

How environmental labels shift durable goods demand in the long term: Evidence from a natural policy experiment

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Abstract

Governments increasingly deploy environmental information policies to steer consumers toward sustainable choices, yet researchers lack evidence on how these interventions work in durable goods markets. We examine France's mandatory repairability index for smartphones and a subsequent repair subsidy to show how these tools reshape market dynamics. Using multi-country, model-level panel data and an augmented difference-in-differences design, we document that the label drives consumers toward more repairable devices and that this shift strengthens over time as consumers learn and firms adjust assortments. The repair subsidy adds little incremental impact. We also demonstrate that strong brand equity reduces consumers' responsiveness to the label, revealing how brand-driven heuristics constrain policy effectiveness. Our findings show that environmental information policies actively interact with market forces and marketing signals to advance circular economy goals.

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics