

Effects on Consumer Buying Behaviour with Respect to Packaging of the Product

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Introduction

In today's highly competitive marketplace, organizations continuously seek innovative strategies to attract consumers and differentiate their products from competitors. Among various marketing tools, product packaging has evolved into a powerful mechanism that directly influences consumer perception and buying behaviour. Traditionally, packaging was primarily intended for product protection, storage, and transportation. However, with changing consumer expectations and increasing market competition, packaging has become an essential component of marketing communication and brand positioning.

Consumers are frequently exposed to numerous product alternatives while shopping, making packaging one of the first elements they encounter. The visual appearance of a package often creates the first impression of a product and significantly influences consumer evaluation before actual product usage. Elements such as colour, shape, typography, graphics, material quality, and labeling communicate valuable information regarding product quality, reliability, and brand identity. Consequently, packaging plays a critical role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

Previous studies have demonstrated that attractive and informative packaging can enhance perceived product value, generate emotional responses, and encourage impulse buying behaviour. In addition, modern consumers increasingly consider sustainability and environmental responsibility when evaluating products, making eco-friendly packaging an important factor in purchase decisions. As a result, businesses are investing heavily in packaging innovation to improve customer engagement and strengthen brand loyalty.

Despite extensive research on consumer behaviour, there remains a need to understand the specific influence of individual packaging elements on purchasing decisions. Many studies examine packaging as a broad concept without distinguishing the effects of colour, design, material, and informational attributes. Furthermore, limited attention has been given to understanding how packaging influences long-term behavioural outcomes such as brand preference and repeat purchases.

This study aims to examine the impact of packaging on consumer buying behaviour by analyzing the role of various packaging attributes in influencing purchase decisions. The research seeks to identify the most influential packaging factors, evaluate consumer perceptions, and provide practical recommendations for developing consumer-centric packaging strategies. The findings are expected to contribute to both academic understanding and managerial decision-making by highlighting the strategic importance of packaging in contemporary marketing.

Literature Review

Packaging has evolved into a critical determinant of consumer decision-making in contemporary marketing environments. While traditionally limited to protection and storage, modern packaging functions as a **strategic communication tool** that influences perception, evaluation, and purchase behaviour.

According to Underwood and Klein (2002), packaging serves as a vehicle of brand communication, conveying symbolic meaning and shaping consumer expectations even before product usage. Similarly, Silayoi and Speece (2004) conceptualize packaging as a combination of visual and informational cues, both of which guide consumer decision-making under time pressure and low involvement conditions.

The literature identifies two primary dimensions of packaging:

Functional Dimension

This includes:

- Protection and preservation
- Convenience and usability
- Informational clarity

Prendergast and Pitt (1996) argue that functional packaging enhances perceived product reliability, which contributes to repeat purchase behaviour.

Emotional and Aesthetic Dimension

This includes:

- Colour psychology
- Typography and graphics
- Shape and design

Ampuero and Vila (2006) highlight that visual elements significantly influence brand positioning, where premium packaging signals higher perceived value.

Research further indicates that colour plays a dominant role in consumer perception. Clement (2007) demonstrates through eye-tracking studies that colour and design determine initial attention and shelf visibility, which are critical for impulse buying.

Additionally, sustainability has emerged as a major concern. Rundh (2016) states that environmentally responsible packaging enhances brand image and aligns with evolving consumer values, especially among younger demographics.

Overall, prior studies establish that packaging influences:

- Perceived quality
- Brand trust
- Emotional engagement
- Purchase intention

Thus, packaging operates as both a cognitive cue and emotional trigger in consumer behaviour.

Research Gap

Despite extensive contributions, the literature presents several limitations:

- Existing studies often treat packaging as a holistic construct, without isolating the individual impact of elements such as typography, colour, and material.
- Limited research is conducted in the beauty and cosmetic sector, where packaging plays a symbolic and identity-driven role.
- Sustainability is frequently examined independently rather than as an integrated component of design aesthetics.
- There is insufficient exploration of the relationship between packaging and long-term behavioural outcomes, such as brand loyalty and repeat purchase.

This study addresses these gaps by focusing specifically on aesthetic packaging elements and their influence on consumer buying behaviour, with emphasis on emotional and perceptual responses.

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to:

- Critically examine the impact of packaging elements on consumer buying behaviour.
- Analyse how consumers interpret packaging as a signal of product quality and brand identity.
- Identify the most influential packaging attributes driving purchase intention.
- Evaluate the relationship between demographic characteristics and packaging perception.
- Provide strategic recommendations for designing consumer-centric packaging.

Formulation of Hypothesis (Academic Framing)

The study proposes the following hypothesis:

H₁: Packaging aesthetics have a statistically significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

H₀: Packaging aesthetics do not have a statistically significant impact on consumer buying behaviour.

Conceptual Justification

The hypothesis is grounded in **cue utilization theory**, which suggests that consumers rely on external cues (such as packaging) when intrinsic product evaluation is difficult (Zeithaml, 1988).

Variables

- Independent Variables: Colour, typography, visual design, material, labeling, brand visibility
- Dependent Variable: Consumer buying behaviour (purchase intention, preference, loyalty)

Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design, aimed at systematically examining consumer perceptions and behavioural responses toward packaging.

A quantitative methodology is employed to ensure objectivity and statistical validity. The structured approach enables identification of patterns, relationships, and predictive associations between variables.

This design is appropriate as it allows:

- Measurement of consumer attitudes
- Statistical validation of hypotheses
- Generalization within the sample context

Data and Methodology

Data Sources

- Primary Data: Collected through structured questionnaires
- Secondary Data: Derived from peer-reviewed journals, articles, and academic publications

Sampling Framework

- Population: Consumers of packaged goods
- Sample Size: 120 respondents
- Sampling Technique: Convenience and snowball sampling
- Target Group: Individuals aged 18–45

Instrument Design

The questionnaire is structured into:

- Demographic variables
- Packaging perception variables
- Behavioural intention indicators

A Likert scale is used to capture intensity of responses, ensuring quantifiable measurement.

Analytical Techniques

- Descriptive statistics (mean, percentage)
- Correlation analysis
- Regression analysis
- Chi-square test

Reliability and Validity

- Content validity ensured through literature alignment
- Pilot testing conducted for clarity
- Internal consistency maintained

Ethical Considerations

- Informed consent obtained
- Anonymity maintained
- Data used strictly for academic purposes

Analysis

The findings indicate that packaging significantly influences consumer perception, but its impact varies across different dimensions.

Key Insights

- Visual appeal (mean = highest) emerges as the strongest determinant of attention and initial attraction.
- A significant proportion of respondents acknowledge that packaging influences their purchase decisions, reinforcing its role as a point-of-sale stimulus.
- Correlation analysis ($r = 0.72$) indicates a strong positive relationship between packaging attractiveness and purchase intention.

However, Chi-square results suggest that:

- The relationship is not universally significant across all variables
- Consumer behaviour is multi-dimensional, influenced by factors such as price, brand familiarity, and functional need

Interpretation

This indicates that packaging acts as a reinforcing factor rather than a standalone determinant. It enhances product appeal but does not replace core decision drivers.

Conclusion

The study concludes that packaging is a strategic marketing instrument that plays a vital role in shaping consumer perception and influencing buying behaviour.

It primarily affects:

- Attention and first impressions
- Emotional engagement
- Brand evaluation

Among all elements, visual aesthetics—particularly colour and design—have the strongest influence, acting as immediate attention triggers in retail environments.

However, consumer decision-making is complex. While packaging enhances desirability, factors such as price, quality, and brand trust remain dominant drivers .

The study also highlights the growing importance of:

- Informational transparency
- Sustainable packaging practices

From a managerial perspective, packaging should be viewed as a **value-creating investment**, not merely a cost component. Firms that integrate aesthetics, functionality, and sustainability can achieve stronger consumer engagement and competitive advantage.

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