

The Predictive Influence of a Climate Score Label on Real Purchase Behavior at the POS

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Abstract

Due to the considerable impact of food production and consumption on the climate, the introduction of a uniform carbon labeling system is foreseeable. As of today, it is not widely researched if a carbon label can shift consumer behavior towards more climate-friendly consumption as empirical studies assessing real purchase behavior are scarce. In previous studies, carbon labels were found to predict climate-friendly purchase behavior. However, results mostly relate to purchase intention for labeled products which do not translate into greener purchases. Against the background of the attitude-behavior-gap, the hurdles associated with methodological bias make it difficult to conduct field experiments. Based on a field experiment in three German retail stores, we investigate whether a multilevel color-coded climate score label at the POS can nudge consumers to buy more climate-friendly food. For four fruits and vegetables, we computed and displayed climate scores for a duration of 24 days. Using hierarchical linear modeling, we examine whether purchases of less carbon-intensive products increased by comparing the experiment time period with the time period before the introduction of the label. We contribute to literature by analyzing real purchase data via a field experiment using a multilevel easy-to-understand climate score label, which can be applied across food categories.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Intention-Behavior Link, Retailing*

Track: Consumer Behaviour