



The Impact of Packaging Characteristics on Consumer Brand Preference

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to investigate the impact of packaging characteristics on consumer's brand preference in perspective to edible oils. Packaging characteristics are being measured such as various sizes of Package, different shapes of Package, safety, shelf life, convenience of storage, convenience of use, extra use of package and package attractiveness as per its importance in selection of edible oil brands. This study included Local and International brands of edible oils i.e. Dalda, Habib, Seasons Canola, Soya Supreme, Sunflower, Eva, Sufi, Meezan and other brands. This research paper also seeks to investigate the importance of packaging characteristics for edible oil by managing an understanding on how consumers measure on the mentioned variables. Identifying how the packaging characteristics of edible oil influence the purchase decisions of consumers. The total number of respondents were 117, and all were females who completed the questionnaire. Optimal Scaling (CATREG) was used to explain the impact of packaging characteristics on consumer brand preferences. This study identified that packaging characteristics are significant variable for consumer brand preference in edible oils because the significance of F value is less than 0.05 in all eight Propositions. Finally, conclusion was drawn that packaging characteristics has a association with consumer brand preference in edible oils.

Introduction

This study identifies the impact of Packaging characteristics on consumer brand preference in perspective to edible oil. Whether packaging characteristics has impact on consumer choice or packaging characteristics has influence in consumer's brand preference. In Pakistan numerous numbers of edible oils are produced with different brand name and quality. Packaging has become appropriate selling proposition now days, although edible oil industry is very competitive and consumers are numerously price conscious but still packaging make an impact on the consumer brand preference.

Packaging attracts the consumer's concentration to buy particular brand and increase brand image and influence towards consumers (Rundh, 2005).

Packaging characteristics creates uniqueness in brand (Silayoi & Speece, 2004).

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Packaging characteristics gives the ability to differentiate between the similar products and induces the clients for purchase (Wells, Farley, & Armstrong, 2007).

This study examines the influential factor which relates packaging characteristics to the consumer's brand preference. Packaging is also a tool of marketing communication and plays a vital role in consumer brand preference. The prime role of packaging is to give security to the brand against any possible damage may it be during transporting, storing or even warehousing (Gonzalez, Thorhsbury, & Twede, 2007).

Packaging characteristics is also a protection of keeping the brands secure by not being smudged by the consumers or either the consumers being contaminated if in-contact with the packaging (Grundvag & Ostli, 2009).

In this research paper Packaging characteristics evaluate in terms of eight variables i.e. Size, shape, safety, shelf life, convenience of storage, convenience of use, extra use and package attractiveness in context of edible oil but Kotler (2003) defines these characteristics in terms of six variable i.e. size, brand, text, color, material and fool Moreover, Ampuero and Vila (2006) same as Underwood (2003) defined parts of package elements (as color, shapes used, typography and images) and structural elements as (form, size of the containers, and materials). This research paper examines how packaging characteristics influence buying decision particularly for edible oil. The package characteristics plays a vital role in the consumer decision-making as it communicates to consumers while the time they decide what to purchase in the store..

Packaging characteristics also shows the quality judgments which largely influence the consumer in brand preference. Consumer frequently assumes that if packaging characteristics are viable it shows that brand is of high quality and helps in decision making of consumer.

In this research paper the developed model used and tested as per the context to edible oil of consumer brand preference. This research paper studies the role of packaging characteristics and consumer brand preference.

In Pakistan, the edible oil industry is very extensive as edible oil is being in used in a great quantity. At present, market scenario of the edible industry in Pakistan:

- There are around 90 edible oil companies operating in Pakistan.
- 45 are national companies.
- Among national companies 32 edible oil companies are licensed.
- 06 edible oil Companies are multinationals.

Moreover, in edible industry brand preference are more sensitive as compare to any other related industry due to the reason that this industry is health sensitive and quality conscious. The target market doesn't want to compromise on its preferred brand.

Literature Review

The intentions of Consumer for procuring anything depend upon the intensity of his desires to satisfy his needs. Consumers have expectations that anything he is buying will satisfy his needs (Kupiec & Revell, 2001).

The basic purpose is to fulfill consumer's needs instead of product name consequently consumer makes buying decision at the moment they encounter different objects rather making prior decisions. Consumer's purchase decision depends the way he is communicated for anything at store. The packaging becomes a major cause of the consumers decision to buy anything because it is the first introduction of the product which communicates the consumer that whether a product may (or may not) fulfill his requirements. The product which appears more suitable to a customer a nearest match for his needs is bought, whereas others are left.

The key factor to convince a customer is to know his needs and to make him understand that a particular thing is a perfect match of his requirements (Kupiec & Revell, 2001).

Marketing Experts believe that Success is based upon the marketing strategy which should be used as an appropriate product positioning which should be associated with the choice of an product positioning strategy. It has also been observed that sometimes quite beneficial products could not get proper attentions of the consumers because of wrong market positioning strategy or weak planning (Ramsay, 1983).

As the world is rapidly turning into global village and with the passage of time business is being expanded, the importance of using correct type of packaging material has become essential. Packaging is rightly called an art because packaging material is the first introduction of any product to the consumers. Packaging Material especially for edible goods is used as a tool to prolong products life. Unlike old days when a huge part of edible goods used to be wasted because of insufficient packaging materials now days, edible goods in bulk quantities are manufactured and stored for a long time which leads to maintain timely supply as well as reduces products cost (Gardner, 1967).

In other term, packaging is where the product is secure, and where it can be identified, where as it preserves the facilitating of the product (Giovannetti, 1995).

Packaging is also a source to provide information about ingredients to the customers and instructions to use the product, for which there are some legal requirements. Consumers make final choice on the basis of these information for instance there are some products inappropriate for diabetics patients because of having high calories. Hence, instructions on packaging can save diabetic patients on contrary. There are some ingredients which are prohibited for some specific religion (as pork is banned in Islamic & Jews preaching) hence through instructions and ingredient list, Muslims and Jews can avoid such forbidden foods. Packaging is a mean of communication (Gardner, 1967).

Packaging properties includes the colors, design, symbols, and messages of Food products, provide people brand acquaintance for example, in a departmental store all kinds of beverages are kept in same place but consumer of specific brand can easily distinguish his choice because of difference of color, size and unambiguous shape (Nancarrow, Wright, & Brace, 1998).

Various number of market trends suggests a growing packaging role as a brand communication vehicle and reducing expenses on traditional brand building mass media advertising. Importance of Packaging role is acknowledged round the globe for brand building and consequently the expenses on advertisement has been found reduced. Once a brand becomes familiar companies do not have to spend a huge amount on advertising because consumer will reach the brand automatically. Companies just have to manage timely deliveries so that meanwhile a consumer may not switch to the nearest competitors due to unavailability of the product (Belch & Belch, 2001).

With the help of the packaging images, it helps the consumers to attract towards the product. Packaging is used as a source of communication and maintain the brand. (Rettie & Brewer, 2000).

Promotional materials are used to communicate the messages of specific companies. Most of the branded companies have their particular brand slogans, which influences consumers towards their products. FMCG manufacturers plays a vital role of comprehending consumer response. It is also observed sometimes that failure of a product is not because of lack in product qualities but lack of presentations (Nancarrow, Wright, & Brace, 1998).

Almost all FMCG spend extra amount to figure out Consumer's perception and behavior which is believed is not consistent across cultures. As analyzed, consumer response and is almost the same as FMCG despite the differences in cultures. yet there are many cross-

cultural researchers who believe vice versa and observe that the knowledge developed in one culture should be confirmed before tested in another cultural contexts.

Color affects human behavior such as some colors make us happy whereas others make us sad. While making purchase decision color scheme becomes more obvious. The effect of color has been studied widely to know the consumer's perception (Imram, 1999).

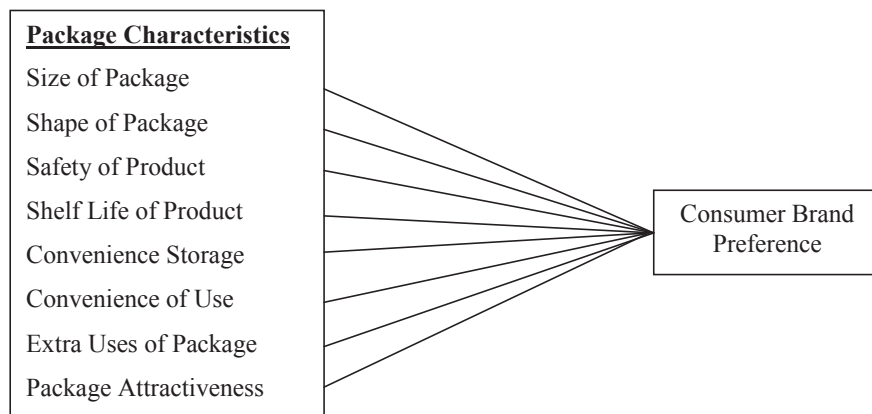
Consumer opinions of an adequate color are associated with other quality features, such as taste, aroma, satisfaction and nourishment levels. In some products clear packaging is sued to allow consumers to view food color, incident light, and taxonomy. While making advertisement of food items, the best color combination is used not only for plates having food items but also the clothes of models and the surroundings are used in contrast, so that the food product may feel better. In Café or Restaurants the food items kept on display are selected for their color and appearance attributes (Imram, 1999).

Theoretical Framework

The literature analysis allow us to preserve that package may perhaps be treated as a set of a variety of characteristics passing to the consumer through different messages.. The message communicating depends upon those promotional characteristics. kind of message communicate depends on those packaging characteristics.

The research model used in this research paper is being modified and instead of using packaging elements i.e. visual and verbal, this research paper includes packaging characteristics on basis of various size of package, different shape of package, safety of product, shelf life of product, convenience of storage, convenience of use, extra uses of package and package attractiveness. This study focused on edible oil industry and helps consumer to choose brand in terms of packaging characteristics. This research paper model determines packaging characteristics which have the impact on consumer's purchase decision. Packaging Characteristics is being used instead of packaging element for this particular research paper since there are several different schemes for categorization of elements of package in technical literature.

Knowledge about the Packaging in our research proposition is very necessary for rising effective packaging which can take advantage of coming up consumer choice. Packaging effectiveness leads toward purchasing, the attitude of the consumer rises and consumer made purchase and give preference to the brand. It is obvious that package plays an extremely large role in brand choice, plus it is as well clear that poor packaging can push consumers left buying the brand. Consumer brand preference is important in terms of buying,



Source: Packaging and purchase decisions by Silayoi & Speece (2004).

The basic purpose of this model is to measure and evaluate the purchase decision of consumers in context with consumer brand preference. This model develops the Impact of packaging characteristics on consumer brand preference in edible oil.

Research Method

Data Collection

Primary and Secondary are the two types of data used by the researchers. In this research paper primary data has been collected through questionnaires based on qualitative and quantitative data.

Customer survey was conducted by sending questionnaires to randomly selected customers for collection of data for statistical analysis. The questionnaire covered the basic content to facilitate achieving goal of the study at its best.

Most form of questionnaires were distributed on hand rather than sent by email or traditional mail by informing them about the purpose of this research paper and asked them to participate in the survey. The questionnaires were recollected after being filled out by then email back.

Content Validity

The Questionnaire is created by the immense efforts by the Supervisor assigned and to test validity of its contents, it was shown to various professors of the University for Feedback in their own area of specialization.

Instrument

Questionnaires were used as an instrument for data collection.

- Firstly Questionnaire based on packaging characteristics.
- Secondly it's based on the comparison of several different brands of edible oils and on packaging characteristics that how they evaluate brand in terms of packaging characteristics, does packaging influence them to make purchase decision.
- Lastly, it's based on level of agreement and disagreement of consumer brand preference with respect to packaging characteristics.

The instrument is in the form of closed ended questionnaire.

Answers were recorded in the Likert five point scales.

Packaging Characteristics is measured as

- Highly Important
- Important
- Neither Important nor Unimportant
- Unimportant
- Highly Unimportant

Compare brand in terms of packaging characteristics:

- Better than other
- Same like other
- Worst than other
- Not Applicable

Consumer brand preference measure on basis of Level of agreement and disagreement:

- Strongly agreed
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Pre-Testing

The instrument was pre-tested where 4 to 5 sample questionnaires were filled to predict if there are any problems with the instrument for the respondent and whether it was easy to understand and comprehend the questions or not. Through pretesting it was found that all respondents felt comfortable in responding and respondents find questionnaire interested too.

Sampling technique and Sample size

The data used in this research paper was collected from the Iqra university female students, some household women and some working women. The sampling technique used in this study was convenience sampling method.

Respondents

The total number of respondents was 117 females with different classes. The age distribution be used for this research was in five ages slabs

- 25 years or less
- 26 years to 35 years
- 36 years to 45 years
- 46 years to 55 years
- More than 55 years

Procedure

Questionnaire were used as an instrument to collect a data and data is collected by two ways:

- Personal survey in Iqra university and meet female respondents and by meeting to household women.
- By emailing the questionnaire to the working women. Respondents filled the questionnaire and then email back.

Statistical tool used

In this research Optimal Scaling categorical regression was used which defines categorical data by resulting in numerical data to categories in linear regression equation in an optimal for the transformed variables. Categorical regression is also known by the acronym (CATREG), for categorical regression (Multivariate data analysis, sixth edition Joseph F. Hair)

Table 1:

Model Summary

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Apparent Prediction Error
.513	.263	.145	.737

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: packaging size of dalda packaging size of habib packaging size of seasons canola packaging size of soya supreme packaging size of sunflower packaging size of Eva packaging size of Meezan packaging size of Sufi packaging size of any other

Table 2:

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	30.739	16	1.921	2.227	.009
Residual	86.261	100	.863		
Total	117.000	116			

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: packaging size of dalda packaging size of habib packaging size of seasons canola packaging size of soya supreme packaging size of sunflower packaging size of Eva packaging size of Meezan packaging size of Sufi packaging size of any other

Table 3:

Model Summary

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Apparent Prediction Error
.574	.329	.214	.671

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: different packaging shape of dalda different packaging shape of habib different packaging shape of seasons canola different packaging shape of Soya supreme different packaging shape of sunflower different packaging shape of Eva different packaging shape of Meezan different packaging shape of Sufi different packaging shape of any other

Table 4:

ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	38.495	17	2.264	2.856	.001
Residual	78.505	99	.793		
Total	117.000	116			

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: different packaging shape of dalda different packaging shape of habib different packaging shape of seasons canola different packaging shape of Soya supreme different packaging shape of sunflower different packaging shape of Eva different packaging shape of Meezan different packaging shape of Sufi different packaging shape of any other

Table 5:**Model Summary**

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Apparent Prediction Error
.599	.359	.278	.641

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: safety of product of dalda safety of product of habib safety of product of season canola safety of product of soya supreme safety of product of sunflower safety of product of Eva safety of product of Meezan safety of product of Sufi safety of product of any other

Table 6:**ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	42.044	13	3.234	4.444	.000
Residual	74.956	103	.728		
Total	117.000	116			

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: safety of product of dalda safety of product of habib safety of product of season canola safety of product of soya supreme safety of product of sunflower safety of product of Eva safety of product of Meezan safety of product of Sufi safety of product of any other

Table 7:**Model Summary**

Multiple R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Apparent Prediction Error
.662	.438	.361	.562

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: shelf life of product dalda shelf life of product habib shelf life of product seasons canola shelf life of product soya supreme shelf life of product sunflower shelf life of product Eva shelf life of product Meezan shelf life of product Sufi shelf life of product any other

Table 8:**ANOVA**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	51.237	14	3.660	5.676	.000
Residual	65.763	102	.645		
Total	117.000	116			

Dependent Variable: edible oil mostly use

Predictors: shelf life of product dalda shelf life of product habib shelf life of product seasons canola shelf life of product soya supreme shelf life of product sunflower shelf life of product Eva shelf life of product Meezan shelf life of product Sufi shelf life of product any other

Discussion & Conclusion

This study has done to classify the impact of packaging characteristics on consumer brand preference in edible oil. This research had to come across whether the packaging characteristics influences the consumer brand preference in edible oil or not, several edible oil brands has been used in this study i.e. Dalda, Habib, Seasons Canola, Soya supreme, Sunflower, Eva, Sufi, Meezan and any other whereas packaging characteristics has been determine in eight different dimensions i.e. various sizes of Package, different shapes of

Package, safety, shelf life, convenience of storage, convenience of use, extra use of package and package attractiveness Finding those critical variables which helps in consumer brand preference. It has been carried out broadly in the light of relevant literature available to the best of our knowledge.

Moreover, to ensure the testability and meticulousness of the research, conceptual framework model has been used for empirical analysis. In this research, two variables 1) packaging characteristics 2) consumer brand preference has been used and data has been collected by using self constructed questionnaire as an instrument targeting to the females.

This study wrap up that packaging characteristic is measured as an important element for consumer brand preference in edible oil industry. After the statistical work and interpretations, one can say that packaging characteristics influence the consumer brand preference and edible oil consumers give significance while making the purchase decision of edible for their household use. This study tells that all eight dimensions of packaging characteristics are the predictors of consumer mostly used brand in edible oil.

It is recommended for the future research, to broaden the aspect of packaging characteristics and designs the model which implement towards some other industry as well. The Implication is to help the edible oil industry to identify the need of customer in term of product packaging and can meet the customer expectation. This study is also helpful to conclude the factors which are responsible for the increment of market share in edible oil industry by changing or modifying the packaging of product in competitive market.

This research paper identifies that the packaging characteristics has an impact on consumer brand preference. These packaging characteristics also have an impact on some other food items as well like Ketchups, Biscuits, Drinking Water and etc.

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