

A Study of Consumers' Attitude towards Green Packaged Food Products

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Abstract

There is a drastic change in the consumers thinking selecting the products for their use and are showing more concern towards environment. People now have become more concerned about environmental issues and this awareness has led to a paradigm shift in the thinking towards the way they go about their life. Business organizations have noticed this change and are trying to gain an edge in the competitive market by exploiting the potential in the green market industry. In this research paper, an attempt has been made to to know the awareness among people about green marketing and packaging, their perception towards environmental issues and green packaging.

Keywords: consumer attitude, consumer behaviour, environment pollution, green marketing, green packaging,.

Green marketing

According to the Bruntland Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, green marketing meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

As per the American Marketing Association, green advertising is the showcasing of items that are ventured to be ecologically protected. With developing mindfulness about the ramifications of an unnatural weather change, non-biodegradable strong waste, and hurtful effect of poisons and so on, both advertisers and customers are turning out to be progressively touchy to the requirement for change into green items, green bundling and administrations.

Although, current ecological awful conditions are perpetually threatening shopper wellbeing and prosperity all around. In this way, buyers are turning out to be more delicate in their natural demeanors, inclinations, and purchases. Amid the previous couple of decades, worries about ecological appalling conditions have been expanding. Since Consumers have comprehended the essentialness of ensuring nature, environmentalism has turned into a fundamental subject in the commercial center.

Subsequently numerous organizations began to be all the more socially responsive in tending to contamination and waste transfer by growing ecologically neighborly bundling and putting in various endeavors to keep in-venture with the natural development. Be that as it may, a portion of the best difficulties confronted by these organizations are changes in shopper inclinations, suspiciousness of green publicizing claim, unfavorable purchaser view of green items and the

high cost put resources into creating green items and green bundling. Subsequently, it is crucial to investigate how shoppers see the natural issues, and how they act, particularly in their states of mind towards green items bundling or ecological well-disposed items.

Role of Packaging in Green Marketing

Packaging in marketing as keyword is used for containers and wrapping materials that protect, contain, identify, promote and facilitate the use of the product. Packaging is the final tool to reach the consumers, transfers the message of green providers. Packaging has an essential role in marketing and distribution of products.

All real enterprises make riches however in the event that there is one industry that assumes a special part by methods for both making of riches through an extensive variety of assembling exercises furthermore by method for protecting the riches or esteem made by numerous, numerous different ventures, it is bundling. In a way bundling can be depicted as workmanship and study of ensuring items for capacity, circulation and utilize. The fundamental reason for bundling is to secure and safeguard the products for coordination, warehousing and for end utilize. The sustenance and refreshment industry is one of the principle clients of bundling. Nowadays, around the globe, parcel of significance is given to bundling, as merchandise are being transported from one player on the planet to the next. It is turning into an undeniable industry and India is additionally seeing a comparative pattern. Mass customization of bundling to allow its utilization in numerous business sectors is a theme that necessities composition and talk. Ecological issues, including maintainability, will dependably be a subjective measurement to any bundling outline. Bundling is a rising science, a developing designing order, and a win patron to pharmaceutical ventures.

Aside from the colossal esteem expansion and work required in these exercises, bundling has served the Indian economy by helping conservation of the quality and stretching the timeframe of realistic usability of endless items – going from drain and bread rolls, to medications and pharmaceuticals, handled and semi-prepared sustenance, products of the soil, eatable oils, electronic merchandise and so on., other than residential apparatuses and mechanical apparatus and other equipment requiring transportation. Even after the purchase, the package of the product can continue to impact the consumption experience.

Traditionally, the primary function of the package was to contain and protect the product. In recent times, packaging has become an important part of marketing policy (Peattie 1992). Businesses are recognising the power of a good package to create a constant recognition on the market.

Green Packaging

Green packaging/bundling could be seen as a viable apparatus of showcasing. Particularly since green bundling is the most "noticeable" component of green procedure. Besides, since green mindfulness is developing, green bundling could be seen not just as an intent to pull in new Consumers, additionally as an intent to hold the old ones. The most widely recognized green worries in the bundling business are: use of common assets and abnormal state of vitality utilization, use of non-recyclable bundling material, half-void and twofold skin/over pressed bundles which prompts inefficient utilization of assets and superfluous waste and litter (Peattie 2005).

Everything around us can be labelled as biodegradable or non-biodegradable. Something that can be decomposed and does not cause pollution like fruits and vegetable peels, leaves are sample of biodegradable. Material that is non-biodegradable cannot break down or dissolve by natural process. For many years instead they damage the environment like Aluminium, glasses, bottles, plastic, metal scarps, polythene bags. As explained above, we can say that packaging comes under non-biodegradable material which is also called solid waste. We can ensure a future with clean water, air, and soil for all if we will try to understand the importance of green packaging of all the products specially food products that are consumed more than compare to any other product on daily basis. Further Green Packaging is divided into four principles:-

1. **Remove:** Eliminate, where possible, unnecessary packaging layers, such as outer cartons and shrink-wrap film.
2. **Reduce:** Shrink packages to the optimal size and weight for their contents only.
3. **Reuse:** Reuse the packaging material instead throwing it outside.
4. **Recycle:** that can be converted into raw material for reuse as a new packaging.

Research Methodology:

This study focuses on consumers' attitude towards critical environmental issues, perception towards green packaged food products and the reasons behind buying those products. The current research used a quantitative research design in which the primary stage is intended to explore information regarding consumer's attitude and buying behaviour towards green packaged food products. The survey questionnaire is designed to collect the information from consumers. The populations for this study consists of residents of Punjab, India with an age above or equal to 18, preferably having knowledge about green packaging food products. More than a thousand people were approached and 500 usable responses were collected for final analysis. Respondents for the final analysis were selected by using multistage sampling technique. Descriptive Statistics technique is used for data analysis which provides frequencies and percentages of each demographic characteristic of respondents. It also computes the arithmetic means, modes, and standard deviations for consumer behavioural variables such as consumer knowledge, attitude etc.

The focus of this study is:

1. To find out the reasons of unawareness among people about green packaging.
2. Consumers' perception towards environmental issues.
3. Peoples' perception towards green packaged food products.
4. Reasons' behind purchase of green packaged food products.

Data Analysis and Findings

This section reports the basic (demographics) characteristics of the sample respondents in terms of their frequency and percentage. Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for different demographics and other categorical variables (e.g. consumer awareness).

Table 1: Sample Characteristics

Characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	293	58.6
	Female	207	41.4

Age	Below 20	20	4
	20-below 30	236	47.2
	30-below 40	161	32.2
	40-below 50	80	16.0
	Above 50	3	0.6
Education	Under Metric	2	0.4
	Metric	19	3.8
	10+2	48	9.6
	Graduate	192	38.4
	Post Graduate	220	44
	Doctorate	19	3.8
	Total	500	100.0
Income	Upto Rs. 5,000	28	5.6
	Rs. 5001-15,000	146	29.2
	Rs. 15,001-25,000	128	25.6
	Rs. 25,001-35,000	79	15.8
	More than Rs. 35,000	119	23.8
	Total	500	100.0
Occupation	Teaching	200	40
	Administration	300	60
	Total	500	100.0
Awareness of green packaged food products	No	200	40
	Yes	300	60
	Total	500	100.0
Location of respondents	Jalandhar	71	14.2
	Ludhiana	68	13.6
	Fazilka	57	11.4
	Moga	61	12.2
	Faridkot	50	10.0
	Ferozepur	63	12.6
	Batinda	66	13.2
	Muktsar	64	12.8
	Total	500	100.0

Table 1 reported that 58.6 percent of sample respondents are male, therefore rest 41.4 per cent are female. Most of them (47.2 percent) aged between 20-30 years, with 31.36 years as an average age of respondents. Respondents also reported that majority (86.2 percent) of them have at least one college degree, with an average monthly income of Rs. 22586.48 (approx.). This

average income group seems similar to a middle man average income. Since this study primarily target urban areas, and educated people, therefore 40 percent of respondents belong to teaching occupation. Rest (60 percent) of these respondents belong to various administrative jobs. Fortunately, most of them (60 percent) reported that they are well aware of green packaged food products. This study has 500 total respondents from eight different locations (Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Fazilka, Batinda, etc.) in Punjab, India. Therefore, the study has diverse sample in terms of locations. Comparing above reports with the overall population of Punjab, India, it can be concluded that the demographics of the sample respondents are more or less same as those from other parts of population in Punjab, India. The prime reason for this similarity is the diverse sampling locations within Punjab, and even the sample collected from each location ranges 10.0 to 14.2 percent. This might help a lot in comparing the results from these different locations.

Table 2: Possible Reasons for Unawareness

Environmental Issues	Mean score	Rank
Lack of Environmental awareness	3.13	3
Did not know what is Green Packaging/ Eco-Friendly Packaging	2.90	1
I have never seen any description of packaging on packaged food products	3.09	2
Time consuming in regard to searching for the green packaging products	3.72	4
Lack of Communication	3.91	5
No option to choose packaging that can be reused or recycled for the product you want to buy	4.27	6

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics of possible reasons for people unawareness as 40 percent (n = 200) reported that they are not properly aware of green packaged food products. This demonstrates a big failure of firms' marketing strategies, and at the same time, it suggests that there is an urgent need to enhance marketing and promotional efforts. Awareness is the first stage of adoption process, followed by interest, desire, trial and adoption. To this end, adoption or purchase of products depends upon whether a potential adopter/consumer is aware of any product/service available into market place. Thus, firms need to provide various sources of

information, and make other possible promotional efforts to increase awareness levels among people.

In table 2, descriptive analysis confirms that people in majority don't even know what do they actually meant by Green packaging/Eco-friendly packaging. They were confused with the role of packaging as environmental protector. Green packages are using nowadays, and many sample respondents mentioned that they don't know about it. Secondly, they mentioned that they have never seen or noticed any kind of logo/description on product packaging while purchasing products. Here, the presence of environmental friendly logos or any other useful description on products is questionable. 'Lack of environmental awareness' found third rank in the list, confirming that people is not so much aware of the influence of products with ordinary packaging on environment. People also find 'looking for green packaged food products' time consuming, and therefore they don't want much information regarding their availability or usage. Lack of communication is obviously an important factor as they mentioned that firms are not doing sufficient marketing/promotional efforts to this end. Another crucial reason is unavailability of those products with green packaged which they really want to buy. It seems obvious as well because people usually purchase products, and not packaging. Packaging plays an important role, but it cannot alter the choice of products. Thus, aforementioned reasons are of primary concern for any firm promoting their green packaging food products. Additionally, the study also focused on consumer's perception regarding green packaged food products (see Table 3).

Table 3 shows people perception regarding green packaged food products, wherein they scored on various aspects related to green packaging, and based on these scores, ranks are allotted to these parameters. According to this survey, a green packaging first of all should be made up of recyclable and sustainably renewable materials and resources. Secondly, it should be safe and beneficial for both consumers as well as environment. Next, it should also be designed to be effective throughout its life-cycle. Fourth, any sustainable packaging should be made up of recycled material. Next, the package should be designed with clean production technologies to minimise the negative impact on environment. It should also be recovered conveniently after use, and should be made up of responsibly sourced materials. At the end, they also mentioned that a green package should be produced and processed using sustainable energy sources.

Table 3: Consumer's perception about Green packaged food products

Particulars	Mean score	Rank
Designed to be effective throughout its life-cycle.	4.35	2
Made from responsibly sourced materials.	4.22	8
Be recovered conveniently after use.	4.27	7
Packaging should be designed in a way to minimise the negative environmental impact.	4.32	5
Made from recyclable and sustainably renewable materials and resources.	4.36	1
Produced and processed using sustainable energy sources.	4.21	9
Sustainable packaging is made up of recycled material.	4.34	4
It is safe, beneficial for the consumer and the environment.	4.35	2
It also utilizes clean production technologies.	4.32	5

Respondents were also asked about different environmental issues caused due to the usage of ordinary package materials, and not green packages, and these issues are ranked based on their scores (see Table 4).

Table 4 : Consumer perception regarding crucial environmental issues

Environmental Issues	Mean score	Rank
Too much of wastes going in to lands	4.54	3
Toxic substance in the Environment	4.32	5
Lack of Solid waste Management	4.41	4
Air Pollutions	4.59	2
Water Pollutions	4.70	1

As per the statistics reported in table 4, water pollution is ranked as most crucial issues, followed by air pollutions and land pollutions. This shows the negative influence of not using green packages on all three major kinds of pollutions that in turn affect overall environment. Lack of solid waste management and producing toxic substance in the environment are two another issues to be taken care of.

The respondents were also asked whether they have purchased green packaged products. Majority (60 percent) of those who were aware of green packaged products responded that they have purchased it in past. Next, reasons were also asked and based on their responses; they were ranked (see Table 5). Results demonstrate that environment safety and responsibility gets maximum Weightage, followed by quality symbol, greenness of packaging, confidence in products, and overall prestige of such products.

Table 5: Reasons behind purchase of green packaged food products

Reasons	Score	
	Mean score	Rank
Save the environment	3.42	1
Due to green packaging	2.85	4
Symbol of quality	3.26	3
Prestige	1.74	6
Confidence	1.89	5
Feel responsible towards the environment	3.42	1

Findings and discussions

A descriptive analysis is one of the crucial kinds of analyses that are being done by social sciences researchers. It is done on the basic characteristics of the respondents (e.g. demographics and socio-graphics). It is considered important because it provides crucial information regarding demographics and other characteristics of the respondents/participants of the field/online survey. Based on such information, findings and results of the study can be compared with different criteria such as age wise analysis, gender based analysis, and location based analysis, and so on. Following information is obtained from descriptive analysis of this study-

- There is slightly more number of male candidates (60 percent). However, it is quite comparable with rest 40 percent of female respondents.
- Most of the respondents were young as approx. 47.2 percent of total respondents aged between 20-30 years, and with 31.36 years as an average age of respondents.

- Majority of respondents had at least one college degree; therefore the sample is consisted of qualified candidates.
- The average monthly income of Rs. 22586.48 (approx.) shows a clear picture of their buying power. Comparing with other members of society, an individual with this much of average income belongs to middle class social status.
- There are only two classifications done based on the occupation, wherein 40 percent of respondents belong to teaching occupation and rest 60 percent belongs to various administrative jobs.
- Approximately 60 percent respondents reported their awareness regarding green packaged food products that is good, but at the same time, remaining 40 percent reported that they are not well aware regarding such products, showing failure of firms' marketing and promotional strategies.
- Most of the respondents don't know how the green packaging protects environment. They have never observed any kind of logo/description on product packaging while purchasing products.
- There is obviously a lack of communication between firms promoting green products and potential consumers. This is a crucial finding to be noticed by the firms and their marketing personnel.

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