

Role of identity appeals on pro-environmental self-identity and sustainable consumer behaviours

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Abstract

Multiple self-identities influence consumers' decision-making as they tend to act in line with who they are (i.e. their self-identity). The aim here was to assess how appeals to other self-identities influence the pro-environmental self-identity and subsequent sustainable choices. Three independent between-subjects one-factor experiments (pro-environmental, other self-identity, control) were conducted (N=1280, UK panel). Reminders of past common behaviours were used as appeals to the pro-environmental or other (hedonic, trendy or frugal) self-identities. Findings show that hedonic or trendy self-identity appeals weakened the pro-environmental one, which in turn was detrimental to sustainable choices. Conversely, appealing to the frugal self-identity had no effect on the pro-environmental one or sustainable choices. The findings imply that making certain self-identities salient through marketing cues can lower one's pro-environmental self-identity and detract from sustainable choices.

Keywords: *self-identity; sustainability; marketing-cues*

Track: Consumer Behaviour