

# An Analysis upon the Support of Packaging as a Brand Communication Tool

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**Abstract – Packaging is considered as an integral part of the 'Product' of marketing mix. Along with basic objectives (protection and preservation, containment, convenience and communication) packaging serves as a promotional tool. Packaging is an important part of the branding process as it plays a vital role in communicating the image and identity of an organization. The objective of this study is to find out role of packaging in brand communication and determining the elements/attributes of packaging for communicating the brand value to customers. To pursue these objectives the authors have developed a research framework for packaging which furcates the main objective into four sub-objectives namely dependence of packaging design upon the buyer attraction, communication to buyer, convenience in handling and using, saleability of product and green aspect; relationships between liking for package and brand, country of origin, colour connotation, symbol connotation and size; relationships between communication through the package and independent variables like information, shape, brand image and symbols/logos; relationship between usability of package and ease of handling, disposability and protection. Data is collected through questionnaire along with the measurement of pulse rate of respondents with the help of pulse oxy-meter. Reliability test is carried out for questionnaire's consistency and then multiple regression analysis is done to formulate relationship between dependent variable and independent variables. This research reveals the importance of buyer attraction in package design and unimportance of environmental considerations. Similarly customers are more likely to give weightage to branded product than to the package and shape of package is the significant attribute of communication through product packaging.**

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## INTRODUCTION

In current competitive environment, brand forms an important part of a business and is one of the most valuable assets. In present most challenging world, all people face ever-increasing choices and time reduction for decision-making and choosing. Brands are valuable in simplifying consumers' decisions and risk reduction. Creating a powerful brand that elevates its own abilities over the time, in addition to doing commitments, is considered as one of the necessities of top managers in each organization (Iranzadeh, 2012). A brand should be close to market needs and traits and communicate with them. The relationship level is the limit that a consumer feels the brand close to herself/himself. The primary aim of communication in marketing is to effect on perceiving related value and behavior to particular brand. In 21st century, it has been occurred an important behavioral change in consumers. They want something more than brands. Therefore, communication should change to strategy rather than tactics. Various methods of communication are important in creating a brand and leading it towards a successful one (Anjum, 2013). Nowadays, market trend and other factors indicate the growing importance of packaging

as a marketing and brand development powerful tools in minds of consumers.

Packaging is a main principle for innovation and product differentiation in retail market (Rundh, 2013) that is used to attract the attention of consumers. In fact, packaging influences on process of product choice through providing an opportunity for establishing a communication and affecting on consumer at point of purchase. In viewpoint of marketing, packaging requires considering following points continuously in order to achieve organization goals. Innovation and creativity in designing for awareness creation and drawing the attention of customers.

- Transferring convincing, clear and necessary information.
- Facilitating product transportation and protection from contents.
- Helping storing and stocking at home and sale centers.
- Easy packing and unpacking and also applicable packaging.

- Supporting amount of product consumption especially in food products.
- Smart and skillfully distribution and recyclable packaging.
- Increasing information about environment.

A package with perfect design can make a brand and moves towards selling (Rundh, 2013), make large profit for production unit (Makabber, 2012) and be clearly a main part in value creation for customer and competitive advantage. In present post-modern marketing world, many believe that it is very difficult to keep consumers satisfied and convinced through past traditional communications. Since numerous elements make packaging attractive and applicable and each of them can be an important factor in introducing product and brand to consumer, so studying all of these elements should be considered essential for managers. Industrial reports emphasize on this subject that investing on packaging as the most rapid effective way on consumer is prioritized out of other traditional advertising ways for introducing brand and packaging design can increase the amount of selling.

In past decades, academic and scientific study on packaging is done more limited in comparison to systematic and brand study on other marketing elements such as advertising and pricing and over recent years, scientific attention to packaging has been clearer regarding its importance. Moreover, brand and packaging has not been defined correctly and less research attention is paid to these two categories, the necessity of examining the impact of packaging on consumer has been more tangible as the most important part of support process. Therefore, studying that how packaging can create value for brand is a vital subject. Hence, in this research, the impact of product display and advertising slogan have been studied as product and packaging attractiveness on consumer's response to brand and package.

In viewpoint of business, brand creation in market is very similar to marking in a form. A brand creation program should be designed to distinguish your product from all similar products even if all products in that range are very similar to each other. Therefore, a brand creation is as below according to the definition by American marketing association: "Choosing a name, logo, symbol, packaging design or other characteristics that can distinguish your product from other products". These different elements from brand that are recognizable and separable, form brand basis. Brands make mental structure that help consumer to organize their information about products and services in a way that make decision making more simple and obvious. A successful brand creation program is based on the concept of being unique. One factor of brand survival and success in

present competitive market is marketing differentiation from other available brands. In order to make this issue, various methods are being used. Packaging has been known as one of the methods to distinguish a brand from other brands (packaging distribution group, 2008) and a tools for marketing communication (Wang, 2013) that draw the attention of consumer to product.

Packaging international institute considers it as a product cover. This fence is able to make following desirabilities: Be a container, keep and protect the goods, communicate with buyer and transfer information to him/her, display the goods and show its profitability. Packaging is effective on attitude and trend of consumer related to a product such as a brand and is considered as an external factor that consumers are exposed to it firstly and then experience the product. It has been observed in previous studies that packaging characteristics can be categorized in two classes of visual and verbal (Kauppinen-Raisanen et al., 2012). For goods with high complexity, packaging concentrates on verbal cues to make a different meaning of considered product besides similar products. In comparison with it, packaging in goods with low complexity (generally food products and beverage) concentrates on visual cues that provide psychological and physical advantages.

The quality of packaging can be a stimulus for drawing the attention of buyers. Nowadays various substances are used in product packaging such as cardboard, metal, glass, plastic and cellophane. Each of the used substances has some privileges in terms of expense, strength, beauty, attractiveness and proportion with product (Ranjbarian, 2012). The qualities of substances, that are supposed to use, are effective on forming the idea in packaging designing. For instance, tulle textile for packaging food stuffs is something that meets both the quality of being seen and durability, elastic tulle is used for keeping and replacing frozen meat or the quality of being transparent of cellophane can be used for product display. The intention of product display is appearing the product contents and its visibility. When you use transparency of cellophane for product display, you intend to show good quality and freshness of its content to audience. This characteristic is used for designing bread, vegetables, cereals or a product such as spaghetti which its form and shape is important in customers' choice.

Packaging is recognized as an integral part of modern marketing operation, which embraces all phases of activities involved in the transfer of goods and services from the manufacturer to the consumer. Packaging is an important part of the branding process as it plays a role in communicating the image and identity of a company. Kotler (2000) defines packaging as all the activities of designing

and producing the container for a product. Packaging can be defined as the wrapping material around a consumer item that serves to contain, identify, describe, protect, display, promote, and otherwise make the product marketable and keep it clean. Packaging is the outer wrapping of a product. It is the intended purpose of the packaging to make a product readily sellable as well as to protect it against damage and prevent it from deterioration while storing. Furthermore the packaging is often the most relevant element of a trademark and conduces to advertising or communication.

## THE ROLE OF PACKAGING AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL

The role of packaging as a communication tool is becoming more and more important due to factors including the increase in self-service at the point-of-sale and the more complex needs of service related to the product (Kotler, 2004; Kotler et al., 2001).

At the point-of-sale in supermarkets and hypermarkets where people buy large quantities of groceries, as well as in specialized chains with more assortment, the uninformed consumer chooses prevalently on the basis of packaging:

- 48% of point-of-sale purchases were based on packaging, regardless of what induced the customer to make the purchase.
- Where purchase decisions were based solely on brand name, variations at the point-of-sale were due to packaging in 48% of cases.
- Where purchases were based on product rather than brand name, the choice was driven by packaging in 43% of cases.

Consumers derive the perceived value of a product from a set of intangible elements: information, service (recyclable packaging after use, single portions in a larger pack, etc.), and brand name.

The role of packaging as a communication tool can be analyzed from different perspectives. Marketing based on the idea that packaging is the “clothing” of the product highlights its logistic (containment, protection, fragmentation, transportation) and communicative functions (Collesei and Ravà, 2004).

The fundamental communicative function of packaging is evident in its very existence on the pages of magazines, on TV, in shop windows, at points-of-sale, at home, etc., where it communicates merely by being on display. Packaging may also present elements with essentially informative and communicative power as well: words, images, colors, shapes, etc, which communicate to the consumer in

various ways and places, both before and after the shopping experience.

In Table 1 we find articulated tools with which packaging can inform and communicate. Marketing recognizes consumerism as a form of language. From an anthropological perspective, consumerism aims to satisfy not only individual need, but also to create, maintain, and control social relationships. In this sense, packaging becomes a tool of communication. An important contribution to this concept comes from Semiotics, which studies signs and related communication processes. The application of Semiotics to packaging has developed recently both in theoretical and in working contexts (marketing research and advertising agencies). Packaging permits multisensory and bi-directional communication to the receiver, who consumes signs and symbols in order to produce individual and social meaning. We have already seen cases of packaging analyzed using Semiotics in different sectors such as tobacco (Musini, 2005) and wine. With regard to wine, for example, Semiotics says that a bottle contains at least five narrative programs: individuation on display, reading in hand, purchase, consumption, and post-consumption.

Type of Elements	Main Characteristics	Attributes: first level	Attributes: second level
Package	Shape	Size	
		Manageability	
		Storageability	
		Cleanability	
		Reusability	
		Dimensional Impression	
		Service	
		Portions	
		Durability	
		Recycleability	
Labelling “clothing”	Textual Elements	Names	Company Name
			Product Line
			Name of Market Sector
			Product Name
			Name of Variant
		Information	Instructions and Suggested Uses
			Ingredients
			Nutritional Information
			Preview of Contents
			History/Product Description
	Recall and Repetition	Service Information	Service Information
			New Products
			Advertising Slogans
			Testimonials
			Extension of Line
	Information Required by Law	Special Offers	Special Offers
			Alpha-numeric Codes
			Production and Expiration Dates
			Weights and Measures
			Plant and Producer
Iconic Elements	Lettering	Specific Sectorial Information	Specific Sectorial Information
			Logo
			Functional Text
	Background	Persuasive Text	Persuasive Text
			Uniform Color
			Decorative Pattern
	Images	Transparent	Transparent
			Product Representations
			Secondary Images
			Informative and Graphic Images

**Table 1 – Elements of Packaging Relevant to the Communicative Function.**

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Product packaging is a —Cross-functional and multi-dimensional aspect of marketing that has become

increasingly important in consumer need satisfaction, cost savings and the reduction of package material usage leading to substantial improvements in corporate profits<sup>11</sup>. The role of packaging is changing from that of 'protector' to 'information provider' and 'persuader'. Whereas the original function of packaging was to protect the product, it is now being used as an important sales tool to attract attention, describe the product and make the sale. Through identifying brands, conveying information in respect to price, quantity and quality, and providing information regarding ingredients and directions, product packaging now plays an important role in product promotion. When the dimensions of packaging are analyzed then the corporate social responsibility of the packaging also plays a vital role in brand consolidation or brand attrition. With increasing competition in the marketplace, certain non-socially responsible packaging practices have been noted that may result in a negative brand image for the company, including: deceptive and misleading product packaging, and non-environmentally friendly packaging. As consumers become more aware of the social and environmental impact of their consumption, they are demanding more ethical product alternatives. Industry has also recognized the need for acting in a more socially responsible fashion, which also includes improving the environmental impact of the firm, its products and services. CSR benefits to business can include more motivated employees, reliable supplier relations and an extended base of loyal customers and improved reputation. Packaging is also a medium to build a brand image as Keller (2008) describes brand image as —perceptions about a brand as reflected by the brand associations held in consumer memory<sup>12</sup>. Studies have shown that brand image is an important cue that consumers use to infer information regarding the quality of the product and motivates their consumption tendencies. In an emotional manner, consumers are presumed to seek a relationship between their self-concept and the brand image of the product. Research suggests that the total sensory experience of a brand (including the packaging) creates an image in the minds of consumers that can inspire loyalty, build trust and enhance recognition. Therefore, if a product's packaging is to effectively entice consumers to purchase the product, then, not only is the total sensory experience of the brand an important factor, but also the congruity between a consumer's self-image and the brand image, especially for socially and environmentally conscious consumers. CSR benefits to business can include an improved reputation and improved brand image, which can help create an extended base of loyal customers. The consumers have the instinct to align themselves to the products that they use and a product invokes their emotional senses as well. The individual's self-concept plays a major role in choosing certain products. In fact, these products are symbols that represent the buyer's self to others. According to Mehta (1999), individuals have a tendency to develop

preferences to particular brands in which they feel match or enhance their self-image, in other words, products that provide a means for self-expression. Therefore the effective packaging of products is vital with the point of view of conveying the brand image to the consumer. It has also been found that the interaction of the buyer's personality and the image of the purchased product often influence consumer buying behaviour. The literature on packaging also examines the deceptiveness of different brands to leverage their sales. The cases of passing off have also been found in case of many brands. Passing off occurs when there is the potential for consumers to find associations between brands and products that, in reality, have no relationship. Research suggests that there is an increase in companies developing their own private brands that exhibit packaging attributes, such as the shape, sizing, colouring, lettering, or even, the logo similar to those of already established brands. Then the hidden changes in size and value have also been reported in product packaging. Misleading labels are another form of deception that results in the consumer receiving incorrect information about the product.

The pack should instantly trigger brand memories, automatically bringing thoughts, knowledge and feelings about the brand into the shopper's consciousness. While it is important that the packaging reflects the values and positioning of the brand, the key role of packaging is not necessarily to communicate but to trigger the communications that have already happened around that brand prior to the shopper entering the store. In order to achieve this, it is vital that packaging is integrated with other forms of brand communication. Many studies suggest that around two-thirds of purchasing takes place in "default" mode, where the shopper gives little serious consideration to choosing between brands. This is often because shoppers already know which brand they want to buy before they walk into the store. Here finding ability is a key. Any difficulties encountered by a shopper when trying to find the brand they want may open them up to other potential choices. Brown (2009) writes about the role of packaging in retail sector and global factor also. With so much competition in the retail sector a brand must break through the visual clutter and grab a shopper's attention. A beautifully designed pack may be lost once displayed on a shelf alongside its competitors.

**The role of Packaging** - The primary function of packaging is to protect the product against potential damage while transporting, storing, selling and exploiting a product and to ensure the convenience during performance of these activities. Sogn-Grundvag & Ostli (2009) have indicated the importance of packaging in the case of grocery, when consumers buy unbranded products. Seeing that most consumers tend to touch products before purchasing, they treat product packaging as a tool



for protecting consumers from contamination, for allowing them to touch products without restraint & without any need to avoid smudging their hands. They propose to use packaging with a —windowll, in order to allow consumers to evaluate product by its appearance at the same time reducing —consumer uncertainty regarding quality by branding the product and labelling it, i.e. to communicate to consumer adequate message about product. It could be stating that in length of time a function of identification and communication became vital important especially for consumer products in the group of convenience goods. Packaging as a tool for communication was investigated and finally suggested. Taking into consideration that impulsive buying is an aspect applicable to many consumers. It could be maintained that —the package may be the only communication between a product and the final consumer in the store. Consequently the role of package in marketing communications increases: it must attract consumer's attention and transmit adequate value of product to consumer in the short period right in the place of sale. Therefore there is a necessity to explore package and its elements in more detail, in order to understand which of these elements are the most important for consumers purchase decision.

## METHODOLOGY

In the current study work after exhaustively surveying the literature above framework was devised. In the above framework the dependent and independent variables were jotted down and the questionnaire involving dependent and independent variables was administered to the representative set of population. And the data collected through survey was analyzed by using multiple regression analysis. The questionnaire was rated on the five point Likert scale. The ratings of questionnaire ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The strongly disagree was allotted the scale of 1 and strongly agree was allotted the scale of 5. The respondents were asked to fill the questionnaire which involved 20 parameters that comprised package design, liking of package, communication through package and usability of package. The questionnaires were administered online as well as offline to seek responses. In addition to the questionnaires the 20 respondents were also tested for their change in pulse rate when they saw variations in different packages. The packages contained the appeals of design, attractiveness, usability and brand.

### Sampling Design -

**Sampling Population:** Sampling population consisted of the different users of packaging who use the packaging in their day to day life.

**Sampling Elements:** Individual respondents were the sampling elements.

**Sampling Size:** 103 respondents for questionnaire.

### Data Collection -

Self designed questionnaires were administered to gauge the preferences of respondents. The questionnaires were rated on the 5 point likert scales with 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree.

### Tools used for Data Analysis -

Following tools were used for data analysis:

- a) Reliability test to measure the reliability of questionnaire.
- b) Multiple regression analysis

## CONCLUSION

The packaging today has become the vital tool to make the products the —Face in the crowd rather than face of the crowdll. It has become the most significant aspect to position the products in the market in a effective manner. The multiple regression analysis of different packaging attributes resulted in surfacing of very important information regarding the packaging parameters. The buyer attraction emerged as the important factor which signals towards the scenario when the packages need to be attraction driven rather than information driven. —In most cases, our experience has been that pack designs are more likely to influence the consumer perception of the brand than advertisingll. When the pulse rate of respondents was measured it showed that when bright colured packages like maggi were shown to them then their pulse rate escalated .The communication aspect of package was marginally significant so the package as a means to communication as per this research does not carry that significant weight so the more importance should be given to the attracting capability of the package.

Shape is also very important attribute as it is evidenced form this research and this signals towards the fact that previous shape of package can become important marketing tool. In case of coca cola or other soft drinks, the bottle is the package so the shape of the bottle becomes its brand identity. If we analyze the shapes of different soft drinks like pepsi or sprite or fruit juices, we can see that different companies have got different shape of bottle. So the shape of package can become an innovative marketing tool creating an iconic brand image through different shaped packages. Instead how we feel about the package is often transferred to how we feel about the product itself. In essence, for consumers the product is the package and the product combined. In this manner the shape of the package must be designed in such a way so as to enable the product to cut

through the clutter on shelf space and create its own distinct identity.

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