

Adopt a sheep, if you care. Fostering sustainable consumption through distant adoption

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Abstract

To engage consumers in sustainable purchases, some companies have started to invite consumers to adopt animals or trees (e.g., sheep or orange trees), and consume the products that derive from them (e.g., cheese or oranges). The consumer, in the role of the adopter, takes care of an animal or a tree through monetary support and receives the products in exchange. Building on ethics of care theory, the present research investigates whether and how framing the sustainable offer as an adoption may increase consumer perceived value of the offer. Preliminary findings of three experiments suggest that consumers perceive higher value for the sustainable product they adopt, rather than purchase. The psychological mechanism behind this effect is the increased perception of psychological ownership which in turn elicits a caring mindset. Through further experiments, we will investigate boundary conditions that may hinder or amplify this effect.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Consumer Behaviour*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics