

Packaging as an Effective Tool for Creating Awareness Among Consumers

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ABSTRACT

Packaging, traditionally considered as a process of wrapping the product for the safety but over the last few decades, the industry has gone from strength to strength.

Once, considered only from the logistic point of view, the industry has now become an integral part of Marketing and strategic campaigns.

The present research tried to find out the role of packaging in the dissemination of the information about the product by the companies and the perception of consumers regarding this special “P” of Marketing.

234 respondents were selected for this study, and they opined their views through structured, pre-defined questionnaire.

The result demonstrated that consumers are aware of the packaging materials and packaging considered to be one of the factors while making a purchase decision.

Keywords: Packaging, Marketing Mix, Labelling, Indian Packaging Industry, Consumer Perception for Packaging, consumer preferences for packaging.

I. INTRODUCTION

Packaging is the process of wrapping and/ or protecting the product using a container to aid its distribution, identification, storage, promotion, and usage. Though this industry is very old, yet it gained momentum during industrial revolution and today packaging industry is the most happening industry in the world.

The 21st century saw the momentum of this industry in a big way as with the arrival of internet and e-commerce companies packaging gained its due recognition over a period of time and today thanks to the advent of new technologies the packaging industry has gained new perspectives and is now being considered as one of the marketing pillars.

Packaging is often considered as an essential tool of marketing, but it is more than that, now it is being used as a strategy to create awareness about the product for customers. Packaging is not only important for customers, but it has its own importance for the Seller. When this industry was started the primary objective was to protect the product in such a way that it can be easily stored and distributed. But now the packaging industry encompasses more than the above factors and now these days it includes various marketing perspectives as well.

In today's time the package of a product has gone beyond the essential purpose of the safety and now it is serving multiple purposes.

As effective packaging can help the company to differentiate its product from the competitor and to create a different image of its product in the minds of potential customers. Packaging, now these days is providing convenience for the consumers and sellers so that it can be easily transported, distributed, stored, and warehoused.

Usually, packaging is classified into three types depending on its usage pattern and serving purpose. These classes are discussed below

1. Primary packaging-also known as consumer packaging is the direct contact with the product. It is the base packaging that emphasize utility and appearance

2. Secondary packaging-this packaging is important for the distributor and the retailer as it does not interact directly with the consumers and its main use is to hold the individual units of the product so that these products can be delivered easily
3. Bulk Packaging-as clear from the name itself it is a transit packaging to transport large quantity of bags from one point to another destination.

Packaging and labelling have become the essential tool for the release of important information about not only the company but also about the directions for use, instruction for storage, the ingredients, customer care helpline and email addresses (now these days the companies are also offering WhatsApp and other social media supports as well), and date of manufacturing, expiring etc.

For a buyer perspective, packaging provides the easiest way to recognize the product. Packaging is the first window for a buyer and the company to interact. It is a point of interaction wherein if used judiciously the company may create brand awareness and brand recognition in the buyer's mindset. The growing importance of this industry can be assessed by the inclusion of this industry in almost every book of marketing and strategic marketing and there are various programmes at universities level that address and cater to this industry all over the world.

II. THE INDIAN PACKAGING INDUSTRY

One would be surprised to know that packaging is the fifth largest sector of India's economy, and this industry has given steady growth over past decade and is still showing very high potential for its expansion. The Indian packaging industry is growing rapidly, and it is expected to reach US dollar 205 billion in the year 2025 with the growth rate of more than 27% during the period of 2020 to 2025.

In fact, India has become the hub of all the innovations being done in packaging sector over the last few years and now these days the Indian packaging industry has gone overseas. Indian packaging industry comprise flattened cans printed sheets, various crown Cox, plastic laminated sheets, paper boards and packaging machinery.

No doubt there are challenges and constraints for this industry in India as China, Vietnam, Malaysia are providing threat to Indian packaging industry and for this reason the government of India is giving due importance to the sector in its policy formulation.

The present study is an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of packaging as a differentiator/marketing tool in the minds of the target customers. The study was carried in Bikaner city and the results were analysed with the help of statistical tool and the findings were presented in the conclusion part of the research article.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Arun Kumar Agariya *et al* studied the importance of buyer attraction in package design and revealed that customer give more importance to the attractive design, branding and shape of the packaging while deciding the purchase.

Saikat Banerjee concluded in his research that consumers attach significant importance to packaging in the category of household items of confectionaries and in the cosmetic product range.

Jabir Ali and Sanjeev Kapoor identified the consumers expectations and came to know that consumers are increasingly giving importance to environmental friendly packaging. The result emphasized that the packaging should focus attractiveness and looks are not that important rather than safety and quality of packaging is more important. .

Mahavir Sehrawet and Subhash C. Kundu surveyed urban and rural consumers to find out their preferences for packaging and found that rural consumers are more critical to packaging as they believe that attractive packaging mislead them.

B.O. Rundh in his study illustrated in the research that for marketing, packaging has become a major tool to create differentiation. This has become more essential as more products are introduced on a market. The study showed that the packaging has finally become the *go to* tool for the marketers and organizations.

IV. RESEARCH GAP

Although there are various research have been done in the past, in the field of packaging industry and its importance yet very few researches have been carried out in India. Moreover the researches which have been carried out in India were conducted in metro cities and Tier 2 and tier 3 cities were largely ignored.

This research is an attempt to understand the consumer perception regarding packaging as a tool for marketing communication.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study Design

A descriptive cross-sectional survey was designed

Scope of the research

The research study was carried out in Bikaner city of Rajasthan state.

Population and sampling technique

The population was the consumers of Bikaner city and a sample size of 234 respondents was taken.

Research instrument

A structured self-administered questionnaire was designed based on previous literature which includes close ended and open-ended questionnaires were used for this study

DATA INTERPRETATION:

The data was collected from the respondents using structured questionnaire and SPSS software was used to analyze the data.

Table-1:Age-wise Distribution

Variable	Category	Male	Female	Total
Age	Below 20	12	7	19
	20-30	21	24	45
	30-40	41	45	86
	40-50	22	26	48
	Above 50	17	19	36
	Total			234

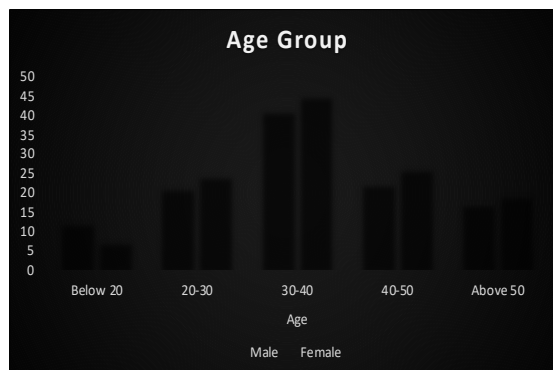


Table-2:Educational Level of Respondents

Variable	Category	Male	Female	Total
Education	Up to High School	21	32	53
	Graduation	61	43	104
	Post Graduate	27	12	39
	Professional	21	17	38
	Total			234

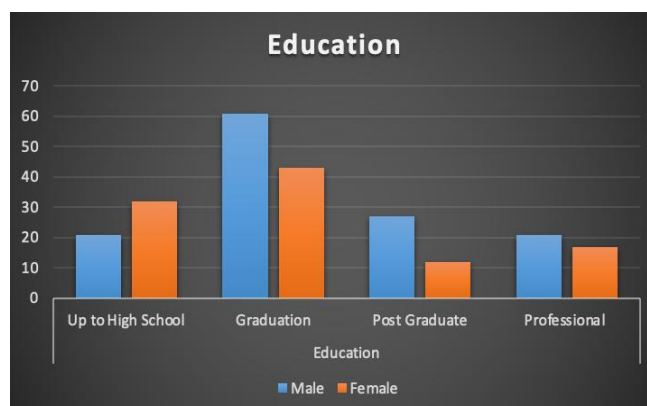


Table-3:Occupation

Variable	Category	Male	Female	Total
Occupation	Govt Job	32	11	43
	Private	51	9	60
	Students	27	22	49
	Home maker	0	41	41
	Own Business	38	3	41
	Total			234

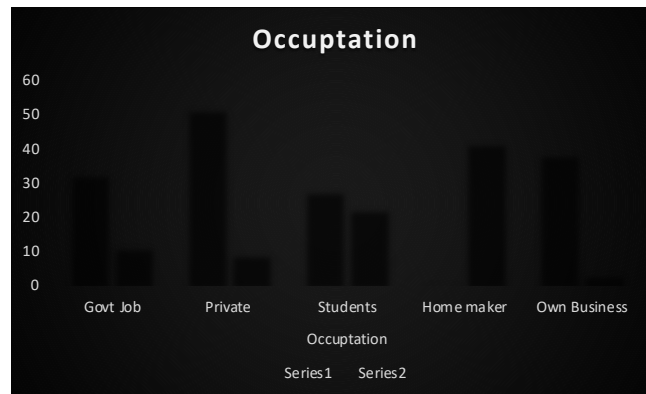


Table-4:Income-wise distribution

Variable	Category	Male	Female	Total
Income	Less than 2.5 L	41	4	45
	2.5 to 5 lakh	77	3	80
	5 to 10 lakh	48	33	81
	More than 10 L	11	17	28
	Total			234



Table-5:Importance of Packaging

Attributes	No.of respondents
Exteremly Important	88
Somewhat important	68
Indifferent	32
Somewhat Unimportant	29
Unimportant	17
Total	234



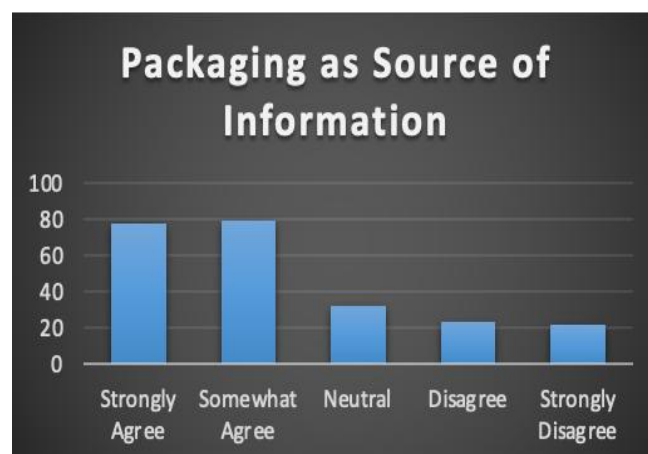
It is clear from the above table that for most of the respondents, packaging plays a vital role. The marketers have to include packaging in their arsenal while drawing their communication strategies.

Table-6: Important Attribute in Packaging

Attributes	No. of respondents
Shape	55
Size	61
Text and Color	36
Instructions	71
Any other	11
Total	234

Table-7: Importance of Information in Packaging

Attributes	No. of respondents
Strongly Agree	78
Somewhat Agree	79
Neutral	32
Disagree	23
Strongly Disagree	22
Total	234



It is evident from the above table

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted in the city of Bikaner. The main objective of the study was to find out the importance of packaging from the perspective of consumer.

The finding strongly indicated that consumer not only pays importance to the packaging but also consider it as one of the main factors of influence while purchasing a product.

There is a vast scope of further research in this area as packaging itself is a complex dimension. Labelling is also one of the dimensions of the packaging and further research must be done to elaborate the role and significance of labeling in a marketing tool.

Further research is also indicated to be conducted in rural areas because more often than not, colors and shape of the packaging play more important role than the language and instructions.

The rural dimension will also bring different aspects of packaging as the safety features become major source of influence in these areas due to poor condition of roads and logistics.

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