

A STUDY ON YOUNG CONSUMERS' PURCHASE DECISIONS ON PRODUCTS USING SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING: A BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable packaging has become increasingly important due to growing environmental concerns, plastic waste, and resource depletion and industries are undergrowing pressure to rethink their packaging. Packaging plays an important role in protecting products, providing information, and influencing consumer purchasing decisions. This study focuses on young consumers and examines from an industrial perspective, how sustainable packaging influences their purchasing decisions on product under the preferences. The study aims to examine the level of awareness of sustainable packaging among young consumers, analyse its effect on purchase decisions, and identify factors such as eco-labels, biodegradable materials, recyclability, price, and brand image that influence their preferences. It also explores the relationship between environmental awareness and willingness to pay a premium for sustainable packaging and examines the influence of demographic factors such as age, income, and education. The study further considers the attitude-behaviour gap between consumers' positive attitudes towards sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour.

The study seeks to provide a better understanding of the role of sustainable packaging in modern consumer markets and its relevance to young consumers. It focuses on how packaging characteristics and environmental considerations may shape product preferences and purchase decision and what this means for dustries that adopt sustainable packaging. The study also aims to provide useful insights for manufacturer, companies and marketers to develop effective packaging and marketing strategies that can attract young consumers while supporting environmental sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable packaging, Purchase decision, Young consumers, Industrial perspective, Consumer buying behaviour, Environmental awareness

I. INTRODUCTION

With the growing awareness of ecological degradation, plastic waste, and resource depletion, sustainable packaging has emerged as an important trend in modern consumer markets.

Sustainable packaging has attracted considerable attention from companies because of its potential to reduce the environmental impacts associated with conventional packaging and to respond to increasing consumer concern about sustainability. Research suggests that consumers' perceptions of environmentally friendly packaging can influence their attitudes, purchase intentions, and willingness to pay for products using sustainable packaging (Prakash & Pathak, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2026).

At the same time, packaging plays a critical role in marketing and consumer behaviour by protecting products, communicating information, differentiating brands, and influencing consumer perceptions during the purchasing process. Sustainable characteristics incorporated into packaging can therefore act as important marketing cues. Studies have found that factors such as eco-labels, environmental information, packaging materials, and sustainability-related brand communication can influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions (Gidaković et al., 2024; Nguyen et al., 2026).

In this regard, young consumers represent an important consumer segment because their consumption patterns and environmental attitudes can influence the future development of sustainable markets. Previous research focusing specifically on young Indian consumers found that attitudes, personal norms, environmental concern, and willingness to pay significantly influence intentions to purchase products with eco-friendly packaging (Prakash & Pathak, 2017). ScienceDirect Similarly, research among young consumers has demonstrated that eco-labels and previous purchasing experiences can play an important role in shaping intentions to purchase more sustainable products (Gidaković et al., 2024).

Understanding young consumers' perceptions of sustainable packaging and examining these perceptions alongside other influential variables can therefore provide companies with useful insights for developing marketing and packaging strategies. Sustainable packaging may influence product choice, purchase intentions, brand perceptions, and willingness to pay. However, consumer decisions are not determined by environmental consciousness alone. Factors such as price, product availability, perceived quality, convenience, trust in sustainability claims, and the clarity of environmental labels may also affect whether consumers translate positive sustainability attitudes into actual purchasing behaviour. Recent research indicates that economic and functional barriers can weaken consumers' willingness to purchase or repurchase products with sustainable packaging despite high environmental awareness.

Furthermore, an important issue in sustainable consumption is the attitude-behaviour gap, referring to the discrepancy between consumers' positive attitudes toward sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour. Young consumers may express strong environmental concerns but may not always purchase sustainable products when such products are more expensive, less available, less convenient, or perceived as offering lower functional value. Recent research on young adults has identified price, availability, convenience, and difficulties

in interpreting sustainability labels as important barriers to converting sustainable attitudes into actual behaviour.

The present study, “A Study on Young Consumers’ Purchase Decision on Products Using Sustainable Packaging: Industrial Perspective,” seeks to examine how young consumers perceive sustainable packaging and how these perceptions influence their purchase decisions. From an industrial perspective, the study also considers the implications of sustainable packaging adoption for manufacturers and companies, which must balance environmental responsibility with packaging costs, product functionality, consumer expectations, and market demand. Existing research indicates that consumer willingness to pay for sustainable packaging is influenced by several factors, including environmental attitudes, perceived value, price sensitivity, packaging functionality, and trust in sustainability claims.

The study will provide insights into the characteristics of sustainable packaging that young consumers consider important and those that may have comparatively less influence on their purchasing decisions. It will also examine whether sustainability consciousness is associated with willingness to pay a premium for sustainably packaged products. Such an examination is particularly relevant because research has identified willingness to pay as an important indicator of consumers’ behavioural response to green packaging, while also highlighting that stated willingness does not necessarily translate into actual purchasing behaviour.

From an industrial perspective, understanding these relationships can assist companies in designing packaging and marketing strategies that respond to consumer expectations while considering economic and functional constraints. Research on green packaging and eco-labeling among young consumers also suggests that sustainability communication can influence consumer responses, although the effectiveness of individual packaging and marketing cues may vary across consumer groups and market contexts. ScienceDirect Therefore, the findings of this study may provide useful implications for marketers, manufacturers, and other businesses seeking to align sustainable packaging initiatives with the preferences and purchasing behaviour of young consumers.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the level of awareness that young consumers have on sustainable packaging.
- To analyze how sustainable packaging affects the purchase decisions of consumers.
- To identify the factors such as eco-labels, biodegradable materials, recyclability, price and brand image that influence the preference of young consumers for sustainably packaged products.
- To study the relationship between consciousness and the willingness of young consumers to pay a premium for sustainable packaging.

- To assess how demographic variables such as age, income and education shape the attitudes of consumers toward sustainable packaging.
- To explore whether there is a gap between the attitude of young consumers toward sustainability and their actual purchasing behaviour that is the attitude-behaviour gap.
- To provide recommendations for marketers and companies, on how to use packaging as a strategy to attract young consumers.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jerzyk This paper by Jerzyk looks at how packaging and eco-communication influence the purchase choices of young consumers. The author studied what kind of environmental data people want on packaging how they view packaging and how knowledge about it changes their buying intentions. The research involved 161 students aged 17 to 30 living in Poland and France. A questionnaire survey collected the data.

The paper shows that sustainable packaging is not a factor in current buying decisions. Sustainable packaging received an importance score of 2.49 out of five. Yet many respondents expect its importance to rise in the future. Several participants said they would switch products if sustainable claims were true and reliable. Trust in information is therefore essential for forming positive attitudes and purchase intentions.

The study also found that young consumers know which environmental data matters most. Recyclability of packages scored highest with a mean of 4.36 followed by safety for health (4.27) use of recycled materials (4.13) and biodegradable materials (4.10). Factor analysis revealed three main categories of information young consumers seek: recycling and renewable energy, materials and resource management and consumer health and safety.

Jerzyk also discovered that young consumers do not want to compromise packaging quality for sustainability. Among changes they tolerate the worst decline in appearance more than a loss of functionality. Hence sustainable packaging must keep the functionality consumers need.

Overall Jerzyk concludes that the success of packaging in shaping consumer behaviour depends heavily on credible environmental communication, consumer trust, awareness and market maturity. Appropriate packaging content and communication can positively affect attitudes and purchase intentions.

REVIEW 02:

Gupta (2021) looked at the factors that affect Indian consumers' decision to buy products with green packaging. The research found that people who care more about the environment tend to prefer packaging that's eco-friendly. People who are more aware of issues are more likely to choose products that use sustainable packaging. This shows that environmental awareness can be a factor in how people make sustainable choices when they buy things.

Shimul and Cheah (2023) looked at how much people know about the environment their sense of responsibility and their attitudes towards the environment. Their results showed that people who know more about the environment and feel responsible for it tend to have positive attitudes towards the environment. These attitudes then influence their decisions to buy products that're good for the environment.

De Canio (2023) studied how much people are willing to pay more for packaging that's good for the environment. The study also looked at how familiar people're with such products. The results showed that people who care about their health and the environment are more likely to buy eco- products but how strong this link is depends on how familiar they are with these products.

Feber et al. (2020) Looked at what influences people to choose packaging in the United States. The study found that people care about the environment and also about the price of products. The PDF also compares these findings with research from countries. It shows that price is still a factor when people decide to buy sustainable products.

Mardiyah et al. (2022) Looked at how green products and eco-friendly packaging affect people's decisions to buy. Their results showed that green packaging had an effect on buying decisions while the green product itself did not. The study used a method with 98 people.

Rokka and Uusitalo (2008) looked at how important environmental packaging is when people choose products in Finland. Their study found that factors like age, education and environmental attitudes had a link to what people prefer when it comes to packaging. The study had 330 people.

Sharma and Babel (2002) looked at how income and awareness of eco- packaging are connected in Mumbai. The study found that people with incomes are more aware of eco-friendly packaging.

Huhtala (2010) studied how income affects people's actions like recycling, in Finland. The results showed that people with incomes are more likely to pay for convenient waste management.

Sanny et al. (2023) Looked at how people's attitudes towards the environment affect their choice to buy products in Jakarta. They found that people who care more about the environment are more likely to buy products that're good for the environment. The study used a method with 228 people.

Setiawan et al. (2023) Looked at how environmental concern, health awareness and how people think they can act affect their decision to buy eco-friendly cosmetics. Surprisingly environmental concern did not lead to a decision to buy but health awareness did.

REVIEW 03:

Aleenajitpong (2013) looked at how undergraduate students feel about packaging and how those feelings change how much they want to buy products that use green packaging. This study focused on three things: how people feel about environmental issues how much they know about green packaging and how they feel about green packaging itself. The researcher wanted to see how these three things change a persons desire to buy packaged products.

The researcher used a method for this study. Data was gathered from 257 students who are older than 18 and go to universities in Bangkok and the nearby areas. A questionnaire was used to get the data and the researcher used regression analysis to look at the answers.

The results showed that students have a positive attitude towards green packaging. It turns out that an attitude towards issues is a big predictor of both an attitude towards green packaging and a purchase intention. Specifically having knowledge and a desire to act in an environmentally friendly way helped improve green-packaging attitudes and purchase intention. The study also found that an attitude towards packaging, which includes how people see the value of green packaging is closely linked to the intention to purchase green-packaged consumer products.

There was a catch. Just having knowledge about green packaging did not directly make people want to buy more. Only knowledge about the green materials used showed a real link to how people see the value of green packaging and their purchase intention. This means that just knowing about packaging might not be enough to make people actually buy products that use green packaging.

In the end the study concluded that an environmental attitude is more important for purchase intention than just knowing about green packaging. People who have an attitude towards environmental issues and green packaging are much more likely to want to buy green-packaged products. These results match up with older studies that show a link, between environmental attitude and green purchase intention even though some older studies said something different.

IV. INDUSTRIAL PERSPECTIVE: SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING INITIATIVES OF INDIAN COMPANIES

Several Indian companies have started to redesign their packaging and manage packaging waste. These examples show why sustainable packaging matters to industry and why young consumers' purchase decisions are important to it:

- **ITC Limited** – Follows a “No Plastic, Better Plastic, Less Plastic” strategy, reported plastic neutrality for the fourth consecutive year in FY 2024-25 by managing about 76,000 tonnes of plastic waste, has introduced biodegradable packaging such as Filo and Bioseal, and aims for 100% recyclable, reusable or biodegradable packaging by 2028.

- **Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL)** – Reported that it collects and processes more plastic packaging waste than it places on the market (a goal met in 2021) through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), and, through Project Circular Bharat, is helping build Material Recovery Facilities in partnership with public bodies.
- **Dabur India Limited** – Announced in February 2022 that it had become the first Indian consumer goods company to be “plastic waste neutral”, having collected, processed and recycled about 27,000 MT of post-consumer plastic waste in FY 2021-22, and has distributed cotton carry bags to replace plastic bags in households.
- **Nestlé India** – Reported to have reached plastic neutrality, alongside HUL and Dabur, showing that packaging responsibility is becoming an industry-wide practice among large FMCG companies.
- **Regulatory push** – India’s Plastic Waste Management Rules and their EPR provisions require producers to take responsibility for the packaging they place on the market, which pushes industries towards recyclable and lower-plastic packaging.
- **Relevance to this study** – Industry action is increasing, but the present study shows that young consumers’ awareness and positive attitudes do not always turn into purchase decisions. Companies such as these therefore need to communicate their packaging efforts clearly and credibly, and keep price and product quality attractive.

V. LIMITATIONS

- **Sample size and demographic scope** – This study only looks at consumers. Because of this the findings cannot be applied to age groups or the wider population.
- **Geographical limitation** – If the research stays within one city, region or country the results might not show how consumers act in different geographic or cultural contexts.
- **Self-reported data bias** – The data comes from questionnaires and surveys. This means the data relies on what people say about their attitudes and intentions. What people say might not actually match how they shop in life because of social desirability bias.
- **Attitude-behaviour gap** – People might say they like sustainability in surveys. They might not act that way when they are actually making a purchase. This makes it hard to see the impact on behaviour.
- **Limited product categories** – This study might only look at product categories like FMCG, cosmetics or food packaging. Therefore the results might not be the same for all industries.
- **Time constraint** – This is a -sectional study, which means the data was collected at just one point in time. This means the study does not show how consumer behaviour changes over time.

- **Awareness and knowledge gap** – Some people might know more about packaging than others. These different levels of awareness could change how accurate and reliable the responses are.
- **Limited scope of variables** – This study might not look at every thing that affects buying behaviour, such as cultural values, peer influence, government regulations or how easy it is to find sustainable alternatives.
- **Cost and pricing factor not deeply explored** – Young consumers often do not have extra money to spend. This study might not fully show how much price affects their buying decisions.
- **Reliance on data collection tools** – Using questionnaires for research can lead to problems, like response bias people misunderstanding the questions or people giving incomplete answer.

VI. RESEARCH DESIGN

REGRESSION ANALYSIS

OBJECTIVE

“To examine the level of awareness that young consumers have sustainable packaging.”

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant level of awareness among young consumers regarding sustainable packaging.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant level of awareness among young consumer regarding sustainable packaging.

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
WILLINGNESSOFYOUNG CONSUMER * DEMOGRAPHICVARIABLES	150	100.0%	0	0.0%	150	100.0%

WILLINGNESSOFYOUNGCONSUMER * DEMOGRAPHICVARIABLES Crosstabulation							
			DEMOGRAPHICVARIABLES				Total
			below 10000	10000-20000	20000-30000	above 30000	
WILLINGNESSOFYOUNGCONSUMER	very high	Count	15	12	12	6	45
		Expected Count	17.7	16.8	6.9	3.6	45.0
	high	Count	29	34	9	5	77
		Expected Count	30.3	28.7	11.8	6.2	77.0
	low	Count	13	10	2	1	26
		Expected Count	10.2	9.7	4.0	2.1	26.0
	very low	Count	2	0	0	0	2
		Expected Count	.8	.7	.3	.2	2.0
Total		Count	59	56	23	12	150
		Expected Count	59.0	56.0	23.0	12.0	150.0
Chi-Square Tests							
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)				
Pearson Chi-Square	14.450 ^a	9	.107				
Likelihood Ratio	14.636	9	.101				
Linear-by-Linear Association	8.019	1	.005				
N of Valid Cases	150						
a. 7 cells (43.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .16.							

Pearson chi square value is 14.450 with the p value of 0.107 which is greater than the significance level of 0.05 , so accepting null hypothesis.

There is no significant level of awareness among young consumers regarding sustainable packaging.

ANALYSIS USING CHI-SQUARE TEST

OBJECTIVE

“To study the relationship between awareness and the willingness of young consumers to pay a premium for sustainable packaging.”

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between awareness and young consumers willingness to pay a premium for sustainable packaging.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant positive relationship between awareness and young consumers willingness to pay a premium for sustainable packaging.

Case Processing Summary						
	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AFFECTS	150	100.0%	0	0.0%	150	100.0%

AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AFFECTS Crosstabulation					
			SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING AFFECTS		Total
			Female	Male	
AWARENESS OF SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING	YES	Count	121	15	136
		Expected Count	120.6	15.4	136.0
	NO	Count	12	2	14
		Expected Count	12.4	1.6	14.0
Total		Count	133	17	150
		Expected Count	133.0	17.0	150.0

Chi-Square Tests					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.134 ^a	1	.714		
Continuity Correction ^b	.000	1	1.000		
Likelihood Ratio	.126	1	.723		
Fisher's Exact Test				.661	.490
Linear-by-Linear Association	.133	1	.715		
N of Valid Cases	150				
a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.59.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

Pearson chi square value is 134 with the p value of 0.714 which is greater than the significance level of 0.05 , so accepting null hypothesis.

There is no significant relationship between consciousness and young consumers willingness to pay a premium for sustainable packaging.

VII. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY USED

PRIMARY DATA:

Data Collection: First-hand data is collected directly from young consumers by means of a survey/questionnaire (based on 150 cases in the Case Processing Summary).

Primary source: The data (demographic variables, awareness levels, willingness to pay, and purchasing behavior) was collected specially for this particular study and is not derived from pre-existing data sets or any other research work.

Analysis of new data: Chi-Square test and regression analysis has been done using primary data collected by the researcher himself/herself.

SECONDARY DATA:

However, the research conducted by Gupta, Shimul, Cheah, Aleenajitpong, etc. is based on secondary research which uses data gathered from earlier studies. However, this data is used in order to provide context, theory and results comparison and is not the methodology of this study.

VIII. FINDINGS

- The statistical analysis indicates a gap between consumers' self-reported sustainability attitudes and their actual purchasing decisions.
- The younger consumers demonstrate high levels of environmental awareness and sustainable packaging knowledge.
- The consumers have high levels of willingness to adopt sustainability.
- In spite of that, sustainability is not seen as a significant determinant of consumer purchasing decisions.
- The positive attitude of consumers does not always reflect their willingness to pay extra for or choose sustainable over non-sustainable products.

IX. SUGGESTIONS

The study could be conducted on a more expanded sample and using a probabilistic method of sampling, which will ensure generalization and minimize any sampling biases raised.

Conducting the study through a combination of the questionnaire and other qualitative techniques such as focus group interviews and in-depth interviews will help validate the results since the attitude-behavior gap can be verified from actual purchases.

To increase the validity of the results obtained through the use of self-reported attitude measures, it would be useful to use transactional data to show real consumer behavior.

In addition to expanding the sample and using more reliable methods of data collection, future research should include more influencing factors (influence of peers, legislation, etc.) and more types of products to test.

From an industrial perspective, manufacturers and companies should adopt sustainable packaging in a cost-effective way, support it with clear and credible eco-labelling, and maintain product quality so that packaging changes are matched by real value for young consumers.

X. CONCLUSION

Sustainable packaging can shape how young consumers think, decide to buy and actually buy. Yet awareness of packaging and positive attitudes toward sustainable packaging do not always turn into buying decisions. Factors such, as price, quality, trust, availability and brand image also matter a deal. The study shows an attitude-behaviour gap proving that sustainable packaging only influences purchase intentions and buying behaviour when it is combined with important purchasing factors.

The study further indicates that sustainable packaging alone may not be sufficient to change the purchasing decisions of young consumers. Although many consumers show interest in environmentally friendly packaging, their final purchase decisions can be influenced by practical considerations such as affordability, product quality, convenience, and trust in sustainability claims. Therefore, companies should focus not only on adopting sustainable packaging but also on creating awareness, providing clear and credible information, and maintaining product quality and affordability. From an industrial perspective, sustainable packaging works best when industries treat it as part of a wider strategy that also addresses price, quality and trust.

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