

THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF THE PACKAGING EFFECT ON CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine the elements that play an important role on consumer's buying behavior. The purpose of this research is to find out the main important factors related with the packaging effect, which are driving the success of a brand.

Companies in order to create the right packaging for their products, they must understand the consumer buying process and understanding the role and the impact of packaging as a variable that can influence the purchase decision. So, by understanding what factors influence the buying behavior and what packaging elements are most important help companies making the right decisions about packaging their products.

This research will identify the relationship between consumer buying process as the main variable of the study and some independent variables like packaging color, printed information, packaging material, design of wrapper, printed information, brand image, and innovation and practicality that help consumers in their decision buying process. The primary research data will be collected through a structured questionnaire and SPSS software will be used for analysis purposes. Therefore, the study tries to find out the most important factors that have an impact and influences consumer's purchase decision.

Key words: *Packaging; Consumer; Buying behavior; Purchase Decision*

JEL Classification: *M3; M31*

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers nowadays are bombarded with too many marketing stimuli, clues in order to being attracted by different companies. In this line Keller (2008) states that consumers are exposed to more than 20,000 product choices within a 30-minute shopping session.

The primary purpose of packaging is to protect the product, but packaging can be used by companies as an instrument for promoting their marketing offer, and for boosting their sales.

A good packaging helps to identify and differentiate products to the consumers. Packaging is used for easily delivery and safety purpose. Packaging helps companies differentiate the product from other brand.

Companies must understand what influences consumers in their consumer buying process. They must also understand what factors influences the buying behavior and what is the role of the packaging elements toward buying decision process of consumers during their purchase decision. Market research helps companies to create the 'right' packaging for a product, as well as the packaging elements that might be of importance to consumers. According to Alvarez and Casielles (2005) organizations' intentions are developing brands in order to attract and retain the existing consumers.

The scholars have recognized the importance of having loyal customers, because loyal customers tend to buy more frequently, and are less likely to be influenced by competitors' promotion and communication strategies. Companies can use this understanding in a very strategic way in order to offer the right products and services to the right customer at the right time.

Consumers respond to packaging based on previous information, learned reactions and individual preferences (Aaker 2010). So, packaging elements, shapes, colors, sizes and labels might influence consumers to respond positively.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

This paper tries to analyze and find out the most important elements of packaging that influence the buying decision process. Thus, the paper will try:

- To find out the impact of packaging on the buying behavior decision.
- To check the effect of packaging elements on the buying behavior.
- To measure the relative impact of each packaging element on the consumer.

1.2. Research Questions and Hypothesis

The study tries to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of packaging elements on the buying behavior of consumers?
2. What is the effect of the packaging elements on the buyer behavior?
3. What elements of the package are more important for consumers in the buying decision process?

The study will also try to answer the following hypothesis:

- H1:** Packaging color has an impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H2:** Labeling has significant importance on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H3:** Quality of packaging material has significant impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H4:** Design of wrapper has significant impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H5:** Printed information facilitates the buying behavior of consumers.
- H6:** The language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process
- H7:** Brand image has a significant impact on buying behavior of consumers
- H8:** Innovation and practicality influences the buying behavior.
- H9:** The quality of packaging is related with the price of the product.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many packaging elements are factors that influence the buying behavior of consumers such as, packaging color, printed information, packaging material, design of wrapper, printed information, brand image, innovation and practicality.

Colors used in packaging can help draw consumer attention. Color of packaging is important because it used by companies to differentiate its product from other competitors. Therefore, colors play an important role in a potential customer's decision-making process. Companies use different colors for emphasizing a different mood, like, black is used for power, blue for trust, red for energy, green for balance or organic and fresh. Color is an essential component of packaging because consumers expect certain type of colors for particular products (Keller, 2009). Different colors also symbolize different meanings to consumers. For example, orange, yellow, purple they have different meanings according to the consumer perception and culture. According to Singh (2006) color perceptions vary across cultures and most of the religions are believed to have their sacred colors.

According to Charles W. Lamb et al., (2011), in their book "Essentials of Marketing" think that packaging has four distinct marketing functions. It contains and protects the product. It promotes the product. It helps consumers use the product and finally, packaging facilitates recycling and reduces environmental damage. Therefore, packaging does more than just protecting the company's products. It also helps in developing the image of the product in consumer mind. So, failing to pay attention to the design of the packaging can decrease the chances of being visible and attractive, which can result in using sales.

Labeling provides information regarding the product category, products ingredients, and product instructions. Consumers when making their mind whether to buy or not to buy a product they are guided not just by the taste, but also some other extrinsic factors such as, brand awareness, labeling, price and origin.

According to Morris, J (1997) product labels help consumer to differentiate a product more easily. Labeling helps consumers spend less time needed while searching for products that are decided to be bought by them. Consumers under time pressure their decisions are influenced when the package comes with a distinctive appearance that contains simple and accurate information (Silayoi, and Speece, 2004). Nowadays, there are consumers that pay more attention to label information since they are more concerned with health and nutrition issues (Coulson, N.S., 2000).

The material used in packaging is an important element which prevents the product from any damage or loss. It is more likely that the high quality material might attract customer more than low quality material. So, packaging material has strong impact on buying behavior. According to Smith and Taylor (2004) consumers

link the packaging materials is associated by consumers with certain essential values of the product. In addition, consumer perceptions regarding certain materials could change the perceived quality of a product (Smith and Taylor, 2004).

Hollywood et al., (2013) carried a study on milk packaging. They tried to find out the impact of the three packaging materials, glass, plastic, and cardboard. Most of respondents in that study agreed that the use of plastic containers were better than cardboard and glass packaging.

Ulrich R. Orth (2009) Packaging is used for identification of the product. Play an important role in attracting the consumer. Children are likely more sensitive in case of wrapper design. So company has to make a wrapper design which attracts the children as well. Good and well planned designs are eye-catching and can differentiate products on the shelves and can attract consumers more easily. So, attractive design, graphics, colors, printed lines, different signs and symbols as well as combinations of various materials can encourage consumers to notice and touch our product, thereby inspiring them to try and eventually buy the product. Printed information contain all the information related to the product quality, price, description which help to identify the brand. According to Shah et al., (2013) labeling is one of the most visible parts of product and an important element of the marketing mix. The information on packaging is an important component since it can support marketing communication strategies of companies, establish brand image and identity.

There is a big consent among many scholars and practitioners about the importance of brand image with products. An image can create value to consumers by helping to process information; differentiate their preferred brands, facilitating buying, giving positive feelings, and providing a basis for product extensions (Aaker, 1991). Moreover, brand image can be defined as a unique bundle of associations within the minds of target customers. According to Goldberg (1999) the image on the product is important because it increases the attention and familiarity with that given product. The background image is the image in the mind of the customer which helps to identify the brand of the product from different brands. Brand image can be assumed as a set of brand associations that collected in the minds of consumers (Mowen and Minor, 2001). Brand image refers to the framing of memory about a brand, which contains the results of interpretation by consumer to the messages, attributes, benefits and advantages of the product (Wijaya, B. S., 2013). Brand image represents what consumers think and feel about a brand identity. Thus, the image of a brand represents the perception that can reflect objective or subjective reality. According to Aaker (1991), consumers often buy products that have famous brand because they feel more comfortable with things that are already known. The assumption that the well-known brand is more reliable, always available and easy to find, and has a quality that no doubt, make a familiar brand is more potential to be chosen by consumers than a brand that is not familiar.

Bringing innovation in the packaging design also increase the value of the product in the consumer mind. Novel packaging can attract consumers, but practicality is equally important. Innovative packaging may actually add value to the product if it meets a consumer needs. But its practicality is also very important for creating the added value, like easily opening, easily stored, recyclable, etc. Nowadays, manufacturers try to design packaging that maintains the key equities of the brand in order to appeal to customers' needs and preferences.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study used different methods, and methodology explains the process of research, design, methods of data collection, sample selection, and ways of analyzing the data. Research is an intensive activity that is based on the work of others and generating new ideas to pursue new questions and answers.

The main purpose of this paper was to identify the role and the impact of the packaging elements on the consumer buying behavior. The buyer behavior of consumers is a dependent variable that is influenced by the independent variables used in the study. The paper used both types of data, primary and secondary. The primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Whereas, secondary data was collected from books, textbooks, online articles, journals, etc.

This study collected data from respondents using a structured questionnaire in order to find out the packaging elements that have an impact on the buying behavior of customers. The statistical tools SPSS and Excel were used for data analysis.

IV. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSES

This chapter includes a systematic presentation of data obtained from the survey about the role and impact of the packaging effect on consumer buying process.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

A structured questionnaire was sent to 460 respondents, but 395 responded it. Thus, the respondents' rate is about 86%. Table: 1 shows the number of respondents and their demographic characteristics that participated in the survey. The study included different age groups, different occupations, and origins of the respondents. There were 395 valid participants who responded 14 questions of the structured questionnaire.

Table: 1 Respondents based on their demographic characteristics

Descriptive statistics			
		Frequency	Percent
Gender	male	273	69.1
	female	122	30.9
Age	less than 20	38	9.6
	21-30	197	49.9
	31-40	91	23.0
	41-50	60	15.2
	more than 51	9	2.3
Country	Macedonia	222	56.2
	Kosova	173	43.8
Job	civil servant	39	9.9
	student	156	39.5
	business	80	20.3
	education	64	16.2
	other	56	14.2
Education	secondary	36	9.1
	faculty	188	47.6
	master	125	31.6
	doctorate	46	11.6

Tables and figures below show the frequencies, percentages of respondents about the variables that relate to the importance of motivation factors

Table: 2. Packaging color impacts consumer behavior during buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	22	5
	Disagree	37	10
	Neutral	23	6
	Agree	223	56
	Strongly agree	90	23
	Total	395	100.0

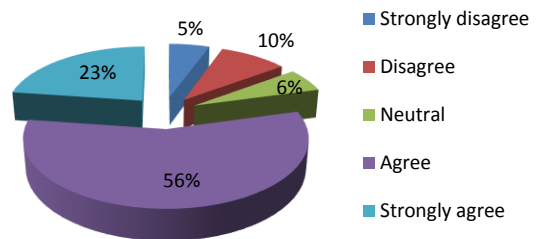


Fig. 1

From the results obtained and presented in fig.1 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 56 % agree that the color has an impact on buying behavior and 23% strongly agree with this statement. Only 5% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 3. Label of the package is important in decision buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	10	2.0
	Disagree	35	9.0
	Neutral	35	9.0
	Agree	188	48.0
	Strongly agree	127	32.0
	Total	395	100.0

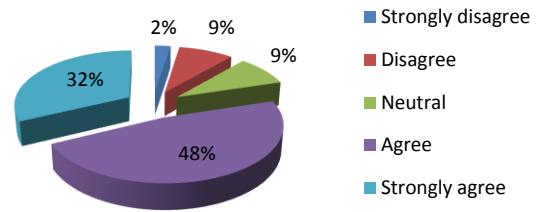


Fig.2

From the results obtained and presented in fig.2 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 48 % agree that the label is important on buying behavior and 32% strongly agree with this statement. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 4. Quality of the packaging material is important during buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	2.0
	Disagree	28	7.0
	Neutral	20	5.0
	Agree	170	43.0
	Strongly agree	168	43.0
	Total	395	100.0

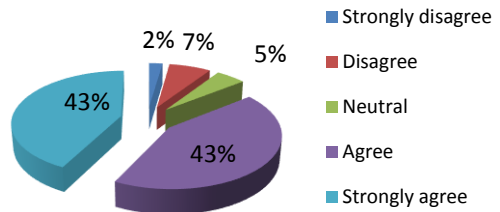


Fig.3

From the results obtained and presented in fig.3 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 43 % agree that the packaging material is important on buying behavior and 43% strongly agree with this statement. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 5. Package design has an impact on product selection during buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	7	2.0
	Disagree	27	7.0
	Neutral	27	7.0
	Agree	195	49.0
	Strongly agree	139	35.0
	Total	395	100.0

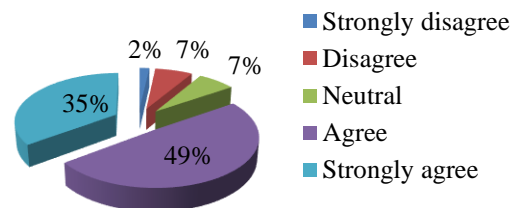


Fig.4

From the results obtained and presented in fig.4 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 49 % agree that the package design has an impact on buying behavior and 35% strongly agree with this statement. Only 2% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 6. Printed information on the package helps the process of buying

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	3.0
	Disagree	21	5.0
	Neutral	28	7.0
	Agree	126	32.0
	Strongly agree	208	53.0
	Total	395	100.0

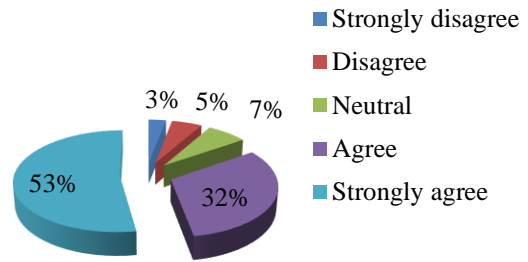


Fig.5

From the results obtained and presented in fig.5 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 32 % agree that the printed information helps on buying behavior and 53% strongly agree with this statement. Only 3% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 7. Language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	22	5.0
	Disagree	50	13.0
	Neutral	35	9.0
	Agree	138	35.0
	Strongly agree	150	38.0
	Total	395	100.0

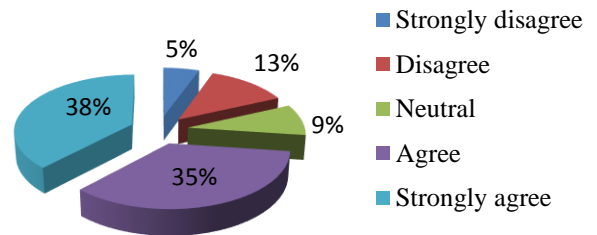


Fig.6

From the results obtained and presented in fig.6 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 35 % agree that the language influences the buying behavior and 38% strongly agree with this statement. Only 5% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 8. the brand image on the package has an impact on consumer behavior on buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	4.0
	Disagree	18	4.0
	Neutral	28	7.0
	Agree	169	43.0
	Strongly agree	165	42.0
	Total	395	100.0

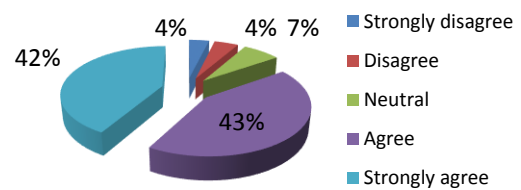


Fig.7

From the results obtained and presented in fig.7 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 43 % agree that the brand image has an impact on the buying behavior and 42% strongly agree with this statement. Only 4% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 9. Innovation and practicality is important in consumer buying process

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	12	3.0
	Disagree	21	5.0
	Neutral	45	12.0
	Agree	191	48.0
	Strongly agree	126	32.0
	Total	395	100.0

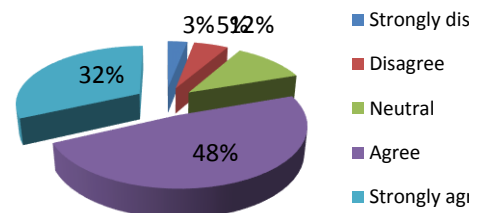


Fig.8

From the results obtained and presented in fig.8 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 48 % agree that the innovation and practicality is important on the buying behavior and 32% strongly agree with this statement. Only 3% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

Table: 10. The quality of packaging is related with the price of the product

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	3.0
	Disagree	45	11.0
	Neutral	52	13.0
	Agree	152	38.0
	Strongly agree	131	33.0
	Total	395	100.0

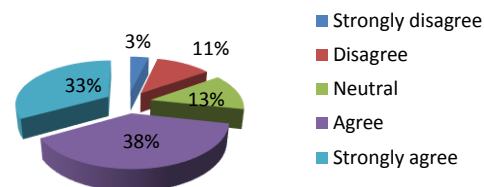


Fig.9

From the results obtained and presented in fig.9 and the distribution of the respondents' responses, about 38 % agree that the quality of packaging is related with the price of the product and 33% strongly agree with this statement. Only 3% of respondents strongly disagree with this statement.

4.2 Testing hypotheses

One Sample T Test was used to analyze packaging elements that have an impact on consumer buying behavior. *The one-sample t test* shows whether a mean of a single variable differs from a specified constant.

Table: 11 One Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The packaging color impacts consumer behavior during buying process	395	3.82	1.063	.054
The label of the package is important in decision buying process	395	3.98	.997	.050
The quality of the packaging material is important during buying process	395	4.16	.969	.049
The package design has an impact on product selection during buying process	395	4.09	.920	.046
The printed information on the package helps the process of buying	395	4.26	1.010	.051
The language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process	395	3.87	1.210	.061
The brand image on the package has an impact on consumer behavior on buying process	395	4.14	.998	.050
Innovation and practicality is important in consumer buying process	395	4.01	.960	.048
The quality of packaging is related with the price of the product	395	3.86	1.115	.056

The results presented in table: 11 of one sample statistics show the mean of populations 'responses, standard deviation and standard error. Mean value provides the idea about the central tendency of the values of a variable. Number of observations of each variable is 395. Standard deviation gives the idea about the dispersion of the values of a variable from its mean value. The minimum value is 1 while maximum value is 5.

The empirical findings should test the following hypotheses.

- H1:** Packaging color has an impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H2:** Labeling has significant importance on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H3:** Quality of packaging material has significant impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H4:** Design of wrapper has significant impact on the buying behavior of consumers.
- H5:** Printed information facilitates the buying behavior of consumers.

- H6:** The language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process
- H7:** Brand image has a significant impact on buying behavior of consumers
- H8:** Innovation and practicality influences the buying behavior.
- H9:** The quality of packaging is related with the price of the product.

With the null hypothesis, the means are the same, whereas with the alternative hypothesis the means differ. A big “t” (> +2.0 or < -2.0), with a small p-value (< 0.05), denotes that the null hypothesis is rejected, and we would suppose that the means are significant. But a small “t”, with a big p-value, it denotes that the means are not significantly different.

Table: 12 One Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
H:1 The packaging color impacts consumer behavior during buying process	15.236	394	.000	.815	.71	.92
H:2 The label of the package is important in decision buying process	19.526	394	.000	.980	.88	1.08
H:3 The quality of the packaging material is important during buying process	23.874	394	.000	1.165	1.07	1.26
H:4 The package design has an impact on product selection during buying process	23.625	394	.000	1.094	1.00	1.18
H:5 The printed information on the package helps the process of buying	24.767	394	.000	1.258	1.16	1.36
H:6 The language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process	14.310	394	.000	.871	.75	.99
H:7 The brand image on the package has an impact on consumer behavior on buying process	22.748	394	.000	1.142	1.04	1.24
H:8 Innovation and practicality is important in consumer buying process	20.864	394	.000	1.008	.91	1.10
H:9 The quality of packaging is related with the price of the product	15.294	394	.000	.858	.75	.97

The obtained results from table: 12 conclude that the packaging elements have an impact on the buying behavior of consumers. Furthermore, from the table we can see a big "t" and a small p-value "p". So the alternative hypotheses are accepted.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The obtained results of research on role and the impact of packaging on consumer’s buying behavior lay down the following conclusions:

The packaging elements represent a good means of marketing communications towards consumers, because consumers value the elements that are embodied on the package.

The packaging color helps consumers differentiate their favorite brands, and for companies it helps to catch consumers’ attention and interest. So, color as well as other packaging elements makes the marketing offer more eye-catching and attractive, as well as differentiating it from other products.

Consumer value label in the products, because they can get information about the product, its origin, its content, its usage, etc. The information given in the label also helps companies promote the product in the market.

From the empirical evidence, the information on packaging represents an important component and it can support marketing communication strategies of companies, establishes brand image and identity. Printed information contains all the information related to the product quality, price, and description which help customers identify the product and facilitates the decision process during purchasing.

The obtained results also show the language used on the package influences consumer behavior during the buying process.

Bringing innovation in the packaging design also increase the value of the product in the consumer mind. From the empirical findings both practicality and innovative packaging are important during the buying process since it gives value to the product.

The obtained results found out that the packaging elements are very important during the buying process and they facilitate a lot the decision process. Furthermore, the findings show that the following factors such as, the quality of the packaging material, Innovation and practicality, and the package design seem to be the most important on product selection during buying process.

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