

Research graduation project:

## Using distinctive design to communicate package sustainability



### Research topic

To decrease the negative impact of packaging waste on the environment, sustainable packaging is important. However, sustainability of packages is often difficult to perceive for consumers, as they lack knowledge about which packages have less environmental impact. For example, bioplastic may look the same as normal plastic. An eco-label could inform them about the environmental impact, but consumers often doubt sustainable claims made by companies due to the occurrence of greenwashing.

So in order to decrease the environmental impact of packaging, it is crucial that consumers perceive and believe this sustainable package advantage.

One way to communicate sustainability is by package design. A distinctive package, looking very different from other packaging in the product category, may disrupt the habitual choice process of consumers by drawing attention to this product. This heightens chances that they will recognize the improved package sustainability, influencing their product choice to be more sustainable. However, a very disrupting and different looking package may also have drawbacks: consumers may not consider it as a purchase alternative, and may perceive it as less reliable and trustworthy, because it looks too different.

### The graduation project

You will investigate whether a distinctive package design heightens consumers' recognition and perception of sustainability, and which type of distinctive package designs are more effective and why. Does this disruptive design work better when it also looks sustainable (e.g., green or neutral colors), or should it just draw attention after which consumers will see the sustainable packaging claim?

In this research project, you will contribute to answering these research questions. After reading relevant academic literature, you will determine relevant variables and product categories. In addition, you will design several package designs, and test your hypotheses by setting up and performing an experimental study, analysing your data in SPSS.

### Interested?

We are looking for a student with an interest in consumer product perception, starting in September or in autumn 2023. Experience in performing a research project (e.g., SPD Research Project) and knowledge of SPSS (for statistical analysis) are beneficial.

This project is part of the Circular Economy Lab, so you will connect with students working on other sustainability related topics.

If you want to know more, please contact the supervisors of this thesis project, Dr. Mariëlle Creusen [m.e.h.creusen@tudelft.nl](mailto:m.e.h.creusen@tudelft.nl) and Dr. Giulia Granato [G.Granato@tudelft.nl](mailto:G.Granato@tudelft.nl).