



Packaging Apparel in Sustainability: The Flourishing Green Packaging Movement

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the consumption values (environmental knowledge, green self-identity, sales promotion, and advertisement) that can significantly affect both consumer behavior toward shopping sustainable apparel packaging (SAP) and small business retailer behavior providing SAP. A proposed conceptual framework of this study is integrated the theory of reasoned action and theory of consumption value and developed five hypotheses. The proposed conceptual framework is to examine consumers' and small business retailers' behavior towards shopping/providing sustainable apparel packaging in retail and sustainable industries. this framework can assist sustainable packaging designers, retailers, and manufacturers in identifying consumption values and providing sustainable apparel packaging based on consumer needs and small business retailer needs. Significant findings of this study will offer useful insights for sustainable consumption and businesses to improve a marketing strategy and communicate their green packaging movement.

Keywords: sustainability, packaging apparel, small business, green consumption

Introduction and Background

More than 300 million tons of plastic (e.g., cheap, durable, and lightweight) are produced per year globally for use in a diversity of applications, including packaging (International Union for Conservation of Nature, 2018). As the biggest market and utilization of plastics, plastic packaging accounts for half of all plastic waste, which not only threatens the ecosystem, seashore tourism, and human health but also causes climate change (Vembar, 2019). According to a survey conducted by the Global Web Index (2019), over 50% of respondents had reduced their plastic use compared to the last year, and 42% of the consumers made a consistent effort to pursue sustainable products during shopping.

Green consumption is defined as a consumption activity that meets human needs or wants while maintaining and having a positive effect on the natural environment (Pieters, 1991). Over the past few decades, green consumption has emerged as a chance for retailers to minimize their environmental footprints, leading to a sustainable packaging movement to meet consumers' needs and preferences (Chaudhary, 2018). This increased awareness and concern about green consumption are expected to consider green buying behavior that refers to purchasing products that are not harmful to the environment (Mainieri et al. 1997). Consequently, consumers tend to change their plastic packaging consumption and their purchasing behavior. To meet consumers'

demand, retailers can continuously improve the sustainable packaging movement and achieve environmental and social transparency. In particular, PrAna, one of the sustainable apparel companies (e.g., Patagonia, people tree, Amour Ver), launched a sustainable packaging movement to reduce the use of plastics and excess wrapping (Mainwaring, 2020). Despite the recent sustainable packaging efforts and practices in retail and apparel industries, there is still a lack of empirical evidence to prove the effect of sustainable apparel packaging on both consumers and retailers in the context of small businesses. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the consumption variables that can significantly affect both consumer behavior toward shopping sustainable apparel packaging (SAP) and small business retailer behavior providing SAP.

Theoretical Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

The theory of consumption value (TCV) illustrates how a consumer decides on and uses a particular product or service (Singh & Pandey, 2018). The TCV identifies motivation for consumption behavior expecting and illustrating consumer decision-making. The potential consumption variables are defined as the tangible (i.e., sale promotion and advertisement) and intangible values (i.e., environmental knowledge and green self-identity) (Singh & Pandey, 2018). In addition, Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) theory of reasoned action (TRA) theoretical framework forms the basis of the hypotheses in this study. TRA entails an individual's buying decision to enact a specific behavior and illustrates the relationship between attitude and behavior (Fishbein, 1980). A proposed conceptual framework of this study is integrated the TRA and TCV and then developed five hypotheses (see Figure 1). Based on the literature, the following research questions (RQs) are proposed:

- RQ1: What consumption value do consumers affect their behavior toward shopping sustainable packaging?*
- RQ2: What consumption value do small business retailers affect their behavior toward providing sustainable packaging?*
- RQ3: How do consumers and small business retailers' behavior differ in consumption value?*

Method and Data Analysis

A total of 500 participants, including consumers ($n = 250$) and small business retailers ($n = 250$), will be recruited via Qualtrics. The survey consists of three sections: (a) demographics, (b) open-ended questions, and (c) variable questions regarding environmental knowledge (3 items), green self-identity (4 items), sale promotion (3 items), advertisement (3 items), attitude (3 items), and behavior (3 items) using a 7-point Likert scale adapted and modified from the previous studies (Arnold & Reynolds, 2009; Duan & Sheng, 2018; Nguyen, Lobo, & Nguyen, 2018). Structural equation modeling (SEM) using SPSS 25 and AMOS 25 will be performed to test the hypothesized paths for the overall proposed conceptual framework. After that, comparative model testing will be conducted to examine how different factors perform differently between consumers and small business retailers.

Significances

The proposed conceptual framework will be used to examine consumers' and small business retailers' behavior towards shopping/providing SAP in retail and sustainable industries. The proposed framework is useful and essential to understanding consumers' and small business retailers' behavior towards shopping/providing SAP. Therefore, this framework can assist sustainable packaging designers, retailers, and manufacturers in identifying consumption values and providing sustainable apparel packaging based on consumers' and small business retailers' needs. Furthermore, the comparative model testing will identify that the attitude and behavior towards shopping/providing SAP will be differently affected by the consumption values (environmental knowledge, green self-identity, sale promotion, advertisement) for consumers and small business retailers, respectively, due to their different expectations and needs. Significant findings of this study will offer useful insights for sustainable consumption and businesses to improve a marketing strategy and communicate their green packaging movement.

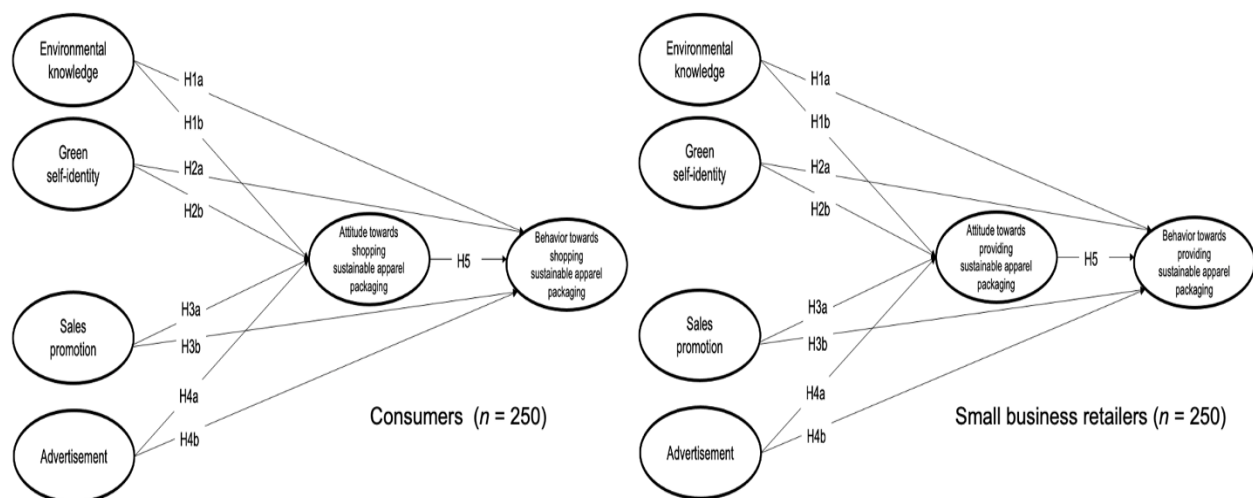


Figure 1. A proposed conceptual framework for comparative model testing.

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