

EFFECT OF PRODUCT PACKAGING ON CUSTOMER PATRONAGE OF LIQUID WASH IN KARU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF NASARAWA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Product packaging impacts unique value to the product and firms use this strategy to influence customers to patronize them. Packaging of liquid wash has been used by small businesses in Karu Local Government area of Nasarawa state such as liquid wash labeling, liquid wash colouring and liquid wash packaging in order to ensure frequent patronage of customers of the product. The study examines the effect of product packaging on customer patronage of liquid wash in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study used survey research design. The population of the study is the customers and sellers of liquid wash in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The study used questionnaire to obtain data and was analysed using regression (OLS) technique with the aid of SPSS statistical software 25.00. The findings indicate that product packaging contribute significantly to customer patronage as well as product labeling. The study recommend that producers of liquid wash should continue to use effective packaging, especially those with residual value, in order to attract customer patronage. However, they should avoid product packaging that appears misleading or dishonest.

Keywords: Packaging, Information, Convenience, Attractiveness, Customer Patronage

Introduction

In recent years, there is an increase in the complexity and competition in the marketing environment and product packaging has become a very important, sophisticated, and influential instrument for selling products from manufacturers to the end consumers. According to Nayyar (2012) the packaging of a product is the first thing a consumer sees and it plays a vital role in differentiating a brand from competition. Product packaging is usually the last impression the consumer has of a product before making the final purchase decision. Underwood (2003) buttressed the fact that product packaging is an important way to gain consumer attention.

Arens (1996) defined packaging as the container for a product and encompasses the physical appearance of the container including the design, colour, shape, labelling and materials used. This simply implies that packaging is the fundamental component of any product that seeks to attract customers from first observation. This is why Borishade, Ogunnaike, Dirisu, Onochie

(2015) citing Pilditch (1973) stated that packaging is a silent salesman in the store and is the only communication between a product and the final consumer at the point of sales.

Similarly, Olga and Nathalia (2006) observed that most product labels provide their information through the product packaging and this serves as a means of product knowledge and usability for consumers. Underwood, Klein and Burke (2001) emphasized that packaging is utilized as a marketing tool to get consumers' attention as well as promote and convey information about the product attributes to consumers.

Rundh (2005) opined that product packaging attracts consumer's attention to a particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about the product. This supports the view of Underwood et al (2001) that holds that designing packages with product images gains attention for brands, especially brands that are less familiar but provide experiential benefits.

Most organisations being aware of the importance of packaging put a great deal of effort into creating product packaging that will attract consumers and convince them to buy their product. These marketers package their products primarily to gain a competitive advantage by presenting a favourable image of the product.

Product packaging is therefore a critical strategic element for brand differentiation and identity, because it helps producers to differentiate their product from their competitors. The desire to support the positioning of their brands, build competitive advantage and increase sales, moves marketers to develop various ways of product packaging. In an attempt to get more customers to purchase their products, companies engage in different innovations to make their products more competitive in the market place.

Hence, marketers utilize product packaging to try to influence and shape consumer's concept and perception instead of allowing the consumer to position the product independently. Consumers are constantly bombarded with choices of various brands of products. This often creates confusion of choice and they are often forced to select based on instinct and personal attraction. This is where packaging becomes relevant as it provides not just a basis for marketing, but can also be used for stimulating consumers buying impulse. That is why Kolter (2003) opined that packaging is the organisational first tool for marketing.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, packaging of liquid wash has been used by small business in Karu Local Government area of Nasarawa State in order to make their products more presentable to customers and ensure frequent patronage of customers of the product in terms of customer loyalty. However, it was observed that sellers of liquid wash products in Karu complain of fluctuating and declining sales. This raised the need to ascertain what aspects of packaging that

increases customers' patronage so as to make adequate recommendations that would improve the performance of liquid wash businesses in Karu LGA.

From extant literatures, studies such as Mahyar and Masoumeh (2014); Mai and Tang (2016); Adebisi and Akinruwa (2019) using Vinamilk users living in Ho Chi Minh City and Islamic Azad University of Qazvin students but none of these studies used liquid wash businesses nor made reference to small businesses in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of product packaging on customer patronage with particular reference to liquid wash in Karu. The hypotheses for the study are formulated in line with the specific research objectives as follows:

- H₀₁** Packaging attractiveness has no significant effect on customer patronage of liquid wash in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria
- H₀₂** Packaging convenience has no significant effect on customer patronage of liquid wash in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria
- H₀₃** Packaging information has no significant effect on customer patronage of liquid wash in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria

The outcome of this study is of significance to the relevant stakeholders including management and ownership of liquid wash businesses in Karu LGA, customers of the liquid wash products, government and the product regulatory bodies, and the body of academic empirical knowledge concerning packaging and customer patronage.

To the ownership and management of the liquid wash businesses, the findings and recommendations from the study would provide relevant information to support decision making in terms of packaging of their products that would lead to improve customer patronage. To customers, the findings study would be a means to air their collective opinions on what aspects of product packaging they are interested in as it concerns liquid wash products in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State. To the government and its liquid wash business related regulatory bodies, the study would provide relevant information to support decision-making, policy formation and implementation that would guide the industry into best practices and improve value for relevant stakeholders. The study would also contribute to the academic pool of knowledge concerning products packaging and customer patronage serving as a reference material to students, authors, researchers and general readers in the field. The study would also serve as a foundation for further research to be conducted by other researchers in the field who would wish to carry out research into the same phenomenon in the future.

The scope is restricted to the effect of product packaging on customer patronage of liquid wash in Karu Local Government Area of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. The scope of this study takes a cross sectional nature in which data was collected for the study only once in 2019. The study covered product packaging elements of information, convenience and attractiveness as the independent variables while customer patronage was the dependent variable measured by the study.

Conceptual Framework

Concept of Product Packaging

Product packaging is the act of containing, protecting and presenting the contents through the long chain of production, handling and transportation to their destinations as good as they were, at the time of production. In the view of Deliya and Parmar (2012), packaging can be defined as an extrinsic element of the product. They stressed further that it can also be defined as a container product. Silayoi and Speece (2005) see packaging as the overall features that underline the uniqueness and originality of the product. In the view of Ahmed, Parmar and Amin (2014), packaging is described as a whole package that becomes an ultimate selling proposition, which stimulates impulse buying behaviour. Ulrich, Campana and Malkewitz (2015), opined that product packaging constituted an essential aspect of projecting a firm's brand's image. Mousavi and Jahromi (2014) viewed packaging as inclusion of design and production of container or wrapper for a product. Packaging is any container though closed, but by it, a product will be offered to the market for sale or by which necessary information about the product is transmitted to the consumer (Gilaninla, Ganjinla, & Moradi, 2013).

Product packaging is a way firms build their supplied products range in order to make them more attractive to the target market and encourage the customers to patronize them. It often makes the company product to be unique and stands out from those products of the competitors. Product packaging attracts consumer's attention to particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumer's buying decision. Product packaging impacts unique value to the product and firms used this strategy to encourage customers to patronage them. Product packaging is the art, science and technology of preparing goods for transport and sale and it is a tool for ensuring safe delivery to the final consumer in good condition and with minimal total cost of the goods. The importance of packaging is that it protects the product and it will be delivered to the point of sale in good condition (Mousavi & Jahromi, 2014).

Packaging attributes

According to Illani (2018) Packaging attributes refer to characteristic features of the packaging of a product that represents the manufacturer's perspective, aimed at appealing to customers and includes elements that make for attractiveness (design, shape, graphics, colour, typography

images) as well as size, material used and convenience of the packaging, and also the information on the packaging concerning the product which it contains. Illani (2018) further describes packaging attributes in terms of convenience, attractiveness and information as follows:

Packaging Attractiveness: Packaging attractiveness is that function of packaging that allures the customer by means of its appearance and makes the product self – selling through the use of bright colours, eye-catching graphics and fanciful shapes of packaging.

Packaging Information: Packaging information communicates the content of the product, how to use, transport, recycle, or dispose of the package or product. Most packaging is designed to reflect the brands message and identity.

Packaging Convenience: Packaging convenience is a characteristic that makes a product easy to obtain, simplifies its usage or consumption, adds to one’s ease or comfort, provides size options (neither heavy in weight nor large in size), and makes provision for easy opening of the product. Packaging convenience is initiated by having a package that is easy to open as well as easy to close (Hogan, 2007).

Concept of Customer Patronage

According to Oliver (1999), customer patronage is defined as a deeply held commitment to repurchase a firm’s products at the expense of a competitor offering. Adiele, Grend and Chinedu (2015) see customer patronage as the means of a respondent’s rating for his or her firm’s sales volume, profit margin and customer retention level. According to Oxford Advance Learner’s Dictionary (1995), patronage can be described as the support and encouragement given by a patron. Adiele, Grend and Chinedu (2015), described customer patronage as a person or thing that eats or uses something or a person who buys goods and services for personal consumption or use. In this study, again, customer patronage is defined as the supports a firm enjoy from the customers

Empirical Review

Adebisi and Akinruwa (2019) examined the effectiveness of product packaging on customer patronage. Survey method was adopted. Data were collected using structured questionnaire and purposive sampling was used to determine respondents. Sample size of 322 was used. Collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics and hierarchical multiple regression. Constructs tested as explanatory variables were product size, colour, quality of packaging material, quality of product content and shape. The results showed that all the tested variables have significant positive effects on customer patronage of Bournvita. In order of significance, the R2 change, in

order of hierarch, for the variables was: product size =.215, quality of packaging material=.058, colour = .049, shape =.044, and quality of product content = .028.It was concluded that customer decision to patronise was influenced by taken into consideration size, colour, package material, product content and shape of a product.

Mahyar and Masoumeh (2014) evaluated the impact of packaging of the product on consumer willingness to buy gum industry. The present study was carried out on a sample of students of Islamic Azad University of Qazvin, about 24,000 persons. Using a simple random sample of 400, questionnaires were distributed among the students. Finally 376 valid questionnaires were collected. The researcher concluded that the functional characteristics of the product packaging have an impact on the willingness of customers to purchase.

Mai and Tang (2016) studied impact of product packaging design factors to consumer repurchase intention as well as the indirect association of these factors to the repurchase intention through two terms of brand awareness: brand recognition and brand recall. Quantitative method was applied with the sample size of 293 respondents who were Vinamilk users living in Ho Chi Minh City. The results demonstrated that in order to attain high level of consumer repurchase intention, board of management of Vinamilk should: a) mitigate the number of colors applying on the packages, b) create unique fonts and use recycle materials for the packages, and c) introduce products with easy-to-store and differentiated shapes. Furthermore, this study found out empirical evidence that brand recognition and brand recall could predict the consumer 'repurchase intention' level. On the other hand, colorful packages, packaging materials and fonts, and packaging shapes indirectly affect the repurchase intention.

The empirical works reviewed however show that studies were either carried out in the past using different methodologies or were carried out in different locations. The present study however wishes to contribute to empirical knowledge on packaging and its effect on consumer behavior by providing recent findings and recommendations that are relevant to liquid wash businesses in Karu, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Nicosia Theory

This theory was developed by Schiffman and Kanuk in 1987. The theory focused on the relationship between the firm and its potential consumers. The firm communicates with the consumers through its marketing messages (advertising) or inscriptions on the packaging and consumers also communicate with the firm via their purchase responses. The Nicosia model is interactive in design. Nicosia model is divided into four major fields (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1987; Goodhope, 2013) namely, (i) the consumer's attitude based on the firm's message; (ii) search and evaluation; (iii) the act of purchase; and (iv) feedback.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design using questionnaire as the instrument for collecting primary data. Data for this study was gathered from primary sources through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study is made up of the users of liquid wash products in Karu LGA. The total number of the population is uncertain since customers of the product cannot be easily identified until questionnaire is administered to the customers. The sample size of customers was selected using purposive sampling techniques where respondents were selected based on the study's criteria. The criteria for the selection was that the customers are resident in Karu LGA, and must have used any brand of liquid wash in the past year. Four hundred and three (403) were selected and distributed around the towns in Karu LGA.

The questionnaire was self-administered with the aid of research assistants across the local government area of Karu in 27 towns in Karu Local government area, which are Angwan Rana, Auta Balefi, Aso Pada, Auta Gurgi, Bakin Ado 1, Gurku, Guata, Jan Kanwa, Jikwai, Kabusu, KalboMada, Karu, Katare, Kofa, Kucikau, Kufe, Kugwaru, Kurman Daura, Lakwa, Liguda, Mararaban-Gurku, Masaka, Nassarawa Bada, Pakin Ado II, Timutna, Yayan Gwandara and Yelwan Sobo. However, it was administered on a pro rata bases such that each town received 11-15 questionnaires and only Karu town received more copies of questionnaire. The reasons for employing research assists were because of time constraint and the large size of the study area. The design was in a structured five (5) point Likert type scale questionnaire to collect information from the respondents on their opinion on packaging and patronage.

It was also tested to ascertain that the reliability of questionnaires are answered properly and noted that the instruments used are unique and perfect. The reliability and viability of the questionnaire is more than the Alpha values 0.6 as advised by Cronbach in Sekaran (2000). The variables used in this study scored Apha value of 0.6, infact all the variables scored at least 0.7 which is above the set limit.

Table 1: Reliability test

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Customer Patronage	5	0.891
Packaging Information	5	0.873
Packaging Convenience	5	0.889
Packaging Attractiveness	5	0.784

Source: Researchers Computation, 2019

The study adopted simple regression technique to analyse collected data and the model formulated is:

$$CP = \alpha + \beta_1PA + \beta_2PC + \beta_3PI + \mu$$

Where:

CP is customer patronage (customer loyalty)

PA = Packaging Attractiveness

PC = Packaging Convenience

PI = Packaging Information

α = constant; β_i = coefficients of determination; μ = Error term;

Findings and Discussions

Four hundred and twenty-one copies of the questionnaire were distributed so as to account for unreturned, incorrectly filled and invalid questionnaires. This allowed for the sample size of four hundred ... (400) to be fully attained. The responses are as analysed:

Presentation of Demographic Variables of Respondents

Table 2: Gender distribution of respondents

GENDER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	178	44.5
FEMALE	222	55.5
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Table 2 displays the gender distribution of the respondents. This shows that of the total four hundred respondents (400), one hundred and seventy-eight (178) of the respondents constituting 44.5% were male while the other two hundred and twenty-two (222) constituting 55.5% were female.

Table 3: Age Distribution of Respondents

AGE BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BELOW 18	16	4
18-25	69	17.3
26-30	77	19.3
31-35	89	22.3
ABOVE 35	149	37.3
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Table 3 shows that 16 (4%) of the respondents were below 18 years old, while 69 (17.3%) were between 18 to 25 years old; 77 (19.3%) were between 26 to 30 years old; 89 (22.3%) were between 31 to 35 years old while the largest group of 149 (37.3%) were above 35 years old.

Table 4: Income Distribution of respondents

INCOME BRACKET	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
BELOW N50,000	91	22.8
N50,000-N100,000	100	25.0
N100,000-N150,000	63	15.8
N150,000-N200,000	49	12.3
ABOVE N200,000	97	24.3
TOTAL	400	100.0

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Table 4 shows that out of the 400 total respondents in response to the income distribution question, 91 (22.8%) stated that their income were below N50, 000; 100 (25%) were between N50, 000 to N100,000; 63 (15.8%) were between N100,000 to N150,000; 49 (12.3%) were between N150,000 to N200,000; while 97 (24.3%) fell above N200,000.

Table 5: Presentation of Responses on product packaging and customer patronage

S/ N	Question	SA 5 %	A 4 %	U 3 %	D 2 %	SD 1 %	TOTAL %
PACKAGING ATTRACTIVENESS							
1	The packaging of a product prompts me to buy the product.	46	39.5	5	6.5	3.5	100
2	I buy products that the containers have fine shapes and colours.	25	38.25	15.25	16	5.5	100
3	I do not buy products that the packaging is of very low quality.	33.25	36.25	13.75	12	4.75	100
4	I like to buy products packaged in containers that have beautiful pictures and images	25	32.75	20.75	17.25	4.25	100
5	I do not pay attention to poorly packaged products.	31	31	12.75	16.75	8.25	100
PACKAGING CONVENIENCE							
6	I like products that are packaged in various sizes so that I can choose which one to buy.	39.25	39.75	7.5	10.5	3	100
7	I like packages that I can use the container for something else after I finish the product	36	34.5	12.5	12.5	4.5	100
8	I like products that are easy to open and easy to close	48,25	32.5	11.5	6.25	1.5	100
9	The material used for the packaging can influence my choice of which one to buy.	52.75	38.25	5.25	2.5	1.25	100
10	I like products that are sold in tamper-proof packs so that I will be sure that it has not been opened before	63.5	24.75	8.5	3	0.25	100

PACKAGING INFORMATION

11	The nutritional or health related information on the label of vegetable oil determines whether I buy it or not.	50.5	32.25	11.5	4.5	1.25	100
12	I always check the Shelf-life/ Expiry date on product labels before I buy	73.75	19.5	5.5	1	0.25	100
13	I always buy products that the label is very clear and readable.	60.25	31.75	6.75	1.25	0	100
14	I check the manufacturer and origin of vegetable oil before I buy it	41	27.5	21	8.25	2.25	100
15	I only buy vegetable oil that the label reads "Cholesterol-free"	39.75	30.5	17.75	10.25	1.5	100

CUSTOMER PATRONAGE

16	I buy vegetable oil often	34	37	12.75	13.25	3	100
17	When I want to buy a product, I consider the packaging first before I consider the price	15.75	37.25	11.25	22	13.75	100
18	I can buy vegetable oil on impulse if the packaging is attractive	11.5	26.5	23.5	25.5	13	100
19	While purchasing fast moving consumer goods, I am more affected by visual and aesthetic elements of the packaging.	14	37.5	25.75	17.25	5.5	100
20	When the packaging of vegetable oil is poor, I do not buy it because I assume that it is of low quality	34.75	36.5	14	9.75	5	100

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

Correlation Matrix for Independent variables of the study

Table 6: Correlation Analysis of Independent variables of the study

	PATT	PCON	PINFO
PATT	1		
PCON	0.407	1	
PINFO	0.2436	0.2098	1

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2019

The Correlation table 6 shows a positive relationship between packaging attractiveness (PATT) and packaging convenience (PCON) with a coefficient of 0.41; between packaging attractiveness (PATT) and packaging information (PINFO) with 0.24; packaging convenience (PCON) and packaging information (PINFO) with 0.21. They all exhibit positive relationships and none of the variables display a correlation close to 1 meaning that the variables are not highly correlated or alike, and are not repetitions. This shows absence of multi colinearity problems with the data for the study.

Test of Hypotheses

From a pooled OLS regression analysis using STATA statistical software, the hypotheses of the study have been tested and results extracted as follows:

Ho₁ Packaging Attractiveness has no significant effect on Customer Patronage.

Table 7: Regression for Hypothesis One

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Coefficient	p-value	f-stats	p-value	R ²
CP	PATT	-0.1552	0.000	9.43	0.000	0.596

Source: Researcher’s Computation 2019

The statistical decision rule of p- value states that the Null hypothesis should be accepted if P-value is greater than alpha value (i.e. level of significant which is 0.05) otherwise it should be rejected while the Alternative hypothesis is adopted.

The analysis shows a negative and significant effect of packaging attractiveness (PATT) on customer patronage (CP) with a coefficient value of 0.1552, p-value < 0.05 at 0.000, disagreeing with the null hypotheses 1 of the study. This result implies that PATT negatively affects CP of liquid wash in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria. In other words, the present nature of their packaging in terms of attractiveness reduces customers’ patronage of the product.

Furthermore, the F-stat is 9.43 with a p-value of 0.000 which shows that the model is in good fit. The R² value of 0.596 shows that the model explains about 59.6% of the dependent variable, the remaining 40.4% may be explained by other factors.

Ho₂ Packaging convenience has no significant effect on Customer Patronage.

Table 8: Regression for Hypothesis Two

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Coefficient	p-value	f-stats	p-value	R ²
CP	PCON	0.6858	0.171	9.43	0.000	0.596

Source: Researcher’s Computation 2019

The statistical decision rule of p- value states that the Null hypothesis should be accepted if P-value is greater than alpha value (i.e. level of significant which is 0.05) otherwise it should be rejected while the Alternative hypothesis is adopted.

The study found a positive but non-significant effect of packaging convenience (PCON) on Customer patronage (CP) of liquid wash with a coefficient value of 0.6858, p-value > 0.05 at 0.171, agreeing with the null hypotheses of the study that there is no significant effect of packaging convenience on Customer Patronage. This result implies that PCON positively affects CP but insignificantly.

Furthermore, the F-stat is 9.43 with a p-value of 0.000 which shows that the model is in good fit. The R² value of 0.596 shows that the model explains about 59.6% of the dependent variable, the remaining 40.4% may be explained by other factors.

H03 Packaging Information has no significant effect on Customer Patronage

Table 9: Regression for Hypothesis Three

Dependent variable	Independent Variable	Coefficient	p-value	f-stats	p-value	R ²
CP	PINFO	-0.0631	0.181	9.43	0.000	0.596

Source: Researcher's Computation 2019

The statistical decision rule of p- value states that the Null hypothesis should be accepted if P-value is greater than alpha value (i.e. level of significant which is 0.05) otherwise it should be rejected while the Alternative hypothesis is adopted.

The study found a negative but non-significant effect of Packaging information (PINFO) on customer patronage (CP) with a coefficient value of -0.0631, and p-value > 0.05 at 0.181, agreeing with the null hypotheses of the study which states that there is no significant effect of packaging information on Customer Patronage. This result implies that PINFO negatively affects CP but insignificantly.

Furthermore, the F-stat is 9.43 with a p-value of 0.000 which shows that the model is in good fit. The R² value of 0.596 shows that the model explains about 59.6% of the dependent variable, the remaining 40.4% may be explained by other factors.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concludes on a general note that product packaging contributes significantly to customer patronage. From the result of the analysis so far, it is noted that there is positive and significant relationship between product packaging and customer patronage. This implies that product packaging contribute significantly to customer patronage. The finding of this study is in agreement with the finding of Adebisi and Akinruwa (2019) who found out that product packaging significantly contribute to customer patronage. The study is also in tandem with Nicosia Theory which states that the relationship between the firm and its potential consumers is that firm communicates with the consumers through its marketing messages (advertising) or inscriptions on the packaging and consumers also communicate with the firm by their purchase responses. The Nicosia model is interactive in design.

However, the study observed from the findings that the problem of bad sales faced by the liquid wash businesses in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State, Nigeria, is mostly as a result of the present nature of the packaging of the products in terms of attractiveness which is the most significant, followed by packaging information which is also negative but insignificant, while packaging convenience was positive but also insignificant. The study therefore recommends as follows in terms of packaging of liquid wash products in Karu LGA of Nasarawa State Nigeria.

Firstly, the packaging of the liquid wash products in terms of attractiveness should be improved in order to improve sales. They can do this by engaging professional packaging specialists to research and develop the most attractive packages for the products. Secondly, the packaging of the products in terms of its information should also be improved in order to improve patronage from customers. This can be done having better type sets and advert content on the packages that are better perceivable and understandable. Thirdly, the packaging of the products in terms of its convenience should be maintained or continually improved till the positive effect becomes significant towards improving customers' patronage for their product. This can be done by getting more convenient packages for the products.

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