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Consumer Decision-Making Process in Purchasing Packaging Products in Malaysia

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Abstract

This research paper highlights the consumer decision-making process in purchasing the packaged product in Malaysia. This paper aims to discover the consumer intention when buying the products, specially packaged products. The finding of this research paper can be used by companies that produce product packaging to ensure that their products meet customer's wants and needs. All data have been analyzed to ascertain the relationship between each variable that is related to packaged products. Results show that all variables are related to each other.

Key words: Packaging products; Intention; Decision-making process

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INTRODUCTION

Among many elements that influence consumer purchasing decisions, product packaging has become a critical factor in differentiating items, attracting consumer attention and promoting them to buy a product (Olga & Natalia, 2006; Vidales, 1995). Today, the promotion and technological growth in the production and distribution of food products have led to a massive proliferation of

the number and brands of food products available in the marketplace. This may increase brand parity within a merchandise category, meaning that when brands become similar and difficult to differentiate, consumers may face trouble in picking out which brand to buy. Thus, food producers need to specialize (separate/segregate/differentiate) their wares from their rivals.

Consumers often look at the packaging of the products as an aid in the purchase decision making procedure. Packaging refers to the container or wrapping that contains a product or group of products (Vidales, 1995). Aside from protecting the merchandise from damage during storage and distribution, the packaging is also a valuable sales tool in furthering (advancing) the product to the ultimate consumer. Pilditch (1972) has defined packaging as the silent salesman in the shop, and it is the sole communication medium between a product and the final consumer at the point of sales. Boxing is an ultimate selling proposition that stimulates impulse buying behavior (Kuvykaite, Dovaliene, & Navickiene, 2009). A full packaging design is seen as an essential component of successful business practice. Besides providing versatility, sustainability and convenience to consumers, most importantly, packaging enables marketers to raise the appeal of their wares better and attract consumers to the shelves (Rundh, 2005).

Vendors not only optimize the visibility of the packaging but also ascertain that the packaging can convey the specific benefits of the product and facilitate the consumers in product selection from the many assortments of brands available in the marketplace. Recently, there has also been an increasing trend of environmental concern in respect of packaging. Some governments have forbidden the use of harmful materials and imposed requirements for (resources) to be reduced, reused or recycled. Also, various laws and regulations have been gazetted to protect the consumers from false and unsafe products. Possibly the most influential division

of legal philosophies that affect packaging is the one related to tagging, which requires the producer or packer to declare on the packaged food the nutritional facts, added ingredients and best before date, etc. The reason for this requirement is to assure that the merchandise conforms to the stipulated quality standard, and at the same time, provides necessary information on the packaging to facilitate the consumer purchasing decision.

As the importance of promotional material and the latest requirements concerning packaging been highlighted, it is pertinent to discuss consumer behavior towards food packaging. Food that comes in packaged form has become an indispensable part of the modern lifestyle. This is imputable to the greater need for convenient, portable, soft-to-make meal solutions that decrease the hassles of grocery shopping and fixing a repast. Consumer behavior towards food packaging indicates certain trends in recent years. Consumers are now taking the effort to learn regarding the nutrition labels and seek out products with health benefits. In the setting of food product packaging in Malaysia, this sector has undergone a more sluggish growth since the economic downturn in 2008. Consumers cut down on indulgence products, such as potato chips, confectionery and ice-cream, in a bid to tighten their belts (Euromonitor, 2011) regarding spending. Also, various food issues (e.g., the melamine scare in dairy products and the detection of harmful toxic chemicals and adulterants in food products) have further aggravated the stability of packaged food industry.

Although the Malaysian market condition is growing better, there is a need to consider the importance of intrinsic factors involving the sales of packaged food products. Thus, the purpose of this work is to analyse the significant properties of packaging that influence consumer purchase/purchasing decisions. The findings will help direct managers to adopt an efficient and appropriate packaging strategy for processed foods, which, ultimately, will serve to improve brand recognition and sales of the packaged food products.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Packaging is one of the essential factors in the buying decision making the process as it communicates to the consumers (Estiri, Hasangholipour, Yazdani, Nejad, & Rayej, 2010). Decision making is affected by the continuous cognitive processes in the selection of a course of action among several alternatives in the environment for making final a choice (Lysonski, Durvasula, & Zotos, 1996). In the decision-making theory, intention to purchase depends on the degree to which consumers expect the product to satisfy their needs and desire when they consume it (Kupiec & Revell, 2001). In the pre-purchase decision making procedure, consumers look at factors such as the product itself, the packaging, the fund

and the purchase method (William, 1994). In this study, emphasis will be given to packaging elements.

According to Rita Kuvykaite (2014), packaging attracts consumer's attention to brands, enhances its image, and influences consumer's perceptions about the merchandise. The packaging also imparts the unique value of the product, works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from a large range of similar merchandise, and stimulates customers buying behavior. So, the packaging performs an essential function in marketing communications and could be regarded as one of the most significant elements determining the consumer's purchase of the product software, its components and their impact on consumer buying behavior became a relevant event. The buyer is basing on theoretical analysis of package elements, and their effect on consumer purchase decision empirically reveals the factors causing the ultimate force on consumer choice. Research methods that Rita used were a systematic and comparative analysis of scientific literature; empirical researchers on that point are half a dozen of variables must be taken into consideration by the producer and designers when making an efficient package regarding form, size, color, graphics, material and flavor.

1.1 Packaging Color

Color can affect human behavior such as some colors that make us happy whereas others make us sad. While making purchase decision color scheme gets more visible. The issue of color has been studied widely to explore/ understand the consumer's perception (Imram, 1999). While making advertisement of food items, the best color combination is applied not only to plates having food items, but also the clothes of models, and the surroundings are used in contrast, so that the food product may (look) feel better. In Café or Restaurants, the food items kept on exhibit are selected for their color and appearance attributes (Imram, 1999).

1.2 Packaging Material

The packaging material is one of the primary visual attributes when making a purchase decision (Kuvykaite et al., 2009; Silayoi & Speece, 2004, 2007). Research indicates that consumers expect all packaging to be environmentally friendly (Prendergast & Pitt, 1996). Consumers take more environmentally friendly packaging or promotion that is reused and reused more easily (Rundh, 2005). Also, some housewives have indicated that snack food packages need to be made with nontoxic materials, as well as being soft and harmless when kids try to open them themselves (Silayoi & Speece, 2004, 2007). Regarding convenience, customers demand packaging that offers easy capability, open ability, reliability, portability and disposability (Ahmed, Ahmed, & Salman, 2005). Combinations of different materials can promote people to touch the package and thereby be inspired to try the real product (Rundh, 2009).

1.3 Packaging Shape

Packaging shape has some influence on consumer purchase decisions (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). A unique physical body can be a very potent weapon in differentiating a brand and make products more appealing and distinguishing them from their rivals. Altering the form of product packaging can play an important part in product differentiation (Sherwood, 1999) and bring in substantial profits at the sales register (Prince, 1994). An unusual container more successfully competes for the viewer's attention than the norm. The distinctive

packaging shapes are considered more attractive for children's products (Silayoi and Speece, 2004). It has been reported that children preferred to try products in different packaging shapes. The packaging shape can be a central ingredient of a software program that contributes to the emotional experience. As packaging shape has been found to be positively significant in predicting purchase behaviour, Wansink (1996) claimed that the condition of the packaging is an indispensable ingredient for success in the market for several merchandises.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Conceptual Framework

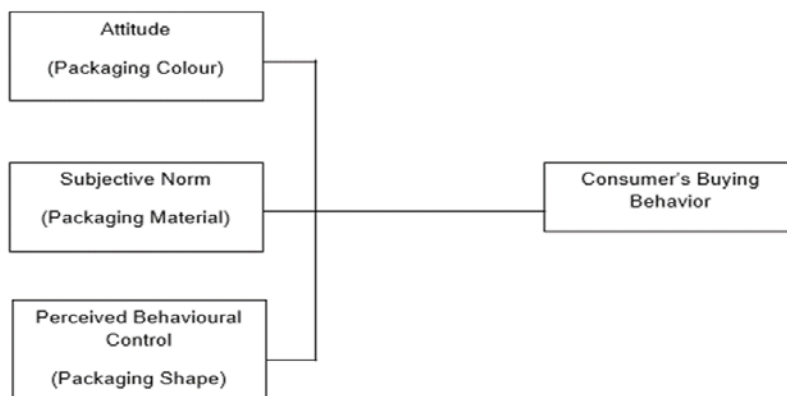


Figure 1
Conceptual Framework

2.2 Research Design

For the research design, the researcher uses a causal method. The reason why researcher choose the causal type of research because it is the most suitable type of research as the objective is to obtain evidence regarding cause and effect (causal) relationship as a researcher are searching on the consumer decision making process in purchasing the packaged product in Malaysia. By using the causal research, it will help the researcher in determining which variable is the cause call as the independent variable and which variable are the effectual call as the dependent variable in the purchasing of the packaged product in Malaysia. Causal research also can help the researcher to determine the nature of the relationship between the causal variables and the effect to be predicted.

2.3 Sampling Size

The target respondents of this study were 200 respondents in Kelantan.

2.4 Data Analysis

For data analysis, frequencies analysis, reliability analysis and correlation analysis were used. Reliability analysis is a statistical process for estimating the relationships among variables. It includes many techniques for modelling and

analyzing several variables' kinship between a subject variable and one or more independent variables. To be more specific, reliability analysis helps researchers to see how the typical value of the dependent variable changes when any one of the independent variables is changed, while the other independent variable or set is unchanged. Mean comparison was used to perform multiple comparisons of group means. We applied this to pool the variance estimates for the substance. To execute the frequencies analysis, reliability analysis and correlation analysis we used the SPSS 20.0 software.

3. FINDINGS

3.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio demographic profile of the respondents in this research. In this research, most of the students at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) are female which is 66.5% as compared to male which is 33.5%. Most of the students were Malay (263 persons, 71.1%), followed by Chinese (66 persons, 18.0%) and Indian (38 persons, 10.4%). The age of the respondents is below 30 years old which is around 18 years old to 22 years old (293 persons, 79.8%) and 23 years old to 27 years old (74 persons, 20.2). It is because the respondents are 100% students, so

their marital status is single (367 persons, 100.0%). The students of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan that become the respondents that have highest education are 100% bachelor. It is because the students that become the respondents are undergraduate students which is currently studies their bachelor at Universiti Malaysia Kelantan at the three campuses. For the results, all respondents of this study are 100% have knowledge and know the term of packaging product and capable to answers the question about the packaging products. And the last question of demographic profile whether the respondents are likes to purchase the packaging products or not. From the result, all respondents are 100% agree to buy the packaging products compare to products that has no packaging.

Table 1
Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender		
Male	123	33.5
Female	244	66.5
Race		
Malay	263	71.1
Chinese	66	18.0
Indian	38	10.4
Age		
18 years old – 22 years old	293	79.8
23 years old – 27 years old	74	20.2
Status		
Single	367	100.0
Education Level		
Bachelor	367	100.0
Have you ever heard of term 'packaging product'		
Yes	367	100.0
Do you prefer to buy product that is in packaging or not		
Yes	367	100.0

Source: Survey, 2016.

Table 3
Correlation Analysis

		Attitude	Subjective norm	Perceived behavior control
Attitude	Correlation	1.000	.470**	.323**
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
Spearman's rho Subjective Norm	Correlation	.470**	1.000	.362**
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
	N	200	200	200
Perceived Behavior Control	Correlation	.323**	.362**	1.000
	Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
	N	200	200	200

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

3.2 Reliability Analysis

From the reliability analysis showed in Table 2, it indicates that Cronbach's Alpha for attitude towards packaging product is 0.734 which means a high level of internal consistency for this variable. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for subjective norm is 0.834 which indicates a high level of internal consistency for this variable. The last variable which is perceived behavioral control is Cronbach's Alpha is 0.806 which states that a high level of internal consistency for this variable. The result of reliability statistics showed that there is a high level of internal consistency among the studied variables. This validates the findings of this study which can be further extended in the future analysis.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Attitude towards packaging product	0.734	10
Subjective Norm	0.834	14
Perceived Behavior Control	0.806	12

3.3 Correlation Analysis

Table 3 shows the correlation analysis to determine the relationship between each variable, whether there is a relationship or not. Based on the table, it shows that attitude towards product packaging and subjective norm have a significant relationship (0.470). There also exists a significant relationship between perceived behavior control and attitude towards product packaging, (0.323). Lastly, there is also a positive relationship between subjective norm and perceived behavior control (0.362). Based on the findings, correlation values are significant at the 0.01 level, so all variables have a significant relationship with each other.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is a positive effect of packaging and color on consumer's decision-making process based on their attitude towards product packaging. The second objective was to study the effects of packaging material on consumer's decision-making process based on their subjective norm towards product packaging, also indicates a positive relationship between the dependent variable and independent variable. The final objective of this study was to determine the effects of packaging shape on consumer's decision-making process based on their perceived behavior control towards product packaging; there is also a significant effect of packaging shape on consumer's decision-making process based on their perceived behavior control towards product packaging.

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