

Departmental Research Seminar



Covering Vice with Virtue:
Categorization and the Perceived Environmental
Friendliness of Product Packaging
By

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Date : 9 Nov 2022 (WED)
Time : 9:00 – 10:30 am
Venue : Online via Zoom

Abstract

Around the world, more packaging waste is produced every year. In 2018, more than 80 million tons of packaging waste were produced in the United States alone. In order to reduce this number, consumers must be able to make accurate judgments about the environmental friendliness of product packaging. We show that perceptions of environmental friendliness (PEF) are systematically biased: Consumers implicitly categorize paper packaging as a virtue and plastic packaging as a vice, regardless of objective measures of environmental friendliness. This happens to the extent that adding extra paper packaging to plastic packaging increases the perceived overall environmental friendliness of the packaging. PEF continues to increase as more paper is added to plastic suggesting that paper proportion cues PEF. Six studies demonstrate the vice/virtue proportional effect and an intervention study shows how the effect can be reduced.

Prof. Aradhna Krishna is an American academic and behavioral scientist focused on persuasion. She studies how different aspects of product and communication design impact people's perceptions and behavior. Her work has looked at decisions related to health and nutrition, sensory and non-conscious conscious marketing, food marketing, corporate social responsibility, and political decision-making. She is consistently on the list of the most productive marketing professors in the world. *Harvard Business Review* recently acknowledged her as "the foremost expert in the field of sensory marketing". She was awarded as a Fellow of the Society of Consumer Psychology, the organization's highest honor, in recognition of her contributions to consumer psychology.

All interested are welcome.

