

Transparent packaging and its effect on psychological ownership and preference

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Short abstract

Transparent packaging removes the visual barrier between the consumers and the product, thereby allowing consumers to develop a more intimate relationship with the product. Across six studies, we show that consumers prefer food products (e.g., cookies, muesli, mixed nuts) in transparent packaging over products in opaque packaging. This effect is mediated by psychological ownership (PO). It can be mitigated by stronger signals of PO (e.g. a MY-claim) and only holds for settings that allow for intimacy, e.g. when the product is bought for oneself and not as a gift.

Consumers prefer products in transparent packaging because of stronger feelings of psychological ownership.



Overview of studies

- **Studies 1a+b:** Main effect of transparency on choice (cookies, muesli, chili powder)
- **Studies 2a+b:** Mediation via PO (muesli, cookies). Informativeness and attractiveness are affected by transparency but do not mediate the effect on preference.
- **Study 3:** Moderation by MY-claim (mixed nuts). MY-claim mitigates effect.
- **Study 4:** Moderation by gift vs. self (cookies). Gift context mitigates effect.



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