

Marketing for a Better World: When and Why Informational Nudges Drive (or Derail)
Sustainable and Prosocial Consumer Behavior

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Special session chairs and affiliations:

Pascal Güntürkün (WU Vienna University of Economics and Business, Austria),

Mohammad Rizky Nur Iman (Coventry University, the United Kingdom),

The proposed Special Session features the following 4 projects:

Impact of Eco-Score Labelling on Consumer Purchase Behaviour: Evidence from a Retail Natural Experiment

Mohammad Rizky Nur Iman¹, Shantanu Mullick⁴, Stijn Maesen², Erica van Herpen³, Sally Dibb⁴

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No Expiry Date, No Problem? Consumer Responses to Retailers Removing Expiration Date Labels from Food Products

Yi Zhang¹, Mohammad Rizky Nur Iman², Christopher Berry³, Erica van Herpen¹

¹ Wageningen University & Research, the Netherlands

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³ Colorado State University, the United States

The Downtrend Effect: When Negative Trends Increase Donations

Stephan Fally¹, Lukas Maier¹, Pascal Güntürkün¹, and Valentyna Melnyk²

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For Rent or Resale? How Product History Shapes Decisions in the Circular Economy

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Abstract for special session (3,000 characters)

Consumers are increasingly confronted with informational nudges promoting sustainable and prosocial marketplace action: from eco-scores and removed expiration labels to declining donation norms and circular usage histories. However, there is yet little research on how these informational nudges shape consumer responses. This special session unites four projects using field evidence, secondary data, and controlled experiments to refine understanding of when and why providing or removing such nudges motivates pro-environmental and prosocial actions—and when they backfire due to misattributed motives or incompatible cognitive frames. Collectively, the session highlights how marketing academics and practitioners can design better informational nudges that truly help to shift consumer behavior towards a better world (Chandy et al. 2021; White, Habib, and Hardisty 2019; White, Habib, and Dahl 2020).

The first project “*Impact of Eco-Score Labeling on Consumer Purchase Behavior: Evidence from a Retail Natural Experiment*” by Mohammad Rizky Nur Iman, Shantanu Mullick, Stijn Maesen, Erica van Herpen, and Sally Dibb, provides evidence from a natural field implementation at Lidl Berlin. Using difference-in-differences analysis on household panel data, the study tests whether multi-graded eco-score labels shift real purchases toward environmentally sustainable alternatives and quantifies labeled vs. unlabeled market-share effects.

The second project “*No Expiry Date, No Problem? Consumer Responses to Retailers Removing Expiration Date Labels From Food Products*” by Yi Zhang, Mohammad Rizky Nur Iman, Christopher Berry, and Erica van Herpen investigates consumer reactions to the removal of expiration labels intended to reduce food waste in retailing. Leveraging Reddit discussions and experiments, the paper shows that label removal triggers negative retailer attitudes and lower patronage intentions because of inferred profit-seeking motives, while sustainability explanations mitigate backlash only partially.

The third project “*The Downtrend Effect: When Negative Trends Increase Donations*” by Stephan Fally, Lukas Maier, Pascal Güntürkün, and Valentyna Melnyk challenges conventional wisdom on the motivational effects of descriptive social norms. Across several experiments the project demonstrates that providing information on declining donation trends (vs. no information, stable or increasing trends) increases blood donations by heightening perceived urgency.

The fourth project “*For Rent or Resale? How Product History Shapes Decisions in the Circular Economy*” by Karun Tangri and Rishad Habib investigates how product history affects

consumer choices between two eco-friendly shopping options: products available for rent or resale. The project shows that prior heavy usage penalizes second-hand purchasing more than renting because renting induces a present (vs. past) focused temporal frame that buffers negative product-history cues.