

Marketing PhD Research Topic

Consumer Acceptance and Preferences Towards Sustainable Product Packaging

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Abstract

This research aims to investigate consumer acceptance and preferences towards sustainable product packaging. By examining consumer perceptions, expectations and purchasing behaviour of sustainable packaging, this project will provide significant societal value and drive sustainable business innovation. The research will use a mixed-methods approach, including focus groups and surveys to gather consumer data. Focus will be on exploring generational and cultural influences on attitudes and expectations. The expected outcomes include insights into consumer perceptions of benefits and barriers to adopting sustainable packaging, and recommendations for organisations on effectively promoting these products. This will contribute to the development of consumer-aligned strategies, meeting regulatory demands, driving innovation, and fostering broader acceptance of environmentally friendly packaging alternatives.

Project Outline

Sustainability is no longer optional but is an essential consideration for businesses aiming to thrive in a socially conscious and regulatory-driven marketplace. As such, sustainability has become one of the integral functions of business operations and is changing how products are manufactured, marketed and consumed. There is increasing demand on supply-chains to be more flexible and adaptive to environmental issues (Bai, Sarkis, Yin & Dou, 2020) and ethical, green, and sustainability have become key marketing terms that are changing communications and consumer engagement strategies (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019).

There is growing emphasis on reducing the environmental impact of production and manufacturing practices from governments, manufacturers and consumers (Li et al., 2020). As such, sustainable packaging has emerged as an important industry consideration and research topic (Oloyede & Lignou, 2021). While this area of study is gaining momentum, there are on-going calls for further empirical research examining the drivers, barriers and performance outcomes of sustainable packaging (Afif, Rebolledo & Roy, 2022) and the relationship between sustainability focussed marketing and consumer purchase intentions (Ferraris, Giudice, Grandhi & Cillo, 2020).

This PhD research will provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer attitudes, expectations, and behaviours towards sustainable packaging. The research will investigate the social and economic dimensions of packaging sustainability, including consumers' perceptions of the environmental impact of packaging, their preferences for sustainable packaging attributes, and the factors that drive their purchase decisions. The study will explore the impact of generational, cultural and other demographic differences on attitudes and behaviour in the context of sustainable packaging. This will provide valuable insights to guide the development and marketing of sustainable packaging that resonates with consumers, ultimately supporting broader sustainability efforts in the consumer product industry.

Research questions for this project could include, but are not limited to:

1. What are consumers' perceptions, attitudes and expectations towards sustainable product packaging?
2. What are the key factors that influence consumer preferences and acceptance of sustainable packaging?
3. How do consumers' perceptions of the attributes of sustainable packaging influence their purchase behaviour?
4. What are the perceived benefits and barriers to the adoption of sustainable packaging from a consumer perspective?
5. How can sustainable packaging be designed and communicated to better align with consumer expectations and behaviours?
6. How do cultural differences impact consumer perceptions and acceptance of sustainable packaging?
7. What are the demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, education level, income) that affect consumer preferences for sustainable packaging?

References

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