

Positive, negative, or graded sustainability labelling? Which is most effective at promoting a shift towards more sustainable product choices?

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## **Abstract**

Sustainability labels convey information about different product attributes, such as its environmental impact, lifespan, or ethical performance. The labelling can be either positive (identifying the most sustainable products available on the market), negative (identifying the least sustainable products available on the market), or graded (comparing the sustainable performance of a product with that of all other products on the market). The goal of this research was to assess the relative performance of these three labelling approaches in terms of influencing product choices. A nationally representative sample of 1,243 consumers from Germany, Spain and the Czech Republic participated in an online discrete choice experiment with real incentives. Compared with positive and negative labels, graded labels were most effective in guiding consumers towards more sustainable product choices. These findings support policy interventions that convey product sustainability with graded labels.

**Subject Areas:** *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making, Public Policy*

**Track:** Social Responsibility & Ethics