

Effect of consumer dissonance on product packaging: An empirical study of distance learning students in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract— The axiom “seeing is believing” is no more imperative than with packaging of consumable goods after consumers’ experience with a brand. There is no doubt that this is one of the key drivers of brand switching. This research evaluates the effect of product packaging on post-purchase decisions regarding consumable products in Nigeria. Cognitive dissonance is a situation where consumers’ needs are not met, and the consumer’s experience is far below the expectation. This could be because of failure of the packaging to adequately protect the product content; the packaging not drawing attention to the product, or the packaging not flaunting the egoistic nature of the consumer in terms of novelty where the consumer expected the packaging to portray their social class attribute. Do marketers adequately exploit the impacts/benefits of packaging to reduce consumer dissonance? What are the aftermaths of consumer dissonance on product packaging? A survey was conducted amongst marketers, distributors and consumers of PZ Cussons PLC using random sampling. The relationships between responses were assessed and the results are presented and discussed. This study affirms that marketers should take advantage of packaging attributes to prevent or reduce the incidence of consumer dissonance. Hence, it is suggested that marketers should endeavour to invest more in product packaging design to gain consumer satisfaction and loyalty which could result in increased purchases.

Keywords: consumer expectation; product packaging; cognitive dissonance, customer satisfaction, nigeria.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Consumers are known to experience cognitive and emotional stress, as well as dissatisfaction during a buying process, especially when the consumption experience does not meet their needs and expectations. When consumers open the packaging of a product, surprised by low product content, it is expected that such a consumer will experience some degree of cognitive dissonance. Slack filling is also one of the most common forms of deception through packaging because the packaging was designed to suggest a certain expected amount of content but surprisingly the package is filled with air rather than product.²⁸ Furthermore, situations occur where the package which is supposed to house the product does not provide adequate protection for the product and exposes the content, causing the consumer to suffer loss and regret. The latter happens because the marketer is profit oriented and focused on sales volume rather than being consumer oriented. Marketers thus try to save on cost through packaging that is detrimental to the consumer. More often the product packaging and labeling give an impression which is totally different to the actual content and quality of the product, which causes the consumer to feel deceived; this could ultimately result in a dissatisfied consumer that could resort in consumerism activity against the distributor and/or producer.

The effect of cognitive dissonance on consumers' product packaging attitude has received less attention among both scholars and practitioners in the marketing arena, especially in Nigeria. The current research attempts to investigate and establish the anticipated link between these variables, using consumer dissonance as a variable that might affect product packaging and the turnaround effect on consumers' perceived value, anticipated satisfaction and word-of-mouth-communication. The main objective of this research is to evaluate the effect of product packaging on post-purchase decisions of consumable products in Nigeria while the sub-objectives of this study are to determine the outcomes of consumer experience on consumer products packaging and to examine how marketers exploit packaging of the product to affect (reduce) incidence of consumer dissonance. Consequently, the relationship between dissonance and packaging of consumer products is significant and bridging the observable gap would require some empirical work that establishes the relationship between these two variables.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cognitive Dissonance

Notable psychologist Leon Festinger formulated the original theory of cognitive dissonance in the mid-1950s and it has since been used to understand a variety of phenomena. Festinger theorised that when an individual holds two or more elements of knowledge that are relevant to each other but inconsistent with one another, a state of discomfort is created.^{1,7, 27} The theory of cognitive dissonance suggests that inconsistencies among cognitions such as knowledge, opinion or belief about the environment, oneself or one's behaviour, can generate an uncomfortable, motivating feeling known as state of cognitive dissonance. People feel uncomfortable when they experience cognitive dissonance and thus are motivated to retrieve an acceptable state.²⁷ The magnitude of existing dissonance depends on the importance and strength of the involved cognitions. Experiencing a higher level of dissonance causes pressure and motivation to reduce the dissonance. Findings from several studies show that dissonance occurs when people do not act in accordance with their act attitude.²⁷ One key aspect of cognitive dissonance theory is that individuals experience mental discomfort after taking actions that appear to conflict with their starting preferences. To minimise or avoid this discomfort, they change their preferences to align with their actions more closely.¹ Cognitive dissonance is very much related to attitude change.³ It is a situation in which two cognitions are inconsistent with one another. The theory of cognitive dissonance describes how inconsistency occurs when an individual holds conflicting thought about a belief. When cognitive dissonance occurs after a purchase, it is called post-purchase dissonance.

Cognitive dissonance and satisfaction

Marketing literature, explicitly in the areas of consumer behaviour and advertising wrongly define cognitive dissonance as buyer's regret or buyer's remorse and in so doing has not fully realised the significance of the theory. Those conducting research on the consumer decision-making process would benefit from a better understanding of cognitive dissonance theory as it relates to pre-purchase dissonant decisions. Research on pre-decisional dissonance as a motivating factor in consumer behaviour is applicable to the field of advertising when the assessment of the efficacy of marketing tactics is the desired outcome.⁵ Cognitive dissonance is classified into a cognitive and an emotional dimension. From the cognitive dimension, dissonance is the difference in the consumer's belief after making a purchasing decision, while from the emotional dimension, dissonance is the uncomfortable feeling following on making the purchasing decision. Consumers have cognitive elements or knowledge about their past behaviour, their beliefs, attitudes and their environment, such as previous purchase experience of a specific product or service.¹³ Consumers have difficulty evaluating the quality of products and feel less satisfied. Consequently, the relationship between dissonance and satisfaction is significant and would be accompanied by the perceived value.¹¹

Satisfaction generally refers to the degree of happiness or contentment that someone experiences in relation to a particular situation, product, service, or outcome. It is a subjective measure and can vary from person to person.¹¹ It comes from the result of perception of product function, and expectation of product. In another dimension, satisfaction is determined through a cognitive procedure by comparing what customers give up getting a service (cost) and what they receive in response (reward).²⁴ It facilitates the measure of how service and products provided by the company meet customer expectations. After the purchase, the consumer begins evaluating the product to ascertain if the actual performance meets expected levels. Many criteria used in evaluating alternatives are applied again during post-purchase evaluation.²⁵ The outcome of this stage is either satisfaction or dissatisfaction, which influences whether the consumer complains, communicates with other possible buyers, or repurchases the product.⁴ Several studies indicate that favourable word-of-mouth is totally done based on the customer's satisfaction and transparent communication, while negative communication not only damages a brand's reputation but also affects consumers' buying decisions.^{23, 16} The level of consumer experience after post-purchase action will determine the consumer's further intention regarding buying process behaviour.²⁸

Consumer dissonance

Dissonance, though, is a psychological concept that has great bearing on the way consumers plan their purchase and the effect of the purchase on their future alliance with the organisation. In an era of marketing, where a consumer is spoilt with a plethora of choices regarding the product

to buy, it is difficult to avoid a situation of confusion which could ultimately lead to dissonance among consumers. However, consumers make efforts in different ways to reduce the conflicting views which arise in their minds.^{8, 25} A customer, after purchasing a certain product, may feel that buying competitors' products would have been a smart choice. This belief also gets strengthened after the expectations of the customer are confirmed. In such a situation, the patronage towards the product or the company could be under the scanner and the person may find the positive features of the purchased product superfluous. When the inconsistencies are experienced by buyers, they feel discontented and make changes to reduce the dissonance and achieve harmony.²⁰

Though dissonance can be felt by the consumer at any stage during the buyer's decision-making process, it is during the post-purchase stage that dissonance could cause even emotional discomfort in the consumer's mind. However, a consumer can try a variety of ways to reduce dissonance.¹⁰ Consumer dissonance may occur when a consumer makes a post-purchase comparison of what was purchased versus the other alternatives that are available.²⁰ If this comparison is not favourable, the consumer experiences psychological discomfort, which might be associated with feelings of anxiety, uncertainty or doubt as well as feelings of regret or remorse.²⁸ A consumer experiencing cognitive dissonance may attempt to return the product or seek positive information about it to justify choosing it. Marketers sometimes attempt to reduce cognitive dissonance by having the salesperson contact recent purchasers to make sure that they are satisfied with new purchases.⁴ Keeping tabs on the dissonance levels of consumers remain a prerogative of the marketers as they feel that they can lose their loyal clientele to the effects of dissonance. Companies need to assure their customers that they have indeed made the right purchase from time to time to avoid the risk of them doubting their decisions.⁸

Packaging of consumer products

Packaging plays a strategic role when products are purchased; after all, it is the first object the consumer has sight of before proceeding to make a purchase decision. Packaging can dissuade consumers from buying the product irrespective of its quality but good and attractive packaging adds value to the product and it attracts a trial from potential consumers.¹⁸ Packaging performs multidimensional functions. It offers knowledge about the product and the organisation – a technique to communicate with consumers and safeguard the quality of the product.⁹ Packaging works as a mechanism for differentiation and a sales promotion tool for the organization and it also stimulates customers' buying behaviour.^{21, 22} Packaging is a whole package that becomes an ultimate selling proposition that has the propensity to increase sales and market share of respective brands of fast-moving consumable goods.²²

Packaging is defined as an activity that entails designing and producing the container or wrapper for a product.^{2,6,14} From the consumer's perspective, packaging is viewed as the final point of contact between the consumer and brand before the purchase point; therefore, understanding the power packaging has on the final consumer purchase decisions provides brands with an opportunity to increase sales by creating more visually attractive packaging that will attract consumers' eyes and bring more attention to the products, thus influencing the final purchase decision.²⁴ Consumers respond to packaging based on previous information, learned reactions and individual preferences. Therefore, packaging elements, shapes, colors, sizes and labels might influence consumers to respond positively.²⁹

The undisputable relevance of packaging has improved the influx and promotion of self-service sales structures which has resulted in marketers having to study and modify product packaging as consumer needs and wants are ever-changing.⁶ The essence of this is to enjoy continuous uninterrupted attention from the target market towards the offerings of the marketer's organization.^{17, 9} Introducing innovative or novel packaging to consumer products can also lead to impulse purchase because of the distinctness and uniqueness of the packaging.⁹ Innovative packaging can add value to a product if it meets consumer wants. However, its practicality is also vital for creating additional value, such as easy to open, easy to store and being recyclable.²⁹ Subsequently, innovation has become crucial to distinguish and portray the packaging method as meeting consumers' needs. Original materials, schemes and skills assist packaging in responding favourably to the rapidly changing demands of today's active consumer lifestyle. ^{2, 26}

Companies expend a much bigger chunk of their budget on advertising than on packaging.¹⁴ While packaging, conferring with marketing intellectuals, is considered very important because of its numerous functions, it also works as an advertising channel, thereby assisting the marketer to minimise advertising expenses.¹² Packaging has some impact on the consumer buying decisions process and the aftermath of the purchase; it determines whether there will be repeat purchase or brand switch.²¹ Hence, product packaging is a vital tool of projecting a firm's brand image, which at times targeted to depict image of great assessment.²²

Consumer product packaging is the final point of the production process, and it is a vital facet of production engagements.²⁶ Nevertheless, some marketers ignore the relevance of good product packaging.²⁸ They are of the belief that a good product will sell itself. On the other hand, for a product to draw the response of a buyer, it is essential for such a product to be strategically packaged in an appealing manner to grab the attention of the consumer at first sight. A product that is well packaged is self-advertising and functions as a purchase appeal.¹² A product that is packaged well is self-advertising and attracts the consumer's attention to a particular brand. This is the reason for packaging commonly being called the "silent salesman", as it informs individuals regarding the value and benefits obtainable from the consumption of a particular brand.¹⁷ In the modern self-service business, consumer product packaging offers marketers the opportunity to influence potential shoppers before selecting the brand of their choice.²⁶

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quantitative research approach, focusing on consumers of PZ Cussons products from among distance learning students residing in Moremi and Mariere Halls at the University of Lagos. The estimated population of this group is 1 000 consumers. From this population, a random sample of 200 respondents was selected. Ultimately, 174 individuals responded to and returned their questionnaires, resulting in a commendable response rate of 87%. This response rate is considered both sufficient and valid for drawing reliable conclusions. The response rate aligns with the guidelines provided by ¹⁵ who suggest that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while rates exceeding 70% are considered very valid. The study proceeds by presenting demographic information first, followed by an analysis of responses in percentages and tables. Subsequently, it conducts hypothesis testing to fulfil its research objectives.

Biographical Information

The study targeted 200 respondents out of which 174 respondents completed and returned their questionnaires giving a response rate of 87%. From the biographical information it was determined that 80% of the respondents were males and 20% were females. Regarding their educational qualifications, 10.9% holds a senior school certificate, 36.2% holds OND/NCE certificates, 59% obtained HND/BSc certificates and 19% holds a master's professional qualification. Regarding their income per annum in naira, 44% earns (100 000-500 000), 15% earns (600 000-1 million), 16% earns (1 million - 1.5 million) and 24% earns above (1.5 million).

Consumer responses on product packaging

Table 1 shows the responses obtained from the various consumers' opinions regarding dissonance on product packaging. (SA – Strongly Agree, U – Undecided, SD – Strongly Disagree).

Table 1: Consumer opinion on dissonance on product packaging.

Responses	SA	U	SD
Poor packaging of consumer products can result in consumer's regret/dissonance in spite of the good quality of content	67.8	8	24.1
Good packaging of consumer products can result in consumer's satisfaction in spite of bad quality of content	47.1	11.5	40.5
Packaging of consumer products does confirm the opinions consumers hold about a product/brand	77	9.8	13.2
Consumers would choose a well-packaged product over a poorly packaged product irrespective of brand	82.2	4.6	13.2
Packaging of consumer products contributes to a consumer's brand loyalty	89.1	3.4	7.5
Poor product packaging can cause consumers frustration about a product	66.1	20.1	13.8
A novel and attractive product packaging can prevent consumers' feelings of disappointment about the content of the product	68.9	17.2	21
Consumers find product packaging more engaging than the advertising	58.1	20.7	21.3
Consumer products packaging helps consumers decide on the integrity of a product (such as expiry, safety, functionality, etc)	78.2	8	13.8
Packaging of products determine consumers' repurchase decisions	68.4	9.2	22.4
Consumers do make the decision not to repurchase due to poor packaging	68.9	12.1	19
Consumers do make the decision to make repeat purchases due to good packaging	71.3	10.9	17.8
Consumer products packaging helps consumers confirm/determine the adequacy of the product	77.1	6.9	16.1
Consumer products packaging is an important factor in products' market share	93.7	3.4	2.9
Consumers do change their minds about a product because of the packaging	83.3	2.9	13.8
Consumers seek packaging attributes that justify their cognitive disposition	73	12.1	14.9
Packaging plays a most important role by giving consumers important information about a product	89.1	2.3	8.6
Consumer products packaging helps consumers decide whether or not they made the right product choice	65.5	13.8	20.7
Consumer products packaging helps consumers finally decide whether they want a product or not	58.8	12.5	28.7
Packaging affects consumers' choice of product at the point of purchase	81.6	2.3	16.1
Packaging of products affects consumers' feelings after purchase	60.4	9.2	30.3

Source: Own elaboration.

It was observed that the consumers strongly agreed on all the factors measured in table 1, which depicts that good packaging is essential in attracting the consumer thus helping in purchase decisions and the satisfaction of the consumer.

Test of hypothesis

The four hypotheses of this study have been tested using the Chi-Square Goodness of Fit. The decision rule applies that the null hypothesis is rejected if the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value at the given degree of freedom. In other words, the alternative hypothesis is thus not rejected. The level of significance used for this study is 5% or 0.05%.

Hypothesis 1

Ho: Packaging of products does not lead to consumer dissonance.

H1: Packaging of products does lead to consumer dissonance.

Table 2: Consumers experience and/or express regret as a result of packaging of products.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Agree	28	34.8	-6.8
Agree	80	34.8	45.2
Undecided	20	34.8	-14.8
Disagree	42	34.8	7.2
Strongly Disagree	4	34.8	-30.8
Total	174		

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3: Test Statistics (Hypothesis 1).

	Consumers experience and/or express regret as a result of packaging of products
Chi-Square	95.080a
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 34.8.

From the SPSS output above:

Calculated chi-square value, $\chi^2(\text{calc.})$ is 95.08.

Tabulated chi-square value $\chi^2(\text{tab.})$ is 9.49 (at a degree of freedom of 4 and 0.05 level of significance). The calculated value is greater than the critical (tabulated) value, thus rejecting the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance and concluding that packaging of products does lead to consumer dissonance. In other words, consumer dissonance influences the packaging of consumer products in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2

Ho: Marketers do not exploit packaging of products to affect (reduce) incidence of consumer dissonance.

H1: Marketers do exploit packaging of products to affect (reduce) incidence of consumer dissonance.

Table 4: Consumer product packaging can cause/prevent consumers' feelings of disappointment about a product.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Agree	22	43.5	-21.5
Agree	98	43.5	54.5
Undecided	30	43.5	-13.5
Disagree	24	43.5	-19.5
Total	174		

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 5: Test Statistics (Hypothesis 2).

	Consumer products packaging can cause/prevent consumers' feelings of disappointment about a product
Chi-Square	91.839a
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 43.5.

Source: Own elaboration.

From the SPSS output above:

Calculated chi-square value, $\chi^2(\text{calc.})$ is 91.839.

Tabulated chi-square value $\chi^2(\text{tab.})$ is 7.81 (at a degree of freedom of 3 and 0.05 level of significance). The calculated value is greater than the critical (tabulated) value, thus rejecting the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance and concluding that marketers do exploit packaging of products to affect (reduce) incidence of consumer dissonance.

Hypothesis 3

Ho: Nigerian consumers are not aware of the messages communicated by the packaging of products.

H1: Nigerian consumers are aware of the messages communicated by the packaging of products.

Table 6: Consumers seek packaging attributes that justify their cognitive disposition.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Agree	37	43.5	-6.5
Agree	90	43.5	46.5
Undecided	21	43.5	-22.5
Disagree	26	43.5	-17.5
Total	174		

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 7: Test Statistics (Hypothesis 3).

	Consumers seek packaging attributes that justify their cognitive disposition
Chi-Square	69.356a
df	3
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 43.5.	

Source: Own elaboration.

From the SPSS output above:

Calculated chi-square value, $\chi^2(\text{calc.})$ is 69.356.

Tabulated chi-square value $\chi^2(\text{tab.})$ is 7.81 (at a degree of freedom of 3 and 0.05 level of significance). The calculated value is greater than the critical (tabulated) value, thus rejecting the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance and concluding that Nigerian consumers are aware of the messages communicated by the packaging of products.

Hypothesis 4

Ho: Products packaging does not solely make Nigerian consumers decide on repeat purchase.

H1: Products packaging does solely make Nigerian consumers decide on repeat purchase.

Table 8: Packaging of products determine consumers' repurchase decisions.

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Strongly Agree	45	34.8	10.2
Agree	74	34.8	39.2
Undecided	16	34.8	-18.8
Disagree	32	34.8	-2.8
Strongly Disagree	7	34.8	-27.8
Total	174		

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 9: Test Statistics (Hypothesis 4).

	Packaging of products determine consumers' repurchase decisions
Chi-Square	79.736a
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000
a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 34.8.	

Source: Own elaboration.

From the SPSS output above:

Calculated chi-square value, $\chi^2(\text{calc.})$ is 79.736.

Tabulated chi-square value $\chi^2(\text{tab.})$ is 9.49 (at a degree of freedom of 4 and 0.05 level of significance). The calculated value is greater than the critical (tabulated) value, thus rejecting the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance and concluding that products packaging does solely make Nigerian consumers decide on repeat purchase.

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results presented in table 1 shed light on the intriguing dynamics of consumer opinion regarding dissonance on product packaging among distance learning students in Lagos, Nigeria. The responses are categorised into three levels: Strongly Agree (SA), Undecided (U), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data suggests that consumers are acutely aware of the significance of packaging quality. A substantial 67.8% of respondents "Strongly Agree" that poor packaging can lead to consumer regret or dissonance, even when the product's content is of good quality. This underscores the critical role packaging plays in shaping consumer perception.⁶ On the other side, 47.1% "Strongly Agree" that good packaging can lead to consumer satisfaction, even if the content of the product is subpar. These findings highlight the delicate balance that exists between packaging and product quality in influencing consumer sentiment. A significant proportion of respondents, 89.1%, "Strongly Agree" that packaging of consumer products contributes to consumer brand loyalty. This indicates that consumers often form strong connections with brands based on the packaging of their products. Packaging serves as a visual identifier and can create a lasting impression that influences future purchase decisions.¹⁰

Furthermore, the results suggest that packaging plays a pivotal role in consumer decision-making. For instance, 82.2% of respondents "Strongly Agree" that they would choose a well-packaged product over a poorly packaged one, regardless of the brand. Additionally, 78.2% "Strongly Agree" that packaging helps consumers decide on the integrity of a product, such as its expiry date, safety and functionality. These findings highlight the importance of packaging not only as an attractive element but also as a source of essential information for consumers. A total of 93.7% of respondents "Strongly Agree" that consumer product packaging is an important factor in a product's market share. This indicates that businesses must invest in effective packaging strategies to gain a competitive edge.¹⁴ In this regard, the impact of packaging extends beyond the point of purchase, as 60.4% "Strongly Agree" that it affects the feelings of consumers after making a purchase. This highlights the enduring influence of packaging on the general consumer experience.

The results obtained from this study illuminate the intricate relationship between product packaging and consumer perceptions and behaviours among distance learning students in Lagos, Nigeria. Packaging quality, brand loyalty, decision-making, market share and the post-purchase experience are all areas significantly influenced by how products are packaged. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for businesses seeking to thrive in the competitive consumer market. This study affirms that marketers can take advantage of packaging attributes to prevent or reduce the incidence of consumer dissonance. A huge majority of respondents indicated an affirmation of this proposition. This agrees with the finding of 2 that packaging has a better impact on consumers than advertising does as it promotes and reinforces the purchase decision, not only at time of purchase but indeed every time the product is consumed. It was also established by this study that Nigerian consumers do make repurchase decisions on account of good product packaging. Many respondents affirmed that they would not make a repeat purchase of a product that comes in poor packaging even if the content is good.

V. COCLUSION

In conclusion, this study delved into the intricate realm of consumer perceptions regarding dissonance in product packaging among distance learning students in Lagos, Nigeria. The findings offer valuable insights into the pivotal role packaging plays in shaping consumer behaviours and sentiments. The data underscores the acute awareness among consumers of the paramount importance of packaging quality. A significant proportion of respondents strongly agreed that poor packaging can lead to consumer regret or dissonance, even when the content of the product is of good quality. Conversely, they also strongly agreed that good packaging can enhance consumer satisfaction, even when the content of the product falls short. These results emphasise the delicate balance between packaging and product quality, demonstrating their interconnectedness in influencing consumer perceptions.

These findings collectively emphasise the paramount importance of effective product packaging in the competitive consumer market. Marketers can leverage packaging attributes to mitigate consumer dissonance. This study aligns with previous research, supporting the notion that packaging often wields a more significant impact on consumers than advertising, reinforcing purchase decisions with each product consumption. Furthermore, the study reinforces that Nigerian consumers make repurchase decisions based on product packaging, with many respondents indicating that they would not repurchase a product with poor packaging, regardless of the quality of its content. In essence, this research illuminates the pivotal role of packaging in consumer behaviour, highlighting its potential to influence brand loyalty, purchase decisions and general consumer satisfaction. Businesses and organisations must recognise the significance of effective packaging strategies to thrive in the competitive consumer landscape, ensuring that the packaging aligns with the quality and values of the product it encases.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to businesses and marketers:

- Invest in high-quality packaging: Businesses should prioritise the development of attractive and high-quality packaging for their products. This includes using visually appealing designs and ensuring that the packaging materials are durable and functional.
- Maintain consistency: It is essential for businesses to maintain consistency between the quality of their products and the quality of their packaging. Discrepancies between the two can lead to consumer dissonance. Therefore, businesses should strive for alignment and excellence in both areas.
- Educate consumers: Marketers can take advantage of packaging to educate consumers about product attributes, including safety, expiry dates and functionality. Providing clear and accurate information on the packaging can enhance consumer trust and confidence.
- Enhance brand loyalty: Businesses should recognise that packaging is not merely a protective covering but also a brand-building tool. Investing in packaging that reflects the brand's values and identity can foster long-term customer loyalty.
- Monitor consumer feedback: Continuously monitoring and soliciting feedback from consumers about packaging can help businesses adapt to changing consumer preferences and needs. This feedback loop can aid in the ongoing improvement of packaging strategies.
- Integrate packaging and marketing: Businesses should consider packaging as an integral part of their marketing strategy. Aligning the messaging and aesthetics of packaging with broader marketing efforts can reinforce the brand's image and influence consumer behaviour positively.
- Train staff and suppliers: Employees involved in packaging design and production should receive training to understand the significance of packaging quality. Additionally, collaborating with reputable suppliers who prioritise quality can contribute to better packaging outcomes.

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