
Role of Environmental Consciousness in Influencing Consumer Purchase Decisions towards Green Packaging: An Empirical and Theoretical Exploration

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ABSTRACT

The environmental awareness has also become the most important factor influencing the present consumer behavior, in particular as regards the sustainability issues of consumption and desire of sustainable packaging. Due to the growing fears about climate change, plastic waste, and scarcity of resources, buyers are increasingly questioning their actions by matching their purchasing models to environmentally friendly standards. As suggested in the article, the role of environmental consciousness as a price to be paid in making consumer purchases of green packaging is ascertained, with particular

reference being paid to the psychological variables which can dominate this field, i.e. the three key dimensions, cognitive awareness, psychological concern and behavioral intention. It focuses on the way in which educated customers are gaining a taste about sustainable options can be also emotionally motivated by moral considerations and show the readiness to contribute to premium price to buy the products packed sustainably. Also, the perceived product value, peer influence, and the role that social norms have in strengthening green choices are explored in the study. Nevertheless, green-washing, increased prices, unavailability, and a lack of information remains a barrier to uptake. New tendencies, such as smart packaging, compostable technologies and consumer activism, indicate that the corporate behavior is going to change dynamically. The results enforce the increased importance of the environment as a driver and a market, defining the future of eco-friendly packaging and responsible consumption.

KEYWORDS

Environmental consciousness, green packaging, consumer behavior, sustainable consumption, cognitive awareness, ethical buying, behavioral intention, smart packaging, compostable materials and consumer activism.

INTRODUCTION

Global awareness with regards to sustainable living has increased following environmental degradation, climate change and depletion of resources. There are numerous aspects of consumer behavior whose attention is immediately drawn to this awareness, which one of them is a packaging. Packaging which is considered a waste also contributes to environmental pollution more so the use of plastics. Consequently, a green packaging, which is biodegradable, recyclable, compostable or packaging that uses renewable resources, has become positive. Yet what is the real motivation that sparks consumer interest in green packaging? The main driver is environmental consciousness, which is a psychological and ethical issue that is continuing to influence consumer preferences, attitudes and behavior towards green packaging. In this double-blind article, the important role that environmental consciousness plays in shaping the preferences, attitudes and behavior of consumers towards green packaging is discussed.

DIMENSIONS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Environmental consciousness refers to an individual's awareness of environmental problems and the willingness to act in an environmentally responsible way. It encompasses several dimensions:

Cognitive Awareness: Cognitive awareness points to the mental knowledge of environmental problems and its effects by a consumer. This awareness, in the case of green packaging, involves learning of how standard package materials, including disposable plastics, have led to environmental pollution, clogging of the landfill, and garbage in the ocean. Two ways of giving consumers information by education, media, or labeling their products can make them in a better position to distinguish the environmental consequences of what they purchase. This knowledge enables them to distinguish sustainable packaging and non-sustainable one. An example would be when a consumer with knowledge that the plastic bottle has a carbon footprint, would choose to use a biodegradable or potential recyclable one. Cognitive

awareness also entails identification of industry practices, like greenwashing, that has the potential to sway consumer trust. Consequently, the information about packaging has to be expressed in an open manner by companies. The greater is the knowledge of a consumer, the higher will be his or her chances to consider sustainability as one of the criteria in making a decision, thus, cognitive awareness is an initial measure to take in terms of sustainable consumption.

Affective Concern: An emotional variable of environmental consciousness is an affective concern which is a feeling of guilt, proudest, fear, or empathy concerning environmental problems. Emotions are linked to environmental degradation because it will emotionally move consumers when they come across anything that concerns the environment like marine animals harmed by the plastic waste. Such emotions will condition their purchase behavior. An example is that guilt in contributing to pollution can make one consumer use less or biodegradable packaging of products. On the other hand, satisfaction that results out of making sustainable decisions can strengthen repeat purchase and brand loyalty. A consumer can also be motivated by affective concern based on identity or values such as nature lovers, parents, or good citizens may have a moral sense of duty in making their decision to go with eco-friendly packaging. Emotional undoubtedly can be more powerfully motivated than rational thinking that is especially in a combination with personal or social responsibility. Emotional resonance Affective pathway If consumers perceive an emotional appeal, then the brand can greatly influence decisions through the affective pathway in the messaging of sustainability.

Behavioral Intention: Behavioral intention is considered a consumer willingness or preparedness to take action on his or her environmental values depending on making particular purchase decisions. When it comes to green packaging, it implies a possibility of a consumer settling on a product which has environmentally friendly sustainable and recyclable materials or is bio degradable. Both the cognitive awareness and affective concern influence behavioral intention because knowledge and emotions are combined to create a specific mind frame of decision making. As an illustration, a consumer who is aware of the cost to the environment of plastic and is worried about the climate change will be more willing to purposely reward the brands willing to provide greener options. Behavioral intention also includes the consideration of the consumer in respect to the evaluations of practicality, which includes price, availability and convenience. In spite of their good awareness and concern, the absence of available options of green packaging may help impede action. Thus, knowledge that relates intention to behavior will need infrastructure support and a strong brand communication. Behavioral intention evolves to actual purchase behaviour when tended well and this leads to market demand of sustainable packaging.

What is Green Packaging?

1. Green packaging, also called sustainable or eco-friendly packaging, includes materials and design practices that have minimal environmental impact. Examples include: The benefits of green packaging extend beyond waste reduction. It can lower energy consumption during production, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and promote circular economy practices.
2. Recyclable Article and Cardboard: These are among the most common and widely accepted forms of green packaging. Made from renewable resources, they can be easily reprocessed into new materials. Article and cardboard are biodegradable, lightweight, and versatile, making them ideal for boxes, wraps, and inserts. When sourced from sustainably managed forests (e.g., FSC-certified), they further reduce environmental impact.

3. **Biodegradable Plastics:** Biodegradable plastics like polylactic acid (PLA) are derived from renewable sources such as corn starch or sugarcane. Unlike traditional petroleum-based plastics, they break down into natural elements under specific composting conditions. PLA-based materials are used in packaging for food, cosmetics, and consumer goods, offering a plastic-like experience with reduced ecological harm.
4. **Refillable or Reusable Containers:** These packaging solutions are designed for long-term use and multiple cycles, significantly reducing waste generation. Refillable glass jars, metal tins, and durable plastic containers encourage consumers to return or reuse packaging. Brands often incentivize this behavior through discount programs or deposit-return systems, enhancing both sustainability and customer loyalty.
5. **Packaging Made from Agricultural Waste :** This innovative packaging repurposes waste from agriculture – such as bagasse (sugarcane pulp), hemp fibers, or rice husks – into biodegradable containers, trays, and wraps. These materials decompose naturally and help reduce dependence on virgin resources. They are particularly effective in food packaging due to their thermal stability and compost ability.
6. **Minimalist Designs to Reduce Material Usage:** Minimalist packaging focuses on functionality and efficiency, using the least amount of material necessary. It eliminates excessive layers, dyes, coatings, or decorations. This not only reduces resource consumption but also makes recycling easier. Clean, simple designs appeal to eco-conscious consumers and align with sustainable branding.

HOW ENVIRONMENTAL CONSCIOUSNESS SHAPES PURCHASE DECISIONS

1. Awareness Translates into Preference

Once the consumers know about the environmental impacts of packaging waste, they start taking sustainability into account. It causes them to be more aggressive in the search of products that have an environmentally friendly package like biodegradable wrapping, cartons that can be recycled or containers that can be reused. The more consumers start to read facts related to the plastic pollution, carbon footprints, and overflow of landfills, the more they start linking an adverse impact to conventional packaging. Such knowledge brings in a change in the taste of preference, where green packaging becomes a determining factor when selecting products. Such an audience will be familiar with sustainable packaging and more likely to pay attention to brands that are transparent when it comes to the practices they employ. The additional choice guidance is accomplished by environmental labels and certification (e.g. FSC, compostable logo). In such a way, the effect of environmental responsibility on the consumers is the cognitive consciousness turning into a high preference degree towards the products representing the environmental responsibility theme. This choice ends up being established and habitual in the long run, which leads to repetitive purchases and can contribute to brand loyalty based on shared values on sustainability.

2. Emotional Resonance and Ethical Buying

The ecological awareness is largely shaped by the feelings of guilt, pride, empathy, or fear. The consumers who are emotionally touched by photos of lost oceans, dying wildlife or overfilled landfills might tend to alter their consumption patterns in correspondence with their moral anxieties. Green packaging can constitute as a very noticeable carrier of moral values and care towards the environment. This emotional appeal would direct the consumer to feel good about what they do, and therefore, they would have positive behavior. Ethical purchasing is not always a logical matter but is rather emotional

(i.e. it is a case of wanting to do the right thing). Whenever people make a choice to purchase products with sustainable packaging, they are left feeling glad or proud of having done something little but significant. Those brands that generate such emotional attachment via a narrative and sustainability messages can foster stronger connections with its audience. Emotion, in the end, is a very effective agent of turning natural lamentation into ethical behavior of purchasing.

3. Perceived Value and Quality Association

Buyers tend to give a green packaging a high-quality product and brand credibility. The intensity to use sustainable material through recycled article or bio-degradable films or containers is an indicator of innovativeness, consideration as well as environmental friendliness. This increases the perceived value of the product more than its functional values. Such packaging is regarded as a premium aspect because it shows that a brand takes care of health, safety, and its impact on the environment. To illustrate, organic skin care in compostable tubes can be treated as reliable as opposed to less trustworthy copious products in plastic. Consumers can also treat green packaging as a symbol of ethical nature of the company as a whole, its treatment of the workers and the community. This is the feeling of greater value which is particularly crucial in saturated markets where packaging is a distinguisher. Thus, green packaging is not only a functional enhancement, but also an indicator of quality that attracts consumers sensitive to the environment, as the latter will purchase the product that agrees with their values.

4. Willingness to Pay More

Green awareness makes consumers even more ready to accept a higher price on their products that have been packaged in an eco-friendly manner. Overall, to most people paying a higher price is the price worth paying in investing the future of the planet. It is this desire which is motivated by personal values like environmental stewardship, social responsibility and long run thinking. Consumers are aware that sustainable materials produced with the application of eco-friendly packaging, including compostable or recycled packaging or even bio items, will have a higher production cost value; the advantage is creating favorable environmental impact in the long run. Nevertheless, this readiness to pay an extra price is not universal and may depend on the individual characteristics (income, perceived quality, and trust to the brand). Green washing can destroy this trust and cannot convince the consumers to defend the price increase. Nevertheless, moral-consciousness may mean more to sincerely green shoppers than the price of the product. Those brands who clearly explain the worth of their green packaging and inform the consumer about green packaging effect will be able to increase the prices and find an enclave of dogmatically loyal followers among this group.

5. Peer Influence and Social Norms

Social forces contribute a great deal in consumer behaviour in relation to green packaging. Consumers are bound to show greater tendency towards becoming more sustainable to fit in their social constructs as environmental awareness proves an accepted part of their culture. The significance of environment-friendly options can be enhanced by the peer conduct and social media trends. Seeing friends or respected figures use products with recyclable or compostable packaging, people may get encouraged, or pressured to become such persons as well. Because it is an environmental sign, green packaging is a social signal as well. The effect is especially profound in younger consumers who have the concern of being socially accepted and having a public identity. Green packaging is no longer only a personal preference but a matter of public values as sustainable consumption is entering mainstream. Companies

which utilize this social initiative - be it in the form of campaigning, testimonials, or community-based operations - have a means of exploiting peer pressure in order to encourage sustainable decisions and raise brand uptake.

Despite rising awareness, certain **barriers** can limit the impact of environmental consciousness on actual behavior:

1. Green washing Skepticism

Green washing refers to misleading or exaggerated claims about a product's environmental benefits. As sustainability becomes a marketing trend, some brands label their packaging as "eco-friendly" without providing clear evidence or certifications. This creates consumer skepticism and reduces trust in green claims, even when they are legitimate. Environmentally conscious buyers, especially those with high awareness, may question vague terms like "natural" or "earth-safe" unless supported by credible third-party labels (e.g., FSC, BPI, or Cradle to Cradle). The fear of being misled makes some consumers hesitant to engage with green packaging, as they are unsure whether their choices are truly impactful. This skepticism can lead to decision fatigue or disengagement, where consumers revert to conventional products due to lack of transparency. To overcome this, companies must practice **honest, verifiable, and consistent communication** about their sustainability initiatives and packaging materials, thus restoring consumer confidence and loyalty.

2. Cost Concerns

Cost: According to experts, high price of green packaging, to both manufacturers and consumers is one of the biggest deterrents to the use of green packaging. Sustainable packaging materials, such as bio plastics, compostable films or cardboard made of recycled material are generally costly to make compared with conventional plastic or foam packaging. These expenses are, often, passed to the consumers as an increase in the prices of products. Environmentally responsible cash-strapped consumers will face the ethical urge to purchase green products and services against their financial needs. This price sensitivity is very strong especially in the developing markets or when the economy is uncertain. Consumers who accept sustainability as a concept might also prefer cheaper products even when the green product is much costly. The brands may find solutions to this by engaging in economies of scale, material sourcing innovation, or subsidizing sustainable choices. The cost premium can also be justified by sharing the long-term value e.g. product durability or reduction of environmental impact with many consumers.

3. Limited Availability

Even in a situation where the consumers have the incentive to select the green packaging, they may not be in a position to do this because of the limited availability in the market. Sustainable packaging is not the rule in most retail environments particularly beyond the urban areas. The conventional plastic-wrapped merchandise is the easiest to stock up by the local shops since they can be economically effective, have limited supply chain, or depending on the customer base, they do not have a demand. It can be presented in the estimates of more green options on the e-commerce platforms, yet combining the expenses on their delivery and preventing their predictable delivery should be factors activating consumer deterrence. Moreover, sustainable packaging remains within niche brands or types of products, meaning that mainstream consumers can find it more difficult to make environmentally aware decisions in all elements of their shopping list. This obstacle needs to be addressed by even greater changes in

supply chains and retailer commitment. However, the green packaging should be implemented in all industries, such as food, cosmetics, and electronics, which will make sustainable consumption the normal possibility ordinary people will one day be able to afford.

4. Information Gaps

One of the biggest barriers to making greener purchasing decisions is a lack of simple accessible information on the materials used in packaging and their effect on the environment. Lots of consumers simply cannot learn how to differentiate between recyclable, biodegradable and compostable items, particularly where labeling is poor or too technical. Even when motivated and well-intentioned customers are equipped with insufficient knowledge, they may start drawing false conclusions, including thinking that all packaged products in article goods are bound to be eco-friendly or that the assumption that something can be considered biodegradable means that it can also go into home compost. Such ambiguity erodes consumer trust and it demoralizes consumers to act. The lack of information when it comes to environmental literacy of a particular region or the improper eco-packaging of the item is especially rampant. Brands and governments should collaborate to ensure that consumers are empowered by doing the same education but making sustainability claims simpler and standardized labelling systems introduced. With something as simple as interactive QR codes connected to the information packaging lifecycle or simple recyclable icons, confusion can be significantly minimised. It is vital to fill these information gaps to convert environmental intention into competent informed consumer behaviours.

FUTURE OUTLOOK

Environmental consciousness is no longer a fringe movement but a **mainstream consumer value**. As climate change becomes an increasingly urgent global concern, the importance of green packaging will only grow. Future developments may include:

1. Smart Packaging

Smart packaging is the technology and sustainability handed-blend to guarantee better user experiences and green consequences. These would incorporate QR codes or RFID tags or sensors that provide information in real-time on the origin of the product, what it is made out of, whether it can be reused or not, how it should be disposed of or better yet, where it should go. Smart packaging is the equivalent of linking the intention to action for environmentally conscious consumers since smart packaging provides transparency and education at the most important time the use. In response, example, a QR code can be scanned to indicate whether the packaging is home-compostable, local bin-recyclable or a component of a reusable packaging system. Smart packaging is also useful to monitor the environmental impact of products, thus supply chain responsibility can be improved. Since digital literacy and the need to be sustainable surge, it is likely that smart packaging will become an emerging norm used to enable consumers to strike an informed, environmentally-friendly decision. In addition, it increases confidence and minimizes doubt because the brands can demonstrate that they are in fact green through interactive, verifiable data.

2. Compostable Innovations

The development of compostable package should be regarded as a major step forward in sustainable design as it produces solutions capable of decomposing into harmless components and entirely non-toxic to the environment. Compostable developments in this field do not just stop at the customary article-based products but have shifted to such products as cornstarch, mushroom mycelium, and seaweed products among other materials including algae. Such bio-based materials may be used in place of plastic in food containers, mailers and cutlery. The latter is beneficial as the composition of the packaging can be recycled and within its closed lifecycle will become part of the earth again leaving no residue. None the less, in order to be successful, they require the consumers to know how to compost (e.g.: industrial and home compostable) and have the proper disposal infrastructure to do so. By governments bringing in more laws to ban single-use plastics more innovations in compostable materials will become more marketable. Companies that invest in such technologies do not only show their interest in minimizing environmental impact but also place themselves as the trendsetters of circular economy principles, anticipating the attention of eco-friendly buyers with an interest in waste-free and regenerative product systems.

3. Consumer Activism

Consumer activism has become a game changer in advancing the entire companies and governments to better packages in terms of sustainability. No longer can consumers of an environmentally conscious nature be passive consumers, but rather active agents of change who are calling to be held accountable where they are looking to companies to be more transparent and actually taking specific steps. Using petitions, social media campaigns and boycottage movements, consumers are trying to hold brands accountable to get rid of their plastic parts, replace them with something easy to recycle or compost and make them report on their impact to the environment. When a firm engages in excessive packaging or greenwashing, this will instantly hurt the brand because of public reaction. In addition, people are making companies follow their values by recommending the company online thereby making them visible and leading to their success in market share. This increasing power has resulted in a change of corporate approach with sustainable packaging no longer considered as a marketing option but a business necessity. With consumer activism increasing, it will cause a policy change, speed up innovation, and become the focal point in developing sustainability as a norm within mainstream markets.

ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Descriptive statistics of Customer Purchase Decisions towards Green Packaging

The increasing global emphasis on sustainability has significantly influenced consumer behavior, particularly in packaging preferences. Green packaging, characterized by eco-friendly, recyclable, and biodegradable materials, has emerged as a key factor in shaping purchase decisions. Understanding the descriptive statistics of customers' purchase decisions towards green packaging provides valuable insights into consumer attitudes, preferences, and behavioral patterns. This analysis helps identify demographic trends, purchasing frequency, and the influence of various green packaging attributes on buying behavior. By examining these statistical trends, businesses and policymakers can better tailor their

strategies to promote sustainable consumption and support environmentally responsible production and marketing practices.

Table .1

Results of Descriptive Statistics of Customers' Purchase Decisions towards Green Packaging

Sl. no.	Level of Awareness	N	Mean	SD
1	Social Influence	200	2.80	1.446
2	Aesthetic Appeal of Packaging	200	1.98	.773
3	Perceived Quality	200	2.16	.943
4	Brand Image and Trust	200	3.13	1.075
5	Government Regulations and Policies	200	2.12	.886
6	Cultural and Ethical Values	200	1.74	.628
7	Convenience and Functionality	200	.986	.665
8	Marketing and Advertising Efforts	200	.824	.728
9	Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiatives	200	.793	.620
10	Past Experience with Green Products	200	.678	.765

The descriptive statistics reveal varying levels of influence among the factors affecting customers' purchase decisions towards green packaging. **Brand Image and Trust** (M = 3.13, SD = 1.075) and **Social Influence** (M = 2.80, SD = 1.446) emerged as the most influential factors, indicating that consumers are significantly swayed by a company's reputation and peer opinions. **Aesthetic Appeal** (M = 1.98) and **Perceived Quality** (M = 2.16) also play moderate roles in shaping preferences. In contrast, factors like **CSR Initiatives** (M = 0.793), **Marketing Efforts** (M = 0.824), and **Past Experience** (M = 0.678) show lower mean values, suggesting these have comparatively minimal direct impact. Interestingly, **Convenience and Functionality** (M = 0.986) and **Cultural and Ethical Values** (M = 1.74) also ranked lower, indicating that while environmental concern exists, practical and ethical considerations may not be primary drivers. Overall, the data highlights that emotional and social factors tend to have a stronger effect on consumer decisions regarding green packaging than purely functional or informational ones.

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean ranks of customer satisfaction towards Role of Environmental Consciousness.

Table-2
Level of satisfaction towards Role of Environmental Consciousness
Friedman test result

Factors	Mean	SD	Mean Rank	Value	P value
Quality Association	4.07	1.321	3.72	121.069	0.000
Peer Influence and Social Norms	3.04	1.286	3.81		
Willingness to Pay More	3.33	1.215	3.22		
Perceived Value and	4.76	1.197	3.56		
Emotional Resonance and Ethical Buying	3.18	1.287	3.40		

A Friedman test was conducted to evaluate differences in satisfaction levels across five dimensions related to environmental consciousness. The test yielded a statistically significant result ($\chi^2 = 121.069$, $p = 0.000$), indicating notable differences among the factors. **"Peer Influence and Social Norms"** had the highest mean rank (3.81), suggesting that social expectations and peer behavior play a significant role in shaping satisfaction towards environmental consciousness. **"Quality Association"** followed closely (mean rank = 3.72), implying that consumers are highly satisfied when environmental consciousness is linked to product quality. Despite having the highest mean score (4.76), **"Perceived Value"** ranked third (mean rank = 3.56), suggesting that while respondents recognize value in eco-friendly practices, it may not dominate their satisfaction ranking. **"Emotional Resonance and Ethical Buying"** and **"Willingness to Pay More"** had lower mean ranks (3.40 and 3.22 respectively), indicating that emotional and ethical alignment, along with financial willingness, are less influential in driving overall satisfaction. These findings highlight the importance of social influence and quality perception in promoting environmental consciousness among consumers.

CONCLUSION

Environmental consciousness plays a vital role in influencing consumer purchase decisions towards green packaging. It drives not only awareness but also emotions, values, and social behaviors that increasingly shape the market. For businesses, this means embracing transparency, innovation, and genuine sustainability. For consumers, it offers the power to make choices that align with environmental ethics. As society collectively moves toward a greener future, the link between ecological awareness and consumption behavior will become ever more important – making green packaging not just a trend, but a new standard. The perceived product value, peer influence, and the role that social norms have in strengthening green choices are explored in the study. Nevertheless, green-washing, increased prices, unavailability, and a lack of information remains a barrier to uptake. New tendencies, such as smart packaging, compostable technologies and consumer activism, indicate that the corporate behavior is

going to change dynamically. The results enforce the increased importance of the environment as a driver and a market, defining the future of eco-friendly packaging and responsible consumption.

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