

# Effects of Ordinal-Scale Product Labels on Consumer Choice: Evidence from the EU Energy Efficiency Label

**Jan-Niklas Hartmann**

University of Cologne/Chair of Marketing and Digital Environment

**Hernán Bruno**

University of Cologne

Cite as:

Hartmann Jan-Niklas, Bruno Hernán (2026), Effects of Ordinal-Scale Product Labels on Consumer Choice: Evidence from the EU Energy Efficiency Label. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (132856)

Paper from the 55th Annual EMAC Conference, Bath, United Kingdom, June 2-5, 2026



# Effects of Ordinal-Scale Product Labels on Consumer Choice: Evidence from the EU Energy Efficiency Label

## **Abstract**

The EU energy label assigns appliances to an A-G scale. Little is known about how the allocation of products into efficiency categories affect consumers. We examine consumers' preferences for different label levels as a product attribute and how altering the scale influences purchase decisions. Using conjoint, we investigate preferences for efficiency and WTP along the scale. Consumers perceive varying differences between labels. Additional WTP falls between 44 € and 98 €. We compare two labeling schemes (lenient vs. strict), and simulate market shares to show how a reclassification impacts market dynamics. Our results show that whether a stricter label system leads to more efficient choices depends on the choice set, sometimes undermining policy intentions. Our findings underscore the importance of scale design on the effectiveness of energy labels. This research not only informs regulators on optimizing label revisions but also provides actionable strategies for manufacturers.

**Track:** Consumer Behaviour