

Responsible Retailing

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Abstract

Traditionally, research in public health and economics has primarily focused on the effects of policy interventions on society, while (quantitative) marketing often deals with consumer demand and deriving implications for firm strategy (Griffith and Nevo, 2019). A next step may be to consider the interaction of consumer behavior and firm strategy with public policy (Griffith and Nevo, 2019). We aim to contribute to this evolution and focus on responsible retailing, which studies the effects of societally-relevant marketing initiatives and regulatory interventions on (retailing) businesses. Broadly, this covers initiatives and regulations targeting societal issues (health and sustainability) that are at the intersection of retailers, manufacturers, and policymakers. Studies in this area help us better understand how interventions affect both consumers and businesses and how their reactions interact with one another, generating a richer understanding of such measures and initiatives. In this special session, four papers delve into different aspects of responsible retailing. The first paper, titled “Estimating Consumers’ Preferences for Sugar: Evidence from Reformulations”, estimates consumer preferences for sugar, focusing on the unique threshold-based UK sugar tax. Unlike traditional taxes aimed at unhealthy purchases, the UK tax employs a threshold-based approach, encouraging manufacturers to reformulate products to lower sugar content. The authors examine changes in sugar content to estimate consumer preferences for sugar and assess implications for promoting healthier beverage choices. The second paper, titled “Sizing the Market for Sustainable Products”, addresses the paradox of consumer behavior regarding sustainable food choices, particularly the widespread rejection of environmentally friendly options like meat substitutes. This study introduces a novel method to measure the market potential for sustainable products by examining the characteristics of consumers resistant to such substitutes. Using a two-fold modeling approach, the paper aims to predict the potential market share of meat substitutes under various scenarios, providing valuable insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders. The third paper, “Retail Implications of COVID’s Disruption to Household Purchase Cycles”, examines the impact of income, liquidity constraints, and the COVID-19 pandemic on grocery shopping cycles. The study introduces a novel method to define, describe, and measure shopping cycles, leveraging the diverse implementation of health measures during COVID-19. The research aims to understand how shopping cycles, and changes to them, affect households' responsiveness to the marketing mix. The insights can offer governments an understanding of how health measures influence shopping patterns, contributing to our comprehension of the welfare implications of such measures. The last paper, titled “Retiring the Store Flyer: Effects of Dropping Print Store Flyers on Household Grocery Shopping Behavior”, investigates the impact of ceasing delivery of

store flyers, and explores the suitability of digital alternatives. The study utilizes Lidl in the Netherlands, which stopped distributing its store flyers in one province but continued to distribute them in all other Dutch provinces. The study assesses changes in grocery shopping behavior and provides insights into the business implications of an environmentally-friendly practice.