

The factors that affect consumers' decision making of repeated milk purchasing .

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Abstract

Packaging and packaging design are the most important marketing tool that differentiate a company's product from its competitor. Package attract consumers attention and help differentiating the product and considered one of the most important influence in consumers' purchase decision making process.

Purpose – *The importance of packaging design and the factors that affect consumer repeated purchase of milk brands. This paper aims to analyze different Saudi milk brands packaging design existing in the market and identify the factors that affect consumer's decision making of making repeated milk purchasing.*

Design/methodology/approach – *the study utilized a quantitative approach in the exploratory stage through a self-administered questionnaires distributed on university students and professionals. A sample of 150 was distributed, and only 75 responded. Then second stage through conducting 2 focus groups among Saudi milk consumers in Saudi Arabia, which is considered a very competitive market.*

Findings – *From the exploratory study consumers did not differentiate between different milk packaging brands easily due to closeness of packaging design. Findings from the focus groups showed that the most important factors affect consumer decision making of milk product is the brand name, availability of the product and packaging design (product information, size & shape, package material quality) which affect consumer purchase satisfaction and affect their repeated purchasing of milk brand.*

Research limitations/implications – *Difficulties in generalizing the findings of the current study to all population. The results will enable companies to implement appropriate marketing strategies to increase their market share while reconsidering their milk packaging design.*

Introduction

Packaging design is one of the important marketing tools that differentiate a company's product from its competitor. Consumer's preferences and consumer buying behavior are considered when designing a new package. In order for consumers to make the purchase they go through certain steps called Consumer decision making process. First consumers identify the problem, then they search for alternatives. After that consumers choose from identified alternatives then make the purchase and the final step in consumer decision making process is to evaluate the decision made. Accordingly product packaging and design assist consumers to make a purchasing decision (Holmes et al.2012). Kuvykaite et al (2015) noted that due to changing in consumers' preferences due to changing in their lifestyle, there is a great interest nowadays in packaging. Since packaging is considered a tool of sales promotion and act as a

stimulator of impulsive purchases. Moreover, according to Kuvykaite (2015) packaging is considered one of the most important influence in consumers' purchase decision making. According to Holmes and Paswan (2012,p.109) " It is estimated that approximately 70 percent of all purchase decisions of goods are made at the point of purchase. Therefore, the package itself is the only marketing communication the consumer may receive while evaluating the product" Based on Kuvykaite et al (2015) packaging as a tool of communication acts as a stimulator of impulsive buying behavior.

The importance of packaging and packaging design has an essential role not only for consumers purchase decisions but also an essential role in product performance and quality. The aim of the research is to identify how milk packaging design affect consumers purchase decision making. The study will compare between different Milk carton packaging design already exist in the Saudi market to identify the factors of packaging design that affect consumers' decision making. This study help companies to fascinate consumers and compete with international products existing and competing in the Saudi market.

Packaging

Packaging not only communicates the product but could affect consumers purchase decision. Safe, high quality, over all product information are all required from consumers to make the positive attitude towards the product and make the purchasing decision. Bill Stewart (2004) stated that there are three main functions of packaging: 1. to contain, 2. to protect (from environmental influences that might harm the product such as temperature, light, gases, moisture, 3. To identify: consist of the content of the product, product use and legal information. Carton is more convenient for people on the go compared to glass bottled and plastic bottled milk. In Saudi Arabia there are 2 main formats of packaging currently exist which are carton packaging for long life milk and plastic for consuming within 10 days of production date. According to Kotler and Keller (2012) "perception does not depend only on physical stimuli but on the stimuli's relationship to the surrounding environment and on the condition within each of us"

Elements of Packaging

The packaging design elements such as colors, fonts, text, graphics and pictures. Play a main role for consumers to make the decision of purchase. According to Garber and Bruke and Jones (2000) the package attract consumers attention and help differentiating the product from competitors product through creating brand image and communicating information during purchase decision process. Moreover, Silayoi and Speece (2007) and Gofman and Moskowite & Mets,(2010), stated that when consumers are not sure about their purchases the package plays a vital role in the consumer decision making. Consumer choices will be according to product category, product variety, product size, quantity or volumes, the influence of advertising and product information

There are several classification of elements of packaging in the literature. Rettie and Brewer (2000) classified the elements into 2 groups: Verbal and Visual. As for Kotler (2003) classification was according to six elements: size, form, material, color, text and brand. Silayoi and Speece (2007) divided these packaging elements into: Visual (which includes graphics, size, and shape of packaging) and Informational elements (which consists of product information, information about the technologies used on the package. *Graphics*: include images, colours and typography and product photography. According to Silayoi et al (2007) eye-catching products is used on the design of the package and colors used this would make the product stand out on the

shelf and attract consumers to buy it. *Color*: combinations of colors is very vital for creating an attractive and a good design package. According to Garber et al. 2000. The product package color help consumer to identify the product and differentiate it from competitors product easily. On the other hand companies can easily change the package design and color without facing a problem in product characteristics and functionality. *Size and Shape*: consumer may consider the shape and size of the product to affect a certain volume judgments. Sometimes companies instead of increasing the cost of the product, they would change the size of the package. In many cases consumers perceive more elongated packages as larger while it might be with less volume. The case of family oriented countries consumers would prefer large packages. Especially in Saudi Arabia where families members in many cases exceed six members in one family. This will be reflected in purchasing large size of the product or family size product.

As for the informational elements: product information affect consumer intentions towards purchasing the product (Silayoi and Speece 2004). *Technology image*: the development of technology in packaging design help to communicate the product in a better way. Technology can be used in different types of packaging materials such as wood, paper , plastic , glass, metals and textiles. According to Rundh (2009) packaging design create a competitive advantage with product packaging.

Underwood, Klein and Burke (2001) indicated that consumers can imagine and figure out how the product taste, feel, smell, from the package design of the product. Color elements play an important role in packaging design. Sometimes colors reflects certain product attributes such as flavor and nutrition. For example red color is always associated with strawberry flavor. Orange color for orange flavor

Repurchase Intention

MacKenzie and Lutz defined purchase intention as “one’s beliefs to purchase a product again based on the evaluation of past purchase and future possibility to use the product repeatedly” (Park and Na, 2015, p. 243). Repurchase intention is the result of consumer’s satisfaction of the product being purchased.

Methodology

The first stage of the study involved an exploratory study to identify consumer’s perception towards different milk brands’ packages. A self-administered questionnaire were distributed on 130 respondents. A convenient sample were from students and professionals. Only 75 respondents’ questionnaire were completed. The response rate is 60%. The general characteristics of the sample were as follows:

The number of males were 57.3% and 42.7% females. The age ranged from 18 to 50 while the majority of the respondents were from 21-40 years. Income was not considered because all milk products are having the same range of prices in the Saudi market.

Analysis

According to the Saudi market the major milk selling brands are as follows: Safi, Almarai Nadec, Saudia, Al Rabie and Rainbow. After asking respondents about which milk do they prefer to buy, the majority of the sample were preferring Almarai (82.7%). As for which type of milk they purchase, 45.9% purchase full cream milk while 28.6 % no fat milk, 19.5% for half cream and 3% for both Lacto Free and Vitamin Milk. The carton varies in size from 200ml to 1L. Respondents indicated that they usually purchase the 1 litre milk carton package. Milk Carton packages were more preferable compared to plastic. Respondent considered several things as not important such as the shape of the package, color of the package, the design of the package, being environmental friendly and attractiveness of the package.

Accordingly from the respondent's responses, it was clear that they were more concerned with the milk brand more than packages attributes such as color, design and attractiveness of the package.

According to respondents results the researchers analysed the carton packages of the three main milk brands in the Saudi market as follows:

Packages analysis

First Package Product information:

Name (Brand Identity): Al Marai

Material: Carton

Type: Full cream

Design Element

Contrast: - There's contrast between the background and the picture

- There's contrast between the back ground and typography

Balance: There's balance in the design

Harmony: there's a little bit harmony in the design

Unity: There's unity in the design

Directional Movement: It's easy to see all the details and move between objects

Readability: It's easy to read all the information in the package

Picture type: Compose between illustration and photography



Second Package Product information:

Name (Brand Identity): Al Safai

Material: Carton

Type: Full cream

Design Element:

Contrast: - There's contrast between the background and the picture

- There's contrast between the back ground and typography

Balance: There's balance in the design

Harmony: There's a harmony in the design

Unity: There's unity in the design

Directional Movement: It's easy to see all the details except the picture

And easy to move between objects

Readability: It's easy to read all the information in the package

Picture type: illustration only

Third Package Product information:

Name (Brand Identity): Nadec

Material: Carton

Type: Full cream

Design Element:

Contrast: - There's no contrast between the background and the picture

- There's contrast between the back ground and typography

Balance: There's balance in the design

Harmony: There's a harmony in the design

Unity: There's unity in the design

Directional Movement: It's easy to see all details and to move between objects

Readability: It's easy to read all the information in the package



Picture type: illustration only

Product name	Brand colour	structural	Message direct	contrast	balance	Eye tracing	readability	recognize	notable
Al Marai	Blue (light)	rectangle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Al Safai	Blue (dark)	rectangle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Nadec	Blue (medium)	rectangle	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Table(1.1): Packaging analysis of different milk Saudi brands

According to table 1.1:

1- Brand identity

The brand identity creates in conjunction with the name the persona of the product, they are totally synonymous with product as we see in all the product the identity is the product name which create huge conjunction in the consumer awareness

2- Brand color

Unique brand color can be an integral part of the brands toolbox, but in all milk packages we found they used the same color family which effect badly in attract consumer attention

3- Structural design and volume

A unique structural design can enhance functionality and is also a powerful means for differentiation but unfortunately all the package had the same structural design may be there's a different in the closing system

4- Texture, tactile design

It's more rarely used tool but a powerful emotional communication, none of the packaging used it this techniques in KSA

5- Materials

Paper and carton the most important material used in packaging and with almost limitless possibilities in terms of shape, fabrication and manipulation ,Paper can be cut folded, moulded and as a tetra pack can resist moisture and Ecologically it can be recycled and reused

6- The retail environment

The packaging does not live in a void but in a challenging retail environment, but as result of our research most of the milk package had the same color and graphic which make it difficult to recognize in the shelves. It will be the designers challenge is how to be seen in such a competitive space.

7- The message direct

According to our survey most of our respondents confirm that there's a verbal communication in all the packages

8- Symbols, barcode and consumer data

A pack information, symbols and data all available in all packages and readable

Second Stage

The researchers conducted 2 focus groups. The first focus group was conducted with 6 undergraduate college students who were targeted from across the university (Dar Al Uloom University) college of Business Administration. Also the second focus group was conducted with 6 participants. The sample consisted of 12 participants. Generally drink milk on regular basis . 50% of the participants were females where as 50% of them were male. Participants age ranged from the 19-35 years old.

It has shown from the focus groups that they always buy the same brand name each time. Participants prefer not to switch to another brand if they did not find it. Participants mentioned that Almarai milk is always available with recent production dates compared to other competitor milk brands. Participants showed interest in the credibility of the brand this appears in the following cotes:

- "Even if the company changed the package design, I still go for the milk I buy because this is the milk I trust"
- "I care more for the brand I trust and I do not like to try other competitors milk brands ."
- "I never changed the milk brand I use and it is always available everywhere."
- "I trust my favorite brand ,it is with high quality"
- "I only buy my favorite brand"
- " I always find only one milk brand at home, we usually buy full cream and low fat milk"

Participants reported the importance of packaging design from the following cotes:

- "the packaging container is important"
- " labeling is considered important I always check the production date and which type of milk before purchase"
- "Especially for milk it is essential to have high quality packaging and convenient when to go"
- "Because I have kids it is important that It doesn't splutters when you open it and make a mess"
- "The weather here is very hot and sometimes it take long to put milk in refrigerators immediately after purchase, milk packages should be designed to be safe and keep milk from spoiling due to high temperatures"
- "Carton packaging is more satisfying to me because it is environmental friendly compared to plastic ones"
- " for milk products package design is important not in the sense of the color and graphics on it but in the safe and easy to open and use"
- "I get confused sometimes because milk packages are very close to one another"
- "The first thing I look at is the date of production"

Participants reported that all milk products packaging colors are a combination of light and dark blue, white from the following cotes:-

- " All Almarai, Safie and Nadek packaging colors are white, blue and green"
- " All Milk brands are similar in packaging colors"
- "My choice of milk is based on the brand I like not the package design, every now and then companies change their packaging design such as color"
- "I search for the brand more than color and graphics on the package"
- "I do not find milk packaging colors attractive, they are considered the same to me in colors and shape of packages"
- "It happens that I sometimes get confused when buying my favorite milk because of similar colors and shape"

- "I care more of packaging material than color because I only buy my favorite milk brand and I do not shift to others"
- "onetime I was in a hurry buying milk to my mum and because packages are very similar to one another I bought her the wrong brand"

Conclusion

This study analysed on only carton packaging because it is widely spread and usually varies in the expiration date from one brand to the other. Al Marai Milk was considered more preferable compared to other competitors' milk in the market. It is considered more preferable in terms of milk quality and in terms of its packaging design (easy to open, safety, and quality of package). But generally respondents did not consider major difference between different milk brands packaging design in the sense of colors and graphics. They are more concerned about brand name, expiration date and availability of the product everywhere, quality and trust. This is in line with Sai (2015) where consumers were more concerned with quality, taste and trust of milk brands. Packaging design is considered important in the sense of product information (expiration date and type of milk), size & shape and packaging material quality only.

According to Pramjeeth and Naidu (2013) a study was conducted to determine if carton packaging is a suitable alternative packaging format for bottled water, it concluded that carton packaging was perceived as the most environmental friendly as in not harming the environment followed by plastic bottles and then glass bottles. Plastic bottles were considered the least environmental friendly type of packaging. Accordingly consumers' choice will vary depending on how they perceive the purchase.

Manufacturers of fast moving goods (FMCG) need to design their packages and consider consumers perception and responses towards the packages they provide consumers with. This can guarantee efficiency and optimize the potential of packaging.

Limitation:

A key limitation of this study is sampling. The researchers found it difficult to provide information across all areas in Saudi Arabia. Therefore, there is a difficulty to generalize the findings of the current study to all population. Replication of the study would be recommended in different areas across Saudi Arabia.

Managerial Implications:

The findings of the research would help companies understand that there is a need to have a differentiated packaging design from competitors packages. The availability of milk brands is considered important to consumers and with recent production date. The results of the study will enable companies to implement appropriate marketing strategies to increase their market share.

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