

How do defaults and framing influence food choice? An intervention aimed at promoting plant-based choice in online menus

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Abstract

Nudging consumers towards plant-based foods by making these choices the default option is a promising strategy for effecting sustainable dietary change. In the context of online food ordering, we examined the underlying mechanisms and effectiveness of swapping the default in menus from meat to a plant-based alternative. Results showed that pre-selecting a plant-based option is not enough to increase choice of plant-based meals alone. Rather, additionally framing the plant-based default as the more sustainable or tasty option is needed to significantly increase choice. Moreover, endowment and implied endorsement were found to mediate default success such that the positive influence of endowment outweighed the negative effect via endorsement. Menus that presented the plant-based (vs. meat) dish as the default led to greater endowment and increased default acceptance. Contrarily, plant-based defaults signaled greater endorsement thereby decreasing default acceptance.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Decision-Making*

Track: Social Responsibility & Ethics