

E-commerce Packaging Sustainability: A Bibliometric Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract: This study aims to (1) examine the publication trend of e-commerce packaging research between 2016 and January 2026, (2) map its distribution across countries, institutions, and outlets, (3) identify its thematic structure through author-keyword co-occurrence analysis, and (4) determine theoretical, contextual, characteristic, and methodological gaps to formulate a future research agenda. A hybrid bibliometric and systematic literature review was conducted on 28 Scopus-indexed journal articles selected following the PRISMA 2020 protocol. Publication trends, country co-authorship, and keyword co-occurrence were mapped using VOSviewer version 1.6.20, while the qualitative synthesis followed the Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM) framework. Results show that annual output rose from three articles in 2022 to seven in 2023, dipped to three in 2024, and surged to a peak of thirteen in 2025, China and Malaysia led with five articles each, followed by India (four) and Australia, Germany, and Spain (three each).

Abstrak: Studi ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengkaji tren publikasi penelitian kemasan e-commerce antara tahun 2016 hingga Januari 2026, (2) memetakan distribusinya berdasarkan negara, institusi, dan saluran publikasi, (3) mengidentifikasi struktur tematiknya melalui analisis kemunculan bersama antara penulis dan kata kunci, serta (4) menentukan kesenjangan teoretis, kontekstual, karakteristik, dan metodologis guna merumuskan agenda penelitian masa depan. Pendekatan hibrida yang menggabungkan analisis bibliometrik dan tinjauan pustaka sistematis diterapkan terhadap 28 artikel jurnal terindeks Scopus yang dipilih berdasarkan protokol PRISMA 2020. Tren publikasi, kolaborasi penulis antarnegara, dan kemunculan bersama kata kunci dipetakan menggunakan VOSviewer versi 1.6.20, sementara sintesis kualitatif dilakukan dengan mengacu pada kerangka kerja Theory-Context-Characteristics-Methodology (TCCM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa jumlah publikasi tahunan meningkat dari tiga artikel pada tahun 2022 menjadi tujuh pada tahun 2023, sempat turun menjadi tiga pada tahun 2024, lalu melonjak hingga mencapai puncaknya sebanyak tiga belas artikel pada tahun 2025; Tiongkok dan Malaysia memimpin dengan masing-masing lima artikel, diikuti oleh India (empat artikel) serta Australia, Jerman, dan Spanyol (masing-masing tiga artikel).

Keywords : E-commerce packaging; Sustainable packaging; Bibliometric analysis; Systematic literature review; Circular economy

INTRODUCTION

Packaging has shifted from a protective shell into a communication instrument and a site where brand value is actively created (Tang et al., 2025). Nowhere is this shift more pronounced than in online retail. Because buyer and brand never meet face to face, the parcel that arrives at the door becomes the first tangible thing the customer encounters, and often the only one (Pålsson & Olsson, 2023). For Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, and Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, the unboxing

experience has transcended its functional utility. Unboxing has taken on the character of a small ritual that carries emotional weight and is frequently recorded and shared ([Islam & Khan, 2025](#)). Brands have responded predictably: packaging has grown more elaborate, more photogenic, and more layered, in pursuit of the attention that circulates on social platforms ([Wolok et al., 2025](#)).

This pursuit rests on an assumption that deserves scrutiny. Many brands appear to believe young consumers can be won over by attractive design or a reassuring green label. The evidence suggests otherwise. These cohorts read marketing claims critically and are notably sceptical of environmental messaging that cannot be substantiated ([Di Pillo et al., 2025](#)). What they ask for is not visual appeal but evidence: transparency about materials, honesty about impact, and consistency between what a brand says and what it does ([Djafarova & Fouts, 2022](#), [Halibas et al., 2025](#)). A genuine tension follows. Operationally, e-commerce pushes toward more packaging, since protection in transit is cheaper than replacing damaged goods. Commercially, the consumers driving the market's growth push in the opposite direction, toward circular practices that reduce waste ([Lopes et al., 2025](#)). Brands are caught between the two, and the literature has not yet given them much help in navigating it.

Existing scholarship has established a good deal about packaging in digital retail, but along two narrow tracks. One is technical and operational, concerned with materials, logistics efficiency, environmental performance, and circular supply chain design ([Huh & Kim, 2024](#)). The other is behavioural but largely aesthetic, examining how visual attributes such as design, colour, and structure shape purchase intention ([Meherishi et al., 2019](#)). Both are valuable; neither addresses the tension described above. Two gaps follow. First, aesthetic satisfaction and environmental responsibility are typically modelled as parallel, independent constructs, leaving unexamined the friction that arises when a consumer wants both at once and suspects the brand offers only the appearance of the second. Second, although bibliometric methods are now common in marketing scholarship ([Donthu et al., 2021](#)), no review has mapped the intellectual trajectory of e-commerce packaging research at the specific intersection where young consumers' ethical expectations meet sustainability demands. The field therefore lacks an integrative map allowing practitioners to reconcile commercial appeal with credible sustainability, particularly for consumers who possess both the literacy to detect inauthenticity and the reach to publicise it.

The present study addresses this gap through a comprehensive bibliometric analysis integrated with a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), designed to map the intellectual structure of e-commerce packaging research and identify its conceptual blind spots. This study is guided by four primary Research Questions (RQs). RQ1: Does research on e-commerce packaging remain a significant and growing topic for future scientific inquiry? RQ2: How is this research distributed across countries, institutions, outlets, and themes? RQ3: What future research agenda can be recommended to align

packaging innovation with the ethical consumption demands of younger generations? RQ4: What theoretical, contextual, characteristic, and methodological gaps emerge from the TCCM synthesis? This study aims to generate theoretical contributions that restore the humanistic and ethical essence of marketing studies, while simultaneously serving as a tactical guideline for e-commerce practitioners in designing authentic and responsible packaging ecosystems.

METHOD

The study used a hybrid exploratory review that combined bibliometric performance mapping with qualitative systematic synthesis. Bibliometric analysis is useful for describing publication and network patterns, while systematic reading is needed to interpret constructs and formulate a research agenda (Donthu et al., 2021), (Paul & Criado, 2020). The review followed the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion logic of PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). Because the corpus is small, the analysis is presented as an indicative map rather than a definitive representation of a mature field.

Scopus was used as the sole metadata source because it provides structured author, affiliation, source, abstract, and keyword fields suitable for VOSviewer processing. This choice improves metadata consistency but does not provide a complete census of global scholarship; journals available only in Web of Science, Dimensions, Google Scholar, or regional indexes may be omitted (Wolok et al., 2025).

The search was executed in January 2026 for publications dated 2016-January 2026 using the Title, Abstract, and Keywords field. The documented core query was: *TITLE-ABS-KEY (“e-commerce packaging” OR “e-commerce unboxing” OR “online retail packaging”)*

The query deliberately identifies e-commerce packaging research broadly. It does not require sustainability, greenwashing, Generation Z, Millennials, or young-consumer terms; therefore, those constructs are not treated as universal corpus-selection criteria.

Criterion	Included	Excluded
Document type	Peer-reviewed journal articles	Conference papers, book chapters, conference reviews, and non-eligible reviews
Period	2016-January 2026	Outside the stated period
Language	English	Chinese, French, German, Korean, and other non-English records
Topical relevance	Substantive focus on consumer-facing e-commerce or online-retail packaging	Packaging mentioned incidentally or outside e-commerce/digital retail
Analytical relevance	Operational, environmental, circular, retail, marketing, or consumer implications	Purely unrelated industrial, medical, or pharmaceutical packaging

The focused Scopus query returned 61 records. Sixteen records were excluded by document type: nine conference papers, three book chapters, three non-eligible reviews, and one conference review. Eight additional records were excluded by language: four Chinese, two French, one German, and one Korean. The remaining 37 records underwent substantive relevance assessment, after which nine were excluded, yielding 28 included articles. The previous broad count of 124,825 records for the generic term packaging was removed because it was not part of the actual specific-query corpus and created an irreconcilable PRISMA diagram.

Scopus records were exported in CSV format and analysed in VOSviewer version 1.6.20 ([van Eck & Waltman, 2017](#)). Descriptive performance mapping covered annual publication output, country and institutional affiliation, publication sources, and author productivity. Country co-authorship and author-keyword co-occurrence networks were analysed using full counting and VOSviewer's association-strength normalisation. Total link strength (TLS) represents the aggregate strength of a node's relationships within the network.

The displayed author-keyword network used a minimum occurrence threshold of two so that low-frequency terms in the 28-document corpus remained visible. Sensitivity checks were conducted at thresholds of three and five. The raw network retained lexical variants, including e-commerce, electronic commerce, and e-commerces, as well as sustainable packaging and sustainability packaging. Consequently, the study reports the five algorithmic clusters visible in the raw map and then performs a transparent semantic consolidation into higher-order themes. Citation-based co-citation analysis was not used because the small corpus would produce unstable intellectual-structure claims ([Donthu et al., 2021](#)), ([Mukherjee et al., 2022](#)).

The qualitative synthesis was structured using the TCCM dimensions of Theory, Context, Characteristics, and Methodology ([Mukherjee et al., 2022](#)). Data extraction focused on theoretical orientation, empirical setting, packaging focus, consumer or operational constructs, research design, and principal implications. The purpose was to connect bibliometric patterns to researchable gaps rather than infer causality from publication metadata.

A corpus of 28 articles is modest by conventional bibliometric standards. The dataset is nevertheless adequate for exploratory description when the objective is to identify emerging patterns, fragmentation, and underdeveloped themes rather than establish a mature field's definitive structure ([Donthu et al., 2021](#)). To protect interpretive validity, geographic absence is described only within the retrieved corpus, and keyword absence is interpreted as a lack of recurrent explicit terminology rather than proof that an idea never appears in article texts.

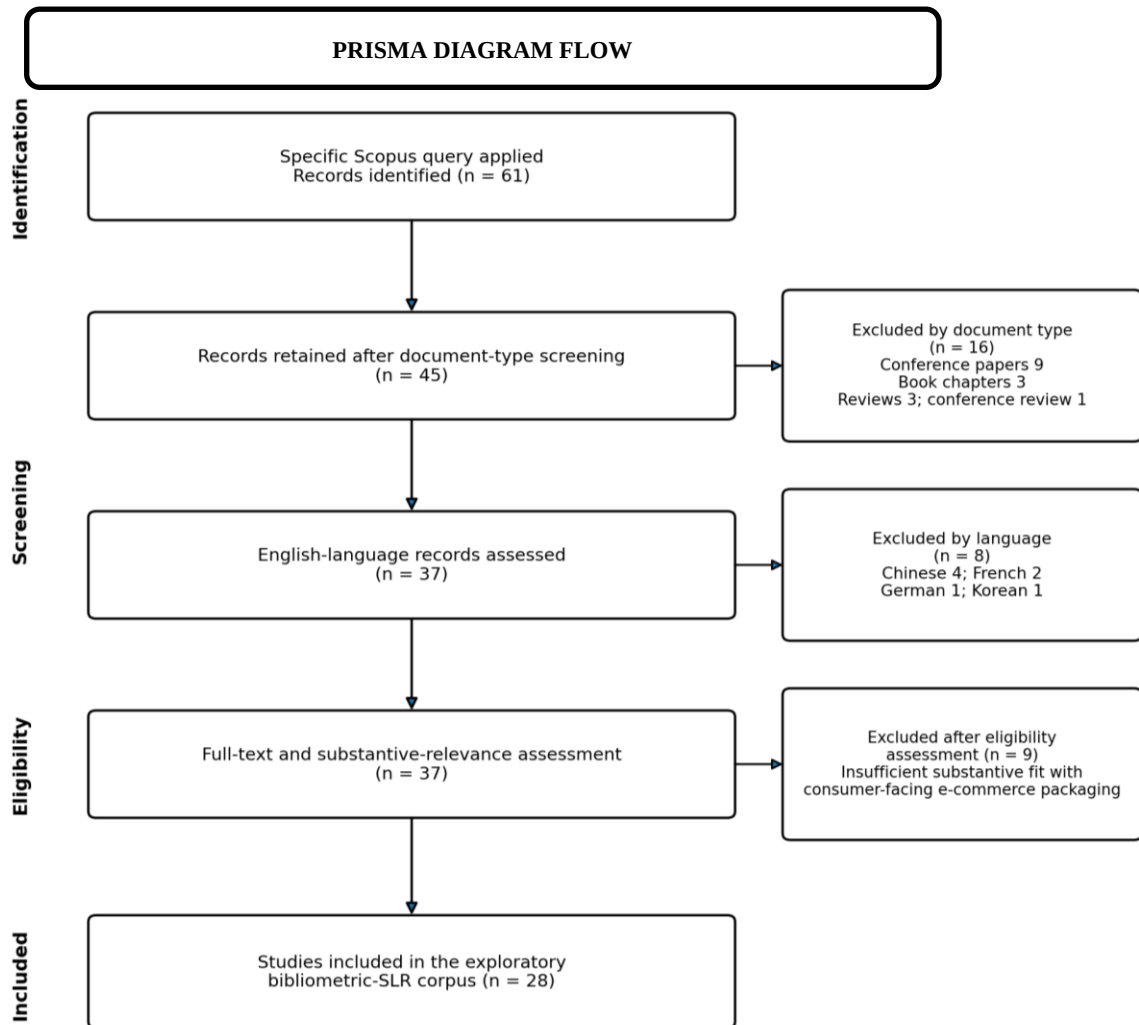


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 Flow Diagram.

Source: Authors' compilation based on Page et al. (2021)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A decade of publishing has produced 28 peer-reviewed articles. The number settles the question of maturity, this is a field in its early stages. The trajectory, however, shows it is no longer static. Activity between 2016 and 2021 was sparse and irregular; the study by García-Madariaga and colleagues (García-Madariaga et al., 2019), examining whether isolated packaging variables shift consumer attention, is among the earliest to treat packaging in this context as worth systematic study. From 2022 onward the curve turns sharply upward (Figure 2).

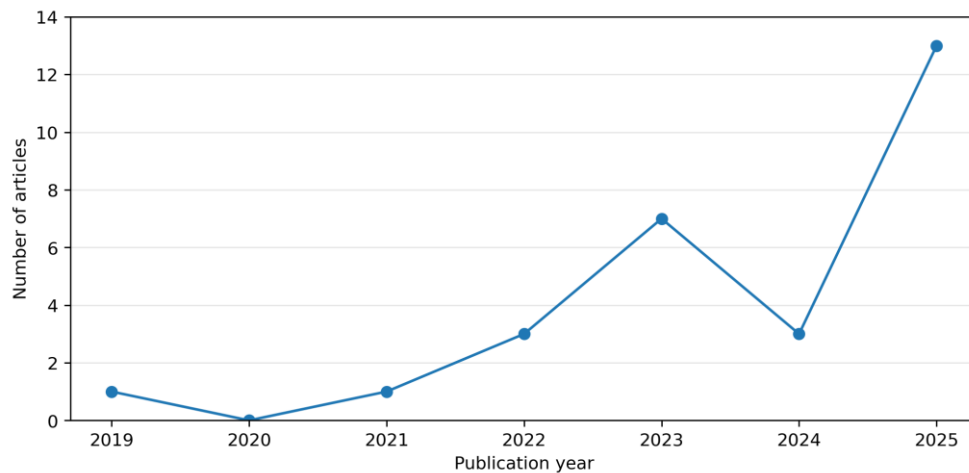


Figure 2. Annual Publication Trend (2016-2026)

Source: Scopus Database

Three developments plausibly account for the inflection, though bibliometric data can support the inference rather than establish it. E-commerce expansion during and after the pandemic made packaging waste newly visible to consumers and regulators. ESG reporting moved from a specialist concern to a mainstream disclosure expectation. And Generation Z entered its years of peak discretionary spending, giving the cohort's preferences commercial weight it had not previously carried. Recent contributions reflect these pressures, addressing environmental concern in online grocery retail ([Hyun et al., 2025](#)), behavioural intentions toward circular packaging ([Ram et al., 2025](#)), and algorithmic approaches to reducing packaging volume ([Zghair & Konathala, 2025](#)). The answer to RQ1 is affirmative, with a qualification worth stating plainly: the field is growing quickly enough that early contributions are likely to be disproportionately influential.

China and Malaysia are the leading contributors with 5 articles each, followed by India (4), Australia, Germany, and Spain (3 each), and Canada, South Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (2 each) (see Figure 3). This Asia-Pacific dominance analytically reflects the region's position as the world's largest e-commerce market and growing regulatory pressure on sustainable logistics governance. The co-authorship network (Figure 4) confirms that international research collaboration remains sparse, with no sustained multi-country research consortia. Critically, the complete absence of contributions from Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East constitutes a significant geographic blind spot, indicating that sustainability challenges in high-growth emerging e-commerce markets remain entirely unexplored.

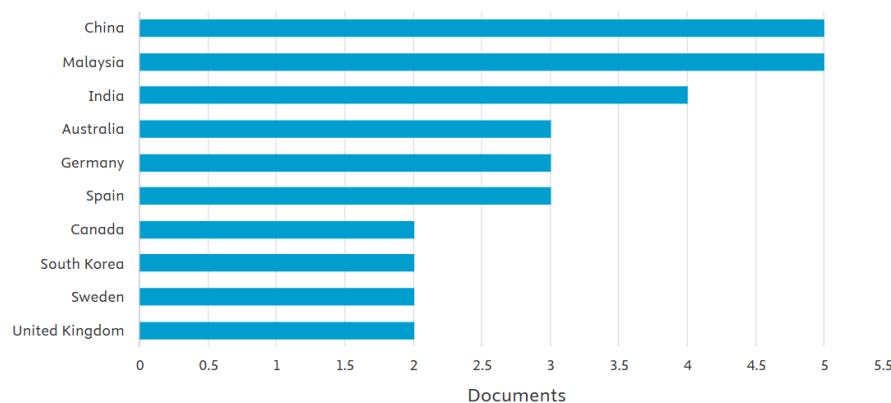


Figure 3. Articles by Country (Top 10)

Source: Scopus Database

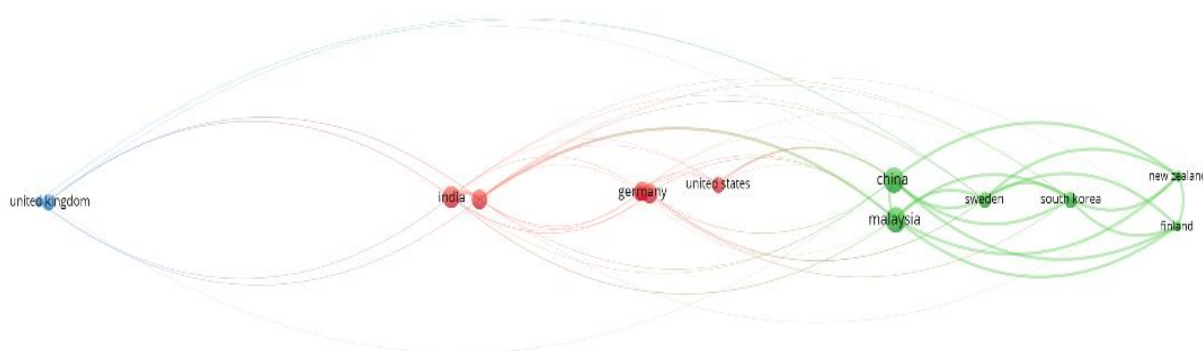


Figure 4. Country Co-Authorship Network

Source: VOSviewer v1.6.20

WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management (Germany), Universidade de Vigo (Spain), and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (Malaysia) lead with 2 publications each, while 27 other institutions contributed one article each (see Figure 5). The dispersed authorship pattern is analytically significant, it is consistent with Stage 1 (Emergence) in Thorpe et al.'s (2005) knowledge development cycle, characterized by the absence of established paradigmatic research traditions. This fragmentation confirms the field has not yet consolidated around any single theoretical paradigm, a condition that represents exceptional opportunity for early scholarly contribution.

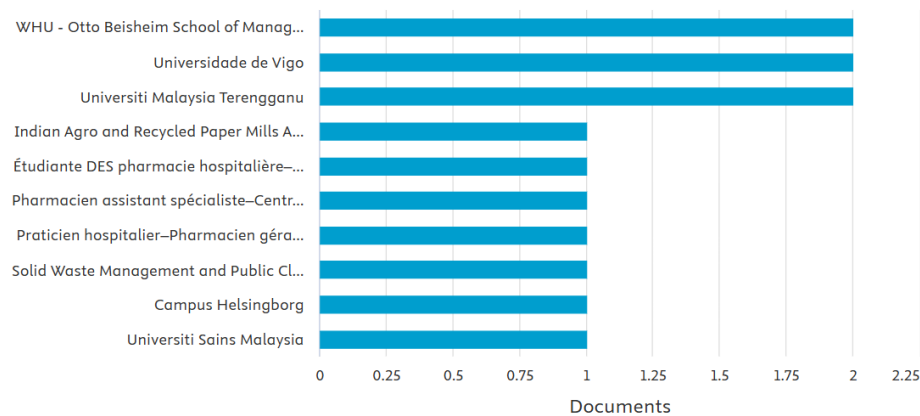


Figure 5. Articles by Institutional Affiliation (Top 10)

Source: Scopus Database

The Journal of Cleaner Production dominates with 4 articles, followed by Paper Asia (3 articles) (see Figure 6). The remaining outlets contributed one article each. The prominence of environmental, engineering, and packaging outlets indicates that operational and ecological questions currently receive more sustained attention than consumer-theory integration.

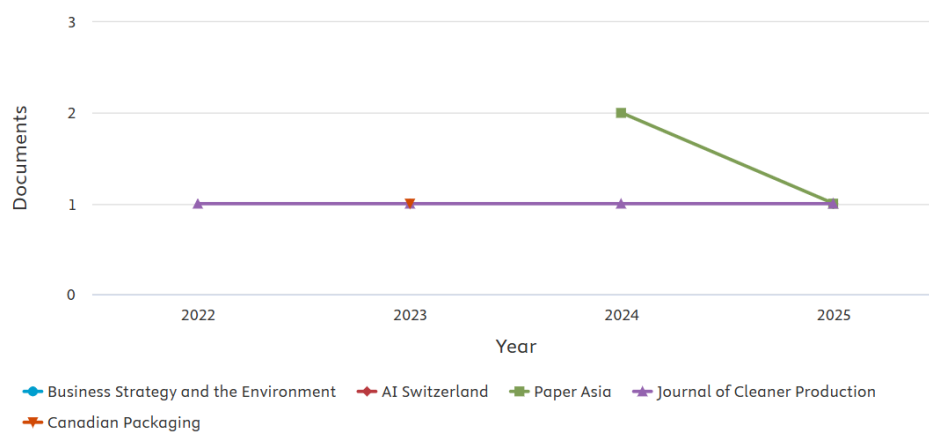


Figure 6. Articles by Publication Source (Top 10)

Source: Scopus Database

Author productivity was also flat. Six authors contributed two articles each, whereas the remaining authors generally appeared once. The absence of dominant authors or institutions suggests limited programmatic accumulation and strengthens the case for collaborative and comparative research (see Figure 7).

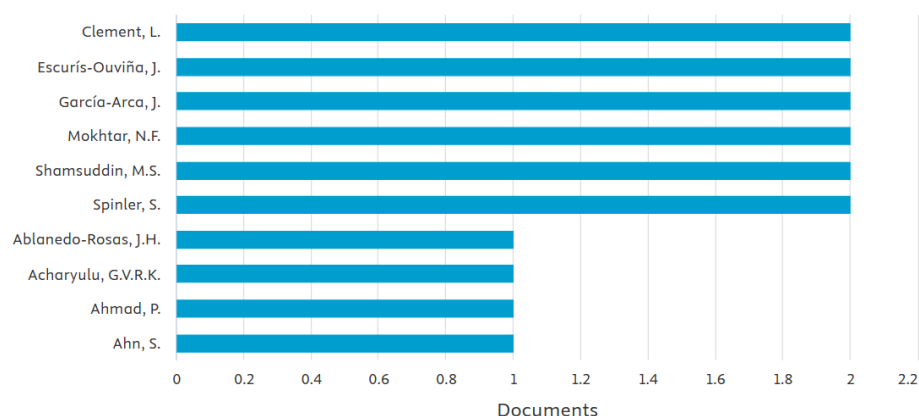


Figure 7. Articles by Author (Top 10)

Source: Scopus Database

Table 1 summarises institutional, outlet, and author distribution. No institution has published more than twice, and six authors account for two articles each while every other contributor appears once. A distribution this flat indicates no research group has established a programmatic line of inquiry, and that the theoretical commitments which typically consolidate around a maturing field have not formed (Donthu et al., 2021), (Mukherjee et al., 2022).

Table 1. Distribution of the 28-article corpus by institution, outlet, and author

No	Dimension	Most frequent contributors	Interpretive implication
1	Institutions	WHU - Otto Beisheim School of Management (2); Universidade de Vigo (2); Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (2)	All other listed institutions contributed one article
2	Publication outlets	Journal of Cleaner Production (4); Paper Asia (3); Sustainability (2)	Remaining outlets contributed one article each
3	Authors	Clement; Escurís-Ouviña; García-Arca; Mokhtar; Shamsuddin; Spinler (2 each)	All other authors contributed one article

Source: Scopus, processed by the authors

The flat distribution should be interpreted cautiously. It is consistent with a field that has not consolidated around a small number of research programmes, but it does not by itself establish a formal stage in a knowledge-development cycle. Outlet concentration in environmental and technical journals supports the conclusion that operational and ecological questions currently outweigh marketing and consumer-theory integration.

The keyword co-occurrence network contains five colour-coded algorithmic clusters. Reporting the algorithmic structure is important because the original map includes lexical variants that can split conceptually similar terms across clusters. Figure 8 therefore shows the raw network, while Table 3 provides a cautious interpretive label for each cluster.

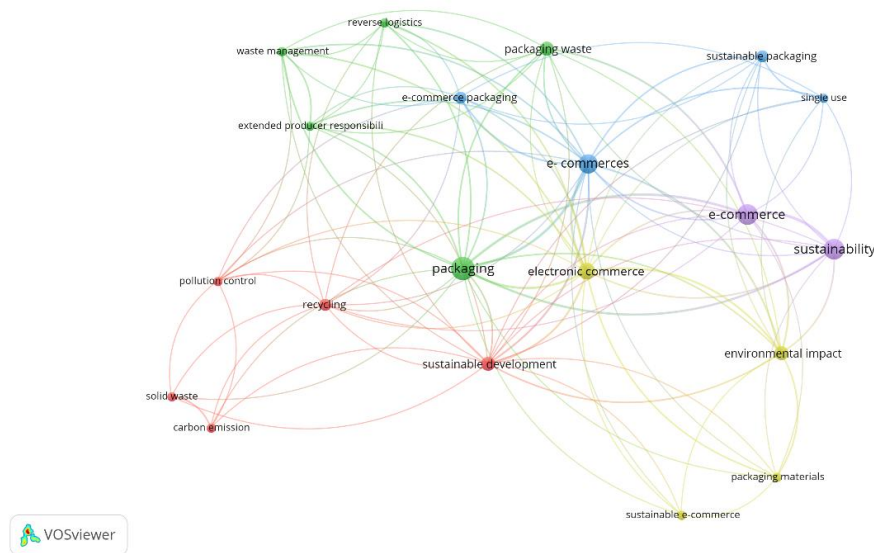


Figure 8. Keyword Co-Occurrence Network

Source: VOSviewer v1.6.20

Table 2. Five algorithmic clusters visible in the raw keyword map

Raw cluster	Principal visible terms	Interpretive label
1	Packaging; e-commerce packaging; packaging waste; reverse logistics; waste management; extended producer responsibility	Operational packaging and reverse-flow governance
2	Sustainable development; recycling; pollution control; solid waste; carbon emission	Environmental management and emissions
3	E-commerces; sustainable packaging; single use	Sustainable packaging format and disposability
4	E-commerce; sustainability	Digital-commerce sustainability
5	Electronic commerce; environmental impact; packaging materials; sustainable e-commerce	Materials and environmental impact

Source: Scopus Database, processed with VOSviewer v1.6.20

Table 3. Author Keywords by Total Link Strength

Rank	Keywords	Total link strength
1	E-commerce	124
2	Packaging	48
3	Sustainability Development	34
4	Sustainability	28
5	Environmental impact	25
6	Packaging Waste	19

Rank	Keywords	Total link strength
7	E-commerce packaging	18
8	Sustainability Packaging	16
9	Pollution Control	13
10	Packaging Materials	11

Source: Scopus Database, processed with VOSviewer v1.6.20

After semantic consolidation, the five raw clusters can be discussed as three higher-order streams. The first concerns technical-operational packaging, including materials, right-sizing, waste, and reverse logistics. The second concerns environmental and circular governance, including sustainable development, recycling, emissions, and producer responsibility. The third connects e-commerce with sustainability but remains conceptually thin and lexically fragmented. This consolidation is an interpretive synthesis, not a replacement for the VOSviewer cluster output.

No recurrent author keyword explicitly named ESG literacy, greenwashing scepticism, perceived authenticity, or emotional response to over-packaging. The non-appearance of these terms was consistent across the tested thresholds and was therefore not attributable solely to the minimum occurrence parameter. It does not, however, establish their complete absence from titles, abstracts, measures, or full texts. The defensible finding is that these concepts have not stabilised as recurrent explicit author-keyword labels in the corpus.

Table 4. TCCM synthesis and future research priorities

TCCM dimension	Pattern in the reconstructed synthesis	Priority for future research
Theory	Operational efficiency, circularity, environmental management, and behavioural intention are more visible than integrated consumer-trust theory.	Examine authenticity, trust, scepticism, moral evaluation, and the full TPB architecture rather than purchase intention alone.
Context	The retrieved corpus is concentrated in Asian and European affiliations and dispersed across sectors and outlets.	Replicate across Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and underrepresented emerging markets; distinguish regulatory and infrastructure conditions.
Characteristics	Materials, waste, environmental impact, and e-commerce dominate the visible vocabulary. Generational cohorts are not consistently specified.	Differentiate Gen Z, Millennials, and broader adult samples; measure packaging type, claim format, unboxing intensity, and circular-system accessibility.
Methodology	A small corpus, engineering-oriented studies, case evidence, and cross-sectional consumer research limit causal and temporal inference.	Use experiments, longitudinal panels, eye-tracking, field trials, platform data, netnography, and multi-group comparisons; report validated measures and behavioural outcomes.

Organising the synthesis under the TCCM framework ([Mukherjee et al., 2022](#)) yields four priorities. On theory, the field needs work specifying how ESG literacy and greenwashing scepticism operate within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB). TPB should be used as an organising lens rather than claimed as empirically extended by this review ([Hyun et al., 2025](#)). Packaging attributes can shape perceived sustainability and authenticity, which may influence attitude and brand trust. Subjective norms may arise from peers, social-media communities, influencers, and platform cues. Perceived behavioural control is more appropriately represented by the consumer's ability to return, reuse, sort, or recycle packaging than by ESG literacy alone. Intention can then predict purchase and circular behaviour, subject to infrastructure and convenience.

Four constructs require conceptual clarity. ESG literacy is the consumer's ability to understand, assess, and verify environmental, social, and governance information communicated through packaging. Greenwashing scepticism is the tendency to question the truthfulness, completeness, and evidential basis of environmental claims. Perceived authenticity is the extent to which packaging claims are judged credible and consistent with observable brand practices. Emotional response to over-packaging comprises affective reactions such as guilt, irritation, disappointment, or frustration arising from perceived material excess.

Table 5. Conceptual definitions for the future research agenda

Construct	Working definition	Proposed analytical role
ESG literacy	Ability to comprehend, assess, and verify sustainability information communicated through packaging	Moderator of claim interpretation and credibility
Greenwashing scepticism	Doubt regarding the truthfulness and evidential basis of environmental claims	Negative antecedent or moderator of authenticity and trust
Perceived authenticity	Judgement that claims are credible, consistent, and supported by observable practices	Mediator between packaging information and brand trust
Over-packaging emotion	Guilt, irritation, disappointment, or frustration caused by perceived packaging excess	Affective pathway influencing attitude, satisfaction, and advocacy

The TPB is used as an organising lens rather than claimed as empirically extended by this review ([Ajzen, 1991](#)). Packaging attributes may influence perceived sustainability and authenticity, which can shape attitude and brand trust. Subjective norms may arise from peers, social-media communities, influencers, and platform signals. Perceived behavioural control is more appropriately represented by the ability to return, reuse, sort, or recycle packaging than by knowledge alone. Intention may then predict purchase and circular behaviour, conditional on infrastructure and convenience

Table 6. Operation research agenda

Agenda	Indicative question	Recommended method	Potential constructs
ESG literacy	How does literacy affect comprehension and verification of packaging claims?	Scale development; experiment; multi-group SEM	Claim comprehension; credibility; trust
Greenwashing scepticism	When do sustainable claims produce trust rather than suspicion?	Scenario experiment; moderated mediation; content analysis	Scepticism; authenticity; distrust; avoidance
Over-packaging emotion	How does excessive packaging affect post-purchase emotion and loyalty?	Unboxing diary; experience sampling; sentiment analysis	Guilt; irritation; disappointment; eWOM
Subjective norms	How do peers, influencers, and platform signals shape packaging expectations?	Social-network experiment; netnography	Normative pressure; social proof; intention
Behavioural control	How do return and recycling systems affect circular action?	Field experiment; longitudinal panel; platform data	Convenience; access; return/recycling behaviour

The theoretical contribution is prospective and bounded. Empirically, the review documents the dominance of operational and environmental vocabulary and the lack of recurrent explicit author-keyword labels for several socio-psychological constructs. Conceptually, it extends TPB into the packaging domain by proposing ESG literacy and greenwashing scepticism as the constructs through which young consumers evaluate the authenticity of packaging claims, and by mapping them onto the attitudinal and perceived-control pathways respectively. This builds on work regarding greenwashing perception ([Di Pillo et al., 2025](#)) and Generation Z ethical consumption ([Djafarova & Fooks, 2022](#)), where these constructs have not previously been applied to packaging. Methodologically, it demonstrates a combined TCCM and bibliometric protocol ([Mukherjee et al., 2022](#)) applied to a formative field, where a small corpus makes citation-based methods unreliable but where structural absences in the keyword network are themselves informative.

This contribution does not constitute a validated extension of TPB. Instead, it specifies testable positions for ESG literacy, greenwashing scepticism, perceived authenticity, subjective norms,

emotional response, and behavioural control. The framework advances sustainable marketing by treating packaging as a material interface through which operational design and environmental communication are jointly evaluated.

The synthesis supports five practical priorities. First, logistics managers should use right-sizing and material-reduction metrics while maintaining damage protection. Second, sustainability communication should make material origin, recycled content, disposal instructions, and evidence boundaries verifiable rather than relying on generic green language. Third, platform and brand managers should bring packaging information to the purchase and post-delivery interfaces, where consumers can use it. Fourth, return, reuse, and recycling systems should reduce behavioural friction through accessible collection points, clear instructions, and feedback. Fifth, customer-experience measurement should include reactions to excess material and claim credibility rather than evaluating unboxing aesthetics alone.

Table 6. Evidence-aligned managerial implications

Managerial priority	Implementation example	Expected value
Right-sizing and protection	Product-size packaging matrices; damage-rate and empty-volume monitoring	Lower material and logistics burden without increasing product damage
Verifiable claims	Specific material facts, credible certification where applicable, traceable evidence, and disposal guidance	Reduces ambiguity and supports credibility
Circular participation	Returnable or reusable options, reverse-logistics instructions, convenient collection points	Converts sustainability from claim to feasible action
Minimalist unboxing	Meaningful design cues with fewer layers and reusable components	Balances customer experience and material restraint
Feedback and governance	Post-delivery questions on excess, clarity, disposal, and trust; internal claim review	Creates evidence for continuous improvement

This study has five limitations. First, it relied exclusively on Scopus, which may omit relevant studies indexed in other databases or published in non-English outlets. Second, the corpus of 28 articles is appropriate for exploratory mapping but limits the robustness and generalisability of bibliometric patterns. Third, the search query focused on e-commerce packaging terminology and did not require sustainability or generational terms. Fourth, author-keyword analysis cannot fully capture conceptual nuance within article texts, and lexical variants can affect the raw network. Fifth, the review does not collect primary data, so the proposed relationships require empirical validation.

Future reviews should combine Scopus with Web of Science, Dimensions, and regional indexes; update the corpus longitudinally; use a disclosed VOSviewer thesaurus file, and conduct systematic full-text coding of synonymous constructs. As the field grows, bibliographic coupling and co-citation analysis can be added. Empirical studies should test the proposed framework using experiments, longitudinal surveys, eye-tracking, field interventions, and behavioural platform data. The Scopus CSV, screening log, and coding framework are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

CONCLUSION

The reconstructed evidence answers the four research questions with appropriately bounded claims. Publication output increased after 2022 and was concentrated in 2025, but the corpus remains small. Countries, institutions, outlets, and authors are dispersed, with no single research hub. The raw author-keyword map contains five algorithmic clusters and substantial lexical duplication; after semantic consolidation, the field is organised around technical-operational packaging, environmental and circular governance, and e-commerce sustainability. Socio-psychological constructs relevant to claim evaluation are not recurrent explicit author keywords, but their absence from the network cannot be treated as proof that they never appear in article texts. The central theoretical implication is therefore prospective rather than confirmatory. Sustainable e-commerce packaging should be investigated as an interface through which operational design and environmental information influence authenticity, trust, intention, and circular behaviour. ESG literacy, greenwashing scepticism, emotional response, subjective norms, and behavioural control provide a coherent TPB-informed agenda for future empirical work. For practice, credible packaging strategy requires alignment between material reduction, product protection, verifiable communication, and accessible circular systems.

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