Descriptive Study On Consumer Perception Towards Secondary Packaging

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Abstract:

This study aims to explore and analyse consumer perceptions toward secondary packaging in the context of retail and consumer goods. Secondary packaging, often used for branding, protection, and display purposes, plays a critical role in influencing consumer attitudes and purchase decisions. The research adopts a descriptive methodology, utilizing structured questionnaires to gather data from a diverse group of consumers. Key areas of focus include consumer awareness, perceived value, environmental impact, aesthetics, and functionality of secondary packaging. The findings reveal that while consumers recognize the importance of secondary packaging in brand identity and product protection, concerns about environmental sustainability significantly affect their perceptions. Most of consumer are now started talking and showing interest towards product without secondary packaging. Study also revealed that product with secondary packaging is eco-friendlier so well accepted by consumer now a days. Study perform on 169 respondents via structured questions and observation. The study underscores the need for manufacturers and marketers to align packaging strategies with consumer expectations, particularly regarding eco-friendliness and design appeal, to enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty.

Keywords: Secondary Packaging, Perception, Eco-friendly

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Introduction:

Packaging is a critical and multifaceted aspect of modern commerce and daily life. It encompasses the science, art, and technology of enclosing or protecting products for distribution, storage, sale, and use. More than just a container, packaging is a coordinated system that prepares goods for their entire journey from manufacturing to the end consumer.

Key Functions of Packaging:

Containment: The most basic function, packaging holds the product together, especially for liquids, powders, or small, numerous items. This makes handling, shipping, and selling more efficiently.

Protection: Packaging safeguards the product from various forms of damage, including physical shocks, vibrations, compression, temperature fluctuations, moisture, dust, and contamination during transport, storage, and handling. It also protects the environment from potentially harmful products.

Preservation: For perishable goods like food and pharmaceuticals, packaging plays a vital role in extending shelf life by creating barriers against oxygen, moisture, and light, and sometimes by maintaining a modified atmosphere.

Information Transmission: Packages and labels communicate essential information about the product. This can include instructions for use, ingredients, nutritional facts, warnings, recycling information, and government-mandated details.

Marketing and Branding: Packaging is a powerful marketing tool. Its graphic design, physical form, colours, and logos attract attention, differentiate the product from competitors, convey brand values, and influence purchasing decisions. It's often the first point of contact between a consumer and a product.

Convenience: Good packaging enhances convenience for consumers and supply chain participants. This includes features for easy opening, reclosing, dispensing, portability, storage, and disposal.

Security: Packaging can deter tampering and pilferage through tamper-evident features, authentication seals, and anti-theft devices, protecting both the product and the consumer.

Portion Control: Single-serving or single-dosage packaging allows for precise control of contents, which is beneficial for both consumers and inventory management.

Types of Packaging:

Packaging is often categorized by its layer or function:

Primary Packaging: This is the material that directly encloses the product and is the smallest unit of distribution or use. Examples include a bottle for lotion, a can for beverages, or a wrapper for a candy bar.

Secondary Packaging: This layer is outside the primary packaging and often groups multiple primary packages together. It provides additional protection, facilitates handling, and can be used for display purposes in retail. Examples include a cardboard box holding several individual juice cartons or a shrink-wrapped tray of bottled water.

Tertiary Packaging: This refers to the packaging used for bulk handling and transportation, designed to protect goods during shipping and storage. It often includes pallets, crates, and large shipping containers.

We focus on consumer perception towards secondary packaging:

Secondary packaging is the layer of packaging that surrounds and protects the primary packaging of a product. It does not come into direct contact with the product itself, but rather groups multiple primary packaged items together for various purposes.

Key Functions of Secondary Packaging:

Additional Protection: It provides an extra layer of defence for the primary packaging and the product inside from physical damage, moisture, dust, and other environmental factors during handling, storage, and transportation. This is particularly important for fragile primary packaging.

Grouping and Organization: Secondary packaging bundles multiple individual units into a single, manageable unit. This significantly streamlines logistics, making products easier to handle, stack, store, and transport efficiently in bulk.

Branding and Marketing: Often, secondary packaging is the first thing a consumer sees on a retail shelf. It serves as a crucial platform for displaying logos, brand colours, graphics, product information, and promotional messages, enhancing product visibility and appealing to target consumers. It plays a vital role in reinforcing brand identity and influencing purchasing decisions.

Information Transmission: While primary packaging might have limited space, secondary packaging offers ample room for essential information like barcodes, product descriptions, ingredients lists, nutritional facts, usage instructions, warnings, and regulatory compliance details (especially important in industries like pharmaceuticals).

Convenience in Distribution and Retail: It simplifies stocking and display for retailers, as products are organized into easily identifiable and manageable units. For consumers, it can offer convenience through features like easy-open designs or multi-packs.

Tamper Evidence: Secondary packaging can incorporate features that indicate if the product has been opened or tampered with, enhancing consumer safety and product integrity.

Sustainability: With a growing focus on environmental responsibility, secondary packaging offers opportunities for using recyclable, biodegradable, or otherwise eco-friendly materials to reduce the overall environmental footprint.

Literature Review:

Consumer Perception towards secondary packaging based on various aspects

Introduction

Secondary packaging plays a key role not just in protection and transportation, but also in shaping consumer expectations and brand perception. As sustainability becomes a global concern, companies are exploring the removal or reduction of secondary packaging. This shift,

however, has implications for how consumers perceive product quality, safety, brand values, and environmental responsibility.

Secondary packaging often serves aesthetic, functional, and psychological purposes in consumer markets. According to (Ampuero, O., & Vila, N., 2006), packaging is a key element of marketing that communicates brand identity and perceived quality. It contributes to, first impressions at the point of sale, Perceived value and luxury, Product information and safety cues.

Perceived Product Value

Research shows that consumers often associate elaborate packaging with premium products. Removing secondary packaging may lead to a perception of lower value or quality. (Magnier, L., & Schoormans, J. , 2015) found that minimalist or bare packaging can result in a perceived decrease in product luxury, especially in cosmetics and electronics.

Environmental Attitudes

Consumers with high environmental consciousness view packaging reduction positively. According to a study by (Prakash, G., & Pathak, P., 2017), eco-friendly packaging practices enhance brand image and trust among green consumers. However, the same study highlights that the effect is demographic dependent younger, more environmentally aware consumers are more receptive.

Trust and Product Safety Concerns

Some consumers perceive packaging removal as a compromise on safety or hygiene, particularly for food or fragile items. As per (Underwood, R. L., & Klein, N. M., 2002), packaging serves as a quality assurance mechanism—its absence can lead to skepticism about freshness, tampering, or damage.

Brand Communication and Consumer Education

The effectiveness of removing secondary packaging often depends on how well brands communicate the environmental intent. Research by (Luchs, M. G., Naylor, R. W., Irwin, J. R., & Raghunathan, R., 2010) indicates that when companies explain packaging changes as part of

sustainability efforts, consumers are more accepting—even if aesthetics or protection appear compromised.

Secondary Packaging of Cosmetics & Luxury Goods.

The removal of ornate secondary packaging in this sector can backfire if not paired with strong sustainability messaging. Many luxury consumers associate packaging with experience and prestige (Ko, E., & Megehee, C. M. , 2012).

Methodology:

Quantifying qualitative things is a challenging task. However, the paper aims to understand the consumer perception towards secondary packaging. With the help of primary data collection, the research is trying to explore the concepts and various factors impacting the same.

Sampling

The research was conducted on a sample of 169 respondents using questionnaires. Following is the descriptive information about respondents. The sample structure is shown below:

Characteristics	Share in the Sample	Results
Age	18-30 Years	40.2%
	31-40 Years	24.3%
	41-50 Years	20.7%
	51&above	14.8%
Education	ISCED 4 or less[*]	10.1%
	ISCED 5 and 6[*]	65.6%
	ISCED 7 or More[*]	24.3%

Gender	Female	45%
	Male	55%
Income**	Below 50,000	31.4%
	51,000-75,000	18.9%
	76,000-1 Lakh	21.9%
	1 Lakh & Above	27.8%

*ISCED = International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED 4 or less is roughly equivalent up to post-secondary non-tertiary education. ISCED 5 and 6 are equivalent to short-cycle tertiary education and bachelor or equivalent. ISCED 7 or more represents a master or doctoral. ** Income is in Indian Rupees (₹).*

Data Collection:

The study was conducted through a questionnaire. The responses were collected through a multiple choice questions. As the questions are for consumer, the data was collected based on perception towards secondary packaging.

Analysis:

One statements were drafted for consumer perception towards secondary packaging. The statements were drafted to identify the perception of consumer. The statement was adopted from various research papers.

The researcher has used the Descriptive statistics to summarize data, organise data and describe statistics. Descriptive statistics is used to Condense large amounts of raw data into understandable summaries and Present data in a structured and meaningful way, which provide insights into the overall features of a data.

The researcher has used the factor analysis to data reduction and identify latent variables, which are constructs or concepts that cannot be directly measured like intelligence, conscientiousness, perception, customer satisfaction, they are inferred from the relationships among observable variables. Factor analysis helps to simplify complex data by grouping these highly correlated variables into a smaller number of factors or dimensions. Factor analysis is used to determine observable measures collectively point to an underlying perceptive factor

Results and Discussion:

H_{01}: There are factors which influence my decision to purchase product with or without secondary packaging

H_{11}: There are no factors which influence my decision to purchase product with or without secondary packaging

Descriptives

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
we always prefer product which facilitate benefits of environmental sustainability	169	0	1	.44	.498
I would like to buy product which favour of eco-friendly product	169	0	1	.62	.487
I prefer product which fulfil regulatory requirement	169	0	1	.55	.499
I will like to buy product which has low price	169	0	1	.57	.497
I will like to buy product to whom I am associated	169	0	1	.54	.500
I always prefer product which is most convenience at the time of consumption	169	0	1	.67	.472
Valid N (listwise)	169				

Factorial Analysis

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
we always prefer product which facilitate benefits	1.000	.522

of environmental sustainability		
I would like to buy product which favour of eco-friendly product	1.000	.605
I prefer product which fulfil regulatory requirement	1.000	.701
I will like to buy product which has low price	1.000	.511
I will like to buy product to whom I am associated	1.000	.669
I always prefer product which is most convenience at the time of consumption	1.000	.799

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The above communalities table of factorial analysis represents the proportion of variance in each initial variable that is explained by the extracted factors. High communalities (closer to 1) indicate that the factors explain a large portion of the variable's variance. Low communalities (closer to or less than 0.3 or 0.4) might suggest that a variable doesn't fit well with the extracted factors and could be considered for removal.

Inference: The communalities table has all value greater than 0.3 or 0.4, so the extraction variable values considered as high communalities that indicates the factors has large proportion of variance and all communal factors has to be considered.

Total Variance Explained						
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	1.663	27.720	27.720	1.663	27.720	27.720
2	1.132	18.864	46.584	1.132	18.864	46.584
3	1.012	16.868	63.452	1.012	16.868	63.452
4	.851	14.191	77.643			
5	.798	13.301	90.944			
6	.543	9.056	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The above total variance table of factorial analysis represents the how much variance each factor explains and the cumulative variance explained by all extracted factors. Eigenvalues a common criterion for deciding how many factors to extract is to retain factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1, which represents the amount of variance explained by a factor. Extraction sums of squared loadings shows the eigenvalues and percentage of variance explained after extraction. The cumulative percentage indicates how much of the total variance is explained by the retained factors.

Inference: The total variance table has three eigenvalues greater than 1, which are environmental sustainability, eco-friendly product and regulatory requirement, so these factors are to be extracted and these retained factors are to be considered on consumer perception towards secondary packaging.

Component Matrix^a			
	Component		
	1	2	3
we always prefer product which facilitate benefits of environmental sustainability	.626	.343	.109
I would like to buy product which favour of eco-friendly product	.449	-.371	-.516
I prefer product which fulfil regulatory requirement	.415	.075	.723
I will like to buy product which has low price	.637	-.176	-.273
I will like to buy product to whom I am associated	.539	-.551	.275
I always prefer product which is most convenience at the time of consumption	.450	.732	-.247

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 3 components extracted.

The above component matrix table of factorial analysis represents the matrix containing a factor loading that shows the correlation of each variable with each extracted component, which further shows the initial relationship between variables and the extracted components. The numbers in the component matrix are the loadings. A value close to 1 or -1 indicates a strong positive or negative relationship, respectively. A value close to 0 suggests a weak or non-existent relationship in the component matrix.

Inference: The component matrix has both positive and negative values, but has maximum values close to 1, which is positive sign means that the variable's value increases. The components are environmental sustainability, eco-friendly product and regulatory requirement which is positive sign on consumer perception towards secondary packaging.

Conclusion:

The findings of this study indicate a growing consumer inclination toward products that has eco-friendly or environmental secondary packaging. Many consumers perceive secondary packaging as unnecessary, environmentally harmful, and a contributor to excessive waste. In contrast, products with environmental sustainable packaging and eco-friendly secondary packaging are often viewed more favourably, particularly by environmentally conscious buyers who value sustainability and minimalism. The absence of secondary packaging can also lead to cost savings for both producers and consumers, making products more affordable while reducing the environmental footprint. As awareness of ecological issues continues to rise, brands that adopt eco-friendly packaging practices — including reducing or eliminating secondary packaging — are likely to gain a competitive edge and foster stronger trust and loyalty among modern consumers.

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