

INFLUENCE OF GREEN PACKAGING ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTIONS OF GROCERY PRODUCTS IN FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA

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ABSTRACT:

The increasing awareness of environmental issues has led to a growing interest in green packaging among consumers. This study investigates the influence of green packaging on consumers' purchase intentions of grocery products in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A survey of 288 consumers was conducted to examine the influence of physical outlook, trust and quality of green packaging have a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Specifically, the findings indicate that consumers are more likely to purchase grocery products with attractive and eco- friendly packaging and that trust in green packaging is a critical factor in shaping purchase intentions. The study's findings have important implications for marketers and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable consumption practices in Nigeria. The study suggests that manufacturers and retailers prioritize green packaging in their marketing strategies to appeal to environmentally conscious consumers. Furthermore, companies should invest in building trust with their customers by providing transparent information about their green packaging practices and environmental sustainability initiatives. Additionally, policymakers and regulatory bodies should develop and enforce guidelines and standards for green packaging in Nigeria, to ensure that companies adhere to environmentally responsible packaging practices. These recommendations can help promote sustainable consumption practices, reduce environmental waste, and enhance competitiveness of businesses in Nigeria.

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Introduction

Green packaging is one issue that is engaging consumers' interest in recent times. Green Packaging is a sustainable and cost – effective alternative to single use packaging. It is achieved by limiting the packaging waste created, maximizing sustainable materials (such as recyclable or biodegradable packaging). Hence, green packaging has become an important aspect in order to reduce the impact of waste and pollution, and to promote sustainable development. Green packaging- also known as 'eco-green packaging', 'eco-friendly packaging', 'sustainable packaging', or 'recyclable packaging' uses ecological materials for packaging purposes, while always bearing in mind that products must be effective and safe for human health and the environment. Firms are encouraged to promote sustainable packaging not only by the increasing importance that consumers place on the environment, but also by the laws, regulations, taxation and other actions promoted by governments to make packaging sustainable and environmentally friendly. For example, the directive by various government agencies across the globe demands that firms abide by legislative initiatives on packaging waste. Packaging is seen to play a pivotal role in all types of products especially, grocery products. It attracts and encourages the customers to choose the products. But, when consumers are done with the consumption of the products and the packages are useless and the consumers litter; these litter wreaks havoc on the environment and pollutes the environment. Most times these wastes become toxic to many animals as they are not easily biodegradable. It is therefore, on this premise that green packaging has become an emerging need for the current situation to eradicate pollution and move forward to sustainable development. Green packaging has also been used as a tool for protecting the environment for the future generation. It is the use of materials and manufacturing methods for packaging of goods that has low impact on both energy consumption and on the environment. By using this eco-friendly packaging, manufacturers and consumers can eliminate these contaminants that destroy the atmosphere, soil and ocean of our planet. In recent years, many researches have been carried out in the specialized areas covering the different perspective and dimensions of green packaging. However, to the knowledge of the researcher, no previous research has been carried out to dig into the effect of green packaging on consumers purchase intentions, particularly as it concerns grocery products in a cosmopolitan city such as the Federal Capital territory, Abuja-Nigeria. The study therefore, intends to fill this gap by analyzing all of the relevant publications found in the database. More specifically, the study will analyze the effect of green packaging on consumers' purchase

intentions from business and consumer viewpoints, including some specific issues such as the design and materials used in green packaging, green packaging costs, marketing strategies and corporate social responsibility related to green packaging, and the impact of green packaging in waste management, the circular economy, logistics, and supply chain management.

Statement of the Problem

The changing times across the globe portends great danger as a result of environmental degradation, erosion control and flood disasters arising from general lackluster attitude in governance and total lack of care of God –given natural environment. Nigeria, as one of the most emerging economy in Africa is faced with issues of inadequate green knowledge, lack of environmental consciousness, high price of green and distrust towards green products. As a result of globalization, new ways of presenting products to consumers emerge and these consumers are faced with the challenge of how to choose among the products that are well stocked before them in store shelves of supermarkets. These products (particularly grocery products) come in different brands and labels from different countries with different packaging(namely, glass bottles, pet bottles, tetra packs, bag-in- box, etc), different volumes as well as prices. At some point, one might think that concentration of similar products at the same point of sale is due to the circumstances surrounding state monopoly of the beverages. In a recent study it was reported that there were around ten thousand different brands only in Nigeria markets with three thousands of them competing on the shelves of the supermarkets.(Sherman & Tuten,2011). Unless the consumer already knows what to purchase, he/she will go through a selection process. It is based on this premise that the researcher intends to examine the Effect of Green Packaging on Consumer Purchase Intentions of Grocery products in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Objectives of the paper:

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the Effect of Green Packaging on Consumers Purchase Intentions of Grocery products in Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Specifically, the study aims:

- i. To ascertain the influence of physical outlook of green packaging on consumers purchase behavior on Grocery products in FCT
- ii. To examine the influence of trust of green packaging on their buying behavior of Grocery Products in FCT

iii. To find out the impact of quality on the purchase intentions of Grocery Products in FCT.

Significance of the paper

This paper is a very important one that will contribute to the creation of awareness regarding Green packaging. It will also go a long way in contributing immensely to the knowledge of green packaging by providing experimental evidence to the aspect of green marketing and green products packaging. More, importantly, the author is by this effort transferring traditional marketing methods used in conventional marketing to the area of green marketing. Hence, the author expanded the understanding of how to communicate with green marketing effectively to influence consumer behavior efficiently. Furthermore, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of what motivates consumer behavior in terms of ecology. Finally, the study contributes to companies' understanding of how to communicate ecology via green marketing as a means to strengthen the image of their private eco- brand. The contributions of this study will therefore increase the space of knowledge in the academic genre particularly in the green packaging literature.

Conceptual Clarifications

Green The word 'green' refers to environmentally friendly and sustainable practices, products, or services that minimize harm to the planet and promote eco-friendliness (Majid and Ahmed, 2023)

Packaging Packaging includes design and production of container or wrapper used to protect, and deliver products, ensuring safe transportation (Gunnet , S. & Bawa S, 2020). Packaging is the container for a product (Hueber, 2000;6)

Green Packaging Green packaging, also known as sustainable packaging refers to packaging solutions that minimize environmental impact throughout their lifecycle (Mahmoud et al.,2022; Ling et al, 2022)

Green Purchase: Green purchase is a specific act of buying products or services that are environmentally friendly, sustainable, and socially responsible. According to Kamalanon et al. (2022), green purchases prioritize minimizing harm to the planet and promoting eco-friendly practices.

Consumer Behaviour : Consumer behavior examines how individuals make decisions about

what products to buy, how they use them , and what influences their purchasing decisions(Sousa et al, 2022 and Sharma, 2021)

Review of Related Literature

The importance of understanding consumer behaviour can most probably be summarized in a simple, yet powerful, statement by Assael (1995: 3): "Consumers determine the sales and profits of a firm by their purchasing decisions. As such, their motives and actions determine the economic viability of the firm". To be a successful seller of products and services (as can be concluded from the statement above), organizations need to understand consumer needs and behavior and draft their marketing strategies to incorporate such behavioral needs of consumers

Packaging can influence the consumer's mindset of product by its exposure. Scientific studies indicate that packaging allow to attract consumer's attention, transfer valuable product information, position the product in the consumer's mind and differentiate the product from other products (Mohammad & Amin, 2012).

Consumer's attitudes towards green packaging

Consumer attitude towards green packaging have garnered significant attention in recent research. Studies have shown that environmental awareness plays a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes towards sustainable packaging (Chen, 2020; Singh & Pandey, 2022). Perceived value, brand trust, and willingness to pay more for eco friendly products also influence consumer behaviour (Kumar & Singh,2023; Lee & Lee, 2022). The market for sustainable packaging is projected to reach \$413.8Billion by 2027, driven by innovative solutions and growing consumer demand (Grand View Research, 2023). Research highlights the importance of recyclability, recycled content, compostability, and reusability in sustainable packaging (Wang & Li, 2021). Furthermore, businesses adopting green packaging report improved supplier relationships, reduced waste, and increased customer satisfaction (Huang & Li, 2022).

Branding and Consumers Product Preference

Branding applies to services as well as physical products (Cravens and Piercy, 2003). Brand is inseparable from business which is the foundation. In order to have consumer preference, marketers should develop a brand name that can communicate product concepts and help position their brand in the minds of consumers. Importance of branding in a competitive consumer marketing environment cannot be over-emphasized; branding is of immense benefits to both manufacturers and the consumers. Onyeke and Nebo (2000) attested that according to them

branding helps the consumer to distinguish a fake product from authentic one and makes shopping easy; and to the manufacturers, it makes order processing easier and also help them to segment their market.

Packaging and Consumer Product Preference

Packaging helps consumers to understand the contents of product and usage. Consumer's packaging choice is generally an economic decision made by comparing costs and benefits ratio. However, packaging has not only functional utilities. As a marketing tool, packaging has some important roles (Peter-Texeria and Badrie, 2005). Packaging can create competitive advantage for firms. Distinctive and innovative packaging with aesthetic presentation can intrigue consumers and change their interests. Innovative packaging impresses consumers with its colour, images, scent, design, etc.

Price and Consumer Brand Preference

Price plays a significant role in shaping consumer brand preference and purchasing decisions. Studies have shown that price sensitivity can impact consumer behaviour in various industries. According to Fu (2023), price sensitivity can be characterized by consumer perceived value, satisfaction, and loyalty towards a brand. Research has also shown that pricing has substantial effect on consumer buying behaviour , with higher prices potentially leading to lower sales volumes (Huo et al., 2021; Sadiq et al., 2020). Conversely, lower prices can drive sales volumes. Consumer satisfaction also plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between price perception, product quality, service quality, and consumer loyalty (Ginting & Heryjanto, 2023)

Consumers' Purchase Intention

Purchase intention or Consumer buying behavior refers to a person's likelihood of buying a product or service, reflecting their predisposition to make a purchase. Purchase intention is also a consumer's desire to purchase an item or service due to a favorable attitude or opinion towards the product or service (Athapaththu and Kulathunga, 2018) .Purchase intention also represents the probability of purchasing product and service in future by the customer from the store (Wu, Yeh, & Hsiao, 2011). Dodds et al. (2019) states that increase in purchase intention shows increase in probability of purchasing in future. Study shows that consumer purchase intention is a willingness to buy goods at a definite time or in a definite situation (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014).

Theoretical Underpinnings

Theory of Reasoned Action

Theory of Planned Behavior/Reasoned Action was proposed by Ajzen and Fishbein and suggests that behavior is determined by intentions, attitudes (beliefs about a behavior), and subjective norms (beliefs about others' attitudes toward a behavior).

The theory of reasoned action argues that purchase intention of product and service or brand predicts actual purchase which may result in loyalty

(Agarwal & Karahanna, 2000). Luo et al. (2011) argued that purchase intention may boost loyalty.

The Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Planned Behaviour – suggest that a person's health behaviour is determined by their intention to perform a behaviour. A person's intention to perform a behaviour (behavioural intention) is predicted by 1) a person's attitude toward the behaviour, and 2) subjective norms regarding the behaviour. Subjective norms are the result of social and environmental surroundings and a person's perceived control over the behavior. Generally, positive attitude and positive subjective norms result in greater perceived control and increase the likelihood of intentions governing changes in behavior.

Rational Choice Theory

Gary (1992) propounded the rational choice theory also known as choice theory or rational action theory. This theory is usually used to undertake and model social economic behaviour. The theory is anchored on the notion that consumers weigh the expected costs and benefits of different actions and choose those actions which are most beneficial or least costly to them. Rational choice theory attempts to explain all (conforming and deviant) social phenomena in terms of how self-interested individuals make choices under the influence of their preferences. It treats social exchange as similar to economic exchange where all parties try to maximize their advantage or gain, and to minimize their disadvantage or loss.

Rational decision-making is choosing an action given one's preferences; the actions one could take and expectation about the outcomes of those actions.

Rational choice theory makes two assumptions about individuals' preferences for actions.

- i. Completeness – all action can be ranked in an order of preference (indifference between two or more is possible).
- ii. Transitivity – if action a_1 is preferred to a_2 , and action a_2 is preferred to a_3 , then a_1 is preferred to a_3 .

Together these assumptions form the result that given a set of exhaustive and exclusive actions to choose from an individual can rank them in terms of his preferences.

Methodology

The descriptive survey method was basically used for this study. This method was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher estimate the representative sample drawn from the population and to test relevant hypotheses for the purpose of drawing valid conclusions for the research study. The population of the study consisted of all the buyers and users of Grocery products within the Abuja Central Area (particularly from the nine major selected outlets in the Central Area of FCT in the year 2023 numbering one thousand and nine (1009).A sample size of 288 was determined using Taro Yamane's formula To determine the sample size for each stratum, the stratified sampling technique formula was applied to guide the distribution of the questionnaires to the respondents accordingly. Convenience sampling technique was used for this study. This ensured that only the people that were using green packaged groceries were taken as sample from the population. Two research assistants gave helping hand in administering the questionnaire in the shops within Federal Capital Territory. The questionnaire was partitioned into two parts, while "PART A" borders mainly on the respondent's demographic data the "PART B" was to elicit response in relation to the research objectives. A total of twenty-three (23) questions were contained therein with 5-point Likert scale structure. The distribution of the questionnaires was done through direct contact.

Primary data was used and copies of the questionnaire were administered directly to the respondents in the nine major selected outlets of Grocery products in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity and to determine the reliability of the instrument, a test and retest method was used with thirty (30) students. The correlation coefficient was found to be high and significant ($r = 0.72$, $p < 0.05$), it was then concluded that the instrument is reliable.

The data were analyzed using simple frequency tables, percentages, 5-point Likert scale and one sample t-test with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The first section of the questionnaire, which contained the demographic data of the respondents, was analyzed using simple frequency tables and percentages; while the second section of the questionnaire was analyzed using 5-point Likert scale and one sample t-test.

Results

From 288 copies of questionnaires distributed, 276 were returned and they were properly filled

and fitted for analysis. The ages of the respondents of this study ranged from 22 – 51 years with mean and standard deviation of 37.4 ± 5.6 years.

From the 276 questionnaires that were properly filled and fitted for analysis, 59 (21.4%) of them were males, while 217 (78.6%) of them were females.

The marital status distribution of the respondents, 147 (53.3%) of the respondents were single, while 129 (46.7%) of the respondents were married.

The educational distribution of the respondents, 1 (0.4%) of them had primary school education, 23 (8.3%) of them had secondary school education, 201 (72.8%) of them had university education, while 51 (18.5%) of them had other level of education such as NCE, OND, HND, Professional Qualification, etc.

The occupation distribution of the respondents, 97 (35.1%) of them were students, 35 (12.7%) of them were in service sector, 28 (10.1%) of them were in industrial sector, 43 (15.6%) of them were in business sector, while 73 (26.5%) of them belonged to other occupation group mostly politicians as specified by the respondents.

Hypothesis 1

H_0 : The physical outlook of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery Products..

H_{A1} : The physical outlook of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

| Grand Mean | Standard deviation | Test value = 3.0 | | |
|------------|--------------------|------------------|----|---------|
| | | t-test | Df | P-value |
| 2.82 | 0.7855 | -0.512 | 4 | 0.635 |

From the result of hypothesis 1 on the physical outlook of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products, the grand mean of physical outlook that influences consumer preference for Grocery products, which is 2.82 was tested with the cut-off point of 3.0, and the difference was not significant ($P > 0.05$). This means that H_0 is rejected and concluded that the physical outlook of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

Hypothesis 2

H_0 : The trust of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products.

H_{A2} : The trust of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

| Grand Mean | Standard deviation | Test value = 3.0 | | |
|------------|--------------------|------------------|----|---------|
| | | t-test | Df | P-value |
| 2.65 | 0.4041 | -1.732 | 3 | 0.182 |

From the result of hypothesis 2 on the trust of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products, the grand mean trust that influences consumer preference for Grocery products, which is 2.65 was tested with the cut-off point of 3.0, and the difference was

not significant ($P>0.05$). This means that H_0 is rejected and concluded that the trust on green packaging influences consumer preference to Grocery products.

Hypothesis 3

H_03 : The quality of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products.

H_{A3} : The quality of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

| Grand Mean | Standard deviation | Test value = 3.0 | | |
|------------|--------------------|------------------|----|---------|
| | | t-test | Df | P-value |
| 3.18 | 0.29364 | 1.938 | 9 | 0.085 |

From the result of hypothesis 3 on the quality of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products; the grand mean of quality that influences consumer preference for Grocery products, which is 3.18 was tested with the cut-off point of 3.0, and the difference was not significant ($P>0.05$). This means that H_0 is rejected and concluded that the quality of cosmetics influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

Discussions

The result revealed that physical outlook of green packaging of Grocery products is always unique, which distinguishes it from other brands. The hypothesis 1 on the physical outlook of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Green products was rejected ($P>0.05$) and concluded that the physical outlook of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products. It was found that packaging value perception of consumers was related with three components of the models, which were price, brand value perceptions and consumer satisfaction.

The trust condition of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products was rejected ($P>0.05$) and concluded that the trust condition of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products. The result revealed that the quality of Grocery products is highly distinguished from other products. The result on the quality of green packaging does not influence consumer preference for Grocery products was rejected ($P>0.05$) and concluded that the quality of green packaging influences consumer preference for Grocery products.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the major findings of this paper:

1. That the physical outlook of green packaging influences customer preference for Grocery products in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, especially its packaging and long-lasting fragrance.
2. That the trust condition of green packaging influences customer preference for Grocery products in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

3. That the quality of green packaging influences customer preference for Grocery products in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. It is a high quality product that functions effectively as needed by its consumers.

Recommendations

It is recommended as follows

1. Since the physical outlook of a product plays a vital role in influencing preference for Grocery products in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja it should be strictly maintained. New idea on packaging should be sourced to attract more consumers to the products.
2. It is recommended that the trust on green packaging should not be compromised irrespective of any prevailing situation in the market.
3. Since the quality of green packaging of Grocery product adds value to its customer preference in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, it is recommended that all efforts should be sourced to keep the product from being adulterated.

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