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Sustainable Packaging and the Consumers Purchase Behaviour in the FMCG context in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT
This paper seeks to be brought an overview on the effect of sustainable packaging on consumer buying behaviour in the FMCG. The study focused on antecedents on purchase intentions as it related to sustainable/green packaging (environmental concern, environmental knowledge and social norms), and how it affects consumer buying behaviour. Convenience sampling was adopted while a structured questionnaire was developed to measure the variables used for the study. Copies of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents and 114 were retrieved. Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the instruments. The score exceeded 0.70 indicating a good reliability of instrument. SPPS was used in analyzing data from research questions and the Pearson correlation was used to test the hypotheses, the findings revealed that environmental concern, environmental knowledge and social norms have significant effect on customer buying behaviour. Based on the results, the study recommended among others that manufacturers of FMCG should give attention to sustainable/green packaging elements, while the government can do well to stimulate better environmentally friendly behaviour among its citizenry.
Keywords: buying behavior, consumer, packaging

1. INTRODUCTION

The climate around us is changing faster now than ever, and for the worse. The temperature is rising; ice caps are melting, animals are extinct, and more. Amidst all this, our daily waste is soaring higher and higher. The amount of non-biodegradable items we use daily is astonishing as well as we are currently running out of space to dump our trash. And as such, FMCG has a significant role in our consumption of plastics and other non-biodegradable items. With Gen-Z entering the workforce and gaining more and more buying power, it is crucial to make strategic organizational changes. Not only to attract them as customers but also as potential employees of a socially-aware organization. Today sustain□ability is the central issue of every society. With the increase in aware□ness about sustainability and its significance and the rise in eco-friendly regulations, sustainable packaging is, now more than ever, an issue of concern for customers. Sustainability is frequently analysed using the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) (Eilert, 2005) approach based entirely on economic, social, and environmental impacts. In each of these three dimensions, packaging plays a critical role.

Economical - It can alleviate the direct and indirect cost of operation through the change in material, optimum handling of goods, speedy transportation, and efficient warehousing.

Social - It can reduce and recover waste from food by enforcing product protection and ensuring the safety of workers through more effective ergonomic designs. Environmental - It can reduce the carbon

footprint generated by ensuring optimal use of the packaging materials and designs used over the lifespan of a commodity.

As of late, ideas of dynamic packaging, astute packaging, and biodegradable/palatable packaging have been created and effectively applied in FMCGs to improve the correspondence, upgrade the quality and well-being of products, delay its period usability, give a sign about healthiness and control its newness. Upgrading the actual usability lifespan of the products includes disposal of different microbial, biochemical and enzymatic responses by receiving other systems of temperature control, dampness guidelines, expansion of synthetics, and execution of a viable packaging framework.

Public consciousness about issues like climate change is influencing buying habits and consumer choices. Consumers today are more aware of the harmful effects of single-use packaging material on the environment and are actively choosing sustainable packaging. Among the many desirable features, they choose products for their packaging. Increasingly, eco-friendly packaging isn't just an Earth-friendly way to sell a product; it's how to broadcast a company's values and ethos.

Despite the growing interest on green packaging from organizational and consumer perspective, exposure to the sustainability movement is likely to be limited in developing nations, in order for the planet to be preserved, the vast majority of the planet's inhabitants, who live mostly in the underdeveloped or developing countries, also need to be committed to sustainability. Thus, this study tends to establish the level of understanding of consumers behaviour towards the green packaging concepts and to developing strategies to secure green patriotic commitment from communities in developing nations.

1.2 Statement of Problem

The application and reliance on plastic in packaging is universal and used on a large scale in industries like food and beverage industry, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and consumer-based products. Packaging practices in the FMCG industry are often excessive and unnecessarily harmful to the environment. The daily use of one-time-use plastic in the form of bottles, containers, and wrappers has proven to be highly wasteful. While SMEs and entrepreneurs play an important role in economic growth, awareness regarding environmentally friendly packaging is becoming crucial. Hence the need to consider drivers such as attitudinal and altruistic dispositions towards the adoption of green packaging behaviour by consumers in the FMCG industry.

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study is to determine the relationship between green packaging and its impact on purchase intents of consumers in the FMCG industry. Other specific objectives include to:

1. Determine the effect of environmental concern on consumers purchase intents of green packaged products.
2. ascertain the effect of environmental knowledge on consumers purchase intents of green packaged products. design wrapper on consumer buying behaviour.
3. Determine the impact of subjective norms on the consumers purchase intents of green packaged products.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does environmental concern influence consumers purchase intents of green packaged products?
2. How does environmental knowledge influence purchase intents of green packaged products?
3. To what extent does subjective norms influence consumers purchase intents of green packaged products?

1.5 Hypothesis of the Study

H_1: There is a positive significant relationship between environmental concern and consumers purchase intents of green packaged products

H_2: There is a positive significant relationship between environmental knowledge and consumers purchase intents of green packaged products

H_3: There is a positive significant relationship between subjevtive norms and consumers purchase intents of green packaged products.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1. Green Purchase Intentions

Green purchase intention can be defined as the willingness of an individual to consider and prefer the green product rather than conventional or traditional product in the decision-making process (Rashid, 2009; Aman et al., 2012). Here, purchase intention is the intention to buy a service or product which is less or not harmful for the society and environment. It refers to an individual's readiness to perform green buying behaviour, mainly reflecting the consideration of less pollution. It can also be defined as the possibility that consumers would like to purchase environmentally friendly products (Chen, 2012).

2.2 Drivers of Green Purchase Intents

Environmental concern is the degree of concern over environmental problems, and indicative of efforts to solve these problems (Dunlap and Jones, 2002). Environmental concern is considered to be a key environmental factor for analyzing personal characteristics of green marketing. Consumers who pay more attention to environmental problems tend to have a positive attitude toward green products, thus maintaining a healthy and green lifestyle (Paul et al., 2016). Consumer attention to the environment will affect purchase decisions, especially for green products. Nekmahmud and Fekete-Farkas (2020) studied green purchases by young consumers and found that environmental concerns had a significant impact on their decisions. Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibáñez (2012) investigated the direct and indirect effects of environmental concerns and found a positive impact on consumer attitude toward and purchase intention for green energy brands.

Environmental knowledge is knowledge of the environment, key relationships that lead to environmental impacts, and environmental responsibility of the individual that leads to sustainable development (Fryxell and Lo, 2003). In the literature on environmental knowledge, researchers usually use different environmental knowledge concepts to predict individual green behavior: general or specific environmental knowledge, and subjective or objective environmental knowledge (Lee, 2017). This research defines environmental knowledge as a person's perception of one's own understanding of general environmental issues. The literature suggests that as consumers accumulate more environmental knowledge, their attention toward purchasing green products increases. Environmental knowledge has a significant positive impact on consumers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products (Wang et al., 2014). Specifically, consumer environmental knowledge has been identified as an important predictor of Ahmad and Thyagaraj (2015) and positive influencer of Choi and Johnson (2019) green purchase intention

Subjective norm refers to the social pressure perceived by individuals on whether to carry out or refrain from a certain behavior (Ajzen, 1991). In decision-making, individuals are often influenced by the people around them. It reflects how individuals are affected in society, that is, if they participate in certain behaviors, how their reference group will perceive them. Previous research has shown that people comply with subjective norms because they are afraid of social pressure from primary referents, or because their referents provide them with guidance on appropriate or beneficial behaviors in society. Bong Ko and Jin (2017) investigated female college students in China and the United States; in both countries, subjective norms had a positive impact on consumers' green purchase intention. When consumers realize that their "important others" recognize green purchase behavior, they tend to adopt it. For example, Yeon Kim and Chung (2011) found that if "important others" thought organic skincare products were good, consumers had more intention to purchase these products.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The theory of consumer behavior is one of the main theoretical methods of marketing. According to the theory of consumer behavior (Engel et al., 1995), there are three factors that affect consumers' purchase decisions: psychological factors, individual characteristics and social factors. People's behavior is dominated and controlled by their psychological activities, psychological factors mainly include demand, motivation and cognitive factors; individual characteristics mainly include interest, attitude and lifestyle; consumer behavior is also influenced by social factors, mainly including family, reference group and

social class. Consumer purchase intention is a kind of embodiment of consumer purchase behavior, so green purchase intention can be explained by consumer behavior theory.

In an attempt to explain sustainable consumption through purchase intentions towards green packaged products, this study attempted to develop a comprehensive model to predict the green purchase intention by incorporating unique factors as Environmental Concern (EC), Environmental Knowledge (EK), Social Norms (SN) identified from previous empirical evidences. (Kollmuss & Agyeman, 2002; Kim & Choi, 2005; Jobber, 2007; Lee, 2008; Pickett-Baker & Ozaki, 2008; , Noushan & Ahmed, 2012, Wong et al., 2012). To this end, the model constructed for this study is distinctive. Further, it provides a well-supported explanation for green purchase intention as an integrated model in green consumerism (Chan & Lau, 2000; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2008; Liu et al, 2012; Zhao et al, 2014)

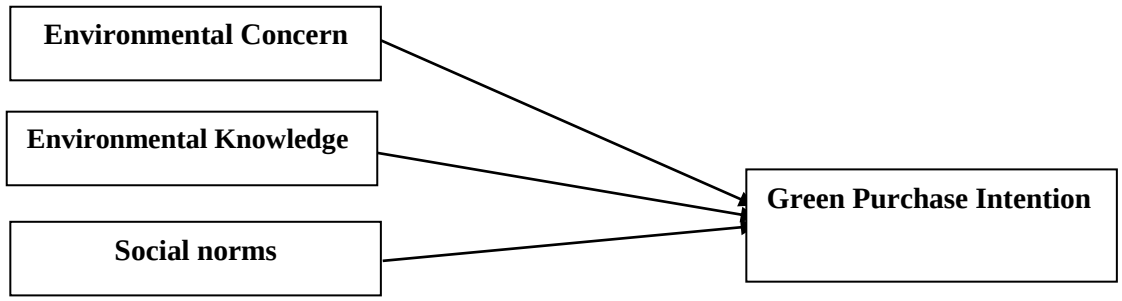

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework
Source: Researchers Elaboration (2023)

3. RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted the Survey research design. For this study, Awka metropolis was chosen to represent the population. The sample comprised of consumers working in different sectors of the economy. The sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling with a sample size of 110 residents within the Ifite/Unizik axis. disagree. Convenience sampling is a non-probabilistic sampling technique that has the advantages of reaching large numbers of relevant respondents, often over a larger geographic area than can be achieved through more probabilistic methods (Baltar and Brunet, 2012).

The research instrument that was used in this study is a structured questionnaire constructed on a five-point likert scale that was ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Using a pilot test, the researcher reduced error and increased the reliability and validity of the research. A Cronbach's alpha test of 0.71 for the quantitative questions indicates that the data were internally consistent, and thus the research was deemed sufficiently reliable. While quantitative data were collected in relation to perceptions and behaviours with regard to environmental packaging, a key aspect of the research was South African consumers' knowledge and understanding with regard to environmental packaging. Data were collected through primary and secondary sources. Questionnaire that was administered to respondents served as the primary source. Extant literatures, journals, research findings constituted the secondary source.

The data collected were analyzed using linear regression through SPSS to determine the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The predictors or independent variables (i.e environmental concern, environmental knowledge, social norms) that influence the dependent variable i.e. Purchase Intentions. Using the linear regression, the test will be significant when the p-value is less than 0.05.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 the Pearson Correlation coefficient is .38; the significance level (sig) or p is .021 and the number of participants of both variables (green intention and environmental concern) is 114. The correlation between (green intention and environmental concern) Is statistically significant because the "sig" is less than .05. Thus, we can accept the hypothesis of a relationship and state that there is a moderate association between (green intention and environmental concern).

The Pearson Correlation coefficient is .406; the significance level (sig) or p is .000 and the number of participants of both variables (green purchase and environmental knowledge) is 180. The correlation between (green purchase and environmental knowledge) is statistically significant because the "sig" is less than .05. Thus, we can accept the alternate hypothesis of an association and state that there is a moderate relationship between (green purchase and environmental knowledge). As the correlation is positive this means that higher the social influence higher will be the green purchase intention and vice versa.

The Pearson Correlation coefficient is .377; the significance level (sig) or p is .002 and the number of participants of both variables (green purchase and social norms) is 180. The correlation between (green purchase and social norm) is statistically significant because the "sig" is less than .05. Thus, we can accept the alternate hypothesis of an association and state that there is a moderate positive relationship between (green purchase and social norms). As the correlation is positive this means that higher the social norms that promote green packaging, the higher will be the purchase intention and vice versa.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation

		Purchase Intention	Environmental Concern	Environmental Knowledge	Social Norms
Purchase Intentions	Pearson Correlation	1	.381**	.406**	.377**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.002
	N	114	114	114	114
Environmental Concern	Pearson Correlation	.381**	1	.474**	.368**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.003
	N	114	114	114	114
Environmental Knowledge	Pearson Correlation	.406**	.474**	1	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		.000
	N	114	114	114	114
Social Norms	Pearson Correlation	.377**	.368**	.433**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.003	.000	
	N	114	114	114	114

***. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)*

Source: SPSS 22.0 Data Output

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This endeavour is conducted to implore what predispositions and factors have capacity to sway the purchase intention as it relates to sustainable packaging among consumers. With the help of carefully designed questionnaire the researcher could acquire the required information and extract the results with the help of latest statistical tools and techniques.

The results of the research showed moderate significant relationship with both independent and dependent variables. However, it is imperative that such relationships can still be influenced towards a stronger and more positive relationship between variables. Marketers can be intentional through the use word of mouth as well as other integrated marketing communications platforms to educate consumers on how to be environmentally patriotic as well as to enhance their perception about purchasing green products.

Businesses and government can educate consumers about buying environment friendly products. This is

an extensive procedure and will take elongated time to nurture the concern for environment. It was also found that friends and associates had a strong influence on the choice of young buyers. Therefore, marketers can use buzz marketing to encourage young people to buy green products. They have confidence in the opinion of their friends. Social networks can be very effective in doing that.

Government should also play its part in encouraging development and production of environmentally friendly products. It can also encourage imports of such products by decreasing duties and taxes so that young consumers as well as general public prefer to buy environment friendly products. But it is not necessary that the intent to buy the green product will definitely direct the consumer to buy it.

However, this study is limited in the sense that the sampling technique is qualitative hence sample size and results cannot be generalized. Also, the variables taken in this study are not the only variables that affect the intent of the consumers. Many more factors are there that influence their concern to buy environment friendly products. So, there is an opportunity to consider other factors as well.

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