

Front-of-Package Nutrition Labeling Standards and Consumer Choice: The Moderating Role of Processing Fluency

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Abstract

This research examines whether and how the structure of front-of-package (FOP) nutrition labels affects consumer information acquisition, comprehension, and subsequent product choice. We develop a theory-based understanding of consumer response to different FOP nutrition labeling schemes, which is an important prerequisite for building an informed FOP nutrition labeling policy. Drawing on psychological theories such as contextual cuing and preattentive processing, we hypothesize the impact of three factors on information processing and subsequent choice: (1) location and color consistency, (2) information signaling via both univalent and bi-valent color attributes, and (3) the value of numerical disambiguation. Evidence from five studies, including one observational study, supports our hypotheses. Consistent location, the use of a signaling color and numerical content are shown to be important elements of an effective FOP labeling standard. We also offer evidence regarding the role of nutritional information fluency as the mechanism underlying consumer response. The findings advance our understanding of how the form and content of FOP nutrition labeling affect consumer choice and offer insights to aid public policymakers in setting FOP regulations.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Information Processing, Public Policy*

Track: Public Sector and Non-Profit Marketing