

Towards zero waste in online retail: The effects of packaging on consumer attitudes and possibilities for omitting it

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## **Abstract**

Online retail is a continuously growing industry with increasing use of tertiary packaging material (i.e., the packaging of already packaged products to deliver online orders). Yet, it is unclear whether, and if so how, secondary and tertiary packaging affects consumer attitudes towards online retailers. Therefore, we first demonstrate how packaging leads to perceptions of unused utility, thereby affecting consumer attitudes and repurchase intentions regarding retailers. Moreover, to better understand how retailers can reduce the use of natural resources, Studies 2 and 3 examine how omitting packaging affects (sustainable) consumer attitudes and repurchase intentions, and consumers' willingness to omit packaging. Results show that omitting packaging positively affect sustainable attitudes and repurchase intentions. Finally, when given the choice, consumers prefer omission of tertiary packaging but only when this action is communicated as being sustainable. Implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** *Packaging; onlineretail; sustainability*

**Track:** Retailing & Omni-Channel Management