

Executive Summary

Design of Cues on Supply Chain Encryption through Blockchain Technology and Animal Welfare Compliance on Meat Product Packaging

By *Andrea Gröppel-Klein* and *Kenya-Maria Kirsch*

Meat is increasingly being marketed based on credence characteristics, such as healthiness and production methods, which cannot be experienced before purchase and therefore need to be communicated. Consumer confidence in the integrity of the supply chain and the information printed on the packaging plays a critical role in the success of packaged products.

Our study sheds light on how consumers respond to innovative technology in the high-quality meat market, specifically focusing on blockchain technology. We examine which extrinsic quality cues on the packaging exert an influence on product perception of meat with high levels of animal welfare in terms of husbandry.

This study is among the first to examine how declaration of blockchain encryption of supply chains, specifically for meat products, should be framed to increase consumers' trust in the information, perception of organic quality, and purchase intention. The wording of the slogans plays a crucial role. While previous studies either only investigated whether a reference to blockchain technology (blockchain certified) vs. not had an influence on consumer reactions or provided an understandable explanation as an add-on, we systematically varied the wording in our study. Additionally, the study explores whether emotive vs. factual references to animal welfare are more relevant for consumers and whether these cues interact with different blockchain information. The study also investigates whether the term "blockchain" triggers aversion and considers consumers' knowledge of the technology.

The expert description of blockchain leads to higher levels of trust in the supply chain information, overall (ecological) quality perception, and in turn purchase intention than the commonly understood description used by previous authors. Emotive animal welfare cues were

found to be more effective than factual ones. This challenges on the one hand the “meat paradox” literature. The meat paradox means that consumers experience a psychological conflict between their preference for meat and their moral response to animal slaughter. So why is it more moral to eat the meat of a happy animal? On the other hand, the emotive cue appeals more strongly to the consumer: The animal lover is appealed to when the animal was happy in its live.