

Variable Opaque Products—How Adapting the Outcome of Opaque Products Influences
Consumers Pre- and Post-Purchase Behavior

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Abstract

Selling opaque products, where firms consciously withhold the identity of the specific product until after the purchase, is a common phenomenon in today's marketing activities. How firms sell opaque products varies significantly in the marketplace. One strategy that becomes increasingly prevalent are so called variable opaque products (VOPs). They differ from conventional opaque products (COPs) in their level of opacity as they allow consumers to adapt the outcome. Despite the prevalence of VOPs, previous literature offers only limited findings. Thus, we want to assess the short-term and long-term benefits of VOPs as well as their boundary conditions. To do so, we use field data from a European fashion brand. Our preliminary results show that a higher share of consumers react to VOPs (vs. COPs) and also causes consumers to less frequently return purchased products. With our findings, we contribute to research on opaque products and provide actionable implications for managers.

Keywords: *variable opaque products; opaque selling; retail promotions*

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