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### **Verbal Impact of Packing on Consumer Buying Behavior of Ready-to-eat Food Products**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The importance of this article is based on the deep insight of verbal elements of packing that impacts 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 verbal elements of packing influences when individual purchase 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 overall packing elements like brand name, product information, nutritional information, Country-of-Origin, customer helpline, packaging shading, foundation image, material of the goods, package style, shape of wrapper 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.

**KEY WORDS:** Packing, consumer buying behavior, ready-to-eat, food products.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Packaging can play a very attention-grabbing role in the success or failure of a product. Its success depends on a lot on how it is designed by its creators. While some see it as a mere safeguard that has the sole purpose of protecting a product, others argue that the life and identity of the product lie within the package creation. It has the power to influence consumers' choices and with its cautiously intended aesthetics can affect your emotions.

In the present world, packaging has become itself a sales promotion tool for the organizations. The role of packaging has changed due to increasing in 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 behavior, increasing market share and reducing promotional costs.

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 verbal impact of packaging on the consumer's purchase decision.
2. To understand the influence of the packaging on consumers purchasing behavior.
3. To check the effects of verbal elements of packing on the buying behavior.
4. To identify the key factors of verbal packaging elements of ready-to-eat food products on the buying behavior decision.

## **SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

Demographic variables such as age, gender, occupation, income, usage and customer acquaintance variable like consumer buying behavior are analyzed from the viewpoints 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.

## **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 behavior of ready-to-eat food products.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE:**

Deliya and Parmar<sup>6</sup> 2012 summarizes the definitions of packaging vary and range from being simple and functionally focused to more extensive, holistic interpretations. The aforementioned assert that packaging act as an extrinsic value of the good. Philip Kotler<sup>10</sup> 2000 asserts that packaging includes all activities that are involved until the final package is brought out. Packaging is

also seen as an attribute of the final product. The impact of the package is lesser in the case of the high involvement. According to Ampero & Vila<sup>1</sup> 2006, opinion, the complex decision-making type means that search for information has started before the choice. In order to make the decision, the consumer evaluates different brands and their features in advance. In this case, the importance of the package is not big.

According to Silayoi and Speece<sup>14</sup> 2004, the information written on the package helps consumers in planning which product to consider for their purchasing. However, information on a package may mislead through over emphasizing thereby causing confusion through giving inaccurate information. A way to reduce confusion is that consumers reduce their choice of alternatives and evaluative attributes as suggested by Deliya and Parmar<sup>6</sup> 2012. However, this strategy is said to work for experienced consumers as heavy users usually do not compare to get the best brand alternatives. Hausman<sup>8</sup> 2000 also states that consumers who regularly search for product information develop a bank of information for each product and this makes them be well informed and restrict the further search in their next purchase. Vakratsas and Ambler<sup>7</sup> 1999 put in the picture that highly involved consumers evaluate message information and rely on message argument quality to form their attitudes and purchase intentions. Deliya and Parmar<sup>6</sup> 2012 give a general conclusion that consumer with low involvement usually purchases without carefully examining brand and product information.

## **VERBAL ELEMENTS OF PACKAGING THAT IMPACTS CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR**

People look at Ready-To-Eat food product's labels for different reasons. But whatever the reason, many consumers would like to know how to make use of these verbal elements which provides product knowledge more effectively and easily. The following verbal elements of packing are intended to make it easier that contribute to a healthy diet for the consumers of ready-to-serve fruit beverages.

### **PRODUCT INFORMATION**

Knowing the products' information or description allows the buyer to know the benefits accurately and persuasively. The information in the can vary with each ready-to-serve fruit beverage product which contains product-specific information. Packaging layout is a very important consideration in providing product information because consumers get confused with the information overload and inaccurate information (Pinya Silayoi M. S., 2004).

## **NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION**

The nutrition information section which is also known as the nutrition facts label is a label required on almost all the ready-to-serve fruit beverages in many countries in the world. This section in the packing of fruit beverages gives the nutrition facts statistics like calorie counts, vitamin content, carbohydrate, calcium, total fat... The nutritional chart begins with a standard serving measurement, calories are listed second, and then following is a breakdown of the constituent elements.

## **COUNTRY OF ORIGIN (COO)**

It is the country of manufacture, production, or growth where the product for consumption comes from. There are differing rules of origin under various national laws and international treaties. Several studies have shown that COO does a great impact in the process of consumer buying behavior and consumers tend to have a relative preference to products from their own country or may have a relative preference for or dislike against products that originate from certain countries.

## **CUSTOMER HELPLINE/SERVICE**

Customer helpline/service is the support that a company offers their customers. It is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase that helps the consumer to have an easy and enjoyable experience with RTS products. In general, it includes services rendered for the assistance in planning, installation, training, trouble shooting, maintenance, upgrading, and disposal of a product.

## **BRAND NAME**

The brand name is the word or words that identify not only a product but also its manufacturer or producer and helps in distinguishing an organization or product from its rivals in the eyes of the customer. Effective branding can result in higher sales of not only one product but of other products associated with that brand, for example, Coca-Cola's Minute Maid ready-to-serve fruit beverages.

In the above verbal elements table of 300 respondents, the highest influencing element of packaging is Product Information and Nutritional Information equally comprising of 116 respondents each (41.7%) which is very closely followed by Brand Name comprising 116 respondents (38.7%). The next comes Customer Helpline/Service which involves 95 respondents (31.7%) trailed by 80 respondents (26.7%) for Country of Origin which impacts on the consumer buying behavior.

1. Verbal Elements That Impacts Consumer Buying Behaviour:

Consume/order	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Product Information</b>	Yes	125	41.7%
	No	175	58.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Nutritional Information</b>	Yes	125	41.7%
	No	175	58.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Brand Name</b>	Yes	116	38.7%
	No	184	61.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Customer Helpline/Service</b>	Yes	95	31.7%
	No	205	68.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Country of Origin</b>	Yes	80	26.7%
	No	220	73.3%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field Survey

It is clear that the verbal elements of packing that impact and influence consumer buying behavior 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 verbal 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.

In the above Cross Tabulation of 300 respondents, the majority of the respondents i.e., 167 respondents (55.7%) say Product Information is the most important and valuable verbal element of packing which is considered while buying Ready-To-Eat food products. For 82 respondents (27.3%)

it is Nutritional Information which is followed by Brand Name comprising 25 respondents (8.3%). The next comes Customer Helpline/Service which involves 21 respondents (7.0%) and finally 5 respondent (1.7%) who prefer to consume Ready-To-Eat food products on the basis of Country's Origin.

**2. Cross Tabulation of RTS Fruit Beverages V/s Verbal Elements of Packing:**

Particulars		Country Origin	Helpline/ Service	Brand Name	Product Info.	Nutritional Info.	Total
ITC India	F	1	6	4	40	15	<b>66</b>
	%	0.35%	2.0%	1.3%	13.3%	5.0%	<b>22.0%</b>
Nestle	F	2	4	9	46	32	<b>93</b>
	%	0.7%	1.3%	3.0%	15.3%	10.7%	<b>31.0%</b>
MTR	F	1	6	4	39	18	<b>68</b>
	%	0.35%	2.0%	1.3%	13.0%	6.0%	<b>22.7%</b>
Kellogg's	F	1	5	6	34	14	<b>60</b>
	%	0.3%	1.7%	2.0%	11.3%	4.7%	<b>20.0%</b>
McCain Foods	F	0	0	2	8	3	<b>13</b>
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.7%	2.7%	1.0%	<b>4.3%</b>
Total	F	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>300</b>
	%	<b>1.7%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>8.3%</b>	<b>55.7%</b>	<b>27.3%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Field survey

Hence, it is understandable that the Product Information is the most impacting and influencing element for consumers and the above table shows that all the companies' product gets the attention paid by their customer on Product Information subsequently by Nutritional Information of packing which is one of the most potential verbal element of packing that impacts consumer in the process of buying ready-to-eat food products.

Case Processing Summary						
Particulars	Valid		Missing		Total	
	No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
<b>RTE * Impact of Verbal Elements</b>	300	100.0%	0	0.0%	300	100.0%

## 3. Selected Five Companies' Impact of Verbal Elements on Consumer Buying Behaviour:

Particulars		Five Companies' Impact of Verbal Elements					
		SD	D	CS	A	SA	Total
ITC India	F	0	4	17	25	2	48
	%	0.0%	1.3%	5.7%	8.3%	0.7%	16.0%
Nestle	F	3	9	55	53	6	126
	%	1.0%	3.0%	18.3%	17.7%	2.0%	42.0%
MTR	F	0	2	7	14	0	23
	%	0.0%	0.7%	2.3%	4.7%	0.0%	7.7%
Kellogg's	F	0	8	33	49	1	91
	%	0.0%	2.7%	11.0%	16.3%	0.3%	30.3%
McCain Foods	F	0	1	3	6	2	12
	%	0.0%	0.3%	1.0%	2.0%	0.7%	4.0%
Total	F	3	24	115	147	11	300
	%	1.0%	8.0%	38.3%	49.0%	3.7%	100.0%
Chi Square	CC						0.234
	P Value						0.366

Source: Field survey

## 4. Chi-Square Tests:

Particulars	Value	DF	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.306 <sup>a</sup>	16	0.366
Likelihood Ratio	17.280	16	0.368
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.852	1	0.174
No. of Valid Cases	300		

a. 14 cells (56.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.12.

Altogether out of five companies' products selected for the study, 158 respondents (52.7%) out of 300 concur that they are driven by verbal elements of packing of Ready-To-Eat food products available at their nearest marketplace. Further, there are 115 (38.3%) of the respondents who are still in a state of mind where they can't comprehend the impact of verbal elements and the remaining 27 respondents (9.0%) are not just subjected to the power of verbal elements of packing. On the other hand, the highest and typical Ready-To-Eat food products consumers of 126 respondents who prefer or buy **Nestle** are also influenced by the verbal elements of packing.

The responses are found to be significantly associated which is supported by the significant contingency coefficient [CC = **0.234**, P Value = **0.366**].

## CONCLUSION

From the analysis, it is evident that the verbal 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 affect consumer buying decision. In addition to consumer preferences, the verbal sequence, visual appeal, and capacity of packaging to attract the consumer's attention have a significant influence in the purchase decision.

After all, 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 verbal elements of packing have a great impact on the consumer in the process of buying Ready-To-Eat food products. 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 Ready-To-Eat food products. So considering all these key fundamentals in their mind, marketers of Ready-To-Eat food companies should develop their marketing strategy and offer their products accordingly.

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