

Determinants of Consumer Purchase Intention towards Retailers Practicing Sustainable Grocery Packaging

OPEN ACCESS

Manuscript ID:
MGT-2024-12048998

Volume: 12

Issue: 4

Month: April

Year: 2025

P-ISSN: 2321-4643

E-ISSN: 2581-9402

Received: 25.02.2025

Accepted: 28.03.2025

Published Online: 01.04.2025

Citation:

Ashwini, S. V., and H. L. Chidananda. "Determinants of Consumer Purchase Intention towards Retailers Practicing Sustainable Grocery Packaging." *Shanlax International Journal of Management*, vol. 12, no. 4, 2025, pp. 141-48.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.34293/management.v12i4.8998>




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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of personal norms, consumer attitude, and willingness to pay on purchase intention towards retailers adopting sustainable grocery packaging. With the increase in environmental consciousness on the part of consumers, the current study uses quantitative methods to determine the impact of psychological and behavioral factors on sustainable consumption. Norm Activation Model (NAM) and the Value-Belief-Norm (VBN) theory; the study makes use of the theoretical tools of these three theories to generate conceptual framework that explains the psychological dimensions of sustainable purchasing decisions. The dataset was as generated from a survey carried out on 752 consumers who were acquaint with a shopping spree for groceries packaged sustainably. A standardized questionnaire comprising of closed ended questions was implemented, evaluating critical constructs on a five point likert scale. A convenience sampling (non-probability) procedure was used based on its practical use in effectively enlisting the appropriate respondent population within the short time. Data collection tool reliability confirmation prior to analysis involved the use of Cronbach's alpha for establishing consistent internal consistency in every construct. Regression analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 23.0 to evaluate the extent to which personal norms, attitude, and willingness to pay contribute to the formation of purchase intention. The findings reveal that all three predictors significantly contribute to consumer intention, highlighting the relevance of ethical orientation, positive evaluation, and economic readiness in driving sustainable purchasing choices. The study offers valuable insights for retailers and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable practices, emphasizing the need to engage consumers through value-based messaging, environmental education, and transparent pricing strategies. By establishing a clear link between psychological constructs and sustainable behavior, the research adds to the growing body of literature on environmentally responsible consumption and supports strategic decision-making in retail sustainability initiatives.

Keywords: Personal Norms, Attitude, Willingness to Pay, Purchase Intention and Sustainable Package

Introduction

The approach of sustainable grocery packaging uses materials that are reusable and recyclable or of biodegradable qualities while minimizing and reducing waste in all stages of packaging. Plastic and other traditional packaging substances cause environmental damage because they harm ecosystems (Filiciotto and Rothenberg). Packaging systems built for sustainability use paper along with bio-based plastic materials and compostable parts which break down faster or recycle efficiently to cut down environmental influence. This approach aligns with the principles of a circular economy, where materials are kept in circulation to reduce the need for new resources and minimize waste (Vanapalli et al.). Environment friendly grocery packaging plays an important role in encouraging a sustainable future for the generations to come and mitigating the environmental degradation. Traditional grocery

packaging, often composed of single-use plastics, contributes to drastic environmental pollution due to its continuation in ecosystems and insufficient disposal infrastructure, leading to harmful consequences (Geyer et al.). Green packaging options including biodegradable, recyclable and compostable materials aim to carbon emissions and waste by fostering a circular economy As part of a plan to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and fulfill international climate goals, this model reduces the use of fossil fuel plastics and protects resources through efficient reuse and recycling of materials (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). By the actual implementation of sustainable grocery packaging, businesses can mitigate the environmental damage resulting from production and disposal. Public health suggests sustainable grocery packaging because standard materials leach toxic chemicals during degradation, impacting water and soil quality and air quality and causing health complications (Rochman et al.). Through use of materials that decompose in an environment without hazardous pollution, green packaging can help companies mitigate these risks. Through sustainable grocery packaging practices, firms help to instill sensibilities in consuming minds, which both improve environmental awareness and sustainable personal practices (Verghese et al.). Sustainable grocery packaging meets current-day threats to the environment and imparts on the next generation habits that contribute to a healthier earth.

Status of Sustainable Grocery Packaging

The Indian market is currently transforming its approach to sustainable grocery packaging through combined environmental reasons and government rules. The Indian government established the Plastic Waste Management Rules which promotes retailers to embrace green packaging solutions. Small-scale retailers hesitate to adopt sustainable grocery packaging due to increased costs and the absence of eco-friendly packaging production infrastructure although these laws support other alternative solutions. Large grocery chains Big Basket and Reliance Fresh implement biodegradable and compostable packaging through their sustainability programs because of consumer demands along with new regulations (George et al.). Research

data confirms 54% of urban Indian consumers opt for sustainable packaging which drives retailers to change their approach toward shifting consumer choice. progress in waste management multiple holes persist which diminish the effect of sustainable packaging initiatives across India.

Sustainable grocery packaging has become ordinary in worldwide markets particularly within developed economies that use Official government policies alongside public knowledge regarding sustainable practices to drive change (Ellen MacArthur Foundation). The European Union introduced the Circular Economy Action Plan which directed global retailers Carrefour and Aldi to adopt recyclable and reusable packaging selection through their efforts to decrease packaging waste before 2030. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation stresses sustainable packaging solutions through different environmentally friendly materials such as biodegradable plastics and compostable components along with recyclable paper products. The integration of sustainable packaging materials faces obstacles because of cost problems and limited processing facilities alongside difficulties regarding sustainable mass manufacturing. Recent consumer research shows people demonstrate growing interest in buying sustainable products at premium prices but their real purchasing actions remain inconsistent since they face hurdles discovering sustainable packaging details while finding some products inconvenient (Magnier and Schoormans). Labels combined with public awareness campaigns are essential to close the gap between what consumers want and their actions since they need better information about sustainable grocery packaging practices (Magnier and Cri ).

Research demonstrates a noticeable difference exists between consumer interest in sustainable food packaging and retail businesses adopting equivalent practices. Research reveals that approximately 70 percent of consumers select sustainable packaging because they perceive the environmental situation better but such individuals avoid premium costs and shopping pattern adjustments for green alternatives according to (Richards). Regular grocery packaging materials produce toxins during degradation which create health problems through damaged water quality and soil corruption and air contamination

(Rochman et al.). Natural degradation of sustainable materials in environmental conditions helps minimize health risks because these substances avoid hazardous pollution release. Green grocery packages help customers form conscientious behaviors towards sustainable consumption by teaching them about green shopping habits (Verghese et al.). The existence of sustainable grocery packaging works both to solve existing environmental issues while teaching younger generations sustainable behaviors that will develop a better world. Research based on personal norms, attitudes and willingness to pay provides a fresh approach to evaluate sustainable consumer decisions toward retailers using sustainable grocery packaging. (Jhavar et al.) demonstrates that personal norms drive customers toward environmentally conscious buying decisions since these values help them bridge their purchases with ecological values. The combination of personal norms and purchasing readiness for sustainable packaging warrants further research analysis since cost barriers exist as a primary issue (Magnier and Schoormans). Consumer perception of sustainability serves as a vital element because favorable attitudes toward sustainable packaging led individuals to choose retailers who place emphasis on environmentally friendly operations. The research gap exists in the limited empirical exploration of how personal norms, consumer attitudes, and willingness to pay influence purchase intentions for sustainably packaged grocery products (Vermeir and Verbeke). Specifically, there is a lack of comprehensive studies addressing the combined effect of these factors on consumer behavior within the retail context, particularly with respect to eco-friendly packaging (Zhuang et al.). This study presents an original assessment of intrinsic motivations and extrinsic beliefs with economic factors in their combined impact on purchase intentions specifically in developing markets for green packaging. Filling a hole in current academic discussion, this study describes new thinking about the elements of purchasing behaviour and the benefits sustainable retailing offers. The aim is to determine how personal norms, attitudes of consumers, and the amount perceived to be paid by consumers influences purchase intentions for sustainably packaged grocery items. The research discusses psychological drivers

of environmentally mindful purchasing habits and their impact on the sustainable consumer decision in retail environments.

Review of Literature

Personal norms, also known as deep-seated moral obligations make a great emphasis in the way consumers behave, and more specific, about their behavior when it comes to environmentally friendly options. This moral responsibility stems when people feel responsible to act their moral convictions about protecting the environment. Song et al. research reveals that personal norms constitute an important aspect that guides choice of sustainably packed products while purchasing groceries. It relies on the Norm Activation Model, which contends that consumers activate their personal norms when they become self-aware of the environmental consequence of their behavior and possess a sense of obligation to do something. If consumers are less caught up on their moral responsibilities, they are more likely to select retailers that are hallmarked in the areas of eco-friendly packaging (Le and Nguyen). A promotable class of clients has people who highly appreciate sustainability as the recurring shoppers; they often look for environmentally-friendly offers despite having to pay extra or change old routines of buying (Hein).

Empirical evidence suggests that personal norms are a key psychological driver behind the preference for sustainably packaged grocery items. Consumers perceive such purchases not just as product choices but as extensions of their values and contributions toward environmental well-being. These moral beliefs reinforce their intention to consistently choose packaging that minimizes ecological harm, making personal norms a powerful determinant in sustainable consumption behavior (Baltaci et al.).

Furthermore, when consumers strongly identify with environmental values, their personal norms can outweigh external factors such as price or brand familiarity. As a result, they tend to remain loyal to retailers who prioritize sustainability in packaging, viewing such support as a reflection of their moral identity. This alignment between internal beliefs and purchasing actions demonstrates how personal norms not only guide intention but also shape long-term

behavioral commitment in the context of sustainable grocery packaging. Based on the above discussion, it can be hypothesised that:

H1: Personal norms significantly impact the consumer purchase intention towards sustainably packed grocery products

Consumers Attitude and Purchase Intention

Attitude, defined as a learned predisposition to respond favorably or unfavorably toward an object or concept, significantly shapes consumer behavior (Ajzen). In the context of sustainably packaged grocery products, consumer attitudes are developed through evaluations of environmental benefits, emotional satisfaction, and product functionality. Positive attitudes emerge when consumers perceive that sustainable packaging contributes to waste reduction and environmental protection, thereby enhancing their motivation to support eco-conscious retailers. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, favorable attitudes directly influence behavioral intentions, meaning that consumers with positive environmental attitudes are more likely to purchase products with sustainable packaging (Le and Nguyen). Emotional factors, such as personal fulfillment from contributing to environmental well-being, alongside functional attributes like packaging durability, enhance these attitudes further (Baltaci et al.). These elements combine to create a sense of satisfaction that aligns with consumers' personal values, making sustainable packaging a symbol of responsible consumption. When consumers believe that their purchasing decisions support broader environmental goals, their intention to buy sustainably packaged grocery items strengthens. Based on the above discussion, it can be hypothesized that:

H2: Attitude has significant impact on consumers purchase intention towards sustainably packaged grocery products

Willingness to pay and Purchase Intention

The maximum price consumers are willing to pay (WTP) for a product reflects how they value its benefits, especially in relation to sustainability. Consumers assess the worth of sustainably packaged grocery products by weighing perceived

environmental gains against financial costs (Le and Nguyen). Willingness to pay is strongly shaped by environmental values and trust in eco-conscious retailers. According to the Value-Belief-Norm theory, individuals who hold strong sustainability values often convert these beliefs into financial support through eco-friendly purchasing behavior. Consumers who identify with environmental causes are more likely to invest in grocery products with sustainable packaging, viewing such spending as an extension of their personal commitment to ecological preservation (Baltaci et al.). Functional benefits such as perceived packaging quality and durability also play a key role. When consumers associate sustainable packaging with higher product quality, they are more inclined to pay premium prices and align themselves with environmentally responsible retailers. Furthermore, transparent communication about packaging sustainability increases customer trust and strengthens both WTP and purchase intentions (Le and Nguyen). Based on the above discussion, it can be hypothesized that:

H3: Willingness to pay significantly impacts the consumers purchase intention towards sustainably packaged grocery products.

Methods

The main aim of this research is to explore the influence of personal norms, willingness to pay, and attitude on consumer purchase intention towards retailers adopting sustainable grocery packaging. A quantitative research approach was adopted to analyze relationships among measurable constructs using statistical methods. The target population consisted of consumers who had experience or knowledge of purchasing grocery products with eco-friendly packaging. A convenience sampling technique, a type of non-probability sampling, was used due to its feasibility in reaching a relevant respondent pool within the available timeframe and resources.

A structured questionnaire was designed as the primary data collection instrument, comprising closed-ended questions mapped to key constructs: personal norms, consumer attitude, willingness to pay, and purchase intention. All scale items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from

“strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The items were adapted from existing validated scales in prior research and were refined through expert review and pilot testing with 30 respondents to ensure clarity and content validity.

A total of 752 valid responses were collected. Demographic analysis revealed that the majority of respondents were female (54.3%), aged 26–35 years (38.8%), graduates (48.1%), earning between 5–7.5 lakhs annually (32.8%), unmarried (82%), and employed (32.7%). To ensure internal consistency, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were calculated for each construct, all of which exceeded the minimum threshold of 0.70, indicating acceptable reliability. IBM SPSS Statistics was used for data analysis. Multiple regression analysis was employed to examine the individual and combined effects of personal norms, attitudes, and willingness to pay on purchase intention toward sustainably packaged grocery products.

Result and Discussion

The main aim of the study is to analyze the influence of personal norms, attitude and willingness to pay on purchase intention towards sustainably packaged grocery products. The following analysis was conducted to test the how reliable is the scale and determinants of sustainably packaged products purchase intention.

Table 1 Reliability Analysis

Scale	Items	Cronbach’s Alpha (α)
Personal Norms	3	0.916
Attitude	6	0.944
Willingness to Pay	3	0.958
Purchase Intention towards Sustainable Grocery Products	5	0.916

Source: Primary Data

A Cronbach’s Alpha reliability test determined the consistency and dependability of data obtained through the questionnaire. The test verifies that each variable group contains items that effectively measure the identical concept. The reliability scores of all four primary study variables reached exceptionally high levels according to Table No.1. The Cronbach’s Alpha value for the three Personal

Norms measurement items reached 0.916. The assessment of personal norms through the selected items demonstrated both close connection and accurate measurement of the intended construct. The Attitude scale showed higher reliability outcomes with a score of 0.944 through its six measurement items. The research scale demonstrated effective performance in measuring participant attitudes regarding sustainable packaging because respondents understood the questions in the similar concept. The reliability of the Willingness to Pay scale reached an exceptional level of 0.958 through its three assessment items. The consistent survey results indicate that the scale effectively captured how much consumers would pay more for environmentally safe packaging solutions. The five items within the Purchase Intention scale achieved a notable reliability score of 0.916 indicating that the scale effectively measured consumers’ buying intentions for sustainable grocery packaging products. The Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeded the standard minimum threshold of 0.70 while reaching scores greater than 0.90 in most instances. The questionnaire items possess reliability which showcases that the data collected will sustain statistical evaluation such as regression analysis.

Table 2a Determinants of Purchase Intention towards Sustainably Packaged Grocery Products

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716 ^a	.728	.735	.40021

a. Predictors: (Constant), Personal Norms, Attitude and Willingness to pay

Source: Primary Data

The Adjusted R Square value reaches 0.735 according to Table 2a. A total of 73.5% of the changes in consumers’ purchase intention toward sustainably packaged grocery products relate to the three contributing variables - personal norms, attitude, and willingness to pay. The Adjusted R Square delivers a better predictive power than regular R Square because it makes calculations based on the number of independent variables in the model. Adjusted R square value demonstrates the model fits well while proving that these components jointly determine consumer purchase intentions regarding sustainable

grocery packaging.

Table 2b: Predictors of Purchase Intention towards Sustainably Packaged Grocery Products

Coefficients					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
(Constant)	821	.072		.732	.223
Personal Norms	.811	.061	.798	11.041	.000
Attitude	.711	.079	.734	5.345	.000
Willingness to Pay	.737	.145	.752	14.327	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention towards Sustainably Packaged Grocery Products					

Source: Primary Data

Table No. 2b provides important findings about how personal norms, attitude, and willingness to pay affect consumer purchase intentions for sustainably packaged grocery products. Data analysis shows the strong positive statistical relationship of each predictor variable to environmentally-conscious consumer purchasing behavior.

Personal Norms stand as the primary factor influencing the study results based on a standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.798 and a highly significant t-value of 11.041 ($p < 0.001$). People who demonstrate strong environmental responsibility tend to back sustainable packaging programs. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) supports this finding by stating that personal norms affect behavioral intentions when people take pro-environmental actions. (Zhuang et al.) showed that people with internalized moral obligations toward the environment demonstrated stronger green purchase intentions according to their research.

The analysis shows that sustainable packaging attitudes demonstrate statistical significance through a Beta value of 0.734 and t-value of 5.345 ($p < 0.001$). Consumer intent to purchase sustainable products rises substantially when they have positive attitudes and favorable evaluations about sustainable packaging. Positive consumer attitudes toward sustainable packaging face limitations since various barriers including convenience and price and availability often prevent actual purchasing behavior (Vermeir and Verbeke). Results show that customer willingness to pay for sustainable packaging stands as a major predictor based on its Beta value of 0.752 and t-value of 14.327 ($p < 0.001$). Those consumers who spend extra money on environmentally friendly packaging show an increased purchase intention

for such products. According to (Bishowkarma and Lohala) volunteering to pay an increased price directly increases green purchasing intentions among Kathmandu Valley residents. The actual purchasing behavior depends on factors like income levels and perceived value along with willingness to pay which functions as a strong indicator of purchase intention.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the effect of personal norms, attitudes, and willingness to pay on consumer purchase intentions toward sustainably packaged grocery products, and the findings confirm that all three psychological factors significantly and positively influence such intentions. Personal norms emerged as the most powerful determinant, underscoring the importance of internal moral obligations and environmental responsibility in shaping sustainable consumption behavior. Attitudes toward sustainable packaging and consumers' readiness to pay a premium also demonstrated strong predictive power, reflecting the growing alignment between environmental awareness and purchasing behavior. These insights advance existing literature by highlighting the psychological mechanisms that influence green consumer behavior, especially in the under explored context of sustainable grocery packaging. In practical terms, these findings offer meaningful recommendations for stakeholders. Retailers are encouraged to reinforce their sustainable brand image by clearly communicating environmental benefits through product labeling, in-store education, and digital engagement strategies that resonate with consumers' values. Policymakers and environmental agencies should consider introducing educational campaigns and incentive-based programs

to strengthen pro-environmental personal norms and attitudes, particularly targeting demographic segments with high potential for behavior change. Moreover, retailers can increase willingness to pay by offering tiered sustainable options, loyalty rewards, and transparency in pricing to highlight the true cost of eco-friendly choices. Despite the valuable contributions, the study is not without limitations. The use of a non-probability convenience sampling method restricts the generalizability of results to a broader population. Additionally, self-reported data may be subject to social desirability bias, and the study did not examine actual purchase behavior, which might differ from intention. Future research could expand by employing experimental or longitudinal designs to track behavior over time, including cross-cultural comparisons to explore whether the identified psychological predictors vary across regions. Investigating additional variables such as social norms, perceived behavioral control, and product availability may offer a more comprehensive understanding of consumer decision-making. Ultimately, this study underscores that psychological strategies - grounded in personal responsibility, favorable evaluations, and willingness to invest in sustainable solutions - play a central role in encouraging ethical consumer conduct and supporting global sustainability goals through mindful retail practices.

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