

Nudge and well-being: a gentle push to promote people's well-being in the

Italian context

POZZI, Francesco,^{1 2} CESAREO, Massimo,^{1 2} COMPIANI, Andrea,^{1 2} LOPES, Magdalena Edyta,^{1 2} STOYANOVA, Paolina,^{1 2} VACCARO, Marianna,^{1 2} VOLPE Mariateresa,^{1 2} MODERATO, Paolo^{1 2}

¹ IULM University, Milan

² IESUM, European Institute for the Study of Human Behaviour

Introduction

Nudging is an approach that incorporates and applies the principles of Behavioural Economics to gently push people towards choices that are as little distorted as possible by the effect of systematic biases. As stated by Cass Sunstein “Soft Paternalism” would refer to “*actions of government that attempt to improve people's welfare by influencing their choices without imposing material costs on those choices... We can understand soft paternalism, thus defined, as including nudges, and I will use the terms interchangeably*”. Starting from this definition, Nudge Italia worked for the last two years to implement interventions of nudging in the Italian context, within the “Nudge and well being” project. Here, the term well being has been purposefully chosen to highlight the versatility of nudging in promoting functional behaviours within a wide range of domains and problems, from social policies to health promotion and environmental impact. Three interventions carried out by the research team of Nudge Italia will be described. The interventions were respectively focused on social communication, healthy eating promotion and sustainability. Data and further directions will then be discussed during the workshop.

Experiment 1. Digital Detox

Introduction. The intervention took place in Milano (Italy) to reduce the usage of smartphones in two pubs located in different areas of the city, by increasing the response cost to use the smartphones in a social context. **Method and Materials.** A basket labeled with the image of a smartphone and a slogan that invited customers to place their devices in was placed in the centre of each table. Each pub was observed twice, using a momentary time sampling (MTS) recording method. During both the control and the experimental observations, the number of clients seated on each table and the number of those using their smartphone were noted on observational grids. In addition, during the experimental observation, data about the number of smartphones placed in the baskets were also noted. **Results.** Preliminary analysis showed a reduction in the usage of smartphones during the intervention.

Experiment 2. Healthy eating

Introduction. The intervention took place in Catania (Italy) to nudge clients of a gym's coffee shop to reduce their sugar intake while consuming hot beverages, by manipulating the default rule. We assumed that people frame their choice about the amount of sugar to pour in their drinks in units (packets) rather than considering the effective amount (grams) contained in the packets. **Method and Materials.** Participants were the self-selected costumers of the coffee shop. Data were collected for twelve days, between 3pm and 4pm, by observing the number of costumers who purchase hot beverages and noting on an observational grid the number of packets of sugar that they poured in their drinks.

Packets with 7,5g of sugar were used during the control phase, replaced with 4g packets during the experimental one. **Results.** The average intake of sugar per person was 5,83g during the baseline, reducing to 3,05g during the intervention.

Experiment 3. Food Waste reduction

Introduction. To tackle food waste in the restaurants, an intervention was carried out in a bistrot located in Monza (Italy) to increase the demand of so-called "doggy bags": baskets used to carry home uneaten food. Clients usually have to actively ask the waiters to pack their leftovers, while in the experiment the default rule was manipulated to automatically provide with a doggy bag clients who had uneaten food in their plates, unless they actively chose to opt-out. **Method and Materials.** Participants were the self-selected clientele of the bistrot. Data were collected for one month by counting the number of clients who had leftovers (at least one slice of pizza left), and the number of doggy bags requested by clients. During the first two weeks the demand of doggy bags was measured. During the second two weeks, a double-sided poker-chip was placed in front of each client, with the two sides colored in a different way, respectively green and red. The poker-chip was placed by default with the green side up so that the costumers, in order to receive the doggy bag, just had to leave it on that side, while to opt-out they had to turn it up on the red side.

To make the intervention easily understandable by costumers, a centerpiece with simple instructions was placed on each table. In addition, a printed paper with the instructions was placed inside of each menu. **Results.** The percentage of demanded doggy bags increased by 44% during the second two weeks (85%) compared with the first two (41%).