Conclusions

Mediator: Participants reported whether calorie information was the first thing they saw. However, this abundance of studies (over 400 studies to date) has found little evidence that calorie labeling is effective in changing people’s food choices. Accordingly, it appears premature to call calorie labeling a “failed” policy.

Left Calories

Accordingly, in the current research, we test whether placing calorie information to the left (vs. the right) of menu items lead to lower calorie food choices in the real world?

Results:

There was a significant effect of condition ($F(2, 146) = 3.60, p = .030$), such that participants in the left calories condition ($M = 654.53$) ordered significantly fewer calories than participants in the no calories condition ($M = 914.34; p = .012$) and right calories condition ($M = 865.41; p = .038$). There was no significant difference between the no calories and right calories conditions ($p > .250$).

Study 1: Field Study

Research Question: Does calorie information to the left (vs. the right) of menu items lead to lower calorie food choices in the real world?

Method:

- Diners ($N = 157$)
- Participants were randomly presented with a menu with either calorie information to the left of each menu item, calorie information to the right of each menu item, or no calorie information
- DV: Number of calories ordered

Results:

There was a significant effect of condition ($F(2, 146) = 3.60, p = .030$), such that participants in the left calories condition ($M = 654.53$) ordered significantly fewer calories than participants in the no calories condition ($M = 914.34; p = .012$) and right calories condition ($M = 865.41; p = .038$). There was no significant difference between the no calories and right calories conditions ($p > .250$).

Study 2: Hebrew Study

Research Question: Does the effect reverse for Hebrew speakers, who read from right-to-left?

Method:

- Participants ($N = 254$) were Hebrew-speaking Israelis
- Participants ordered from a menu (in Hebrew) with calorie information to the left, calorie information to the right, or no calorie information
- DV: Calories ordered

Results:

Participants in the right calories condition ordered significantly fewer calories ($M = 1308.66$) than participants in the no calories condition ($M = 1441.45; F(1, 251) = 4.80, p = .029$) and participants in the left calories condition ($M = 1428.24; F(1, 251) = 3.94, p = .048$).

Study 3: Process Study

Research Question: Does calorie information to the left (vs. right) lead to lower calorie food choices because it is processed earlier?

Method:

- MTurk Workers ($N = 458$)
- Participants were exposed to a menu with calorie information to the left, calorie information to the right, or no calorie information
- Mediator: Participants reported whether calorie information was the first thing they saw

Results:

Participants ordered significantly fewer calories when the calorie information was to the left ($M = 1182.15$) than when there was no calorie information ($M = 1373.74; p < .001$) and when calorie information was to the right ($M = 1302.23; p = .031$).

How early the calorie information was seen mediated the difference between the left and right calories conditions (CI (95%) = [39.92, 135.77])

References


