

Visual Influence of Packing on Consumer Buying Behaviour of Ready-To-Eat Food Products

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Abstract: The significance of this article is based on the deep insight of visual elements of packing that influences consumer buying with respect to the packing of ready-to-eat food products of different companies. Further, the article also stretches its understandings to how packing influences when individual purchases the products which are ready-to-eat. The basic purpose of this study is to figure out how and what factors are behind the success of packaging. The purchasing behaviour of a consumer is subjected to the packing elements like packaging shading, foundation image, material of the goods, package style, shape of wrapper, printed information and the time spent looking at a product and its packaging in addition to consumers' tastes and habits influences the consumer purchase decision to buy a product or brand over another. So packing performs a critical part in promoting interchanges, particularly for the purpose of the offer and could be dealt with as a standout amongst essential elements affecting customer's buying choice.

Keywords: Packing, consumer buying behaviour, ready-to-eat.

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I. Introduction

In the present world, packaging has become itself a sales promotion tool for the organizations. The role of packaging has changed due to increase self-service and changing consumers' lifestyle in the competitive business environment. Packaging is an important factor which influences the consumer buying decision. It has a huge impact on the success of the company in the heavy competitive environment. Packaging is a wrapping of product that holds the information regarding the product and the manufacturer of a product. Package becomes an ultimate selling proposition stimulating impulsive buying behaviour, increasing market share and reducing promotional costs. According to a recent study published by researchers from the University of Miami and California Institute of Technology in the scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the packaging of a food product have a proven and important influence on the consumers purchase decision. Scientists have analyzed several packaging food products using a "novel neuro-computational simulation of human intentional processes" to determine which aspects and items are the most effective to attract attention and it is found that the visual attractiveness and personal preferences are the most important factors. The visually appealing products attract consumer's eyes and increase the attention spent on these products by shoppers. The significance of product packing which involves in the buyers' psyche and how it influences obtaining a choice which re-emphasizes the significance of observation rather than permitting the client to position items freely. On the other hand sellers/advertisers attempt to contact and figure out the taste and preference of shoppers' ideas through packing. Packing is regularly the last impression that the shopper or the buyer will have before the last buy of choice is made. Hence product's package can be the selling point for many consumers by delivering a sense of quality while also reflecting the product's brand image which leads to a key part of the marketing plan for any business that makes or sells products.

Objectives:

1. To illustrate the packaging impact on the consumer's purchase decision.
2. To understand the influence of the packaging on consumers purchasing behaviour.
3. To identify the influence of packaging elements on the buying behaviour decision.
4. To check the effect of packaging elements on the buying behaviour.

Scope of the Study:

Demographic variables such as age, gender, occupation, income, usage and customer acquaintance variable like consumer buying behaviour are analyzed from the view points of the customers. The packing strategies adopted by the 5 different companies namely MTR, Nestle, Kellogg's, ITC India and McCain Foods are analyzed by considering the opinion of the buyers of ready-to-eat food products. The data for the study is collected from 300 customers who use ready-to-eat food products. The study is done predominantly on fast food restaurants in Mysore.

II. Research Methodology:

The generally accepted Principles and Practices of Packing are applied in the study to ascertain the packing strategies adopted by the ready-to-eat food companies. An exploratory, analytical and descriptive study is carried out with a view to identifying the best packing strategies adopted by different companies in India. The research methodology for the study is summarized as follows:

Research Design:

Descriptive method is used for the purpose of conducting research. Data is gathered from customers.

Source of the data:

The proposed research involves both primary and secondary data.

Primary data:

Primary data on the packing is collected through the structured questionnaire. The primary data is collected from customers.

Secondary data:

The secondary data is extracted from among different published sources such as Euromonitor International manuals and reports, magazines, voice and data magazine, research articles, books and selected websites.

Sampling Design:

300 sample respondents are selected from the population for the purpose of the study. The composition of the respondents includes ready-to-eat product buyers from selected five fast food companies drawn from Mysore. Five companies i.e. MTR, Nestle, Kellogg's, ITC India and McCain Foods are considered for the study of the visual influence of packing on consumer buying behaviour of ready-to-eat food products.

Review of Literature:

Packing performs multi-undertakings and capacities which represent the product of a company or brand and its elements that speak with the customers (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). The part of packing as a medium for correspondence and marking is expanding in focused markets for products. Packing incorporates the brand names, brand logos, photos of a product, various types of marks, for example, fixings, assembling and expiry date, notices, value, utilizing a technique for the item, organization name, and organization place and so on (Neeta & Sudha, 2014).

Packing in present day terms can be characterized as the planning and delivering compartments and wrappers for an item. Packing as a component of item methodology has turned out to be important to the point that when there is by all accounts a moment contrast in the brands, imaginative packing may give an upper hand (Keller, 2009). Packing is important to the point that the greater part of the advertisers trust it is the fifth P of showcasing blend with other four Ps of the item, value, advancement, and spot and it is thought to be a vital component in item system (Philip Kotler, 2008).

Packing has essential influence in showcasing brand as it separates organization's product from its rivals and is the best way in conveying to the customers. Packaging is additionally an essential element of brand acknowledgment and also an imperative element in making positive brand affiliations (Keller, 2009). According to (Ahmed, Billo & Lakhani, 2012), the packaging is the last impression for buyers as they settle on obtaining choices on the premises through an observation in the mind of buyers about a product. Therefore it is imperative that packing is striving to secure the deal, this might be a brand picture, brand values, item quality and advancements.

In a focused business sector, packing as a promoting instrument could be a powerful approach to accomplish advertising targets and in the meantime, it fulfills the goals of shoppers through its style components which incorporate bundle's size, shape, content, shading, material and design and its functional components too (Rundh, 2013). Packing is an essential component of brand acknowledgment and making positive brand affiliations and the stylish components or segments of packing incorporate size, shading, content, design, material, and shape (Keller, 2009). According to (P R Smith, 2004), has recognized six packing components which incorporate size, design, shading, content, material and smell.

Packing has now numerous capacities from securing the item, to transporting the item to the end buyer securely protecting the quality and to convince the customer to purchase the item by getting shopper consideration while in the meantime making a positive effect at retail locations in an exceptionally aggressive environment (Rundh, 2005). Research has demonstrated that shoppers decidedly assess item's packing in the event that it reliably and rationally passes on the significance of that item through its packing components (Hannele Kauppinen - Raisanen, 2010).

Demography of the Respondents:

For the purpose of collecting primary data for the study, a structured questionnaire was administered to 300 customers. Their opinion on the packaging that influences their Buying Behaviour and other different dimensions of packing elements namely, Shape & Graphics, Size, Colour, Design and Packing Material were analyzed. The following is the demographic profile of the respondents.

Particular	Sub-Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	182	60.7%
	Female	118	39.3%
	Total	300	100.0%
Age	10-18 Years	11	3.7%
	19-25 Years	63	21.0%
	26-35 Years	181	60.3%
	36-49 Years	37	12.3%
	50 & Above	8	2.7%
	Total	300	100.0%
Qualification	Schooling	13	4.3%
	UG	93	31.0%
	Postgraduate	134	44.7%
	Professional degree	60	20.0%
	Total	300	100.0%
Occupation	Housewife	15	5.0%
	Student	40	13.3%
	Govt. employee	31	10.3%
	Private employee	189	63.0%
	Businessman	25	8.3%
	Total	300	100.0%
Income	NIL	48	16.0%
	5,000 - 10,000	12	4.0%
	10,000 - 15,000	23	7.7%
	15,000 - 25,000	91	30.3%
	25,000 & Above	126	42.0%
	Total	300	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

The above table illustrates that out of 300 customers who have responded to the questionnaire consists of 182 male and 118 female who belong to different age levels. Out of 300 respondents, 11 are between the age group of 10-18 years, 63 are between 19-25 years, the highest portion of respondents 181 are between 26-35 years, 37 between 36-49 years and finally 8 are 50 & above. In the survey, the respondents were of different levels of education that is 60 are professional degree holders, 134 postgraduates, 93 undergraduates and lastly 13 school level of education. Sorting the respondents based on their income there are 48 respondents that are still not earning, 12 respondents are in the income group of Rs.5,000 - Rs.10,000, 23 respondents in the range of Rs.10,000 - Rs.15,000, 91 respondents in the group Rs15,000-Rs.25,000 and the highest portion of the respondents that is 126 are in the income group of Rs. 25,000 and above per month. Further, based on the occupation, the respondents include 245 working class people out of which 31 are government employees, 189 are private employees and 25 are Businessman/ Entrepreneur, 40 are still students and 15 are housewives. Thus respondents are made up of people from different income, education, gender and occupational background.

Visual Elements of Packaging that influences Consumer Buying Behaviour:

The packaging of the product is the final opportunity for marketers to rely on their brand’s message and visually communicate that an item for consumption is a better choice than its competitors and visual components of the packing influence the feelings of purchase to a great extent. Following are the significant visual elements of packing that influences consumer buying behaviour:

1. Shape and Design:

More than anything, customers are drawn to products that look good. Something that is well designed and interesting is bound to catch the attention of more potential customers than a product that is weakly designed and looks plain. This is the importance of packaging design.

2. Size:

For many customers, it’s not only their evolving lifestyles and tastes but on the other hand, even size matters to a great extent. Grab-and-go of ready-to-eat food products is presently the most active handy parcel size trend among people, especially among youths. Along with the changing lifestyle and taste of the consumers, size is one of the most effective elements of packing which has led the consumers’ lives easier in their day to day activities.

3. Colour:

Colour is the best way to reflect and enhance a unified image and branding of your product as it is such a visual medium. Colour plays a significant role in a prospective customer’s decision-making process, certain colors set different moods and can help to draw interest.

4. Graphic Design:

Graphic design is the practice by means of colors, images, words and messages to communicate ideas and important business information with the potential customers. The graphics of packing is highly a creative task and requires those who can facilitate product to stay competitive in the market through unique graphics.

5. Material:

The consumer can change his decision regarding packaging material. High-quality packaging material attracts consumer then low quality. In this fast moving standard of living with increased processing efficiency and improved food safety has led materials like aluminum, numerous types of plastic and plastic covers are developed and are incorporated into packages to improve performance and functionality.

Visual Elements That Influence Consumer Buying Behaviour			
Packing Elements	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
Shape & Design	Yes	139	46.3%
	No	161	53.7%
	Total	300	100.0%
Size	Yes	139	46.3%
	No	161	53.7%
	Total	300	100.0%
Colour	Yes	116	38.7%
	No	184	61.3%
	Total	300	100.0%
Graphic Design	Yes	146	48.7%
	No	154	51.3%
	Total	300	100.0%
Material	Yes	133	44.3%
	No	167	55.7%
	Total	300	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

In the above visual elements table of 300 respondents, the highest influencing element of packaging is graphics i.e., 146 respondents (48.7%) which are very closely followed by size and shape and design equally comprising 139 respondents (46.3%). The next comes material which involves 133 respondents (44.3%) trailed by 116 respondents (38.7%) for color which influences consumer buying behaviour.

It is clear that the visual elements of packing that influence consumer buying behaviour buying of ready-to-eat food products by the different customers depend on their taste and preference of individual customers. Though the figures show that there are almost comparable postures on the visual elements of packing that influence, each element has their own intensity in impact factor on the minds of the buyer. On the other hand, it also depends on the consumer mindset and interest and changing buying behavior of customers on any product packing.

Cross Tabulation of RTE Food Companies V/s Visual Elements of Packing that Influences Consumer Buying Behaviour:

Particulars		Shape	Size	Colour	Graphic	Material	Total
ITC India	F	1	5	2	2	1	11
	%	9.1%	45.5%	18.2%	18.2%	9.1%	100.0%
Nestle	F	16	20	10	11	6	63
	%	25.4%	31.7%	15.9%	17.5%	9.5%	100.0%
MTR	F	42	53	24	35	27	181
	%	23.2%	29.3%	13.3%	19.3%	14.9%	100.0%
Kellogg’s	F	5	12	4	6	10	37
	%	13.5%	32.4%	10.8%	16.2%	27.0%	100.0%
McCain Foods	F	0	2	1	3	2	8
	%	0.0%	25.0%	12.5%	37.5%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	F	64	92	41	57	46	300
	%	21.3%	30.7%	13.7%	19.0%	15.3%	100.0%

Source: Field Survey

In the above Visual Elements of Packaging table of 300 respondents, the considered necessary element while buying a product is Size. 92 respondents (30.7%) prefer Size which is followed by Shape & Graphics

comprising 64 respondents (21.3%). The next comes Design which involves 57 respondents (19.0%) trailed by 46 respondents (15.3%) for Material and finally 41 respondents (13.7%) who prefer to consume food and beverages from Colour.

Therefore, it is understandable that the Size is the most attracting and influencing element for consumers and the above table shows that all the companies' product is attracted by the size of their product's package subsequently by Shape of packing which is one of the most potential visual element of packing that influences consumer in the process of buying ready-to-eat food products.

Case Processing Summary						
Particulars	Valid		Missing		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Companies*Influence of Visual Elements	300	100.0%	0	0.0%	300	100.0%

Visual Influence of Packing on Consumer Buying Behaviour:

RTE Companies		Influence of Visual Elements					
		SD	D	CS	A	SA	Total
ITC India	F	0	0	2	6	3	11
	%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	54.5%	27.3%	100.0%
Nestle	F	0	2	25	31	5	63
	%	0.0%	3.2%	39.7%	49.2%	7.9%	100.0%
MTR	F	1	22	76	78	4	181
	%	0.6%	12.2%	42.0%	43.1%	2.2%	100.0%
Kellogg's	F	0	4	12	18	3	37
	%	0.0%	10.8%	32.4%	48.6%	8.1%	100.0%
McCain Foods	F	0	0	2	5	1	8
	%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	62.5%	12.5%	100.0%
Total	F	1	28	117	138	16	300
	%	0.3%	9.3%	39.0%	46.0%	5.3%	100.0%
Chi Square	CC						0.398
	P Value						0.000

Chi-Square Tests			
Particulars	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	25.598 ^a	16	.060
Likelihood Ratio	24.387	16	.081
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.032	1	.154
No. of Valid Cases	300		

a. 15 cells (60.0%) have expected F less than 5. The minimum expected F is .03.

Altogether 154 respondents out of 300 agree that they are influenced by visual elements of packing of ready-to-eat food available at their nearest market place. And little close to the agreed numbers of respondents there are 117 of the respondent who still is in a state of mind where they can't comprehend the influence by visual elements of packing and the remaining 29 respondents are not just influenced. On the other hand, the typical ready-to-eat food consumer respondents of 181 who prefer or buy MTR products are also influenced by the packing of products The responses are found to be significantly associated which is supported by the significant contingency co-efficient [CC = 0.398, P Value = 0.000].

III. Conclusion

Due to increasing self-service and changing consumer lifestyles, ready-to-eat products are one of the fastest moving products in the market which have made people's life more convenient and helping in their day to day activities. So packaging of ready-to-eat food products performs a vital role in marketing and encouraging or even sometimes discouraging the consumer from buying RTE products, especially at the point of sale or at the time when a consumer is choosing from among different brands of similar products type.

From the survey data, it is very clear that the visual packaging elements of ready-to-eat food products have the ultimate effect on consumer choice which may lead to the diversion of consumers' minds and even affects consumer buying decision. In addition to consumer preferences, the general appearance, visual appeal and capacity of packaging to attract the consumer's attention has a significant influence in the purchase decision. In contrast keeping this as one of the sales tools, marketers try to influence and shape consumers concepts and perception through packaging. Finally, the ultimate success of a company depends on the expected sales of a product. The expected sales of a product also depend on the perfect packaging of that product. Again the exactness of packaging depends on the correct choice in the process of selecting packaging elements. And

our study clearly confirms that the elements of packing have a great impact on the consumer in the process of buying RTE food product. Though packing influences the customers to a great extent it's not only the package or brand which completely forces or attracts the consumer to consume RTE food product. So considering all these key fundamentals in their intellect, marketers of ready-to-eat food companies should offer their products and develop their marketing strategy accordingly.

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