

Thumbs up to transparency or dangerously thin ice? Consumers' evaluation of sustainability communication.

Anne Peschel
Aarhus University
Jessica Aschemann-Witzel
Aarhus University

Cite as:

Peschel Anne, Aschemann-Witzel Jessica (2019), Thumbs up to transparency or dangerously thin ice? Consumers' evaluation of sustainability communication..
Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy, 48th, (9242)

Paper presented at the 48th Annual EMAC Conference, Hamburg, May 24-27, 2019.



Thumbs up to transparency or dangerously thin ice? Consumers' evaluation of sustainability communication.

Abstract

In line with a general trend of increasing sustainability in production and consumption, consumers demand more and more sustainable products in the market. One way of improving resource-efficiency and thus sustainability impact of products is through re-valuing by-products of the manufacturing process, also known as upcycling. While it is known from the domain of corporate social responsibility that transparent communication increases consumer trust, it is unclear to which degree transparency in sustainability communication pays off in relation to upcycling. We apply this phenomenon to the trend of consuming plant-based food products by assessing consumers' choice likelihood and fair price perception. When the product is communicated as being upcycled (versus not), we find that choice likelihood is hardly affected, but fair price perception is significantly lower. Findings suggest that transparency communication might only pay off, if the product indeed can be offered at a lower price than the regular alternative.

Keywords: *fair price; preference; upcycling*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics