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## **The effect of green packaging on consumers buying behavior**

*Vplyv ekologických obalov na nákupné správanie spotrebiteľov*

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*Abstract: Environmentally conscious packaging is an important instrument for developing and conveying brand equity, gaining an edge in the marketplace, and shaping consumer buying behavior. It's crucial to keep in mind, though, that contemporary consumers expect environmentally friendly packaging because they are becoming more aware of environmental protection issues. The purpose of the study is to investigate how consumer buying behaviors are impacted by green packaging in relation to environmental consciousness and sustainability. In particular, the study aims to comprehend how customers view and value eco-friendly packaging materials, such as recyclable or biodegradable substitutes, and how these views affect their purchase choices. Consequently, two hundred and seventy nine (279) questionnaires were administered to the respondents, out of which two hundred and seventy (270) were properly filled and retrieved. Data obtained from the study respondents were analyzed using correlation and regression analysis. The findings of the study unveiled that there is a positive and significant effect of green packaging on consumer buying behavior. Based on the findings, it was recommended that firms should create product packaging that can easily decompose to lessen the environmental harm that packaging does.*

**Key words:** *Packaging. Green Packaging. Consumer buying behavior.*

**JEL Classification:** D11, Q5

### **Introduction**

Since the public understanding of the deterioration of resources from nature has increased, safeguarding the environment has received a greater interest. Packaging is currently identified as an important contributor of environmentally harmful waste that isn't biodegradable. Notably,

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businesses have long been subjected to demands from customers and regulators to mitigate garbage from packaging, over package, and boost recycling capacity (Hao, Liu, Chen, Sha, Ji, & Fan, 2019). The outer covering of an item is among the most prevalent components of consumption and it fulfills a range of functions while offering customers a great degree of ease (Hao, et, al, 2019). Considering its crucial role when interacting with consumers, building relationship with them, shaping their choices of goods, fostering products and corporate image, and discerning a product from its rivals, packaging has been identified as one of the component of the marketing mix (Magnier & Schoormans, 2015). Packaging satisfies the business's constitutional responsibilities and conveys to customers significant corporate image. Additionally, packing, according to Singh and Pandey (2018), has three adverse consequences on the environment: it uses up resources; creates fluid, solid, and gaseous waste; and pollutes the environment. Also, because the molecules in the items interact with the packing material, the packaging has an effect on the nutritional properties of the products. Certain packaging supplies may lead to the growth of germs that can lead to serious human diseases. Nevertheless, packaging plays an integral role for the items' protection and storage, and it also facilitates how they travel along the entire supply chain and delivery to the final users (Magnier & Schoormans, 2015).

Since consumers demand that businesses implement eco-friendly practices and provide them with items that can be used immediately and without having an adverse impact on their physical well-being, modernized packaging should be both aesthetically pleasing and safe. Based on this angle, environmentally conscious packaging may be a crucial instrument for developing and conveying brand equity, gaining an edge in the marketplace, and shaping customer buying behavior. Additionally, it is acknowledged that environmentally conscious packaging, is a key tactic for fostering customer preference and brand loyalty (Mahmoud, Tsetse, Tulasi, & Muddey, 2022). Due to their environmental concerns, consumers might be persuaded to purchase products that are safe for the environment. Because of this, efficient environmentally friendly packaging—which incorporates a successful layout and environmental messaging—has an effect on consumer buying behavior and aids businesses in gaining a competitive advantage for both the product and the brand (Jerzyk, 2016).

Existing literature has shown that green packaging is related to consumer buying behavior, willingness to pay, business performance (Mahmoud, et, al, 2022; Sakshi, 2023). Although, several works have been done on the two construct under study, few studies have taken place in Nigeria. Thus, the aim of this research is to find out how green packaging affects consumer buying behaviors in regard to environmental sustainability and environmental consciousness in Nigeria. The study specifically attempts to understand how consumers perceive and value

environmentally friendly packaging materials, such as recyclable or biodegradable choices, and how these perceptions influence their choices when making purchases. Ultimately, by presenting empirical evidence on how green packaging affects consumer buying behavior, the study also aims to add to the body of knowledge already available on green marketing and sustainable packaging techniques. The research aims to support the development of environmentally friendly packaging that not only meet consumer expectations but also contribute to the larger goal of fostering sustainable consumption habits.

## **1. Literature review**

Packaging, according to Pathak (2014), has a variety of uses. These include: (a) protecting the product from damage during storage and distribution; (b) informing customers about the product's contents; (c) influencing consumers' buying decisions; and (d) helping to establish a brand, attract devoted customers, and set oneself apart from competitors' offerings. The process of designing and making a wrapping or container for a product in order to present, protect, and confine it is known as packaging. Packaging can have basic or intricate patterns and can be made from a range of materials, including cardboard, plastic, glass, and metal. Important details about the product, like ingredients, usage guidelines, and branding, are also communicated through it. Packaging plays a crucial role in marketing and promoting products to consumers. It's important to remember, though, that modern consumers are increasingly conscious of environmental protection issues and as a result, they require that packaging be eco-friendly. Innovations are also being made in this regard to find new packaging materials that are beneficial to the environment and the health of consumers, as some packaging materials may be hazardous to the public's health.

Both businesses and customers can profit from packaging. For example, the surface of packaging functions as a medium for information interchange. This comprises details about the product's contents, cost, usage patterns, and other pertinent information for customers. In addition, it helps marketing techniques by making products more appealing to consumers, which reduces the amount of unsold inventory. The amount and size of a product are also governed by its packaging. Additionally, packaging increases product distribution efficiency, which could lead to larger profit margins for businesses (Sambu, 2016). The act of confining or safeguarding a product with a container to facilitate its distribution, identification, storage, promotion, and use is known as packaging. To put it simply, packaging is the process of creating a wrapping material or container for a product that aids in its identification and differentiation in the marketplace, as well as its transportation, distribution, storage, promotion, and proper use (Aashish & Kumar, 2023).

### **1.1. Green packaging (GP)**

Green packaging (GP) sometimes referred to as Eco-friendly packaging, or sustainable packaging, is a rapidly developing field of study for academics, researchers, and industry professionals worldwide. This kind of packaging protects the environment and public health by using eco-friendly materials for packaging without ever sacrificing the quality of the product itself (Ackaah, Kanton, & Osei, 2022; Sakshi, 2023). The fundamental component of green packaging, according to Hao et al. (2019), is its resource- and environmentally-friendly technology. Hao et al. (2019) further opined that green packaging poses little or no risk to human health or the environment over its entire lifecycle, which includes design, development, manufacture, usage, and recycling. However, in order to improve the manageability of items, green packing encourages and makes use of packaging that are environmentally friendly (Wandosell, Parra-Meroño, Alcayde, & Baños, 2021). As cited by Mahmoud, et, al, (2022) Green packaging is associated with communicating an obligation to sustainability, eco-friendly operations of businesses, and green product attributes in the marketplace. Maziriri (2020) identifies three primary characteristics of green packaging: reducing the usage of packaging that is difficult to break down, utilizing packaging that uses less energy, and utilizing packaging that is beneficial to the environment. Most of the time, green packaging refers specifically to packaging that is designed to minimize harm to the environment. Using eco-friendly materials is not the only step in implementing sustainable packaging. It necessitates a thorough comprehension of consumer behavior and attitudes toward environmentally friendly packaging. This covers elements that affect consumers' decisions and decision-making processes, such as their preferences, values, beliefs, and motives (Sakshi, 2023).

### **1.2. Consumer buying behavior (CBB)**

The process by which a person or organization decides what goods or services to buy is referred to as consumer buying behavior (CBB) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). Consumer purchase decisions are influenced by a complicated web of psychological, social, and economic elements (Solomon, Marshall, & Stuart, 2018). Consumer behavior, according to Madiche (2009), is the study of the procedures people or groups go through when they choose, pay for, utilize, or dispose goods, services, concepts, or experiences in order to satiate needs and desires. Organizations need to understand customer buying behavior in order to create marketing strategies that effectively reach their target demographic. Consumer purchasing behavior is influenced by a number of elements, including social, psychological, and economic aspects. Psychological factors like as perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and motivations influence the decisions that consumers make when making purchases. For instance, a customer's attitude

toward a brand, their impression of the quality of a product, or their drive to satisfy a need or desire can all influence their purchase decisions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2017). CBB is also significantly influenced by social variables as well. These include cultural and societal conventions, as well as the influence of friends, family, and other social groups. The availability of alternatives, price, products and income are examples of economic factors that affect CBB.

Apart from these variables, the way in which goods are packaged also affects the purchasing habits of consumers. According to Vijayakumar and Reddy (2020), one factor that aid in choosing a brand is the package material. Consequently, in order to effectively target their audience with the correct messages at the right time, organizations need to understand consumer buying behavior.

### **1.3. Green packaging and consumer buying behavior**

When it comes to marketing and customer promotion, packaging is vital. It's crucial to keep in mind, though, that contemporary consumers are looking for environmentally friendly packaging because they are becoming more aware of environmental protection issues. An essential component of sustainable marketing is understanding the relationship between green packaging and consumer buying behavior, since it sheds light on the ways in which eco-friendly packaging affects consumer choices. An increasing number of studies demonstrate how green packaging affects consumers' purchasing decisions. According to Nielsen, (2015) study, 81% of worldwide consumers strongly agree that businesses should contribute to environmental improvement. In addition, 73% of participants stated they would modify their consumption patterns in order to lessen their influence on the environment. This suggests that consumers are very interested in eco-friendly packaging and products.

Additionally, research has shown that green packaging influences consumer attitudes and purchasing patterns. According to Dangelico and Vocalelli (2017), when a product is packaged sustainably, buyers believe it to be of higher quality and more environmentally conscious. This positive association between green packaging and product quality can influence consumers to choose products with sustainable packaging over non-sustainable alternatives. Additionally, an organization can gain reputation and brand image from the usage of green packaging (Ottman, 2011). Businesses that use sustainable packaging techniques could experience an increase in customer preference as consumers grow more ecologically conscientious. Increased brand loyalty and a competitive edge in the business domain may result from green packaging. However, it is essential for organizations to be mindful of certain factors when leveraging green packaging to influence consumer buying behavior. For example, simply labeling a product as

"green" may not be sufficient to drive consumer purchasing decisions (Roberts, 1996). Sambu (2016) studied how manufacturing firms in Nairobi County, Kenya performed when using green packaging. The explanatory research design was used in the study. 133 firm managers employed by 47 firms in Nairobi County were surveyed. Questionnaires were used as instruments for gathering data to obtain information from respondents. The structured questionnaire's internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach alpha. In order to test the study's hypotheses, data was analyzed using multiple regression models in addition to descriptive statistics like means and standard deviations. Tables were used to display the data. The findings showed that one of the main factors influencing business performance in Kenyan manufacturing is green packaging. Managers of businesses should therefore package their goods using recyclable materials.

Vijayakumar and Reddy, (2020) conducted a study on green packaging through green marketing practices in flexible packaging of FMCG industries. Both survey and secondary data gathering methods were used in this investigation. Only 520 of the 577 upper middle-class groups in Hyderabad city that received the prepared questionnaire on the basis of a convenient sampling strategy were able to provide complete data for the study. The data was analyzed using Chi-Square tests, regression models, ANOVA, exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling via SPSS software package. The results demonstrated that buyer attitudes had a bigger influence on purchasers' opinions about green packaging. The results also showed that while choosing products, factors like packaging color, design, material, shape, size, and image are crucial for the consumers. Mahmoud, et, al, (2022) examined green packaging, environmental awareness, and willingness to pay for green products in consumers' purchase decisions. 218 Ghanaian respondents participated in a cross-sectional survey that was used to gather data. The study employed purposive sampling in the process of selecting participants. To evaluate the hypotheses of the study, partial least square structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) and descriptive statistics were used, both of which were performed on the data using SPSS software. The study discovered that green purchasing decisions were positively and significantly impacted by customers' environmental awareness. Green packaging did not, however, appear to have a substantial effect on Ghanaian consumers' purchasing decisions. The study also showed that consumer purchase decisions were favorably and significantly predicted by customers' willingness to pay for environmentally friendly products.

Sakshi, (2023) carried out a research on sustainable packaging: A consumer's perspective. However, the study was primarily a literature review. The study aimed to bridge the gap between consumer behavior and sustainable packaging by providing insights into consumer

perceptions, preferences, and decision-making processes, and creating a conceptual model that highlights the elements of green packaging and how consumers respond to those elements. This knowledge can empower businesses to develop sustainable packaging strategies that align with consumer expectations and contribute to a more sustainable future. It was observed in the study that the elements of packaging have a direct influence on the consumer's buying behavior.

Pan, Lei, Wu, and Wang (2021) studied the impact of green packaging on consumers' desire to make green purchases in the context of online-to-offline commerce. Through an online survey, 295 actual questionnaire responses from O2O customers in China were gathered. The analysis of the data was done using structural equation modeling. The empirical findings showed that, through perceived value, perceived risk, and green satisfaction, green packaging has a substantial indirect impact on consumers' intentions to make green purchases in the context of online and offline commerce. Furthermore, the impacts of perceived value, perceived risk, and green pleasure on the intention to make green purchases are positively and significantly moderated by green loyalty.

Odiah (2017) investigated how green marketing affected customers' purchasing decisions. A sample size of 301 customers of fast-moving consumer goods manufacturers in Lagos State, Nigeria, was used in the study. The statistical tools included regression analysis, frequency, and correlation in addition to the survey research methodology. According to the research, customers' purchasing decisions are significantly influenced positively by green pricing, packaging, and awareness, but not significantly by green promotion. These suggest that because trash production is always rising, people are become more conscious of environmentally friendly items and believe they are safe and secure to use. It was shown that a large number of clients who are referred to as "green purchasers" are aware of the impact that the environment has on their health. From the above discussion, we hypothesize that green packaging has an effect on consumer buying behavior.

## **2. Material and methods**

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The total population of this study was made up of all the shoppers at Warri Shoprite, Delta state, Nigeria. Warri Shoprite is a popular shopping mall located in the city of Warri, Delta State, Nigeria. It is part of the Shoprite chain of supermarkets and offers a wide range of products including groceries, household items, clothing, electronics, and more. Customers can also enjoy food and beverage options at the mall. Warri Shoprite is a convenient and modern shopping destination for residents and visitors in the area. Questionnaires were used as instruments for gathering data to obtain information from respondents. A purposive sampling technique was used to sample

(279) individuals. Data collection was on two occasions. First, data was gathered by the researcher from Shoprite customers on February 22, 2024. Unfortunately, the poor response rate was caused by the majority of customer's refusal to complete the provided questionnaire. The researcher then returned to the Shoprite a second time on February 24, 2024, to gather information from customers that visited the Shoprite that day. In total, 270 valid questionnaires were obtained by the researcher from the two times in which the respondents were given the questionnaires. The method of data analysis utilized in this study was correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis. Microsoft excel software was also used to create tables and perform data entry.

The variables (green packaging and consumers buying behavior) were measured by scales adopted from previous studies. Both variables were measured by a modified version of GP and CBB survey questionnaire developed by Orzan, Cruceru, Balaceanu and Chivu,(2018) while Nulty, (2008) provided guidance on the suitability of paper surveys' response rates. The scale was developed with 11 items to measure how Romanian consumers view the contribution of eco-packaging to the development of sustainable behavior (consumers' behavior concerning sustainable packaging). That is, determining the kinds of eco-packaging that consumers like, understanding the motivations behind their purchases of eco-packaging, and understanding how knowledge about eco-packaging contributes to sustainability. This is due to the fact that the majority of respondents are aware of how packaging affects the environment and that feeling responsible, recycling, and environmental protection are the top motivations for buying. GP items used in this study are: (Protecting the environment is my reason for choosing products whose packaging is environmentally conscious); (The use of eco-friendly materials for packaging is important for the protection of public health); (I prefer green packaging because I care about the environment). Sample items of CBB are: (I am willing to pay extra for products that come in environmentally friendly packaging); (I'm proud to have environmentally conscious packaged products in my home even though the products cost more than conventionally package products); (When making a purchase, I buy products that are environmentally friendly). The above questions are to measure the buying behavior of customer in respect to their perception of sustainable packaging and concern for the environment.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 Correlate gptotal cbbtotal (obs=270)

| Variables | Green packaging<br>(gp) | Consumer buying<br>behaviors<br>(ccb) |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|

|                           |        |        |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| Green packaging           | 1.000  |        |
| Consumer buying behaviors | 0.2172 | 1.0000 |

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2024)

Table I above explains the correlation matrix of the two variables (green packaging and consumer buying behavior) under study. The result indicate that the variable green packaging (gp) ( $r=0.22$ ) was significantly and positively related to consumer buying behavior (cbb) at ( $p<0.05$ ).

### 3.1. Test of Hypothesis

Table 2 Linear regression

| <b>Dependent variable:<br/>Consumer buying behavior<br/>(CBB)</b> | <b>Dependent variable:<br/>Consumer buying behavior<br/>(CBB)</b> | <b>Dependent variable:<br/>Consumer buying behavior<br/>(CBB)</b> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Green packaging                                                   | Green packaging                                                   | Green packaging                                                   |
| Probability = 0.0000<br>T-Value = 3.64                            | Probability = 0.0000<br>T-Value = 3.64                            | Probability = 0.0000<br>T-Value = 3.64                            |

Source: Compiled by the Researcher (2024)

Linear regression was adopted in this study to test the research hypothesis. From table II: above, the coefficient value (0.417) is significant and positive at ( $p<0.05$ ). This led to the acceptance of the stated alternate hypothesis. The R-square value of 0.0472, f-ratio (1,268) = 13.27, t-value = 3.64 and  $p = 0.000<0.05$  unveiled that green packaging (gp) explains 4.72% variation in consumer buying behavior (cbb). Thus, there is a significant and positive association between green packaging (gp) consumer buying behavior (cbb). Therefore, green packaging (gp) has a positive effect on consumer buying behavior (cbb).

## 4. Discussion of findings

This study looked at the effect of green packaging on consumer buying behavior. The results of the analyzed data obtained from all the respondents of the study unveiled that there is a positive and significant effect of green packaging on consumer buying behavior as stated in hypothesis 1. Thus, the stated alternate hypothesis is accepted. The implication is that green packaging influences consumers buying behavior (decisions) by appealing to their personal beliefs. Nowadays, a lot of consumers are actively looking for products that reflect their values and views and are more environmentally responsible. Consumers believe that they are helping the environment and fostering a more sustainable future when they select products that are packaged responsibly. Due to their sense of duty and ethical consumerism, consumers who support environmentally responsible businesses are more likely to be satisfied with their

purchases and to make more of them in the future. This result is in line with the findings of (Vijayakumar & Reddy, 2020; Mahmoud, et, al, 2022; Sakshi, 2023) who opined that consumers perceive products packed sustainably as being of higher quality and being more ecologically cautious. This may persuade buyers to select environmentally friendly packaging for products over less environmentally friendly options.

Consumers actively promote businesses that share concerns about the environment by selecting products with sustainable packaging. Therefore, businesses that make use of environmentally conscious packaging may be able to draw in more customers and gain an edge over their rivals. Through showcasing their dedication to sustainability, businesses can improve their standing and gain the confidence of customers. Because consumers who care about the environment are more likely to purchase items from brands that share their beliefs, this can improve brand loyalty. Furthermore, buyers may view a product as more desirable and trustworthy if it has environmentally friendly packaging that exudes quality and responsibility. Furthermore, the usage of eco-friendly packaging may have an impact on impulsive purchasing habits. Consumers are more inclined to make impulsive purchases when they see products with eco-friendly packaging since sustainability is becoming more and more important (Zafar, Shen, Shahzad & Islam, 2021). This is because they believe the product to be in line with their personal ideals and feel that they are having a beneficial environmental influence. Green packaging therefore has the potential to greatly influence the buying habits of consumers by raising the possibility of impulsive purchases for sustainable goods.

## **Conclusion and recommendation**

This study investigated the effect of green packaging on consumers buying behavior. The result of the study showed that green packaging has an effect on consumers buying behaviors. Growing consumer interest in sustainability and environmental responsibility has made green packaging an important factor to take into account when choosing what to buy. Understanding how green packaging affects consumer attitudes, perceptions, and behavior can help businesses develop effective strategies to meet the evolving demands of environmentally conscious consumers. On the basis of the findings it was recommended that businesses should design their product packaging with consumers' sensitive to the environment in mind. Firms should create product packaging that can easily decompose to lessen the environmental harm that packaging does. Lastly, Firms should plan their manufacturing procedures to provide ecologically friendly products in sustainable packaging.

## **Suggestion for further studied**

This research was carried out to examine the effect of green packaging on consumer buying behaviors. However, the sample size of the study was relatively small. Thus, further study should be carried out on green packaging and consumer buying behaviors on a larger population and sample size. This is due to the fact that using small populations and samples to make decisions can lead to incorrect inferential statistics and erroneous conclusions. A survey research design was used in the study to examine the connection that exists between the research constructs. Future research could use different methodologies to investigate the interaction between consumer buying behaviors and green packaging. Subsequent research endeavors should include a range of theoretical frameworks to elucidate consumer buying behaviors concerning the purchase products in environmentally conscious packaging. Furthermore, the independent variable in this study, green packaging, has a number of aspects and dimensions that were not used in this particular investigation. Thus, additional research including a wider range of aspects and dimensions of green packaging is necessary to determine the impact of these factors on consumer buying behaviors. Additionally, research can be done in other sectors of the economy, such industrial goods business organizations.

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