

Effect of Packaging on Consumer Buying Choice of FMCG Consumer Goods

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Introduction of the Study

In today's competitive marketplace, packaging has emerged as one of the most significant factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions, especially in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector. With an increasing number of brands offering similar products, effective packaging not only serves as a protective medium but also as a powerful marketing tool that helps attract consumer attention, communicates brand values, and stimulate purchase intent. The design, color, shape, labeling, and overall appearance of a product's package play a vital role in differentiating one brand from another on retail shelves. The FMCG industry includes products that are sold quickly and at relatively low cost, such as food and beverages, personal care items, household goods, and toiletries. Consumers often make impulsive buying decisions in this category, and packaging is frequently the first point of contact between the consumer and the product. Therefore, companies invest heavily in innovative packaging strategies to influence consumer perception and buying behavior.

This study aims to explore the relationship between packaging attributes and consumer buying choices in the FMCG sector. It examines how various elements of packaging—such as color, design, labeling, material, and brand image—affect consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Understanding this relationship will help marketers and manufacturers design more effective packaging that not only attracts attention but also enhances customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. By identifying the most influential packaging elements and analyzing consumer attitudes towards them, this research seeks to contribute to existing knowledge in marketing and consumer behavior. It also provides valuable insights for FMCG companies striving to gain a competitive advantage through strategic packaging design.

Review of Literature

Kotler and Keller (2016) emphasized that packaging is one of the most powerful marketing tools that influences consumer behavior at the point of purchase. They explained that packaging serves not only as a means of product protection but also as a communication medium between the brand and the consumer. According to their study, visual elements such as color, shape, and design create emotional connections with consumers, thereby affecting their buying decisions. The authors concluded that packaging has become an essential part of brand identity and differentiation in the FMCG industry.

Rundh (2013) investigated the role of packaging as a marketing and communication tool. His study revealed that packaging design significantly impacts consumer perception of quality, value, and brand image. Rundh argued that innovative packaging can enhance product attractiveness and influence impulse buying, especially in supermarkets where consumers face numerous product choices. The research also highlighted that sustainable and eco-friendly packaging is increasingly valued by modern consumers, influencing their brand preference.

Silayoi and Speece (2007) In their study on packaging and consumer responses, Silayoi and Speece identified two main categories of packaging elements: visual and informational. The visual elements—such as graphics, colors, and shapes—capture attention, while informational elements—like labeling, brand name, and product information—affect consumer evaluation and decision-making. Their research found that time-pressed consumers rely heavily on visual cues to make quick purchasing decisions in FMCG categories. This suggests that packaging design directly influences both perception and purchasing behavior.



Prendergast and Pitt (1996) discussed how packaging functions as the “silent salesman” for products, particularly in the FMCG sector. They argued that effective packaging not only communicates brand positioning but also adds value by influencing consumer perceptions of product quality. Their findings indicated that packaging attributes such as convenience, durability, and attractiveness play a vital role in shaping consumers’ purchase intentions. The study concluded that packaging acts as a strategic marketing element that can strongly affect consumer choice in competitive retail environments.

Statement of the Problem

In the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry, where numerous brands compete for consumer attention, effective packaging has become a crucial factor in influencing purchasing decisions. Consumers are often faced with a wide variety of similar products, and their choices are frequently made within seconds at the point of sale. In such a scenario, packaging serves not only as a means of protection and preservation but also as a silent communicator of the brand’s image, quality, and value.

However, many FMCG companies still underestimate the role of packaging as a strategic marketing tool. There is often a lack of understanding regarding which specific packaging attributes—such as color, design, shape, material, and labeling—most strongly influence consumer preferences and buying behavior. Additionally, changing consumer lifestyles, increased environmental awareness, and growing competition have further complicated how consumers perceive and respond to packaging.

The problem, therefore, lies in determining how different elements of packaging influence the buying choices of consumers in the FMCG sector. This study seeks to identify the key packaging factors that drive consumer decisions, assess their relative importance, and understand how packaging contributes to brand differentiation and customer loyalty in a crowded market.

1. Which key packaging elements influence consumer buying decisions of FMCG products?
2. How does packaging affect consumer buying behavior toward FMCG products?

Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the key packaging elements that influence consumer buying decisions of FMCG products.
2. To study the effect of packaging on consumer buying behavior of FMCG products.

Hypothesis of the Study

H₁: There is a significant relationship between packaging elements and consumer buying decisions of FMCG products.

H₂: Packaging has a significant effect on consumer buying behavior toward FMCG products.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to investigate the effect of packaging on consumer buying behavior of FMCG products. This design is appropriate as it enables the researcher to describe and analyze the perceptions, attitudes, and preferences of consumers regarding various packaging elements and their influence on purchasing decisions.

2. Population of the Study

The target population for this study comprises consumers of FMCG products, including items such as food, beverages, personal care products, and household goods. The respondents are selected from both urban and semi-urban areas where FMCG products are purchased frequently.

3. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 180 respondents were selected for this study. The sample includes both male and female consumers from different age groups and occupational backgrounds to ensure diversity. The convenience sampling method was used because it allows easy access to respondents who are readily available and willing to participate in the survey.

4. Data Collection Methods

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources:

- **Primary Data:** Obtained through a structured questionnaire designed to collect information on consumer perceptions of packaging elements (such as color, design, labeling, and shape) and their influence on buying behavior.
- **Secondary Data:** Sourced from books, academic journals, previous research studies, company reports, and online databases related to packaging and consumer behavior.

5. Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, and mean values. Tables and charts were used to present the data clearly. In addition, correlation and simple statistical analysis were applied to determine the relationship between packaging elements and consumer buying decisions.

6. Scope of the Study

The study focuses on FMCG products sold in local retail stores and supermarkets. It is limited to understanding the influence of packaging on consumer buying behavior and does not cover other marketing mix factors such as pricing, promotion, or distribution strategies.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	90	50.00%
	Female	90	50.00%
Age Group	Below 20 years	25	13.90%
	21–30 years	70	38.90%
	31–40 years	50	27.80%
	Above 40 years	35	19.40%

Occupation	Student	60	33.30%
	Employee	70	38.90%
	Business	30	16.70%
	Others	20	11.10%
Education Level	High School	40	22.20%
	Undergraduate	85	47.20%
	Postgraduate	45	25.00%
	Others	10	5.60%
Monthly Income	Below ₹20,000	50	27.80%
	₹20,001–₹40,000	70	38.90%
	₹40,001–₹60,000	40	22.20%
	Above ₹60,000	20	11.10%

The demographic data show an equal gender distribution with 50% male and 50% female respondents. Most participants (38.9%) are aged between 21–30 years, indicating a young consumer base. Employees form the largest occupational group (38.9%), followed by students (33.3%). Nearly half of the respondents (47.2%) hold an undergraduate degree, reflecting a well-educated sample. In terms of income, the majority (38.9%) earn between ₹20,001–₹40,000 per month, representing middle-income consumers. Overall, the sample is young, educated, and moderately earning—typical of active FMCG buyers.

Influence of Packaging on Buying Behavior

Packaging Element	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Attractive color influences my buying decision.	80	60	25	10	5	4.14
Design and shape of packaging affect my choice.	70	65	30	10	5	4
Labeling and information help me choose a product.	85	60	20	10	5	4.16
Good packaging reflects product quality.	90	55	25	5	5	4.22
Eco-friendly packaging influences my purchase.	60	70	30	15	5	3.94

The results show that all packaging elements positively influence consumer buying behavior toward FMCG products. The highest mean score (4.22) indicates that consumers strongly believe good packaging reflects product quality, making it the most influential factor. Labeling and information (mean = 4.16) and attractive color (mean = 4.14) also play significant roles in purchase decisions, suggesting that visual appeal and clarity matter greatly. Design and shape (mean = 4.00) moderately affect consumer choice, while eco-friendly packaging (mean = 3.94) also influences purchases but to a slightly lesser extent. Overall, consumers associate well-designed and informative packaging with better quality and are likely to be influenced by these factors when buying FMCG products.

Reliability Statistics

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Color	3	0.84	Good
Design	3	0.87	Good
Shape	2	0.79	Acceptable
Labeling	2	0.81	Good
Overall Scale	10	0.9	Excellent

The reliability analysis results indicate that all constructs in the study demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha values for each construct are above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, confirming the reliability of the measurement scales. Specifically, Color ($\alpha = 0.84$) and Design ($\alpha = 0.87$) show good reliability, while Shape ($\alpha = 0.79$) and Labeling ($\alpha = 0.81$) are also reliable. The overall scale ($\alpha = 0.90$) indicates excellent internal consistency across all items. This suggests that the questionnaire items used to measure packaging elements are consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis such as correlation and regression.

Regression

a) Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.842	0.709	0.702	0.381

b) ANOVA Table

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	64.325	4	16.081	110.025	0
Residual	26.375	175	0.151		
Total	90.7	179			

c) Coefficients Table

Predictor (IV)	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t-value	Sig. (p-value)
(Constant)	0.412	0.175	—	2.35	0.02
Color	0.278	0.061	0.301	4.56	0
Design	0.345	0.056	0.376	6.16	0
Shape	0.129	0.048	0.142	2.69	0.008
Labeling	0.188	0.052	0.205	3.61	0

The regression analysis results reveal a strong and significant relationship between packaging elements and consumer buying behavior of FMCG products. The model summary shows an R^2 value of 0.709, indicating that 70.9% of the variation in consumer buying behavior is explained by the four packaging factors (color, design, shape, and labeling). The ANOVA table ($F = 110.025$, $p < 0.001$) confirms that the overall regression model is statistically significant.

Among the predictors, all variables have a positive and significant influence ($p < 0.05$). Design ($\beta = 0.376$) has the strongest impact on buying behavior, followed by color ($\beta = 0.301$), labeling ($\beta = 0.205$), and shape ($\beta = 0.142$). This suggests that while all packaging elements affect consumer decisions, attractive and well-designed packaging plays the most crucial role in motivating FMCG purchases.

Limitations of the Study:

1. The study was conducted on a sample of 180 respondents using a convenience sampling method, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to the entire FMCG consumer population.
2. The research focused only on packaging-related factors, excluding other marketing mix elements such as price, promotion, and distribution, which might also influence consumer buying behavior.

Suggestions

- Focus on design and visual appeal: Regression results show design ($\beta = 0.376$) and color ($\beta = 0.301$) have the highest impact on buying behavior. Companies should invest in creative, eye-catching designs and color schemes to attract consumers.
- Enhance labeling and information clarity: Labeling has a significant positive effect ($\beta = 0.205$), indicating that clear, informative labels help consumers make confident purchase decisions. Brands should ensure product benefits, ingredients, and usage instructions are visible.
- Improve shape and ergonomics moderately: Shape ($\beta = 0.142$) influences buying behavior to a lesser extent. While not the top factor, innovative or convenient shapes can differentiate products and improve user experience.
- Leverage packaging to communicate quality: High mean scores for “good packaging reflects product quality” suggest that consumers perceive well-packaged products as superior. Packaging should emphasize premium feel and durability.

Conclusion

The study concludes that packaging plays a vital role in influencing consumer buying behavior in the FMCG sector. The analysis confirms that elements such as color, design, shape, and labeling significantly affect consumer purchase decisions. Among these, design emerged as the most influential factor, indicating that creative and visually



appealing packaging captures consumer attention most effectively. Color and labeling also strongly impact perception, helping consumers identify brands and make confident purchase choices. The reliability analysis showed high internal consistency, validating the measurement scales used. The regression model further revealed that 70.9% of buying behavior variance is explained by packaging factors, demonstrating their strong predictive power. Consumers tend to associate good packaging with product quality, reinforcing its role as a “silent salesman.” The findings suggest that FMCG companies should prioritize innovative, informative, and eco-friendly packaging designs. Overall, effective packaging not only attracts buyers but also enhances brand image and customer loyalty in competitive markets.

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