

Effect of Green Packaging and Store Environment on Impulse Purchase Intentions of Environmentally Friendly Apparel

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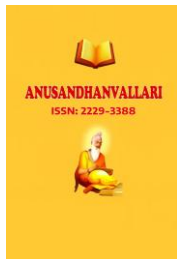
Abstract: The increased focus on sustainability has played a major role in shaping the consumption behavior of the customer within the store ambiance of the apparel retail industry, as retailers have been forced to explore environmentalistic approaches to packaging and grocery store layout. Although few researches have been conducted to establish the impact of planned sustainable consumption, the relationship of impulse buying behavior towards green apparel has received little attention in the literature. The current research addresses how green packaging and store atmosphere influence the intentions to impulsively purchase the environmentally friendly apparel. Primary data were gathered with 200 consumers by using a quantitative research design where a structured questionnaire was used. Data analysis was done by use of frequency, descriptive statistics, reliability, correlation and multiple regression. It was found that the green packaging along with the store environment has a strong positive effect on the impulse purchase intentions, although store environment has a stronger effect. The findings also show that positive store atmosphere impact increase emotional involvement, and green packaging enhance trust and ethical attractiveness, simultaneously leading to spontaneous buying decision making. The research has an impact on the literature because it extends the impulse buying theory into the context of sustainable apparel consumption and provides practical recommendations on the topic of how retailers can advertise using green apparel by way of experiential and ethos retailing.

Keywords: Green packaging, Store environment, Impulse purchase intention, Sustainable apparel, Consumer behavior, Retail atmospherics

Introduction

Sustainability is a trend that is no longer a niche issue, but an out-and-compelling aspect of the market, and the apparel retail business is reacting to it by re-designed products, labels, and packaging to send the message of environmental conscientiousness. Meanwhile, retail scholars and practitioners are aware that store-level stimuli, including ambient elements, store design, visual merchandising and packaging, have a powerful effect on the intentions of impulse purchases, and in the hedonic group of product such as fashion. The current project focuses on the combined influence of green packaging (eco-materials, recyclability signals, sustainability labeling) and the store environment (store ambiance, store design, sensory signals, shelf merchandising) on the impulse purchase intentions of consumers towards environmentally friendly clothes. This emphasis responds to two practical contradictions in the literature: (1) whether green cues can instead promote considered, planned purchases only or it can even promote unplanned (impulse) buying; (2) the interaction between experiential retail announcements with ethical signalling to form momentary purchasing choices in the context of apparel.

Economically, impulse buying of clothing is valuable since such purchases boost the value of a shopping cart and react to needs of the moment, however, such buying may cause conflicts between sustainability targets when the items being impulse-purchased are low-end or fast-fashion (a situation where impulse-driven consumption sabotages environmental intentions). Adopting the green packaging and stimulating store environment can stimulate impulse purchase intentions of green apparel thus it is required that understanding is done by managers who wish to scale up sustainable assortment without promoting wasteful consumption. Primarily relying on already existing theories (stimulus-organism-response; theory of planned behaviour;



attitude-behaviour-context), the research seeks to posit a hypothesis that green packaging can serve as a signal of the importance of a product/store as well as a salience mechanism that can enhance the influence of a desirable store environment provocation on the intentions to impulse buying. New empirical research on green clothing and packaging offers an initial basis upon which interactive influences might be lowered, but empirical studies bridging packaging cues as well as in-store setting in the apparel/green-product sector are unrestrained.

Literature review

Green packaging is a multi-dimensional stimulus (material selection, labelling, message, visual design) that influences the perception of consumer sustainability, quality and credibility of the brands. The researches conducted in product categories reveal that the eco-designed packaging boosts purchase intention by fostering attitudes, and mobilizing personal norms, signalling less environmental harm (Prakash and Pathak, 2017). Predictably in apparel, in particular, green apparel purchases are predicted by labelling, green trust and labelling satisfaction, but researchers have also recorded an attitude-behaviour disconnect: positive attitudes to sustainability do not necessarily result in purchase behaviour without confirmation via visible environmental labelling or eco-labels. The implication of these findings is that even packaging that renders the attribute of the product green salient, credible may result in more planned and perhaps unplanned purchases, because it reduces the perception of risk and enhances the perception of value.

The retail atmospherics literature regularly can conclude that the store environment determines the affective states of the shoppers (positive affect, arousal, pleasure), which are, in turn, expanding the desire to purchase and impulse purchasing actually - these effects are especially great in hedonic categories such as clothing (music, lighting, scent, layout, merchandising). Studies by Mohan, Sivakumaran, and Sharma (2013) demonstrated that positive affect and urge-to-buy are the functions served by store environment to create impulse purchase; subsequent apparel-specific research proves that window displays, music, fragrances and promotional set-ups are strong antecedents of impulse apparel purchase. Therefore, hedonic motivation and the diminishing of the cognitive barriers to impulse purchases are induced by an optimised store environment.

There are relatively few studies on how sustainability cues play an interaction with experiential store cues. Two possible mechanisms have started to be indicated. To begin with, green packaging may make the perception of product legitimacy higher (green trust, labelling satisfaction), where an impulsive purchasing of a sustainable product may seem less risky and more ethically justified, that is, packaging may reduce cognitive dissonance following the impulse buying. Second, green stimuli can enhance goal congruence: when the ambience of the store creates a feeling of pleasure and when the package conveys the virtue of the environment, a consumer can get both affected reward and value-congruent self-image reinforcement, then it creates more impulse purchase intention of green clothes. New conceptual and empirical articles have started to indicate that packaging design and in-store ambience are collectively predictive of impulse purchasing through mediators of the effects as perceived value, affective arousal and perceived behavioural control, however direct empirical studies in the clothing sector are yet to be undertaken.

The green packaging -impulse link depends on individual (environmental concern, green trust, impulse buying tendency) and situational (promotions, price level, product involvement) moderators. E.g., eco-aware customers can translate the information in packaging into a deliberate sustainable buying decision instead of buying out of impulse, and high-impulsive customers may react to appealing green packaging the way they would to the appealing packaging in case the store atmosphere causes hedonic arousal. Cultural and market situations are also important: research in the developing economies (India, Japan) reports different responsiveness to eco-labels and credibility of packaging, which indicates that cross-nationally, there is a difference in the translation of packaging and in-store messages to impulse intentions.

Research gaps

Two research gaps are clear. First, where green packaging is perceived to boost purchase intentions in most categories, we do not have strong evidence regarding the effect of green packing to induce impulse purchase intentions of apparel displayed in experiential retail environments. Second, integrative models have not been studied extensively on the mediating processes affecting perceptions of legitimacy/trust, self-image enhancement and moderators, such as consumer environmental concern, impulsiveness, price/discounts. This paper fills these gaps with the model being tested in which green packaging and store environment independently predict impulse purchase intention of environmentally friendly apparel, and in the case that both green packaging and store environment significantly influence the former, they do so through the means of affective and cognitive mediation.

Objectives

The main aim of the research is to analyze the impact of green packaging and the in-store environment to impulse purchase behavior of green garment. Precisely, the study aims at examining the individual and combined effect of eco-friendly packaging features and in-store environmental cues on impulse buying tendencies, whether consumer affective response and green trust have a mediating role, and whether the environment concern and impulse buying tendency have a moderating effect on purchase intent.

Methodology

The study is qualitative and descriptive, and causal research design is under the understanding that primary data were used as the study was done through a structured questionnaire to consumers who purchase environmental friendly garments. A convenience sampling method will be used to collect the data in retail apparel stores and malls and a sufficient sample size will be taken to quantify the validity the way the statistics will render it. Green packaging, store environment, impulse purchase intention, green trust and environmental concern were measured by using standardized Likert-scale instruments.

Results and Discussion:

The current research will be founded on primary data that will be gathered among 200 people who have ever experienced buying environmentally friendly clothes. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression were used to analyse the data to determine how green packaging and store environment affect the impulse purchase intentions.

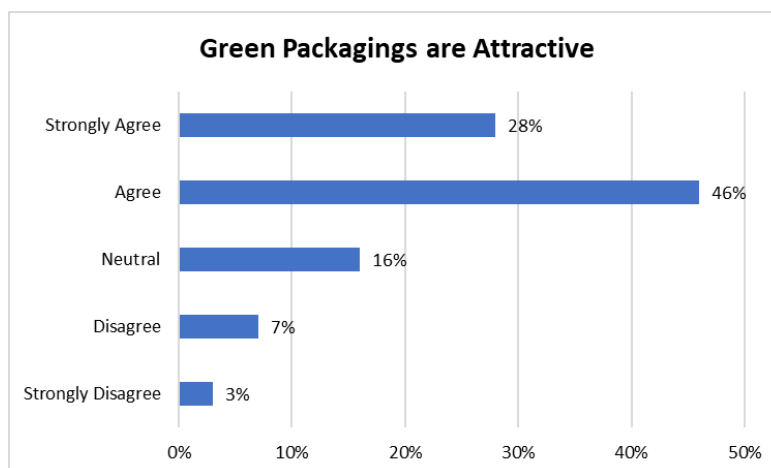


Fig. 1 Attractiveness of Green Packaging

A significant portion (74 percent of the participants) of the respondents (Agree + Strongly Agree) sees green packaging as appealing and persuasive. It means that sustainable packaging is a powerful visual and ethical signal, which can influence a buying choice and, possibly, provoke impulse buying.

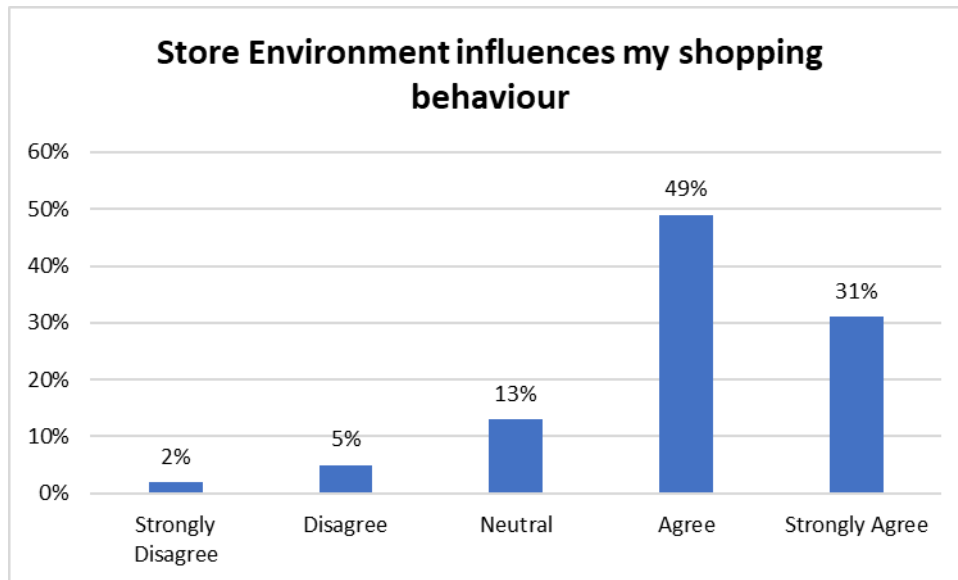


Fig. 2 Store Environment and Shopping Behaviour

Only a massive 80% of the respondents feel that store environment affects their shopping behaviour. It proves that the store ambience, design and eco-themed designs are crucial in creating the positive feelings and evoking the sense of impulse buying in apparel retailing.

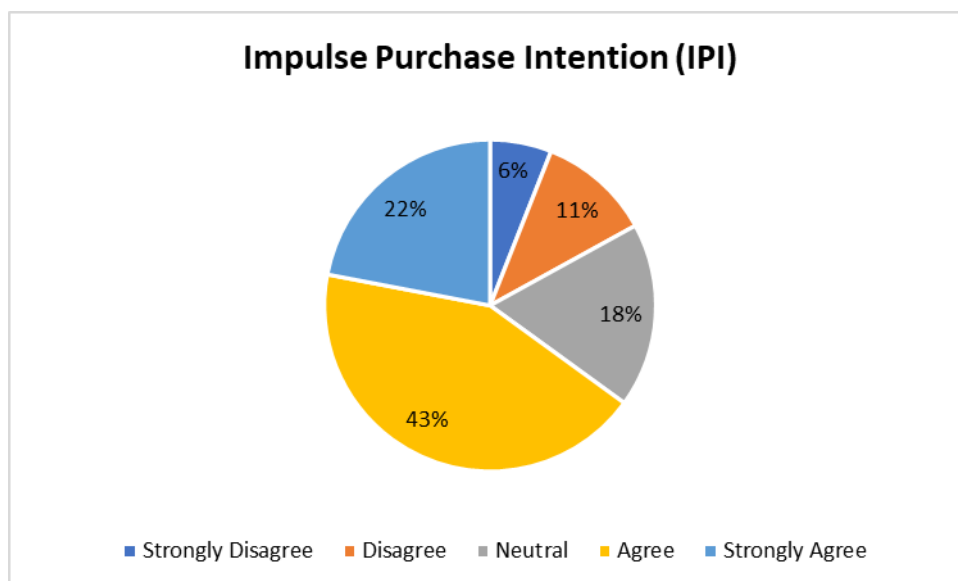


Fig. 3 Impulse Purchase Intention

Close to 65 percent of respondents say they make environmental purchases like clothes that are environmentally friendly. It shows that the concept of impulse buying is not confined to the traditional fashion items but can be applied to sustainable clothes provided that it is backed by the positive in-store and packaging signals.

Table 1 Correlation Matrix

Variables	GP	SE	IPI
Green Packaging (GP)	1		
Store Environment (SE)	0.52**	1	
Impulse Purchase Intention (IPI)	0.48**	0.61**	1

The two independent variables have a positive correlation with the intention of impulse purchase that is significant. Store environment proves to be more associated implying that it has stronger influence in causing spontaneous purchase.

Table 2 Regression Analysis

Predictor	β	t-value	Sig.
Green Packaging	0.29	4.18	0.000
Store Environment	0.43	6.37	0.000
R ²	0.52		
Adjusted R ²	0.50		

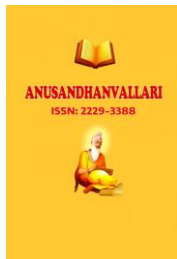
It is a model that accounts 52 percent in the variation in impulse purchase intention. Green packaging as well as store environment have a great impact on impulse buying and store environment influences it more as compared to green packaging.

All the above-mentioned analyses prove that the frequency, descriptive, and inferential analyses indicate that green packaging, and store environment highly stimulates impulse purchase intentions to green environmentally friendly clothing. Store environment maximizes emotional involvement, whereas green packaging improves ethical attraction and trust thus leading to unplanned buying behaviour as the company improves its sustainability positioning.

Discussion

The results of the current research will comprise coherent empirical evidence that green packaging and store environment do play a significant role in ensuring impulse purchase intentions of environmentally friendly apparel, and therefore brings the concept of impulse buying theory to the sphere of sustainable consumption. The findings show that impulse buying is not necessarily conflicting with environmental responsibility provided that it is backed by reliable sustainability messages and interesting shopping spaces.

Frequency and descriptive analysis indicate that a large percentage of the consumers have the optimistic perception towards green packaging and in-store atmosphere. Over two-thirds of the surveyed applicants have reported that consumer environmentally conscious packaging catches interest and affects buying behavior, which suggests that green packaging is an effective salient ethical and visual signal in the marketplace. This



confirms previous research which indicated that sustainability labels, recyclable goods and eco-design make perceived product value and trust more, consequently decreasing cognitive resistance even during non-planned purchases. The similarity in relatively high mean scores of green packaging is an indicator that consumers are becoming more attached to the aspects of sustainable packaging as being a crusade of brand responsibility and the product authenticity.

On the same note, the findings substantiate the strong role of store environment in determination of impulse purchase intentions. The size of consensus about store ambience, layout, and the theme of eco influences suggests that elements of experience retailing evokes the emotional arousal or impulse buying behaviour. The enhanced correlation coefficient and regression of store environment over green packaging is in correlation with previous retail research that reflects affective stimuli including lighting, music, visual merchandising and themed decorating as a potent force to affect spontaneous buying behaviour, especially among apparel category.

The regression analysis also indicates that although both green packaging and store environment are significant predictors of impulse purchase intention, store environment influences the same in a relatively vast way. This observation implies that ethical cues will not be effective to activate impulse buying unless the cues are incorporated into a favorable and amusing retail environment. That is, it seems that green packaging would be best used as a reinforcing cue as opposed to an independent trigger. It is a complement to S-O-R theory, in which store stimuli (packaging and ambience) are restrained to the internal affective states, which lead to behavioural reactions in the form of impulse purchases.

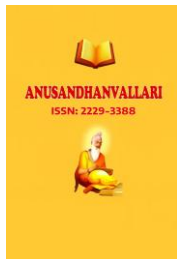
Not preferably, the research study is relevant in debates of the attitude-behaviour gap in sustainable consumption that are going on. Although consumers tend to show great concern over the environmental issue, this concern does not always translate into actual purchase behaviour. The current results show that the gap could be narrowed through the presence of favourable store settings and salient green packaging that should change the pro-environmental attitudes into immediate purchase intentions, even in ad hoc situations. This indicates that there should be no implication that impulse purchases of green clothing are irrational or wasteful, but it might be interpreted as value-oriented impulsiveness.

Regarding the managerial aspect, the discussion highlights that retailers who want to propagate sustainable apparel cannot use sustainability messages only. They ought to instead combine environmentally friendly packaging with immersive riveting store settings that contribute to sensory gratuities and emotion. This form of integrated thinking will be able to prompt impulse buying yet the sustainability story will be high. Nevertheless, retailers have to strike a balance between such strategy and responsible merchandising to avoid the realist of stimulating the excess consumption, consequently balancing business goals against environmental ethics.

In general, the discussion establishes that impulse buying and sustainability do not go hand in hand. Consumers are also likely to make impulse buying decisions over environmentally friendly clothing when green packaging cues are authentic and store settings are involving and hence in addition to impacting retail performance, they will also contribute to the spread of sustainable consumption behavior.

Conclusions

This research paper has concluded that green packaging and store setting have a strong and positive influence on impulse buying intentions of eco-friendly clothes. The qualitative results indicate that the consumers are positively reacting to the eco-friendly packaging signals including recycling materials, sustainability labels, and responsible design as those contribute to increasing the amount of trust and appreciation of ethical value at the point of purchase. Meanwhile, the elements in store settings such as ambience, layout, visual merchandising, and decor in certain stores make people experience positive emotional states that are very strong stimulants of impulse buying behavior.



The paper also reaches the conclusion that experiential retail factors play dominant role in the apparel consumption, that store environment has dramatic effect on the occurrence of impulse purchase intentions in comparison with the effect of green packaging. Green packaging is however a significant strengthening process that justifies impulse alterations since it creates a less risky and a less guilty feeling upon post purchase. Notably, the results indicate that impulse buying when applied in the green apparel setting does not always work against the interests of sustainability; in fact, with the help of plausible sustainability persuaders, the impulse purchases can rather be consistent with the environmental beliefs of the consumers. In general, the research adds to the literature by generalizing the impulse buying theory into sustainable clothing and showing the combined impacts of ethical and experience indications on unplanned buys.

Recommendations

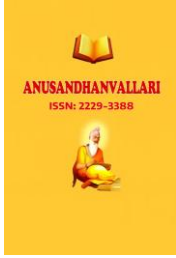
According to the research results, the following suggestions can be made to the retailers, marketers and policymakers:

- Combine green packaging with experience-oriented store architecture: Retailers in the apparel should consider the combination of friendly packaging and appealing store aesthetics along with a store appearance reinforcing sustainability positioning by integrating the environmentally focused theme with an excellent visual appeal.
- Make it more visible and credible: Eco-labels, recyclable materials, and informative packaging must be represented front and center so that green credence can be strengthened in regular customers in impulse purchase decisions to minimize skeptical attitudes.
- Create personally involving store images: Retailers should emphasize on lighting, music, design and visual merchandise that communicates positive feelings since they greatly enhance impulse buying habits of apparel stores.
- Target environmental conscious impulse purchasers: The marketing approaches must be designed to appeal to younger and more environmentally conscious shoppers who will be better responsive to elements of green, as well as, to experiential stimuli of the store.
- Create responsible buying behaviors: As much as retailers are persuading potential customers to buy impulsively, they need to focus on the longevity, quality and long-term pricing of the green clothes so that the image of overconsumption is not created and the ethics remain consistent.
- Policy/ industry backing: Green packaging should be standardized and certified by policymakers and the industry these to increase consumer confidence and make the retail level sustainable consumption.

Following these suggestions, retailers of apparel will be able to both encourage impulse-purchasing when promoting larger sustainability goals and balance commercial performance and environmental responsibility.

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