

THE INFLUENCE OF PRODUCT PACKAGING ON THE PURCHASE OF STAPLE COMMODITIES IN LAGOS STATE (USING PZ CUSSONS NIGERIA PLC AND UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC AS A CASE STUDY)

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Abstract: The need for effective product promotion is crucial given the seemingly increasing market competition. In Lagos State, product packaging has come to play a more important role as a brand communication vehicle. The study is a descriptive survey using a structured questionnaire that elicited responses from the respondents within Lagos State, the respondents are made up of consumers of staple commodities produced by Unilever and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc. Structured questionnaires were administered to 204 consumers of products from the two selected companies in Lagos State. The respondents were selected using random sampling technique and oral interaction preceded questionnaire administration. The responses of the respondents on the questionnaire based on their attitudes toward the packaging of the selected staple commodities were analysed using mode, frequency, and percentages. Inferential statistic using Chi square was used in analyzing the two hypotheses. The findings and conclusions of this study indicate that; packaging with its entire attendant element plays a great role in determining consumers choice of staple commodities.

Keywords: influence, packaging, commodities, consumers, point-of-purchase.

1. INTRODUCTION

A number of factors have combined to stimulate the interest of researchers at undertaking a study of consumers' perception of product packaging. The changing needs and preferences of consumers have created opportunities and markets for new products that companies are willing to produce and market. Consumers who have expanded interest in product safety, labelling, and value-added enhanced qualities, have also created opportunities for product packaging development. The need for profit maximization, increased market share, and control of the vertical integration system has caused producers to invest heavily on research and development of product packaging. (St. Everald, 2002)

From the very earliest times, humans consumed food where it was found. Families and villages made or caught what they eat freshly, so there was little need for packaging of goods (Berger, 2002). Packaging became a necessity when food and other items needed to be packed for storage, transportation, and protection, measurement, and display purposes. In the early civilization, nature provided containers like hollowed-out trees and stones. However, as man discovered through

chemistry how to use compounds like ores, product packaging took on new forms whereby; metals and pottery were developed, leading to other packaging forms. Now, packaging has become an important integrative aspect of a manufactured product and often a critical factor in the success or failure of such given product (Schoell, 1985).

Product managers and design firms therefore seek to create packages that break through the cluster of the market-place and communicate positive aesthetic, experiential, functional, symbolic or informational benefits to the consumer. The ability of brands to gain attention and consideration on the basis of their point-of-purchase appearance forms the basis for design strategy, which is particularly important in the case of new brand introductions, brand repositioning, brand extensions and the signaling of product changes (Garber, 1995).

Statement of problem

Packaging of a product is more than a medium of protection and storage or another convenient form for advertising. Due to the significant investments made by marketers on the packaging of their products, one would have to assume that the industry believes that packaging has substantial influence on consumer choice behaviour and product experience. However, Ghoshal (2001), observed that there is little academic literature and discourse on these interactions and no clear theory of how packaging impact on consumers' attitudes and actions.

Product packaging is not just about designing a container for a product; it speaks to the target consumers. It is expected that there should be a relationship between the consumers and the products packaged and to achieve this, package designers need to understand the thought and opinion of consumers on product packaging. Marketing experts such as Abdalkrim and Al-Hrezet (2013), through their various studies highlighted that there are four important functions of packaging- protects products, capture attention of consumers, add value to products through design and structure as well being environmentally friendly. In order to understand which of the various elements are considered important for consumer's purchase design, the need to explore consumer's perception of staple products in Lagos State becomes pertinent. Understanding consumer responses in Nigeria is crucial to companies competing globally. However, as important as package appearance is, there is no comprehensive data or theory available to account for its influence on consideration at the point of purchase.

Research Questions

1. Does packaging influence consumers' acceptance of the selected staple commodities in Lagos State?
2. How do consumers perceive the packaging of the selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State?

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study investigated consumers' attitudes toward the packaging of selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State.

The study specifically:

1. investigated the influence of product packaging of the selected staple commodities on consumers' acceptance in Lagos State, and
2. evaluated consumers' attitudes toward the packaging of selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following hypotheses were raised for the study

Hypothesis1:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

H_1 : There is significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

H_1 : There is significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

Justification

Despite the variety of different consumer studies on packaging, there is still relatively little information for designers to build their creative works on. The theoretical foundations of the present studies are generally in marketing management, therefore, majority of the packaging-related consumer researches leave the questions “why” and “how” unanswered: *Why* consumers respond positively to certain designs and negatively to others? *How* can packages be made meaningful? According to Ghoshal (2001), the answers to these questions are crucial for package designers who would benefit from having a deeper understanding on consumers’ need in creation process.

A survey of the consumers’ attitudes toward product packaging in Lagos State might give product package designers adequate information of what consumers expect and how they view product packaging. Acquiring this knowledge and making use of it could have a positive impact on the producing company in terms of profit maximization and increased market shares. This study will attempt to bridge the gap between the Producing Companies, designers and consumers for effective good services and products delivery.

Over the years many companies producing staple commodities have been known for their incessant change of brands appearance. These changes, in one way or the other, have effect on consumers negatively in the sense that, the consumers are usually confused on which brand to identify with. With adequate information on how consumers perceive packaging of staple goods and the proper evaluation of consumers’ expectation, the researcher is of the view that companies producing staple commodities would be informed of how to achieve stability in products brand appearance.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to the staple commodities packaged by Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State. These two companies have been able to carve a niche for themselves in the Nigerian society, with their wide range of products. Both companies have been in existence long before now, and very much relevant and enhancing sustainable living of their consumers (PZ Cussons Nig. Plc was established in the year 1899 and Unilever Nig. Plc in the year 1923). These companies are among the best manufacturers of leading brands in beverages, home care and personal care products which cut across all ages, gender and social status. This study will be conducted in Lagos State, being Nigeria’s former Federal capital, which is also the commercial and industrial nerve centre of the country. It is also one of the most populated States in Nigeria consisting of people from different ethnic groups with about 17.5million (as at 2006 population census). The scope of this research work covered only the following staple commodities from two companies as stated below.

2. RESEARCH METHOD**Introduction**

This section elucidates the rationale for selecting the research methods and procedures which will be adopted in the course of this study. Kothari (2004) admitted that scientific research is the truth, determined by logical consideration through systematic interrelation of facts. Duyilemi and Duyilemi (2006) stated that research method or methodology is the aspect made up of the research design, population, sampling technique, instrumentation, reliability and validity of instrument, administration of instrument (collection of data), and data analysis.

Research Design

The design that was used for this study was the descriptive research of the survey type. This was for the purpose of eliciting appropriate response from the consumers through a structured questionnaire. The descriptive survey involved meeting the objectives and testing hypotheses for this study. According to Gay (1992), “Descriptive research involves

collecting data in order to test hypotheses or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects of study.” The main purpose of descriptive research is describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions. Survey research is one method of conducting descriptive research which this study adopted. Quantitative approach (close ended questionnaire) was used as research instrument to elicit responses from respondents on the influence product packaging on purchase of staple commodities in Lagos State, Nigeria. This research is to look at the consumers’ attitudes toward packaging in order to gain insight into the opinion, perception, and attitude within the study area.

RESEARCH POPULATION

The research populations for this study are:

- I. The products of the Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc.
- II. The consumers of Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Plc’s products in Lagos State.

SAMPLE FRAME

Sample frame is the complete list of all members/units of the population from which each sampling unit is selected (Panneerselvan, 2007). The following figures were obtained from the Unilever and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc’s website respectively (www.unilevernigeria.com, www.pzcussonsng.com).

I. Products

Unilever Nigeria Plc - 11

- Lux Soap, Close up Toothpaste, Vaseline Body Lotion, Blue band Magerine, Lipton Tea, Pears Baby Lotion, Knorr Cubes, Royco Cubes, Omo Detergent, Sunlight Detergent, Pepsodent Toothpaste, Lifebuoy Antiseptic Soap

PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc – 20

- Elephant Gold Detergent, Elephant Colour Detergent, Cussons Baby Lotion, Robb Coast milk, Yo yogought, Zip Detergent, Jet detergent, Morning fresh Liquid Soap
- Imperial Leather Soap, Joy Soap, Canoe green Soap, Duck Soap, Venus Body Cream
- Carex Soap, Olympic Milk, Nunu Milk, Stella pomade, Everyday Sanitary Pad, Robert Antiseptic

II. Consumers of Unilever and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc’s product in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Sample Size

A sample size of 204 people was considered suitable for the study because of cost and time to sample a large population. The 204 respondents were selected and sampled from Lagos State, Nigeria.

UNILEVER

- Pears baby range
- Lux Soap
- Lifebuoy Antiseptic Soap
- Omo Detergent
- Sunlight Detergent
- Vaseline Body Lotion

PZ CUSSONS

- Cussons baby range
- Joy Soap
- Imperial leather Soap
- Elephant Gold Detergent
- Elephant Colour Detergent
- Venus Body Cream

Stratified random sampling was chosen because in the course of this study, there was comparism between the products packaged by Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc. Therefore, the choice of similar and comparable goods from both companies was necessary.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The population of the study in Lagos State was randomly sampled and questionnaires were administered to respondents.

Method of Data collection

The data for the study was collected through administration of questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of 3 parts; personal data and product package data (2 parts). This was administered to obtain relevant data that satisfied the research objectives 1 to 4. The scaling model that was used is the modified Likert scaling.

Tick right the appropriate

U	SD	D	A	SA
1	2	3	4	5

Where U = Undecided, SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree (source): Nworgu (1997) in Adiji (2006)

Data Collection Instrument

The study was carried out by collecting data through questionnaire administered to the consumers of staple commodities from Unilever and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State. The data collection instrument that was used for this study was structured questionnaire. The structured questionnaire is one that consists of specific questions and restricted sets of possible responses. The questionnaire was closed-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was based on the Likert Scale model and also questions with a YES/NO response. This model makes statements to tap opinion, and providing responses on the five point scale: Strongly Agree (S.A.), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (S.D). The questionnaire designed in a manner that obtained relevant data that satisfied the objectives of this study.

Method of Data Analysis

The questionnaires were given numerical value of response as 1,2,3,4 and 5. These values gave room for easy interpretation and justification for statistical analysis in order to validate or nullify the hypothesis generated with the aid of SPSS software. The collected questionnaire were analyzed using frequency distribution, percentage, and mode. Percentages and frequencies were used to determine the demographic information.

The responses of the respondents on the questionnaire based on their attitudes toward the packaging of the selected staple commodities were analysed using mode, frequency, and percentages. Inferential statistic using Chi square was used to analyse the two hypotheses. According to Kunle and Muyiwa (2005), Chi-square is a reliable statistical tool for testing hypothesis correctly.

Mathematically, the Chi-square formula is given as:
$$x^2 = \frac{\sum (fo - fe)^2}{\sum fe}$$

Where x^2 = Chi-square, fo = frequency obtained and fe = frequency expected

3. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT PRESENTATION**Introduction**

The research findings and analysis of the data collected from the respondents were discussed under this heading. The discussion would be based on the objectives, research questions and postulated research hypotheses of the study. In the analysis, descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage and mode were used with the aid of SPSS 16 software. The researcher personally distributed questionnaires to the respondents with the help of a field assistant, and postgraduate student. A total number of two hundred and four (204) questionnaires were administered, and all were returned representing 100% of the total administered.

Table 1: Consumers' attitudes towards the packaging of selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria plc in Lagos State

Variables	Response	Frequency 204	Percent 100.0	Mode
I use any of the PZ Cussons Nig Plc staple commodities more often	Strongly Agreed	40	19.6	4
	Agreed	108	52.9	
	Strongly Disagreed	8	3.9	
	Disagreed	24	11.8	
	Undecided	24	11.8	
I use any of the Unilever Nig Plc staple commodities more often	Strongly Agreed	50	24.5	4
	Agreed	112	54.9	
	Strongly Disagreed	12	5.9	
	Disagreed	16	7.8	
	Undecided	14	6.9	
Product from the two companies were comparable in terms of packaging and branding	Strongly Agreed	42	20.6	4
	Agreed	124	60.8	
	Strongly Disagreed	8	3.9	
	Disagreed	18	8.8	
	Undecided	12	5.9	
Consumers prefer the packaging of Pears Baby range to Cussons Baby range	Strongly Agreed	48	23.5	4
	Agreed	76	37.3	
	Strongly Disagreed	16	7.8	
	Disagreed	46	22.5	
	Undecided	18	8.8	
Consumers prefer the packaging of Lux soap to Joy soap	Strongly Agreed	53	26.0	4
	Agreed	64	31.4	
	Strongly Disagreed	30	14.7	
	Disagreed	40	19.6	
	Undecided	17	8.3	
Consumers prefer the packaging of Omo detergent to Elephant colour	Strongly Agreed	42	20.6	4
	Agreed	96	47.1	
	Strongly Disagreed	18	8.8	
	Disagreed	36	17.6	
	Undecided	12	5.9	
Consumers prefer the packaging of Sunlight to Elephant Gold	Strongly Agreed	54	26.5	4
	Agreed	80	39.2	
	Strongly Disagreed	30	14.7	
	Disagreed	26	12.7	
	Undecided	14	6.9	
Consumers prefer the packaging Vaseline to Venus	Strongly Agreed	39	19.1	4
	Agreed	70	34.3	
	Strongly Disagreed	46	22.5	
	Disagreed	38	18.6	
	Undecided	11	5.4	
	Total	204	100.0	
Consumers prefer the packaging of Lifebouy soap to Imperial Leather soap	Strongly Agreed	24	11.8	3
	Agreed	46	22.5	
	Strongly Disagreed	63	30.9	
	Disagreed	56	27.5	
	Undecided	17	8.3	

Source: Author's fieldwork (2014)

From the table above, 40 (19.6%) strongly agreed that I use any of the PZ Cussons Nig Plc staple commodities more often, 108 (52.9%) agreed, 8 (3.9%) strongly disagreed, 24 (11.8%) while, 24 (11.8%) were undecided.

That I use any of the Unilever Nig Plc staple commodities more often, the results obtained reveal that, 50 (24.5%) strongly agreed, 112 (54.9%) agreed, 12 (5.9%) strongly disagreed, 16 (7.8%) disagreed while, 14 (6.9%) were undecided.

The opinion of 204 respondents that product from the two companies is comparable in terms of packaging and branding reveals that 42 (20.6%) strongly agreed, 124 (60.8%) agreed, 8 (3.9%) strongly disagreed, 18 (8.8%) disagreed, and 12 (5.9%) were undecided.

On the question that consumers prefer the packaging of Pears baby range to Cussons baby range, the response shows, 48 (23.5%) strongly agreed, 76 (37.3%) agreed, 16 (7.8%) strongly disagreed, 46 (22.5%) disagreed and, 18 (8.8%) undecided.

The response on whether consumers prefer the packaging of Lux soap to Joy soap, 53 (26%) strongly agreed, 64 (31.4%) agreed, 30 (14.7%) strongly disagreed, 40 (19.6%) disagreed while, 17 (8.3%) were undecided.

The table above shows that 42 (20.6%) strongly agreed that consumers prefer the packaging of Omo detergent to Elephant colour, 96 (47.1%) agreed, 18 (8.8%) strongly disagreed, 36 (17.6%) disagreed and, 12 (5.9%) were undecided.

54 (26.5) out of 204 respondents strongly agreed that consumers prefer the packaging of Sunlight to Elephant gold while, 80 (39.2%) agreed, 30 (14.7%) strongly disagreed, 26 (12.7%) disagreed, and 14 (6.9%) undecided.

The response gotten from the respondents that consumer prefer the packaging of Vaseline to Venus shows that, 39 (19.1%) strongly agreed, 70 (34.3%) agreed, 46 (22.5%) strongly disagreed, 38 (18.6%) disagreed while, 11 (5.4%) were undecided.

The question on whether consumers prefer the packaging of Lifebouy soap to Imperial Leather soap received these responses, 24 (11.8%) strongly agreed, 46 (22.5%) agreed, 63 (30.9%) strongly disagreed, 56 (27.5%) disagreed while 17 (8.3%) were undecided.

Table 2: General Opinion Question

Variables	Response	Frequency 204	Percentage 100.0	Mode	
Companies producing staple commodities should focus more on packaging	Strongly Agreed	80	39.2	5	
	Agreed	78	38.2		
	Strongly Disagreed	16	7.8		
	Disagreed	20	9.8		
Packaging cannot make any further contribution to the product brand	Undecided	10	4.9	3	
	Strongly Agreed	12	5.9		
	Agreed	16	7.8		
	Strongly Disagreed	90	44.1		
	Disagreed	70	34.3		
Why do you buy any of the selected staple commodities?	Undecided	16	7.8	1	
	Because of advert	Yes	134		65.7
	No	62	30.4		
	Undecided	8	3.9		
Peer Influence	Yes	106	52.3	1	
	No	86	42.1		
	Undecided	12	5.9		
Packaging	Yes	182	89.2	1	
	No	20	9.8		
	Undecided	2	0.9		
Brand Name	Yes	164	80.4	1	
	No	34	16.6		
	Undecided	6	2.9		

Source: Author's fieldwork (2014)

The responses to whether companies producing staple commodities should focus more on packaging reveals that, 80 (39.2%) strongly agreed, 78 (38.2%) agreed, 16 (7.8%) strongly disagreed, 20 (9.8%) disagreed and 10 (4.9%) were undecided.

Out of 204 respondents, 12 (5.9%) strongly agreed that packaging cannot make any further contribution to the product brand, 16 (7.8%) agreed, 90 (44.1%) strongly disagreed, 70 (34.3%) disagreed while, 16 (7.8%) were undecided.

The results on why do you buy any of the following; pears baby range, cussons baby range, lux, joy, omo, sunlight, vaseline, venus, lifebouy, imperial leather, elephant gold and colour shows that, 134 (65.7%) responded yes to because of the advert, 62 (30.4%) no while, 8 (3.9%) were undecided

The opinion of 204 respondents that were sought on why do you buy any of the following; pears baby range, cussons baby range, lux, joy, omo, sunlight, vaseline, venus, lifebouy, imperial leather, elephant gold and colour reveals that, 106 (52.3%) responded yes to peer influence, 86 (42.1%) no while, 12 (5.9%) were undecided.

Why do you buy any of the following; pears baby range, cussons baby range, lux, joy, omo, sunlight, vaseline, venus, lifebouy, imperial leather, elephant gold and colour, the analysis reveals that 182 (89.2%) responded yes to packaging, 20 (9.8%) responded no while, 2 (0.9%) were undecided.

In response to why do you buy any of the following; pears baby range, cussons baby range, lux, joy, omo, sunlight, vaseline, venus, lifebouy, imperial leather, elephant gold and colour, the result shows that 164 (80.4%) responded yes to brand name, 34 (16.6%) responded no while, 6 (2.9%) were undecided.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

	Product packaging is very important to consumers in the purchase of staple commodities	The quality of a good staple commodities can be perceived from the packaging	Good packaging serves the needs for showcasing the brand and act as a means of communicating product information
Chi-Square	8.000	4.000	5.333
Df	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.092	.406	.255

Source: Author's fieldwork (2014)

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

	Product from the two companies are comparable in terms of packaging and branding	Consumers prefer the packaging of Pears Baby range to Cussons Baby range	Consumers prefer the packaging of Lux soap to Joy soap	Consumers prefer the packaging of Omo detergent to Elephant	Consumers prefer the packaging of Vaseline to Venus	Consumers prefer the packaging of Lifebuoy soap to Imperial Leather soap
Chi-Square	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
Df	4	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000

Source: Author's fieldwork (2014)

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Having presented the results of the study, this chapter presents the discussion from the results and they are as follows:-

Influence of product packaging of the selected staple commodities on consumers' acceptance in Lagos State

Research objective two is on how the product packaging of the selected staple commodities influence consumers' acceptance in Lagos State. The consumers laid credence to the fact that product packaging is very important to consumers in the purchase of staple commodities as shown in the result where, 192 (94.1%) of the respondents believed the assertion while, the perceived view that packaging is only a minor consideration for staple commodities was refuted by the consumers. The consumers also admitted that the quality of a good staple commodity can be perceived from the packaging, and submitted that good packaging serves the needs of showcasing brand and act as a means of communicating product's information This finding is also corroborated by Brassington and Pettit (1997), that packaging

is an important part of the product that not only serves a functional purpose, but also acts as a means of communicating product information and brand character. In addition to offering functional information about product identity and use, packaging also serves a promotional purpose.

The packaging is said to be a critical factor in the decision-making process because it communicates to the consumer as stated by Silayoi and Speece (2004). Companies producing staple commodities could source more attractive packaging than their competitors in order to appear as though their products are of higher quality, even if the price is comparable. By presenting products as higher in quality due to the attractive packaging when compared with the competition, companies producing staple commodities can have a competitive advantage in their market segment due to the power of the relationship between packaging and quality in determining consumer purchasing decisions.

Consumers choose products (brands) through perception and the use of their visual and tactile senses. A package design that draws consumers' attention provokes impressions and associations for consumers to be interpreted. Packaging influences consumers' acceptance of staple commodities through various means. Creusen and Schoormans (2005) have studied the ways product appearance influences consumers' choice and identified six appearance roles: (1) communication of aesthetic, (2) symbolic, (3) functional, and (4) ergonomic information, (5) attention drawing; and (6) categorization, this was confirmed by the result of response by consumers of staple commodities in Lagos State as shown in table 4. A product's appearance can have aesthetic and symbolic value for consumers, communicate functional characteristics and give a quality impression (functional value), and communicate ease of use (ergonomic value).

Respondents were asked to indicate how the packaging of the selected staple commodities influence their acceptance using six dimensions presented in Table 1. From the result, it can be inferred that the acceptance of soap in Lagos State is largely influenced by communication of aesthetic, followed by attention drawing, functionalism, categorisation of product and symbolism then lastly, ergonomic information. The researcher opined that, consumers are most likely to accept soap with packaging that looks appealing and eye-catching as seen in the result. The consumers submitted that product packaging influences consumers' acceptance of baby range products in Lagos State through communication of aesthetic and functionalism followed by categorisation of product, attention drawing and symbolism, then lastly, ergonomic information. The finding shows that consumers are more likely to accept baby range of products with packaging that is visually appealing, gives functional and quality impression.

The perceived view that product packaging influences consumers' acceptance of detergents in Lagos State was supported by the respondents. Majority of the consumers agreed that their product packaging influence them through communication of aesthetic and functionalism which is followed by, attention drawing, ergonomic information, symbolism then categorisation of product. From the result, it can be deducted that the acceptance of detergents in Lagos State are largely influenced by how visually appealing it is, the functional and quality impression it gives. For body cream, the findings shows that the consumers are mostly influenced by product packaging through communication of aesthetic, followed by, functionalism, attention drawing, ergonomic information, categorization of product then symbolism.

Consumers' attitudes towards the packaging of selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc in Lagos State

Research objective two is on the attitude that is the way consumers think or feel about the packaging of selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc and the question was examined through, if the respondents use any of the staple commodities and also which of the staple commodities do they prefer by comparing packaging of similar products from the two companies. On the issue of usage, 148 (72.5%) of the respondents admitted that they use any of the staple commodities from PZ Cussons Nig Plc more often. 162 (79.4%) of the respondents acceded to the fact that they use any of the Unilever Nig Plc staple commodities from Unilever Nig Plc staple commodities more often.

When asked if the products from the two companies (PZ Cussons Nig. Plc and Unilever Nig. Plc) are comparable in terms of packaging and branding, 166 (81.4%) out of 204 respondents agreed to this view. The researcher opined, since the two companies are into production of similar products, there is a likelihood of competition to be high, in terms of packaging and branding. It is revealed that most of the respondents in Lagos State prefer the packaging of Pears baby range to

Cussons baby range, this implies that consumers are likely to buy and choose the Pear baby range over Cussons baby range.

Comparing the packaging of Lux soap to Joy soap, majority of the respondent admitted to the preference of the former, which literally means consumers are likely to buy Lux soap more than Joy soap. 138 (67.7%) of the respondents in the study area admitted that they prefer the packaging of Omo detergent to Elephant colour detergent. 134 (65.7%) of the consumers also stated that they prefer the packaging of Sunlight to Elephant Gold detergent. The result also revealed that consumers prefer the packaging of Vaseline to Venus body lotion. As for the packaging of Lifebouy soap to Imperial Leather soap, majority of the respondents acceded to preferring the packaging of Imperial Leather soap more. According to the result, the researcher concluded that consumers will rather buy the product whose packaging they prefer most, this view is supported by the response gotten from consumers in table 6, when asked why they buy any of the staple commodities, majority laid credence to the fact that it is because of the packaging.

The consumers submitted that companies producing staple commodities should focus more on packaging, and refuted the view that packaging cannot make any further contribution to the product. So, packaging performs an important role in marketing communications, especially in the point of sale and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision (Deliya & Parmar, 2012). Package design informs consumers' attitudes toward product and brand and these perceptions dictate their attitudes towards a product and their purchasing behavior; attractive packaging is associated with quality products by consumers and therefore can generate sales when compared with competing products at comparable cost in ordinary packages; and also, consumers prefer packaging that communicates clearly about the product and its story. In other words, staple commodities should be able to sell itself via its packaging.

HYPOTHESES TESTING

Under this heading, the postulated hypotheses were analyzed. Hypothesis testing helps to establish if a statistical difference is significant or not. In order to determine the significance, the computed value was compared with the appropriate critical value (table value) at a chosen level of significance. In this case, 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) significant level or 95% confidence level was used to either reject or accept the hypotheses. This implies that 5% is the allowable errors for testing the hypotheses for this study. In order to test the hypothesis, the degree of freedom (df) were calculated from the contingency table. The result of the Chi-square analysis for the test of hypotheses is as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

Versus

H_1 : There is significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Decision rule: Reject H_0 if $\chi_c^2 > \chi_{0.05}^2$

Where $\chi_{0.05}^2$ is 12.8

Conclusion: Since $\chi_c^2 > \chi_{0.05}^2$, we have statistical reason to reject H_0 and concluded that there is significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State

The result presented showed that there is significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State. Majority of the respondents agreed that Product packaging is very important to consumers in the purchase of staple commodities. As a result of the tested hypothesis one would agree that there is significant relationship between the packaging of staple commodities and consumer patronage in Lagos State.

Hypothesis 2:

H_0 : There is no significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

Versus

H_1 : There is significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

$$\alpha = 0.05$$

Where $\chi^2_{0.05}$ is 18.5

Decision rule: Reject H_0 if $\chi_c^2 > \chi_{0.05}^2$

Conclusion: Since $\chi_c^2 > \chi_{0.05}^2$, we have statistical reason to reject H_0 and concluded that there is significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State

On the hypothesis of whether, there is significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc in Lagos State was rejected while it was concluded that there is significant difference between the packaging of selected commodities of Unilever plc and PZ Cussons plc.

5. CONCLUSION

When consumers are to choose among competing products consumers are faced with quality and product performance uncertainty, hence, they rely on cues, for instance brand name, price, and warranty which are some of the information on product labels, as signals of perceived quality. This study also discovered that consumers will readily purchase or develop a positive attitude toward products with packages that are appealing, eye-catching and functional in use. The conclusion of this study is that the visual and aesthetic dimension of packaging should be taken seriously into account because it transfers undercover messages; as it seems the most important package design attributes are those which are not just attractive but also play a functional role.

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