

How does product packaging features influence the purchase decision of young adult?

Bagaimana fitur kemasan produk mempengaruhi keputusan pembelian pemuda dewasa muda?

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Received 19 February, 2023 | Accepted 16 May, 2023 | Published 23 June, 2023

Abstract: Packaging serves a purpose beyond merely showcasing a product or ensuring its safe delivery to consumers without damage. In this study, our aim was to determine the relative significance of different packaging features for young adult consumers. To control for product diversity and potential confounding effects, participants were specifically assigned a product category (toiletries items) in the instructions. A survey was conducted involving 386 Bangladeshi adult participants who were asked to rate their attitudes towards ten different packaging features when making a purchase decision. Male and female young adults were invited to participate, and they were instructed to imagine purchasing toiletries products from new brands that they were unfamiliar with. They were then asked to identify the packaging features that would play the most crucial role in their purchase decision. The findings revealed that participants rated printed detail on the package as the most important attribute influencing their purchase choice. Furthermore, convenience packaging, hygienic wrapping material, convincing words on the packet, and attractiveness were rated as the top five packaging features for young Bangladeshi adults, in that order. Significant gender differences were observed in four product packaging features. Bangladeshi adult females demonstrated a stronger influence of attractiveness, colorful packets, convenience packaging, and convincing words on the packet compared to male customers. These findings contribute valuable insights to the existing literature on consumer behavior and offer marketers and designers a reliable source of marketing strategy to enhance product sales.

Keywords: product packaging; consumer behaviour; decision making; young adults



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Introduction

Product promotion and attention-seeking strategies are versatile in the current competitive business world. In terms of marketing, we mainly focus on media and brand publicity. Between these costly marketing strategies, it almost slips from our minds that the product wrapper itself could carry out an important message. In the previous investigations, this became clear that product promotion is a powerful strategy and an important predictor of product sales (Kumar et al., 2016). There could be different mediums of product marketing, and their ultimate target is to increase product sales. Marketing strategy is a concept at the heart of strategic marketing and is essential to the practice of promotion (Morgan et al., 2019). A better understanding of the current marketing strategy's relevance to consumer psychology is also essential for developing a practical understanding of marketing (Katsikeas et al., 2016).

The continuous research on product marketing and purchase decision has already built a pile of findings that the perception of the product to the consumers has an important role in the continually shifting business environment and consumer purchase requirements. Perception of a good product is more than how is the quality of the product. It consists of other relevant determinants. Product packaging is one of the crucial determinants. The history of primary product packaging was just concerned with protecting the product from any damage or controlling the quality of the product (Deng & Fligner, 2019); (Kingdom et al., 2015). However, current evidence shows that packaging is successfully being used to attract potential customers. Companies are getting interested in using packing to create a potential and reliable impact on their customers (Shridhar & Shrivastava, 2018); (Alhamdi, 2020). Using this packing as an effective tool is the challenging part for marketers. They should be well aware of the product they are dealing with, their potential consumer, and their age and priority. Without knowing the focal concern of current potential customers, marketers cannot use their attention to influence their purchasing decision. In the last three decades, it has been increasingly understood that product packaging is a powerful promotional strategy (Rundh, 2016). This credibility could only go right if marketers and brand managers can use it in the right way. This is found that over three fourth of food or drink purchase choices are made at the shop instantly (Connolly & Davison, 1996; Guyader et al., 2017). Around 90% of consumers choose after seeing the front of the packet (Urbany et al., 1996).

Decision-making is more complex than it seems. On average, a consumer buys only 0.7% of the available product within a year, while 30,000 products are available to choose from (Simmonds & Spence, 2018); (Simmonds & Spence, 2017). As a result, consumers must find and evaluate similar category products before deciding. Since there is minimal opportunity for a sample test, consumers must rely on other relevant information about the product. Among them, the packaging of the product is crucial. So, this is important for marketers and inventors to grab consumers' attention and to create a positive impact on their minds for a more extended period to ensure commercial success. Packaging can help achieve these goals to get consumers' attention and increase sales.

However, there are many product packaging features, and all features may have different impacts. There are a handful of research studies investigated in this area. Some studies investigated the impact of the main colour of the packet (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2014), weight (Reimann et

al., 2010), shapes (Spence, 2012), and typeface (Schifferstein et al., 2017). The increasing literature shows that the sight of food in a food packet can trigger a diverse type of physical response, including triggering hunger and giving customers some secondary reinforcer. Moreover, printed information, the material of the wrapper, using recycling materials, and the aesthetic shape of the packet have some impact on the consumer's decision-making. Nevertheless, all these dimensions have a different impact based on the product category and different age groups. For food products, the transparency of a packet is a highly appreciated feature, but for toiletries items packing colour and printed information is more important for making a purchase decision (Simmonds & Spence, 2017). Product pricing highly impacts consumers when the external packaging could be better than the product itself. Product packaging is also differently evaluated by males and females. (Ritnamkam & Sahachaisaeree, 2012) investigated the principle of packaging design, gender differences, and cosmetic packaging design principles. They suggested a long concave flip bottle, long rounded roller bottle, and square shape with central- rounded flip bottle for male customers and the colour for the design should be black, cool tone (blue), contrast tone and harmonious tone. In contrast, for females, they recommended curved and rounded pumps with pink or white colour. For females, the elements and principles are symmetry and curve shapes.

In this study, our primary objective is to find out the relative significance of different features of packing for Bangladeshi young adult customers. Bangladesh has been declared a middle-income country since 2015. The economic growth graph shows gradual progress in the national economy and individuals' per capita income. This could impact their lifestyle, purchase pattern and the types of products they prefer to consume. From this perspective, we tried to determine the significance of different packaging elements from Bangladeshi customers' perspectives when buying toiletries. Additionally, we also investigated if there is any significant gender difference in this preference. A handful of studies worldwide mention the relevance of effective packaging in attracting customers. In Bangladesh, there is no such adequate record to use on their native customers. This study would be very significant for marketers to understand how Bangladeshi young adult customers decide while purchasing.

Method

Three hundred and eighty-six Bangladeshi adults (Mage=24.61, age range=22-29 years, & SDage=1.18) participated in this study, of whom 196 were females (52%). Nationality, education, and age were the inclusion criteria for the participants. Undergraduate and postgraduate students from Dhaka University, Bangladesh, were recruited. They were fluent in English and Bengali languages and had normal eyesight. The participants were selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

A Personal Information Questionnaire was utilized, comprising general demographic questions for the participants, including gender, age, and profession. A checklist involving product packaging information was developed for this study. It consisted of 10 dimensions aiming to assess the significance of packaging on individuals' purchase behavior. These dimensions encompassed attractiveness, novelty of design, colorful packet, convincing words on the packet, printed detail, hygienic wrapping material, unique shape of the packet, eco-friendly packaging material, convenience

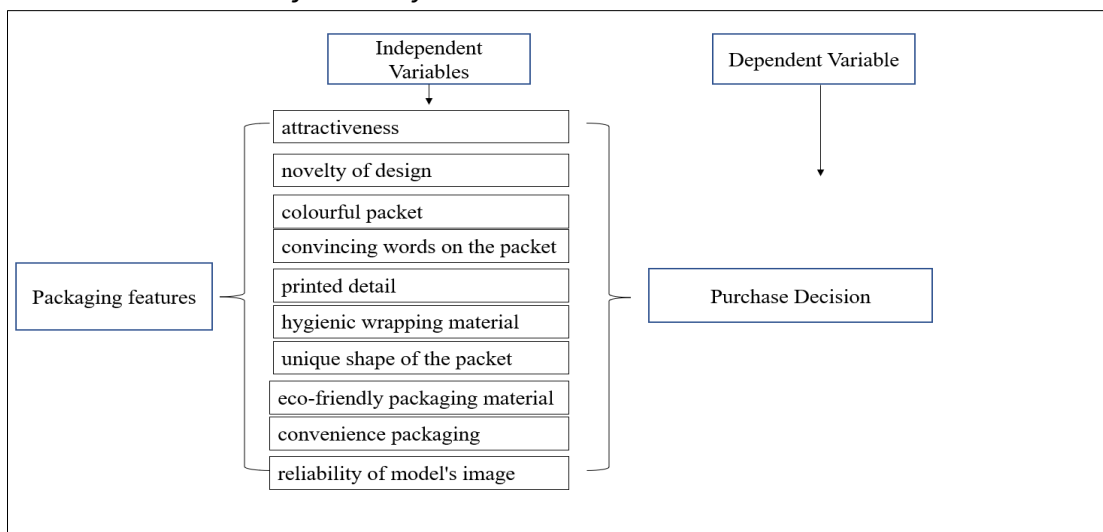
packaging, and reliability of the model's image on the packet. The checklist was created through focused group discussions with the targeted age group and a thorough literature review (Kumar et al., 2016; Orłowski et al., 202; Sarumathi, 2014; Simmonds & Spence, 2017). It was presented using a five-point Likert scale, where points 1 to 5 indicated "never," "rarely," "neutral," "frequently," and "always," respectively. Participants were instructed to rate each dimension based on how much these packaging features influenced their purchase decisions.

No separate measures of purchase decision were employed in this study, as the aim was to understand the attitudes of young adults toward product packaging when making purchases without prior knowledge or experience of the product. Therefore, the checklist data will provide insights into the importance of various packaging features in influencing product purchases.

Researchers recruited participants through purposive and snowball sampling based on specific recruitment criteria. Initially, young adults from the Department of Psychology, University of Dhaka, were approached by the researchers. Following their participation, they were requested to refer classmates and friends who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Participants below the honors level in the 1st semester were excluded based on the criteria. All participants were native-born Bangladeshis.

After recruiting the participants, a consent form was provided to them, clearly outlining the study details, as well as the associated risks and benefits. Upon reading the form in detail and signing it, participants were instructed to imagine themselves buying toiletry items (such as soap, shampoo, oil, lotion, toothpaste) and rate the checklist accordingly. The scenario presented was that if they encountered a new item on the shelf without the opportunity to sample or try the product inside the packaging, they were asked to assess which features on the checklist and to what extent they believed would influence their purchase behavior. Following this instruction, participants were presented with the checklist, which utilized a five-point Likert scale, where point 1 represented "never" and point 5 represented "always."

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework of The Study



Result

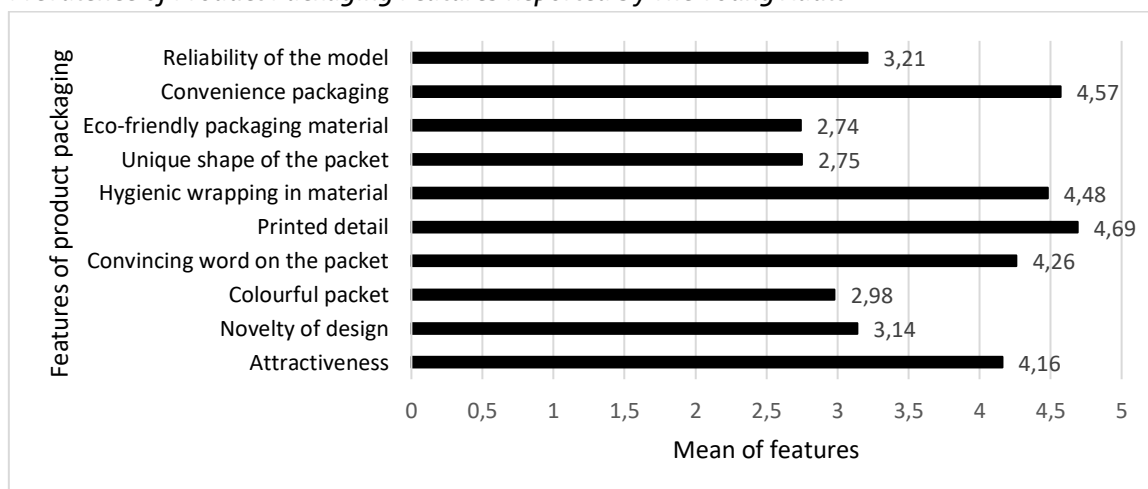
Since the outcome variable was quantitative, SPSS 20 was utilized for data analysis. Respondents provided ratings for the relative significance of different packaging features in the checklists. Hence, the mean difference of the 10 packaging features was investigated. Additionally, a t-test was conducted to examine the gender difference in consumers' product purchasing decisions.

Comparison of different product packaging features and their role in the purchase decision: Participants were asked to rate the significance of each specific feature in their purchase decision, resulting in a total of ten features. Proportional means and standard deviations (SD) were calculated to determine the prevalence rate of each feature. The findings indicate that the top three factors influencing young adults' purchase behavior in packaging are the use of hygienic material in wrapping, convenience packaging, and printed detail, respectively. Conversely, the bottom three determinants are eco-friendly packaging material, the unique shape of the packet, and the colorful packet, respectively (See Table 1 & Figure 2).

Table 1
Mean Proportion of Product Packaging Features

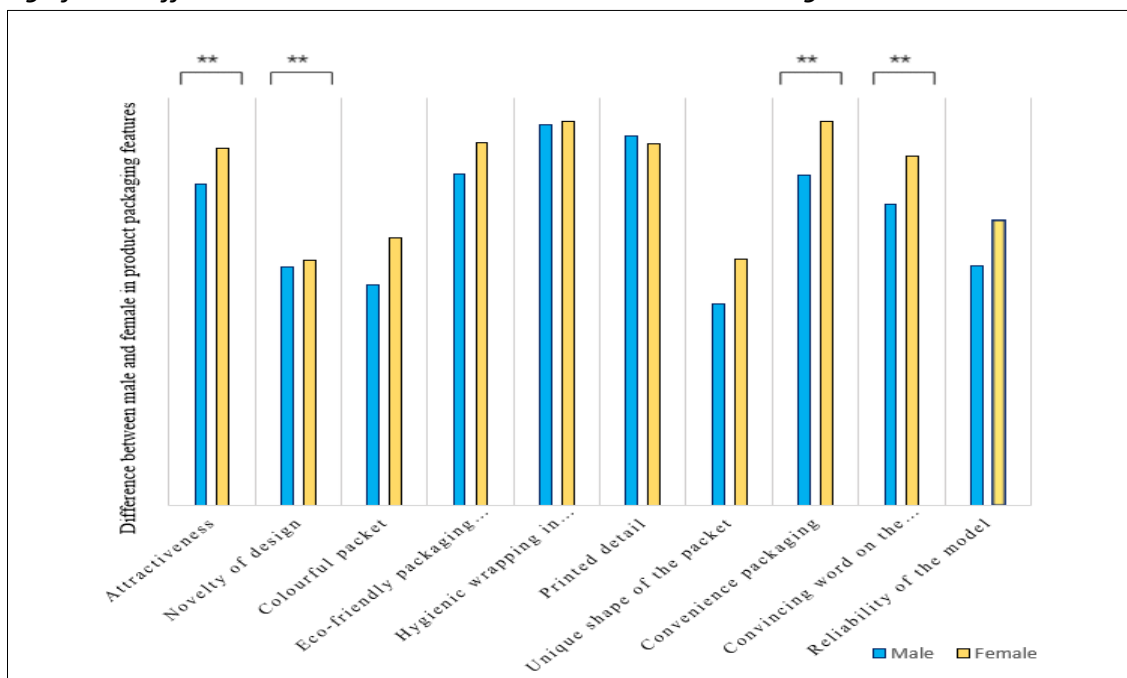
Features in product packaging	Mean	SD
Attractiveness	4.16	.85
Novelty of design	3.14	1.00
Colourful packet	2.98	1.25
Convincing word on the packet	4.26	.75
Printed detail	4.69	1.00
Hygienic wrapping material	4.48	.80
Unique shape of the packet	2.75	1.38
Eco-friendly packaging material	2.74	1.26
Convenience packaging	4.57	1.15
Reliability of the model	3.21	1.38

Figure 2
Prevalence of Product Packaging Features Reported by The Young Adult



Gender differences in the perceived significance of product packaging features: Independent sample t-tests were conducted to examine the gender difference in the perceived significance of product packaging features. The results revealed significant differences between males and females in four packaging features. Specifically, female respondents scored significantly higher than males in attractiveness ($t = -4.20$, $SD = 0.10$), colourful packet ($t = -4.05$, $SD = 0.14$), convenience packaging ($t = -5.27$, $SD = 0.08$), and convincing words on the packet ($t = -4.20$, $SD = 0.11$). These findings indicate that female respondents reported a greater influence on their purchasing behavior compared to males, particularly regarding the attractiveness, color, convenience packaging, and persuasive messaging on the packet (see Figure 3).

Figure 3
Significant Difference Between Males and Females in Product Packing Features



Note: * & ** indicates significant at .05 & .01 level, respectively

Discussion

In this study, researchers intended to investigate the importance of product packing on young adults' purchase-related decisions. For this purpose, we had two objectives to explore. Firstly, to investigate the most significant features of packing which might influence a purchase-related decision. Secondly, to investigate if there is any significant gender difference in determining the most significant features of packing which might influence a purchase-related decision. For this purpose, we selected 386 young Bangladeshi adults.

Addressing the first objective, we have found that among the ten packaging features, the top five features are printed detail, convenience packaging, hygienic wrapping material, convincing words on the packet, and attractiveness, respectively. Printed detail on the packet is also reported as an essential feature in other research (Orlowski et al., 202; Punjani & Org, 2022). Ahmed et al. (2014)

found that colour, packaging material, wrapper design and innovation are more important when consumers make purchase decisions. Similarly, investigators reported labelling as a substantial factor influencing purchase decisions (Saeed et al., 2013);(Yeo et al., 2018). Convenience and hygienic packaging are two important and crucial factors in current findings, which were underrated in previous findings (Dharmadhikari, 2012); (Sarumathi, 2014). This research also mentioned those features as the second and third most crucial features among the ten features for making a purchase decision. Emphasis on hygienic materials in product packaging could raise people's health and environmental awareness worldwide, especially worldwide campaigns stressing the harmful impacts of non-disposable materials on nature.

On the other hand, people also place a strong focus on convenient packaging. Nowadays, individuals are often busy with multiple tasks and need to move to different places quickly. Therefore, convenient packaging provides comfort to consumers when carrying the product without much hassle. The current findings indicate the need to reconsider the crucial features of packaging in order to attract more customers and effectively increase product sales. Attractive packaging emerged as the fifth most significant feature in terms of packaging importance. The appeal of attractiveness remains consistent and has been consistently recognized as a crucial indicator for packaging in previous literature. However, in this study, the significance of attractiveness was overshadowed by other essential factors, indicating that consumers perceive practicability as more important than attractiveness. Therefore, in this study, respondents ranked convenience, hygiene, information, and messaging as higher priorities over visual appeal. This change in attention and focus among our young adult generation could be attributed to their awareness of the importance of product handling convenience, health and safety, and environmental concerns.

Regarding the second objective, gender differences were observed in terms of attractiveness, colorful packaging, convenience packaging, and persuasive messaging on the packet. Females tend to be more influenced by the attractiveness of the packaging, the color of the wrapper, convenient packaging, and persuasive messaging on the packet. Relevant findings from previous research support this, suggesting that females are more attracted to colorful packets and visually appealing designs (Reimann et al., 2010; Seifhashemi & Elkadi, 2022; Sook-Fern Yeo et al., 2020). Therefore, marketers should be aware that when targeting potential customers, female customers consider these factors more strongly than males do during purchase decisions. To capture their attention, designers must devise strategies to highlight these features.

Conclusion

The study was designed to assess the relative significance of different packaging features. The findings show that young adults emphasized certain factors more than others, such as the use of hygienic materials in wrapping, convenience packaging, and printed details on the packet. Here, customers clearly prioritize their comfort and hygiene-related concerns over attractive, colorful, and unique designs. However, there are some limitations to this study. We utilized convenience and snowball sampling methods, which are inappropriate for effectively generalizing the findings. Furthermore, we did not consider the price differences among the items, which could be a potential

factor influencing the decision significantly. Therefore, it is recommended to investigate the combined effect of price and product packaging on the purchase decision.

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