



INFLUENCE OF PACKAGE DESIGN ELEMENTS ON CONSUMERS' CHOICE OF STAPLE COMMODITIES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

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 were analysed using mode, frequency, and percentages. 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. The attitude of consumers toward staple commodities in Lagos State are mostly influenced by the information and label on the package followed by colour, picture, size and shape, technology, layout of design and lastly the lettering. The study recommends that companies should adopt the factors that have great influence on consumer's perception of product quality as an incentive to consumers to choose their product.

Keywords: Consumers' choice, Packaging elements, Product packaging, Staple commodities

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-increasing competition of the global market, the need for effective product promotion is crucial, and product packaging has come to play an important role as a brand communication vehicle. Virtually all goods that are manufactured or processed require some form of packaging for effective handling at distribution; packaging decisions, according to Panwar, (2004), are considered in early marketing plans as an integral part of the total marketing strategy. 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).

The conventional sources of enhancing competitive advantage such as economies of scale and huge advertising budgets are not as effective as they used to be because, choice of staple commodities are now being made mostly by consumers at the point of purchase. Some marketers believe that packaging is actually more influential than advertising in influencing consumers, as it has a more direct impact on how they perceive and experience the product (Deliya, 2012).

Packaging is the container for a product – encompassing the physical appearance of the container including the design, colour, shape, labelling and materials used (Deliya & Parmar, 2012). A product's packaging is something which all buyers experience and which has strong potential to engage the majority of the target market audience. This makes it an extremely powerful and unique tool in the modern marketing environment. Product design companies therefore seek to create packages that break through the cluster of the market-place and communicate positive aesthetic, functional, symbolic or informational benefits to the consumer. How a consumer perceive a product depends on communication and package elements, which become the key to success for many marketing strategies This study identified the different package design elements that influence consumers' attitudes toward the selected staple commodities in Lagos State, and assessed how frequently consumers consider aesthetic principles of packaging in justifying demands for staple commodities in Lagos State.

According to Ampuero and Villa (2006), packaging plays a crucial role, especially from the consumer's perspective. This is because product's packaging is what first attracts a consumer. However, in Lagos, Nigeria there is incessant change of brands appearance which often confuses and misleads consumers when they are deciding to select their preferred staple commodities. Therefore, there is a need to understand how consumers choose between the different packages mostly at the point of purchase in the State. This is with regard to the overall visual appearance, i.e., the package design, colour, verbal and visual elements, graphic variables and pictures. It is considered necessary for the package designers to fulfil the emotional, experimental needs of the consumers and create expressive package designs that allow designers to think beyond the existing ways of packaging.

Despite the variety of different consumer studies on packaging, there is still relatively little information for designers to build their creative works on. This study seeks to answer the question why consumers respond positively to certain designs and negatively to others. According to Ghoshal (2001), the answer to this question is crucial for package designers who would benefit from having a deeper understanding on consumers' needs in the creation process. Hence, a survey of 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 share. This study will attempt to bridge the gap between the producing companies, package designers and consumers for good/effective services and products delivery.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Evolution of Product Packaging

Packaging is the “fifth marketing P”, along with price, product, place and promotion pointing out its importance in the marketing context (Kotler, 2003). It is an element of both product and

brand. Packaging communicates, and is capable of attracting consumers' attention. It can communicate images that influence consumer perception, appeal to the consumers' emotions, and motivate desire for the product. Packaging should also be considered as a promotional tool, especially within the retail environment (Vranesevic, Vignali & Vrontis, 2004). However, to understand how packaging communicates and influences consumers, it is important to understand how consumers perceive packaging. In other words, it is necessary to define the way packaging communicates to consumers.

Generally, to arrive at a particular product package is a long process. It is the product of continuous research aimed at finding better method of packaging the various goods in order to ensure the best protection. Berger (2002) stated that from the very earliest times, humans consumed food where it was found such as families and villages made or caught what they used or ate. They were also self-sufficient, so there was little need for packaging of goods, either for storage or transportation. When containers were needed, nature provided gourds, shells, and leaves. Later, containers were fashioned from natural materials, such as hollowed logs, woven grasses and animal organs. As ores and chemical compounds were discovered, metals and pottery were developed, leading to other packaging forms such as paper, glass, metal and plastic.

Similarly, it became obvious that product containers have to bear the identification of the maker alongside pictures, nutritional information, ingredients, and others. However, this seemingly obvious feature of packaging has its own history. In the 1660s, imports into England often cheated the public and the phrase "let the buyer beware" became popular. Inferior quality and impure products were disguised and sold to uninformed or unsuspecting customers. Honest merchants, unhappy with this deception, began to mark their wares with their identification to alert potential buyers. Official trademarks were pioneered in 1866 by Smith Brothers for their cough drops marketed in large glass jars. This was a new idea - using the package to "brand" a product for the benefit of the consumer. In 1870, the first registered U.S. trademark was awarded to the Eagle-Arwill Chemical Paint Company. There are nearly three-quarters of a million (750,000) registered trademarks in the United States alone. Labels now contain a great deal of information intended to protect and instruct the public (Berger, 2002).

In addition, a review by Welt (2005) stated that packaging has certainly changed from containers provided by nature to the use of complex materials and processes. Various factors contributed to this growth. This includes the needs and concerns of people, competition in the marketplace, unusual events (such as wars), changing lifestyles, as well as discoveries and inventions. The recent trend in globalization emphasizes the need to understand the consumer perception on product packaging especially in a developing country like Nigeria. There is increasing application of digital mechanisms in trade transactions and a reduction in trade barriers which make it relatively easy for multinational organizations to compete in several markets and economies. For example, a Nigerian consumer has access to several products from around the world and the product package elements may be used to evaluate these products.

Several consumers make a rational choice by comparing and contrasting product design and package. Recent studies have shown that package play a major role in consumer purchase of a product. According to Kupiec and Revell (2001), the package of a product is a critical factor in the decision-making process because it communicates to consumer and influences their selection process. In most cases, the intention to purchase a particular commodity depends on the degree to which consumers expect the product to satisfy them when they consume it. Obviously, the evolution and development of product package is not out of place considering the significance it has over the products' companies and the consumers of the products.

Products (Staple Commodities)

In all civilizations, different products serve different purposes. Mac and Linux (2009) posit that products are things that are grown or made in a factory in large quantities which are meant to be sold. Product items range from petroleum products to food beverages, and services rendered. This particular study is concerned with staple commodity. Celen, Erdogan and Taymaz (2005), stated that staple commodities are products sold quickly and at relatively low cost. Examples include non-durable goods such as soft drinks, toiletries, grocery items and many others. They are products that are frequently purchased and are used up over a short period of time. Staple goods, most times, have short shelf lives, either as a result of high consumer demand or because the products deteriorate rapidly.

Product packaging is a bundle of value, encompassing functional, social, psychological and economic effects, in order to sell a specific product or service to a target audience, and get immediate results. Graphic art principles are usually attached to advertisement of products in order to appeal to consumers. Bovee and Aren (1996) noted that appealing product will sell better than one in whose appearance has no effect on the consumer regardless the product type. The major secret in product packaging is that product should have the look of quality and thereby attract and appeal to the prospective users. It is obvious that a well-packaged product will sell better than the one in which the appearance has not been considered, regardless of the type of product. The major secret in graphic design is to make a product look like an article of high quality, and thereby make it desirable to the prospective consumer (Oladumiye, 2011). The study of colour harmony and the principle involved are essential in designing a visual for any product.

Consumers' Attitudes toward Product Packaging

The success of a product's package is relative to its target market and its desired performance specifications, such as evoking a particular meaning that supports, for instance, brand positioning, company reputation or anticipated promotional themes (Bloch, 1995). According to Bloch (1995), for a product to be successful, its sensory characteristics must strike a responsive chord in target consumers. Thus, a package evokes a certain level of psychological responses in

consumers (see Figure 1). These responses can be cognitive, affective, or both at the same time (Bitner, 1992). The psychological responses, in turn, lead to a number of behavioural responses.

At the point of purchase, the product package is the communication life-blood of the firm. The package, sometimes referred to as the 'silent salesman', makes the final sales pitch, seals the commitment and gets itself placed in the shopping trolley (Hine, 1995). Harckham (1989) noted that the package is the shopper's window to the product because it often projects the initial impression they form about a product, its quality or its value.

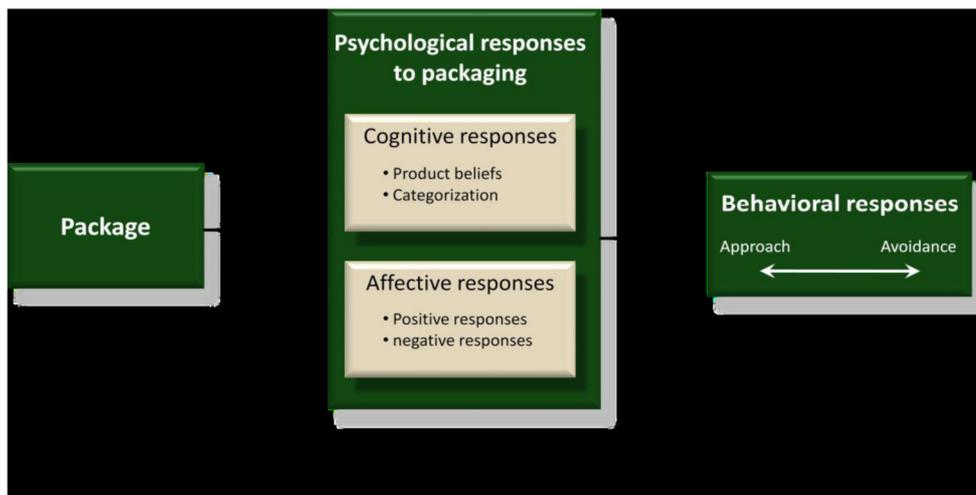


Figure 1: Consumer responses to packaging

Source: Bloch (1995)

The way a product's package affects a consumer is dependent on a number of variables. In Figure 1, they are called moderating influences. According to Bloch (1995), this influence is divided into a consumer's individual tastes and preferences, and situational factors. An individual's preferences stem from cultural backgrounds or innate sensitivity to design and experience in interpreting design. On the other hand, situational factors affect not only the psychological responses, but also the behavioural ones.

Visual and Informational Elements of Package Design

The concept of package design is inherently multidimensional, incorporating multiple elements such as texts, shapes, graphic designs, logos, sizes, colours, illustrations, materials, constructions, and texture (Underwood et al., 2001). With regard to the main components of packaging, many different points of views have been expressed (Ampuero & Vila, 2006; Underwood et al., 2001; Vidales, 1995). According to Ampuero and Vila (2006), a distinction is made between two blocks of components: (1) graphic components, which include colour, typography, the graphical shapes used and the images introduced; and (2) structural components, which include the shape

and size of the packages and the materials used to manufacture them. Silayoi and Speece (2004) also divided packaging elements into two categories, which are, in part, different from Ampuero and Vila's (2006) view. According to Silayoi and Speece (2004) four main packaging elements potentially affect consumer purchase decisions, and they can be separated into two categories: (1) visual and (2) informational elements (see Figure 2). The visual elements consist of graphics, size and shape of packaging, and relate more to the affective side of decision-making.

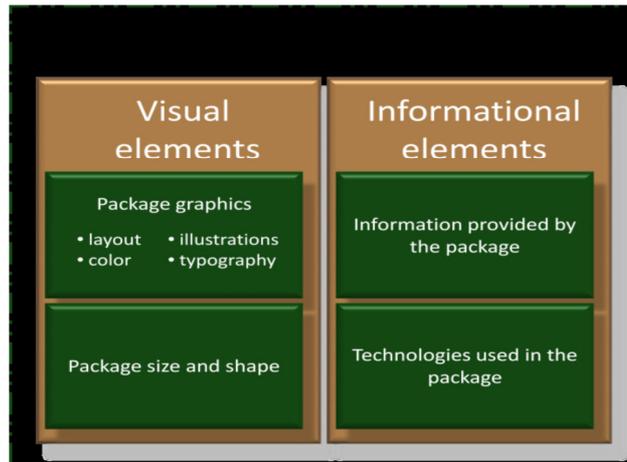


Figure 2: Package communication elements

Source: Bloch (1995)

Figure 2 shows the two types of communication elements of packaging: visual and informational elements. Visual elements are divided into two parts: package graphics, and package size and shape. The package design graphics are further divided into four parts: layout, illustrations, colour, and typography. Informational elements are also divided into two parts: packaging information and packaging technologies.

Visual Elements

According to Silayoi and Speece (2004) the visual components of packaging are the different graphical elements of the package, size and shape of the package. Visual elements include layout, colour combinations, typography, and product illustrations, and they all contribute to creating an image for the product or brand. They stated that poor graphics can lose the sale for many consumers, while attractive graphics gains it for many. For instance, Meyers-Levy and Peracchio (1995) suggested that colour, which is assumed to be more vivid than black and white, attracts attention and provide information. It is expected that, a product must be able to stand out from the cluster of competing brands in order to succeed and colour has a great capacity to attract the needed attention (Fitzgerald Bone & Russo France, 2001). However, colour can also attract attention to irrelevant data at the expense of more important and diagnostic information in a situation when colourful graphics use consumers' resources that might better be used in

examining the verbal component of the package label, leading to an incorrect conclusion on the product (Fitzgerald Bone & Russo France, 2001).

The notion of colour associations is quite a complex matter. On the one hand consumers seem to have personal and cultural preferences for some colours over others (Grossman & Wisenblit, 1999). On the other hand, entire product classes seem to have sets of “acceptable” colours (Schoormans & Robben, 1997), and these sets seem to be independent of personal colour preferences. Indeed, according to Grossman and Wisenblit (1999), favourite colour does not adequately explain consumer colour choices for products. Consumers have likely developed a wide range of colour associations for various product contexts, which makes the task of understanding colour responses more complicated. Interestingly, Ampuero and Vila (2006) discovered that packaging in cold and dark colours were usually associated with high-prices and refined aesthetics. In contrast, accessible products that are directed to price sensitive consumers required light, mainly white, coloured packaging. Safe and guaranteed products were associated with red packaging (Ampuero & Vila, 2006).

Pictures are one of the most expressive elements which arouse universal appreciation of product. It plays an important role in the choice of goods and materials. It is generally considered the most potent device available to graphic designers in aesthetic composition (Oladumiye, Ogunduyile, Ogunlade, 2013). The primary essence of a picture in a package is to attract increase attention to a product. It is through this accomplishment of this that the consumers imagine how a product looks, tastes, feels, smells, or sounds. A picture validates the quality of a more inexpensive private label product when compared to a national brand (Underwood et al., 2001). Moreover, in categories where product knowledge is low, the product picture may prove to be highly diagnostic. Also, most products are often presented in bold, large, Roman, upper case letters with expanded characters. Hence, accessible products of reasonable price were associated with both serif and sans serif typographies (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Examples of this are seen in Plate 1 and Plate 2.



Plate 1: Package design of Vaseline Body Lotion
Source: Fieldwork (2020)



Plate 2: Package design of Venus Body Cream
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

It is important to know that package size, shape, and elongation affect consumer assessment and decisions, much like graphical elements. It was found that size and shape were much related to usability. Product information communicates, which assist consumers in making their decisions carefully (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). This is mostly achieved through verbal information. However, written information on a package can also create confusion by conveying either too much information or misleading and inaccurate information in some cases. This suggests the informational elements are relevant only if the graphical elements have performed well enough. Also, Silayoi and Speece (2007) found that the impression of the level of technology used in packaging reflected the contemporary image of the product itself. Also, as convenience has become increasingly important for food products, consumers who are worried about time saving could pay more attention to claims of new technology, because of technology's association with convenience (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). However, this study concentrates on the influence of package design elements on consumers' choice of staple commodities in Lagos State, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research of the survey type was adopted for this study. This was for the purpose of eliciting appropriate response from the consumers through a structured questionnaire. The descriptive survey involved meeting the objective and research question raised for this study. Quantitative approach (close ended questionnaire) was used as research instrument to elicit responses from respondents on the package design elements that affect the consumer's choice of staple commodities most in Lagos State. For the purpose of this research, Yamane formula (Yamane, 1967) was used to calculate the consumer sample size. This is contained in Isreal (1992) and Kasunic (2005). It allows the various level of precision (+/_3%, +/_5%, +/_7% and +/_10%) and a confidence level of 95%. 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. In order to attain a fair representation of consumers' perception on the subject matter, respondents (consumers) were accidentally intercepted in market places such as the Yaba market, as well as supermarkets and mall such as the Ikeja shopping mall. In order to avoid loss of questionnaire, after consent was got from the respondents, the questionnaire was administered and collected at the spot. Stratified Random Sampling was used in determining the product sampling size. The products of the two companies (Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc) were classified into strata according to their similarities, after which 12 products were chosen randomly in total (6 products from each company) (see Table 1). These sampling methods gave the products equal opportunity to be chosen without bias and it also gave the total population a good representation.

Table 1: Classification of products of the two companies

| MANUFACTURING COMPANIES | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| SN | Unilever Plc | PZ Cussons Plc |
| 1 | Pears baby range | Cussons baby range |
| 2 | Lux Soap | Joy Soap |
| 3 | Lifebuoy Antiseptic Soap | Imperial leather Soap |
| 4 | Omo Detergent | Elephant Gold Detergent |
| 5 | Sunlight Detergent | Elephant Colour Detergent |
| 6 | Vaseline Body Lotion | Venus Body Cream |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

A total number of two hundred and four (204) questionnaires were administered, and all were returned representing 100% of the total administered.

Findings

The study explored the influence of package design elements on consumers' choice of staple commodities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The contextual findings from respondents' submission of close-ended question in the survey are presented in Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4. Typically, the Tables provide information on the packaging elements that influence purchasing decision of staple commodities from Unilever Nig. Plc and PZ Cusson Nig. Plc. In addition, it provides results on the effects of package aesthetic principle on consumers' demand for staple commodities. As presented in the Tables, mean weighted scores were used to discuss the findings under the following headings.

Package design elements that influence consumers' attitudes toward the selected staple commodities

The package design elements that made-up the product design of Unilever Nig. Plc and PZ Cusson Plc vary considerably. The variances in the design elements explored by the companies under study influence the consumer attitude either positively or negatively towards their products. The design elements that are capable of influencing consumers' attitude towards staple commodity are picture, colour, information and label, size and shape, technology, lettering and the layout of design. The results of the finding revealed that the information and label, colour and picture were the three major package design elements that influence the consumers when trying to make purchasing decision of staple commodity in Lagos. Apparently, the design elements on the design package of the staple commodities by the Unilever Nig. Plc and Cusson PZ Plc differ; the responses of the consumers to the product design element are the same.

For instance, majority of the consumers were of the opinion that information and label on the product package influence consumers decision of purchasing staple commodities of the

companies. This is so because consumers desire to know much about the content of the product to procure. On the other hand, some consumers want to explore other active ingredients that made the product package as presented in the package design. Among other information that are needed by the consumers before they make their decision about a product include expiry date, ingredients or composition, safety procedure or measure etc. Obviously, the information required by the consumers can only be obtained from the product package. It is through this information that confidence is built about a particular product and loyalty to the product is obtained.

Equally, the consumers of the staple commodities produced by both companies posited in their submission that the colour of the product package has a positive influence on their decision to purchase a product. Typically, one thing that attracts the attention of consumers to any product is the colour of such material. This is same for package design. It is this fact that led to colour recording high frequencies among the consumers. This is particularly true for children and youths of different age brackets who are attracted to bright colours. Hence, colour plays a pivotal role in product selection. Examples of this are seen in Plate 3 and Plate 4.

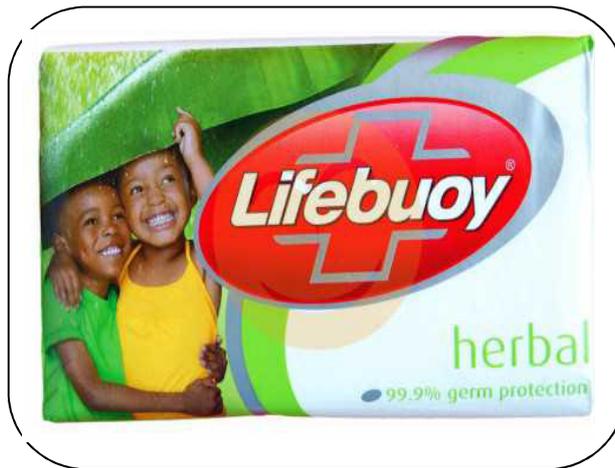


Plate 3: Package design of Lifebuoy Herbal Soap
Source: Fieldwork (2020)



Plate 4: Package design of Imperial Leather Soap

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Designers deliberately create pictures on product packages. In this study, 81.4% of the consumers either strongly agreed or agreed that pictures on the package influence their decision to buy a particular product. A picture is more than a thousand words. It does engage, interact and communicate with the consumers. Obviously, this aesthetic package design gives more information about the product for the consumers to make their decisions.

There is no gainsaying that consumers have their individual preferences relative to a given characteristic, size and shape is not an exception. In the results gathered, majority of the consumers of commodity products produced by the two companies conceded the fact that size and shape of the product, to an extent, influence consumer purchasing decisions. Apparently, also from the findings, the design element is very important for a product package to be functional. However, it was found out that technology, layout of design and lettering are considered by the consumers to have the least influence on the consumers' decision about buying Unilever Nig. Plc and PZ Cusson Nig. commodity products. The same results were obtained for both companies.

Table 2: The package design elements that influence consumers' attitudes toward the selected staple commodities from Unilever Nig. Plc, Lagos State

| Variables | 5 SA (%) | 4 A (%) | 3 UN (%) | 2 D (%) | 1 SD (%) | Mode | Mean |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------|------|
| Picture | 72 (35.3) | 94 (46.1) | 16 (7.8) | 16 (7.8) | 6 (2.9) | 2 | 4.03 |
| Colour | 70 (34.3) | 104 (50.9) | 12 (5.9) | 14 (6.9) | 4 (1.9) | 2 | 4.09 |
| Information and Label | 96 (47.1) | 98 (48.0) | 0 (0) | 2 (0.9) | 8 (3.9) | 2 | 4.33 |
| Size and Shape | 78 (38.2) | 84 (41.2) | 10 (4.9) | 14 (6.9) | 18 (8.8) | 2 | 3.93 |
| Technology | 60 (29.4) | 94 (46.1) | 30 (14.7) | 8 (3.9) | 12 (5.9) | 2 | 3.89 |
| Lettering | 26 (12.7) | 106 (51.9) | 26 (12.7) | 28 (13.7) | 18 (8.8) | 2 | 3.46 |
| Layout of Design | 28 (13.7) | 116 (56.9) | 28 (38.7) | 18 (8.8) | 14 (6.9) | 2 | 3.62 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Table 3: The package design elements that influence consumers' attitudes toward the selected staple commodities from PZ Cussons Nig. Plc, Lagos State

| Variables | 5 SA (%) | 4 A (%) | 3 UN (%) | 2 D (%) | 1 SD (%) | Mode | Mean |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------|------|
| Picture | 62 (30.4) | 114 (55.9) | 16 (7.8) | 10 (4.9) | 2 (0.9) | 4 | 4.09 |
| Colour | 68 (33.3) | 110 (53.9) | 16 (7.8) | 10 (4.9) | 0 (0) | 4 | 4.16 |
| Information and Label | 88 (43.1) | 102 (50.0) | 6 (2.9) | 4 (1.9) | 4 (1.9) | 4 | 4.29 |
| Size and Shape | 66 (32.4) | 98 (48.0) | 18 (8.8) | 14 (6.9) | 8 (3.9) | 4 | 3.98 |
| Technology | 58 (28.4) | 90 (44.1) | 32 (15.7) | 14 (6.9) | 10 (4.9) | 4 | 3.84 |
| Lettering | 30 (14.7) | 96 (47.1) | 24 (11.8) | 24 (11.8) | 30 (14.7) | 4 | 3.35 |
| Layout of Design | 44 (21.6) | 90 (44.1) | 24 (11.8) | 30 (14.7) | 16 (7.8) | 4 | 3.56 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

Effect of package aesthetic principles on consumers' demand for staple commodities

The effects of package aesthetic principle on consumers' demand were explored as well (See Table 4). Of the 204 consumers, 48 (23.5%) and 120 (58.8%) of the consumers strongly agreed and agreed respectively that application of aesthetic principle have a positive effect on staple commodities demand. Further investigation into the effect of package aesthetic principle on consumers' demand showed that information and label, size and shape, colour, picture and technology top the list of aesthetic principle that has positive effects on consumers' demand of staple commodity. On the other hand, lettering and layout of design have the least effects on a consumers' demand.

Table 4: Effect of package aesthetic principles on consumers' demand for staple commodities in Lagos State

| Variable | 5 SA (%) | 4 A (%) | 3 UN (%) | 2 D (%) | 1 SD (%) | Mode | Mean |
|----------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------|------|
| B | 48 (23.5) | 120 (58.8) | 2 (0.9) | 26 (12.9) | 8 (3.9) | 4 | 3.80 |
| B1 | 72 (35.3) | 98 (48.0) | 12 (5.9) | 12 (5.9) | 10 (4.9) | 4 | 4.03 |
| B2 | 78 (38.2) | 100 (49.0) | 4 (1.9) | 8 (3.9) | 14 (6.9) | 4 | 4.08 |
| B3 | 102 (50.0) | 90 (44.1) | 0 (0.0) | 6 (2.9) | 6 (2.9) | 4 | 4.35 |
| B4 | 62 (30.4) | 112 (54.9) | 8 (3.9) | 8 (3.9) | 14 (6.9) | 4 | 3.98 |
| B5 | 64 (31.7) | 100 (49.0) | 16 (7.8) | 12 (5.9) | 12 (5.9) | 4 | 3.94 |
| B6 | 32 (15.7) | 92 (45.1) | 14 (6.9) | 24 (11.8) | 42 (20.6) | 4 | 3.24 |
| B7 | 36 (17.6) | 100 (49.0) | 24 (11.8) | 26 (12.7) | 18 (8.8) | 4 | 3.54 |

Source: Fieldwork (2020)

B: Consumers always justify staple commodities with the following package design elements (B1): picture, (B2): Colour, (B3): Information and label, (B4): Size and shape, (B5): Technology, (B6): Lettering, (B7): Layout of design.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study examined packaging elements that influence consumers' attitudes toward the selected staple commodities from Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ-Cussons Nigeria Plc. Generally, the package design elements are meant to communicate certain meaning through the appearance of a product design with the view to create a competitive advantage in the market and increase the product's chance of success (Lewalski, 1988; Bloch, 1995; Hertenstein, Platt, & Veryzer, 2005). The results as presented in Table 2 and Table 3 of the two companies confirmed that information and label, colour, picture, and size and shape are rated high, and so to top the list of the design element that influence consumers decision toward the selected staple commodities in Lagos, Nigeria.

In respect of the staple commodities from the Unilever Nigeria Plc and PZ Cussons Nigeria Plc, it was revealed that most of the respondents in Lagos agreed that they are most influenced by the package information and label, followed by the colour, picture, size and shape, technology, layout of design then lastly the lettering. Consumers increasingly rely on the information or details contained on packaging, which shows a specific combination of quality attributes determining the expected quality, while taking decisions on products (Wyrwa & Barska, 2017). This means that, the choice of a consumer to purchase or consider a particular staple commodity in Lagos, Nigeria depends on how appealing and convincing the package appears to prospective consumers. Consumers are more likely to read the label to check that the product information was consistent with their needs (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). This suggests that the informational elements are relevant only if the visual elements have performed well enough.

It can be deduced that consumers will readily consider product whose colour has the ability to stand out from the cluster of competing brands and the capacity to attract the needed attention. This is particularly so because what first attract a consumer towards a particular product is the colour of the product package. Although, colour patronage by the consumers varies among sex, age group, cultural affiliation etc. However, the fact remains that colour has a greater influence when it comes to selection of product package. The study conducted by Ibeto, Akinmoye, and Emidun (2019) revealed that undergraduate students in Nigerian universities have preference for white, pink, black blue (among females) and white, black, blue, and red (among males) as clothing colour. Therefore, it is imperative to identify the product target audience and research into their colour preference in order to attract the attention of the prospective consumers at the point of sales. Odji, Odewole, and Oladumiye (2019) posited that a product package can only communicate if it succeeds in attracting the attention of the consumer to itself.

Asides, colour and, information and label, the consumers of products from the selected companies admitted that picture on the packaging is mostly considered next in their bid to take final decision of the staple commodities products. Underwood, *et. al.*, (2001) opines that picture can also be a source of information to a consumer. Most significantly, the pictorial content represents concrete information that tends to be more influential in the decision-making process than more abstract verbal information.

Considered next to this, is the size and shape of the packaging, a consumer appears to use package size and shape as a simplifying visual heuristic to make volume judgments (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). According to the result, considered next to size and shape is the technology used in packaging. Consumers who are more concerned about time saving can pay more attention to claims of new technology, because of technology's association with convenience. The layout of package design also influences the attitudes of consumer, which can be defined as the arrangement of all the visual and informational elements on the package. The way this arrangement communicates to or stimulates the mind of the consumer, determines whether a product is considered or not. Lastly is the lettering; these are the type-faces used on the packaging, which could be bold, large, italicized, san serif, or small. This verbal communication element is of critical importance because they are responsible for communicating specific information about the product and its attributes.

The results shows that consumers always consider package design elements before purchasing staple commodities as revealed in the result, where, 48 (23.5%) strongly agreed and 120 (58.8%) agreed out of 204 respondents. The respondents acknowledged the fact that they always justify staple commodities with the packaging elements. Table 3 shows that, the use of information and label in justifying demand for staple commodities recorded the highest positive response compared to the other packaging elements, this is followed by the use of colour, size and shape, picture, technology, layout of design then the lettering. The findings show that packaging information and label are mostly used in justifying commodities for finalizing the choice to purchase it, after all other elements must have been considered as can be inferred from the result. From the research it can be concluded that packaging information and label can serve as a decision maker, when consumers are presented with competing brands at the point of purchase.

CONCLUSION

The underlying thrust of this study is to identify the package design elements that affect the consumer's choice of staple commodities in Lagos State. The package design has a very strong impact on consumers' attitude. According to the research analysis, results had proved that different elements of package design, such as picture, size, color, and shape, played very important roles. Consumers are willing to have easy instructions on the package: an easy handled/opened/closed package. All these elements contribute to attract consumers' attention and interest. The combination of these elements gives the product more attention. It can be concluded

that a well-designed package helps and gives product a chance of success in the market at the point of purchase. It has been proved that product package elements are always considered by consumers before purchasing a staple commodity and it is used in justifying a commodity. Consumers are most influenced by the information and label of packaging, followed by colour, picture, size and shape, technology, layout of design and least influenced by the lettering, which implies that labels are one of the most important features of product packaging, and they are designed to communicate a message.

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