

Enabling Healthy Lifestyle Changes

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Cite as:

Storch Julia (2020), Enabling Healthy Lifestyle Changes. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 48th, (62444)

Paper from the 49th Annual EMAC Conference, Budapest, May 26-29, 2020.



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Abstract

Against the background of the obesity epidemic, leading a healthier lifestyle has become an increasingly important goal for many consumers. However, as the ever-growing obesity rates suggest, actually implementing healthy lifestyle changes into daily lives appears to be easier said than done. The objective of this special session is to present recent insights on factors that influence both consumers' willingness and ability to lead a healthier lifestyle. This special session will contribute to the EMAC conference by presenting novel and relevant research on various factors that may enable consumers to lead a healthier lifestyle and stimulating a discussion on future research directions. Together, the papers provide important implications for consumers, marketers, food retailers, and policy makers.

The first paper "What you do or what you don't: The impact of framing on goal level setting" by Mirjam Tuk, Sonja Prokopec, and Bram van den Bergh elucidates how consumers can be nudged to set more ambitious health and exercising goals for themselves. Across six studies, the authors demonstrate that focusing on how much consumers want to forego (exclusion goal frame) induces consumers to set higher goal levels than focusing on what they want to achieve (inclusion goal frame) through a compensatory mechanism.

The second paper "(No) pain, no gain? Lay theories of body weight, effort, and healthy lifestyle changes" by Julia Storch, Koert van Ittersum, and Jenny van Doorn investigates how consumers who perceive to have low control over their body weight can be motivated to implement more weight management practices into their daily lives. The authors show that framing weight management behaviors as requiring little compared to high effort could make these consumers more willing to make healthy lifestyle changes.

The third and last paper "How to prevent the health halo effect of organic foods? The

influence of a nutritional labeling system” by Aurélie Merle, Amanda Yamim, and Carolina Werle seeks to mitigate consumers’ perceptual biases with regards to organic foods. The authors show that using a Front-of-Pack nutritional label (Nutriscore) reduces the perceived nutritional quality and increases the perceived amount of calories of organic food products with low nutritional value, thereby improving consumers’ understanding of how often these products should be consumed as part of a healthier lifestyle.

The session will end with a discussion of remaining research questions and potential future research directions, guided by Koert van Ittersum, an expert in the area of health and consumer well-being.