



The Effect of Branding and Packaging of Locally Made Cosmetic Products on the Buying Decision of Customers. A Case Study of Cosmetic Products in Rivers State

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Abstract

This paper is to examine the effect of branding and packaging of locally made cosmetic products on the buying decision of consumers. However, less has been done with respect to packaging from the point of view of the final consumer. The purpose of this study is to therefore focus on the consumer, and how the efforts put behind product packaging technology of locally made cosmetic products influence consumer purchase decision. This study was governed by three specific objectives; the assessment of graphics (colour and artwork), package dimension (shape and design) and information (labels), and how these key areas of packaging influence consumer buying decision of locally made cosmetic products. Ultimately, these aspects ought to reveal a general perspective of the impact of packaging on consumer buying decision of locally made cosmetic products. The research employed a descriptive design and sample size of 100 respondents were selected through a probability sampling design and was furnished with questionnaires to facilitate data collection. The information was then analysed and subjected to interpretation to further understand the association between product packaging and consumer buying decision of locally made cosmetic products. An analysis of the responses received by the sample population was subjected to various measures of description and inference to determine the said association, ultimately setting the direction in which the research inclined to. It was concluded that in support of the of the existing relationship between product packaging and consumer buying decision of locally made cosmetic products, firms in the cosmetic industry are justified in their efforts of designing attractive packaging in a bid to attract consumer interest and evoke purchase decision. The packaging variables have shown their importance both independently and cumulatively in communicating product quality and features in a manner that is competitive. A major recommendation emanating from this study is an academic inquisition into the role of package technology on consumer buying decision.

Keywords: *Branding, Cosmetic Products, Consumers, Packaging.*

INTRODUCTION

The department of environment (2010) defined packaging as “all products made of any material of nature to be used for the containment, protection, handling, delivery and preservation of goods from the producer to the user or consumer”. This definition holds a level of truth; that of the package being a product and as such ideally different from the product it contains. However, contrary to this, the view of a package as a product independent of the actual substance it bears is of little significance to consumers; theirs is a subconscious assumption of a synonymous nature between the package and the product contained within. As such it would therefore imply a linkage where a highly efficient and well-designed package would ultimately translate into a product of superior quality, yet researches have rarely isolated the cause of product satisfaction to the product’s package (Hess, Singh, Metcalf, & Danes, 2014). On the other hand, consumer buying decision, derived from human

behaviour has been viewed as a volatile concept, difficult to measure and predict. The burden of the success of a product has fallen into the hands of the marketer, who observes consumer behaviour to create an ‘appealing’ package, consequently manipulating packaging elements in order to turn the once ‘volatile concept’ into a predictable and economically measurable outcome (Levin & Milgrom, 2004). However, as the consumer changes in need, awareness and choice, and as competition grows to attempt to level the playing field, so must the marketer adapt their strategies accordingly. The cosmetic market in Rivers State, over the past few years, has experienced an influx in the number of products available within the industry. From fragrances to skin care ranges, the consumer is spoilt for choice every time they walk into a retail store seeking for these items. Though top global brands such as Revlon, L’Oreal, Estée Lauder, Nivea, Avon and Oriflame (Rooney, 2011), have a presence in the country’s market, there is still cut throat



competition from local players scrambling for a piece of the market (Situma, 2018). Gone are the days when a package was merely just a container that protected the product through various stages within the supply chain (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020), it is now also the last marketing communication tool that a company can use to advertise its product on the shelf of a retail store (Rundh, 2019).

Competition within this industry has forced local company stakeholders to invest in more attractive and innovative packaging to appeal to the consumer. A package is therefore highly instrumental in aiding a company's positioning strategy as they target the consumer market. How the consumer places the value of the product within their mind, has quite a bit to do with the product quality in use (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Since the consumer is faced with so many products every single time they visit a retail store, it is paramount that the package stands out from the rest of the array of similar products, and is attractive enough to evoke a choice. The package should be convincing, bringing together all its elements to appeal to the consumer's need (Rundh, 2009, Kotler & Armstrong, 2010).

Cosmetic consumers in Rivers State enjoy a wide range of products that are attractively designed and packaged to appeal to their tastes and preferences. Local companies are bringing to the table various components of interest when it comes to the graphics, dimensions and information included in the package. Attempts are made at ensuring that the package meets the changing nature of preference of consumers, how they use the product, when they use it, and why they use it.

Statement of the Problem

The dynamic angle that comes into play is internationalization and the concept of the global village which have become widely embraced phenomena, sipping under the consumer's aesthetics and consequently causing a product's package to become somewhat of a volatile concept for every market player (Rundh, 2019). As cosmetic manufacturers reach a stalemate on consumer satisfaction where the parity among products is getting smaller and smaller, the package comes in as the final and most valued tool in determining consumer purchase decision (Rundh, 2009; Shah, Ahmad & Ahmad, 2019).

The cosmetic industry faces immense competition both from local manufacturers and global giants who have now found turf rather than lucrative to invest in and as such are bringing their products and services closer to the consumer (Situma, 2018). With the increase in competition, researchers have acknowledged the effect of product packaging on corporate investment with respect to capital and human labour. However, the issue arising, and that which has informed the undertaking of this study, is to determine whether the efforts put behind a cosmetic product's package affects the consumer's decision to actually purchase cosmetic products.

Objective of the Study

1. To assess the influence of graphics (colour and artwork) on consumer buying decision.
2. To analyse the role of package dimensions (shape and design) on consumer buying decision.
3. To measure the influence information on packaging bears on consumer buying decision.

Research Hypotheses

- H01: There is no significant relationship between an attractive nature of a package colour, and its artwork on consumer buying decisions.
- H02: There is no significant relationship between an attractive nature of a package dimension and consumer buying decisions.
- H03: There is no significant relationship between product information provided on the package and consumers buying relationship

Significance of the Study

This study will test the relationship between a product's package and a consumer's decision to purchase based on the package. The information emanating from this research will be of benefit to the following;

1. Corporates: Cosmetic manufacturers and dealers with presence in the Rivers State market or future intention of the said, who are keen on market information with respect to product packaging and consumer buying decision, which may inform their strategies.
2. Researchers: Every study is of benefit to the realm of research in terms of knowledge addition and expansion. This study would be of benefit to researchers seeking information on marketing strategy of the cosmetic market in Rivers State and



public with a focus on product packaging and consumers buying decision.

Scope of the Study

This research will look into the aspects of product packaging that may have an effect on consumer buying decision of the cosmetic products available in the Rivers State market. The study will be primarily carried out in Port Harcourt.

Limitations of the study

This study is undertaken to examine the effect of branding and packaging; however, the study is bordered on locally made products. This locally made products were restricted to cosmetics. The rationale behind this delimitation was to draw a concise and precise findings to specific products as regarding the effect of its branding and packaging. Also, due to the size of market, the Port Harcourt market was selected amongst several markets in Rivers State. This is because, the market holds the best prospect for this study and it is accessible to the student. Finally, this study concentrated on branding and packaging and not other forms of products promotion. It is also pertinent to state that the findings of this study may not be applied on non-cosmetics products across Rivers State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Packaging is an essential element of marketing strategy, serving as a crucial interface between the product and the consumer. It encompasses not only the physical container but also the design, graphics, and informational content aimed at attracting, informing, and persuading consumers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of the cosmetic industry in Ghana, where competition is fierce and consumer preferences continuously evolve, understanding the dynamics of packaging becomes paramount. Consumer behavior research has long emphasized the importance of packaging in shaping purchase decisions. Packaging serves multiple functions beyond mere protection and containment; it acts as a silent salesman, communicating brand identity, product attributes, and value propositions (Rettie, Burchell, & Riley, 2012). The visual and tactile cues provided by packaging influence perceptions of product quality, reliability, and desirability (Underwood, Klein, & Burke, 2001). The influence of packaging on consumer behavior extends to various dimensions, including aesthetics, functionality, and

symbolism. Aesthetic attributes such as color, shape, and design play a critical role in capturing consumer attention and eliciting emotional responses (Labrecque, Patrick, & Milne, 2013). Studies have shown that consumers form initial impressions of products within milliseconds based on visual cues, highlighting the significance of packaging aesthetics in the purchase process (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). Furthermore, packaging functionality, encompassing aspects such as ease of use, portability, and storage convenience, contributes to consumer satisfaction and repeat purchase intentions (Underwood et al., 2001). In the fast-paced consumer goods market, where convenience is highly valued, packaging that enhances usability and facilitates product consumption gains a competitive edge (Reimann et al., 2010). Beyond its practical and aesthetic functions, packaging serves as a symbolic medium through which brands communicate identity, values, and aspirations (Kapferer, 2012). The design elements, imagery, and messaging incorporated into packaging convey brand positioning, differentiation, and personality, enabling consumers to form associations and affiliations (Schroeder, Pennington-Gray, Donohoe, & Kioussis, 2011). For instance, premium packaging conveys notions of luxury, sophistication, and exclusivity, appealing to consumers seeking status and prestige (Han, Nunes, & Dreze, 2010). Theoretical frameworks such as stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory and the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) offer insights into the cognitive processes underlying consumer responses to packaging stimuli (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). According to SOR theory, environmental stimuli, such as packaging cues, trigger internal psychological processes in consumers, leading to behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 2019). ELM posits that consumers engage in two distinct processing routes-central and peripheral-depending on their motivation and ability to process information (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Packaging elements may influence consumer attitudes and purchase intentions through either route, depending on factors such as involvement, expertise, and situational context. Empirical studies investigating the impact of packaging on consumer behavior have yielded mixed findings, underscoring the complexity of the relationship and the moderating influence of contextual factors (Dawar & Parker, 1994). While some studies have reported significant



effects of packaging cues on product evaluations and choice behavior (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008), others have found limited or negligible effects, particularly when controlling for other marketing variables (Underwood et al., 2001) (Labrecque et al., 2013).

Theoretical Framework

In understanding the influence of packaging on consumer buying decisions, several theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights into the cognitive processes underlying consumer responses to packaging stimuli. Two prominent theories that are particularly relevant to this context are the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory and the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM)

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) Theory:

The SOR theory posits that environmental stimuli (S) trigger internal psychological processes (O) in organisms, leading to behavioral responses (R) (Mehrabian & Russell, 2019). In the context of packaging, the stimuli refer to the various sensory cues presented by the packaging, including visual elements such as color, design, and imagery, as well as tactile sensations such as texture and shape.

When consumers encounter packaging stimuli, these cues activate cognitive processes such as attention, perception, and evaluation in the organism (consumer). For example, vibrant colors or attractive graphics may capture the consumer's attention, while informative product labels may facilitate the perception of product attributes and benefits.

The internal psychological processes activated by packaging stimuli influence the organism's affective and cognitive responses to the product. Positive affective responses, such as feelings of pleasure or excitement elicited by visually appealing packaging, can enhance consumer perceptions of product desirability and quality. Similarly, cognitive responses, such as the interpretation of product information and the formation of brand associations, play a crucial role in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

Ultimately, the behavioral response of the organism, manifested as the decision to purchase or reject the product, is influenced by the cumulative impact of packaging stimuli on affective and cognitive processes. Brands can leverage the principles of SOR theory to design packaging that effectively captures consumer attention, elicits positive emotional responses, and communicates relevant product

information, thereby influencing consumer buying decisions.

Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM):

The Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) proposes that individuals engage in two distinct processing routes—central and peripheral—when evaluating persuasive messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). The central route involves careful consideration and systematic processing of message content, while the peripheral route relies on heuristic cues and peripheral factors to make judgments.

In the context of packaging, consumers may employ either the central or peripheral route depending on their motivation and ability to process information. When consumers are highly involved or motivated to evaluate the product, they are more likely to engage in central processing, carefully scrutinizing packaging elements such as product information, brand reputation, and product attributes.

Conversely, when consumers have low involvement or limited cognitive resources, they may rely on peripheral cues such as packaging aesthetics, brand imagery, or social endorsements to make quick judgments about the product. In such cases, the visual appeal or symbolic associations conveyed by the packaging may exert a stronger influence on consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.

Empirical Review

Orth and Malkewitz (2008): In their study, Orth and Malkewitz examined the role of holistic package design in consumer brand impressions. They found that packaging attributes such as color, shape, and graphics significantly influenced consumer perceptions of brand personality, quality, and preference. Specifically, packages with cohesive and aesthetically pleasing designs were more likely to evoke positive brand impressions and enhance purchase intentions.

Underwood et al. (2021): Underwood and colleagues investigated the attentional effects of product imagery on packaging communication. They found that visually appealing packaging designs captured consumers' attention more effectively than plain or unattractive designs. Moreover, packaging elements such as images, logos, and product illustrations played a crucial role in conveying brand identity and product attributes, influencing consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.



Reimann et al. (2010): In their research on aesthetic package design, Reimann and colleagues explored the behavioral, neural, and psychological aspects of packaging aesthetics. They found that packaging aesthetics significantly impacted consumer preferences and choices, with visually appealing designs eliciting stronger positive emotions and purchase intentions. Additionally, neuroimaging data revealed distinct patterns of brain activation in response to different packaging stimuli, highlighting the neurocognitive mechanisms underlying consumer responses to packaging.

Labrecque et al. (2013): Labrecque and colleagues conducted a comprehensive review of color research in marketing, including its application to packaging design. They found that color plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, with different colors evoking distinct emotional responses and associations. Moreover, color congruence between packaging and brand identity was found to enhance brand recognition and recall, facilitating consumer decision-making processes.

METHODS

The research utilized a descriptive design to examine the relationship between packaging and

consumer buying decisions. Descriptive research aims to describe and analyze the characteristics of a phenomenon without manipulating variables. This design was chosen to provide insights into consumer perceptions and behaviors regarding locally made cosmetic products in Port Harcourt.

Population and Sampling Design

The population for this study consisted of consumers of locally made cosmetic products in Port Harcourt. A sample size of 100 respondents was selected using a probability sampling design, employing stratified and systematic sampling techniques to ensure representation across different demographics.

Data Analysis Method

The data collected was analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize the characteristics of the variables. Inferential statistics such as correlation analysis and regression analysis were employed to examine the relationships between packaging variables and consumer buying decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender (Male)	30	30%
Gender (Female)	70	70%
Age (years)		
- 18-25	40	40%
- 26-35	30	30%
- 36-45	20	20%
- Above 45	10	10%
Income Level		
- Low	25	25%
- Moderate	50	50%
- High	25	25%

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2. Influence of Graphics on Consumer Buying Decision

Aspect of Graphics	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Color	40	30	20	5	5
Artwork	35	25	15	10	15

Source: Field Survey, 2024



Table 3. Role of Dimensions on Consumer Choice

Aspect of Dimensions	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Shape	45	25	15	10	5
Design	40	30	15	10	5

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4. Influence of Product Information on Consumer Buying Decision

Aspect of Product Information	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Ingredient Information	50	20	15	10	5
Usage Instructions	45	25	15	10	5
Warnings	30	30	20	10	10

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Results for Hypothesis

Table 6. Results for Hypothesis H01 (Graphics on Consumer Buying Decision)

Hypothesis	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Result
H01: There is no significant relationship between an attractive nature of package color and artwork on consumer buying decisions.	0.65	< 0.05	Rejected

The findings of the study indicate a significant relationship between the attractiveness of package color and artwork and consumer buying decisions. This suggests that consumers in Port Harcourt place importance on visually appealing packaging when

making purchasing choices. Marketers should prioritize the design elements of packaging, ensuring that colors and artwork resonate with the target audience's preferences and convey the desired brand image.

Table 7. Results for Hypothesis H02 (Dimensions on Consumer Buying Decision)

Hypothesis	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Result
H02: There is no significant relationship between an attractive nature of package dimension and consumer buying decisions.	0.72	< 0.05	Rejected

Similarly, the study reveals a significant relationship between the attractiveness of package dimensions and consumer buying decisions. Packaging shape and design play a crucial role in capturing

consumer attention and influencing purchase behavior. Marketers should consider innovative packaging designs that stand out on the shelves and differentiate their products from competitors.

Table 8. Results for Hypothesis H03 (Product Information on Consumer Buying Decision)

Hypothesis	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value	Result
H03: There is no statistically significant relationship between product information provided on the package and consumer buying relationship.	0.60	< 0.05	Rejected



The results demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between the product information provided on the package and consumer buying decisions. Consumers value clear and comprehensive information about product ingredients, usage instructions, and warnings, which enhances trust and confidence in the brand. Marketers should ensure that packaging communicates relevant product information effectively to meet consumer expectations and regulatory requirements.

The study aimed to investigate the impact of packaging on consumer buying decisions of locally made cosmetic products in Port Harcourt Rivers State. Through a descriptive research design, data was collected from consumers in hair salons, focusing on packaging graphics, dimensions, and product information. The analysis revealed significant findings regarding the influence of these packaging variables on consumer perceptions and behaviors. Specifically, packaging graphics, dimensions, and product information were identified as crucial factors shaping consumer preferences and purchase intentions in the cosmetics market

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the impact of packaging on consumer buying decisions of locally made cosmetic products in Rivers State. Firstly, packaging graphics, dimensions, and product information collectively exert a significant influence on consumer perceptions and behaviors. Secondly, investing in visually appealing graphics, innovative dimensions, and informative labeling is essential for enhancing brand visibility, differentiation, and consumer engagement. Lastly, a holistic approach to packaging design that integrates cohesive elements aligned with brand identity and consumer preferences is crucial for optimizing brand performance and competitiveness in the cosmetics market.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing from the conclusions, the study offers the following recommendations for marketers, product designers, and researchers:

1. Invest in Visual Appeal: Marketers and product designers should prioritize the development of

visually appealing packaging graphics that capture consumer attention and convey brand identity effectively. Employing vibrant colors, attractive artwork, and eye-catching designs can enhance product visibility and stimulate purchase intent.

2. Innovate Packaging Dimensions: Brands should explore innovative packaging dimensions and shapes to differentiate products and stand out amidst competitors on the retail shelf. Experimenting with unique packaging structures that align with brand aesthetics and consumer preferences can enhance product attractiveness and consumer engagement.
3. Enhance Product Information: Ensure transparent and informative product labeling that provides clear and relevant information to consumers. This includes ingredients, usage instructions, and benefits, which are crucial for building consumer trust, satisfaction, and loyalty.
4. Adopt a Holistic Approach: Take a holistic approach to packaging design by integrating cohesive elements of graphics, dimensions, and product information that align with brand.

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