

## BEVERAGE PACKAGE MATERIAL AND BRAND ASSOCIATION AMONG POST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to investigate how customer brand associations are impacted by product packaging. Today, marketers place a high value on consumer choice. According to studies, the packaging attracts consumers' attention to a particular brand, enhances its reputation, and stimulates their impressions of the product. There so many thing which can effect consumer purchase decision one of them is packaging and its elements. For this reason, we conducted research to know views of our respondents about how beverage packaging material specifically impact on their brand association. In this regards, survey was conducted to collect primary data from post graduate students in Rivers state. The data was analyzed using SPSS. Findings suggested that all four elements of the packaging have significant positive association with purchase intention.*

**Keywords:** *Packaging Material, Brand Association, Package Material, Colour, Graphics.*

### INTRODUCTION

In today world there are plenty of organizations working in the market to provide the product according to customer need and to compete with each other. Companies are adopting different techniques to compete with each other and to capture the customer in market. One of the most popular techniques is packaging. Most of the customers are attracted by product packaging. Product packaging gives form to a product. Therefore its importance in the production activities cannot be over emphasized

However, despite the huge investment in developing new product packaging technology customer shun rate in the beverage industry is still very high, hence organisations are not relenting effort in intensive sales promotion and other marketing communication strategies. It is therefore difficult to justify the contribution of product package to the success of the brand in the market. This is probably the reason many beverage organisation give less attention to product package.

What could have accounted for this and what then is the role of package features in consumer perceived brand equity in the beverage industry? It is common to find retail outlets carry variety of brands that are similar in all respect and leaving the consumer with the Borden of choice to make. Besides consumers product primary values, they are also aware they are been influenced by other factors (Levy, 1959). However, what the product do and stand for in the consumers mind are the reason they buy. Poor package features can lead to unintended brand perception. According to Young (2010) "increase in shelf visibility were the single strongest driver of sales increase". In other words "unseen is unsold". However, some organisations that have replaced or better enhance their brand look to influence sales have not recorded success (Young, 2010). Research has empirically revealed that only 10% of new package designs have influenced sale positively, while 20% lead to sales declines. Brand can fail easily than to grow it via packaging.

One is in doubt if package features has a significant relationships with consumer perceived brand equity. This confusion demands scientific investigation most especially to uncover the influence of packaging materials on consumer brand association.

### **Objective of the study**

The aim of this study is to determine the extent to which packaging features influence beverage brand equity among house wives in the south-south geopolitical zone of Nigeria. However, the specific objectives of the study is to establish the extent Package materials influence beverage brand association among among post graduate student in Rivers state..

### **Research Hypotheses**

H1: There is no significant relationship between package material and beverage brand association among post graduate student in Rivers state

### **Significance of the Study**

Package features play important role in product marketing. Product package act as a tool for differentiation and assist consumers in purchase decision. This study will therefore be of immense significance to beverage product manufacturers and marketing executives. The findings of this study will give insight into consumer's response to package characteristic. It will help in planning and designing effective product package. More so, this study will contribute to existing pool of knowledge in this area of study

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Consumer Buying Process**

Decision making involves series of systematic steps which emanates out of conscious effort to arrive at a beneficial outcome (Goodhope, 2013). It therefore, requires a thoughtful process to achieve a rational decision. Making decision as to which brand to buy can be a tasking in the face of lots of alternatives. Lawan & Zanna (2013) opined that decisions are generally made without thinking about how we make them and what is involved in the particular decision-making process itself.

Therefore for every purchase we make there is indeed a decision process which involves input, process and output model (Lawan & Zanna, 2013).The input elements of a decision comprises of the external stimuli which serve as the sources of product information. These information leads to consumer's perceived values, attitudes, and behaviour. When all of these are internalized it they influence consumer's purchase decision (Lawan and Zanna, 2013). Kotler (2000) opined that consumer's decisions making involves five sequential stages. Need recognition is when a consumer is conscious of a need gap. Pre-purchase search is the stage when all alternative to need satisfaction, cost and supplier are identified. The consumer's past experience and exposure will influence the success of this stage. The next stage in the decision process is the evaluation of alternative which is a function of set criteria's. Purchase and post purchase activities stage represent executing the outcome of the evaluation stage and evaluating the decisions to find out whether the need recognized is satisfied.

### **PACKAGING**

Orth and Malkewitz. (2006) stated that design of packaging is the resource of building brand identity. According to (Saeed, Lodhi, Rauf, Rana, Mahmood & Ahmed, 2013), Looking for a good product marker, the number of customers to buy more labeld products. Therefore, the label will influence consumer purchasing behavior, but also to influence consumer purchasing behavior and other factors. Adelina & Morgan (2007), also mentioned in their study that Packaging is one of the most valuable technique for the marketer's to capture customers, packaging and elements can have an impact on consumer purchasing decisions. According to Topoyan and Bulut (2008), packaging has positive effect on brand experience. Customer happiness can be positively impacted by better brand packaging. According to Kuvykaite (2009), packaging also has positive impact on consumer purchase intentions.

## Elements of Packaging

### Graphics

According to P R Smith, (2004) the graphics on the packaging, the brand unique, retain their identity, help in weight to the brand and standing on the shelf. To P R Smith, (2004) also discusses that Graphics Value Added in brand looks and increases its aesthetic quality.

Additionally, creating a favorable sensation, matching graphics, or satisfying a customer's long-hidden wants are frequently included. Graphics of products helps a consumer to find its desired product in many different products, if consumer don't have strong preferences towards your brand at least graphics will grab the attention of consumers (Pinya Silayoi M. S., 2004). Same author also discussed that Visual elements affect consumers make their choice to buy a particular product. According to Lynsey Hollywood, 2013, if product packaging has different images then it can create interest of consumer for that product.

### Color

Keller, (2009) discussed in his study , color is the scope of the packaging, a designer and a certain kind of color, the color of the product of the visual elements is a particularly important part of the vocabulary is to be expected. Keller also discussed that color of packaging and information is an important element of visual design and what it means to be consistent with other marketers are trying to provide. According to Hannele Kauppinen-Raisanen (2010), similar colors of common products are generally accepted, especially when the product range is common.

### Design

According to Arun Kumar Agariya, (2012) Feelings regarding the packaging of consumer goods and retail customers really translated new packaging forms to establish an iconic brand image through diverse forms. Golnesa Ahmadi, (2013), mentioned in his study design of packaging of any product attract consumers and persuades them to purchase that product. Wang (2013), mentions in his study that consumer perception of product quality is directed effected by product packaging.

### Material

According to P R Smith, (2004), material communicates to consumers the value of a given product, just as other visual components of the packaging. Material can also affect the perceived quality of product some products are to be made with the material which can bear the lowest temperature below zero or it can also bear high temperature like microwave, it's all depends on product functionality (P R Smith, 2004).The packaging material is an important element that prevents product from losses.

Like other visual elements of packaging materials also communicate and consumers associate certain intrinsic values with the material of a product [Smith, 2004]. In addition materials also affect the perceived quality of a product, which means consumer perceptions regarding certain materials could change the perceived quality of a product. Depending on the functions of the product and the needs of the user, some packaging materials must be made in a way that allows them to withstand temperatures below zero or high heats in a microwave. [smith, 2004].

In one study on milk packaging by the author in [Lynsey, 2013] Glass, plastic, and cardboard were the three packaging materials mentioned. The research's findings showed that different packaging materials elicited diverse views of packaging. Many people supported using glass packaging for milk containers, but they later complained that it was heavy and needed to be washed after each use. Secondly, with regard to cardboard packaging consumers had negative views about it and they said that this type of packaging do not keep a product fresh and one also cannot see the product and they referred this kind of packaging to UHT treated milks [Lynsey,2013]. Participants in that study advocated the use of plastic containers and agreed that such containers were better than cardboard and glass packaging because their screw top cap prevented the product and were less likely to leak [Lynsey, 2013].

### **Brand association**

Keller (1993) Brand associations are described as informative nodes that are connected to the brand node in memory and contain the significance of the brand for the target audience. The same author classified brand associations in three categories: Attributes, benefits and attitudes. The Brand association might be made through the help of benefits, attitudes and attributes (Severi, Ling, & Nasermodeli, 2014). According to Durianto [(Srivastava & Shocker, 1991)], brand associations are all things related to the brand's memory. Associations may be based on product experience, product attributes, positioning of the brand in promotional communications, price information, packaging, perceived typical user imagery, or other sources. The associations related to the functions represent a greater degree of abstraction than those referring to the attributes, and so are more accessible and remain longer in the consumer's memory (Dean, 2004). Customer knowledge of the brand is necessary to establish brand association in the first place. (Jayswal & Vora 2019. Brand association is often linked with the brand performance (Atilgan, Aksoy, and Akinci 2005) and also create the brand loyalty of the particular brand (Severi & Ling, 2013)

Furthermore, if customers assume that certain brands are physically distinct from their competitors' brands, the brand image will stick constantly so that they can form loyalty to a particular brand, called brand loyalty. Brand association functions are: (1) can help the process of information preparation that can help provide a set of facts and specifications that can be easily recognized by customers. (2) Differentiation or position. The Association can provide an important platform for the distinction between one brand and another (3). Reasons to buy. The brand association is very helpful for customers to make a decision to buy the product or not. (4) Creation of attitude or positive feeling. Brand associations can stimulate positive feelings that will ultimately have a positive impact on the product concerned. (5) Runway for expansion. The brand association can generate the foundation for a brand extension, namely by creating a sense of conformity between a brand and a new product (Srivastava & Shocker, 1991).

The essence of this study is to establish the relationship between beverage package materials and customer brand association.

### **Research methodology**

This study adopted a quantitative research design.

### **Population of the study**

The population of this study consists of Post graduate students in government owned university in Rivers State.

### **Sampling**

We used probability sampling design to select sample from population. Our Sample size of research is 350 respondents from which we collect data.

### **Data collection instrument**

18 item 5-point Likert-type scale questionnaires was used to measure relevant variables of interest.

### **Data analysis approach**

Data collected in the study were transformed into various indicators and scores that are reflective of the various variables. All the questionnaires were coded and entered with the use of SPSS statistical software (Version 20.0.) Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to reveal underlying patterns. While the regression analysis were used to establish relationships amongst the variables of interest.

### **Data analysis**

The total questionnaire distributed was 350 while 346 were returned and used for analysis. Out of the 346 respondent 208 representing 60.1% are male while 39.9% are female. Majority of the

respondent are above 30years old and earned above N 90.000 monthly. Most of the respondents are admitted for MSc/MA degree programs while only 7.2% are admitted for PhD program.

**Table 1. The extent package features are of value to respondents**

		To a very large extent	To a large extent	Undecided	To a little extent	To a very little extent
i	The extent package size is of value to respondents	102 (29.5%)	70 (20.2%)	102 (29.5%)	36 (10.4%)	36 (10.4%)
ii	The extent package colour is of value to respondents	70 (20.2%)	88 (25.4%)	70 (20.2%)	68 (19.7%)	50 (14.5%)
iii	The extent package attractiveness is of value to respondents	68 (19.7)	122 (35.3%)	54 (15.6%)	86 (24%)	16 (4.6%)
iv	The extent package shape is of value to respondents	86 (24.9%)	122 (35.3%)	-	86 (24.9%)	52 (15.0%)
v	The extent package font size is of value to respondents	36 (10.4%)	70 (20.2%)	102 (29.5%)	102 (29.5%)	36 (10.4%)
vi	The extent package picture quality is of value to respondents	86 (24.95)	86 (24.95)	68 (19.7%)	88 (25.4%)	18 (5.2%)
vii	The extent package weight is of value to respondents	88 (25.4%)	136 (39.3%)	18 (5.2%)	70 (20.2%)	34 (9.8%)

Source: Survey, 2022

The table above shows the distribution of respondent's opinion towards the extent package features are of value to them. From the table, package size, weight, shape, colour and attractiveness significantly influence respondent value judgment.

**Table 2: The extent beverage package material influence respondent's value judgment**

		To a very large extent	To a large extent	Undecided	To a little extent	To a very little extent
i	The extent package material quality is of value to respondents	88 (25.4%)	84 (24.3%)	54 (15.6%)	104 (30.1%)	36 (10.6%)
ii	The extent package material durability is of value to respondents	70 (20.2%)	138 (39.9%)	-	70 (20.2%)	68 (19.7%)
iii	The extent package material safety influence respondents value judgment	72 (20.8%)	84 (24.3%)	54 (15.6%)	68 (19.7%)	68 (19.7%)
iv	The extent package material sophistication influence respondents value judgment	70 (20.2%)	88 (25.4%)	36 (10.6%)	120 (34.7%)	32 (9.2%)
v	The extent package material perceived cost influence respondents value judgment	122 (35.3%)	104 (30.1%)	102 (29.5%)	68 (19.7%)	52 (15.0%)
vi	The extent package ease of handle influence respondents beverage value judgment	52 (15.0%)	122 (35.3%)	52 (15.0%)	70 (20.2%)	50 (14.5%)

Source: Survey, 2022

From the table above it was obvious from the study that consumers value beverage package material durability, cost and ease of handle. They are divided over package material quality.

**Table 3: Respondent beverage brand association**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i.	My choice beverage brand is fault free	104 (30.1%)	102 (26.5%)	104 (30.1%)	18 (5.2%)	18 (5.2%)
ii.	My choice beverage brand is nutritionally rich	86 (24.9%)	104 (30.1%)	88 (25.4%)	34 (9.8%)	34 (9.8%)
iii.	My choice beverage brand is flawless in its production	106 (30.6%)	102 (29.5%)	122 (35.3%)	11 (3.2%)	5 (1.5%)

Source: Survey, 2022

The table shows the distribution of respondent's response to the three measure of brand association. 57.65 of the respondents agreed that their choice brands is fault free while a significant number of the respondent are also of the opinion that their beverage brand is nutritionally rich and flawless in its production

**Table 4: Respondent beverage brand association**

		Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
i.	My choice beverage brand is fault free	104 (30.1%)	102 (26.5%)	104 (30.1%)	18 (5.2%)	18 (5.2%)
ii.	My choice beverage brand is nutritionally rich	86 (24.9%)	104 (30.1%)	88 (25.4%)	34 (9.8%)	34 (9.8%)
iii.	My choice beverage brand is flawless in its production	106 (30.6%)	102 (29.5%)	122 (35.3%)	11 (3.2%)	5 (1.5%)

Source: Survey, 2022

The table shows the distribution of respondent's response to the three measure of brand association. 57.65 of the respondents agreed that their choice brands is fault free while a significant number of the respondent are also of the opinion that their beverage brand is nutritionally rich and flawless in its production

**Test of Hypothesis**

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between package materials and beverage brand association.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between package materials and beverage brand association.

**Table 5**

**Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.493 <sup>a</sup>	.243	.232	.96532

a. Predictors: (Constant), The extent package material perceived cost influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material durability influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material quality influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material sophistication influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material safety influence respondents value judgment

**Table 6**

**ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.761	5	20.352	21.841	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	316.828	340	.932		
	Total	418.590	345			

a. Dependent Variable: My choice beverage brand is fault free

b. Predictors: (Constant), The extent package material perceived cost influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material durability influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material quality influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material sophistication influence respondents value judgment, The extent package material safety influence respondents value judgment

**Table 7**

**Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.065	.293		10.452	.000
	The extent package material quality influence respondents value judgment	.079	.042	.094	1.877	.061
	The extent package material durability influence respondents value judgment	-.374	.044	-.499	-8.404	.000
	The extent package material safety influence respondents value judgment	.001	.047	.002	.026	.979
	The extent package material sophistication influence respondents value judgment	-.039	.043	-.047	-.909	.364
	The extent package material perceived cost influence respondents value judgment	.057	.058	.055	.981	.327

a. Dependent Variable: My choice beverage brand is fault free

The regression equation is as follows:

$Y = X_1 + X_2 + X_3 + X_4 + X_5 + X_6 + X_7 + X_8 + X_9$  where

$Y_5$  = My choice beverage brand is fault free

$X_1$  = The extent package material quality influence respondents value judgment.

$X_2$  = The extent package material durability influence respondents value judgment

$X_3$  = The extent package material safety influence respondents value judgment

$X_4$  = The extent package material sophistication influence respondents value judgment.

$X_5$  = The extent package material perceived cost influence respondents value judgment

The dependent variable used for this model is "My choice beverage brand is fault free" with other independent variables classified as package material. The R-Column shows the strength of the relationship. The closer this is to one, the stronger the relationship. The R-square value indicates the proportion of the variance in the dependent variable explained by the model.

The result as seen in table indicates that there is a weak relationship between the variables considered (i.e. the dependent and independent variables) with R-value of 0.493 and R-Square values of 0.243. The implication of the R-square values is that the model accounts for 24.3% of the variations in consumer brand association measured as "extent respondent choice beverage brand is fault free". Therefore the remaining 75.7% are accounted for by other factors not considered in this model. Also, the R2 adjusted indicates that addition or removal of any variable will cause the variation in customers' opinion to be 23.2%. Moreover, only one of the independent variables is significant out of the five used with their p-values less than 0.05.

The model is:

$$Y_5 = 3.065 + -0.374X_2$$

The model derived is significant with p-value less than 0.05 as seen in table above hence; the conclusion that package material does influence beverage brand association.

## CONCLUSION

It was clear from the study that Beverage packaging features significantly influences consumers' brand equity perception in no small measure. Brand equity from the consumer's perspective is the function of the strength of associations, awareness and trust held for a brand. Successful branding entails all activities that help to lower consumer's consumer level of uncertainty in purchasing. There must be frantic effort to ensure there is almost no need customer long decision making process. Effective Product package make shelf visibility enhanced. Therefore, to succeed in today competitive and globalized market, firms need to balance both beverage package features and quality to meet consumer value expectation to build confidence and loyalty.

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