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Role of product packaging in influencing consumer purchase decisions and brand perception

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Abstract

Packaging is an important marketing tool that significantly influences consumer purchase decisions, product perceptions, and brand image. The present study examined packaging preferences and perceptions among 150 women consumers in Udaipur city, Rajasthan, including 75 working women and 75 non-working women. Data were collected through a self-structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequency, percentage, and mean score methods. The findings revealed that packaging convenience plays a major role in purchasing decisions, with ease of handling and clear product information being highly valued by respondents. Functional features such as reusable or resealable packaging and effective product protection were also strongly preferred. Packaging attributes including colour, labeling clarity, and brand representation received high ratings, indicating their importance in shaping consumer perceptions. Environmental sustainability emerged as a key concern, with a large proportion of respondents expressing a preference for eco-friendly packaging materials. In addition, most women associated packaging with product safety, freshness, and brand identity, highlighting its broader role beyond product protection. Overall, the study demonstrates that attractive, informative, functional, and sustainable packaging has a strong impact on consumer trust, brand perception, and buying behaviour. These findings suggest that manufacturers and marketers should focus on developing innovative and environmentally responsible packaging solutions to enhance consumer satisfaction and strengthen their competitive position in the market.

Keywords: Product packaging, consumer preferences, consumer perception, purchase decision, brand image, sustainable packaging

1. Introduction

Product packaging has evolved from being a simple protective covering to becoming an important marketing and communication tool in today's competitive marketplace. Traditionally, packaging was mainly used to protect products from damage, contamination, and spoilage during storage and transportation. However, modern packaging performs a much broader role. It helps attract consumer attention, provides essential product information, strengthens brand identity, and influences purchasing decisions. Packaging serves as a key point of interaction between consumers and products, where visual appearance, structural design, and informational content shape consumers' perceptions even before they use the product. These packaging elements create expectations regarding product quality, safety, and value, making packaging a significant factor in consumer decision-making (Rundh, 2016) [2].

Modern packaging serves both functional and promotional purposes. From a functional perspective, packaging helps protect the product, maintain its quality, and facilitate storage, handling, and transportation. At the same time, it acts as an important marketing tool by using elements such as colour, graphics, typography, layout, and packaging materials to distinguish products from competitors and create a positive emotional connection with consumers. Studies have shown that visual packaging features can strongly influence purchase intentions by enhancing consumers' overall brand experience. Among these elements, colour and graphics play a particularly important role in attracting attention and shaping buying decisions.

In addition, clear and informative labeling helps consumers better understand product characteristics, reduces uncertainty during the purchasing process, and builds trust by enabling more informed and confident choices (Silayoi & Speece, 2007) [3].

Consumer preferences for product packaging are increasingly influenced by factors such as visual appeal, convenience, and environmental sustainability. Packaging features like ease of handling, resealability, and portability improve product usability and enhance the overall consumer experience. At the same time, the growing awareness of environmental issues has increased consumer interest in eco-friendly packaging materials. Research suggests that perceived environmental benefits, ecological concerns, and positive attitudes toward sustainable packaging significantly influence consumers' purchasing decisions for environmentally friendly products. However, sustainable packaging may also present certain challenges. Packaging with unfamiliar designs or less attractive aesthetics can reduce consumers' willingness to pay, even when it offers environmental benefits. Therefore, it is important for manufacturers to balance sustainable packaging practices with appealing sensory and visual design elements to effectively meet consumer expectations and encourage purchase behaviour (Magnier *et al.*, 2016) [1].

From a marketing perspective, packaging plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior and is often referred to as a "silent salesman" at the point of purchase. It helps distinguish a brand from its competitors, especially in markets where products offer similar features and benefits. Packaging serves as an effective communication tool by conveying information about product quality, value, and brand identity, while its visual appeal can attract consumers and encourage impulse purchases. In today's highly competitive marketplace, where consumers are increasingly concerned about product transparency and environmental sustainability, understanding the impact of packaging attributes on consumer preferences and perceptions has become essential. Such knowledge can help manufacturers and marketers develop packaging strategies that meet consumer expectations, improve satisfaction, strengthen brand loyalty, and provide a competitive advantage in the market (Underwood, 2003) [4].

2. Methodology

The study titled "A Study on Consumer Preferences and Perceptions Regarding Product Packaging" was undertaken to investigate the role of packaging in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. An exploratory research design was adopted for the study, which was conducted in Udaipur city, Rajasthan. The sample consisted of 150 women consumers, including 75 working women and 75 non-working women, aged between 20 and 50 years. Respondents were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

Data were collected through a self-structured questionnaire designed to gather information on the respondents' demographic characteristics, packaging preferences, and perceptions regarding the influence of packaging on purchase decisions. Consumer responses were measured using a three-point Likert scale comprising Agree, Neutral, and Disagree categories. This approach helped in systematically assessing consumer opinions and evaluating the importance of different packaging factors in the decision-making process.

Data were collected through the personal administration of a structured questionnaire after clearly explaining the purpose of the study to the respondents. Once collected, the data were coded, classified, organized, and tabulated for analysis. Microsoft Excel was used to process and analyze the data. Statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, mean, and ranking were applied to examine consumer preferences and identify the packaging factors that have the greatest influence on purchasing decisions.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study provide an analysis of product packaging preferences and perceptions among working and non-working women consumers in Udaipur city. Data were collected from 150 respondents using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through frequency distribution, percentage, and mean score methods. The findings have been presented under key dimensions of packaging, including convenience, clarity of information, visual and design features, environmental sustainability, product safety, and brand association. These aspects were examined to understand their role in shaping consumer perceptions and influencing purchasing decisions.

Table 1 outlines the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The results indicate that the largest proportion of respondents (45.3%) belonged to the 30-40 years age group, followed by those aged 20-30 years (34.0%). Since the study focused on women consumers, all respondents were female. In terms of educational qualification, graduates and postgraduates each represented 33.3% of the sample, reflecting a relatively well-educated group of participants. Regarding occupation, the majority of working women were employed in the private sector (64.0%), whereas most non-working women were homemakers (92.0%). With respect to monthly family income, the highest percentage of respondents (36.6%) reported an income ranging from ₹0,001 to 30,000, while 33.3% fell within the 30,001-50,000 income category. The findings also show that most respondents were married (78.0%), and more than half (56.0%) belonged to joint families. Overall, the sample mainly consisted of educated, married, middle-aged women from middle-income households, providing an appropriate population for examining consumer preferences and perceptions related to product packaging.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to the General Information

S. No	Parameter	Working women(n = 75)		Non-working women (75)		Total (150)	
		f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
1.	Age (in years)						
a.	20-30	31	41.3	20	26.6	51	34.0
b.	30-40	26	34.6	42	56.0	68	45.3
c.	40-50	18	24.0	13	17.3	31	46.5
2.	Gender						
a.	Male	0	0	0	0	0	0
b.	Female	75	100	75	100	150	100
c.	Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Educational Qualification						
a.	Primary	0	0	11	14.6	11	7.3
b.	Secondary	4	5.3	16	21.3	20	13.3
c.	Higher Secondary	10	13.3	9	12.0	19	12.6
d.	Graduate	29	38.6	21	28.0	50	33.3
e.	Post Graduate	32	42.6	18	24.0	50	66.6
4.	Occupation						
a.	Student	0	0	6	8	6	4
b.	Government Employee	11	14.6	0.0	0.0	11	7.3
c.	Private Employee	48	64.0	0.0	0.0	48	32
D.	Business	16	21.33	0.0	0.0	10	6.6
e.	Homemaker	0	0.0	69	92.0	69	46
f.	Others	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0
5.	Monthly Family Income						
a.	Below ₹10,000	6	8.0	0	0.0	6	4.0
b.	₹10,001-20,000	7	9.3	14	18.6	21	14.0
c.	₹20,001-30,000	18	24.0	37	49.3	55	36.6
d.	₹30,001-50,000	26	34.6	24	32.0	50	33.3
e.	Above ₹50,000	18	24.0	0	0.0	18	12.0
6.	Marital Status						
a.	Married	53	70.6	64	85.3	117	78.0
b.	Unmarried	20	26.6	11	14.6	31	20.6
c.	Widowed	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.6
d.	Divorced	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.6
7.	Family Type						
a.	Nuclear	42	56.0	24	32.0	66	44.0
b.	Joint	33	44.0	51	68.0	84	56.0

Table 2 presents the responses of working and non-working women regarding the convenience and handling aspects of product packaging. The findings suggest that packaging convenience plays a significant role in influencing consumers' purchasing decisions. A majority of respondents stated that ease of handling consistently affects their buying choices, as reported by 68.0% of working women and 60.0% of non-working women. Similarly, ease of storage was considered an important factor by 54.6% of working women and 44.0% of non-working women. Clear and

detailed product information was also highly valued, with 72.0% of working women and 84.0% of non-working women considering it important. In addition, creative packaging was found to attract consumers' attention, particularly among non-working women, with 68.0% of working women and 92.0% of non-working women reporting its influence. Overall, the results indicate that packaging that is convenient to use, provides clear information, and has an attractive design can positively influence consumer purchase decisions.

Table 2: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Convenience and Handling Factors of Packaging

S. No	Question	Working women (n = 75)			Non-working women (n = 75)		
		Always f (%)	Sometimes f (%)	Never f (%)	Always f (%)	Sometimes f (%)	Never f (%)
1.	Are your purchase decisions influenced by ease of handling?	51(68.0)	21(28.0)	3(4.0)	45(60.0)	29(38.6)	1(1.3)
2.	Do you care about the packaging's ease of storage?	41(54.6)	32(42.6)	2(2.6)	33(44.0)	29(38.6)	1(1.3)
3.	Should product information be clearly shown on packaging?	54(72.0)	18(24.0)	3(4.0)	63(84.0)	11(18.6)	1(1.3)
4.	Does creative packaging draw your attention?	51(68.0)	23(30.6)	1(1.3)	69(92.0)	6(8.0)	0(0.0)

Table 3 demonstrates that functional packaging features are an important consideration in consumer preferences. A large majority of respondents (96.6%) expressed a preference for packaging that is reusable or resealable, highlighting the value they place on convenience and practicality. Similarly, 91.3% of the respondents favored impenetrable packaging, as it provides better protection and enhances product safety. Lightweight packaging was also preferred by more than half

of the respondents (54.6%), with working women showing a greater preference for this feature compared to non-working women. Overall, the findings suggest that consumers highly appreciate packaging that combines convenience, reusability, durability, and effective product protection, making these features important factors in their purchasing decisions.

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Functional Packaging Features

S. No	Question	Working women(n = 75)		Non-working (n = 75)		Total (150)	
		Yes f (%)	No f (%)	Yes f (%)	No f (%)	Yes f (%)	No f (%)
1	Do you prefer packaging that can be reused or resealed?	70(93.3)	5(6.6)	75(100)	0(0.0)	145(96.6)	5(3.3)
2	Do you recommend lightweight packaging?	47(62.6)	28(37.3)	35(46.6)	40(53.3)	82(54.6)	68(45.3)
3	Should packaging be impenetrable?	65(86.6)	10(13.3)	72(96.0)	3(4.0)	137(91.3)	13(8.6)

Table 4 reveals that various packaging attributes have a strong influence on consumers' perceptions of products and brands. Packaging color was considered an important factor by respondents, with mean scores of 4.3 among working women and 4.8 among non-working women. Similarly, clarity of labeling received high ratings, recording mean scores of 4.6 and 4.8 among working and non-working women, respectively. Packaging durability was also regarded as an important attribute, with mean scores of 4.2 for working women and 4.0 for non-working women. The

highest level of agreement was observed for the statement that packaging should reflect the brand image and product quality, which received mean scores of 4.3 among working women and 4.9 among non-working women. Overall, the findings suggest that consumers highly value packaging that is visually appealing, informative, durable, and capable of conveying brand quality, as these factors play a significant role in shaping brand perception and influencing purchase decisions.

Table 4: Mean Score Distribution of Respondents According to Importance and Brand Perception Toward

S. No	Question	Working women (n = 75)							Non-working women (n = 75)						
		S	A	N	D	SD	Total	mean	SA	A	N	D	SD	Total	mean
1	How important is packaging color?	42	20	9	4	0	325	4.3	65	10	0	0	0	365	4.8
2	Is clarity of labeling crucial?	55	15	5	0	0	380	4.6	66	8	1	0	0	365	4.8
3	Do you value packaging durability?	30	36	6	3	0	318	4.2	33	22	12	8	0	305	4.0
4	Packaging should reflect brand image and quality.	37	27	9	2	0	324	4.3	70	4	1	0	0	369	4.9

Table 5 indicates that respondents were highly aware of and concerned about the environmental impact of product packaging. A substantial proportion of working women (73.3%) and non-working women (62.6%) reported being extremely concerned about the use of eco-friendly packaging. Likewise, concern regarding the recyclability of packaging materials was considerable, with 65.3% of working women and 49.3% of non-working women

expressing a high level of concern. In addition, more than half of the respondents in both groups (54.6% of working women and 54.4% of non-working women) were extremely concerned about excessive or unnecessary packaging. These findings suggest that consumers place significant importance on environmental sustainability and show a strong preference for packaging that is recyclable, eco-friendly, and environmentally responsible.

Table 5: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Environmental Concern Toward Packaging

S. No	Question	Working women(n = 75)			Non-working women(75)		
		Extremely Concerned f (%)	Moderately Concerned f (%)	Unconcerned f (%)	Extremely Concerned f (%)	Moderately Concerned f (%)	Unconcerned f (%)
1	Are you concerned about eco-friendly packaging?	55(73.3)	20(26.6)	0(0)	47(62.6)	27(36)	1(1.3)
2	Are you concerned about the recyclability of packaging materials?	49(65.3)	26(34.6)	0(0)	37(49.3)	35(46.6)	3(4)
3	Are you concerned about excessive or unnecessary packaging of products?	41(54.6)	27(36)	7(9.3)	41(54.4)	28(37.3)	6(8)

Table 6 shows that respondents had generally positive perceptions of product packaging and acknowledged its important role in product evaluation and purchasing decisions. A large proportion of both working and non-working women agreed that packaging helps ensure product safety, with 88.0% of working women and 97.3% of non-working women expressing this view. Similarly, most respondents believed that packaging plays a key role in maintaining product freshness, as reported by 86.6% of working women and 94.6% of non-working women. Attractive packaging was also considered an important factor, with 76.0% of working women and 92.0% of non-working women agreeing that it increases product appeal. In addition, a majority of respondents felt that packaging reflects product quality (70.0% of working women and 77.3% of non-working women) and contributes to building

and strengthening brand identity (84.0% and 88.0%, respectively). These findings indicate that consumers perceive packaging as a valuable element that influences both product perception and purchasing behavior.

The findings further indicate that packaging has a significant influence on consumer trust, brand perception, and purchasing behavior. More than half of the working women (53.3%) and 40.0% of the non-working women agreed that packaging affects their purchase decisions. Similarly, 49.3% of working women and a notably higher proportion of non-working women (80.0%) reported that packaging influences their perception of a brand's value. These results highlight the important role of packaging in shaping consumer opinions, enhancing product attractiveness, strengthening brand image, and ultimately affecting buying decisions.

Table 6: Percentage Distribution of Respondents According to Perception Toward Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour

S. No.	Statement	Working women(n = 75)			Non-working women (n = 75)		
		Agree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Disagree f (%)	Agree f (%)	Neutral f (%)	Disagree f (%)
1	Product safety is guaranteed by packaging	66(88)	8(10.6)	1(1.3)	73(97.3)	2(2.6)	0(0.0)
2	Product freshness is maintained by good packaging.	65(86.6)	7(9.3)	3(4.0)	71(94.6)	4(5.3)	0(0.0)
3	Product attractiveness is increased by attractive packaging.	57(76.0)	17(22.6)	1(1.3)	69(92.0)	6(8.0)	0(0.0)
4	Product quality is reflected in packaging.	53(70.0)	16(21.3)	6(8.0)	58(77.3)	17(22.6)	0(0.0)
5	Packaging aids in brand identity	63(84.0)	10(13.3)	2(2.6)	66(88.0)	8(10.6)	1(1.3)
6	Packaging affects my decision to buy.	40(53.3)	30(40.0)	5(6.6)	30(40.0)	38(50.6)	7(9.3)
7	Items with poor packing make me decide not to purchase them.	22(29.3)	37(49.3)	16(21.3)	25(33.3)	35(46.6)	15(20.0)
8	I find creative packaging appealing.	32(42.6)	43(57.3)	0(0.0)	71(94.6)	4(5.3)	0(0.0)
9	When a thing is packaged well, I have more faith in it.	23(30.6)	28(37.3)	24(32)	31(41.3)	30(40.0)	14(18.6)
10	My opinion of a brand's value is influenced by its packaging.	37(49.3)	35(46.6)	3(4.0)	60(80.0)	15(20.0)	0 (0.0)
11	High-end packaging enhances the product's appeal.	33(44.0)	38(50.6)	4(5.3)	34(49.3)	39(52.0)	2 (2.6)
12	Overly complicated packaging is inferior to simple packaging.	34(48.3)	35(46.6)	6(8.0)	37(49.3)	34(45.3)	4(5.3)
13	My desire to spend more is influenced by packaging.	31(41.3)	28(37.3)	16(21.3)	16(21.3)	35(46.6)	24(32)
14	I'm less interested in the product when the box is damaged.	34(45.3)	27(36.0)	14(18.6)	28(37.3)	43(57.3)	4(32)
15	Packaging has a significant impact on recurring business	36(48.0)	33(44.0)	6(8.0)	31(41.3)	38(50.6)	6(8.0)

3. Summary

The present study was carried out to examine consumer preferences and perceptions regarding product packaging among 150 working and non-working women. The findings indicated that the majority of respondents were educated, married women from middle-income households. Several packaging-related convenience factors, including ease of handling, ease of storage, availability of clear product information, and innovative packaging design, were found to have a significant influence on consumers' purchasing decisions. In addition, respondents showed a strong preference for functional packaging features, especially those that offer reusability, resealability, and effective product protection.

The findings of the study revealed that several packaging attributes, including color, clarity of labeling, durability, and effective brand representation, were regarded as highly important by the respondents. Environmental considerations also emerged as a significant factor, with many women showing a strong preference for eco-friendly, recyclable, and sustainable packaging materials. Participants generally viewed packaging as an essential element that helps ensure product safety, preserve freshness, enhance visual appeal, indicate product quality, and reinforce brand identity. Overall, the results suggest that packaging plays a crucial role in shaping consumer trust, influencing product evaluation, building brand perception, and affecting purchasing decisions.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that product packaging plays a significant role in shaping consumer preferences and perceptions. Consumers consider packaging not only as a protective covering for products but also as an important medium for providing information, ensuring convenience, and communicating brand value. Packaging that is visually appealing, informative, durable, and easy to use creates a positive impression on consumers and influences their purchasing decisions. These findings highlight the importance of effective packaging in enhancing consumer satisfaction and supporting product success in the marketplace.

The study further emphasizes the increasing importance of environmentally sustainable packaging, as many respondents expressed a strong preference for eco-friendly

and recyclable packaging materials. Consumers also highly valued practical features such as reusability, resealability, and the ability of packaging to protect products effectively. Overall, the findings suggest that well-designed packaging plays a vital role in enhancing product attractiveness, improving consumer satisfaction, strengthening brand image, and increasing market competitiveness. Therefore, manufacturers and marketers should focus on creating packaging solutions that are innovative, informative, convenient, and environmentally sustainable to better meet consumer expectations and market demands.

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