

Netnography on online consumer panel



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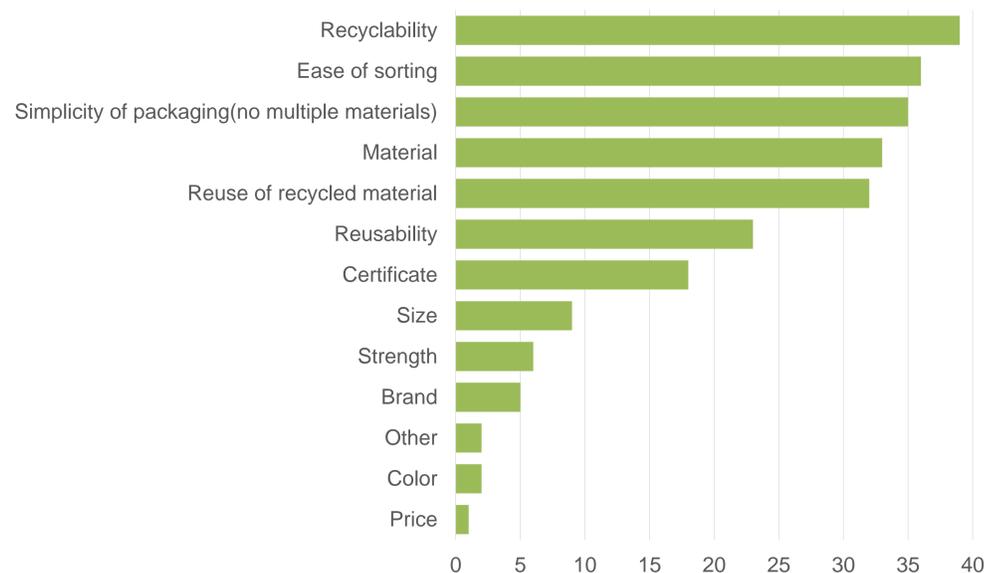
Netnography is an ethnographic research conducted within an online community. It provides researchers with qualitative research data that is based on online activities, rather than more traditional ethnographic methods such as face-to-face interviews.

We sent an open invitation to anyone who is interested in sustainable food packaging to join our online consumer panel. The work is still ongoing, but we have some preliminary results we can share. The panel had 45 active members who answered a question or did a task assigned to them, such as photographing and describing good food packaging.

FACTORS THAT COMMUNICATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL FRIENDLINESS OF A PACKAGE

Previous research indicates that consumers are not very well aware of the environmental impact of food packaging, and even further, are not well equipped to assess the environmental friendliness or sustainability of the food packaging. We asked our panelists, who in general are well educated and aware of environmental issues to describe which cues, attributes or factors of the food packaging communicates environmental friendliness for them. The Top 3 indicators among our panelists were:

- 1) Recyclability of the packaging
- 2) The easiness of sorting the packaging
- 3) Monomaterial (simplicity of the package i.e. does not consist many materials)

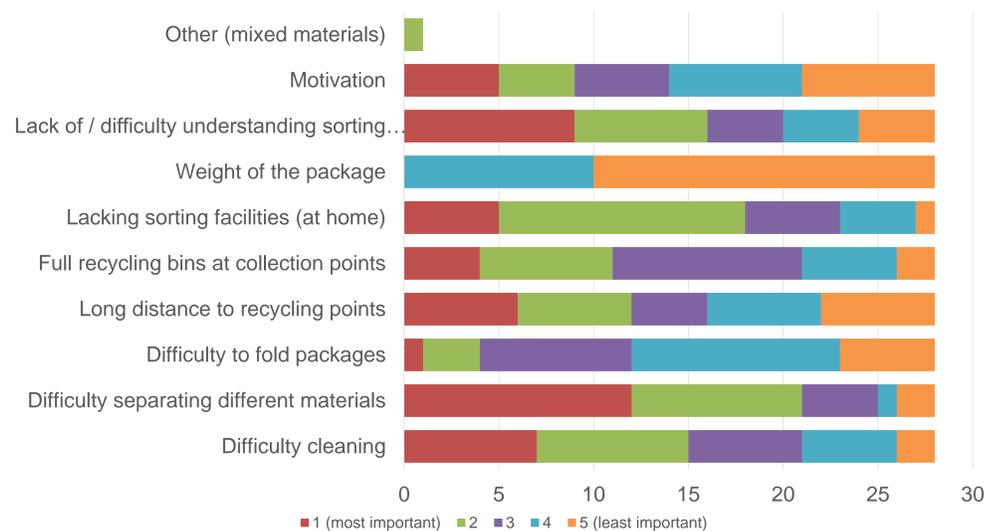


FACTORS THAT MAKE SORTING DIFFICULT

Since our panelist clearly stated that from their point of view, the factors connected to recycling and sorting are the key factors of environmentally friendly packaging, it is important to know what then are the factors that hinder the effective sorting and recycling of food packaging. The top 3 factors were:

- 1) Difficulty separating different materials
- 2) Lack of and/or difficulty understanding sorting instructions
- 3) Difficulty cleaning the waste properly

Other important factors which were ranked second important were the lack of sorting facilities at home and long distance to recycling points.



RECOGNISING RECYCLING CODES



As our panelists listed the lack of proper sorting instructions as one of the most important hindering factor for recycling, we tested how well they recognize and interpret some of the recycling codes. It is noticeable that paper was very well known, whereas, for example PVC-03 was often sorted as plastic and some of the plastics were poorly recognised. It was, however, mentioned that it was harder to assess the codes without the actual package in hand.

To know more about the consumer panel contact: Kirsi.sonck-rautio@abo.fi or keep an eye on our webpage www.packageheroes.fi where we will publish our results

