

Background Awareness of Choice Architectures in Marketing

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Acknowledgements:

This project is partially funded by the Behavior Spotlight Small Grants Scheme from University of Warwick.

Cite as:

Guo Fenqi (2026), Background Awareness of Choice Architectures in Marketing. *Proceedings of the European Marketing Academy*, 55th, (133107)

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



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Abstract

We bridge the discussion of nudge transparency and Persuasion Knowledge Model by considering Choice Architecture (CA) manipulations in marketing and looking at background awareness – information about the CA gained from sources other than direct disclosures. Using a series of pre-registered Prolific studies ($N > 4000$) based on a 2 (CA vs no CA) x 2 (aware vs unaware) design, we show robust results that awareness of decoy does not change participants' choices (nonsignificant main or interaction effect). Regarding the anchor, we find significant main effects of awareness of decreasing participants' willingness to pay, irrespective of whether the anchor is deployed, but no interaction effect; however, we demonstrate that such "awareness" effect should actually be attributed to a different cognitive mode caused by reading, not awareness knowledge itself. We conclude that background awareness is not an effective tool to protect consumers from CA manipulations of marketers.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics