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CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS ECO FRIENDLY PACKAGING

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ABSTRACT :

The increasing concern over environmental sustainability has led to a significant shift in consumer preferences, particularly in the context of packaging. This study aims to explore consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly packaging, examining the factors influencing their purchasing decisions, attitudes, and perceptions regarding sustainable packaging options. Through a combination of surveys and interviews, the research investigates consumer awareness of environmental issues, the perceived benefits of eco-friendly packaging, and its impact on brand loyalty. Additionally, the study evaluates the role of social and cultural influences, as well as the effectiveness of marketing strategies in promoting eco-friendly packaging. The findings reveal that while consumers express a preference for sustainable packaging, challenges such as cost, availability, and convenience still influence their behaviour. The research provides valuable insights for businesses seeking to align their packaging strategies with consumer expectations and environmental sustainability goals.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, Eco-friendly packaging, Consumer preferences

Introduction

The growing concern over environmental degradation has prompted a change in both consumer behaviour and corporate practices. Packaging waste, especially plastic, has contributed significantly to environmental pollution, leading to severe ecological consequences. Eco-friendly packaging solutions have emerged as a key strategy to mitigate these effects. Such packaging includes materials that are biodegradable, recyclable, or reusable, offering a more sustainable alternative to traditional packaging options. As consumers become more aware of the environmental impact of their choices, the demand for products that align with eco-conscious values has risen. Brands that adopt eco-friendly packaging stand to gain not only by reducing their environmental footprint but also by enhancing their reputation among increasingly environmentally-aware customers. However, while there is considerable focus on the environmental benefits of sustainable packaging, there is a need to understand how consumers perceive and respond to these efforts. This study explores consumer perception towards eco-friendly packaging and seeks to uncover the motivations and challenges faced by consumers when purchasing products packaged sustainably. The research aims to provide valuable insights for businesses that are looking to enhance their sustainable packaging strategies and better align with consumer expectations.

This paper contributes deeper understanding to the growing body of knowledge of consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly packaging in a unique socio-cultural context: Vietnam. Globally, the use of plastic packaging for consumer products has steadily increased. In 2012, the global plastic production volume was 288 million tons (Parker, 2015). In 2015, this figure increased to 448 million tons, 40 per cent of which was single-use plastic (Parker, 2018), mostly applied for food packaging (Ritschel, 2018). Each year, it is estimated that 90 million tons of plastic waste enters the world's oceans from coastal regions (Howard et al., 2018). Plastic waste can damage the ecosystem of the oceans. There is evidence that plastic may cause malnutrition or starvation for fish and eventually lead to plastic ingestion by humans on a large scale. In 2016, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) gave a warning of increased risks to human health from micro-plastic pollution in commercial fish (Trousdale et al., 2017). Additionally, the European Parliament has approved the ban of single-use plastics, effective from 2021 across European Union (EU) member countries (Rankin, 2019).

Literature Review

The literature review is an overview of the previously published work on a topic. The term can refer to a full scholarly paper or a section of a scholarly work such as a book, or an article. **Michel Laroche (2001)** identifies key demographic and psychographic factors, such as income level, education, environmental awareness, and social responsibility, that influence this behaviour. Laroche explores how companies can strategically target these consumers through marketing efforts that emphasize environmental benefits. The study highlights the potential for businesses to tap into this niche market, emphasizing the importance of clear, credible eco-labelling and product differentiation. **Luo and Bhattacharya (2006)** examine the link between corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices, such as sustainable packaging, and customer satisfaction and finds that companies that adopt CSR initiatives, including eco-friendly packaging, tend to enjoy higher customer loyalty and market value. **Scott and Vigar-Ellis (2014)** explore the behaviour of consumers in developing countries towards eco-friendly packaging. Their study finds that although environmental awareness is rising,

price sensitivity remains a significant barrier to adoption. Consumers in developing nations are less willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly packaging, especially when alternatives are cheaper.

Methodology of the Study

Research Design

This study adopts a descriptive research design to understand and analyse consumer behaviour towards eco-friendly packaging. The approach helps in gathering detailed insights into consumer preferences, attitudes, and the factors influencing their choices related to sustainable packaging.

Sample Size

A sample size of 100 respondents has been selected by adopting convenient sampling method.

Sample Design

A non-probability convenience sampling technique is used to collect data from consumers who are accessible and willing to participate, including those shopping at retail outlets, supermarkets, and online platforms.

Data Collection

The data were collected from primary and secondary sources.

Primary Data

A primary data is collected directly from respondents through questionnaire.

Secondary Data

A secondary data is collected from books, journals, websites and articles.

Tools and Techniques

The data was collected through questionnaires method. The research is descriptive type. The analysis done through the tabular and graphical representative.

Data Analysis Techniques

A data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as simple percentage method, ranking analysis, chi-square analysis.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

1. What makes to choose the eco-friendly packaged products?

Eco-friendly products	Frequency	Percentage
Price	45	45%
Awareness	25	25%
Quality	30	30%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with price 45%, 25% respondents agree with awareness, 30% respondents agree with quality.

2. Which types of products do you expect to have eco-friendly packaging?

Eco-friendly packaging products	Frequency	Percentage
Foods and Beverages	25	25%
Cosmetics and Skincare	20	20%
Electronics	20	20%
Clothing	15	15%
Household Items	20	20%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with foods and beverages 25%, 20% respondents agree with cosmetics and skincare, 20% respondents agree with electronic products, 15% respondents agree with clothing products and 20% respondents agree with household items.

3. What kind of eco-labels or certifications creating trust between consumers?

Kinds of eco-labels or certifications	Frequency	Percentage
FSC [Forest Stewardship Council]	20	20%
Green Dot	25	25%
Biodegradable Certifications	25	25%
Plastic Free Seal	30	40%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with plastic free seal 30%, 25% respondents agree with green dot, 25% respondents agree with biodegradable certifications, 20% respondents agree with FSC [Forest Stewardship Council].

4. Whom take a responsibility to encourage the eco-friendly packaging?

Responsibility to encourage the eco-friendly packaging	Frequency	Percentage
Government	25	25%
Manufactures or Companies	10	10%
Retailers	10	10%
Consumers	20	20%
NGO or Environmental groups	35	35%
Total	100	100%

Interpretation

It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with NGO or environmental groups 35%, 20% respondents agree with consumers, 10% respondents agree with retailers, 10% respondents agree with manufactures or companies and 25% respondents agree with government.

Findings

- It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with price.
- It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with foods and beverages.
- It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with plastic free seal.
- It can be referred that majority of the respondents agree with NGO or environmental groups.

Suggestions

- Businesses need to invest in educating consumers on the advantages of green packaging and its influence on the environment. Proper labeling and educational campaigns will enable consumers to make better purchase decisions, which will boost demand for environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Brands must strive to make ecologically friendly packaging as convenient and functional as its conventional counterpart. Consumers will use sustainable packaging if it is accessible, store-able, and disposable.
- Brands must provide transparent information regarding their sourcing and manufacturing practices so that consumers get clear details of the materials incorporated in packaging. This will promote trust among consumers and alleviate disbelief in "greenwashing" intentions.
- Providing discounts, rewards, or loyalty points to consumers who opt for products with environmentally friendly packaging can incentivize consumers to prioritize sustainability. Companies can also incentivize the reuse of packaging through return and reward programs.
- Companies need to promote their dedication to sustainability not only by using eco-friendly packaging but by other green practices as well. By highlighting their overall green efforts, brands can reinforce their image and attract green consumers.
- Stimulating creativity in packaging design can result in innovative solutions that are both sustainable and consumer compliant. Such companies can seek new materials like edible or biodegradable packaging, attracting environmentally friendly consumers.
- Promote governmental support for sustainable packaging in the form of subsidies, regulations, or tax breaks to those companies which implement sustainable packaging practices. This will further lower the economic burden on the firms and promote large-scale implementation of sustainable packaging.

Conclusion

This study, consumers preference towards green products and packaging concludes that almost each consumer participated in in research is well aware of green products and packaging and also consumers are well known of effects of complementary products on environment, though this study concludes that purchase behavior of consumers towards green products and packaging is positive. Consumers are concerned about environment extensively. Most consumers regularly recycle their product packages on a regular basis.

Consumer education played a vital role in educating consumers regarding green products and packaging and harmful effects of complementary products and packages. According to research most of the consumers are confident that green marketing will be having a huge impact in future regards to making world more sustainable. Green marketing improved proper utilization of resources and also helped in protection of environment. Green marketing led to creation of demand for green products and packaging. Based on research consumers are desired for purchasing of green products and positive towards usage of green packages. As the analysis shows that most of the consumers are ready to pay more amount of money to buy green products and for green package for enhanced quality of life and to save environment from depletion. Price is the main concern which drives consumer buying behavior. Consumers are well concerned about future state of environment and this signifies demand of green products and packages in near future. Though many consumers are still not confident that do companies are truthful in promoting their green products.

Marketers should come up with variety of green products and packages that should give equivalent or more satisfaction than complementary products and packages, and they should also focus on the pricing of the products as price is the main factor which leads to purchase behavior, pricing should be competitive with complementary products, this will motivate consumers to make their decisions mainly towards green products and packages. Marketers really have to be focused on green marketing extensively, which will create believe among consumers that companies are really truthful in promoting green products.

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