

**A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS
FOOD PRODUCTS WITH SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN**

Research dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master's in Procurement & Supply Chain Management

Griffith College Dublin

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28 August 2020

CANDIDATE DECLARATION

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I certify that the dissertation entitled: **A STUDY ON CONSUMER AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS FOOD PRODUCTS WITH SUSTAINABLE SUPPLY CHAIN**

submitted for the degree of **MSc in Procurement & Supply Chain Management** is the result of my own work and that where reference is made to the work of others, due acknowledgement is given within the text & listed in references. Further, I declare that no content of this report has been published or used for any other academic award.

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First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to Almighty God to enable me to complete the research on “Consumer awareness & attitude towards food products with a sustainable supply chain in Ireland”

I would like to thank my supervisor *Eoghan McConalogue* for his expertise and constant support throughout the research process. I would also like to thank my parents for their blessings and support that has resulted in the successful completion of the study. I am also thankful to the faculties of Griffith-GBS and my friends who supported and guided me throughout the study.

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ABSTRACT

The increased awareness about sustainable practices has resulted in the need for adopting environment-friendly practices by organisations. The eco-friendly practices of the organisation are influenced by internal and external factors. The internal factors are management and employees whereas external factors are shareholders, customers, social media, investors, government authorities, suppliers and rivals. Supply chain management is the most important aspect of Food Company. The study discusses the contribution of the food production sector of Ireland towards sustainable supply chain management. Besides this, the study also discusses how consumer buying behaviour is influenced by sustainable practices. In addition to this, the study analyses the influences of consumers on Sustainable supply chain management (SSCM). At last, the study provides suggestions based on the analysis to make improvement in Supply chain management and persuade the behaviour of the customers.

To determine the attitude of the customers towards the food products with sustainable supply chain management in Ireland, the research was based on interpretivism research philosophy due to its complex nature. The study is based on qualitative approach so it has considered convenience sampling under Non-probability sampling. The responses are recorded with the help of an online questionnaire from the consumers of the retail food industry in Ireland. The study considered a close-ended questionnaire. The data analysis was done using inferential statistics approach and keynotes were recognised based on literature.

Based on the study it was evident that customers are aware of the sustainable practices underlying the supply chain of food products. From the study, it was able to conclude that consumers have a positive attitude towards products with a sustainable supply chain and are also ready to pay.

Keywords: Supply chain management, Sustainable Supply Chain, Consumer Awareness, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Sustainable Food Supply Chain.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

1.1 Overview

This research is about consumer attitudes and awareness of sustainable practices in food production, in Ireland. The focus of the study is on the strategies of the supply chain management adopted by the retail organizations and the behaviour of the customers to these retail organization products. The production and the functions performed to distribute these different products has led to environmental changes. Further, the task undertaken by the companies in the distribution of the product has also affected the environment very seriously. Every company is improving its production as well as distribution activities and adopting sustainable practices to reduce the impact of production and distribution on the environment. Reducing the impact on the environment has become the utmost priority of every business. There are various internal as well as external factors that affects the supply chain decisions of the organisation, that is the sustainability is influenced by these factors. These factors mentioned have a significant influence on the decisions taken by the management concerning the environment, economy and society. The internal factors that affect the decisions of a company are top-level management and employees of the company. The external factors that affect the business are customers, investors, suppliers, government authorities, society etc. Customers are one the important external factor that influences the decision making of an organisation as they are aware of the market changes as well as the various practices followed by the organisations and its impact of society, environment and economy. This has led the organisation in facilitating processes that have a less negative impact on the environment and society. In the present era, the customers have easy access to the market trends and change in business activities due to the growing popularity of social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook etc. The purchasing decision and preference of the customers are affected by the various practices followed by the companies. The growing competition among the companies

and change in the business environment also has a significant impact on the customer's awareness about the market. This has led companies in using certain strategies to attract consumers through marketing as well as greenwashing techniques, where companies claim that their products are eco-friendly which is not. Many customers get manipulated by such fake claims. Thus the research is relevant to understand the consumer's awareness and attitude towards sustainability. The current research will emphasize on customer's reaction to the policies of the company concerning the triple bottom line. The research will also study how the preference of the customer's changes due to the practices adopted by the company. The consumer buying behaviour based on the sustainable practices of the companies can be identified by the end of the research.

This research is based on the qualitative method of research approach therefore the primary data required for the research will be collected using a questionnaire. The participants will be selected using Non-probability sampling as most of the individuals as food products are very basic essential and the study focuses on the consumers of food products. It will help the researcher to understand the attitudes of the customers clearly and in detail in Ireland. The secondary data will be utilized by the researcher to learn and form the base of the current research topic. Resources for secondary data include books academic journals and previous study on the same topic. It will help the researcher to carry out the research in an effective manner and collect the data from primary sources more effectively. It will help the researcher to understand the subject and the theories of the topic which is required to carry out the research. The common customer behaviour will also be understood by the researcher after studying from the sources of secondary data. The objectives, goals, hypothesis after learning the present situations, notions and perspective all this will be developed with the help of literature review.

1.2 Research Purpose

The consumer's buying behaviours and attitudes have an impact from various factors such as marketing, word of mouth, price, corporate social responsibility and sustainable practises followed by the organisation. Most of the organisations that involve products closely associated with the consumers influence them by marketing and reporting sustainable practises across the operations of the products(Farooque *et al.*, 2019). Supply chain management is a significant aspect of business operations that facilitate the organisations to provide a better customer experience by prominently offering products and services. As food products are essentials it necessary to have a positive reputation among the consumers therefore along with promoting products and services they also have to use their strategies such as sustainability to attract and retain consumers. The role of supply chain management in Ireland is very crucial as the retailers completely rely on the effectiveness of supply chain management. Therefore, Ireland's supply chain management is expected to produce goods and services by practising necessary sustainable practices. The sustainable supply chain practices are implemented to keep a check on its impact on the environment like reducing the carbon footprints, optimum utilization of resources and fulfilling social commitments. Sustainable practices adopted by the organisation not only enhance its competence but also its productivity. These practices try to keep the negative impact on environment, society and economy to minimal. The increased awareness among consumers regarding the effect of carbon emission and consumption of resources are facilitating organisations to follow sustainable practices. Therefore, these factors can affect consumers in choosing a food product. The study will cover various aspects of consumer's attitude and awareness of the same.

1.3 Significance of the study

The practice of sustainable supply chain leads to not only improves the efficiency of the business but it also results to minimise the harmful effect of the operations on the environment. It is also

analysed that the improvement in the supply chain will help the companies to deliver the goods and services at a faster rate which in turn helps them to satisfy more number of customers. The reason being an efficient supply chain will save the cost of the company that will allow the companies to offer better deals and improve the value of the customers. This study will be beneficial for the scholars that are trying to understand the attitudes of the consumers, sustainability and supply chain management practices. Besides this, the study will identify the challenges of a sustainable supply chain that will impact the operations of the retail food products to a significant level at the time of implementing sustainable practices of the supply chain.

In addition to this, According to Passaro and Salomone (2017), Consumer awareness is a significant concept in the present world since the consumer is going to buy a product that is best for their need. Through the study, it is determined that many business firms indulge in malpractices and greenwashing techniques to influence consumer behaviour so the products won't be up to their expectations. Hence, to protect the interest of the consumer, it is important to make the consumer aware. Based on the study, the importance of the consumer awareness framework will help the organisations and marketers in several ways that are to achieve maximum consumer satisfaction. The research outcome will also help consumers to protect themselves from exploitation and choose products wisely.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main aim of this research is to evaluate the attitude and awareness of customers towards food products with a sustainable supply chain in Ireland. The focus of the study is on the strategies of the supply chain management adopted by the retail food industries and the response of the customers towards these products.

Objectives

- To identify the contribution of the sustainable supply chain management in the food production sector.

- To understand Consumer Buying Behaviour concerning sustainable practices in supply chain management.
- To analyze the influence of Consumers in Sustainable Supply Chain Management.
- To give the suggestions to make supply chain management better to persuade consumer based on their buying behaviours.

Research questions

The present research is required to answer the following questions after its completion.

- What are Sustainable Food Supply Chain and What is its impact on the customers' purchase decision?
- How stakeholder pressure affects the business to attain the goal and objectives of the business?
- How the purchasing behaviour of the customer is influenced by adopting sustainable practices in supply chain management?
- How to understand the connection between sustainable practices in supply chain management and the purchasing behaviour of the customers?

Justification

The increasing ability of consumers' access to information has depicted a change in buying behaviour of the consumers. In past consumers had very little knowledge of the company's operations on taking a product to end customers. Consumers were not concerned about the various factors affecting the production such as the area, manufacturing unit, its impact on the environment and the time taken to deliver the products to the end customers. Due to the increasing competition, as part of a marketing strategy, many organisations are practising transparent business practises

attracting more customers. According to (Krishna, 2011) the buying behaviour of consumers are mainly affected by variables such as brand awareness, brand image and characteristics of the products, therefore, the practises a company follows also affects the buying behaviour of the consumers. The Transparency and increased awareness are facilitating consumers to choose products more sensibly based on sustainable practices and they prefer an organisation that is contributing back to society (Ansari and Kant, 2017).

The easy access to information has made consumer aware of the business practices in the manufacturing and distribution of the products. But with the increase in consumer awareness, many organizations are trying to adopt transparent business practices. The current study will determine the impact of sustainable practices on customers buying behaviour. Is it important to adopt sustainable practices in the supply chain management to persuade consumer or it is just an ideal practice. Most of the Irish organisations are using technological integrations for enabling sustainable supply chain management. It is expected that by this research, the researcher will be able to identify the consumer attitude and awareness towards products with a sustainable supply chain in Ireland.

1.5 Structure of the Study

The research includes five chapters which in an organized manner developed based on the research structure. The origin of the study begins with the introduction chapter, which offers context for the subject to be researched in a simplified mannerism. The chapter provides a brief idea on what the research is all about as well as the research objectives, the significance of the study etc

Second chapter- Literature review begins with the overview of the different terminologies and well as basic concepts of the study. Every concept is supported by the arguments as well as related research done by other scholars in the given field. The secondary data provided here is compiled from online databases of widely available research papers, media articles, news reports and journals from google scholar, research gate, etc. The section also discusses advantages and challenges and wraps up by recommending a conceptual structure that is the culmination of the appropriate & critical literature review.

Third chapter- The next chapter is research methodology. This research chapter articulates the process involved in conducting the study. It sheds light on research methodology approach, the research strategic plan, which is also the overall structure for carrying out the study, combined

with - it also offers information of the methods & techniques for gathering, sourcing and analyzing data to eventually achieve the study objective. Besides, the sample selection, as well as the methodology for conducting the analysis and how each method is advantageous for the study, will also be depicted.

Fourth chapter- Presentation and observations are outlined in this chapter which provides a comprehensive summary of the research. The information or data collected through the questionnaire is analyzed with the help relevant statistics tools. This output comes at a juncture from our findings in the study.

Fifth chapter- Conclusion marks the final chapter of the research. In this, the researcher draws a conclusion based on findings regarding the study that we undertake.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

A literature review is an inclusive collection of the piece of detailed information collected from the published sources of data collection on a relevant area of interest of the research problem. The data is collected from academic journals, peer-reviewed articles and other materials available in online database etc. The purpose of this is to critically analyze the literature review and to create an understanding and develop an awareness about the research study that is "Consumer awareness & attitude towards food products with the sustainable supply chain in Ireland". The topic of the research that is consumer awareness is already studied by many researchers in the world but only for few decades, but the researches based on Ireland's consumer buying behaviour or awareness are in limited in number, so the researcher has used certain peer-reviewed articles, academic journals, etc. related to Sustainable Supply Chain Management, Consumer Buying Behavior to evaluate the consumer attitudes and awareness towards food products with the sustainable supply chain. In the literature review, the researcher will focus on the concept of supply chain management and its strategies followed by the organizations to understand consumer buying behaviour. In this context, the researcher will discuss the role of sustainable supply chain management in the retail food industries, consumer buyer behaviour, the role of the supply chain in the food industry etc. To support the study, the researcher will highlight the various aspects of the sustainable supply chain and its significance in the organization to persuade consumers and retain consumers. Besides that, the literature review of this research will also discuss the increasing importance of the social and environmental issues that are linked to supply chain management and why the concept of sustainable supply chain management or green supply chain management relevant.

2.2 Definition Core Terminology

2.2.1 Supply Chain Management:

According to (Stock *et al.*, 2010), three main themes are underlying in the definition of supply chain management after studying around 166 SCM definitions, the identified themes are (i) activities, (ii) benefits, and (iii) constituents or components within each theme has relevant sub-nodes (figure 2). In simple words supply chain can be defined as the organisational entities which are directly involved in the upstream and downstream flow of information, products, and services across an organisation, therefore, supply chain management is the systematic approach of getting it done.

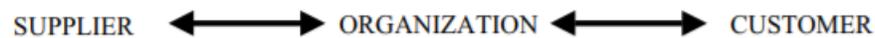


Figure 1 Basic Supply chain flow

SCM is the practice that helps the organisation to communicate efficiently with the different entities of the business and enable an effective flow of information, product or services throughout the business. The principle underlying the SCM practices is the concept of coordination and collaboration among each channel of SCM for the effective flow of resources, and information to all channel partners so that customer needs are fulfilled right product at right time at the right destination. But supply chain management must in a sustainable way to help the business to have a long-term competitive advantage(Stock *et al.*, 2010), According to Heugel (2019), the framework of the supply chain management address the several combination processes that is the production planning process, inventory controlling the process, and the logistic or distribution process. Heugel(2019) also suggests that Supply chain management is the integration of various entities involved in business to enable faster flow of product or services to the consumers. According to Savitha, (2010), states that the idea of Supply Chain Management is a concept where several businesses are connected for providing a better customer experience. Besides that, the author also classified the supply chain concept into four phases that is First, Procurement in which the required raw material for production allocated; second, production in which the raw material is converted into semi-finished or finished goods; third, distribution where the goods are taken to the retailer or the factory outlets and the final phase is the stage where consumers buying these products or services

	<i>THEMES</i>	<i>SUB-THEMES</i>	<i>FREQUENCY</i>	<i>% of TOTAL</i>	
SCM Definitions	Activities	Flows	Material/physical	117	69%
			Information		
		Networks of Relationships	Internal	120	71%
			External		
	Benefits	Adds Value	82	48%	
		Creates Efficiencies	61	36%	
		Customer Satisfaction	47	28%	
	Constituent/component Parts		133	78%	

Figure 2. Frequency of SCM definition themes and sub-themes

2.2.2 Sustainable Supply Chain Management:

Researcher Tom, (2019) states that a sustainable supply chain is a business practice that develops a vision and achieves a goal with the support of corporate social responsibility. In simple words, a Sustainable supply chain is a process where management of the flow of material, information, to each entity of supply chain along with cooperation and collaboration in line with three factors that are economic, social, and environment. The concept of sustainability is to practice greener practices that have less impact on the environment and society. According to Logic, (2018), sustainability is significant in every business industry for getting in a competitive advantage. In the modern world, the supply chain management is all about growth and sustainability. To survive

in a market organization must need to understand consumer preferences and needs. Many previous studies state consumer is highly satisfied with more sustainable products. Therefore, the organization are trying to acquire a competitive position in the value chain by integrating the sustainable supply chain practices in the organisation. Concerning this context, many organisations are taking initiatives to adopt sustainable supply chain practices with the scope of reducing the impact on environment economy and society.

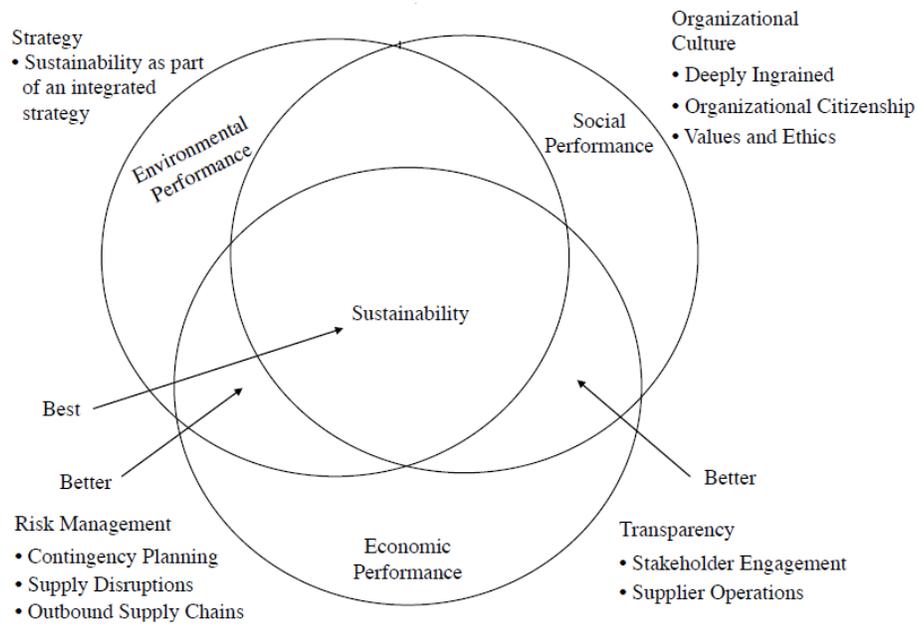


Figure 3: Sustainable Supply Chain Management (Carter and Rogers, 2008)

To attain sustainable practice in the SCM need to support the surrounding three pillars of the business, that are economic, social, and environment. The transparent flow of information and more ethical business practices will improve stakeholder participation and also provide an upper hand over growing competition. According to Heugel, (2019), the study of sustainability has become a concern of most of the organization and it became a significant aspect of the organisation to have a competitive advantage by the integrating ethical practices and sustainability throughout the business which makes all the processes transparent. The implementation of the supply chain in industries will help to improve customer experience and satisfaction. With several choices and options available in the business world, the Consumer always prefers products and services that

fulfil the needs of the customer along with the lesser impact on the environment. Therefore following sustainable supply chain practices will help the organisation in retaining the consumers and in attracting more consumers. It is also evident that Sustainable Supply Chain Management helps the firms to reduce their operating cost of the business. Many retail industries were able to cut down their cost by implementing certain sustainable practices like LEAN, JIT, KANBAN etc. Moreover, the retail market being a competitive sector of the economy, adopting sustainable practices helped many organisation to keep up with the competition. With an effective Sustainable Supply Chain Management, a retailer can take a product or service from point of production to point of consumption at an optimum cost and time.

2.2.3 Consumer Buying Behaviour:

According to Joshi and Rahman, (2015) the concept of consumer behaviour is studied to analyze the pattern of consumer buying that is when, where, how the consumer-buying behaviour is influenced while choosing a commodity. Significantly, the organisations should regularly study consumer buying behaviour concerning market change as consumers are an important aspect of the business. Therefore it is necessary to understand the consumer's attitudes for retaining as well as attracting consumers and such market research facilitate the same. Past studies have shown many factors affect buying pattern of the consumers some of them are economic status, quality, price, brand reputation etc. According to the article of UK, essay, (1970), the idea of consumer behaviour is the reflection of society and many significant factors contribute towards the same. In other words, the concept of consumer behaviour can be interpreted as the purchasing decision which is being influenced by many external factors. According to Sarkis, et. al (2010), the study of the concept of consumer buying behaviour helps the marketer or business firm to analyze buying patterns of the consumers. The author also states that studying these patterns of consumer buying behaviour helps the organisations to analyze the targeted customer, offering better consumer experience and thereby get a competitive benefit by constructing effective marketing strategies. According to recent studies, it is also seen that nowadays the consumer demands sustainable supply chain management for the goods or services they prefer. In concerns with these responses of consumers towards SSCM, most of the organisations consider CSR practices for influencing consumers and the as unique selling point of the product.

According to DJ Team, (2020). Consumer buying behaviour is considered as a framework that defines consumer action while choosing a product or service. This will also help the organisation in implementing a sustainable supply chain and understanding the aspects to be focused while implementing to provide a better customer service experience. Analyzing consumer buying behaviour is significant as consumers play a crucial role in the market, therefore, understanding their attitude will provide grip for the organisation in the present competitive world. Having an awareness about consumer buying behaviour will help the marketers in developing new strategies by responding to consumer preferences

2.2.4 Stakeholder Pressure:

According to Sarkis(2010). Stakeholders are an important element of every organisation that has a significant role in achieving the goal and objectives of the organisation. They are an integral part of an organisation which can have an impact on the existence of the business. Stakeholders are the backbone of the organisations as their support and cooperation are necessary for a firm to have a competitive advantage for the organisation. Some of the important stakeholders of a business entity are consumer, employees, investors, suppliers and government. Stakeholders play a vital role in the organisation while creating new strategies, for example, while taking supply chain decision the stakeholder pressure has a significant role it is the integration of different entities of the business and thereby achieve several benefits like reducing inventory cost, save time and to improve customer experience. However, understanding the needs and changing demands of stakeholders to manage the sustainable supply chain is challenging. According to Mariadoss(2016) stakeholders has a significant role in supply chain decisions and supply chain management. Therefore integration of stakeholders in the supply chain management and supply chain decision making can have a positive effect on the organisation and help firms in tackling the risk arisen due to the consumer pressures.

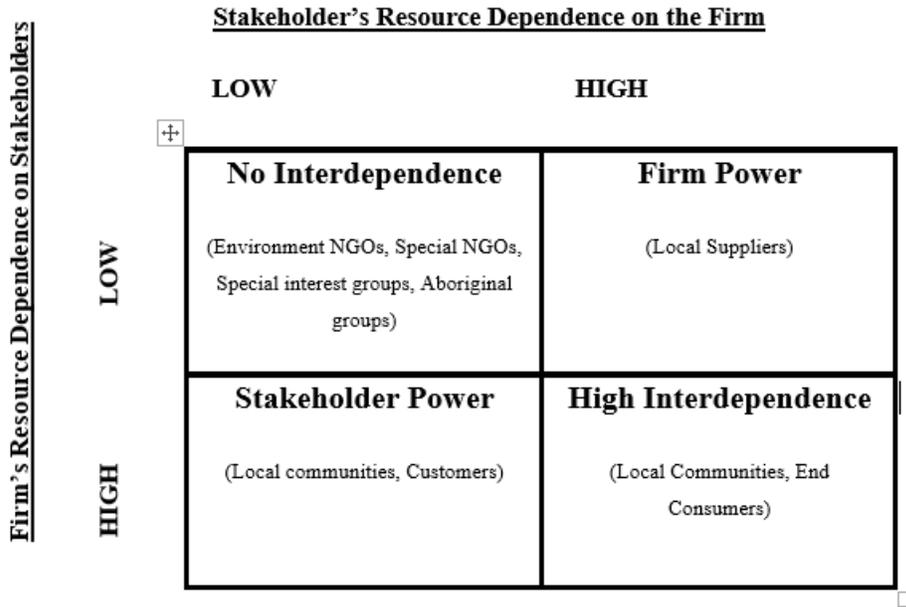


Figure 4: Stakeholder Influence Framework (Mariadoss et al., 2016)

2.3 Sustainable Supply Chain Management (SSCM)

2.3.1 Basic Concepts of SSCM

According to (Berning and Venter, 2015) supply chain management has a critical role in the adoption of sustainable practices during the entire lifecycle from procurement, designing, production, packaging and transportation. Supply chain helps to speed up the activities by connecting to various vendors, identifying alternatives, and delivering goods to the end-users in a faster way which lead to benefit the organisation. The supply chain also requires an increased level of collaboration and coordination for the flow of the information and the resources among the different channels from suppliers to channel partners and customers. The increased need for transportation has led to an increase in the environmental impact such as pollution, climate change and emission of harmful gases. These activities have a severe impact on the environment and the society which has raised a need for sustainable practises by the organisations after the increased regulation by the government, competition and responsibility towards society. (Carter and Rogers, 2008) stated that sustainable supply chain can be achieved through responsible operations for surroundings with the support of economic prosperity and social welfare. It also considers the strategic and transparent involvement of the communities and stakeholders as a combined effort to move towards sustainable practices. Thus, it is analysed that a sustainable supply chain is a

complex process due to a need for balancing between the different pillars such as environment, society and economic aspects (figure3). As stated in the previous part of literature the role of the supply chain is very important for the organisations as it helps in the movement of the goods and services in a smooth and aligned manner that helps in timely productions, packaging and delivery of the goods within stipulated time which results to the controlled cost of per unit production.

In the words of (Walker and Jones, 2012) some several barriers and enablers influence the sustainable practices of the organisations, some of them are internal whereas some are external to the company. The different barriers influence the activities of the company to a different extent. The external barriers identified for the companies are government, competitors, customers, suppliers, media and sectoral regulations. On the other hand, these factors also enable the companies along with the addition of the investors and NGO's. Government is the governing body that is responsible for the practices and procedures to be followed by the companies in the entire nation. They are responsible for the implementation of the new policies and procedures that needed to be necessarily accomplished by industry, sector or individual firms. It is also needed by the organisations to take care of the sectoral regulations. In the case of the sectors that are less regulated face issues related to environmental pollution, improper use of the resources and failure to adopt sustainable practices which is the key barrier in the sustainable supply chain. Besides this,(Anantadjaya *et al.*, 2007) depicted that the competitors are also an important factor that creates pressure on the organisations at the time of implementing a sustainable supply chain. In the case of a high number of competitors in the industry will make it more difficult to implement sustainable practices due to increased competition and offering products at competitive prices. Besides this, it becomes difficult for the organisation to deal with the suppliers due to the availability of a variety of options in front of the suppliers. The drivers and transportation system is also difficult to control due to high competition as the workforce have more favourable options and can negotiate with the business which makes it more difficult for the company to handle their operations at an affordable cost.

<u>External Barriers</u>	<u>External Enablers</u>
---------------------------------	---------------------------------

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Competitors • Customers • Suppliers • Media • Sectoral 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government • Competitors • Customers • Suppliers • Investors • NGOs
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Internal Barriers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Issues • Strategic Issues • Functional Issues 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Internal Enablers</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People Issues • Strategic Issues • Functional Issues

Figure 5: Enablers and barriers(Walker and Jones, 2012)

In addition to this, (Modica *et al.*, 2020) stated that the adoption of advanced technology is another factor that will be beneficial for the companies operating in the retail sector as this will provide real-time information of the operations and will analyze the different information collected over a while to develop algorithms that will ultimately help to identify the efficient and economical routes of supply chain management. It will also help to identify sustainable practices and the integration of the technology will help to control costs in such practices.

2.3.2 Influence of Sustainable Supply Chain Management:

According to Das, (2018), The practice of sustainable supply chain management influence the organisations to work in line with the Corporate social responsibility that is three pillars of the triple bottom line: social, economic, and environment. The sustainable supply chain integrates with different entities of the business and the support them to create more value to the product and services to be delivered in a greener. The strategies, decision and actions of an organisation is highly influenced by the effect of SSCM. Most of the firms coordinate with a supply chain to have a higher environmental performance which can provide a competitive advantage for the

organisation. By the implementation of SSCM, organisations are more aware of the effect of business on social, economic and environmental aspects. Similarly, previous studies show that SSCM has a significant impact on the attitudes of the stakeholders. Since stakeholder being an important aspect of business as they influence the demand of the product and services, significant for operations and even can raise potential fund for the business it is necessary to make sure that the influences are positive. According to Harms, Hansen, and Schaltegger, (2013), due to the growing popularity of SSCM, most of the organisations are providing training to its supplier, employees to facilitate SSCM and thereby create the additional value to the customers. Therefore, with a sustainable supply chain approach, an organization can motivate their supplier to practice sustainable measure and eliminate the risk of environmental, society and economy, in return, it will increase the value of supply chain.

2.3.3 Competitive Advantage:

Based on Kaye, (2013) study, the market is highly competitive across the globe, which exerts pressure on the business therefore to survive the competition it is necessary to have a competitive advantage over other competitors. Due to the presence of high risk and completion in the market organisation implement sustainable supply chain practices to increase the value of the products and services provided, This will help them offer better products at a competitive price. When the organization delivers a better product than the competitor at an optimum cost this will provide a competitive advantage for the firm. Therefore, the idea of sustainable practice helps organisations to provide high-quality products at a reasonable price in a competitive market. Through the study, it is analyzed how a brand can get a competitive advantage by adapting supply chain practises and how it is affected in factors such as brand reputation, goodwill, employee and consumer retention etc.

According to Beckwith, (2019), the driver of sustainability for supply chain management helps business and supply chain partners to manage the business risk such as disruption of environmental, social and economic impact over the business, it also helps the firms to protect the brand image and goodwill of the firm, that means if the business trade practice is in favour of three corporate pillars then the stakeholders and parties at each channel will have faith in sustainability; SSCM also helps the firm to realize the efficiencies of their operations as to how it responds to integration.

2.4 Consumer Buying Behaviour

2.4.1 Influence of Consumers in SSCM

According to Joshi and Rahman (2015), the business environment has changed over the years. Today business firms have the greater responsibility to make a difference in the form of resources, market share and knowledge for sustainable development. The concept of sustainable supply chain practice is immense due to the driving forces of customers, as they have a significant influence on business. For the customers to get a product or service produced under a sustainable practice that is of good quality product, reasonable price, etc. and for the firms to meet these expectations they must compromise with time, comfort and finance. The consumer plays a vital role in SSCM as with the change in buying behaviour and needs, the supply chain decision will also become more innovative to meet the consumer's needs. As per the study of Joshi and Rahman (2015), the most significant factor affecting the customer on SSCM is the quality and cost of the product that gives a sustainable advantage. Besides that, it also notifies that awareness of consumer behaviour helps the firm to take more efficient SSCM practices

According to Mariadoss et al., (2016) the sustainable practice that consumers check while buying the product is that if the product may be recyclable, or reusable, does the production of the product involves optimum use of resources and whether the organization is socially or environmentally responsible. Thus, incorporation of sustainable practice may involve the high degree involvement of customers that influence their buying process.

2.4.2 Consumers as a driver of SSCM:

According to Thompson, (2020), the rising environmental concern may be encouraging the consumers to have a positive purchase decision. In past, no consumers were not influenced by the supply chain as they weren't aware of the concepts and due to the unavailability of the information. But now consumer perception has changed and they are ready to gather information about the product they purchase as the product passes to different channels of the supply chain. Through the study, a four key consumer buying driver is analyzed such as emotions, affective response, mood, and evaluation that affects consumer buying decisions in a positive or negative. It is also analyzing that some other factors that affect the buying decision are income, cultural preference, educational background, and perception towards the product and services. So, in the context of the SSCM consumer are aware of essentiality of sustainable practice and their impact on the companies'

supply chain management. Lack of information and awareness on SSCM can lead the consumer in choosing the wrong purchase decision

2.4.3 Factor affecting Consumer Buying Behaviour:

According to Thompson, (2020) with the change in the marketing environment, the behaviour of the consumer is affected by several factors. These factors include cultural factors, personal factors, social factors as well as physiological factors. The cultural factors are that rules, laws, or culture of the consumer and personal factors are the consumer occupation, economic, age factor; social factors that influence the buying behaviour are the family, group of friends, status; and Psychological factors include beliefs, thoughts, etc. According to the study by Krishna, (2011) about consumer behaviour helps the business firm to develop a marketing strategy in a way that influences an individual or a group to buy a product and offer a growth opportunity to the business against odds. Through the study of around 200 consumer responses, it was analyzed that several factors affect the buying pattern of the consumer, these factors are the brand image of the product, quality of the product, service & price of the product. In context to the sustainable supply chain management, the buying pattern of consumers passes through three stages that are problem recognition- identify the product that satisfies the need or expectation for instance- the consumer wants a comfortable running shoe for jogging, here shoe is the need; information search is a second stage where consumer collects the information about the product (shoes) of the different brand; Final a purchase decision in this with a piece of collected information about the product features, benefits, price, quality, time of delivery, etc. consumer compare the product with other supplier and make a final decision for the same.

2.4.4 Consumer Perception in SSCM:

According to Abhishek (2019), sustainability is a concerning subject for every business organization. For creating a consumer demand every firm has to oblige its business practice towards social and environmental concerns. The consumer being a significant entity of the market, the supply chain decisions are highly influenced, by the stakeholders. Through the study, it is analyzed that the buying pattern of the consumer will affect the sustainable factor. If the product of the company has obliged their responsibility towards the society and environment, then the consumer is ready to pay a premium price for the product. Hence, the company avails the product under sustainable supply chain practice and create demand for the product and thereby improving

brand image for getting a positive response from consumer to attract them towards the firm. Moreover, with support of the Sustainable Supply chain factor, the company will get more loyal consumer which will provide a competitive advantage to grow the business. As per Thompson (2020), the role of the consumer in Sustainable supply chain management has a growing demand for global business. The sustainable supply chain management is a practice that improves the responsiveness of business firm towards the society and environment to meet the needs of the stakeholders and get over the competition.

2.5 Sustainable Food Supply Chain:

2.5.1 Basic Concept of Food Industry:

According to Passaro and Salomone (2017), the increasing competition due to globalization may increase the significance of the concept of food supply chain management. SCM is the concept of managing the flow of goods or services from producer to the ultimate user, for example, the food industry considers the concept of the food supply chain that will procure the raw materials and the finished food products to the end customers after processing. According to GFSI (2019), food is a necessary commodity of human beings therefore the industry should meet certain criteria and standards. The industry of food is not a single entity but is a collection of different types of industries. The industry consists of different activities like farming, production, processing, preservation, packaging, distribution, and retail catering. With the increasing demand for food, an efficient supply chain management to take the products to the consumers on time as the industry is so sensitive. From various previous studies, it is evident that the food industry significantly contributes to the economy, as it is a very basic and essential commodity for human beings. It is also analyzed that the food processing industry is an industry of regular consumption that develops a competency status in the market. It is an industry that regulates under the intervention of government policies, the interest of stakeholders for reducing the cost and wastage. The studies also analyzed that the food industry is a category that faces challenges for setting up the sustainable supply chain to produce perishable food in less time, and are influenced by risks due to change in climate, government laws, for measuring the quality.

2.5.2 Effects of Sustainable Food Supply Chain:

According to Carter and Rogers (2008), the concept of Sustainable Food Supply Chain is playing a vital role in the food industry. It is a concept that depicts the claim that food is produced or

manufactured under a sustainable or ethical condition. The practice of producing an environmental and health-friendly food product is known as Sustainable Food Supply Chain. In a world of competition, every business organization tries to manipulate the consumer by offering a fake green touch. With the increasing awareness about sustainability in the supply chain, several food industries focused on the green concept. The effect of the green concept on the firm sustainable will influence the buying pattern of the consumer. As with an increase in competition and the availability of substitute products, the consumer will need demand for Sustainable food products. Moreover, with sustaining the practice of Sustainable food, the supply chain food industry will meet the customer needs and eliminate the risk of environmental impact. As per Beaumont (2019), the process of Sustainable food concept helps the food industry to eliminate waste and minimize the production cost which tends to lead the chance to increase the profit of the business. Moreover, it is analyzed that every supply chain food industry has a goal to carry trade with sustainability. Therefore, the concept of Sustainable Food Supply Chain plays a vital role in sustainable practice because it helps to develop a brand image of food under a Corporate Social Responsibility and developing a marketing strategy to get a competing advantage.

2.5.3 Drivers of Sustainable Food Supply Chain:

According to Magali and Burbano (2011), the concept of Sustainable Food Supply Chain is most prominence in context to consumer perception. Through the study, it is analyzed that several external drivers in the market such as customers, investors, stakeholders, will put pressure on the firm to follow the Sustainable Food Supply practice in their business operations for attaining sustainability. Besides that, it is also evident that some government regulations also demands the firms to incorporate sustainable food supply practice in operation for satisfying customer expectations and also to reduce the impact on the environment.

This sustainable food supply practice enforces the firm to monitor its performance and to have a check on its practices and to see if it fulfil the three aspects of corporate social responsibility to get a competitive advantage. In addition to this, the customer is one of the most prominent drivers that help the organisation as the demand among consumers determines the existence in the market.

2.6 Consumer Awareness:

According to Magali and Burbano (2011), Consumer awareness is a framework that makes sure that the consumer is aware of the information regarding the products and services they are going

to buy. It is an approach that helps the consumer to make the right and effective decision while buying a product. Moreover, it interferes with insight into consumer rights against protecting themselves when the seller and business organization indulge in unethical practises. In the context of the research, the consumer is, directly and indirectly, influenced by the sustainable practice of that is followed in the production of the food product. Through the study, it is analyzed that nowadays, the consumer takes an active part to analyze the market trend to make the correct purchase decision and to choose the product which will fulfil the needs of the consumers. With the active participation of consumers, the organisation are continuously improving their strategies and supply chain decisions with the scope of retaining consumers Moreover, based on the consumer awareness, the customer uses the available information about the product and compares it with substitutes to make a right purchase decision.

Chapter 3-Research methodology

3.1 Overview

This chapter discusses the research methods adopted for undertaking the research. The research strategy used and the method of data collection used to conduct the study is detailed in the following sub-chapters. The strategies and methods used for the study are in line with the characteristics of the research.

3.2 Research paradigm and overall approach

This part of the research emphasizes the theoretical concepts and knowledge of the research subject. The questions of the research and the major target of the research revolve around the attitude of consumers towards sustainable practices of businesses and supply chain management (Kumar, 2019). In addition to this, the main focus of the study is to determine the awareness and attitude of customers towards food products with sustainable supply chain management in Ireland. Opinions of the customers may be different depending on their wants and necessities. Many significant factors affect the purchasing pattern of the consumers like the income, socio-cultural factor etc. Meanwhile, the characteristics of the research and the structure of the research make the qualitative approach as the most suitable method for undertaking the study. It is suitable and favourable for the researcher to analyze the individual's response and to generalize the research outcome. Among the four types of philosophy that is pragmatism, realism, positivism, and interpretivism (Flick, 2015). The most appropriate research philosophy would be interpretivism. As said by the author, the interpretivism research philosophy usually used when the research study is composite in structure. In addition to this, the research is complex due to the engagement of various factors like customers, culture, society, economy and environment to determine customer behaviour based on these relevant factors. At the same time, the current topic of the research has been studied by various scholars before but it failed to show clear results about customer behaviour (Fletcher, 2017). There are still certain areas that need to be explored. Based on the resources available for the study, none of the researchers was able to identify the consumer buying behaviour on basis of specific terms, The data for this research is collected from different sources and individuals with no commonality to make sure that the responses are not biased by any chance.

This will help the consumer in analyzing the diverse buying behaviour of the consumers and provide the scope of exploring various dimensions of the research topic (Choy, 2014).

3.3 Research strategy

Research Strategy is the systematic approach which helps the researcher to undertake the research systematically. The research strategy helps the researcher to conduct the study step by step which makes the research process effective. Meanwhile, the research strategy facilitates the researcher to conduct research work smoothly without any interruption and keep a close check and every task (Mackey and Gass, 2015). In addition to this, interpretivism research philosophy is used by the researcher which can help him to deal with the complex structure of the result and manage all the outcomes of the study effectively. According to the author, the research being qualitative in nature and is categorized into five main categories. They are a biography, phenomenology, case study, ethnography, and grounded theory. Among these five categories, the most favourable strategy can be phenomenology (Fletcher, 2017). This type of strategy is used when the research is based on observing the variables of the results. Characteristics of the phenomenology strategy are in line with the characteristics of the research to be undertaken. The researcher is required to observe the purchase behaviour of the customers. Therefore, the researcher is required to study the attitudes of the customers and therefore direct interaction with the customers are necessary (Jamshed, 2014). In addition to this, the adopted strategy helps collect the responses of the customer effectively. Considering all these characteristics of the study, the data collection method preferred for the study is Primary Data Collection techniques with the help of a survey using a questionnaire. The Questionnaire Data Collection method is preferred only due to some restrictive factors like government policies and the social situation during the time of research. Meanwhile, the researcher has to maintain the balance between the above-mentioned restrictions and collection of the relevant data for the research purpose. The primary data collected can be analyzed using any of the data analysis tools such as Microsoft Excel, SPSS or similar software. (Kumar, 2019).

3.4 Collection of Primary Data

According to the researcher, an ideal data collection method or source can enable the researcher to be coherent with the research study objectives, theoretical aspects, and its philosophy. The data collection method that can be used by the researcher should enable the researcher to collect the data which is relevant to the research questions as well as objectives (Flick, 2015). Research

questions that are generated in the research proposal should be effectively answered with the data collected by using a suitable data collection method. In addition to this, the researcher should use primary as well as a secondary source of data to collect the relevant data. Meanwhile, the research strategy adopted by the researcher is phenomenology under the qualitative method thus the data should be collected using the following strategy (Choy, 2014). It is important that the researcher collect only the relevant data to answer the research questions and therefore he should select only the respondents who can be able to answer and questionnaire genuinely. In addition to this, the researcher should also set the criteria for selecting the respondent that is the respondent must be a consumer of food products. The first step towards the data collection is to identify the best suitable sampling method based on the nature of the study. As the research study is conducted based on the qualitative method, therefore the best suitable sampling method for the research is a non-probability sampling. The method is divided into sub-methods that are theoretical sampling, convenience sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling (Mackey and Gass, 2015). Based on the sub-methods, the convenience sampling method will be the best fit for the study's characteristics. This method of sampling provides a good amount of resilience to the researcher in the case of qualitative research. This method takes less time and is simple to understand. It is suitable for the sample size that will be taken into account for the research.

The targeted participants of the study are the consumers of the food products in Ireland. The required data for the research from the consumers will be collected using an online questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of a set of questions that focuses on the significant aspects of the research. The study is time-bound and is based on specific geography, therefore, the researcher should collect the data within this particular time limit from the consumers of Ireland by using an online questionnaire due to the nature of the study(Choy, 2014). As mentioned in the previous chapters and based on the conceptual framework the questionnaire is developed based on the aspects of the triple bottom line and other variables that affect the consumer buying behaviour. The triple-bottom-line will include economic, social, and environmental variables that influence consumer buying behaviour. While on the other hand, the variables affecting the consumer buying behaviour will include attributes like consumer satisfaction, their willingness to pay for the product, brand loyalty and other demographic factors. The required secondary data for supporting the study will be collected from academic journals, previous research on the significant area and other public data that has access to (Mackey and Gass, 2015). Secondary data will help the

researcher to develop a base for the study and will help the researcher in developing the relevant chapters for the study as well to support the primary data collection effectively by including relevant questions to make the study more efficient. The secondary data required for the literature review will be collected from peer-reviewed articles.

3.4.1 Nature of data

Based on the nature of the study, the data will be collected using a survey questionnaire as mentioned in previous chapters. The questionnaire will be distributed by the researcher to the customers of the supermarkets and other retail food industries (Kumar, 2019). Since food products being essentials the customers of the supermarket can also be included as the participants of the survey. The nature of the questions that will be included will be only related to the research topic and not beyond that. The questions that might affect the sentiments of the respondents will be avoided by the researcher. In addition to this, the questionnaire will be prepared in a way the respondents will have the flexibility to skip questions they do not feel comfortable with answering. At the same time, the questions asked in the questionnaire will mainly emphasize on the triple bottom line factor and variables affecting the purchase behaviour (Flick, 2015). In addition to this, the response of the participants will be collected through an online questionnaire by the researcher to maintain the safety of the customer data as well as to collect data without any external influence. This will also help the participants in maintaining their privacy throughout the study. Examples of the questions that will be asked are as follows:

- Do the practices adopted by the company for supply chain management affect your buying preference?
- Does the impact of manufacturer of a food product on the environment influence your purchase decision?
- Do you take into consideration the Goodwill of the company while purchasing a product?
- Are you willing to pay a premium price for an environmentally friendly product?

3.4.2 Access and Research ethics

To maintain the safety of the customer's data, no personal data will not be recorded. The researcher will take various steps to ensure the data safety of the respondents (Mackey and Gass, 2015). While taking the survey respondent can take required time for completing their responses, the privacy of

the respondents will not be affected and proper space will also be given so that the respondent could answer without any influence. In addition to this, a clear description will also be given by the researcher on the utilization of their responses. In the case of the questionnaire, the questionnaire will be shared online to the customers so that they can fill it as per their convenience (Choy, 2014). By this approach, the privacy of the respondents will be maintained. Among the targeted sample group, no individual will be compelled to participate in the survey and the participants will be given the option to withdraw from the survey when they feel like.

3.5 Approach to Data Analysis

As per the structure of the study, inferential statistics approach is adopted by the researcher to analyze the collected data (Kumar, 2019). The nature of the study is qualitative as every single customer has different purchase behaviour which makes it difficult for the researcher to convert it in quantitative terms. Meanwhile, significant keynotes will be recognized based on literature and a codebook will be used to analyze the collected data. In addition to this, the write up will be prepared after considering the nature of the data collected, various theories, and the objectives of the research and literature of the research (Flick, 2015).

On the completion of the primary data collection, the data will be categorized under different contexts. Through this, the researcher will be able to recognize the relation between the factors and utilize it to achieve the research objectives and to find the answers for the research questions. (Choy, 2014).

3.6 Conclusion

The study will help the researcher in understanding the influence on consumer buying behaviour based sustainable supply chain practices of the food products in Ireland. The research will help the researcher in identifying the significant factors of the Triple Bottom line that influences consumers' attitude towards food products (Mackey and Gass, 2015). This will help the businesses of Ireland to focus on those variables of the triple bottom line which has more influence on consumer buying behaviour. In addition to this, the study will also help the readers to identify the extent to which the supply chain decisions are affected by the stakeholder pressure, particularly customers (Kumar, 2019). Meanwhile, conducting a study on the topic will help the researcher to develop a deep understanding of the sustainable supply chain management and provide the opportunity to explore the new aspects of the topics

Chapter 4-Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

4.1 Overview

The chapter analyzes the response obtained as the primary data for the study. The data were collected using a questionnaire consisting of around 22 questions online. The researcher was able to get 38 responds were only 35 were selected for the further analyzes. From the 22 questions, only 19 questions were selected to complete the study. Detailed analysis and interpretation of the results are discussed in the following chapters.

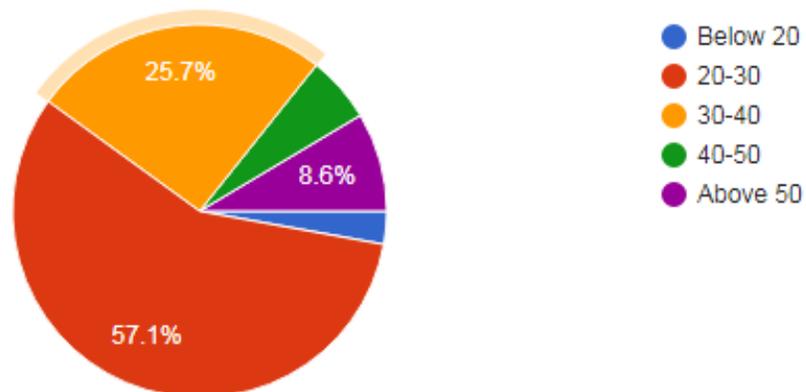
4.2 Findings

Respondents' Profile

1. Age	Respondent
Below 20	1
20-30	20
30-40	9
40-50	2
Above 50	3
Total	35

1. Age

35 responses

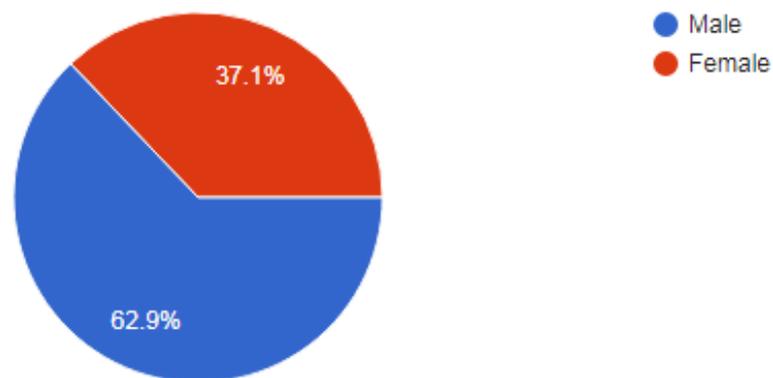


Interpretation: The above pie chart and table are showing the age group of survey participants. Based on the survey result it is determined that the total number of participants in the survey is 35 and all respond to this question, where 1 participant is below 20 age group, 20 participants are aged between 20 to 30 years, 9 participants are aged between 30 to 40 years, 2 participants are aged between 40 to 50 years, and the remaining 3 out of 35 participants are aged above 50 years. However, most of the participants are between the age of 20 to 30 years that is an older age group people.

2. Gender	Respondent
Male	22
Female	13
Total	35

2. Gender

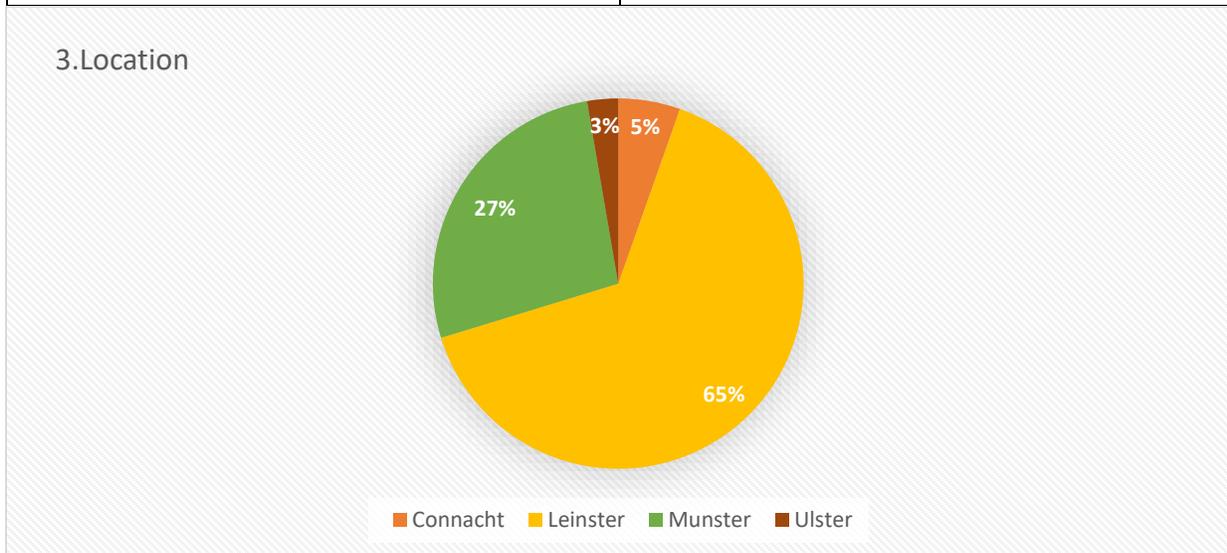
35 responses



Interpretation: The above Pie-chart is describing gender as demographic details of the respondent in surveyed the research report. Based on the survey data out of the total respondents 35, it is outlined that 62.9 % of responses in the survey are male participants and the remaining 37.1% are

females. Hence, with the data interpretation, it can be analyzed that majority of the respondent are Male participants as compare to females.

3. Location	Respondent
Connacht	2
Leinster	24
Munster	10
Ulster	1
Total	35

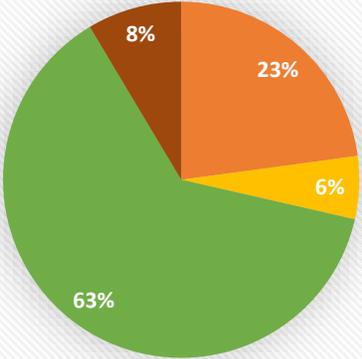


Interpretation: The above data represents the location of the participants of the survey. Among the total participants around 65% of the respondents were from the province of Leinster, which includes the capital of Ireland that is Dublin and 27% of the respondents were from Munster. Rest of the 8% of the participants were from Connacht and Ulster.

4. Occupation	Respondent
Working Professional	8
Self-Employed	2

Student	22
Homemaker	3
Total	35

4.Occupation

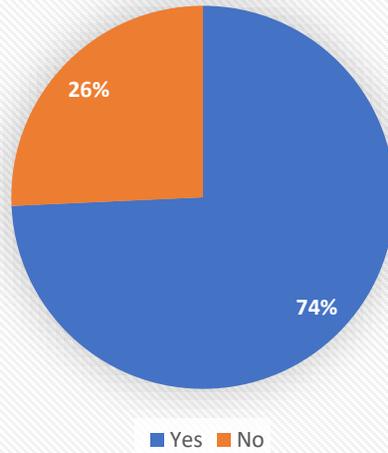


■ Working Professional
 ■ Self-Employed
 ■ Student
 ■ Homemaker

Interpretation: Based on the above table and pie chart, it can be said that these are representing the occupation of the survey respondents. From the collected data it can be analyzed that out of total participants of 35, 23% of the participants are working professionals, 6% of the participants are self-employed, 63 participants are students and the remaining 8% are homemakers, However, it can be said that most of the participants are students as their occupation.

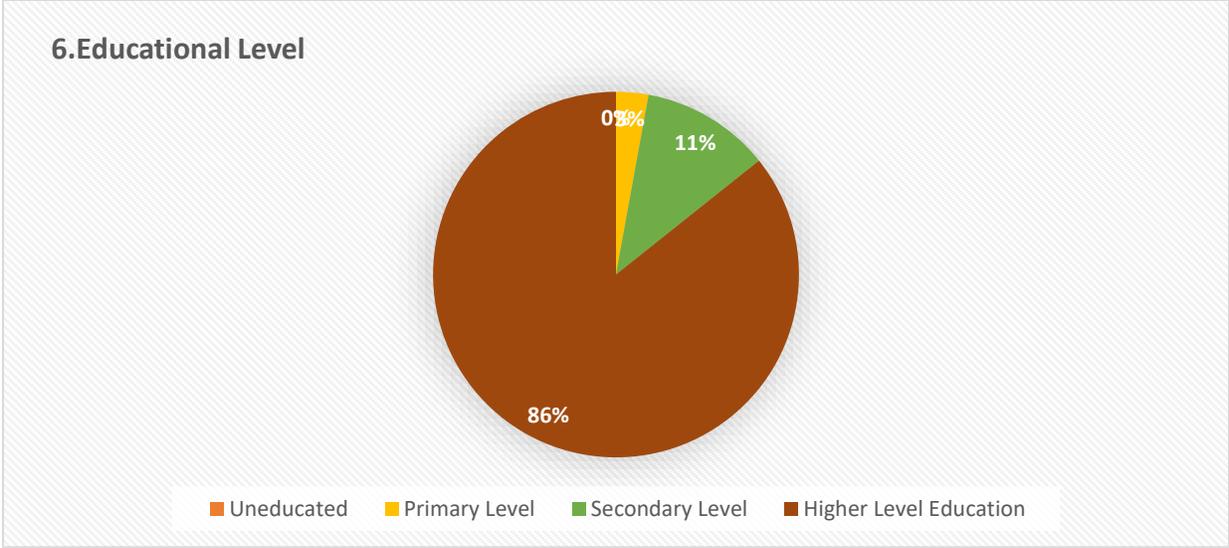
5. Are you the primary decision-maker of the household?	Respondent
Yes	26
No	9
Total	35

5. Are you the primary decision-maker of the household?



Interpretation: The table and pie chart are representing the respondents as are primary decision-makers of the household or not. In this, 74% of participants from 35 are primary decision-maker and the remaining 26% participants, not primary decision-maker. However, most of the participants are the primary decision-maker of the household.

6. Education	Respondent
Uneducated	0
Primary Level	1
Secondary Level	4
Higher Level Education	30
Total	35

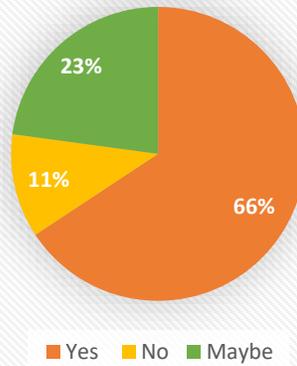


Interpretation: The table and above pie chart are representing the education level of the respondents that have participated in the survey. From the survey, it analyzed that in the total number of participants 35 where 86% of participants who are at a higher level of education, 11% of participants are at secondary level education, 3 % participants are at primary level education. No participant in the survey is uneducated and most of the participants are having a higher level of education.

Survey Questions: (Consumer Awareness and Attitude towards sustainability)

7. Are you aware of the various energy resources used in the making of a food product?	Respondent
Yes	23
No	4
Maybe	8
Total	35

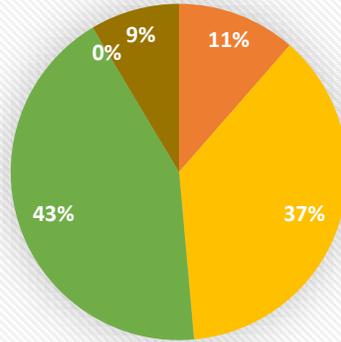
7. Are you aware of the various energy resources used in the making of a food product?



Interpretation: The table and the above pie chart represent how many people are aware of various energy resources used in the making of the food product. Based on the survey, it is determining that out of 35 only 34 respondents respond to this question, in which 67.6 % says Yes, while 11.8 % says No and 20.5 % respond may be. This means that majority of the respondent is aware of the energy resources used in the making of food products.

8. Does the energy resources utilize in supply chain influence in choosing a food product?	Respondent
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	13
Neutral	15
Disagree	0
Strongly disagree	3
Total	35

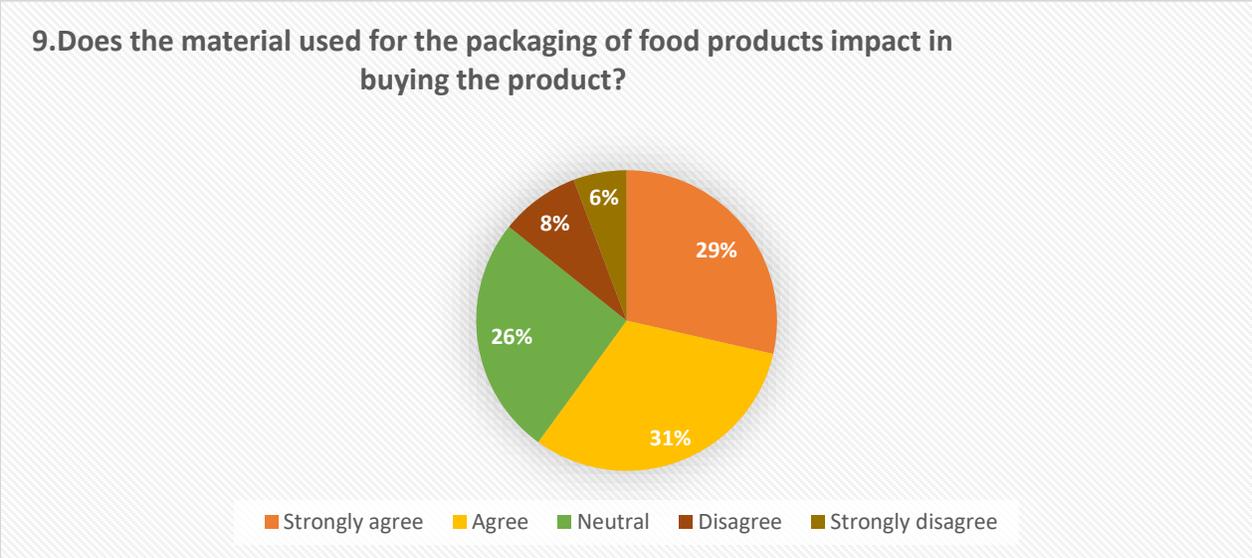
8. Does the energy resources utilize in supply chain influence in choosing a food product?



Strongly Agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

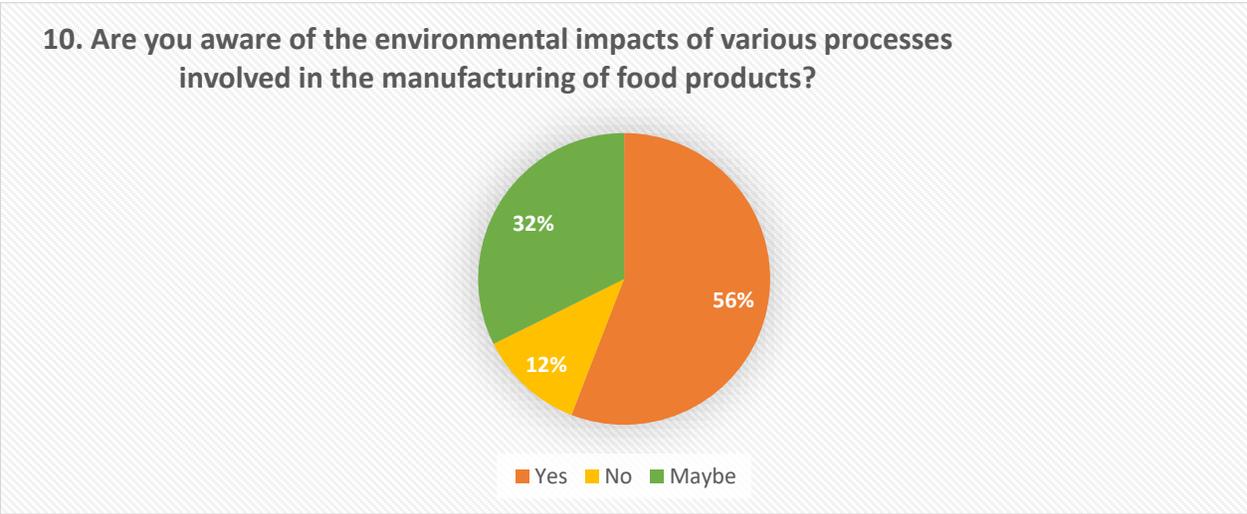
Interpretation: The above chart shows the data on energy resources utilized in Supply chain influence in choosing a food product. Based on 35 response collected during the survey, 37% of the respondents are agreeing with the question and 11% strongly agree with the statement. 43 % of the respondents are neutral regarding the statement. Meanwhile, the rest of the 9% strongly disagreed with the statement. Hence, it can be said that energy resource utilization in the Supply chain influence consumer in choosing a food product.

9. Does the material used for the packaging of food products impact in buying the product?	Respondent
Strongly agree	10
Agree	11
Neutral	9
Disagree	3
Strongly disagree	2
Total	35



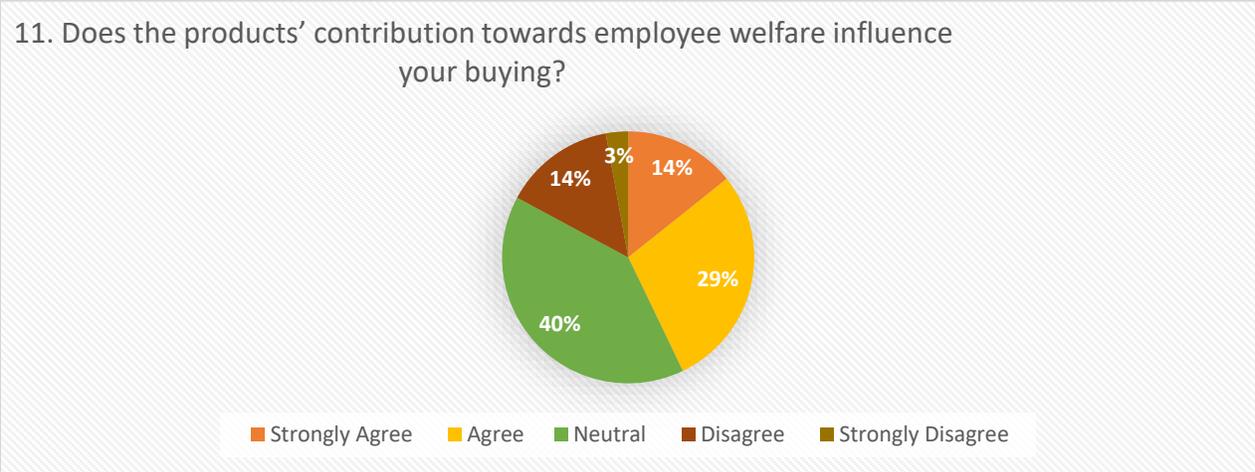
Interpretation: Based on the above pie chart and table the effect of consumer buying behaviour based on the material used for packaging. In this survey, out of 35 respondents, 26% strongly agree to the statement, while 31% agree with it and 26% responded neutrally. Rest of the 8% of respondents are disagreeing and 6% are strongly disagreeing with this statement. Hence, based on the majority of responses that is 31% it can be inferred that consumer buying behaviour is affected based on the material used for packaging.

10. Are you aware of the environmental impacts of various processes included in the manufacturing of food products?	Respondent
Yes	19
No	4
Maybe	11
Total	35



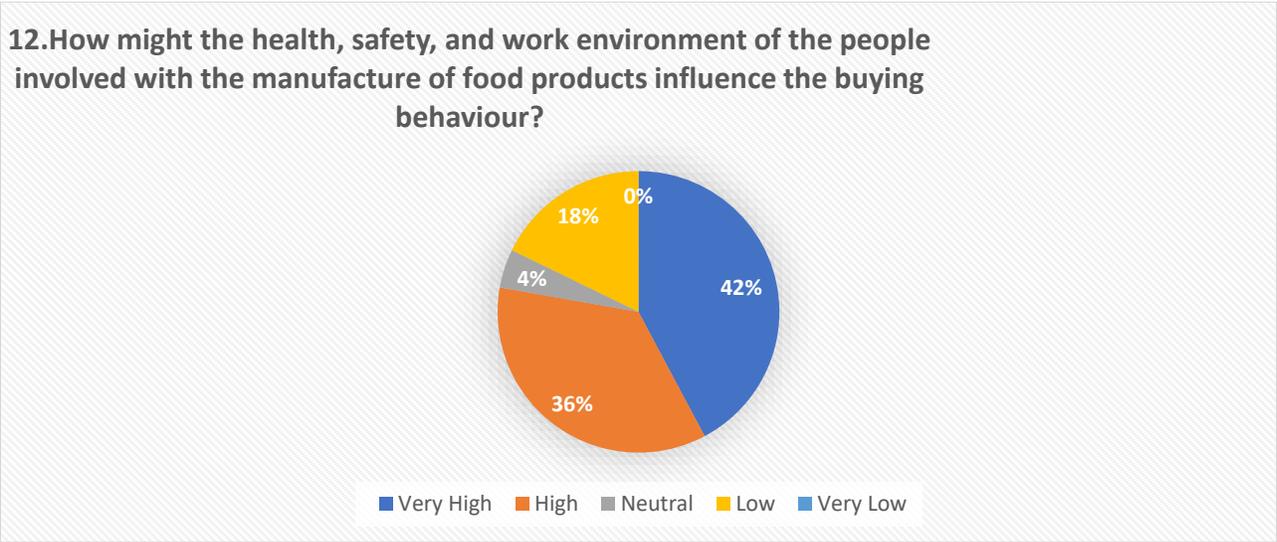
Interpretation: The above graph shows the consumer response regarding the awareness of various environmental impacts. Among the total response, 56 % of participants were chosen Yes as their response which implies they are aware of the environmental impacts of various processes involved in the manufacturing of food products. Rest of the 32% and 12% were responded Maybe and No respectively. Hence, with the majority of the majority responses, 56% said Yes it can be implied that the consumers are aware of the environmental impacts of various processes involved in the manufacturing of food products.

11. Does the products' contribution towards employee welfare influence your buying?	Respondent
Strongly Agree	5
Agree	10
Neutral	14
Disagree	5
Strongly Disagree	1
Total	35



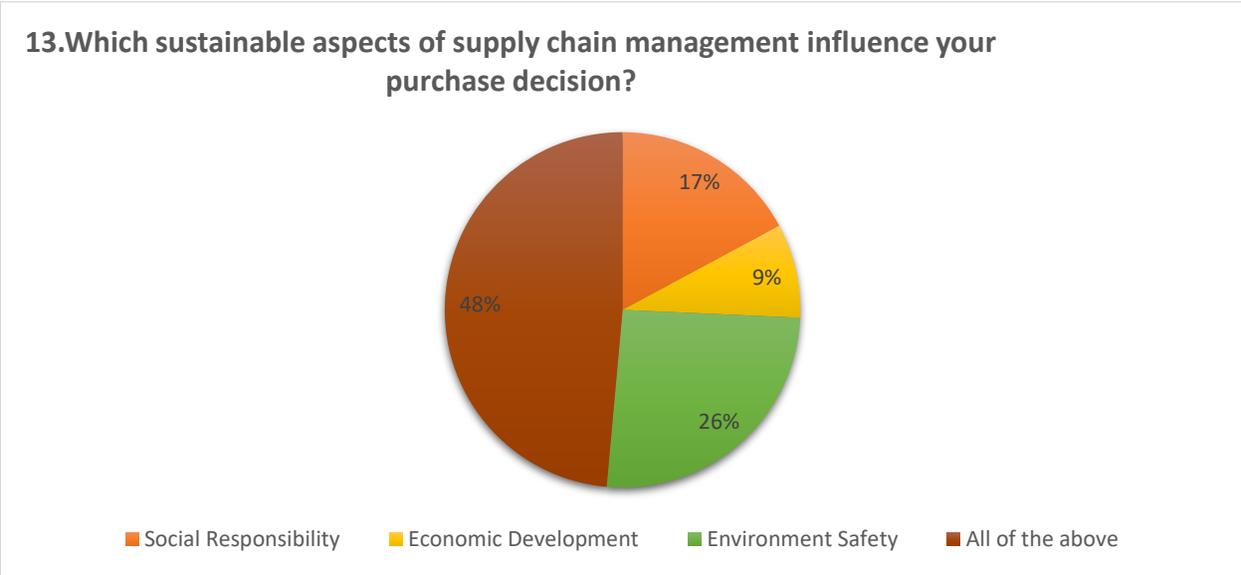
Interpretation: From the data of the table about consumer behaviour based on the products' contribution towards employee welfare, it is analyzed that out of 35 participants 14% strongly agree and where 29% agree with this statement. 40% responded neutrally. On the other hand, rest of the 14% and 3% recorded disagree and strongly disagree respectively Hence, it can be implied that the effect is almost neutral concerning the effect of employee welfare towards buying behaviour.

12. How might the health, safety, and work environment of the people involved with the manufacture of products influence the buying behaviour?	Respo ndent
Very High	19
High	16
Neutral	2
Low	8
Very Low	0
Total	35



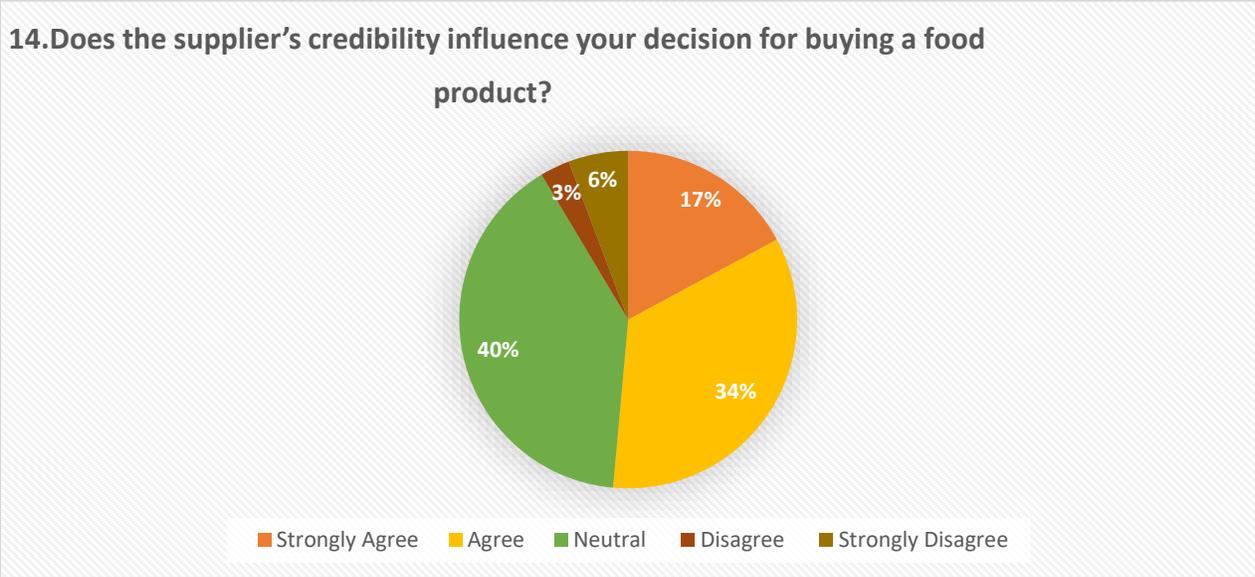
Interpretation: The above pie chart shows how the buying behaviour of consumers is influenced based on the health, safety, & work environment of the people involved with the manufacturing of the food products. Based on the data out of 35 respondents 42 % of the responded very high. 36% and 4% of the total participants were recorded High and Neutral as their responses. Rest of the 18% was recorded low. Therefore based on the response 42% of respondents Very High, it can be inferred that the buying behaviour of consumers has a positive impact based on health, safety, & work environment.

13. Which sustainable aspects of supply chain management influence your purchase decision?	Respondent
Social Responsibility	6
Economic Development	3
Environment Safety	9
All of the above	17
Total	35



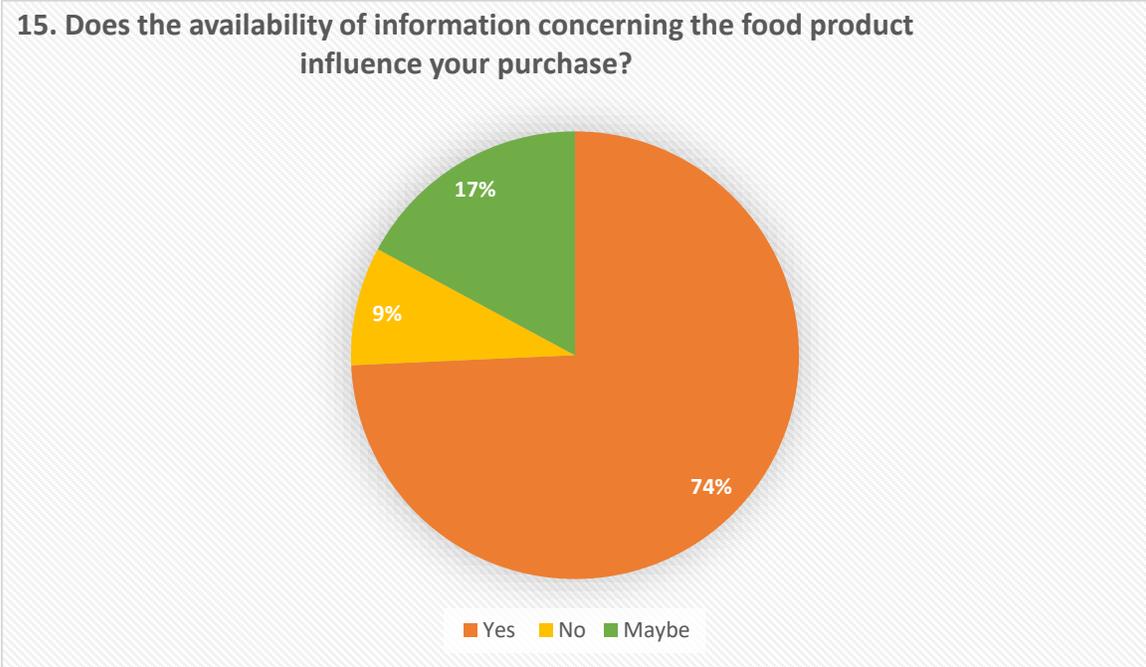
Interpretation: The above pie chart and table represent the what aspect of sustainable supply chain influence your purchase decision. Based on the participants' response almost 40% of the total respondents chosen all the above as their response. 26% of the respondents considered the option environment safety which is the major individual aspect of sustainability followed by social responsibility and economic development with 17% and 9% of the response respectively. From the response, it can be inferred that all the elements of the triple bottom line have an impact on consumer buying significantly

14. Does the supplier's credibility influence your decision for buying a food product?	Respondent
Strongly Agree	6
Agree	12
Neutral	14
Disagree	1
Strongly Disagree	2
Total	35



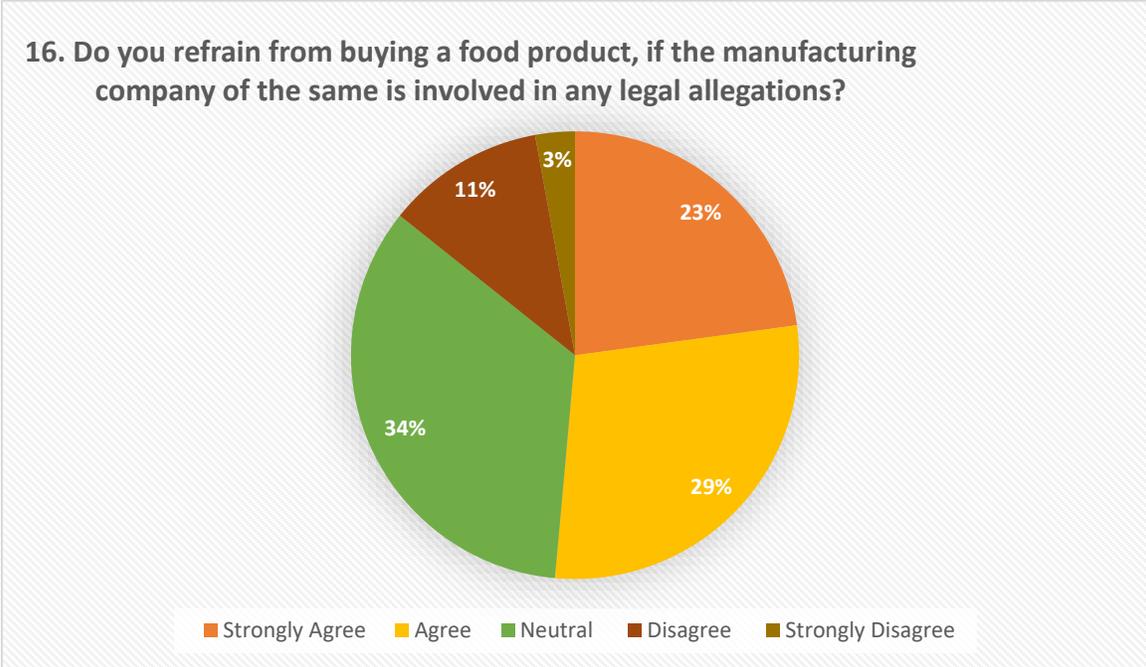
Interpretation: The above table and the pie chart show responses of the consumer about the supplier's credibility and its influence on their decision to buying a food product. In this context, Among the 35 respondents, 40% of the participants were neutral about the statement and 34% of the participants were agreeing to the statement. 17% of the respondents were marked strongly agree. Rest of the 3% and 6% were recorded disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Since the majority of the respondents were marked neutral and agree, it can be inferred that supplier credibility has a positive effect on consumer buying behaviour.

15. Does the availability of information concerning the food product influence your purchase?	Respondent
Yes	26
No	3
Maybe	6
Total	35



Interpretation: The above table and Pie chart depicts how the availability of information regarding the product influence consumer buying behaviour. It is analyzed that out of 35 respondents 74% of the participants recorded ‘Yes’ to this statement and 9% responded ‘No’. Rest of the 17% of the respondents chose the option ‘Maybe’ Therefore, based on the data it can be inferred that the availability of information regarding the food products has an impact on consumer purchase decisions

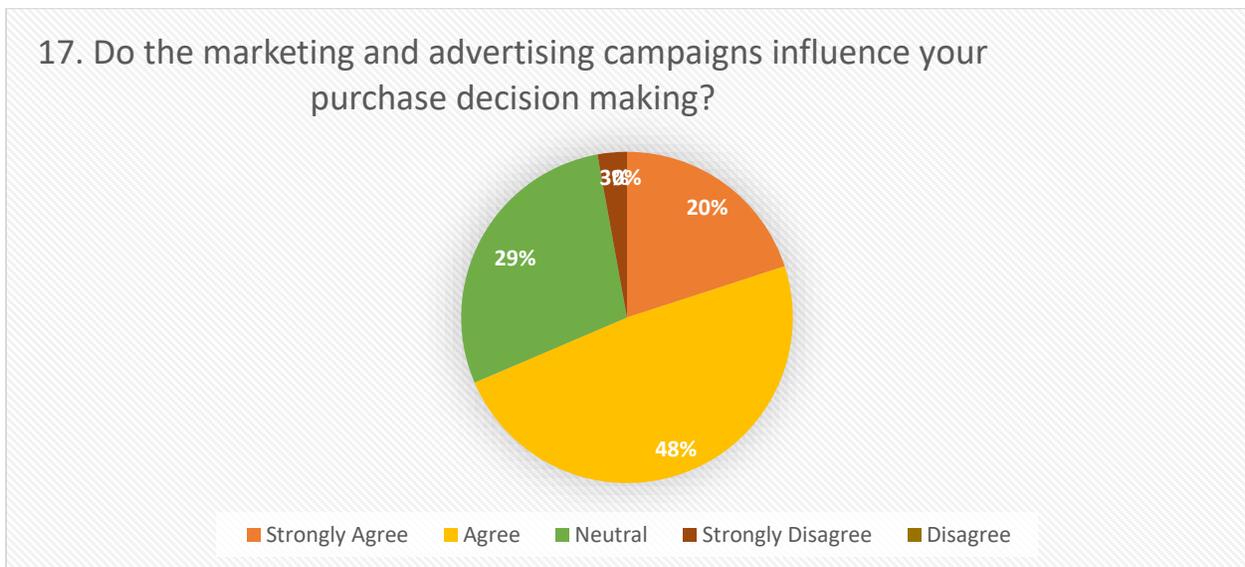
16. Do you refrain from buying a food product, if the manufacturing company of the same is involved in any legal allegations?	Respondent
Strongly Agree	8
Agree	10
Neutral	12
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	1
Total	35



Interpretation: The above pie chart and table represent the responses of participants regarding how the buying decision is influenced based if the manufacturing company involved in any legal allegations. Among the total response, 23 % of participants were strongly agreed to this statement that they will not prefer products from the manufacturer company that involved in any legal allegation. In context to this 29% agreed on and 34% were neutral to the statement which means that their buying decision does not get the affected if the manufacturing company of the food product is involved in any legal issues. Meanwhile, the rest of the 11% of respondents have disagreed with this and 3% of respondents are strongly disagreed. Hence, with the interpretation

of the collected data, it can be inferred that since most of the respondents opted for neutral this does not have an impact on the buying decision of the consumers.

17. Do the marketing and advertising campaigns influence your purchase decision making?	Respondent
Strongly Agree	7
Agree	17
Neutral	10
Strongly Disagree	1
Disagree	0
Total	35



Interpretation: The above data in table and the pie chart shows the consumer response on how their buying decision is affected by marketing and advertising campaigns. From the data, it can be seen that 20% of participants strongly agreed with the statement and where 48% of respondents agreed. The 29% of the respondents were chosen neutral as their response which means they don't have any kind of positive or negative influence. On the other hand, 3% strongly disagree with this statement and no response corresponding to 'agree' was recorded. Since the majority of the

respondents agree to the statement it can infer that marketing and advertising campaigns have a positive impact on consumer buying behaviour.

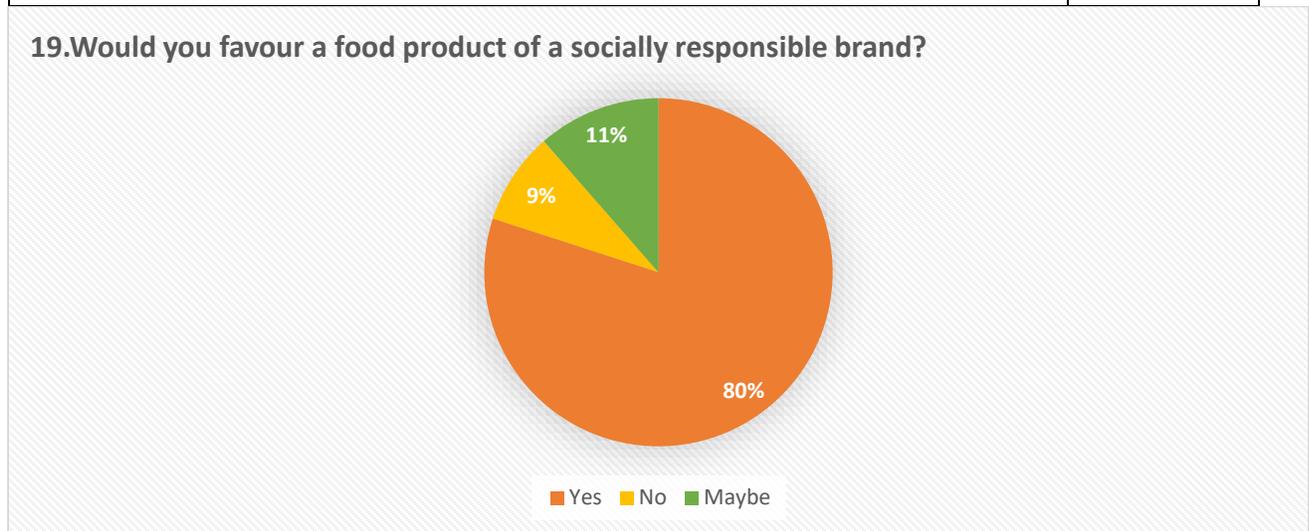
18. Do you prefer a food product manufactured with all environment-friendly measures even if you have to pay a premium price?	Respondent
Yes	23
No	2
Maybe	9
Total	34



Interpretation: The above table and pie chart depicts the data regarding the response of consumer concerning paying a premium price for a food product which are manufactured with all environmentally friendly measures. Among the data collected using the questionnaire, 68% of the total participants responded 'Yes' to the statement, 6% participants responded 'No' in context to the statement and rest of the 26% of respondents responded to 'Maybe'. Since the majority of the

respondents were 'Yes' it can be inferred from the consumers are ready to pay a premium price for food products manufactured with all eco-friendly measures.

19. Would you favour a food product of a socially responsible brand?	Respondent
Yes	28
No	3
Maybe	4
Total	35



Interpretation: The above table and pie chart depicts the consumer response regarding how a social responsibility of brand influence choosing a food product. From the collected survey data, 80% of the participants responded 'Yes' to the statement, 9% responded 'No'. and the rest of the 11% participants responded to the option 'Maybe'. Since about 80% of the respondents opted option 'Yes' it can be inferred that consumers prefer food products of socially responsible brands.

4.2 Analysis

The questionnaire was prepared with the motive of identifying consumer awareness and attitude towards the food product with Sustainable Supply Chain Management in Ireland. The survey is conducted by because consumer buying behaviour is influenced by social, economical, environmental and psychological factors. Therefore the questionnaire will cover all these aspects. The questionnaire was circulated among the population of Ireland and the researcher was able to collect around 38 responses after sorting. Among the 38 responses, once after the final sorting, only 35 responds were selected for the final analysis. The first six questions were included to record the demographic profile of the participants. The purpose to ask the demographic questions is to avoid the threat of stereotyping and help to know the profile of the respondent of Ireland. Meanwhile, the demographic questions included in the questionnaire describes the age, gender, location, occupation, education level of the respondents and also if they are the primary decision-maker of the household. All these questions were asked as it is relevant to the research topic that is “Consumer Awareness and Attitude towards food products with SSCM practice in Ireland”. From the survey, it is analyzed that the maximum number of respondents that is 20 out of 35 belongs to the age group between 20-30 years and the maximum number of participants are that is 22 of the total participants are male. The participants from all four provinces of Ireland were tried to include in the study however most of the respondents were from Leinster. Majority of the participants involved in the study were students. All the participants of the study were having at least the basic level of education, no response from uneducated individuals was involved in the study. Most of the participants were the primary decision-maker of the household this is significant for the study since they have an upper hand over buying decision of a household.

Besides the demographic section, the researcher included questions about consumer awareness and attitude towards the sustainability concept. At the same time, through the study of the survey response, it is identified that the maximum number of the respondent is aware of the concepts of sustainability and paying a premium price for eco-friendly products etc. In the context of the statement about consumer awareness towards energy resources used in the food product, the maximum number of participants said ‘Yes’ but meanwhile when a researcher asked that utilized energy resource in Supply chain influence their buying behaviour in term of food product maximum number of respondent respond neutrally on this which means that consumer buying

behaviour of the food product is affected based on the processes or energy utilized in the supply chain or vice versa. Based on the survey responses it can be implied that to survive in a fast-paced competitive market it is necessary to consider consumer preferences. Besides that, it is analyzed that 11-respondent agreed that, their buying behaviour is also influenced by the material used for the packaging of the food product. Meanwhile, it identified that the purchasing decision of the food product is also affected the various processes followed by the food industry and its impact on the environment as majority of the consumer-preferred food product that served all sustainable measure because the consumer is highly aware of the impacts on environment by the industries.

Along with the processes' impact, after the majority of students, the following group were working professionals, so the researcher might get to know the organisations' contribution towards employee welfare influence the buying decision. However the when the response was analyzed that the maximum number of the respondents responded neutrally to this statement which depicts there is no much effect on buying behaviour. In addition to this with the maximum responses, it is identified that the buying behaviour of the consumers is highly influenced by the health safety and working environment provided by the organisation. The survey also analyzed the aspects such as social responsibility, economic development and environmental safety aspects and which has a significant impact on the consumer buying decisions but based on the majority of the response it was inferred that all the three aspects equal significance

Similarly, to analyze the consumer perception towards sustainability concepts the consumers were asked if they prefer products of brand with any legal allegations, the majority of respondents opted that they will refrain from buying such products. The majority of the respondents also preferred the food products of socially responsible brands thus from the study it is visible that the brand's social reputation has an impact on consumers buying behaviour. As the brand reputation or brand image plays a significant role to have brand recognition in a competitive market and to have a stable spot in the market thus organisations will highlight their practices and make their processes more transparent to persuade the consumers and to have a competitive advantage. The supplier is an important part of supply chain management therefore in a survey the efforts were taken by the researcher to analyze how the supplier credibility and it was noted that it has a positive influence in choosing a food product. Availability of information regarding the products was another significant aspect which influenced consumer buying behaviour according to the survey. The

majority of the consumers preferred the products with available information rather than the products without. From the response, it was also clear that the marketing and advertisement campaign also has a significant impact in the consumer's buying decisions, the majority of the response on this context recorded that their purchase decision was influenced by the marketing and advertisement campaigns. These two context shows how important information and transparency is for the consumer to choose a food product, More transparent the organisation more sustainable it will because if not it can affect its reputation. A major proportion of the participants were ready to pay a premium price for the food products which are more sustainable and which has a lesser impact on the environment. Therefore, based on the above analysis, it can be inferred the majority of the respondents are aware of the sustainable practices. Meanwhile, the consumer's attitude towards food products with the sustainable supply chain is very positive and are ready to pay a premium price to buy those products with sustainable supply chain management and brands with a lesser impact on the environment. From the analysis, it is also visible that all the aspects of the triple bottom line have a significant role in consumers buying behaviour.

4.3 Discussion and Conclusion

Through the survey, it is detected that every business organization is going to conduct market research to determine the consumer needs to get a sustainable position in the market. Likewise, the views of Mariadoss et al., (2016) in the above literature also supports that the incorporation of the sustainable concept in the business helps the consumer in their buying process. In addition to this, it can also be discussed that the main aim to conduct the survey is to revolve the relation of consumer buying behaviour towards sustainable supply chain management. With the help of survey responses, the researcher will get to understand the perception of consumer behaviour towards the food products in the sustainable supply chain management in the segment of Ireland. In the word of Carter, and Rogers, (2008) it is found in the literature that the consumer perception is the subject matter that defines the need and desire of the individual consumer while buying the product. However, it can be said that market research is essential for a business organization to determine the consumer needs to get a sustainable position in the market.

In the survey, it is also discussed that there are several factors like social, personal, cultural, and psychological factors that come in the mind of the consumer at the time product is buying by the

consumer in the market place. Similarly, it is also recognized in the literature review of Joshi and Rahman (2015) that many factors like economic status, quality, price, etc. can influence the buying pattern of consumer. In addition to this, it is also found from the survey that customer awareness and attitude towards the food products in the sustainable supply chain management helps the marketer of retail organization. Besides, it also supports the suppliers to improvise their service performance in term of quality, cost, benefits, features, responsibility towards sustainable practice. It is because they will enhance the customer level of satisfaction by offering the food products that are manufactured with severed all measure of sustainable practice. However, it can be said that consumers are highly influenced by social, personal, cultural, and psychological factors.

With the help of the survey responses of the participants of Ireland retail organization. The suppliers easily get to know that with the incorporation of the sustainable food supply chain framework in their business practice they will provide a level of satisfaction to the consumer while buying the product. According to Beckwith (2019), it is stated that the different traits that will influence consumer buying behaviour. At the same time, Berning, and Venter, (2015) has found in their findings that there are several companies in the global map has produced and distribute the product to the ultimate consumer with the elimination of the impact of production & movement of product on the environment for the reason to get the sustainable competitive advantages in the business world. In their study, they also discovered that with the incorporation of sustainable measures in the production & distribution of a product may tend to reduce the environmental impact and develop that company product to the utmost priority of the consumer buying.

Based on the survey, it is detected that for getting success in the business, every firm wants to fulfil the demand of the customer as they are the real king of the market, for whom the retail organization produces a product. In support of this Sigala, (2014) discovered that nowadays the buying pattern of the consumer is highly influenced because of their concern toward the environment. In the survey discussion, the researcher addressed that while buying the product, the consumer gets to collect the piece of detailed information about the product that includes; various business activities involved in the production of the product, the impact of processes involved on the environment, the condition in which the employee produce the product, the marketing campaign of the company, the qualities of the supplier, a legal allegation on the company, etc. Similarly, through the literature of Joshi and Rahman, (2015), it is discussed that another reason to apply the concept of the

sustainable framework is due to the presence of elements that is investors, customer, government, etc. inside or outside of the organization and whose plays a vital role in managing affairs of the business for the company survival. However, it can easily be discussed that the consumer is highly attentive and aware of the sustainable concept and knows that to get a competitive advantage several companies impose a fake claim about the sustainable practice to manipulate the consumer.

Through the survey, it also analyzed that the brand value and the marketing campaign of the company are highly affected factors for making the consumer buying decision. It is also supported by the research study of Berning, and Venter, (2015) that if the company constructs a right marketing campaign on right time at fulfilling the need of the consumer needs than the consumer will buy the product. While, if the brand value of the company is socially responsible than it will also help the consumer to recognize the brand against the various product. Besides that, in the study that the researcher also detects the practice of sustainable concept helps the firm to increase its revenue because if the product is severed under sustainable responsibility than consumers may ready to pay a high price for the product.

Based on the survey it is inferred that consumer will collect detailed information about the product before buying it. At the same time, the above literature review is also supporting that consumer will try to gather information about the product before making a purchase decision. According to the Walker and Jones, (2012) interfere that this research report is about to know the effectiveness of the sustainable and sustainable food supply chain concept in the food product in the supply chain and retail organization, and also help to address the thoughts, values, beliefs of the consumer towards the incorporation of the sustainable concept. However, it can be said that this will help the consumer to protect themselves from the fake claim of the retail food industry.

In the word of Das, (2018), through the survey, it is found that consumption of Ireland is concentrated to measure the company food product sustainability while buying the new product of the existing company. Moreover, it also analyzed that the consumer of Ireland is even ready to pay to the product that has a positive impact on the environment and society. Similarly, the above literature of Mariadoss et al., (2016) is also supporting that the practice of sustainable food supply chain attracts the consumers. In this concern, the consumers check the product while buying. The product production is including optimum use of resources as well as the firm or supply chain team

put their responsibility towards the environment protection. However, this research is discussing that the incorporation of sustainable practice may involve high degree involvement of customers as well as it can be said that it influences the buying process.

Chapter 5- Concluding thoughts and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1 Implications of findings for the Research Questions

It can be concluded that the research has been successfully attained all its objectives. The research clearly shows that the customers are affected by the sustainable practices adopted by the business. The maximum number of customers has agreed that the energy source that is used by the company in the supply chain management affect their buying preference. From the research, it is evident that the consumers are aware of the various process involved in supply chain management. The role of sustainable practices in the retail food sector is relevant as the supply chain management process of the sector can have a serious impact on the triple bottom line as it is very basic. The hurdles in implementing sustainable supply chain in Irish Food Industries is that the consumers may fully rely on the information available to them, this can be taken as an advantage by industries and use techniques like greenwashing or fake claims to persuade consumers to buy their product. Due to this the companies that are adopting sustainable practices may not get recognized as an organisation with more marketing budgets can arise fake claims regarding the sustainability and may attract the customers of the organisations that follow sustainable practices. Therefore this can have a negative impact or refrain organisation from actually adopting sustainable supply chain practices. However, there are instances where organisations are highly motivated with the scope of attracting more customers by adopting sustainable supply chain practices. The health, safety and work environment also influence the customers while choosing the product of a company. Now a day the most important stakeholder of the business is the customer. The stakeholders are putting pressure on the business to produce eco-friendly products and be transparent in their supply chain management but the company requires huge investment to adopt sustainable practices and not all business can afford the same. The popularity of the internet and social media enables customers to increase their awareness regarding the market, information of products and allegations against products and how these aspects influence the consumer was able to be analyzed by the study. The research has successfully covered the relevant aspects that influence customer purchase behaviour and also analyze consumers awareness and attitude towards food products with sustainable supply chain management. The researcher has also clearly identified the reason to research the current topic.

5.2 Contributions and Limitations of the Research

The study will help the food industries in understanding consumer buying behaviour concerning sustainable supply chain management. The study will also help future researchers in understanding the concepts closely linked with the study. The exploratory nature of the research will contribute towards the existing literature and researches that are already published. As a researcher, the study helped the author to understand the various concepts linked with the study in-depth.

The research was time bound therefore it can be considered as the primary limitation of the study. The study would have been more effective if it wasn't time-bound. Another significant limitation was the time at which the study took place. The study was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic situation as it is an infectious disease the movement was restricted to an extent. This restricted the ability of the researcher to collect more primary data as the researcher was not able to be in direct contact with the consumers of the retail food industries. The situation also influenced the data collection method of the study. The secondary data available based on the geography of the research context was limited which was also a potential limitation for the study.

5.3 Recommendations for Practice

In practice, the research related to consumer buying behaviours concerning sustainable supply chain will help the organisations as well as scholars in understanding the impact of SSCM in a purchase decision. Regular studies will help the organisation in understanding the pulse of the consumers and thereby developing new strategies to provide a better experience for the consumers.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

- It is recommended that the questionnaire made by the researcher could be more precise about the topic of the research. The researcher should include questions which are directly related to the topic of the research for easy analysis.
- The locations from which the researcher has collected the data could be expanded to identify more clear results of the study.
- The demographic factors that have been considered by the researcher are limited that could have been extended more.
- The numbers of working professionals participated in the survey are very less. The professionals usually have a better awareness of the business practices and therefore if the

researcher can include more working professionals in the survey to get more authentic results.

- When self-employed individuals are included in a study related to business the chances are high that the response from the participants can be biased. They might respond to study with business perspective rather than a consumer perspective.
- Financial factor plays an important role in the purchasing decision of a product. The research didn't focus on unemployed individuals. If they were included the outcome would have been different. Therefore, the researcher could focus on unemployed individuals in future studies.
- It is recommended that the research should also involve and critically analyze the customer's knowledge about fake claims by the organization to market their products.
- It is recommended that research should take a large sample size as it is covering a wide geographical area.
- It is recommended that the research should also focus on the solution path of the research topic. Providing a solution, the research problem will validate the research more.
- The current research has faced various restrictions from the sources of data collection due to social reasons. Therefore, it is recommended that the data collection process should be conducted in such a way that minimizes the restrictions on data collection.

5.5 Final Conclusion and Reflections

Customers are aware of the need for sustainable practices in the retail food sector. Based on the study it was evident that then consumers are concerned with the various aspects of the triple bottom line and are also products ready to pay a premium price for more sustainable products. Besides this, the study also helped to find out that the consumer buying behaviour is often affected by energy consumptions that is they prefer products with a lesser carbon footprint.

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Appendix:

Survey Questions

Respondents' Profile

1. Age
2. Gender
3. Location
4. Occupation
5. Are you the primary decision-maker of the household?
6. Education

Main Question

7. Are you aware of the various energy resources used in the making of a food product?
8. Does the energy resources utilize in supply chain influence in choosing a food product?
9. Does the material used for the packaging of food products impact in buying the product?
10. Are you aware of the environmental impacts of various processes included in the making of food products?
11. Does the products' contribution towards employee welfare influence your buying?
12. How might the health, safety and work environment of the people involved with the manufacture of products influence the buying behaviour?
13. Which sustainable aspects of supply chain management influence your purchase decision?
14. Does the supplier's credibility influence your decision for buying a food product?
15. Does the availability of information concerning the food product influence your purchase?
16. Do you refrain from buying a food product, if the manufacturing company of the same is involved in any legal allegations?
17. Do the marketing and advertising campaigns influence your purchase decision making?
18. Do you prefer a food product manufactured with all environment-friendly measures even if you have to pay a premium price?
19. Would you favour a food product of a socially responsible brand?