

Narrative Review Article

# Digital vs. Physical Nudges: How Amazon and Walmart Shape Consumer Decisions

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## ABSTRACT

This paper looks at how Amazon and Walmart use psychology to influence the way people shop. Using ideas from behavioral economics, it focuses on four main strategies: scarcity cues, loyalty programs, price framing, and anchoring. Amazon does this mostly through digital tools like Prime, countdown timers, and personalized pricing, while Walmart relies on in-store tactics such as product placement, sale signs, and its “Everyday Low Prices” slogan. Even though one company is online, and the other is physical, both use nudges that push customers to spend more without always realizing it. The paper also discusses how these strategies affect consumer decision-making, what they mean for shoppers, and why understanding them is important. Finally, it points out the limits of this research and suggests that future studies should explore how nudges can be both helpful and harmful. Throughout this paper, the term “digital nudges” refers to behavioral cues used in online retail settings such as Amazon, while “physical nudges” describe those present in in-store environments such as Walmart.

**Keywords:** digital nudges; physical nudges; scarcity; loyalty incentives; price framing; anchoring; consumer autonomy; behavioral economics

## INTRODUCTION

Retail spaces are constructed to shape consumer decision making. Decades of research in behavioral economics demonstrates how subtle nudges can significantly influence what, how much, and even whether people buy products or services. These strategies use psychological tendencies such as scarcity cues, loyalty incentives, and price framing and anchoring to

influence their consumer bases. While physical retailers like Walmart rely heavily on in-person cues, such as product placement, in-store promotions, and sensory experience, digital retailers such as Amazon have expanded the scope of nudging through personalization and algorithmic design. Online, every recommendation, timer, and loyalty incentive can be tailored to the individual consumer, making digital nudges persuasive and difficult for consumers to recognize.

With the rise of digital commerce, it has raised an important question: What behavioral nudges are more prevalent on Amazon’s online platform compared to Walmart’s in-store retail environment, and how might these nudges encourage consumers to overspend? As both these companies seek to maximize consumer spending, they act in fundamentally different environments that

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shape their use of behavioral strategies. By examining this question, the review contributes to a deeper understanding of how digital versus physical retail environments shape consumer psychology, with broader implications for marketing strategy and consumer insight.

## **FOUNDATIONS OF BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS**

Traditional economic theory has continuously shaped the understanding of purchasing decisions made by consumers. These theories, though, assume that consumers act rationally, weighing several factors before making purchasing decisions. However, the real world is filled with far more imperfections, as consumers are influenced by emotions, heuristics, and environmental cues that make their decisions less predictable than classical models may suggest. This is the basis for behavioral economics, which uses evidence from psychology and other disciplines to create a greater understanding of how these cognitive biases and environmental cues can shape our consumer world (1).

The behavioral aspects of the influencing factors in the world are known as nudges. These nudges, as described by authors Thaler and Sunstein, are small features in the environment that attract our attention and influence behavior. Unlike laws or mandates, nudges function as gentle prompts that steer individuals toward particular decisions (2). In the consumer context, nudges operate as cues that reframe how choices are presented, making some options feel more attractive than others. These nudges are crucial in the basis of behavioral economics, as they pose as mere deviations in our paths, that account for the imperfections of the economic models.

Before examining specific sale tactics, it is important to root the discussion in the biases that make nudges effective. As noted in Kahneman's *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (3), humans rely heavily on their "System 1", fast, automatic thinking, intuitively, and with little to no effort. This mode of thinking allows people to make quick decisions and judgements based on patterns and experiences; however, this system is prone to error. Thaler, in *Misbehaving*, emphasizes that consumers rarely behave like the perfectly rational "Econs" of economic models. Instead, they are "humans" influenced by context, framing, and biases. These biases, such as loss aversion, mental accounting, and anchoring, provide the psychological mechanisms through which nudges operate and shape consumer behavior (4).

This paper focuses on four prominent applications

in the retail world: scarcity cues, loyalty incentives, price framing and anchoring. By examining each through the lens of behavioral economics, there can be a more cohesive understanding on how companies such as Amazon and Walmart design their environments to influence consumer behavior, and in some cases, encourage overspending.

## **BEHAVIORAL FRAMEWORK: THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR**

One framework that helps explain consumer choices is Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (5), which says our actions come from our intentions, and those intentions are shaped by our attitudes, social influences, and sense of control. In online shopping, companies like Amazon use these same ideas to affect how we buy. Positive attitudes are built through "limited-time offers" or "best-seller" tags that make deals look exciting. Social pressure comes from ratings, reviews, and messages like "people also bought," which make products seem popular. Perceived control of how easy it feels to make a choice, is increased through tools like "Buy Now" or one-click checkout that make shopping seem effortless.

These small design choices make people feel like they're in control, even when they're being guided to act quickly. The Theory of Planned Behavior helps show how online platforms turn our sense of control and positive attitudes into automatic, impulsive buying.

## **SCARCITY CUES AND CUSTOMER URGENCY**

Scarcity cues use the idea that people value things more when they seem rare or temporary. Retailers often use messages like "Only 3 left" or "Limited time offer" to trigger loss aversion, the fear of missing out on a deal (6). These tactics push consumers to act quickly rather than rationally. While scarcity marketing can boost sales, it also reduces consumer autonomy by creating emotional pressure to decide before evaluating options.

In both digital and physical spaces, scarcity appeals are designed to shorten decision-making time and increase urgency. On Amazon, countdown timers or stock alerts make customers feel they must buy immediately, while stores like Walmart use "Clearance" or "While supplies last" signs to spark the same reaction. The ethical concern arises when these signals exaggerate scarcity to manipulate emotions rather than provide real information. This blurring between urgency and truth challenges the idea of informed consumer choice.

## LOYALTY INCENTIVES AND CUSTOMER DEPENDENCE

Loyalty programs such as Amazon Prime or Walmart+ encourage repeat purchasing by offering rewards like free shipping or discounts. These systems operate on positive reinforcement, each purchase feels rewarding, which builds a habit. Over time, this conditioning can make consumers shop automatically to maintain benefits rather than because they genuinely need something.

Although these programs make shopping more convenient, they can also reduce consumer independence. Paying for a membership creates a sunk cost that pressures people to keep buying to “get their money’s worth.” Emotionally, the programs build trust and attachment, which can disguise overspending as loyalty. Ethically, this raises questions about whether companies are rewarding loyalty or exploiting it by creating dependence under the illusion of control.

## PRICE FRAMING EFFECT

Price framing refers to the way a price is presented rather than the actual numerical value. Rooted in prospect theory, consumers evaluate outcomes relative to reference points and tend to perceive losses more strongly than equivalent gains (6). This explains why the same price can feel like a bargain or a burden depending on how it is framed (1). For instance, a \$10 discount on a \$50 product is more appealing when advertised as “20% off” rather than “Save \$10,” even though the savings are identical. Partitioned pricing, such as presenting a subscription as “\$1 a day” rather than “\$365 annually,” further increases acceptance because the lower, frequent figure feels less psychologically burdensome (7).

Physical retailers such as Walmart rely on highly visible in-store framing cues. “Rollback” promotions, for example, work by pairing bold red signage with comparative reference prices (“Was \$29.99, Now \$19.99”) to anchor consumer expectations (8, 6). Shelf placement reinforces these signals: Walmart often places discounted products at eye level or on aisle-end displays, which research shows enhances the perception of savings (9). In addition, Walmart’s price-match guarantee functions as a framing tool by signaling to consumers that they are always receiving the “best deal,” even when competitors’ prices are not actually checked. These tactics use both visual salience and social proof (“everyone shops here for savings”) to magnify the value frame.

Digital retailers such as Amazon extend these

strategies through personalization and algorithmic testing. Amazon frequently lists a “List Price” alongside the discounted price, even when the list price may not reflect the prevailing market average (10). This artificially elevates the consumer’s anchor point, making the discount seem more attractive. Features such as “Lightning Deals” with countdown timers, or banners displaying “You saved \$27.35 (45%),” further intensify the framing effect (6). Subscription services like “Subscribe & Save” add another dimension by framing recurring purchases as avoided future losses, leveraging consumers’ loss aversion.

While both Walmart and Amazon rely on price framing to influence perceptions of value, Amazon’s algorithmic ability to personalize and iterate nudges at scale makes its digital frames both subtler and harder for consumers to resist. Ultimately, price framing demonstrates how small changes in presentation can produce significant shifts in consumer decision-making.

Beyond broad strategies, specific applications of price framing illustrate its persuasive power. At Walmart, “Everyday Low Price” (EDLP) signage has been shown to create a perception of long-term savings even when individual items are not meaningfully discounted (11). Pairing EDLP with *rollback pricing* frames creates a dual reference point, the assurance of ongoing affordability plus the psychological impact of a temporary price cut. Research indicates that such strategies increase basket size because consumers believe they are maximizing value during the shopping trip (1). By contrast, Amazon uses dynamic pricing to frame discounts in real time. A consumer might view a \$120 vacuum cleaner marked down from a “List Price” of \$199, but another customer may see the same item discounted from \$179, depending on browsing history or algorithmic segmentation (12). This flexible anchoring makes the discount appear personalized, heightening its persuasiveness. Moreover, Amazon’s “Buy Now with 1-Click” button often pairs framed discounts with instant purchasing ease, reducing the time consumers have to critically evaluate the offer (13). Both cases show how price framing, whether static in physical stores or dynamic online, taps into cognitive biases that subtly but decisively shape consumer spending.

## DIGITAL VS. PHYSICAL NUDGE ENVIRONMENTS

As shopping has expanded across both online and physical spaces, companies have adopted behavioral

nudges to fit each environment. Digital retailers such as Amazon rely on personalized algorithms and interface design to guide choice, features like countdown timers, recommended products, and “Buy Now” buttons act as digital nudges that shorten decision-making and create urgency. These cues are subtle but constant, shaping perception through convenience and speed.

Physical retailers like Walmart use environmental nudges instead of algorithmic ones. Store layouts, shelf placement, and sensory details such as lighting or music influence how long shoppers browse and what they notice first. Signs like “Rollback” or “While supplies last” create the same sense of urgency that digital scarcity messages do online.

Despite the differences in medium, both forms of nudging rely on the same psychological principles of loss aversion, habit formation, and attention bias, to make consumers act quickly and feel confident in their decisions. Together, these environments show how behavioral design can limit reflection and push shoppers toward impulsive purchases, whether through a screen or on a shelf.

## **AMAZONS DIGITAL CHOICE ARCHITECTURE**

Amazon has become the dominant digital retail platform because of its vast product range and efficacy in delivery. However, it has been able to reach great heights due to the nudges used to shape consumer decision making. These nudges work on the cognitive biases, and increase consumer spending.

Algorithms act as the primary way for Amazon to gain customer attention. By using this algorithm to its advantage, Amazon is able to gain a sense of market power, making it seem organic, but in reality influencing their consumers. Their market algorithmic attention allows for dominance to occur, as they exert market power and extract these decisions from consumers.

An example of this can especially be seen in the way Amazon’s marketplace design relies on advertising. When searching on Amazon, the first results tend to be ads, rather than the most relevant or best-reviewed products. This system favors sellers who pay for ads, and not necessarily those who compete by quality or price. By nudging consumers towards products by altering the choice architecture in search results, Amazon tricks consumers into believing they are seeing the best or more relevant items, but in reality, this is carefully crafted by the company.

An example of one of these cues would be the scarcity cue. As previously discussed, this cue operates by activating loss aversion, a principle from Kahneman and Tversky’s Prospect theory (6), which suggests that losses are felt more strongly than equivalent gains. Consumers, fearing the loss of an opportunity, are motivated to purchase more quickly than they otherwise might. Research has shown that scarcity promotions have increased purchase intent because they reframe the interaction as a potential loss (15, 16).

One of the most prominent nudges in Amazon is its loyalty system, best known as Amazon Prime. By charging an annual subscription fee, Amazon draws in these consumers by offering them a variety of benefits including: two-day free shipping, exclusive deals, and services like Prime Video and Prime Music. These additions and exclusive deals serve as continuous reinforcement for repeat purchasing, vividly displaying Skinner’s theory of operant conditioning (17), as each purchase is rewarded with convenience and additional perks, returning and building loyalty with Amazon Prime.

Researchers found that Prime membership actually fostered impulsive buying, even among consumers who believed they were exercising self-control. The program builds trust and emotional attachment to the brand, creating a false sense of control, which can trick even those who believe they are making their own decisions (18). This attachment can eventually lead to a reliance on this network, shifting it from a consumer-retailer relationship to purely based on transactions. This can further be seen in Amazon’s technological innovations. The dash button, although discontinued and turned virtual, eliminated the evaluation stage of the consumer journey. This divide ultimately allowed visitors to order products with the single press of a button. By skipping over the stage of evaluation, where a consumer decides if this is the time to make a purchase, this button creates a way for consumers to continue impulsive shopping.

Now, in features like the “Subscribe and Save”, companies ensure that consumers repeat purchases and reframe loyalty. These mechanisms highlight how Amazon turns loyalty into a trap, convincing consumers that they are in control, when it really is nudging them in certain ways.

Another key nudge used by Amazon is price framing, the way in which Amazon presents its prices to create a perception of savings. Most product pages display a higher “List Price” which is crossed out, and followed by a lower price, with the percent saved present at the

top. Congiu and Moscati (19) show how this can fit into the idea of the message and environment aspects of choice architecture, as the visual presentation and the comparative message alter consumer perception together.

Behavioral economics shows that as consumers evaluate outcomes relative to reference points, and as they set artificially high anchors, Amazon ensures that the current price feels like a gain. This idea can further be seen in Thaler's mental accounting idea, which notes that consumers treat discounts differently, reducing the psychological cost of spending (10). Researchers extend this idea to Amazon's innovations, showing that framing recurring expenses like subscriptions as savings increases impulsive purchases.

This nudge is especially powerful when combined with urgency or loyalty perks. For example, a Prime exclusive deal framed as 50% off for members only today, uses all three nudges into one angle message, pushing the consumer to the edge of getting the product as soon as they can. By using the Buy Now and Add to Cart buttons, Amazon is able to capture purchases, anchoring consumer attention to whichever seller Amazon's algorithm selects (15). Studies have shown that Amazon and its related sellers using this idea steer consumers away from potentially better alternatives and instead point it to products that are paid for in the given spot, as opposed to ones that might be a better price or quality. These design choices display the environmental nudges that benefit certain sellers, while also increasing the likelihood that consumers spend on a top ranked, promoted, or Amazon affiliated product.

This idea connects back to the theory of planned behavior which consists of awareness, consideration, evaluation, and action of purchasing. The purpose behind this process is that each customer first learns about the product, compares their options, weighs the benefits, and then buys it. However, due to the world's digitized marketplace and shopping world, these steps tend to be overlooked, and this can specifically be seen in the Amazon Dash button. This dash button allows people to instantly reorder a specific product, and eliminates the selection and evaluation stages. Now, the consumer does not have to compare brands or browse around, making the decision clear and faster. Once a customer uses this button, they are essentially locked into that product and Amazon, creating a sense of loyalty. Studies found that the button increases attachment to the Amazon platform and creates a more convenient, time saving shopping experience (15). This connection increases impulsive buying behavior and reduces thoughtful decision

making, particularly among consumers with a lower sense of control. With ongoing technological innovation, companies continue to remove choice options and instead promote brand loyalty and habitual purchasing. Consumers may continue to feel that they are acting rationally and freely, but in reality, these systems limit choice and reinforce existing habits.

## **WALMARTS PHYSICAL CHOICE ARCHITECTURE**

As the world's largest brick and mortar retailer, Walmart relies more on in store design to guide consumer choices. Walmart uses nudges through store layout, signage, and consistent pricing strategies. While the same nudges are on display in these in person stores, they appear in different forms.

Scarcity cues have the same intention in Walmart as they do in Amazon, however they are portrayed in a different way: through signage and promotions. For example, displays marked with "While supplies last" or clearance racks that emphasize limited availability serve as loss aversion triggers, pushing consumers to try and make the purchase before they lose another deal. In grocery aisles, scarcity is sometimes implied through end-cap promotions that feature seasonal items in limited runs, nudging consumers to act before they are gone. As seen in Foster et al. (20) study on milk placement and Carroll et al.'s (21) work on bundling fruits and vegetables, the placement and labeling of targeted items do increase their sales. This can also be seen in a study by Crowley and Henderson (22), which shows that scents influence consumer evaluations and time spent in stores. This is seen as Walmart uses lighting, music, and product placements to create an atmosphere that anchored consumer attention and behavior. By framing these products as scarce or temporary, Walmart creates a sense of urgency that encourages people to shop faster or make impulsive purchases.

Unlike the more visible nature of Amazon Prime's subscription model, Walmart relies on a more subtle loyalty mechanism that is embedded in everyday shopping. The Walmart+ membership, which was launched in 2020, offers free delivery and fuel discounts, functioning as a hybrid model of a transitional loyalty system, with online and in-person perks. It still operates as a sunk cost nudge, as once consumers pay for membership they feel compelled to shop at Walmart more to justify their expenses.

However, even before Walmart+ was introduced,

loyalty was cultivated through its Everyday Low Prices slogan, that continues to instill loyalty, as shoppers believe in the idea that Walmart consistently offers lower prices, they reduce their comparison shopping, and it instead fosters default reliance. This loyalty comes through habit formation, as consumers make their routine trips to Walmart for groceries and household essentials, creating conditioned behavior over time.

With this slogan, Walmart anchors its value in the brand promise. The framing device here, is present in its message that Walmart will always provide the cheapest option. Glanz, Bader, and Iyer (11) note that in-person store promotions and signage can significantly influence choices by reframing ordinary purchases as cost savings. By making an effort to consistently highlight the “Always Low Prices” idea, Walmart creates an environment where every purchase feels rational, and savings driven. This strategy connects back to Kahneman’s System 1 thinking (3), as it shows that rather than comparing across competitors, consumers default to Walmart as their first choice. “Everyday low prices” serves as an anchor for consumer expectations, even when Walmart may not always offer the lowest price, the branding convinces shoppers that they are saving money making them more likely to consolidate their purchases in one trip (6).

Walmart’s behavioral nudges highlight how cognitive biases are shown in physical spaces. Scarcity is conveyed through clearance signs and seasonal stock, whereas loyalty is built through brand promise and Walmart+. Price framing and anchoring is embedded in the “Every Day Low Prices” policy that redefines value perception, and the environmental design of the store. While Walmart’s methods are less personal and precise compared to Amazon’s digital choice architecture, they are still powerful. By shaping the shopping environment through consistent cues, Walmart fosters loyalty, reduces consumer deliberation, and encourages larger purchasing behavior. Ultimately, the company demonstrates how nudges adapt across contexts, and how these tools can differ across digital and in person marketplaces.

## **PHYSICAL VS DIGITAL NUDGES: KEY DIFFERENCES**

While Walmart and Amazon operate in fundamentally different retail environments, across platforms and locations, they both employ nudges that display the same underlying cognitive biases. By comparing these nudges, clear differences emerge in how each company designs its

choice architecture, and can help consumers understand how they are subtly being influenced.

While Amazon displays scarcity through real-time alerts, Walmart communicates scarcity physically through cleared racks and end-cap displays. While the medium may differ, the idea behind both these incentives is the same, where it frames the consumer’s choice to not buy something as a loss, and drives the urgency to purchase a product without spending time thinking about it or making the decision if it is a clear deal. On the other hand, loyalty to these two platforms takes a different shape. Amazon Prime exemplifies how loyalty driven nudges can lead to emotional attachment and habit formation which only exemplifies the consumers purchasing behavior. Walmart, though, relies on two layers of loyalty. First, its long-standing EDLP habitat has helped build loyalty by reinforcing the belief that Walmart is always the cheapest option. They also recently employed Walmart+ which is more subtle, but allows perks for its members, and continues to draw them into the Walmart world, promoting reliance on the retailer and ultimately, overspending.

Amazon’s price framing is especially seen in the striking out of prices highlighting the savings in clear percentages for consumers to see. These tactics make purchases feel like games even when it adds to overall spending for the consumer. Walmart frames price a bit differently through using their everyday low prices strategy which positions every price as cost-effective even when it may not be. While Amazon nudges consumers by using price comparisons in real time Walmart does so by embedding the value into their brand identity and eventually into their loyal customers in both cases consumers perceive themselves as saving even more despite spending more.

Lastly while Amazon anchors behavior through algorithms such as the add to cart and buy now, Walmart does so through the use of scarcity incentives. These features guide attention to promoted products and condition consumers to trust that the algorithm prominence knows the quality and quantity of the product they are willing to buy, further increasing their loyalty and consumerism. Walmart by contrast achieves anchoring through environmental design as they use shelf placement, eye level product positioning and end cap displays to gather and gain consumer attraction and loyalty, using sensory elements such as lighting, music, and scent to anchor consumers to specific areas of the store (9, 22). While Amazon’s anchoring is algorithmic and not visible Walmart is physical and tangible. Both,

however, exploit consumers’ tendency to rely on the first or most prominent option presented.

Together this comparison reveals that Amazon and Walmart apply the same behavioral principles through different modes (Table 1). Amazon nudges operate within the online choice architecture such as digital alerts, badges, and price displays that communicate scarcity, as well as Amazon Prime’s loyalty benefits and savings which promote loyalty and dependence on the Amazon brand. Walmart’s nudges, in contrast, are rooted in the environmental choice architecture of the store’s layout shelf positioning and signage the structures show shoppers how to navigate the physical space. Despite these differences it is clear that both of these retailers exploit cognitive biases to deliberately influence consumers to make a choice or purchasing decision based off what they want to accomplish promoting overspending urgency and non-rational thinking.

**CONCLUSION**

The analysis of Amazon and Walmart demonstrates how both digital and physical retailers can embed behavioral nudges into their environments to influence consumer purchasing behavior. While the methods that these companies may use differ, the psychological principles behind them have the same intended purpose and use within these retailers whose goal is to capitalize on the consumers. The use of scarcity cues loyalty incentives, price framing and anchoring all capitalize on cognitive biases that reduce consumers’ rational thinking

and increase their likelihood of overspending.

For everyday consumers these findings highlight a difference between the easiest option and the more well thought out option. Nudges have the tendency to diminish the understanding of a consumer in their purchasing choices and eventually leave them to make a choice based on impulse, which may not be the most beneficial. Scarcity cues activate loss aversion pushing consumers to buy items they may not need; loyalty programs exploit sunk costs leaving individuals to justify unnecessary purchases; price framing creates illusions of savings; and anchoring biases attention towards promoted products rather than best value products causing the consumer to not make the most informed decision. This effect in a shopping environment, whether online or offline, continues to make consumers feel that their choice is free but in reality it is suddenly guided by the cues designed to maximize retailer profit.

From a retailer perspective both Amazon and Walmart reveal how behavioral economics can be optimized at a large scale. For Amazon, digital nudges offer the advantage of personalization and the ability to be more dynamic. This allows their customers to build not only short-term sales but long-term relationships. Walmart, on the other hand, demonstrates how nudges can be standard across millions of stores relying on the layout, environmental factors and the brand promise which carries throughout their consumer base. In both cases, the result is a reduction of consumer search and evaluation ensuring that their consumers return frequently and spend more with each trip.

**Table 1.** Comparative Summary of Digital vs. Physical Nudges

Nudge Type	Amazon Example (Digital/Online)	Walmart Example (Physical/In-store)	Psychological Mechanism	Behavioral Outcome
<b>Scarcity Cue</b>	Countdown timers, “Only 3 left,” “Limited-time offer” banners	Clearance racks, “While supplies last,” seasonal end-cap displays	Loss aversion, fear of missing out increases urgency	Consumers purchase quickly and skip evaluation
<b>Loyalty Incentive</b>	Amazon Prime: free shipping, exclusive deals, subscription perks	Walmart+: delivery and fuel discounts; long-term EDLP branding	Operant conditioning and sunk-cost effect	Repeat purchases, emotional attachment, overspending
<b>Price Framing</b>	“List Price \$199 → Now \$120 (40% off)” with “You saved \$27.35”	“Was \$29.99 Now \$19.99,” “Rollback,” “Everyday Low Price” signage	Anchoring and framing bias	Perceived savings increase, even without real discount
<b>Anchoring &amp; Placement</b>	“Buy Now” or algorithmic product ranking at top of search	Eye-level shelf placement, lighting, and scent cues	Attention bias and default effect	Shoppers choose first-seen or most-salient option

While these nudges can be framed as tools of choice, they can come across as manipulative when designed to block away the true benefits that a consumer could have. By using Amazon's algorithmic processes, the company blocks off real products that could be better in quality or price and instead suggests Amazon products or specialized ones to consumers, which may not be as beneficial as they appear. In addition, with the use of Amazon Prime's loyalty system, consumers are tricked into believing that they are in control of the choices they are making, but in reality, if these tools are operated on an extreme level, they could hurt consumer decision making. Similarly, Walmart's framing of Everyday Low Prices can mask the fact that not all products are cheaper, relying instead on consumer trust in branding, these choices can actually undermine informed choice (23).

### Limitations

This study has limitations. First, although Amazon has been widely examined in research on digital nudges and behavioral design, evidence on Walmart's use of comparable nudges in physical retail is more limited. Consequently, the Walmart analysis relies more heavily on general retail and consumer behavior literature. Future work could address these gaps by conducting systematic content analyses, expanding datasets to include direct in-store observation at Walmart, and comparing results across a broader set of retailers.

### Future Research

This suggests that future research should focus on documenting the effectiveness of nudges and distinguishing between if these nudges are beneficial or harmful to the consumers (24). For example, their beneficial nudges could include stores promoting healthier food choices through labels or shelf placement and exploitative ones would include manipulating prices and perceptions to encourage overspending in the consumer world. By being transparent and clear with the promotions as well as consumers being educated about the biases prominent in the world, these harmful effects could be avoided without eliminating the possibility of beneficial nudges.

Ultimately this research describes that the differences between Amazon's digital platform and Walmart's physical stores are less prominent than their similarities: both systematically exploit consumer psychology to encourage overspending. Understanding these nudges is essential to not only consumers who wish to make more informed decisions but also retailers and industry leaders

tasked with creating a fairer and more transparent marketplace.

### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflicts of interest related to this work.

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