Abstract

The field of Behavioral Economics provides a set of strategies to change food environments to "make the healthy choice the easy choice." The aim of this study was to design, implement, and evaluate four innovative, low-cost nutrition interventions that incorporated insights from the field of Behavioral Economics in two rural North Carolina grocery stores and two corner stores. The four interventions included: a product placement intervention (which promoted health bars), a scarcity messaging intervention (which promoted produce), a floor arrow intervention (which also promoted produce), and a combination of all three aforementioned interventions.

Using analysis of variance, the authors analyzed sales data (from the corner stores only- analyses for the grocery stores are ongoing) to examine whether there was a change in the proportion of mean weekly sales of the featured items to total store sales during the intervention period.

This study found no significant differences in sales of the promoted items for the scarcity, product placement, or floor arrow intervention. However, sales of the promoted items during the COMBINED intervention increased by 16.97 units.

Methods Highlights

• Interventions ran from March-August 2017
• 4 weeks long, followed by 2 week washout period
• Customer intercept surveys collected during washout periods to assess if customers noticed intervention materials and if it influenced purchasing
• Fidelity checks conducted weekly during intervention weeks

Results

• No significant differences in sales of the promoted items for the scarcity, product placement, or floor arrow intervention in corner stores.

• Sales of the promoted items during the COMBINED intervention increased by 16.97 units in corner stores.

Challenges Faced

This study found that a product placement, scarcity messaging, and floor arrow intervention did not significantly increase sales of promoted items. However, when all of these three interventions are combined and implemented simultaneously, sales of promoted items significantly increased by 16.97 units. However, before stores consider implementing these strategies to promote healthier purchases among their customers, additional research is warranted. Future randomized controlled trials should.

Conclusions

References


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