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ABSTRACT

Eco-responsible considerations in consumption choices, particularly in the context of food, have significantly grown over the years. Eco-Responsible Food Behaviors (ERFB), like buying local or organic food, reducing meat consumption, and choosing sustainable packaging, have emerged among various sectors, including governments, businesses, and consumers. However, these behaviors vary significantly within the population, necessitating the identification of these differences for the development of targeted interventions. One valuable source of variations are generations, which can provide insights into how consumers motivations are shaped by shared values and beliefs developed during formative years through shared experiences, and how these contribute to explain long-term consumption patterns across generations hence offering valuable insights for studying ERFB. This research program aims to understand ERFB while considering generational influences. More specifically, the program will explore significant transitions and trajectories consumers have followed in adopting (or not) ERFB, analyzing triggers as well obstacles and challenges encountered on their journey towards ERFB.

Anchored into a conceptual framework based on Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model (1977), we adapt current comprehensive frameworks related to food-related decisions by integrating a life course approach, which ensures the consideration of a generational perspective. This approach examines how biological, behavioral, and social factors shape choices throughout life and across generations, enabling the exploration of various life stages (trajectories and transitions) that influence ERFB.

This framework will be studied through a research program which includes (1) a systematic review of ERFB with a focus on intergenerational perspectives to uncover motivating and demotivating factors; (2) an online survey (n=350) to gauge their awareness of ERFB and eco-conscious perceptions in the food sector; and (3) semi-structured interviews (n=18-20) spanning different generations to explore the factors shaping ERFB adoption and obstacles faced during the transition and trajectories. Results will lead to an in-depth understanding of significant life events and intergenerational differences and similarities, which can assist businesses and governmental entities to better tailor their communication strategies and product or service offering to the specific needs of each generation in the realm of ERFB.