to the environment. At the same time, cruel videos about killing animals are also widely circulated. Under the issue of global concern for environmental protection, vegetarians continue to increase. Moreover, however, in such an atmosphere, more and more inspiring documentaries are explaining the benefits of vegetarianism to the natural environment.

Taiwan's youtubers also release more and more videos on related topics. Through the introduction of the interviewees, I watched many videos on vegetarian issues, including vegetarian food, the effects of vegetarianism on the body, etc. Although the interviewees are vegetarians due to different factors, all of them will find vegetarian information through the Internet. When I asked them how they got information about vegetarian food, everyone invariably posted the websites and impressive videos they had searched. Furthermore some people even decided to become vegetarians because of the information and videos. Respondents D and Respondent E, respectively.

Interviewee D said that he was deeply impressed by a documentary called the games changers. The film tells about the changes of various types of athletes after a period of vegetarianism. All the nutrients and energy can be obtained from plants, instead of eating meat, it reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease and even improves physical function. Interviewees realized that the commercial behavior of using animal husbandry and economic animals has actually affected people's understanding of diet all over the world. Humans should see the truth and face the food they eat consciously. He said that if anyone thinks that eating vegetarian food will affect their health, he would recommend them to watch this documentary.

The promotion of the media has a great influence on interviewee E. During the interview, she recommended two videos to me, Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret and Dominion. Cowspiracy: The Sustainability Secret is discussing the impact and destruction of animal

husbandry on the natural environment. It also mentions the environmental protection organizations' response strategies to this situation. Dominion is recording how Australia consumes and abuses animals. At the same time, there are many real images from slaughterhouses and livestock farms. The core of the documentary is to explore the six main aspects of human and animal interaction. Contains pets, wild animals, scientific research, entertainment, clothing and food. Through this point of view to question the morality and legitimacy of human rule over the animal kingdom. Respondent E decided to be a vegetarian after watching these two films and has been vegan for half a year.

Respondent A shared a video he watched on YouTube. The content was to challenge a week to be vegetarian and one month to be vegetarian. In fact, these themes are very common in recent years. YouTubers who have no vegan habit regard this diet as a challenge and observe the changes in their health conditions afterwards. To tell the truth, The trends led by the information media have affected our views and attitudes towards life. Respondents are no longer just passively receiving information but are moved by positive content and change their living styles.

Critical Factor 4: Personal experience

To put it simply, a vegetarian diet is a meatless diet. For some people, eggs and milk must be avoided. Vegetarians have similar eating habits but have completely different personal experiences. Through in-depth interviews, I learned about the experience of the interviewees

since they became vegetarian. Respondent D believes that Vegan does not support any behavior related to the use of animals. It covers not only diet, but also clothing. The food basically does not eat meat, eggs, milk, and he avoid even honey. He doesn't like meat, so the process of converting to vegetarian food is easy. Instead, he eats very happily. At the same time, no one will force him to eat meat because of his malnutrition. Moreover, he is very grateful that his friends will consider his needs and find restaurants that provide vegetarian food during dinners.

Respondent E became very light after eating vegetarian, and thinking about things became clearer. This is a big thing that she feels very strongly, so she is determined to be vegetarian for half a year. The above is a good life experience for the two interviewees since they became vegetarians. In fact, there are many challenges along the way to becoming a vegetarian. There are many obstacles to overcome whether it is physical, mental or social. These contents will be discussed in depth in key factor five.

Critical factor 5: Obstacle

Although the vegetarian population continues to increase, the current society is still based on a meat-eating diet. The fifth critical factor will discuss the obstacles and problems encountered by the six vegetarians since they became vegetarians.

Respondent C, who became a vegetarian because of religion and family factors, said that people's stereotypes about vegetarians made her once regarded as a religious fanatic. In addition, when going abroad, she must plan the itinerary in advance to ensure that the

destination has vegetarian meals. She said that compared to foreign countries, it is actually easier to buy vegetarian food in Taiwan.

Respondent E, who has just been a vegetarian for half a year, said that there are not many vegetarian restaurants around her residence, and she feels tired of repeated vegetarian meals. It was easy for interviewee D to become a vegetarian because he did not like meat by nature. The biggest obstacle is the need to persuade those around him not to worry that he will be malnourished because of being a vegetarian. He also mentioned that when looking for a job, he would consider whether the job content is friendly to the environment and animals, which resulted in him not being able to find a part-time job.

Respondent F told me that when she travels abroad, she often only eats Indian cuisine, because many Indian cuisines are edible by vegetarians. In addition, she is also worried that when looking for a boyfriend later, she will not be able to accept that the other person has different eating habits. ◦

In conclusion, Interviewees have faced many different dilemmas since they became vegetarians. When they talked about their experiences, I also deeply thought that under the global trend of promoting a friendly natural environment, real life still has many inconveniences for vegetarians. Both people's stereotypes and dietary choices in life need to be more advanced and better suited to the needs of vegetarians. I have also observed that when vegetarians are pursuing their beliefs and values, they are actually worried that they will not be

accepted. However, when their needs are seen, they are always grateful.

In Chapter four, I used Google's bar and pie charts to analyze the results of the questionnaire, which showed that we know the basics, background, motivations, consumption habits, and can observe the trend of vegetarian culture being valued. I then classified the content of my in-depth interviews into five key factors: family, religion, trends, personal experience, and obstruction. Use this analysis to learn the stories of the interviewees, whether it's a good or a bad experience. The first part of the questionnaire provides data, the second part of the interview provides details, through these two research methods to fully understand the Taiwan youth's perception and experience of vegetarian culture.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The main purpose of this paper is to explore the perception and experience of the vegetarian culture of Taiwanese youth. With reference to the World Health Organization, the United Nations, and the selection of outstanding youths, I tried to explore Taiwanese youths between 15 and 44 years old by looking into how they followed the trend of vegetarian culture. The result was finished in the last chapter through my analysis of questionnaire surveys and online in-depth interviews.

My earliest experience of vegetarianism came from my family, so it is natural for me to accept this eating habits resulted from religion or family. The experience made me to further explore young vegetarians. I tried to explore why they are vegetarian through this research. I have listed three research questions,

1. What are the motivations for young people to choose vegetarian diet?
2. What experience do young people have in the trend of vegetarian diet?
3. What is the impact of vegetarian diet on youth?

In Chapter 2, I showed the historical background and recent trends of vegetarian culture through literature. First, I described the basic definition of vegetarianism. It advocates not to eat the animal's body. Of course, it contains plain meat and seafood. Vegetarians usually eat only plants and their products, such as grains, vegetables and fruits. Different types of vegetarians have different definitions of vegetarianism. In addition, many people's reasons

include religion, family, trends, environmental protection, health and animal rights.

When it comes to the origins of vegetarian culture, the term "vegetarian" was born in 1840. Since the 17th century, Western culture has been widely influenced by vegetarians. Thinkers believed that vegetarianism can not only extend people's life, but also purify their souls. The promotion of vegetarianism came from the spiritual level. Until the 19th century, medicine showed that a vegetarian diet is beneficial to the human body. Although the benefits of vegetarian food have been medically proven, many people believe that a diet lacking meat, eggs, and milk will lead to nutritional imbalance. Especially in pregnancy, lactation and growing organisms, risks are involved.

Although vegetarianism is controversial, it is undeniable that this food culture is already a trend. I mentioned in the literature that the vegetarian population is increasing. Due to various factors, everyone decides to become a vegetarian. Many scholars have begun to conduct formal research on vegetarianism. In addition, vegetarian food is also popular among Americans. In the past few decades, the way Americans eat has undergone major changes. It even affected American agriculture. The prevalence of vegetarianism is not affected by age, gender or education level. Moreover, the market finds that the number of vegetarians has increased and they are producing related products. To make a long story short, vegetarian business opportunities continue to expand. The vegetarian diet is higher than ever. Movies, books, articles, and celebrity interviews all tout how vegetarianism can reduce disease and obesity.

Eating vegetarian or vegan food is now easier than ever. Specialty products have expanded from natural food stores to mainstream grocery stores, discount chains and club stores. From fast food restaurants to five-star restaurants, vegetarian options are becoming more common.

The above content keeps mentioning that everyone has different reasons for becoming vegetarians. In fact, attention to environmental protection is often a key factor. People have recently realized that the food we produce, choose, and consume can have a significant impact on the environment. Therefore, it is very advantageous for plant-based diets centered on nutrition and environment. How can vegetarianism be good for the environment? Studies have shown that vegetarian food is very suitable for protecting the environment, reducing pollution, and minimizing global climate change.

When it comes to the values of vegetarians, the habits in daily life come from different personal experiences and values. Of course, the reason why vegetarians choose vegetarian food also has their belief in value. The diet of vegetarians has changed from general preference to value and always chooses vegetarian food. Few vegetarians change their original diet and eat meat. We believe that moralization is common, at both the cultural and the individual levels, and that it has significance for understanding norms, socialization, and, particularly, health-related behaviors and attitudes on health issues. The significance of moralization is that it converts preferences into values. Values are more durable than preferences, more central to the self, and more internalized. I am deeply convinced that the above content is the main reason

why vegetarians can maintain this eating habit.

The last part of the literature discussion focuses on the relevant materials of the research object. Vegetarianism comes from everyone's values, and these values are closely related to everyone's background. How young people choose their diet involves many reasons, including parents, school, peers, business, mass media, and health. According to this concept, we can understand that these factors are the key to the diet of teenagers. Maintenance and retention require two factors: First, social support from friends and family, and friends and family are the main reasons why young people become vegetarians. The last part of the literature review shows that the reasons why young people become vegetarians come from family and friends. However, through my research, I found another possibility, which comes from their own care for the environment and attention to animal life.

My research methods are mainly questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews. They both help me to see the trend of vegetarianism and the details of life shared by the interviewees. The questions in the questionnaire include basic information, basic knowledge of vegetarianism, vegetarian trends, consumption motivation and obstacles. As for the question of face-to-face interview, it is an open question based on the content of the questionnaire and then extended. Among the responses to the questionnaire, vegetarians accounted for 60%. This is contrary to the facts. As a matter of fact, vegetarians are still a minority in society. I think this is because vegetarians are more willing to fill out this questionnaire.

The results of the questionnaire show that the types of vegetarians are mainly ovo-lacto vegetarian. The religious part is the most Buddhist. Most people are interested in vegetarian issues and agree with the environmental benefits of this eating habit. At the same time, they oppose the erroneous idea that vegetarianism can lead to malnutrition. What surprised me the most was the vegan motive reply. Half of the people said they were vegetarian because of family and religion, while the other half did not agree. At first, I thought that the half of the people who disagreed might become vegetarian because of the key factor of the trend. Through the results of the interview, I was sure that the vegetarian diet advocated by the trend had a significant impact on young people.

I interviewed six young people, all of whom have experiences in vegetarianism. And divide the critical factors for them to become vegetarians into five categories, including family, religion, trends, personal experience and obstacles. The eating habits of four of the interviewees came from family and religion. Nevertheless, they strike a balance between respecting their family and pursuing themselves. They must not follow their families blindly. Except when they dine with their families, they mostly consume according to their own preferences, although it is not a typical vegetarian diet.

Two of the young people were influenced by media promotion. They are strictly vegetarian. They are convinced that meat eating causes great disaster to the environment. At the same time, they also look for information on plant-based diets online to ensure that they

receive complete nutrients. All interviewees encountered similar difficulties and obstacles. They worry about not finding vegetarian meals when traveling abroad or not participate in friends' dinners.

After completing online interviews and questionnaires, I find answers to my research questions. First of all, what are the motivations for young people to choose vegetarian diet? Generally speaking, the vegetarian diet of young people is often closely related to family and religion, but through my research results, I found that some people are also affected by new trends. This trend comes from the promotion of the media, the use of films, movies, documentaries to expose the cruelty of meat food. Content includes killing animals and the negative impact of raising poultry on the environment.

Next research question is what experience do young people have in the trend of vegetarian diet? Young vegetarians who have been a vegetarian for many years often face social difficulties. They cannot participate in dinners without vegetarian meals, so they are always moved when someone is concerned about their needs. In addition, they may be regarded as religious fanatics. Young people who have recently been promoted by the media and become vegetarians will experience a situation of being tired of being vegetarian. The above two kinds of vegetarians are convinced of the environmental benefits of vegetarianism, and have also encountered the inconvenience of being vegetarian when traveling abroad. The last research question is what is the impact of vegetarian diet on youth? In the respondent's reply, some

people think that being vegetarian makes his mind clearer and his thinking ability improves. Some people think that they will be more tolerant of different food cultures and no longer have stereotypes. There are even vegetarian youths who can pay attention to news about changes in the global natural environment when searching for information related to vegetarianism.

In discussing the perception and experience of the vegetarian culture of young people in Taiwan, I found that many people's eating habits come from their own values. And these values do not come from family or religion. That comes from caring for the environment. They believe that the best way to protect the natural environment is to change their living habits, so they decide to be vegetarian and reject all inhumane diets. At the same time, they are keen to share their ideas with everyone. During the interview, I can feel to their passion for a vegetarian life, they also accept that everyone has a different diet. Most of the interviewees are about my age. When I am enjoying my gourmet life, they are thinking about the burden of wrong consumption habits on the environment. Although the interview time is very short, the touch and inspiration brought to me by young vegetarians is forever.

APPENDIX A

台灣青年對素食文化的認知之問卷調查

親愛的先生/小姐:

這是一份學術研究問卷，主要是探討「台灣青年對素食文化的認知」。在此耽誤您幾分鐘的時間，依您的真實感受填寫問卷，想請您提供寶貴的意見。

本問卷採不記名方式作答，您的回答僅供學術研究使用，絕不對外公開，請放心填寫。感謝您在百忙之中抽空填答此問卷，您的協助將使本研究更具貢獻。在此獻上最誠摯的謝意。

敬祝 萬事如意、身體健康

文藻外語大學國際事務系

指導老師：李宇軒 教授

學生：蔡寅瑄

第一部分：基本資料

1. 性別：

男 女

2. 年齡：

15~22 23~30 歲 31~35 歲 36~44 歲

3. 教育程度：

國小 國中 高中 專科及大學 研究所 其他

4. 職業：

學生 服務業 農林漁牧 製造業 金融業 軍公教 其他

5. 收入：

20000 以下 20,000-39,999 40,000-59,999 60,000-79,000

80,000-99,999 100,000 以上

6. 居住地區：

北部 中部 南部 東部 外島

7. 宗教：佛教 道教 基督教 天主教 無 其他

第二部分：素食基本認知

1. 是否為素食主義者

是(從第二題開始作答) 否 (從第三題開始作答)

2. 吃素的種類

全素 蛋素 奶素 蛋奶素 植物五辛素 鍋邊素 方便素

3. 我願意嘗試素食飲食

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

4. 我對素食相關議題感興趣

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

第三部分：素食趨勢

1. 我觀察到周遭素食人口增加

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

2. 我觀察到越來越多素食餐館開設

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

3. 我觀察到許多連鎖餐飲都推出素食的餐點

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

4. 我觀察到新聞媒體或報章雜誌都在推廣素食

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

5. 我會觀看 youtuber 拍攝素食題材的影片

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

第四部分：消費動機

1. 我吃素的習慣來自我的宗教信仰

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

2. 因為家庭影響所以吃素

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

3. 我認為吃素可以保護環境

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

4. 我認為吃素促進動物保育

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

5. 我認為吃素有益身體健康

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

第五部分：阻礙因素

1. 我習慣每餐有肉

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

2. 我的家庭很少有素食飲食

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

3. 我認為素食會導致營養不均衡

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

4. 吃素會使我無法參與和朋友們的聚餐

非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

5. 我居住的地方不容易買到素食 非常同意 同意 普通 不同意 非常不同意

APPENDIX B

Google Analysis Table

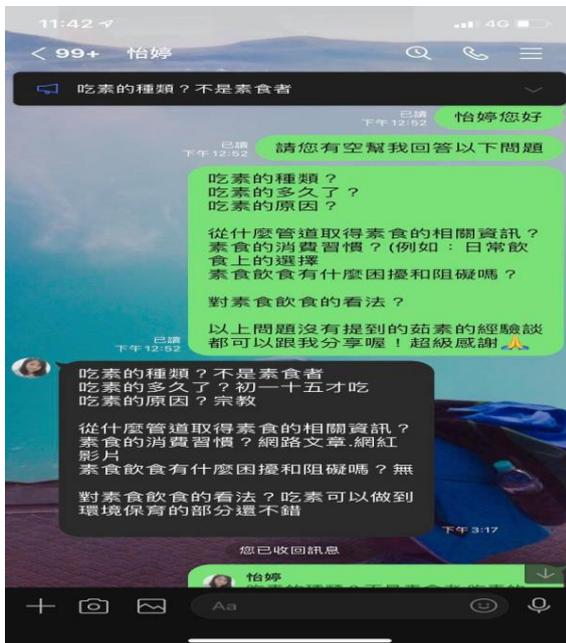
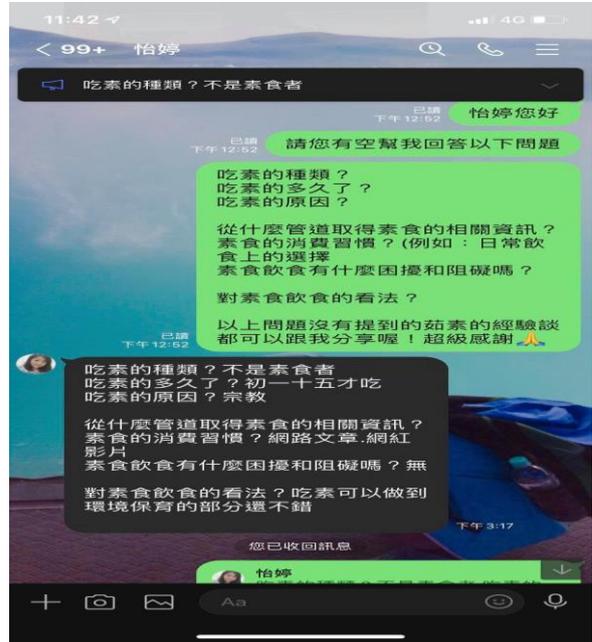
Attribute	Demographic	Percentage
Are you vegetarian?	Yes	64%
	No	36%
Types of vegetarian	Ovo-lacto vegetarian	63.1%
	Vegan	7.5%
	Flexitarian	11%
	Others	18.4%
How much are you willing to spend on a vegetarian meal?	Less than NT\$100	28.8%
	NT\$100~ NT\$200	41.2%
	NT\$201~ NT\$300	11.7%
	NT\$301~ NT\$400	5.1%
	NT\$401~ NT\$500	1.9%
	More than NT\$500	11.3%
Gender	Male	25.9%
	Female	74.1%
Age	15~22	24.4%
	23~30	24.9%
	31~35	14.3%
	36~44	36.3%
Occupation	● Student	29.1%
	● Service industry	27.5%
	● Military personnel, civil servants and teachers	9.5%
	● Manufacturing	13.5%
	● Financial industry	3.4%
	● Others	17%
Income(NT)	Less than 20,000	33.3%
	20,000~39,999	37.6%
	40,000~59,999	17.8%
	60,000~79,999	6.6%
	80,000~99,999	0.8%
	More than 100,000	3.9%

Living area	North,	43.9%
	Middle	21.7%
	South	30.7%
	East	2.7%
	Offshore islands	1%
Religion	Buddhism	32.8%
	Taoism	22.5%
	I-Kuan Tao	23.6%
	Christian	1.1%
	No religion	15%
	Others	5%

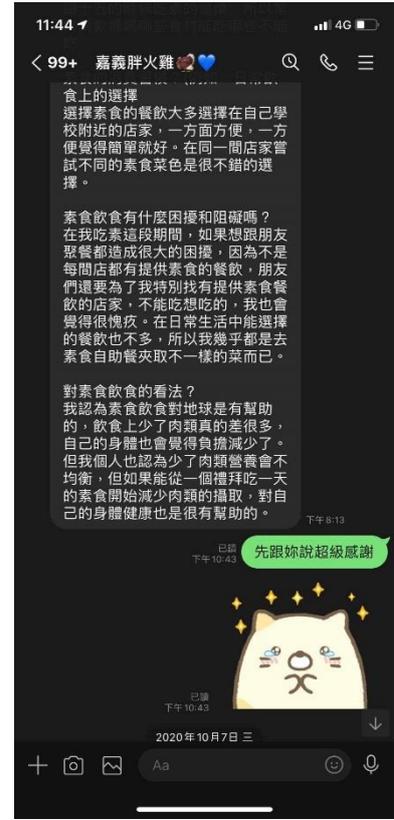
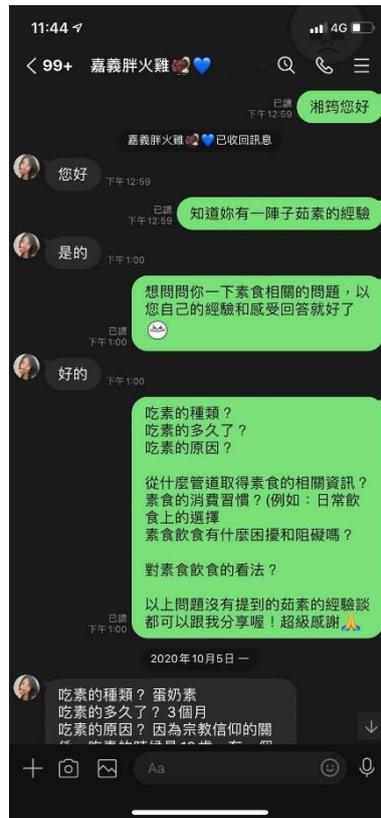
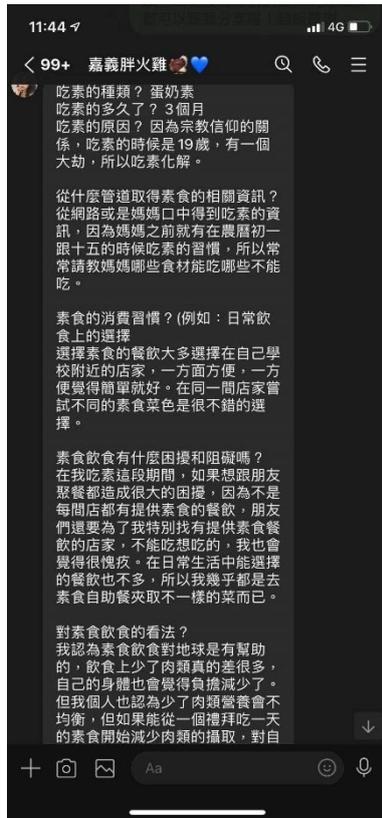
APPENDIX C

Transcript for Online Interviews ...

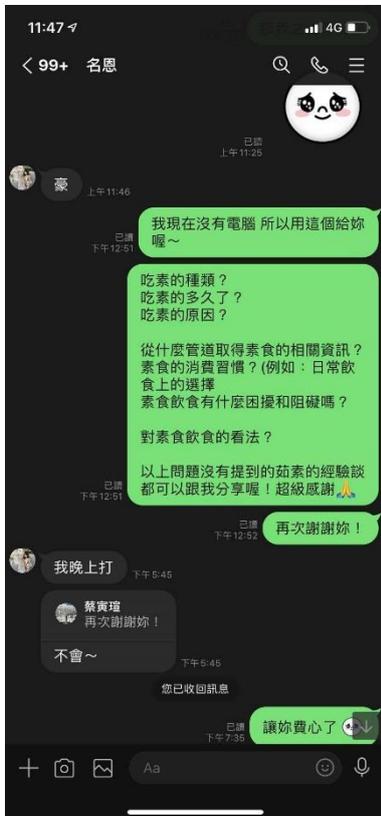
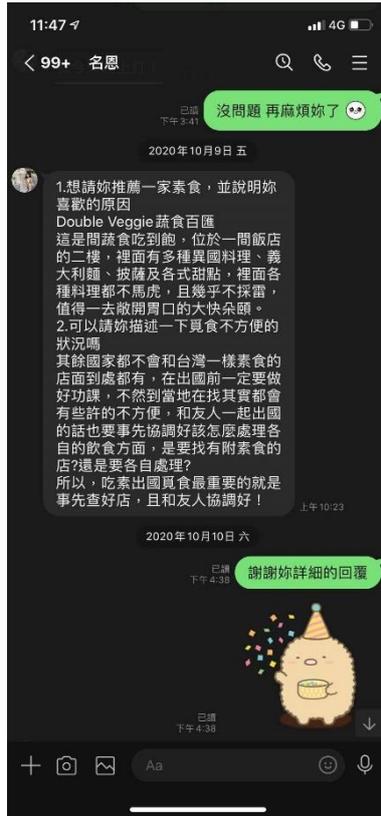
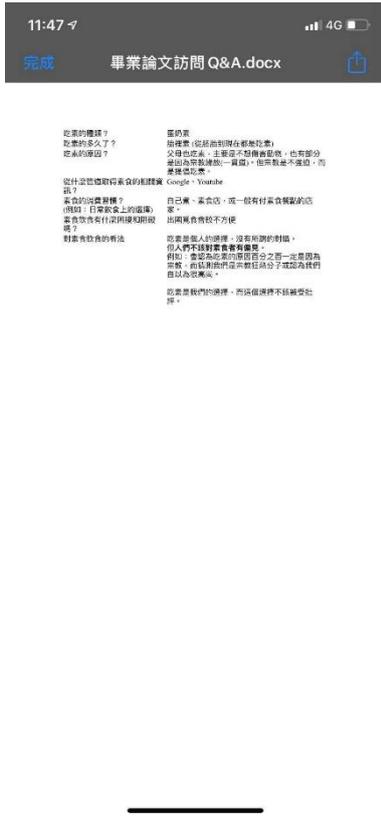
Interviewee A



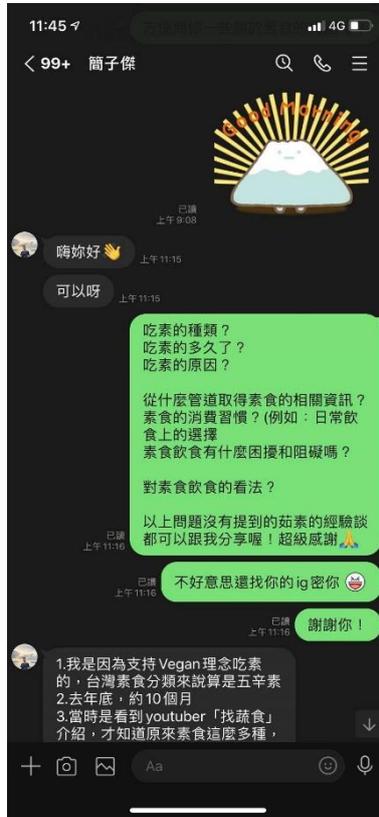
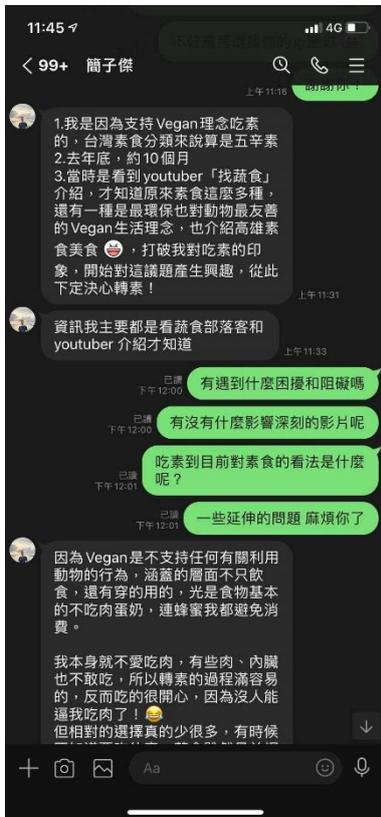
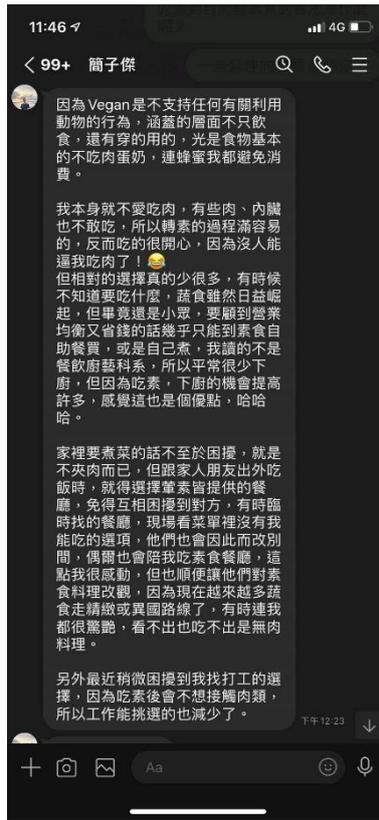
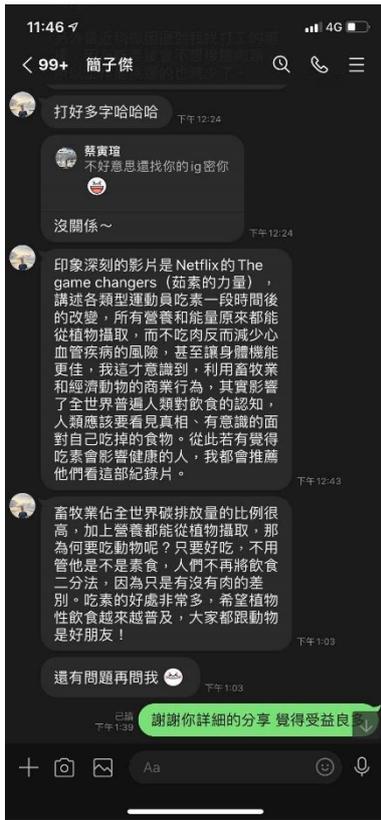
Interview B



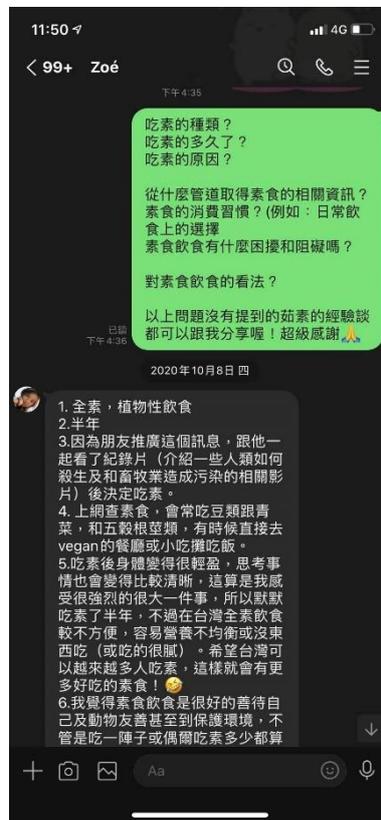
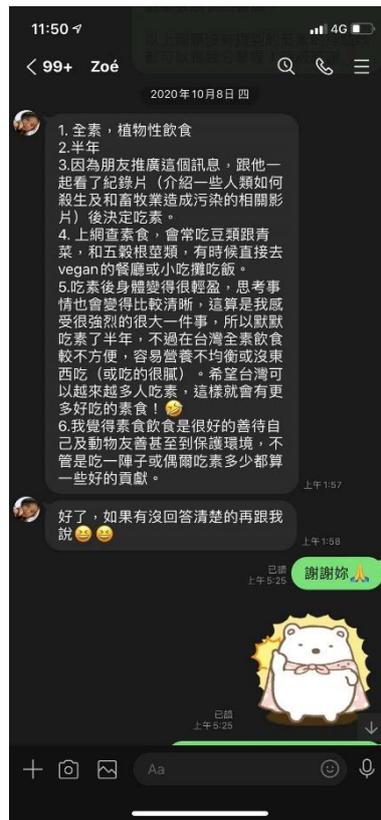
Interview C

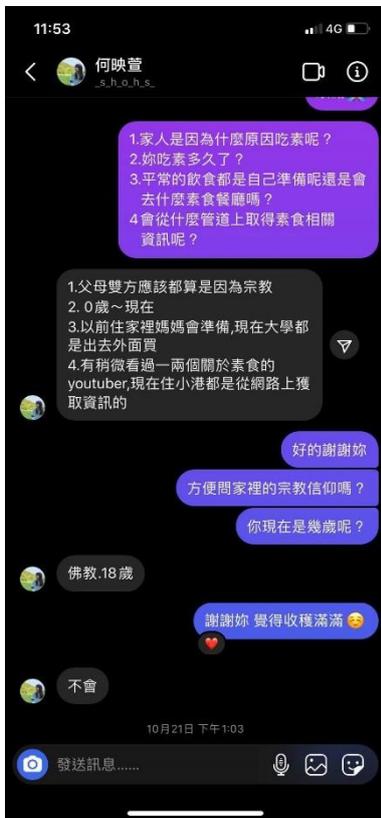
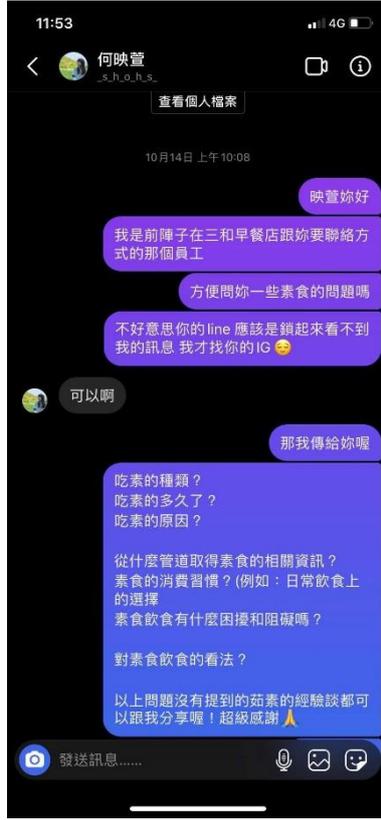
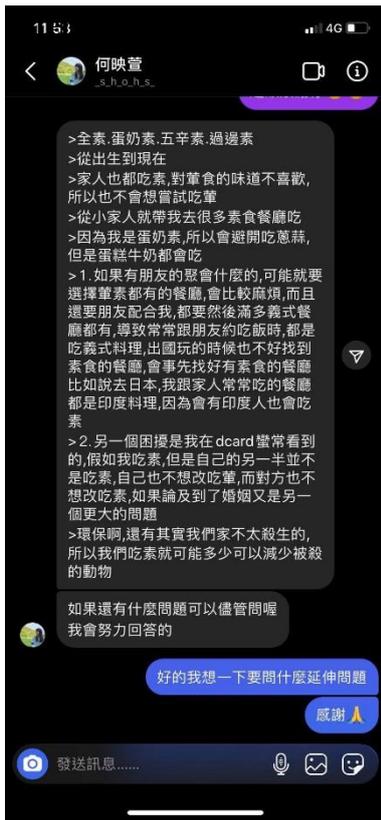


Interview D



Interviewee E





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