

More is not always better, but when is it? Investigating the Influence of Comprehensiveness on the Effectiveness of Sustainability Labels

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Abstract

Sustainability labels are a promising tool for making informed, sustainable food choices. The challenge is to provide consumers with sufficient information while making the information process easy-to-use at the point of purchase. Although highly relevant to broader society, there is a lack of understanding of how consumers respond to different labelling schemes which differ in design and comprehensiveness. In two studies, we analyze how different levels of label comprehensiveness influence consumers' label use, confidence and their quality of sustainable choices. In addition, we examine whether supportive label interventions, such as educational information, increase the effectiveness of labels. We used a mixed-methods approach, including an eye-tracking study and an online survey experiment. Our results show that simplified labels can be processed more quickly than more comprehensive labels, and that label comprehensiveness without label intervention does not lead to better sustainable choices. The findings contribute to an emerging literature on sustainability labelling.

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

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