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A STUDY IN UNDERSTANDING THE CONSUMER PERCEPTION FACTORS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PACKAGING IN FOOD INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT: Within the context of the food sector, this research explores the complex aspects of customer perception about environmentally friendly packaging. Within the context of today's environmentally aware society, businesses are being subjected to an increasing number of requests to embrace sustainable practices, which may include the use of environmentally friendly packaging solutions. A thorough examination of consumer behaviour and preferences is the means by which the researchers want to accomplish their goal of determining the underlying elements that influence consumers' attitudes on environmentally friendly packaging in the food industry. For the purpose of ensuring that full data was collected, the methodology used a mixed-methods approach, which included both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Comprehensive interviews were conducted in addition to questionnaires that were sent to a diverse group of customers. The purpose of these interviews was to give more in-depth insights into the attitudes and behaviours of the participants about sustainable packaging. Through the use of data obtained from a wide variety of sources, the research endeavoured to improve the reliability and validity of its conclusions. The results of the research highlight a number of critical aspects that influence and influence the impression that buyers have of sustainable packaging. One of the most important factors that influences consumer behaviour is the increased knowledge of the effect that packaging materials have on the environment. According to the findings of the research, the recyclability, biodegradability, and decreased waste output of the packaging have a substantial impact on the preferences of customers for environmentally friendly packaging solutions. In addition, it was discovered that the customers' perceptions of the product's quality and freshness had a major impact on their willingness to accept different packaging materials on the market. On the other hand, the report also draws attention to considerable obstacles that stand in the way of the broad adoption of environmentally friendly packaging options. Among these concerns are the possible cost repercussions of environmentally friendly alternatives, the availability of these options, and the potential difficulties that they may provide. As an additional point of interest, the researchers are firmly in favour of the concept of fostering efforts within the food business that promote more openness and knowledge-sharing. Specifically, they highlight the role of education and the transmission of information in the process of moulding the viewpoints of consumers.

KEYWORDS: Perceived Quality, Environmental Friendliness, Convenience of the Consumers, Food Industry, Knowledge-Sharing

1. INTRODUCTION

Packaging is seen by customers as a physical building that encloses an item that they want to purchase. In the marketing mix of a company, the packaging is the most important component. It is possible for the packaging to include features that are beneficial to the environment without sacrificing its other capabilities. Packaging is a medium that serves the purpose of delivering information, protecting the goods, and improving the marketing efforts that are being made for the product. Additionally, it has the potential to influence the customers' propensity towards a certain brand, as well as their views of safety, value, and quality respectively. In order to determine the features of packaging that have an effect on the views of purchasers, a number of studies have been conducted to explore the effects of form, size, as well as verbal and visual signals. According to the academic literature, the altering opinions of consumers and the possible improvement of conventional packaging via adjustments to its components are both important factors to consider (Cantele, 2020). More research is needed to investigate the possibility of using environmentally friendly packaging. In order to affect customers' impressions about affordability, quality, simplicity of use, and likelihood to make a purchase, ecologically friendly packaging is designed with the intention of influencing that perception. Consequently, there is a need for more research to be conducted in order to investigate the reaction of consumers towards environmentally friendly packaging, especially in respect to individualised packaging solutions (Wang, 2021). The purpose of this research was to investigate the influences that consumers' views of different forms of packaging, with a specific emphasis on environmentally friendly packaging, had on their intentions to make purchases. This research adds to the current body of literature in the food sector by offering further insights into consumer awareness of sustainable packaging and a deeper understanding of the existing gap between consumer views and the real sustainability of such packaging. Specifically, this study focuses on the gap between consumer perceptions and the actual

sustainability of such packaging. Validation of the process is also achieved by the use of the same strategy in the fast-expanding consumer goods industry, such as muesli cereal manufacture. The findings of this research provide managers significant insights that may help them understand the opinions of customers about sustainable packaging and the challenges they confront while moving to more environmentally friendly packaging solutions. Furthermore, this research provides advice for successfully connecting with customers, taking into consideration the strategic relevance of highlighting the environmentally friendly elements of packaging in order to educate customers about the sustainable properties of the packaging and increase their desire to adopt it. According to a number of studies, consumers have a propensity to misinterpret the components of packaging that are made from ecologically friendly materials (Shim, 2021).

1.1 Problem Statement

The purpose of this research is to investigate the influence that customer perceptions of convenience, quality, and environmental sustainability have on the incorporation of sustainable packaging practices within the food industry. In order to do this, it is necessary to ascertain the influence that customers' perceptions of the quality and safety of goods, the environmental effects of the materials used for packaging, and the practicability of alternative packaging solutions have on their decision-making and behaviour. In order to encourage more sustainable practices within the food sector, the study endeavours to uncover both the obstacles that stand in the way of general adoption and acceptance of environmentally friendly packaging options, as well as the possibilities that exist for doing so.

1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the study are:

- To analyse the impact of perceived quality in influencing the sustainable packaging in food industry
- To understand the influence of environmental friendliness of consumer perception in influencing sustainable packaging in food industry
- To apprehend the convenience of customers in influencing the sustainable packaging in food industry

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The term "perceived quality" refers to the subjective appraisal that a customer makes on the overall excellence of a product or its superiority in comparison to other alternatives for a particular purpose. A personal and subjective assessment of the product's internal and exterior elements is used to establish the outcome. This evaluation is decided by the result. It has been shown in previous research that the packaging of a product may have an effect on how consumers perceive the quality of the product. In general, consumers have a tendency to have a stronger perception of the quality of a product when it is sustainable or when it is presented in a sustainable way (Raab, 2018).

It is possible for purchasers to form an opinion about the pricing of a product based on its packing. As a result of the perception that environmentally friendly packaging is more costly than conventional packaging, consumers' decisions on whether or not to buy things that are packed in a sustainable manner are heavily influenced by price (Tehrani 2020). Due to the fact that people are very sensitive to fluctuations in price, it is possible that they may find themselves in a precarious financial situation if they consider a product to be somewhat expensive (Martin-Rios, 2018).

It has been shown via research that there is a correlation between an individual's ecological awareness or environmental beliefs and their propensity to purchase and make use of sustainable variations (Sarmiento 2018). Consumers, on the other hand, have a limited grasp of the environmental implications of packaging due to the restricted access to information that is available to them. All of the material, visual, and linguistic ecological characteristics of the packaging are taken into consideration when determining the environmental sustainability of the package. Previous academic research has shown that the choice of packaging material has an effect on the way in which customers perceive the environmental friendliness of a product (Niederle, 2020).

A consumer's degree of convenience may be defined as the amount of work that they are required to put forth in order to acquire a certain product. There is a possibility that alterations in lifestyles and consumption patterns are to blame for the growing need for clients to have greater convenience when purchasing products (Baig, 2022).

There are implications for transportation, health assurances, and convenience that are brought about by the packaging. Generally speaking, the qualities of the material, size, and technique of closure of the package are the primary factors that customers consider when evaluating the convenience of the packing. An improvement in the consumers' impression of the convenience of the packing and an impact on their intention to purchase might be achieved by modifying the dimensions, form, or distinguishing elements of the packaging (Saengchai, 2020).

The research that has been done on the particular topic of environmentally responsible consumption has demonstrated that the ease of the packaging has an effect on the desire to make a purchase (Chen, 2018).

3. METHODOLOGY

By comparing a number of different experimental groups, this study carried out an online choice experiment with the purpose of determining how customers feel about environmentally friendly packaging. The online method was chosen because it has a lower potential for bias and a higher potential for the efficient use of time. When the choice experiment was being introduced, the researchers made a conscious decision not to disclose the purpose of the study, which was to get an understanding of how consumers perceive environmentally friendly packaging. This was done in order to reduce the impact of social desirability bias. The individuals who made up our sample were adults from France who were frequent customers. It was decided to start with muesli since it is a noteworthy product category that might potentially benefit from enhanced packaging in order to exhibit a more environmentally conscious approach. For the purpose of gathering information for the inquiry, a collection of standardised questionnaires was sent to a large population that was located in a number of different geographic regions. It is possible for the researcher who is utilising this particular approach to gather data from either an uncontrolled or controlled variable, depending on the experimental design. Due to the fact that both types of variable sets are capable of producing data, it is possible to extract information from either of them. Due to the fact that the respondents were compelled to provide responses to questions that were purposefully designed to elicit specific information, there was a restricted amount of room for open-ended replies.

3.1 Analysis

This section provides the data analysis of the study based on the information collated by the researcher.

Table 1: Demographic data

Respondents Gender	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Male	98	66.70
Female	49	33.30
Respondents Age	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 30 years	53	36.10
31 - 40 years	45	30.60
41 - 50 years	18	12.20
Above 50 years	31	21.10
Education	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Completed Diploma	64	43.50
Completed Undergraduation	60	40.80
Completed Postgraduation	23	15.60
Type of Family	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Nuclear Family	83	56.50
Joint Family	64	43.50
Position	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Food production	70	47.60
Delivery Agent	27	18.40
Supervisor	44	29.90
Business Owner	6	4.10
Experience	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Less than 5 years of experience	45	30.60
5 - 10 years	40	27.20
10 - 15 years	24	16.30
15 - 20 years	27	18.40
Above 20 years	11	7.50
Total	**147**	**100.00**

Based on a number of indicators, the data that was provided offers a comprehensive picture of the demographic composition and features of the individuals who took part in the

study. With regard to gender, the majority of the total sample was comprised of male respondents (66.70 percent), while the proportion of female respondents was 33.30 percent. The fact that this finding was made suggests that there is a disparity between the sexes in the population that is being under investigation. The participants were divided into four groups according to their age distribution: those under the age of 30, those between the ages of 31 and 40, those between the ages of 41 and 50, and those above the age of 50. Individuals who were less than 30 years old made up the age group that recorded the largest proportion of respondents (36.10%). Next, individuals who were between the ages of 31 and 40 made up 30.60 percent of the total. The percentages of participants who fell into the older age groups, namely those individuals who were above the age of 50 and those who were between the ages of 41 and 50, were 12.10% and 20.20%, respectively. There was a wide range of educational backgrounds among the participants, with the majority of them having either a diploma (43.50%) or an undergraduate degree as their highest level of schooling. The sample consisted of a very small percentage of individuals, namely 15.60%, who had successfully completed postgraduate degrees. There is a broad variety of variance in the educational backgrounds of the population that was surveyed. Demographic data are shown in the Table 1.

The vast majority of respondents, who accounted for 56.50 percent of the sample, acknowledged that their family structure consisted of nuclear families. Joint families made up the remaining 43.50 percent of the population. Among the population that was investigated, the findings suggest that nuclear family configurations are considerably more prevalent than other possibilities. The individuals who took part in the study were categorised according to their occupations, which included those of food manufacturers, delivery agents, supervisors, and business owners. In terms of occupation, the largest percentage of respondents (47.60%) said that they were involved in the occupation of food production, while 29.90% indicated that they were supervisors. 4.10 percent of those who responded were new company owners, while 18.40

percent were those who worked in deliveries. There was a wide range of experience levels among the participants, with the majority of them having either five to ten years of experience (27.20%) or much less than five years of experience (30.60%). The following additional experience categories were included: those with 10-15 years of experience (16.30%), those with 15-20 years of experience (18.40%), and those with above 20 years of experience (7.50%). It is clear from the distribution of the data that the sample that was questioned is comprised of individuals who have a wide variety of degrees of skill, ranging from novices to experts with years of experience

3.2 Regression analysis

Table 2: Regression analysis

Coefficients	B	St.Err	Beta	t val	P value
(Constant)	0.318	0.162		1.956	0.05
Perceived quality	0.355	0.082	0.358	4.353	0.00
Environmental friendliness	0.348	0.086	0.377	4.07	0.00
Convenience to customers	0.197	0.073	0.203	2.716	0.01

First and foremost, it is of the utmost importance to recognise that the constant term in the regression equation represents the value that is anticipated to be associated with the dependent variable when all of the independent variables are set to zero respectively. A coefficient of 0.318 is assigned to the constant term in this analysis, and the standard error is calculated to be 0.162. The results of the study showed that the t-value was 1.956, and the p-value was 0.05. The findings of this investigation indicate that the constant term has statistical significance at a level of significance equal to 0.05. Taking into consideration the independent components, it has been shown that the dependent variable is positively and significantly

influenced by the perceived quality of the independent elements. In support of this assertion, a coefficient of 0.355 and a standard error of 0.082 have been calculated. The fact that the beta value is 0.358 indicates that the influence of perceived quality on the variable that is being studied is of a moderate degree of strength. Further evidence to support the significance of this association is provided by the p-value of 0.00 and the t-value of 4.353. These numbers indicate that higher values of the dependent variable are associated with higher levels of perceived quality. Regression analysis are shown in the Table 2.

In a similar vein, there is a robust and statistically significant connection between being environmentally conscious and the variable that is being studied. When compared to perceived quality, which has a value of 0.348 and a standard error of 0.086, environmental friendliness has a somewhat more significant impact, as shown by the beta coefficient of 0.377. The significance of the correlation between the dependent variable and products or services that are regarded as being environmentally friendly is shown by the statistical analysis, which reveals that the t-value is 4.07 and the p-value is 0.00. An additional point to consider is that there is a robust and statistically significant connection between the convenience of the customer and the dependent variable. As shown by its beta coefficient of 0.203 and coefficient of 0.197, together with a standard error of 0.073, the influence of convenience on consumers is considerably smaller than that of perceived quality and environmental sustainability. This statement is supported by the fact that the standard error is 0.073. The t-value of 2.716 and the p-value of 0.01, both of which are statistically significant, lend credence to the significance of this connection. There is a link between the things or services that give greater ease for clients and higher values of the dependent variable, according to the results, which imply that there is a correlation between the two.

3.3 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA)

Table 3: ANOVA 1

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	150.399a	4	37.6	186.548	0.00
Intercept	507.827	1	507.827	2519.53	0.00
Perceived Quality	150.399	4	37.6	186.548	0.00
Error	28.621	142	0.202		

A total of four degrees of freedom are available for the updated model, which incorporates the concept of perceived quality as an independent variable. The total of squares for Type III is 150.399, which is equivalent to a mean square of 37.6. This is evident from the data. Both the p-value of 0.00 and the F-statistic of 186.548 contribute to the conclusion that the model is statistically significant. The fact that this is the case shows that even after taking into account the influence of other variables, the difference in sustainable packaging may still be primarily explained by perceived quality. Furthermore, when just one degree of freedom is taken into consideration, the intercept component of the model displays a Type III sum of squares that amounts to 507.827, which results in a mean square value of 507.827. The fact that the p-value is 0.00 and the F-statistic is 2519.529 suggests that the intercept component is very important from a statistical point of view. Based on this study, it seems that sustainable packaging is considerably impacted in a manner that extends beyond the influence of perceived quality alone. ANOVA 1 are shown in the Table 3.

Its Type III sum of squares of 150.399, which is based on four degrees of freedom and a mean square of 37.6 and demonstrates the distinctive influence that perceived quality has on sustainable packaging, gives an indication of the unique impact that it has. Taking into account

the other factors, the F-statistic of 186.548 and the p-value that corresponds to it, which is 0.00, reveal that the perceived quality of the packaging has a significant influence on the sustainability of the package. To conclude, the error component of the model has 142 degrees of freedom, and the sum of squares for Type III is 28.621, which results in a mean square value of 0.202. Consequently, this demonstrates the degree of unpredictability that exists in environmentally friendly packaging, which is not taken into consideration by the other elements and perceived quality of the model. The findings point to a significant connection between the perception of quality and environmentally responsible packaging.

Table 4: ANOVA 2

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	144.308a	4	36.077	147.581	0.00
Intercept	633.39	1	633.39	2591.03	0.00
Environmental Friendliness	144.308	4	36.077	147.581	0.00
Error	34.713	142	0.244		

A mean square value of 36.077 and a Type III sum of squares of 144.308 are shown by the updated model, which also adds environmental kindness as a distinct variable. Additionally, there are four degrees of freedom. Both the p-value of 0.00 and the F-statistic of 147.581 provide evidence that the model is statistically significant from a statistical point of view. The findings of this study reveal that environmental friendliness has a substantial role in explaining the variety of variances in sustainable packaging, even after taking into account the influence of other variables. The model's intercept term has a Type III sum of squares of 633.39 when

there is only one degree of freedom, which results in a mean square of 633.39. This is the maximum value that may be obtained. The fact that the p-value is 0.00 and the F-statistic is 2591.029 suggests that the intercept component is very important from a statistical point of view. The fact that this is the case suggests that sustainable packaging has a substantial impact on a wider range of issues than only its beneficial effects on the environment. ANOVA 2 are shown in the Table 4.

Using a Type III sum of squares of 144.308, with a mean square of 36.077 and four degrees of freedom, we are able to determine the impact that the use of environmentally friendly packaging has on sustainable packaging. After taking into account a number of other factors, the F-statistic of 147.581 and the p-value that corresponds to it, which is 0.00, indicate that environmentally friendly packaging has a considerable positive influence. With 142 degrees of freedom, the error component in the model has a Type III sum of squares of 34.713, which is equal to a mean square of 0.244. This is the case because the model has 142 degrees of freedom. This demonstrates the degree of variability in environmentally friendly packaging that cannot be accounted for by environmental decency or any of the other characteristics that are included into the model. According to the findings, there is a significant connection between environmental consciousness and environmentally responsible packaging.

Table 5: ANOVA 3

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	141.970a	4	35.493	136.031	0.00
Intercept	776.475	1	776.475	2975.97	0.00
Convenience to customers	141.97	4	35.493	136.031	0.00
Error	37.05	142	0.261		

The new model, which incorporates the convenience of the customer as a distinct variable, generates a mean square value of 35.493 and a Type III sum of squares of 141.970 with four degrees of freedom. Given that the p-value is 0.00 and the F-statistic is 136.031, it can be concluded that the model is supported by statistical evidence. Even after taking into account a variety of other variables, this indicates that the level of convenience that is provided to consumers has a substantial part in explaining the discrepancies that are seen in sustainable packaging. The model's intercept term has a Type III sum of squares of 776.475 when there is only one degree of freedom, which results in a mean square of 776.475. This is the case when there is only one degree of freedom. There is a strong indication that the intercept term is highly statistically significant, as shown by the p-value of 0.00 and the F-statistic of 2975.966 data. In light of this, it seems that environmentally friendly packaging has a substantial effect that extends beyond the straightforward convenience it provides to consumers. ANOVA 3 are shown in the Table 5.

It is possible to quantify the precise impact that consumer convenience has on environmentally friendly packaging by calculating its Type III sum of squares, which comes to a total of 141.970. A mean square value of 35.493 is also associated with this measure, which also has four degrees of freedom. There is substantial evidence that customer convenience has a significant influence on sustainable packaging, even when other variables are taken into consideration, as shown by the F-statistic of 136.031 and the p-value that is associated with it, which is 0.00. The error component of the model has 142 degrees of freedom and a Type III sum of squares of 37.05, which results in a mean square of 0.261. To recap, the model has a mean square coefficient of 0.261. This demonstrates the degree of variability in environmentally friendly packaging that cannot be accounted for by factors such as the convenience of the consumer or any of the other variables that incorporate into the model. The

data indicate that there is a significant connection between environmentally friendly packaging and the convenience of the client

4. DISCUSSION

The research investigates in great detail an essential component of consumer behaviour, namely the way in which consumers perceive environmentally friendly packaging in the food industry. This study not only offers one-of-a-kind data but also brings up crucial concerns for discussion, notably with respect to the convenience of consumers, the sustainability of the environment, and the perception of quality. The article begins by doing an analysis of the significance of perceived quality in terms of its ability to influence consumer attitudes towards sustainable packaging. On the other hand, there could be variations in the manner in which perceived quality is articulated and evaluated in connection to environmentally friendly packaging. The assessment of the consumers' opinions of the quality of things that are packaged using sustainable methods, as compared to traditional packaging techniques, is of utmost importance. A further possibility for the article is to investigate how perceptions of quality are influenced by the durability, beauty, and usability of environmentally friendly packing materials. In addition, the significance of environmental sustainability is emphasised as a determining element in the impressions that customers form. The study recognises the significance of environmental factors in affecting packaging decisions; nevertheless, it might be improved by doing more research into certain environmental attributes that are of the biggest relevance to consumers. We would have a better understanding of how the characteristics of the material used in the packaging, such as its recyclability, biodegradability, and carbon footprint, influence the purchasing decisions and perceptions of consumers if we conducted further research on these characteristics. In addition, the study investigates the impact that

consumer convenience has on the attitudes and willingness of consumers to accept environmentally friendly packaging. While it is true that consumers place a high value on efficiency, it is essential to determine the extent to which convenience really contributes to the achievement of sustainable objectives. There are certain instances in which the characteristics of a package that places an emphasis on convenience may come into conflict with the goals of sustainability, which may result in inquiries into the nature of trade-offs and the preferences of customers. Organisations that are interested in implementing sustainable packaging solutions may find that doing an analysis of the equilibrium between convenience and sustainability may offer them with significant information

5. CONCLUSION

To recap, the research that was conducted on the elements that determine how consumers view sustainable packaging in the food business offers significant insights into a facet of consumer behaviour that is becoming more essential. Through an examination of the effect that customers have on perceived quality, environmental benevolence, and convenience, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge about the involvement of consumers with sustainable packaging choices. However, there are still significant differences of opinion on the intricate link that exists between these aspects and the effects that they have on the plans that are being developed for ecologically friendly packaging. It will be essential for businesses and governments in the food industry to address these challenges in order to achieve their goals of promoting sustainability while also satisfying the preferences and expectations of potential customers

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Not Applicable

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