

The influence of knowledge and motivation on sustainable label use

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Abstract-

Sustainable labels are considered the best way for consumers to identify brands with environmental or social attributes on the shelves, and therefore promoted as a means to develop the so-called "ethical markets". However, little is known about how consumers use these brands. This paper tries to offer complementary theoretical insights on the determinants of sustainable label use by drawing on the economic model of information search; in particular, it examines the influence of two factors on the purchase of such labels: motivation and knowledge. Information was gathered through a structured questionnaire in personal interviews with 289 primary buyers. The study found that education influences directly knowledge, while Motivation influences Label use both directly and indirectly, via Label knowledge. This study concludes that Motivation is the most powerful factor to explain Label use; knowledge is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Even more, consumers may not have a good understanding of sustainable labels and still use them in their purchasing decisions. This suggests that there is a dual processing mode of sustainable labels, both systematic and heuristic.

Index Terms- Responsible consumption; Label use; Label knowledge; Motivation; Sustainable labels; Economic search theory

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