

Understanding the Effect of Women-Owned Businesses (WOB) Label on Ingredient Perceptions

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Abstract

The gentleness of product ingredients is often highlighted in marketing communications. However, little do we know how the perception of ingredient gentleness can be induced and managed. This research examines how labeling products as from women-owned businesses (WOB) can be an antecedent of the perception of ingredient gentleness, which in turn increases purchase intention. Two pilot studies and three focal studies provide converging evidence that labeling hygiene-related products as WOB (vs. control) prompts consumers to consider the product ingredients to be gentler, an attribute extended from gender stereotypes of women. The perception further increases the purchase intention. The effect is not contingent upon product efficacy and is more pronounced among consumers who strongly subscribe to gender stereotypes associated with women, but not those associated with men. The findings illuminate the role of product ingredients in persuasion and inform the marketing strategies of WOB.

Track: Consumer Behaviour