

How Retail Choice Architecture Shapes “Green” Consumer Choices in Online Grocery Shopping

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Abstract

Consumer uptake of organic food is shaped by personal values and by the choice architecture in the retail environment. Prior research has focused largely on demand-side motivations, so we study impacts of elements of retail choice architecture. In an incentive-compatible online supermarket experiment across four countries, we examine the effects of (1) organic product availability and assortment, (2) branded competing options, (3) social norm cues such as a “bestseller” tag, and (4) competing sustainability labels like a climate impact label. We find that broader availability and assortment of organic options boost organic purchases. Branding, social norm nudges, and competing sustainability labels on conventional products divert attention away from organic alternatives, strengthen the competitiveness of labelled conventional products, and reduce organic purchases. Hence, sustainability messaging and other choice architecture elements should be carefully aligned in retail strategy.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics