

The effect of beauty product packaging on consumer buying decision

(A case of selected shops in the New Juabeng Municipality, Ghana)

Alexander Oduro Adofo

All Nations University College, Koforidua, Ghana

Keywords

Beauty, Product, Packaging, Buying, Decision

Abstract

The saying that "first impressions remain forever in the mind" is also applicable when it comes to buying decision making. The package of a product has a high propensity of attracting a first time buyer of a beauty product who has no prior contact of the product. In the same way, it can also turn away the first buyer too. Packaging actually serves many purposes, ranging from product protection to attracting consumer attention. It is the selling tool that should promote and sell the product by catching consumers attention, defining the product's identity, providing information, ensuring safe use and protecting the product. This study therefore seek to find out how much the package of a beauty product goes into the decision making process of the consumer. A non probability sampling method was used to select the sample size. A sample size of 50 consisting of 40 users of beauty product and 10 sellers of beauty product in the New Juaben Municipality was used. The findings made in the research were that, females have the highest percentage when it comes to beauty product usage, whiles users of beauty product mostly prefer a rubber containers, consumers consider the package of a beauty product before they make a purchase, and the level of influence packaging have on the consumers' buying decision was high. However, majority said that packaging does not guarantee quality, but rather packaging does help in the following ways; catching consumers attention, defining the product identity, and protecting the product. It is therefore recommended at the end of the research that manufacturers and retailers must not under play the role that packaging plays in bringing consumers to a particular product.

Introduction

The decision to buy a particular product in the mix of all the other varieties that may serve the same purpose and sometimes with other advantages such as close proximity, relatively cheaper price, etc is not as simple as we see it. It involves a rigorous mental exercise that is influenced by lot of factors which may be product related or personal related. Packaging has now become part and parcel of the product bundle and it's not just a mere part but has a bearing on the consumer's buying decision. Every product comes with a packaging and this beauty way of packaging product comes in different forms which normally affect the consumer in their buying decision making. Packaging however consists of all the activities of designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product (Michael J. Etzel p.273). Consumers sometimes purchase a product base on how the product is package which normally affects their buying decision making. Before a consumer or consumers should be attracted by this beauty package, there is the need to pass through processes which will enable them to purchase the right product. This processes include problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision and post purchase evaluation.

The problem recognition occurs when there is a perceived difference between an individual's ideal state and reality. Having identified a problem a prospective buyer search for information in attempt to solve it. This can be either by internal search which involves a memory scan to recall experience and knowledge utilizing the perceptual processes to see whether there is "off -the-shelf" solution or the prospective buyer resorting to an external source. This will involve family and friends, reference sources and commercial guides and advertising. However, potential solution need to be evaluated in other that the optimum choice be made. Having evaluated various solutions, the buyer may develop a predisposition to make a purchase. This will involve matching motives and evaluative criteria with product attributes. After the purchase decision has been made, the buyer might feel tension about a past decision either because the product fails to reach expectations or because the consumer becomes aware of the superior alternative. (Hoyer Maclinnis, Consumer Behaviour 1997 p.101-102)

The main motive of every business entity being it in the service or good industry is to make their service or good more attractive to the buyer/consumer so that the buyer or the consumer may consider it when the decision to buy a product is being made. Companies therefore sometimes embark on re-branding which normally outwardly comes with a new packaging from its previous packaging. It has therefore come to stay as a fact that, businesses place much importance on the packaging of their product. Most often than not they play on the concept of "First impression last longer "That is the first impression one gets about a product is largely formed based on the packaging. This is because before the consumer even touches the product, it is the packaging of it that catches his/her eyes first. As a result, if that first impression (packaging) is done well, it will leave a lasting impression about the product.

Companies from this background mostly use persuasive pictures, labels, designs; etc that sometimes depicts the benefits of the product on the package. One major product category that is often seen with such packaging is beauty products. They normally come with pictures of beautiful models, or skin people showing the final effect of the product on the skin. The primary objective of the research is to examine the extent to which the packaging of beauty products affects the consumer decision making process.

A Brief Survey of Literature

Packaging is now generally regarded as an essential component of our modern life style and the way business is organized. Packaging is the enclosing of a physical object, typically a product that will be offered for sale. (Prof. Dileep Kumar M). It is the process of preparing items of equipment for transportation and storage and which embraces preservation, identification, and packaging of products. Packing is recognized as an integral part of modern marketing operation, which embraces all phases of activities involved in the transfer of goods and services from the manufacturer to the consumer. The packaging component of a product refers to any container in which it is offered for sale and on which information is communicated .To a great extent the customer's first exposure to a product is the package, and it is an expensive and important part of the marketing strategy.

Kotler also defines packaging as "all the activities of designing and producing the container for a product." (Kotler, 1999) Packaging can be defined as the wrapping material around a consumer item that serves to contain, identify, describe, protect, display, promote, and otherwise make the product marketable and keep it clean. Packaging is the outer wrapping of a product. It is the intended purpose of the packaging to make a product

readily sellable as well as to protect it against damage and prevent it from deterioration while storing. Prior to World War II, packaging was used primarily to surround and protect products during storage, transportation, and distribution. Some packages were designed with aesthetic appeal and even for ease-of-use by the end consumer, but package design was typically left to technicians. After World War II, however, companies became more interested in marketing and promotion as a means of enticing customers to purchase their products. As a result, more manufacturers began to view packaging as an integral element of overall business marketing strategies to lure buyers.

The importance of consumer packaging was elevated in the United States during the late 1970s and 1980s. Rapid post-war economic expansion and market growth waned during that period, forcing companies to focus increasingly on luring consumers to their product or brand at the expense of the competition. Package design became a marketing science. And, as a new corporate cost-consciousness developed in response to increased competition, companies began to alter packaging techniques as a way to cut production, storage, and distribution expenses.

Packaging plays an important functional role such as convenience, protection or storage. The convenient dimension of packaging is becoming increasingly important for example; microwave popcorn has a major market success. Consumer protection has become important function of packaging as well including the development of temper resistant containers. Another functional value of packaging is in extending storage and shelf life (the time a product can be stored before it spoils). New technology allows product requiring refrigeration to be packaged in paper-sealed containers which dramatically increases their shelf life. (Fredrick G. Crane et al 1997). Consumer buying decision process is the stages a buyer passes through in making choices about which product and services to buy. This process consist of five stages which are problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. (Fredrick G. Crane et al 1997)

Problem recognition is the first in purchase decision. It occurs when a consumer perceives differences between his or her ideal and actual situations that are big enough to trigger a decision. In marketing, advertising or salespeople can activate a consumer's purchase decision process by showing the shortcomings of competing product. After recognizing a problem, a consumer begins to search for information. First you may scan your memory for previous decision process. This action is called internal search. The information search clarifies the problem for the consumer by suggesting criteria to use for the purchase, yielding brand names that might meet the criteria and developing perception of value. All these factors are called the evaluative criteria. These criteria consist of both the objective attributes of a brand and the subjective ones that you would use to compare different products and brands. Having examined the alternatives in the evoked set, there lays a decision to make a purchase. Two choices remain thus from whom to buy and when to buy. The choice of which seller to buy from will depend on such consideration as the term of sale. A purchase decision often involves a simultaneous evaluation of both the product attribute and seller characteristics.

After buying the product the consumer compares it with his or her expectation and is either satisfied or dissatisfied. If a consumer is dissatisfied, marketers must decide whether the product was deficient or consumer expectations too high. Product deficiency may require a design change, on the other hand, if expectation were too high perhaps the company's advertising or salesperson oversold the product's features. Market-driven organizations places great emphasis on delivering customer value in order to ensure

satisfaction after the sale. By providing value and satisfaction a firm is able to develop long-term relationships with customers. (Fredrick G. Crane et al 1997)

Internal influence as to how people perceive marketing message, their motivation to acquire products and their unique personalities influence the decision they will make. According to Michael R .Solomon et al, the internal influences on consumer decision constitute perception, motivation, learning, attitudes, personality, age group, and lifestyle. A number of internal factors influence consumer decisions. Perception is how consumers select, organize, and interpret stimuli. Consumers must first be exposed to the marketing communications. To prevent sensory overload, consumers practice perceptual selectivity; that is they are selective in their attention by focusing on stimuli. Consumers differ in interpretation of stimuli, because the meaning assign is based on individuals' prior experiences or beliefs.

Marketers should understand that consumers act because they are motivated to achieve goal, which depend on which level of needs is currently satisfied. Motivation however is an internal state that drives us to satisfy needs. Once we activate a need, a state of tension exists that drives the consumer towards a goal that will reduce this tension by eliminating the need.

Behavioral Learning theories focus on how consumer behavior is changed by external events or stimuli .Thus behavioral learning result from external events such as rewards, punishments or the previous pairing of stimuli. Behavioral learning may result in stimulus generalization in which attitudes towards a brand or company may be transferred to other products, such as product line extensions. Cognitive learning theory views people as problem solvers who do more than passively react to associations between stimuli. In other words it refers to internal mental activity and includes observational learning in which behavior result from imitation of the observed behavior of socially attractive others.

Research Methodology

Research work most often than not is appraised based on the quality and accurateness of the analysis and information it provides at the end. The methodology enlightened on the tool or technique for data collection, the study area, the population as well as the sample. The study population was narrowed down to selected shops and selected buyers in the municipality. This basically involved some users and sellers of beauty product in the New Juaben Municipality, Ghana. The study used a sample size of 50 consisting of 40 users of beauty product and 10 sellers of beauty product in the Municipality. The data collection used for the analysis was mainly questionnaires. The study however made use of secondary data very extensively.

Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

The analysis and presentation is based on the data collected from buyers and sellers of cosmetics from the New Juaben Municipality. Below are the data presentation and analysis under the various objectives of this research.

Table 1. Gender (usage of beauty products)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
Female	25	62.5	62.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

After analyzing the data it was realized that out of the 40 respondents 15 representing 37.5% were males and 25 representing 62.5% were females. This shows that females have the highest percentage when it comes to beauty product usage.

Table 2. Level of Attention Consumers Pay to Packaging

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Very high	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
High	16	40.0	40.0	65.0
Minimal	14	35.0	35.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

Table 2 represents the rate at which the package of a beauty product influences users in their buying decision. The respondents were asked whether packaging of a beauty product has influence on them. 25% of the users responded to the fact that the rate at which the package of a beauty product influences them is very high. 16 out of the total sample size representing 40% said that the level of influence to the packaging of a beauty product is high in their buying decision. 14 respondents representing 35% said that the rate at which the packaging of a beauty product affects them is minimal to them.

Table 3. The type of beauty product used most

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Soap	10	25.0	25.0	25.0
Cream	6	15.0	15.0	40.0
perfume	4	10.0	10.0	50.0
All	20	50.0	50.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

This question was intended to measure the type of beauty product users' use most. It was found that 10 respondents representing 25% uses soap. 6 respondent representing 15% uses cream and 4 respondents are representing 10% uses perfume. However, 20 out of the total sample size uses all the types (soap, cream, or perfume) representing 50% this means that majority of the respondent uses all the types but most of the respondents uses soap most when it comes to beauty product usage.

Table 4. Associating packaging of beauty product with its quality

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	15	37.5	37.5	37.5
No	25	62.5	62.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

Table 4 shows the number of users which associate the packaging of beauty products with its quality before a consumer makes decisions to buy a particular brand of product. As can be seen from the data above, 25 out of the 40 respondents representing a percentage of 62.5 said that there was no need for users to associate packaging of a beauty product with its quality however it was notice that when consumers get attracted to a beauty product, they just make a purchase without knowing the product quality. 37.5% of the users were of the view that consumers that get attracted to the packaging of a beauty product must also take into consideration its quality.

Table 5. Whether packaging of beauty product prevent buyers from using or buying the product

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	6	60.0	60.0	60.0
No	4	40.0	40.0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

Table 5 displays the results by sellers of beauty product as whether the package of beauty product they sell prevents customers from buying or using the product. From the sellers point of view when product are not well packaged they find it difficult to be patronize by buyer or users. This reveals that out of the total respondents, 6 respondents representing 60% are prevented from using or buying a particular product when is not well packaged while 4 respondents representing 40% said that the package of a beauty product do not prevent customers from using it. This is to mean that product that comes to sellers to be sold must be well packaged in order not to prevent users from using or buying.

Table 6. Number of times people complain about the Package of a beauty product.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Most times	6	60.0	60.0	60.0
Sometimes	4	40.0	40.0	
Not before	0	0	0	100.0
Total	10	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field Survey July, 2014

As beauty product that were not well packaged prevented users from using or buying it in table 6 so as there are numbers of times those users do complain about the package of that beauty product. Thus the table displays the number of times users complain about the package of a beauty product. Out of the total respondents, 6 sellers representing 60% said most times people do complain about the package of a beauty product. While 4 out the total sample size representing 40% said that buyers sometimes complain about the package of the beauty product. This means that the percentage of buyers that do complain about the package of a beauty product was higher than those who sometimes complain.

Findings

The finding is concerned with usage rate of males and females of beauty products. It was found that females have the highest percentage when it comes to beauty product usage. This confirms the common believe that ladies/females are more attentive to their looks as compared to their male counterparts. Also 20 out of the total sample size use all the types (soap, cream, or perfume) representing 50% this means that majority of the respondents use all the types but most of the respondents use soap most when it comes to beauty product usage. Another finding was based on the purchasing behavior of consumers of beauty product. It was found that consumers do complain about the package of the beauty product most times as shown by table 6, thus affecting it sales to a high extent. However, when they were asked whether they associate quality with packaging, majority said that package does not guarantee quality. 25 out of the 40 respondents representing a percentage of 62.5 said that there was no need for users to associate packaging of a beauty product with its quality however it was notice that when consumers get attracted to a beauty product, they just make a purchase without knowing the product quality. 37.5% of the users were of the view that consumers that get attracted to the packaging of a beauty product must also take into consideration its quality. Interestingly, the sellers revealed that some people refuse to buy products because of their package. In the analysis out of the 6 respondents(sellers) representing 60% said some customers stopped using or buying a particular product because its not well packaged while 4 respondents representing a 40% said that the package of a beauty product do not prevent customers from using it. With respect to the extent to which the packaging influences the buying decision of consumers of beauty products, the research found that the level of influence packaging have on the consumers' buying decision is high. This can mean that majority of users of beauty product purchase a particular brand of a beauty product base on the packaging and quality of that product.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proposed; Manufacturers should also invest a lot in the packaging of their beauty products since majority of beauty product consumers (users) place a lot of importance on the package of the products. Manufacturers and sellers must direct more of their marketing efforts on female (ladies) since majority of their users are females. However, the manufacturers and retailers must not neglect the male population but develop innovative products to attract the large potential male market. It is recommended to users of beauty products to consider the quality of the product as well when buying their products but must not just follow the beautiful or attractive packages of the products.

Conclusion

Consumers go through rigorous mental exercise in making their buying decisions since there are alternative products which compete in the areas close proximity, quality, relatively cheaper price, etc. Packaging has now become one of strong competing factors in the decision making process. When it comes to beauty products, it is even more intense, consumers have made it clear in this study that packaging plays a key role in informing their decision either to buy or not to buy. Manufacturers and retailers of beauty products must therefore have this at the back of their mind as they embark on the marketing of their beauty products.

References

-
- Babbie.Earl.2002.The Basics of Social Research .U.S.A Wadsworth Group: a division of Thompson Learning Inc.
- Cooper, R. Donard andSchindler, S.Pamela.2001.Business Research Methods. U.S.A: McGraw Hill/Irwin.
- Dennis Salazer, 9 July 2008(www.packaging.com)
- Fredrick G.Crane et al 1997 Marketing Canadian Insight and ApplicationU.S.A McGraw-Hill/Irwin
- Ghanadistrict.com
- Ghaun, Perez, and Kjell Grohang2002.Research Method in Business Studies. A practical Guido prentice Hall London
- Gilbert A.ChurchHill. 2002 Marketing Research Third Edition.U.S.A: The Dryden Press, Harcourt Brace College Publishers..
- Hoyer Maclinnis,Consumer Behaviour 1997 p.101-102)
- Michael J.Etzel et al, Marketing Canadian Insight, and Applications13th Ed.
- Michael R.Solomon et al. Marketing Real People Real Decision 2nd Canadian Edition.
- Nachmias, David, and Cava Nachmias.1976.Reasearch Methods in Social Science. New York Martin's Press.
- Osuala, E.C2005.Introduction to Research Methods. Nigeria: Africana-First Publisher Limited.
- Philip Kottler, Principles of Marketing". Hollywood Printing Press (1999).
- Philip Kottler, Gray Armstong, John Sauder, and Veronica Wong, Principles of Marketing 3rd European edition 2002.
- Professor Dileep Kumer, 2008(www.packaging.com)
- Shaughenessy, John, and Zechmeister B. Eugene .1994.Research Methods in Psychology. U.S.A: McGraw-Hill.
- William O.Bearden, Thomas N.Ingram and Raymond W.Laforge.2001.MarketingPrinciples and Perspective Third Edition USA MCGraw-Hill/Irwin
-