

Analyzing the Impact of Packaging Design on Consumer Purchasing Decisions in the Cosmetics Industry

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry, aiming to understand how various packaging elements impact consumer behavior. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, including quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and observational studies, the research provides comprehensive insights into consumer preferences and the role of packaging in shaping purchasing decisions. Key findings indicate that aesthetic appeal, functional design, brand congruence, and sustainability are critical factors influencing consumer choices. Visually attractive and modern packaging designs significantly enhance purchase intent, while functional elements such as ease of use and convenience improve consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Consistent alignment between packaging and brand identity fosters trust and loyalty, and sustainability features appeal to eco-conscious consumers. Emotional engagement through packaging also plays a pivotal role in creating lasting consumer connections. The study's practical implications suggest that cosmetic companies should invest in innovative, functional, and sustainable packaging designs that align with their brand identity to attract and retain consumers.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In The cosmetics industry is characterized by fierce competition and ever-evolving consumer preferences(Ling, 2020). In this dynamic landscape, product packaging plays a crucial role in capturing consumer attention, conveying brand identity, and influencing purchasing decisions. Understanding the intricate relationship between packaging design and consumer behavior is essential for cosmetic companies striving to gain a competitive edge in the market(Urip, 2010).

The cosmetics industry is highly visual, with packaging serving as the first point of contact between consumers and products(Mohammed et al., 2018). Beyond merely containing and protecting the product, cosmetic packaging serves as a powerful marketing tool, communicating brand values, product benefits, and aesthetic appeal. In an industry where consumers are bombarded with an array of choices, packaging design can make a significant difference in capturing attention, differentiating products, and ultimately driving purchase decisions(DuPuis & Silva, 2008).

Consumer perception is shaped by various factors, including visual stimuli, sensory cues, and emotional responses(Pramudya & Seo, 2019). Packaging design elements such as color, typography, imagery, and material can evoke specific emotions and convey implicit messages about product quality, efficacy, and brand personality. Understanding how consumers interpret these design cues is crucial for designing packaging that resonates with target audiences and influences purchasing behavior.

Psychological theories provide valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms driving consumer behavior (Carrington et al., 2010). Concepts such as perception, cognition, and emotion play a pivotal role in shaping consumer responses to packaging stimuli. For example, the mere exposure effect suggests that repeated exposure to a particular packaging design can increase familiarity and preference among consumers. Similarly, color psychology posits that different colors evoke distinct emotions and associations, which can influence purchase decisions (Labrecque et al., 2013).

A comprehensive review of existing literature reveals a wealth of research exploring the relationship between packaging design and consumer behavior in the cosmetics industry (Liobikienė & Bernatienė, 2017). Studies have examined various aspects of packaging, including visual aesthetics, functional design, sustainability, and luxury branding, and their impact on consumer perceptions and preferences. While some research highlights the importance of aesthetic appeal and brand congruence in packaging design, others emphasize the role of functional features and eco-friendly packaging in driving consumer purchase decisions (van Rompay et al., 2016).

Psychological theories provide valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms driving consumer responses to packaging stimuli (Stoll et al., 2008). One such theory is the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), which posits that consumers process information through either a central route (conscious, effortful processing) or a peripheral route (automatic, heuristic processing) (Yang, 2015). Packaging design elements such as color, imagery, and typography can influence consumers' processing routes, thereby shaping their perceptions and attitudes towards products. Additionally, theories such as the Mere Exposure Effect suggest that repeated exposure to a particular packaging design can increase familiarity and liking among consumers, influencing their purchase decisions (Vermeir & Roose, 2020).

Research has consistently demonstrated the significant impact of aesthetic appeal and visual stimuli on consumer perceptions and preferences (Bhandari et al., 2019). Studies have shown that packaging design elements such as color, shape, and imagery can evoke specific emotions and associations, thereby influencing consumers' perceptions of product quality, efficacy, and desirability (Simmonds & Spence, 2017). For example, warm colors like red and orange may convey a sense of energy and excitement, while cool colors like blue and green may evoke feelings of calmness and trust. Moreover, studies have found that visually appealing packaging designs can enhance product attractiveness, increase purchase intent, and differentiate products from competitors in the marketplace (Beneke et al., 2015).

The congruence between packaging design and brand identity plays a crucial role in shaping consumer perceptions and attitudes towards products. Research suggests that packaging design elements should align with brand values, personality, and positioning to foster authenticity and trust among consumers. Studies have shown that consumers perceive products with congruent packaging designs as more authentic, credible, and trustworthy, thereby increasing their purchase likelihood and brand loyalty (Huang & Wan, 2019). Conversely, incongruent packaging designs may lead to confusion, skepticism, and disengagement among consumers, undermining brand equity and market success (Makri et al., 2020).

In addition to aesthetic appeal, functional design and usability are essential considerations in packaging development (Noble & Kumar, 2010). Research indicates that packaging features such as ease of opening, product dispensing, and storage convenience can significantly impact consumer satisfaction and repurchase behavior. Studies have found that consumers prefer packaging designs that are user-friendly, intuitive, and practical, as they enhance the overall product experience and utility (Mugge et al., 2018). Moreover, packaging innovations that address specific consumer needs and pain points, such as travel-friendly formats or customizable packaging options, can confer a competitive advantage in the marketplace and foster brand loyalty over time (Endy, 2000).

Despite the extensive research on packaging and consumer behavior, there remain gaps in understanding the nuanced interactions between packaging design elements and consumer preferences in the cosmetics industry. This research aims to address these gaps by analyzing the influence of specific packaging attributes on consumer purchasing decisions (Akpojomare et al., 2012). The objectives include identifying key packaging design elements that impact consumer perceptions, examining the role of brand image and packaging congruence, and exploring the influence of packaging on consumer emotions and purchase intentions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

To comprehensively analyze the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry, a systematic and robust research methodology is essential. This study will adopt a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of packaging on consumer behavior (Eberhart & Naderer, 2017). The quantitative component will involve the collection and analysis of numerical data to identify patterns, correlations, and causal relationships, while the qualitative component will provide deeper insights into consumer perceptions, attitudes, and motivations.

A stratified random sampling technique will be employed to ensure a representative sample of the target population (Alvi, 2016). The target population for this study comprises consumers who regularly purchase cosmetic products. The sample will be stratified based on demographic variables such as age, gender, income level, and geographic location to capture diverse consumer segments (Bernués et al., 2012). A sample size of 300 respondents will be targeted to ensure sufficient statistical power for quantitative analysis.

A structured survey questionnaire will be designed to collect quantitative data on consumer perceptions, attitudes, and purchasing decisions related to cosmetic packaging (Scott & Vigar-Ellis, 2014). The questionnaire will include both closed-ended and Likert scale questions to measure variables such as packaging aesthetics, functionality, brand congruence, and purchase intent. The survey will be administered online to reach a broad and diverse audience.

To complement the quantitative data, focus group discussions will be conducted to gather qualitative insights into consumer experiences, preferences, and motivations regarding cosmetic packaging (Hoek et al., 2017). Each focus group will consist of 8-10 participants selected based on demographic criteria to ensure diversity. The discussions will be guided by a semi-structured interview protocol covering topics such as packaging design elements, brand perceptions, and decision-making processes.

Observational studies will be conducted in retail environments to observe consumer interactions with cosmetic packaging in real-time (Stein & Ramaseshan, 2020). This method will provide contextual insights into how packaging influences consumer behavior at the point of purchase. Observations will focus on consumer engagement with different packaging designs, time spent examining products, and purchase decisions.

The quantitative data collected through surveys will be analyzed using statistical techniques such as descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis (Nardi, 2018). Descriptive statistics will summarize the demographic characteristics of the sample and key variables related to packaging perceptions and purchasing decisions. Correlation analysis will identify relationships between packaging design elements and consumer attitudes, while regression analysis will examine the impact of these elements on purchase intent and behavior (Theben et al., 2020).

The qualitative data from focus group discussions and observational studies will be analyzed using thematic analysis (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). This method involves coding the data to identify recurring themes, patterns, and insights related to consumer perceptions and experiences with cosmetic packaging. The findings from the qualitative analysis will be triangulated with the quantitative results to provide a holistic understanding of the research problem (Olsen, 2004).

Ethical considerations will be paramount throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all survey respondents and focus group participants, ensuring they are fully aware of the study's purpose and their rights. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained to protect participants' privacy. Additionally, the research will adhere to ethical guidelines for observational studies, ensuring that participants are not subjected to any harm or discomfort.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Result

The study on the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry yielded several key findings and insights that elucidate the crucial role of packaging design in shaping consumer behavior. By employing a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative surveys, qualitative focus groups, and observational studies, the research provides a comprehensive understanding of how various packaging elements impact consumer perceptions, emotions, and purchase intentions.

One of the most significant findings of the study is the paramount importance of packaging aesthetics in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. The data revealed that visual appeal, encompassing color, design, and overall aesthetics, is a primary driver of consumer interest and

purchase intent. Consumers showed a marked preference for packaging that is vibrant, modern, and visually engaging. The strong positive correlation between aesthetically pleasing packaging and purchase intent underscores the need for cosmetic brands to invest in visually appealing designs to attract and retain consumers.

The study also highlighted the critical role of functional design in consumer satisfaction and repeat purchases. Packaging features such as ease of use, convenient product dispensing mechanisms, and portability were highly valued by consumers. The analysis indicated that functional packaging significantly contributes to overall consumer satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of usability in packaging design. Cosmetic brands that prioritize practical and user-friendly packaging are more likely to enhance consumer experience and foster brand loyalty.

Another key finding is the influence of brand congruence on consumer perceptions of authenticity and trustworthiness. Packaging that aligns with a brand's values, personality, and identity was perceived as more credible and trustworthy by consumers. This alignment reinforces brand image and fosters consumer trust and loyalty. The study underscores the importance of maintaining consistency between packaging design and brand identity to build and sustain strong consumer relationships.

The growing consumer emphasis on sustainability was also evident in the study's findings. A significant portion of respondents expressed a preference for eco-friendly packaging options and indicated a willingness to pay a premium for products with sustainable packaging. This trend reflects an increasing consumer awareness and concern for environmental responsibility. Cosmetic brands that adopt sustainable packaging practices can tap into this growing market segment and enhance their brand's appeal among environmentally conscious consumers.

The qualitative insights from focus group discussions revealed the emotional engagement elicited by packaging. Participants described experiencing positive emotions such as excitement, joy, and anticipation when encountering well-designed and aesthetically pleasing packaging. This emotional connection was particularly strong among younger consumers, highlighting the importance of creating packaging that resonates emotionally with target audiences. Emotional engagement through packaging can significantly enhance consumer connection and loyalty to the brand.

Observational studies in retail environments demonstrated that packaging significantly influences consumer behavior at the point of purchase. Packaging with distinctive shapes, bright colors, and clear labeling captured more visual attention and encouraged consumer interaction. This finding underscores the dual importance of visual appeal and informative labeling in influencing consumer decisions at the point of sale. Brands that effectively combine these elements in their packaging are more likely to stand out on crowded retail shelves and drive purchase decisions.

3.2 Results in the Context of Existing Literature and Theories

The findings of this study on the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry align with and extend existing literature and theories. The strong positive correlation between aesthetic appeal and purchase intent corroborates existing research emphasizing the critical role of visual stimuli in consumer behavior. According to Bloch's framework on product design, aesthetic appeal significantly impacts consumer attraction and preference, which this study supports. Our findings align with Garber, Burke, and Jones' (2000) assertion that visually attractive packaging can capture consumer attention and influence their purchasing decisions. The preference for vibrant and modern designs reflects the industry's trend towards visually engaging packaging, as highlighted by Krishna (2011) in her work on sensory marketing.

The importance of functional design in enhancing consumer satisfaction and fostering brand loyalty is consistent with previous studies. Rettie and Brewer (2000) highlighted that ease of use and convenience are vital aspects of packaging that contribute to consumer satisfaction. Our study's findings reinforce the idea that practical and user-friendly packaging features are crucial for a positive consumer experience, echoing Underwood's (2003) emphasis on the significance of packaging in creating value for consumers.

The study's results on brand congruence align with established theories on brand identity and consumer trust. Aaker's model of brand equity underscores the importance of consistent brand messaging and visual identity in building consumer trust and loyalty. Our findings are in harmony with Keller's conceptualization of brand image, which posits that congruent packaging can enhance brand perceptions and strengthen consumer-brand relationships. The alignment of packaging with brand values and personality helps create a cohesive and authentic brand image, as supported by Kapferer's (2008) brand identity prism.

The growing consumer preference for sustainable packaging resonates with contemporary trends and research on environmental responsibility. Ottman noted the increasing importance of eco-friendly practices in consumer decision-making, a trend that has only intensified in recent years. Our study supports Peattie and Crane's (2005) findings that consumers are willing to pay a premium for environmentally sustainable products. This shift towards sustainability reflects the broader societal movement towards eco-conscious consumption, as highlighted by Prothero and Fitchett (2000).

The emotional engagement elicited by well-designed packaging aligns with existing literature on emotional branding and consumer behavior. Schmitt emphasized the role of emotional experiences in shaping consumer behavior and brand relationships. Our findings support this notion, demonstrating that emotionally resonant packaging can significantly enhance consumer connection and loyalty. The strong emotional responses observed, particularly among younger consumers, align with Gobe's (2001) concept of emotional branding, which stresses the importance of creating emotional connections through packaging and other brand elements.

The influence of packaging at the point of purchase is consistent with previous research on consumer decision-making in retail environments. Underwood, Klein, and Burke (2001) noted that packaging serves as a critical touchpoint in the consumer decision-making process, particularly in the cosmetics industry. Our observational studies support Clement's (2007) findings that visually distinctive and well-labeled packaging can capture consumer attention and drive purchase decisions in-store. The importance of clear and informative labeling aligns with Wansink's (2004) research on the impact of packaging information on consumer choices.

3.3 Practical Implications for Cosmetic Companies in Terms of Packaging Design and Marketing Strategies

The comprehensive analysis of the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry provides valuable insights with practical implications for cosmetic companies. The study underscores the critical role of aesthetic appeal in attracting and retaining consumers. Cosmetic companies should invest in visually striking packaging designs that resonate with their target audience. This involves using vibrant colors, modern design elements, and high-quality materials that convey a sense of luxury and sophistication. Companies can benefit from staying abreast of current design trends and incorporating elements that reflect contemporary tastes. Additionally, periodic updates to packaging design can keep the brand fresh and appealing, encouraging repeat purchases and attracting new customers.

Functional packaging that enhances user experience is essential for consumer satisfaction and loyalty. Cosmetic companies should focus on designing packaging that is easy to open, use, and store. Features such as convenient dispensing mechanisms, resealable closures, and travel-friendly sizes can significantly enhance consumer convenience. Investing in ergonomic and intuitive packaging solutions not only improves functionality but also differentiates the brand in a crowded marketplace. Conducting usability testing and gathering consumer feedback during the design process can help identify and address potential issues, ensuring that the final product meets consumer expectations.

Consistency between packaging design and brand identity is crucial for building consumer trust and loyalty. Cosmetic companies should ensure that their packaging reflects the brand's values, personality, and positioning. For example, a brand that emphasizes natural and organic ingredients should use packaging materials and designs that convey purity and eco-friendliness. Maintaining coherence between packaging and other brand elements, such as advertising and product formulations, helps create a cohesive and authentic brand image. This alignment fosters brand recognition and reinforces consumer trust, ultimately driving brand loyalty and repeat purchases.

The growing consumer preference for sustainable packaging presents both a challenge and an opportunity for cosmetic companies. Brands that adopt eco-friendly packaging solutions can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers and differentiate themselves in the market. This may involve using recyclable or biodegradable materials, reducing packaging waste, and communicating sustainability efforts transparently. Companies should consider obtaining relevant certifications, such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification for paper products or ECOCERT for organic products, to enhance credibility. Marketing campaigns that highlight sustainability initiatives can further strengthen the brand's reputation and attract eco-minded consumers.

Packaging that elicits positive emotions can significantly enhance consumer connection and loyalty. Cosmetic companies should design packaging that not only looks good but also feels good to use. Tactile elements, such as soft-touch finishes, embossed logos, and high-quality textures, can create a memorable sensory experience. Additionally, storytelling through packaging such as

including a brand story or product journey can evoke emotions and deepen the consumer-brand relationship. Engaging consumers on an emotional level helps create lasting impressions and encourages brand advocacy.

Packaging plays a crucial role at the point of purchase, particularly in retail environments. Companies should focus on creating packaging that stands out on the shelf and captures consumer attention. This includes using distinctive shapes, bold colors, and clear labeling that communicates key product benefits and differentiators. Informative and transparent labeling can help consumers make informed decisions, fostering trust and confidence in the brand. Point-of-purchase displays and in-store promotions that highlight unique packaging features can further enhance visibility and drive sales.

Regularly gathering and incorporating consumer feedback is essential for continuous improvement in packaging design. Cosmetic companies can use surveys, focus groups, and social media listening to understand consumer preferences, pain points, and emerging trends. By staying attuned to consumer feedback, companies can make informed decisions about packaging updates and innovations. Engaging consumers in the design process through co-creation initiatives can also foster a sense of ownership and loyalty, as consumers feel their opinions are valued and reflected in the final product.

3.4 Research Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry, several limitations must be acknowledged. One of the primary limitations is the representativeness of the sample. Although efforts were made to ensure diversity in age, gender, income level, and geographic location, the sample size of 300 respondents may not fully capture the wide array of consumer preferences and behaviors in the global cosmetics market. Additionally, the survey was administered online, which may have excluded individuals with limited internet access, potentially skewing the sample towards a more tech-savvy and possibly younger demographic.

The reliance on self-reported data in surveys can introduce biases such as social desirability bias, where respondents may provide answers they believe are more socially acceptable rather than their true preferences. Furthermore, recall bias may affect the accuracy of respondents' recollections of their purchasing behavior and packaging perceptions. Although qualitative methods like focus groups and observational studies provide more in-depth insights, they also depend on participants' willingness to share honest and accurate information.

While observational studies in retail environments offer valuable real-world insights, they still have limitations. These studies can capture immediate reactions and behaviors but may not fully account for the complexity of long-term purchasing decisions influenced by packaging. Additionally, the observational settings may not perfectly replicate the diversity of retail environments worldwide, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings.

The qualitative data obtained from focus groups can be influenced by group dynamics. Dominant participants may sway the discussion, leading to a potential bias in the insights gathered. While efforts were made to facilitate balanced participation, the presence of a moderator and the group setting can affect the authenticity of the responses. Furthermore, focus groups typically consist of a small number of participants, which may not fully represent the broader consumer base.

The study predominantly reflects consumer behavior within specific cultural and regional contexts. Packaging preferences can vary significantly across different cultures and regions, influenced by local aesthetics, values, and shopping behaviors. Thus, the findings may not be universally applicable, and further research is needed to explore how cultural and regional factors impact the relationship between packaging and consumer behavior in diverse markets.

The cosmetics industry is characterized by rapidly changing trends and consumer preferences. The study's findings are based on data collected within a specific timeframe, and emerging trends or shifts in consumer behavior may not be fully captured. Continuous monitoring and periodic updates to the research are necessary to keep pace with the dynamic nature of the industry and ensure the relevance of the findings.

While the study examined key packaging elements such as aesthetics, functionality, brand congruence, and sustainability, it may not encompass all factors influencing consumer decisions. Elements such as packaging size, material innovations, and digital integration (e.g., QR codes for additional product information) were not extensively explored. A more comprehensive analysis including these additional factors could provide a deeper understanding of packaging's impact.

Consumer purchasing decisions are influenced by a complex interplay of psychological, social, and behavioral factors. While the study employs psychological theories to explain the influence of packaging, it may not fully account for the intricate and multifaceted nature of consumer decision-making processes. Integrating more advanced psychological and behavioral models could enhance the depth of the analysis.

4. CONCLUSION

This research provides a comprehensive analysis of the influence of product packaging on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetics industry, revealing crucial insights and practical implications for cosmetic companies. The study underscores the multifaceted role of packaging in shaping consumer perceptions, emotional engagement, and purchase behaviors, emphasizing the importance of aesthetic appeal, functional design, brand congruence, sustainability, and point-of-purchase influence. The research highlights that aesthetically appealing packaging significantly attracts consumers and enhances their purchase intent. Functional design elements, such as ease of use and convenience, are crucial for consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Consistency between packaging design and brand identity strengthens consumer trust and loyalty, while sustainability in packaging is increasingly valued by eco-conscious consumers. Emotional engagement through packaging creates lasting consumer connections, and visually distinctive packaging plays a critical role at the point of purchase. For cosmetic companies, these findings translate into actionable strategies. Investing in visually appealing and modern packaging designs can capture consumer interest and differentiate products in a competitive market. Enhancing functional aspects of packaging improves user experience and fosters repeat purchases. Aligning packaging with brand values and identity reinforces brand image and builds consumer trust. Embracing sustainable packaging practices appeals to the growing segment of environmentally conscious consumers, while creating emotionally engaging packaging can deepen consumer loyalty.

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