



The impact of packaging design on product quality and price expectation

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Auteur Miltgen, Caroline [1], Pantin-Sohier, Gaëlle [2]

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The packaging and labelling of food or beverages offer the opportunity for consumers to obtain information about the product and make a better choice in the marketplace (Van Trijp & Steenkamp, 1998). Research has demonstrated that the design and content of a food label and its associated packaging may affect the perceived quality, intention to purchase and liking (Tom & al., 1987; Van Dam & Van Trijp, 1994). Although R&D departments try to improve the innate quality of the products, they have invested very little into the effects of packaging cues on consumer perceptions and expectations about the product. More surprisingly, little research has explicitly examined package pictures. In this study we test the impact of the packaging design of a new beverage (i.e. aromatized cider) on product quality and price expectation. We designed two experiments. The first one examines the relationship between the flavour associated with the beverage and the appearance of the packaging: the bottle's label clearly shows -or not- pieces of caramel or a grape of blackcurrants. The results provide evidence for the influence of the presence (on the packaging) of the flavouring ingredients, on how the consumer evaluates the product (taste, odour, colour, pleasantness and freshness). The study also shows the role of the congruence between the beverage and the associated flavouring ingredient as a quality indicator. The second experiment adds the impact of the type of packaging (can vs bottle). The results provide evidence for the influence of the packaging on pleasantness, gustatory expectations and price perception of the new aromatized alcoholic beverage. The findings emphasize the use of packaging design and visual information as a strategic tool to influence consumer perceptions and expectations about a product, especially in the case of food innovations where packaging design and information could increase food acceptance.

Résumé en anglais

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