International Marketing Trends Conference

POSTER SESSION

GREEN GAP AND COGNITIVE DISSONANCE : IMPACT ON THE RECEPTION AND EVALUATION OF ECO-RESPONSIBLE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

🌍 Growing demand for sustainability: consumers expect eco-friendly products and transparent brand communication.

⚖️ The green gap paradox: persistent mismatch between pro-environmental attitudes and actual purchase behaviors.



🌀 Cognitive dissonance effects: psychological discomfort (stress, guilt, rationalization) caused by this inconsistency.



❓ Research gap identified: limited studies on how cognitive dissonance shapes reception of eco-responsible marketing messages.

METHODOLOGY

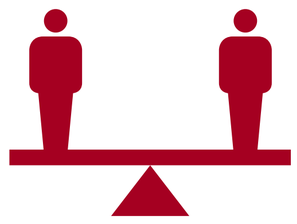
- Qualitative exploratory study
- 17 french consumers (23 to 52 years old)
- Semi-structured interviews
- Thematic analysis applied

OBJECTIVE

TO EXPLORE THE IMPACT OF COGNITIVE DISSONANCE ON RECEPTION AND EVALUATION OF ECO-RESPONSIBLE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

KEY RESULTS

Attitude polarization: reinforcement of pro-environmental attitudes and simultaneous development of negative perceptions towards eco-responsible marketing communications.



Psychological defense mechanisms: Manifestation of skepticism, distrust towards brands and cognitive disinterest in eco-responsible communications as strategies to reduce cognitive dissonance.



Catalytic effect on young consumers: Repeated exposure to eco-responsible messages intensifying cognitive dissonance, provoking psychological reactance and extreme behaviors (boycott) particularly among 20-35 year olds.



DISCUSSION & IMPLICATIONS

- Cognitive dissonance creates tensions when consumers encounter eco-responsible ads
- Paradox: communications reinforce pro-environmental beliefs while activating psychological defense mechanisms (skepticism, disinterest)
- Defense mechanisms can escalate to brand boycott, especially among young consumers
- Research enriches Festinger's theory (1957) by applying it to eco-responsible advertising context
- Study limitations: exploratory nature, limited sample size, qualitative methodology
- Future research opportunities: mixed methodological approach, quantitative validation, data triangulation

Eco-responsible communications can backfire : they reinforce green beliefs but may trigger rejection

