

UNIVERSITY LOGO HERE

INFLUENCE OF FOOD PACKAGING ELEMENTS ON CONSUMER BUYING
BEHAVIOUR IN THE UK

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF XXX

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my special appreciation and thanks to my advisor supervisor xxx, you have been a tremendous mentor for me. I would like to thank you for encouraging my research and for allowing me to grow. Your advice on both research as well as on my career have been priceless.

A special thanks to my family. Words cannot express how grateful I am to my mother, father and mother-in law, father-in-law, for all of the sacrifices that you've made on my behalf. Your prayer for me was what sustained me thus far. I would also like to thank all of my friends who supported me in writing, and incited me to strive towards my goal. At the end I would like express appreciation to my beloved wife xxx who spent sleepless nights with and was always my support in the moments when there was no one to answer my queries.

Abstract

The purpose of product packaging, design and labelling is to help in promoting consumer decision making. The product package and product labels are found to be vital attributes which communicate the information of a given product. It is argued that the purchasing decision of the consumer will definitely involve an assessment of the package material, design and label to generate product perception and subsequent evaluation. This research contends that though there is significant analysis of consumer attitude towards labelling among university students, the research has targeted attitude towards product labelling and product packaging among university students by focusing on healthy foods. This research adopts a primary data collection method using questionnaire as the data collection tool, where the data is analysed using SPSS software to prove (or disprove) the proposed hypotheses.

From the results of the study it is quite clear that there is a significant impact of visual and informational elements of product packaging on consumer choice. Another important research contribution gained from the current study is the difference in opinion of men and women. Therefore it is argued that it is important for the designers of a package to understand that the design influences the consumer decision and that consumers must approve of the product package to help increase sales. This research concludes that the consumer intent to buy depends upon the extent to which the product and its packaging meet the consumer's expectations.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background of the Study

According to researchers (Rundh, 2009; Ahmedi et al., 2013), the purpose of product packaging, design and labelling is to help in promoting consumer decision making. Furthermore, Coulson (2000) argues that the packaging helps in ensuring the product visibility on the shelf and attracts consumer attention. Over the years, the importance of product packaging has been attributed to two important reasons. Firstly, consumers give great importance to product packaging as well as product labelling as a result of a health conscious attitude (Becker et al., 2013), nutritional content and the environment (Ampuero and Vila, 2006). Secondly, Reimann et al. (2010) argue that consumers are looking to reduce the overall time taken by food preparation and cooking, and are often looking for products which have lower processing time. Under such conditions, the author argues that the consumer decision on such ready made food is dependent on the packaging, preservation and labelling of food.

Wrap (2010) conducted a study to understand the consumer attitude and behaviour towards packaging and labelling. The study identifies that respondents consider product safety and hygiene to be the most important considerations for product packaging. The study also identifies that consumers ascribe a great deal of importance to nutrition labelling, as it provides information on product fat content and salt/sugar content. The study concludes with the view that consumers prefer minimal packaging, environmentally friendly material use and product labels which are clear and legible.

Given this level of importance attributed to product packaging and labelling, this dissertation will identify the attitude towards packaging among university students in the UK.

1.2. Study Rationale

When designing a new package, it is important to keep in mind the consumers' buying behaviour and their preferences (Rundh, 2009). Although the product may contain new technologies or may contain new material developments, consumers' desires and choices are the vital elements that drive the marketing process. The entire design process is based on consumers and their perceptions and needs. Thus Stewart (2004) states that understanding the consumer is the key to developing correct packaging. In today's world, development of the market economy highlights the importance of packaging. Packaging helps in distinguishing a particular product from its competitors in the marketplace, many of which will have similar functionality (Schoormans and Robben, 1997).

Rettie and Brewer (2000) state that a good product strategy will prioritise package designing, which helps in the promotion of product functionality by directly translating into consumer experience. It is stated that 70% of buying decisions are made when consumers take a look at the product's packaging and at the point of purchase. Hence, packaging is in itself a viable marketing communication channel and a very important one (Holmes and Paswan 2012). The current study delves into two specific areas related to packaging. These are marketing and consumer behaviour. These fields influence each other and play a role in a business's marketing strategy. In the current research, packaging and labelling of products are considered in order to understand consumer response to a given product.

1.3. Study Aim and Objectives

The aim of the study is to identify the student attitude and behaviour towards product packaging and labelling.

The objectives of the study include:

1. To understand the role of product packaging and labelling in the consumer decision making process.

2. To identify the consumer perception of product packaging design and the relevance of colour, image and product information.
3. To identify the consumer perception of the benefits of product packaging in the UK.
4. To identify the consumer perception of the benefits and drawbacks of product labelling in the UK.

From the above aims and objectives, the following research question is identified:

What is the role of packaging and product labelling in impacting consumers' decision making and their behavioural intent towards a product?

1.4. Study Delimitations

There are a number of features of packaging and product labelling which are inherent to a product, and a comprehensive view of all attributes is not possible in the current study. This research will limit its purview to product labelling features including mandatory features (product manufacture date, expiry date, ingredients, etc) and nutritional features (calories, fat content, sugar content, salt content, etc). Similarly, the product packaging features which are considered in the current study include the product size, packaging design (colour, graphics) and product shape.

1.5. Structure of the Study

The study is structured into five separate chapters.

Chapter One: This chapter identifies the study background, rationale and study aims and objectives.

Chapter Two: This chapter identifies the study review of literature. In this chapter, a focus on the role of consumer behaviour, consumer decision making,

the importance of packaging and labelling and the research focus are clearly detailed.

Chapter Three: This chapter identifies the research methodology adopted in the study by identifying the study population, study sampling and the study research instruments.

Chapter Four: This chapter identifies the research results by presenting the analysed data of the questionnaire.

Chapter Five: This chapter provides a conclusion to the study by presenting study implications, limitations and recommendations.

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Chapter Two: Review of Literature

2.1. Introduction

Extant literature identifies packaging and labelling as integral components of a given product and brand (Ahmed et al., 2013; Klimchuck and Krosovec 2013; Rundh, 2009). The product package and product labels are found to be vital attributes which communicate the information of a given product. Kotler and Armstrong (2010) further argue that, for a consumer, the product is judged on the package and the label, making it very important for manufacturers to pay attention to product packaging. Reimann et al. (2010) contend that the purchasing decision of the consumer will definitely involve an assessment of the package material, design and label to generate product perception and subsequent evaluation. Given the importance of product packaging design, material and labelling, this chapter will identify the theoretical and empirical elements of consumer behaviour literature. Section I will discuss the theoretical basis of consumer behaviour, attitude and involvement as well as its relevance to consumer decision making with respect to product packaging. Section II will discuss the importance of packaging design and package labelling. Section III establishes the research focus and the proposed framework of the study.

Section I: Theoretical Basis of the Study: Consumer Behaviour

2.2. Consumer Decision Making and Involvement

There is extensive diversity in today's modern markets in relation to the various services, products, designs and packages (Rundh, 2009). The rate of innovation is very high in this marketplace and improvements are seen almost on a daily basis. The main reason for such a high pace of innovation is the consumers' need for such products and services (Kotler and Armstrong, 2010). In a market place, the only indispensable element is the consumer. The consumers' demands and needs are the only elements that run any market and allow it to expand and grow. In order to

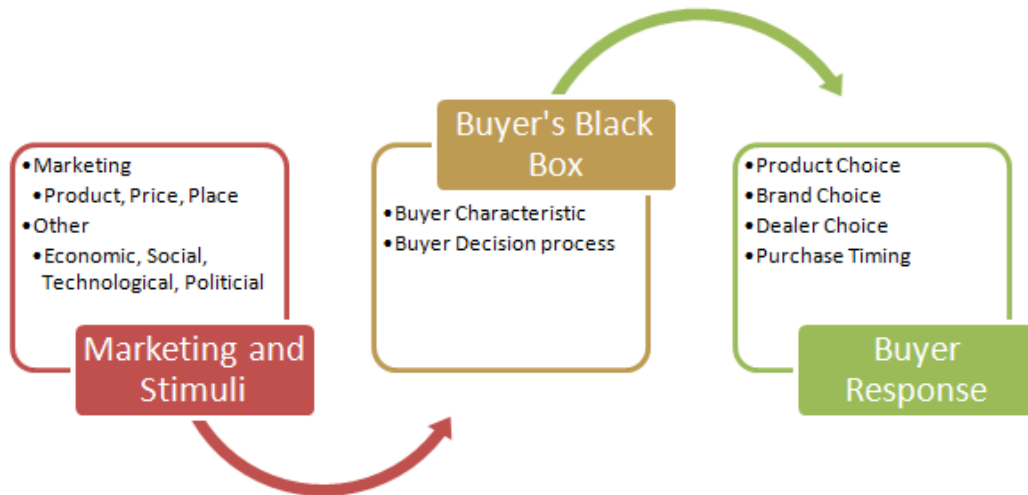
design and develop products or services in tune with the customers' needs and requirements, the companies have to understand the consumers' perceptions and their behaviours (Ariely and Norton, 2011). According to Solomon et al. (2010, pp6-7), "*Consumer behaviour is the process involved when individuals or groups of people select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and desires*". Various people are involved in this process and they all have different responsibilities. This includes the purchaser, who is responsible for purchasing the product or service; the user, who is responsible for utilising the product or service; and the influencer, who is responsible for providing comments on the product before or after using it.

A good business strategy for any organisation or business would be to understand the consumers' needs (East et al., 2012). Consumer needs and demands are the fundamental cornerstone of marketing and businesses exist to cater to these demands. Therefore, consumer segmentation is an important element for any business (Zellman et al., 2010). Consumer segmentation aids businesses by grouping consumers based on various factors. This will aid the businesses as they will be able to design products and services better suited to the consumers' tastes, they can market their goods to the correct group of people and this will ultimately help in increasing their profits. Consumer segmentation can be done based on various demographical factors like age, gender, religion, etc; behavioural factors such as benefits, product usage, etc; psychographic factors like personality, lifestyle, etc; and geographical factors such as country, regions, etc (Solomon et al., 2010). In addition to this, consumers can also be grouped as green consumers, who are more environmentally friendly, or global consumers, who are more brand conscious (Sheppard and Thomas, 2012).

Armstrong and Kotler (2010) present a black box to understand the process of consumer decision making. According to the authors, there are some initial marketing and external stimuli including marketing mix, economic, social and other factors which can impact the buyer's black box. The buyer's black box involves the decision making process of the buyer which is based on their involvement, perception and attitude towards the product. Following this, the buyer's response to

the product can be identified in terms of choice and purchase timing. The following Figure 1 identifies these attributes.

Figure 1: Consumer Decision Making Process



Source: Kotler and Armstrong (2010), p14

According to Zaichkowsky (1985), consumer involvement can be defined as the perception of product relevance by the consumer by identifying the inherent needs of the consumer, their values and their interests. Motivation plays a significant role when it comes to involvement and is evoked by goals, needs and interests. Therefore, consumers find it necessary to go through product related information before getting involved in the purchasing decision process (East et al., 2013).

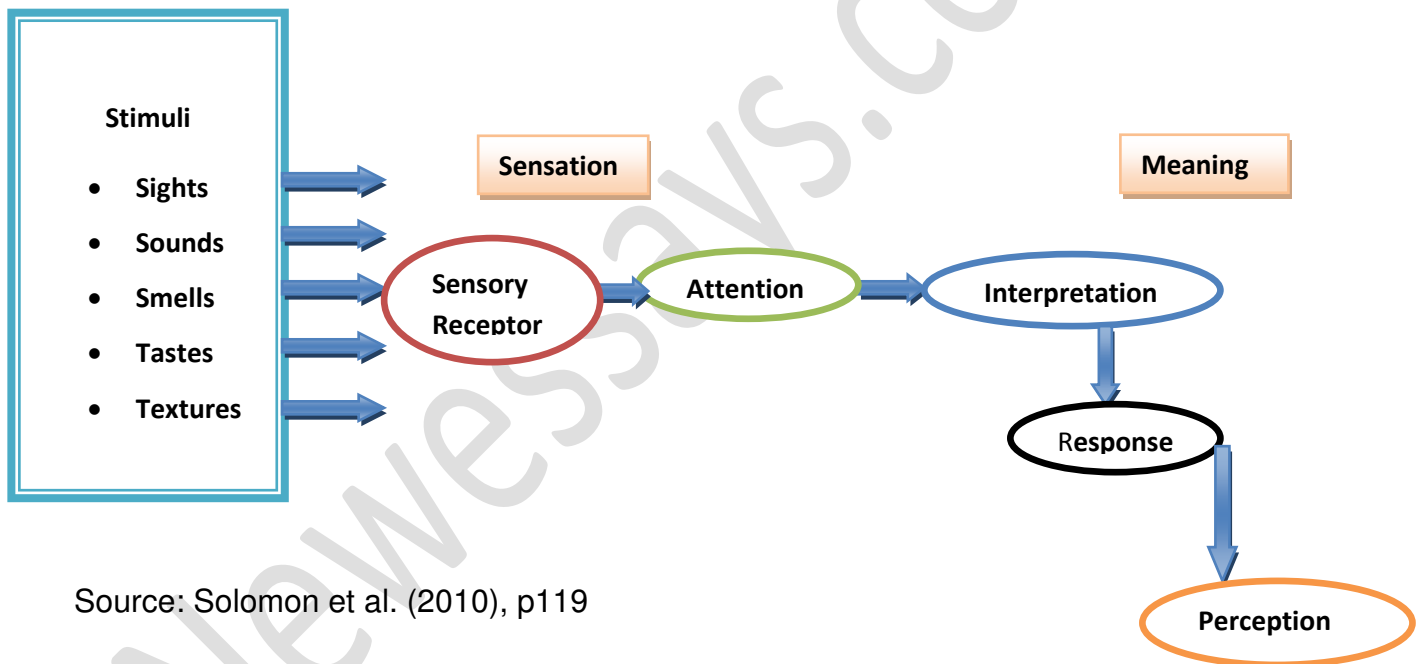
2.3. Consumer Attitude and Perception

According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), consumer attitude can be identified as a psychological attribute of the consumer in which he evaluates products on the basis of specific criteria on different polarities, including satisfaction-dissatisfaction, good-bad or favourable-unfavourable. Furthermore, Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) argue that consumer attitude and behaviour can be associated with one another and that the development of a favourable attitude helps in the generation of favourable behaviour.

According to Schiffman et al. (2008), consumer attitude towards a given product can be largely associated with their perception of the product.

According to Solomon et al. (2010), an understanding of the consumer perception towards a product helps directly define their attitude. For instance, from the following Figure 2, it is observed that multiple stimuli, including visual, auditory, smell, taste and texture, can directly impact the consumer sensation and help in the creation of perception towards a specific product. The perception process which is involved is clearly detailed in the following Figure 2.

Figure 2: Product Perception



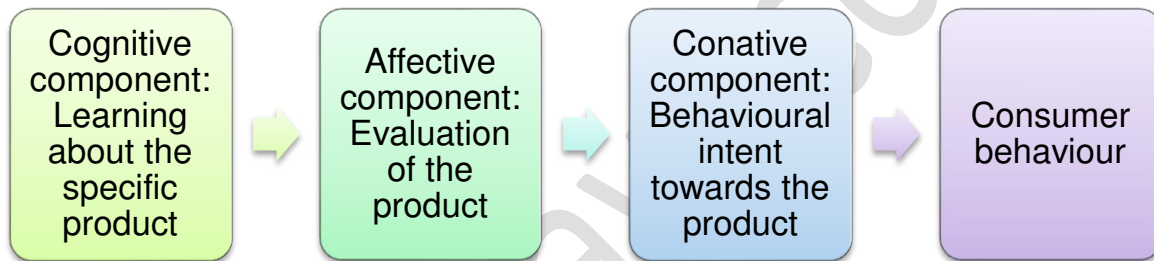
Source: Solomon et al. (2010), p119

Shiffman et al. (2008) further argue that to determine the attitude of an individual it is important to identify with cognitive, affective and conative components. The identification of the consumer cognitive function helps in understanding their beliefs regarding the product and therefore stands for the product learning. The identification of the affective function, on the other hand, identifies the consumer feelings towards a specific product and can be identified as their feelings or their emotions. The conative component, however, directly presents the final observable

behaviour. At this stage, the consumer intent to behave either favourably or unfavourably is determined.

The following Figure 3 by Shiffman and Kanuk (2004) identifies different attitude components.

Figure 3: Attitude Formation



Source: Shiffman and Kanuk (2004)

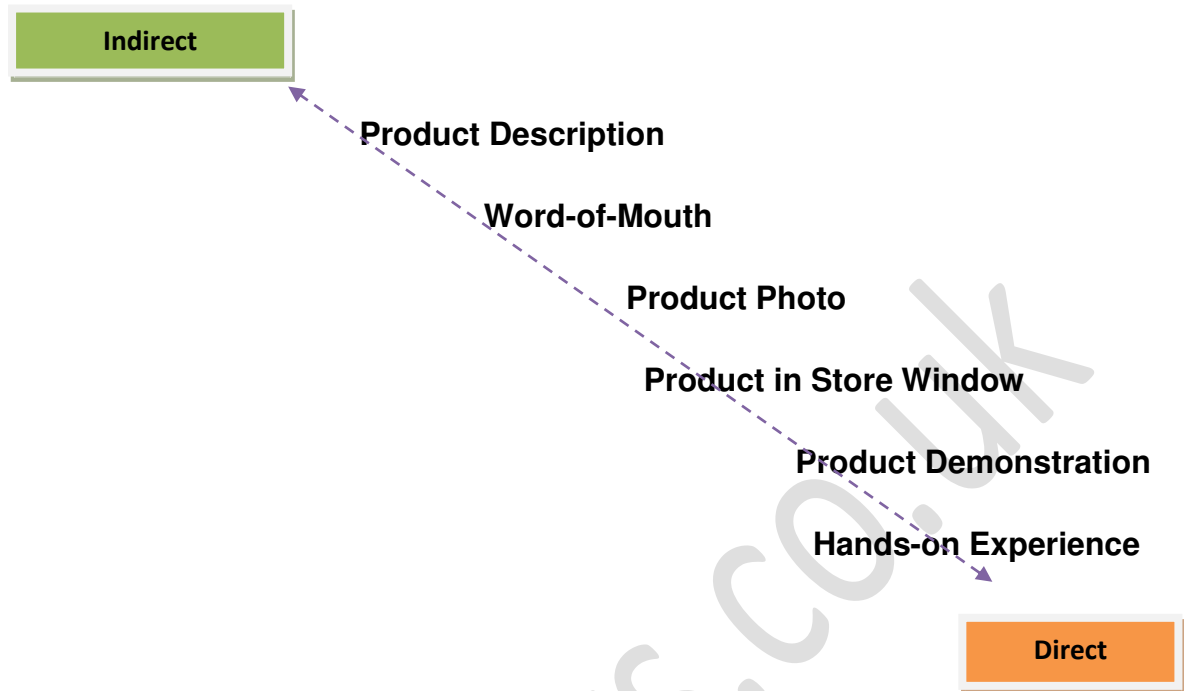
2.4. Consumer Decision, Attitude Involvement and Packaging

Involvement refers to the consumer and the product interactions. This process involves the consumer obtaining information that is relevant to the product or service he/she is interested in, following which the consumer makes a decision on whether to buy the product or service (Shepherd and Thomas, 2012). In other words, the consumer first undertakes a trial of a product or service before making the final decision. The way a product is packaged is an important aspect that influences a consumer during this initial decision making phase.

According to Hoch and Deighton (1989), consumers go through a four-step process. In the first step, the consumer forms certain ideas and expectations of a product (this idea can be generated from the packaging of the product). The second step involves the consumer trying out the product or service and gaining experience about it (the initial choice of product packaging may give the product an edge over its competitors). The third step involves contemplation, when the consumer goes through the information related to the product and his/her experience with it (this process involves the reading of the product labels and a comparison of their experience with the product promise). The final step involves updating his or her behaviour and making a decision on whether to buy the product or not (Holmes et al., 2012).

Consumers gain valuable experience when they interact directly with the product or service. Consumers tend to experience the product or service either directly or indirectly. According to Chiu et al. (2008), direct experience is gained when consumers interact with the product directly, whereas in an indirect experience, the consumers gain experience and information through media and advertising. The authors also argue that the consumer experience of the product involves hands on experience and product demonstration, while indirect experience involves product description or word of mouth. The following Figure 4 identifies the direct-indirect experience spectrum. According to Calver (2004), the packaging and labelling process is involved in the indirect and direct experience stages. For instance, the product description, product photo and word of mouth promotion largely depends on product design, while product demonstration and product in-store will also involve the product information promoted through labelling.

Figure 4: Consumer Experience Spectrum



Source: Slyvia et al. (2002), p433

Section II: Packaging and Labelling of Food

2.5. Packaging of FMCG Products

2.5.1. Importance of Packaging

According to researchers (Rundh, 2009; Klimchuk and Krasovec, 2013), the effective use of packaging is vital to modern marketing of consumer goods where the purpose of the package is to draw the attention of the user by communicating the brand name and image and by enhancing the associated product functionality. Furthermore, Haller (2006) reiterates that the package by itself can be considered a decision making tool which provides the consumers with the pertinent information on the product. According to Guo (2010), the packaging process is of key importance to the sales as it acts as a product communication tool and helps in the product positioning. Karowski et al. (2011) define product positioning as a tool used to identify the importance of the product and the efforts taken to differentiate the product from its competitors. The use of product packaging helps in ensuring that the product awareness is promoted by differentiating the product from its competitors by focusing on the brand image, product characteristics and brand reputation.

Calver (2004) contends that the importance of packaging can be understood by examining its functionality across multiple departments. According to Silayoi and Speece (2004), the primary role of packaging is to assist in the logistics and marketing functions. The authors argue that these two functions are linked to one another as they directly impact the end-user of any product. The purpose of logistics is to contain, utilise and protect the product till it reaches its end customers, while the purpose of marketing is to draw the attention of the customer by focusing on product design and labelling elements (Karowski et al., 2011). According to Stewart (2004), there are three primary functions associated with the packaging of a given product including product containment, protection and identification. The following Figure 5 identifies the functions of product packaging.

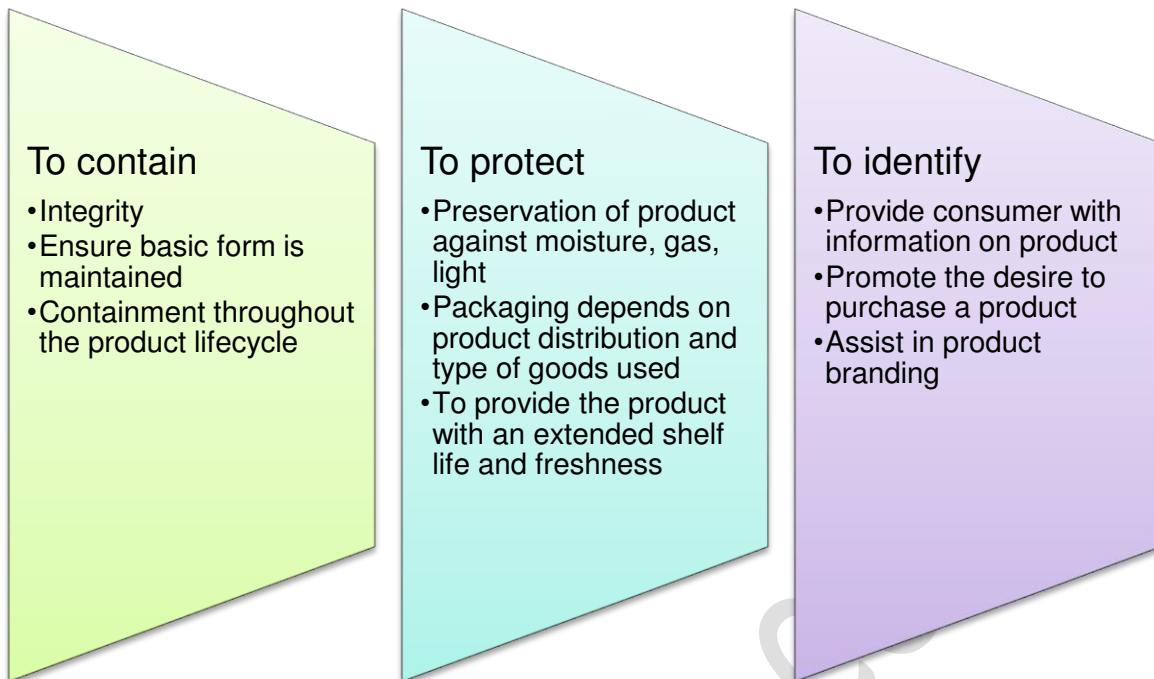


Figure 5: Product Packaging Functions

Source: Adapted from Stewart (2004)

Creusen et al. (2010), on the other hand, stress the marketing importance of packaging. They argue that the product design and appearance are an attractive method promoted by organisations to help in conveying a specific message and information about the product's attributes to the customers. Furthermore, Holmes et al. (2012) argue that the marketing use of product packaging helps identify consumer attention and sensory stimulation. Finally, Rundh (2009) argues that the package design is of vital importance as it promotes product value by using multiple colours, pictures, catchy fonts and graphics. Becker et al. (2011) reiterate that the product packaging design is a vital feature which catches the attention of the customer by ensuring that the product stands out from its competition.

Having discussed the importance of product packaging, the following section will identify the role of packaging elements.

2.5.2. Packaging Elements

Packaging Design

According to Becker et al. (2011), the use of graphics and colours identifies the promotion of visual stimulus. Grossman and Wisenblit (1999) argue that the use of graphics, different colour combinations, typography and product photography are vital in creating a specific image in the mind of the customer. As identified in the previous section, the FMCG goods are often low involvement products where a primary role is played by marketing communications and image building. According to Ares and Deliza (2010), in the FMCG sector, especially in the marketing of groceries, the product attributes are mostly similar for different brands and design characteristics using colour and graphics draw the attention of the consumer.

Furthermore, Solomon et al. (2010) argue that the consumer's shopping decisions are often under time pressure with limited attention given to product characteristics, with FMCG products being the top of consumer decision making without a complicated decision process. According to Kauppinen-Räsänen and Lumola (2010), the primary attributes which differentiate the FMCG product during an impulse buy are the graphics, colour and use of fonts. Rettie and Brewer (2000) support this view and argue that in psychology research a primary component which impacts consumer decision is recall associated with product size, colour, font style and other such visual stimuli, rather than informational stimuli. From this, one can argue that to promote consumer recall of a product and thereby ensure repetitive buying, it is important to use visual stimuli including product photography, colour and font in a manner which immediately draws the consumer attention.

According to Silayoi et al. (2007), the product packaging size and shape directly determine the involvement level of the consumer. Raghurir and Krishna (1999) argue that consumers use simple visual heuristics to make decisions on the product content and volume. They indicate that products which are longer are often considered to be larger, even when smaller packaging may have same volume of product. Silayoi et al. (2007) further argue that products of low involvement, including grocery products, are found to be packaged with minimal material to generate product savings. In such a scenario, if one brand generates a bigger

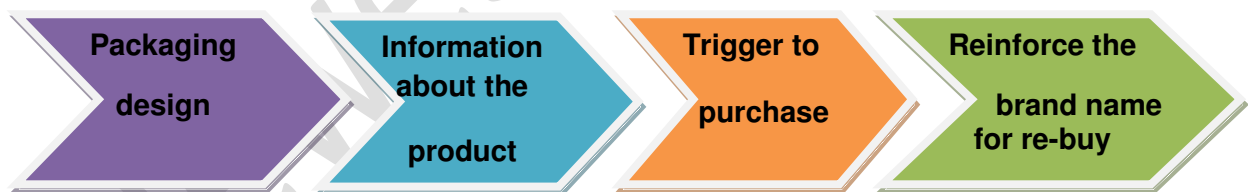
packaging size it may lead to a consumer positive decision to buy the product. Therefore it is argued that the product colour, graphics, size and shape are important visual stimuli which impact the packaging design of the product.

Informational Elements

According to Coulson (2000), one of the primary roles of product design is to provide effective communication. The authors argue that information given through packaging in the form of labelling helps the consumer make informed decisions. The role of food labelling is detailed in Section 2.6.

The following Figure 6 by Rundh (2009) summarises the role of product packaging elements on consumer decision making. It is argued that the consumer attention is first gathered by package design by visual stimulus. Following this, information about the product is understood using labels, which then promote the consumer behavioural intent to purchase a given product.

Figure 6: Packaging Design and Consumer Decision Making



Source: Adapted from Rundh (2009)

2.6. Product Labelling

2.6.1. Importance of Product Labelling

According to researchers (Popelwel and Job, 2012; Wandell, 1997; Kelly et al., 2009), the purpose of product labelling is to provide the consumers with detailed

information on the product constituents and product qualities including the price, content, quality, longevity, place of origin, volume and environmental status. According to Kelly et al. (2009), labelling is a process which allows consumers to identify the product contents, product quality and product characteristics. The aim of product labelling is to provide the consumer with the tools required to evaluate the product in relation to its price, so that they can compare it with other products in the same category and make an informed choice based on their personal preference (Drichoutis et al., 2006).

Cowburn and Stockley (2005) argue that the label is a primary factor which accompanies the product packaging used to advertise the product. The label of a product can be in different forms. For instance, Calver (2004) identifies that the product label can be a source of information, claim, specification, trademark, sign and product label, all of which can be used to refer to the product's qualities. According to Jansen and Hamm (2012), the primary interest that is exhibited towards the labelling of food products by consumers is to identify health qualities (nutritional uptake), place of origin (promote local traders) and type of agriculture used (organic products). According to Drichoutis et al. (2006), there is an increase in consumer interest towards food labelling, and the increase in free trade within the EU has promoted negative consequences of higher environmental impact and spread of contamination in food. The authors argue that given such high incidences in food contamination and spoilage as well as environmental concerns, there is growing importance given to food labelling by consumers. Campos et al. (2011), on the other hand, argue that the consumer focus is largely on labelling with respect to health, environment and ethics, with many consumers looking for organic labels and GMO (genetically modified) labels. The authors indicate that given the diversity in the source of FMCG products, including food, there is a general increase in consumer need to gain more information with regard to the food that they consume. Finally, Heiki and Taylor (2011) argue that the consumers look towards product labels to identify choices which reflect their values and preferences. Therefore, it can be argued that the purpose of the product label is to inform and protect the consumer.

2.6.2. Types of Product Labelling and Labelling Problems

According to Dannenberg et al. (2011), there are two important types of product labelling, including mandatory labelling and voluntary labelling. The purpose of mandatory labelling is to provide basic information on a given product. The mandatory labelling process involves the identification of date of packaging, ingredients, name of brand, expiry date and address of organisation. The mandatory labelling regulations vary from one country to another, but the above listed attributes are the most commonly occurring factors. The mandatory labelling laws in the UK and EU are quite complex, with forty different laws existing in the EU to ensure that proper information is made available to the consumer.

On the other hand, voluntary labelling refers to multiple product attributes declared by the organisation which go beyond legislation. These labels are often referred to as claims and can be identified as being attributes which represent the characteristics, nutritional properties, processing and composition of the food. Heiki and Taylor (2012) argue that voluntary labels are commonly promoted to help differentiate one product from another.

A number of researchers have identified problems associated with product labelling. Campos et al. (2011) argue that consumers do not want to use labelling as they get confused with the use of symbols and logos. Kaltcheva et al. (2012), on the other hand, argue that the consumers do not use product labels as they often buy the same product and are already aware of the product information. Cowburn and Stockley (2005) support the above argument and effectively summarise that the drawbacks of product labelling include the need to differentiate between multiple logos and the confusion as to whether the information provided is subjective or objective.

Section III: Research Framework

2.7. Research Focus

The previous sections established the importance of consumer behaviour analysis and the role of product packaging and product labelling. This research focuses on the product packaging and labelling attitude of university students with respect to health and organic food. Given this focus, this section will identify some previously conducted research in this area.

Tobler et al. (2011) identify the role of consumer attitude towards packaging and labelling of environmentally sustainable food among students. The authors present clear evidences to support the importance of limited packaging and the purchase of products which have an environmentally friendly label on their product.

Smith et al. (2000) studied the use of food labels among university students and identify that consumers of both genders prefer packages which use less material and are easy to use. It was observed that the use of food labels is more by women than by men. It was also observed that women were found to ascribe more importance to organic food and healthy food choices when compared to men. Similarly, Misra (2007) identifies student knowledge and attitude towards consumer decision making on labels using a population of college students. The results presented by the researcher show that consumer attitude towards label reading is more positive among women than among men. However, the knowledge on the purpose of the label was found to be similar among all respondents.

From the above analysis, one can argue that though there is significant analysis of consumer attitude towards labelling among university students, the research largely targets attitude towards product labelling and product packaging among university students by focusing on healthy food.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology

3.1. Introduction

A vital part of any research study is the research methodology. The research methodology typically encapsulates the overall methods, approaches and the rationale behind the research process that was part of the study. According to Saunders et al. (2009), research methodology involves the philosophical and the theoretical assumptions upon which the study is founded. The various implications of the chosen approaches are also a part of the research methodology. This research methodology will examine the research process adopted to understand the young consumer behaviour towards packaging and labelling.

3.2. Research Design

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2008), the purpose of a research design is to form a bridge between the theory and the empirical data that is collected. Hence, sampling and statistics play a major role when it comes to research design. The research design includes the various strategies that can be used, the different approaches, choices, and the limitations of each of these approaches and choices (Saunders et al., 2007). A research onion model is used to depict the research design process (Saunders et al., 2009).

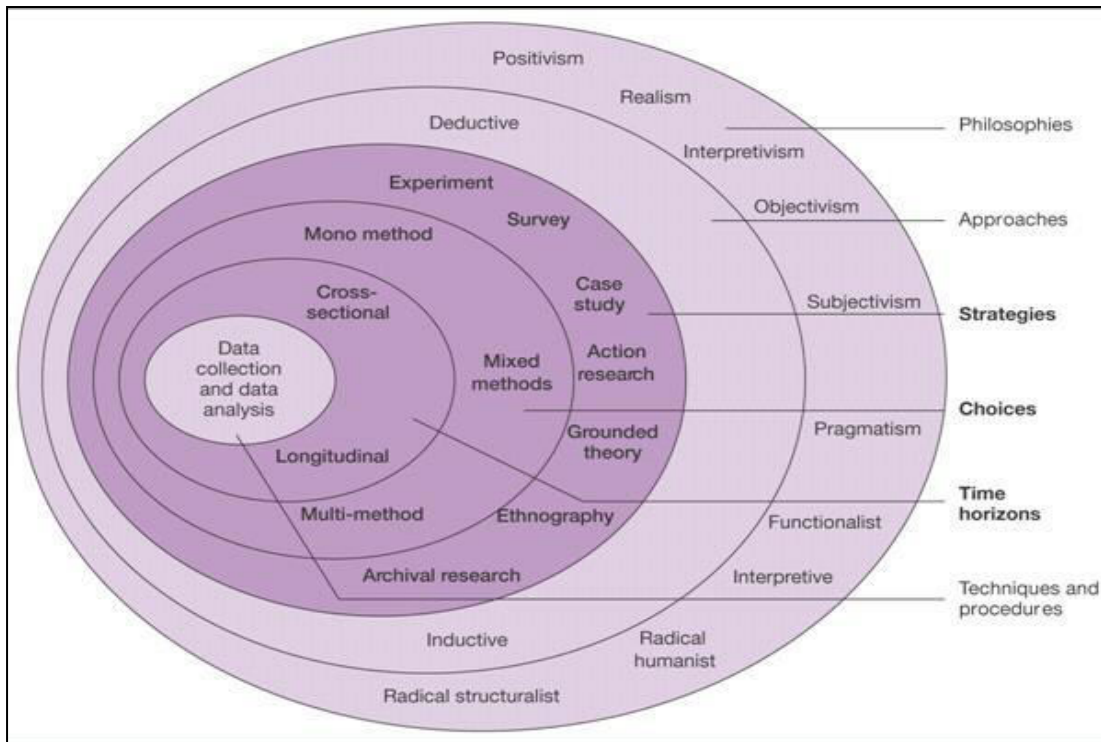


Figure 7: Research Onion

Source: © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill (2007)

The onion model consists of numerous layers. Each of the layers refers to a particular step in the research design process.

The first layer depicts the various research philosophies. The research philosophy aids in determining the manner in which the data that is collected can be examined (Lewin, 1988). The various research philosophies that are depicted in the onion model include positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2009).

The current study takes a pragmatic approach towards research philosophy as it allows the researcher to make use of a range of research philosophies instead of relying on just a single philosophy. This expands the scope of the research, as it allows for a wider scope of investigating the collected data. Furthermore, recommendations will be detailed based on existing discourse. Hence, pragmatism based research philosophy is used in the current study.

The next vital step in the research process is determining the research approach. The research approach is usually linked to the type of philosophy being used

(Saunders et al., 2007). The onion model depicted in the above figure reveals that there are two main types of research approach that can be taken. One is the deductive approach, which involves first formulating a theory based on existing and prevailing literatures and then formulating hypotheses based on these literatures. The empirical data is then collected and analysed and the findings are compared with the formulated hypotheses to see if they are correct or not. This is the approach that is adopted in the current study.

The research method involves the type of data that the study is going to collect and analyse. The most commonly used methods are the qualitative, quantitative and the mixed methods. The current study will make use of a quantitative method, which involves collecting empirical data that is numerical in nature and analysing it to test the hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2009). In the current research, the aim is to identify the consumer views on specific products. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2010), the adoption of a quantitative method is most effective in marketing research. Therefore the current study adopts this research method.

3.3. Data Collection

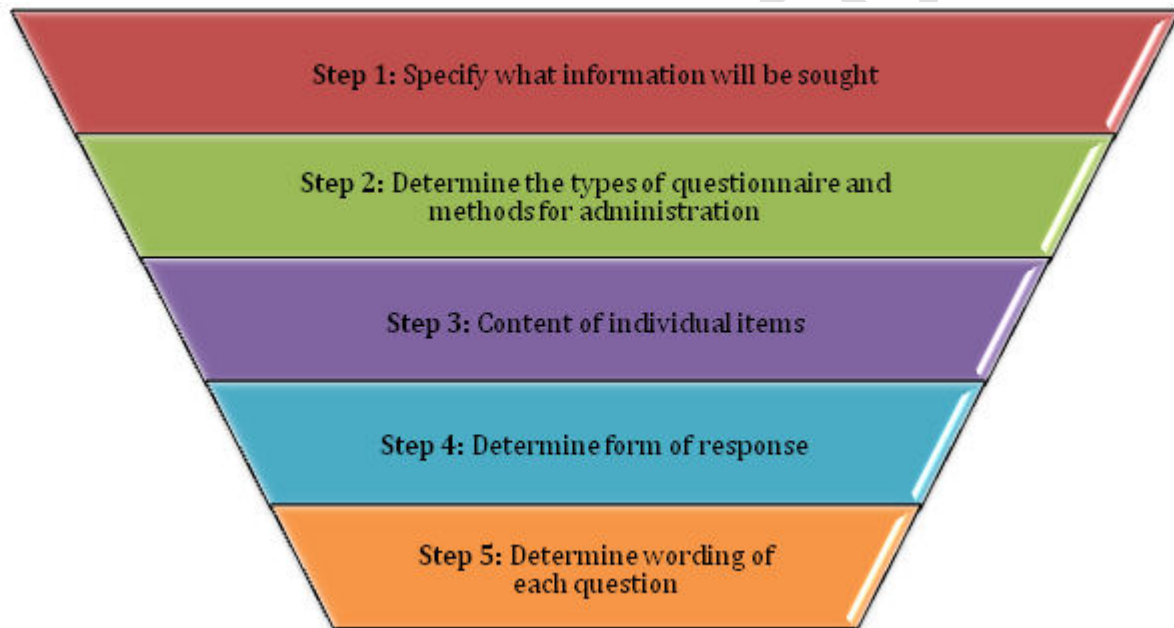
There are, typically, two ways to collect data for a research study. These include primary data collection and secondary data collection. The current study uses a primary data collection approach, which involves surveys and observations (Malhotra, 2010). Observations are used when the researcher wants to analyse an individual or group's behaviour and their actions. Surveys are used when the researcher wants to know an individual or group's perceptions, ideas and opinions about a particular subject matter. The current study makes use of a survey-based approach towards data collection.

3.4. Survey Instrument

A self-administered questionnaire is used to carry out the survey in the current study. Such a questionnaire can either be closed ended or open ended (Bryman and Bell,

2005). An open ended question invites respondents to provide answers freely without any limitations. They are encouraged to give their opinions on a particular subject matter. However, in closed ended questions, the answers have to be limited to a set of given answers. The current study makes use of a closed ended questionnaire as it saves time, gives non biased answers and is simpler to analyse (Bryman and Bell, 2005; Fink, 2003a). The below Figure 8 depicts the steps that were involved in the questionnaire design process. The questionnaire was designed in a manner that identifies product design features, packaging features and labelling features.

Figure 9: Questionnaire Development



Source: Churchill and Iacobucci (2002)

3.5. Sampling

The current study makes use of a systemic random sampling method which involves selecting respondents to be part of the survey at random while ensuring that men and women are equally represented. This ensures that bias does not set in and gives more validity to the study. The study respondents were targeted at a local

health food store close to the university. The researcher positioned himself outside the store on two weekdays and one weekend for three hours a day and requested participants exiting the store to take part in the survey. The sampling process is based on Churchill and Iacobucci's (2002) and Wilson's (2006) five-step method, which is as follows:

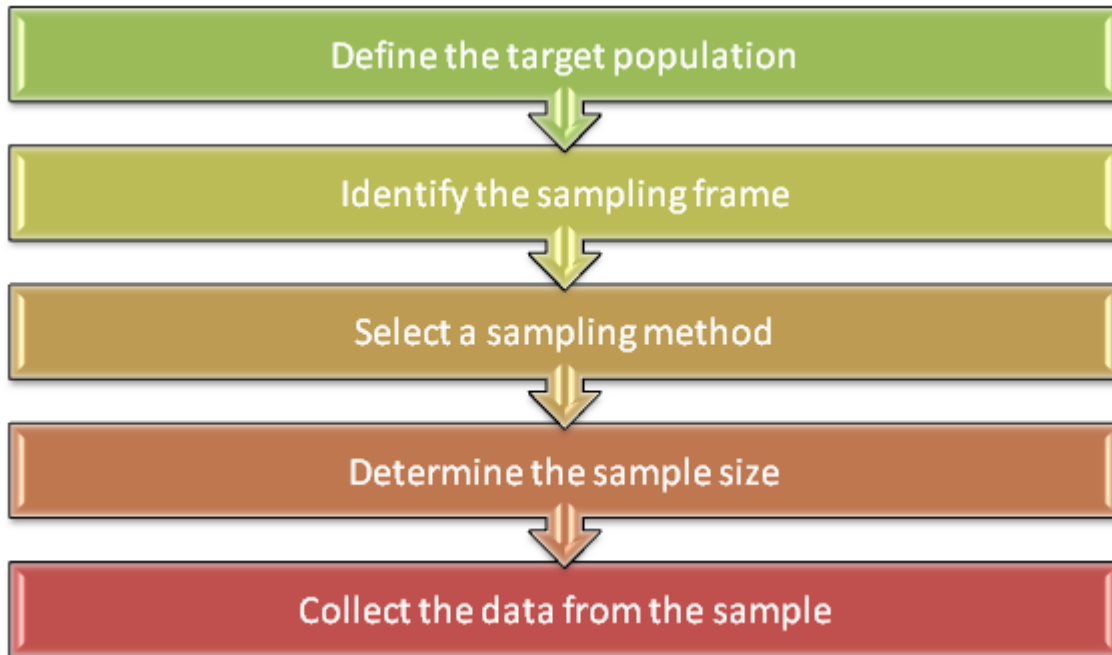


Figure 9: Sampling Process

Source: Adapted from Churchill and Iacobucci (2002) and Wilson (2006)

3.6. Data Analysis

Analysis of the collected data is done using software known as SPSS version 20.0. By using this particular software, the researcher ensures that both inferential and descriptive statistics are analysed with regard to the study's parameters. The data collected from the survey is checked for reliability and consistency before carrying out the data management process. The answers provided by the respondents are coded to ensure anonymity and protection to the respondents and then analysed (Bryman and Bell, 2007). Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentage analysis will be used to make sense of the data and turn it into useful information.

Following this, inferential statistics will be used, like regression and correlation. The results that are attained are then presented in the form of tables and figures.

3.7. Ethics of the Study

Ethics is always a big part of any research study. The current study will observe all the standard ethical procedures and guidelines that are proposed by the University of [REDACTED]. According to Saunders et al. (2012), the researcher will clearly inform the respondents that their participation is completely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the survey at any time. Furthermore, the respondents will also be assured that their identity and their responses will be coded and kept under strict security (Creswell, 2003).

3.8. Conclusion

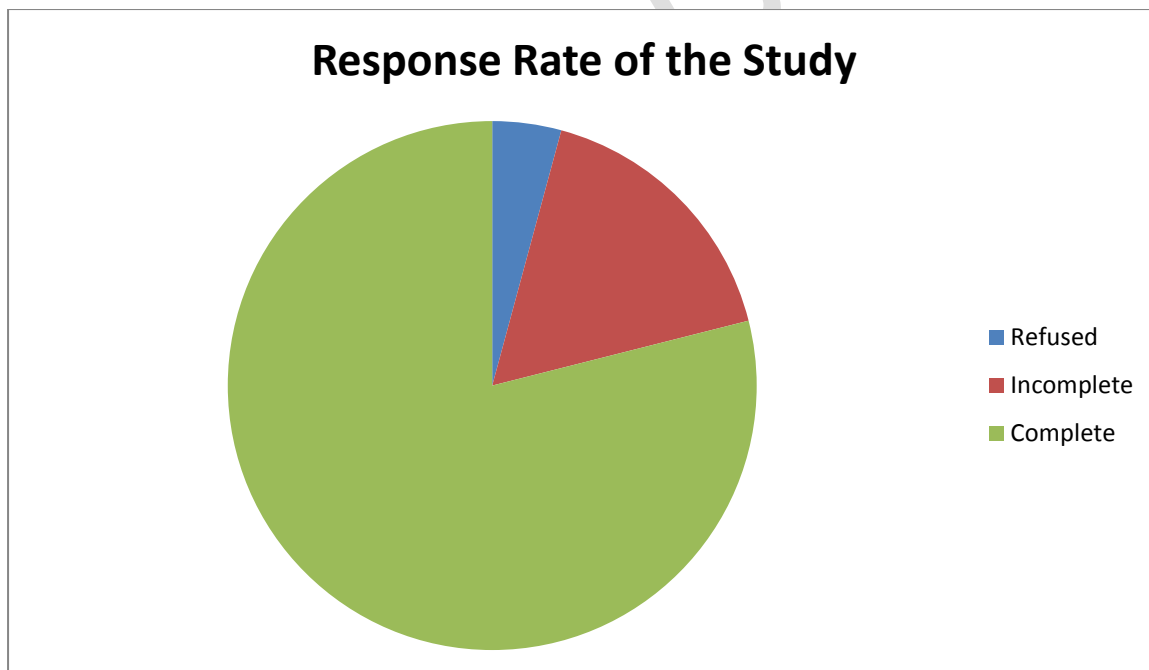
From the above research analysis, it is identified that a pragmatist, deductive, quantitative research design is adopted. The research also adopts a primary data collection method using questionnaire as the data collection tool, where the data is analysed using SPSS software to prove (or disprove) the proposed hypotheses.

Chapter Four: Results of the Study

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the questionnaire presented to the respondents. The respondent views are categorised into different charts and tables to ensure that the reader is able to follow the work. The respondent approached both men and women who visited the health food store close to the university. A total of 80 respondents were approached by the researcher, of whom 67 agreed to take up the survey. Of the 67 responses, seven were considered to be incomplete. Therefore, the researcher considered the final sample size of the study to be 60 respondents. The following figure identifies the respondent rate of the study.

Figure 10: Response Rate of the Study

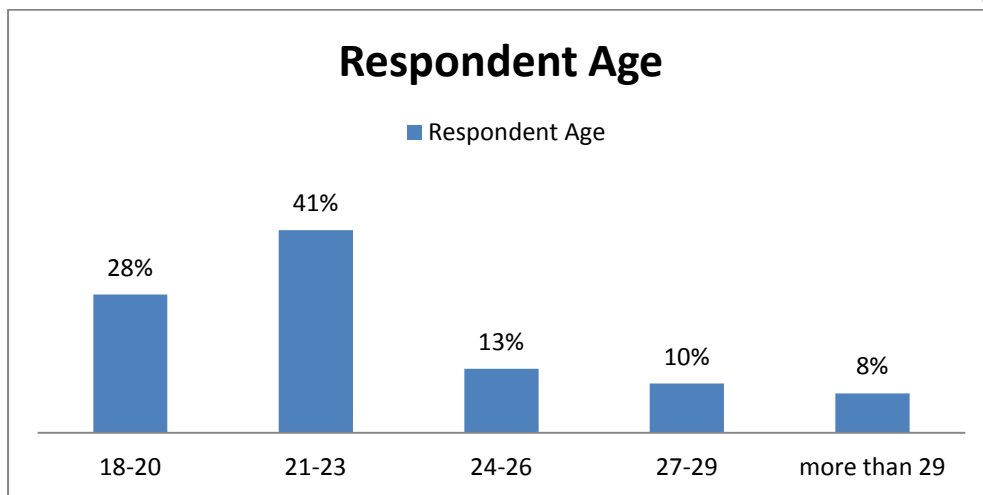


4.2. Respondent Demographics

The following figures identify the respondent age and respondent gender. It is observed that most of the respondents were in the age group of 21-23 (41%) and 18-

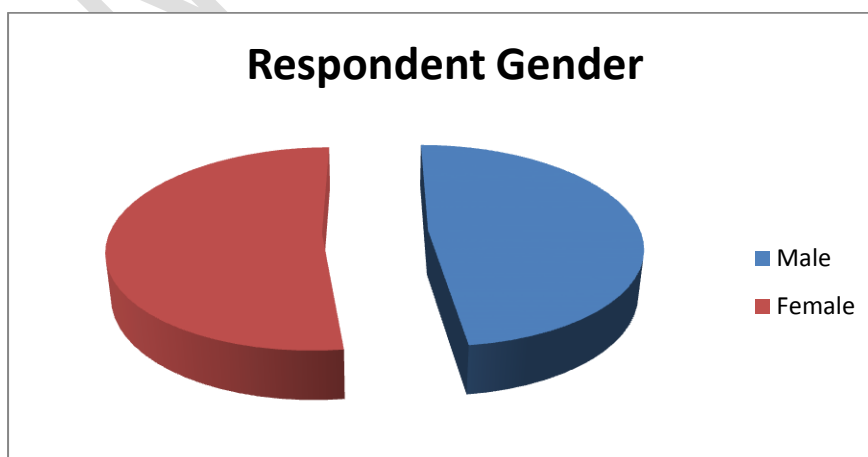
20 (28%). This largely signifies that most of the respondents were doing their undergraduate degree. Some of the respondents were found to be in the 24-26 age group (13%), over 29 age group (8%) and 26-29 age group (10%). This clearly signifies that university students who were pursuing their post graduate studies and other graduate programmes were also part of the study.

Figure 11: Respondent Age



An analysis of the gender of the respondents shows that there is a slightly higher representation of women (52%) when compared to men (48%). The researcher undertook a systemic random sampling method to ensure that there was more or less equal representation of men and women to understand any pertinent differences in their attitude towards packaging and labelling of products.

Figure 12: Respondent Gender

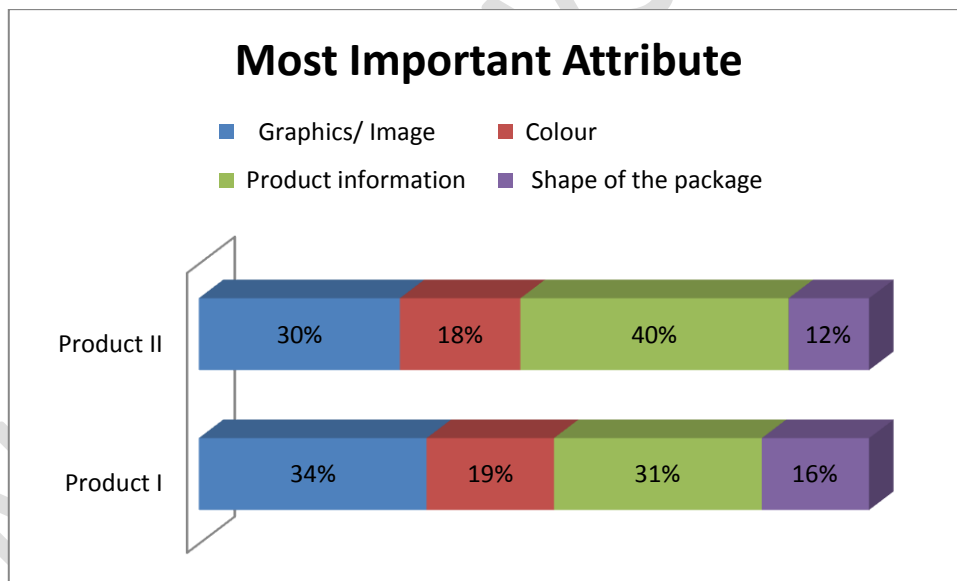


4.3. Consumer Response to Specific Product Design Features

4.3.1. Product Recognition

The respondents were asked to identify the first attribute that caught their attention of a given product image. It is observed from the following figure that the respondents show a preference for the graphics/image for one product (34% for product I, while only 30% for product II), while product information is given more importance for the other (40% for product II, while only 31% for product I). The impact of other factors, including colour and shape of package, shows minimal difference among the research participants.

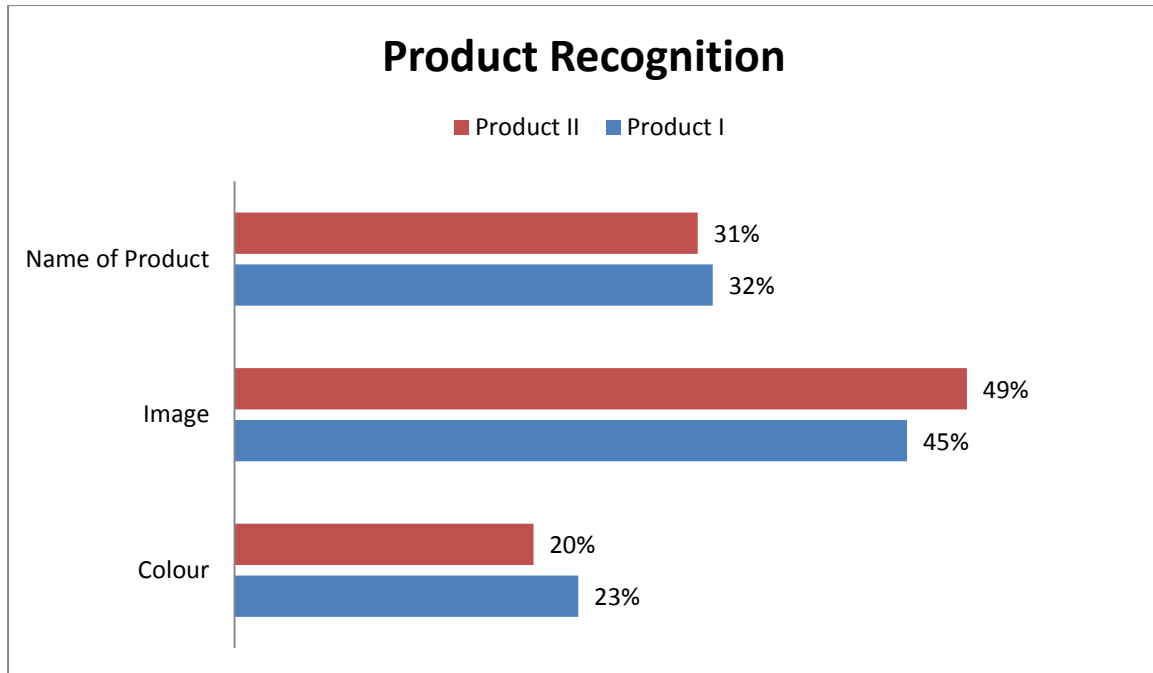
Figure 13: Most Important Attribute



When the respondents were questioned about the factors which promote image recognition, the product image was found to be the most important factor (45% of respondents for product I and 49% for product II). The second factor which was given importance to was the name of the product (product I, 32%, and product II, 31%), followed by product colour (23% of respondents for product I and 20% for product II). The researcher argues that colour was of less importance as the

products promoted were health products and ones which did not have many bold colours.

Figure 14: Product Recognition



The following figure shows the overall rating of the two different products by the respondents. It is observed that the respondents found both the products to be mostly good (43% respondents for product I when compared to 46% for product II). It is also interesting to note that product II was found to have a greater number of respondents who identified it as being excellent (18% of respondents for product I and 20% of respondents for product II). Similarly, the poor rating of the products were also found to be lower for product two (8% of respondents for product I and 5% of respondents for product II).

From the above results, it can be argued that product II was considered to be better when compared to product I. It is argued by the researcher that product II was found to be rated higher for nature of product and product information when compared to product I. This shows that the information function of packaging was given greater importance when compared to the visual stimuli.

4.4. Consumer Views on Importance of Product Packaging

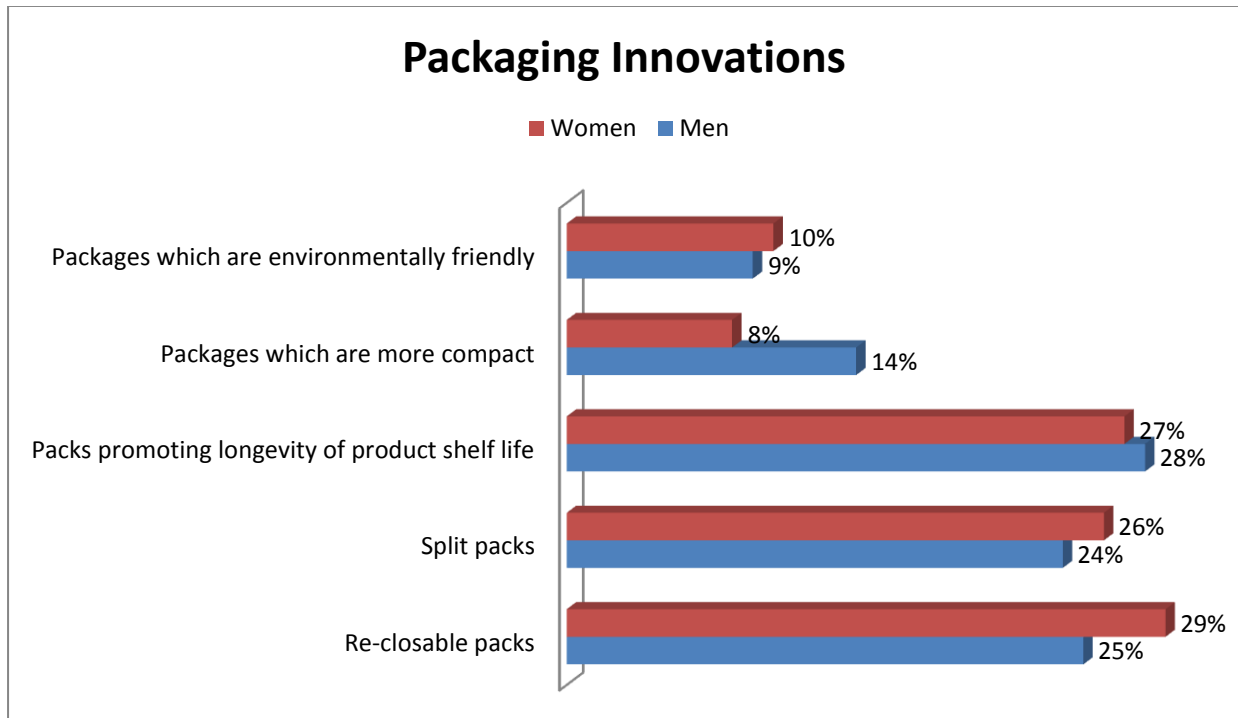
The following Table 1 identifies the consumers' views on product packaging. It is observed that the respondents were found to give importance to the logistic attributes of packaging rather than to the marketing attributes. It is observed that the packaging of products was found to useful in promoting quality (Mean = 4.34, SD = 0.167), product safety and hygiene (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.284) and product information (Mean = 4.16, SD = 0.3), as most respondents rated these attributes as being important or very important. In contrast, the respondents rated packaging as a factor of product marketing relatively low (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.342).

Table 1: Consumer Views on Product Packaging

	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Packaging of products is important as it helps in maintaining quality and keeping the product fresh	4.34	.167	4.666	.000
Packaging of the product is important as it helps in keeping food products safe and hygienic	4.16	.284	2.622	.000
Packaging of the product is important as it promotes product marketing	3.27	.342	4.167	.000
Packaging of the product is important as it provides information on labels	4.16	.360	2.600	.000

The respondents were asked to rank some product innovations associated with packaging. The following Figure 15 identifies the customer response to ranking of the different packaging innovations as the most important innovation (i.e. rank I). It is observed from the figure that there is a difference in responses between men and women with respect to the views on product packaging innovations introduced. For instance, men were found to give importance to the compact nature of products (14%) and longevity of the packaging (28%). In contrast, women were found to give importance to re-closable packs (29%) and split packs (26%). The importance given to environmentally friendly packages was relatively low among both the respondents, with 9% of men ranking it the most important and 10% of women ranking it the most important. From the results, it can be argued that women are more involved in product reuse related packaging innovations (re-sealable packs and split packs), while men are mostly concerned with the longevity of the product.

Figure 15: Packaging Innovations



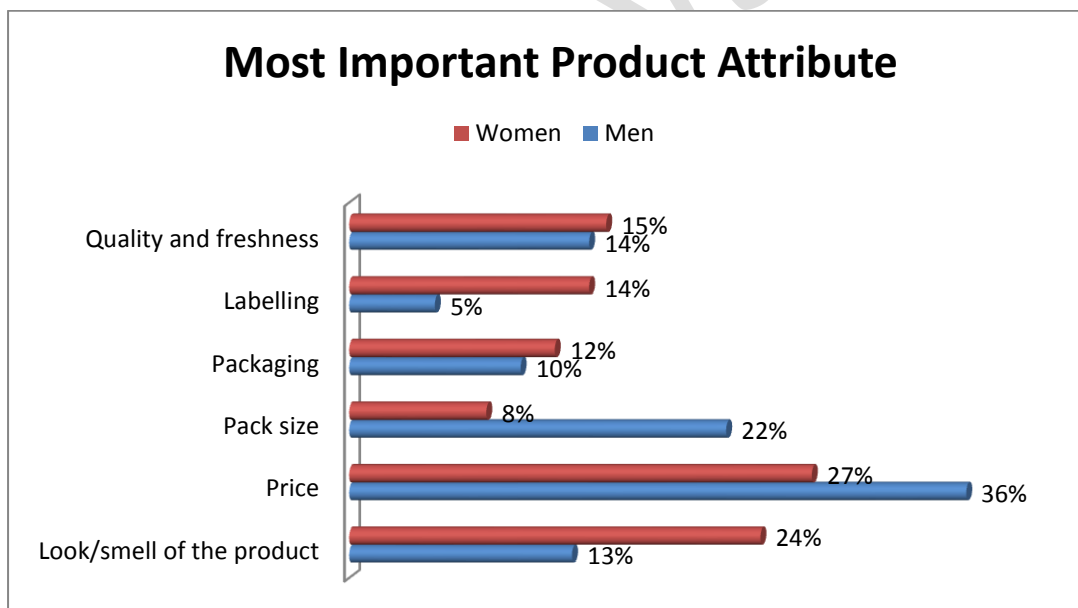
From the following Table 2, the consumer importance ascribed to different product attributes is identified. It is observed that there is a marked difference in importance given to products across men and women. Women consider the price, product look, quality and labelling to be the four most important attributes. On the other hand, men consider product price, pack size, quality and packaging to be the four most important attributes. It is also interesting to note that women give greater importance to labelling (rank 4) when compared to packaging (rank 5), while men give greater importance to packaging (rank 4) when compared to labelling (rank 5).

Table 2: Ranking of Product Attributes

	Men	Women
Look/smell of the product	VI	II
Price	I	I
Pack size	II	VI
Packaging	IV	V
Labelling	V	IV
Quality and freshness	III	III

The following Figure 16 identifies the most important product attribute identified by the respondents. The ranking of the most important attribute follows the overall ranking presented in the above table. However, it is interesting to note that though packaging of the product was given greater importance by the men when compared to women with respect to overall rank, a greater number of women (14%) have considered packaging the most important attribute when compared to men (10%). However, it is clear that the pack size is given greater importance by men (22%) when compared to women (8%). It is also observed that though men and women rate price to be the most important attribute, it is observed that men are found to give greater importance to price (36%) when compared to women (27%). It is also interesting to note that women give more importance to product labelling (14%) when compared to men.

Figure 16: Most Important Product Attribute



4.5. Consumer Views on Product Labelling

The following Table 3 identifies the consumer views on product labelling. It is observed that most of the respondents identify the attributes related to product

labelling. It is observed that respondents make use of product labels when the product is new (Mean = 4.23, SD = 0.105), there is a presence of food allergies in the family (Mean = 4.16, SD = 1.340), it must be suitable for vegetarians (Mean = 4.28, SD = 0.348), to determine if the product is organic or free range (Mean = 4.33, SD = 1.001) and if the consumer is generally health conscious (Mean = 4.21, SD = 0.859). All of these attributes strongly indicate that consumers positively respond to food labels for the above reasons.

Table 3: Product Labelling

Purchase Experience	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
If the product is new	4.23	.105	2.769	.000
If there are food allergies in family	4.16	1.340	3.315	.000
If you are generally health conscious	4.28	.859	3.842	.000
To determine if the product is suitable for vegetarians	5.28	.348	3.145	.000
To identify if the product is organic or free range	4.33	1.001	3.176	.000

The respondents were asked to identify some of the reasons behind their use of labels from a nutritional perspective. It is observed that, overall, respondents were found to give moderate importance of the nutritional attributes of labelling, with importance given to quality (Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.101), salt/sugar content (Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.667), overall calories/fat intake (Mean = 3.37, SD = 0.826) and total preservative content (Mean = 3.14, SD = 0.192). All of these attributes indicate that consumers moderately use food labels.

Table 4: Nutritional Attributes of Labelling

Brand Association	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (2-tailed)
To know the quantity of ingredients	3.38	.884	.000
To calculate calories/fat intake	3.37	.826	.000
To calculate salt/sugar	3.00	.667	.000
To calculate preservatives	3.14	.192	
To determine quality	3.00	.101	

The following figures identify the importance given by men and women to different food nutrition labels. In general, it is observed that men are found to be mostly neutral and many either disagree or strongly disagree with different attributes. Two factors show the most difference. For instance, men are found to consider identifying information about calories and fat intake to be mostly neutral (37%), disagree (23%) or strongly disagree (18%). In contrast, women are found to largely agree with the use of product labels for fat/calorie intake (37% agree, 13% strongly agree and 30% are neutral). A similar result distribution is observed for identifying product salt/sugar content information.

Figure 17: Response by Men to Food Labelling

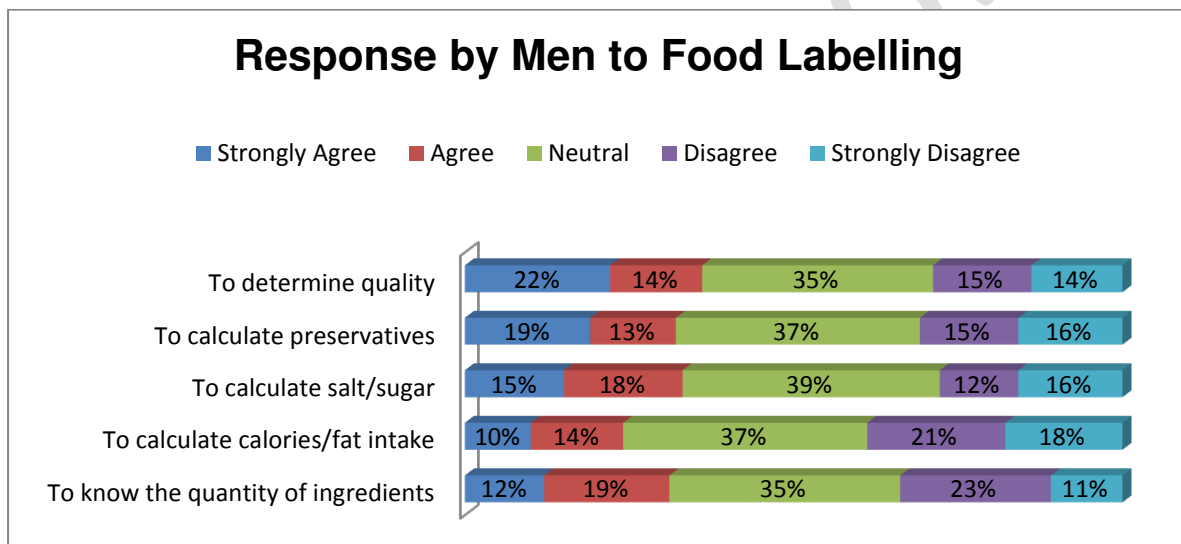
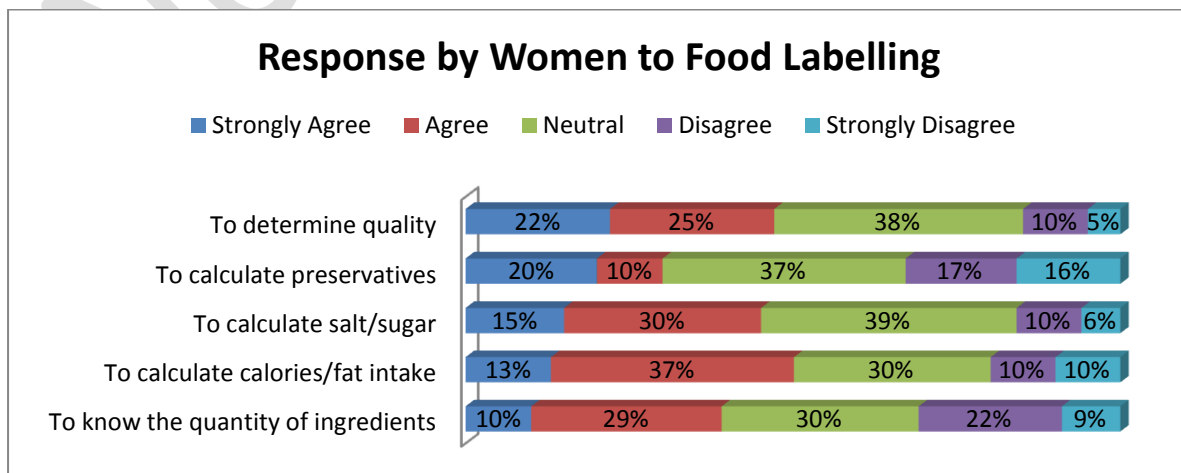
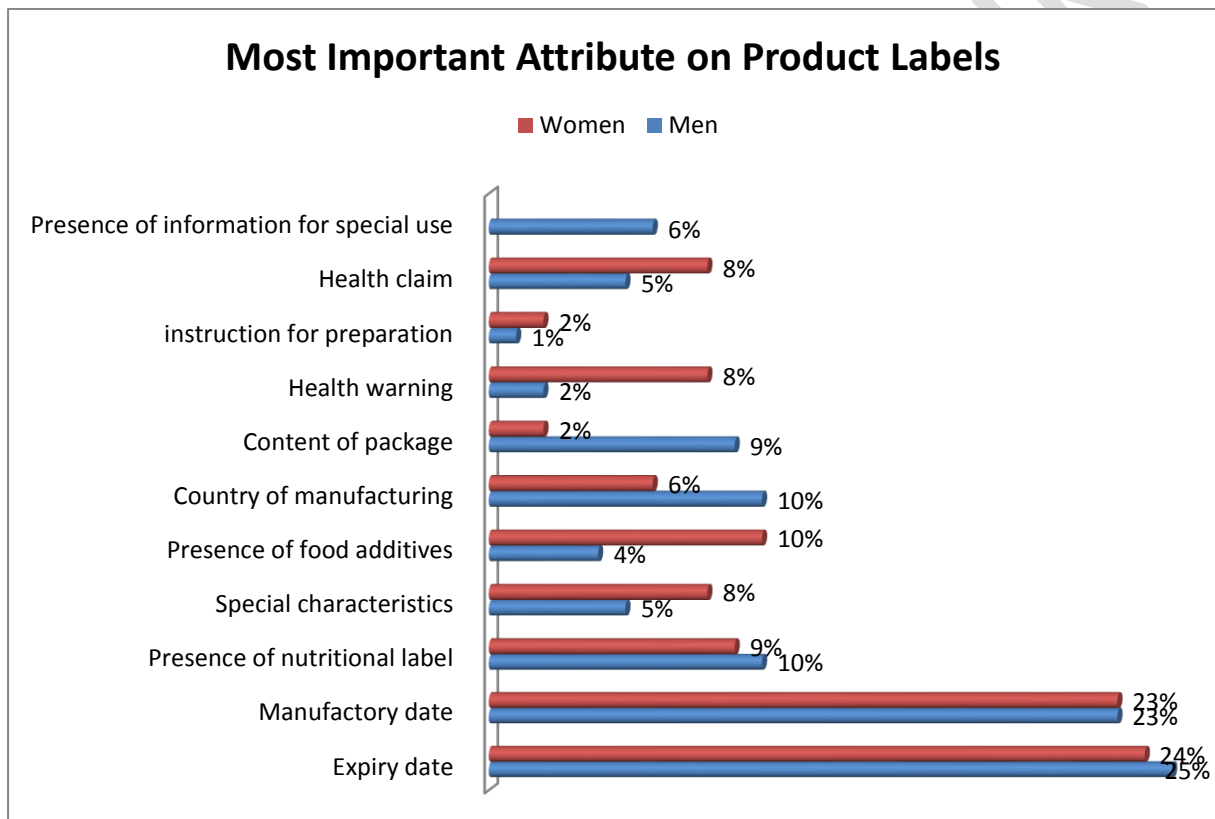


Figure 18: Response by Women to Food Labelling



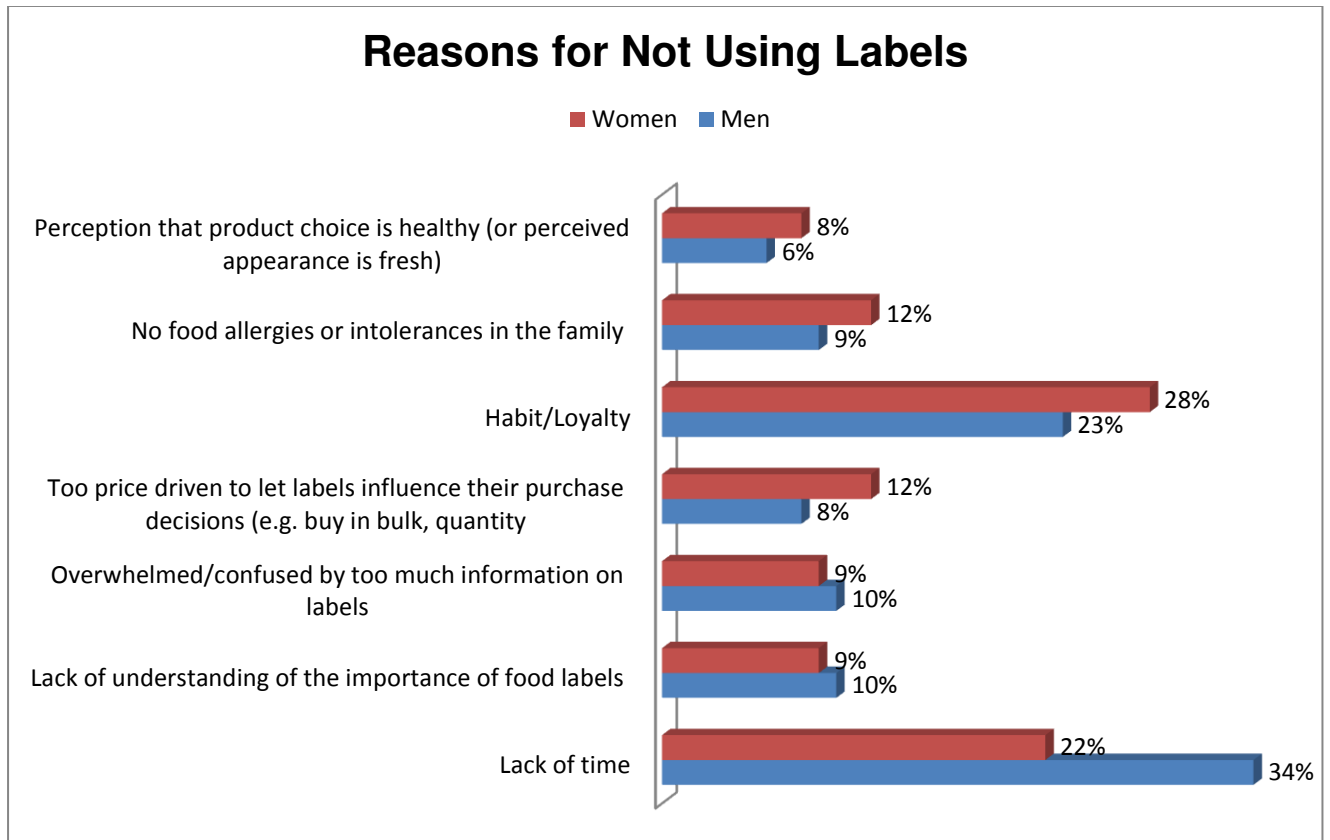
The following Figure 19 identifies the respondent views with respect to the aspects considered to be most important on product labels. It is observed that both men and women consider product expiry and manufacturing dates to be the most important. The primary difference between the views of men and women is associated with the promotion of health claims, food additives and health warnings by women and the promotion of country of origin and content of package by men.

Figure 19: Most Important Attribute on Product Labels



Finally, the consumers were asked to rank why they do not read product labels. When the respondents were questioned about the primary reasons for not using product labels, it was observed that men strongly identified lack of time (34%) and habit (23%). In contrast, women were found to give greater importance to habit (28%) followed by lack of time (22%).

Figure 20: Reasons for Not Using Labels



4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has presented the results of the study questionnaire. The following chapter will conclude the study by discussing the study implications.

Chapter Five: Conclusion of the Study

5.1. Implications of the Study

There is a wide range of packaging attributes that are used by food products. These range from pictures, images, colours, designs, information and messages. The main function of these attributes is to capture the consumer's attention and keep it. Furthermore, the packaging design plays a significant role when it comes to influencing consumers' perception of a product. Therefore, utmost attention has to be paid to the design of the product before introducing it into the market. If a product is perceived as a good one by consumers, this will in turn result in increase in the sales of the product. Given these important parameters associated with packaging and design, the current research aimed at understanding the university student attitude towards packaging and labelling.

From the results of the study, it is quite clear that there is a significant impact of visual and informational elements of product packaging on consumer choice. The primary aim of the current research was to identify university student attitude towards product packaging and labelling. In line with this view, the research presented a questionnaire to the respondents of the study. The primary section of the questionnaire was designed to help in understanding the level of importance given to product design elements. It is clear from the results that consumers consider both product image and product information to be vital components, with limited focus on product colour. The comparison of two different images of organic milk also showed that the product which was considered to show more product information was considered to be of better design when compared to the product which drew attention using image and product colour. These results are in alignment with the views expressed by Coulson (2000). According to the author, one of the primary roles of product design is to provide effective communication. The authors argue that information given through packaging in the form of labelling helps the consumer make informed decisions, especially with low involvement products like grocery items and other FMCG products. However, the results also contradict the views expressed by Holmes et al. (2012), who argue that the marketing use of product packaging helps identify with consumer attention and sensory stimulation.

Another important research contribution gained from the current study is the difference in opinion of men and women. An examination of consumer importance to product attributes shows that though overall men consider packaging to be ranked higher than women, the focus of men is mostly on product price and product size. Women are found to ascribe greater importance to product packaging and labelling. For instance, when product packaging innovation was considered, women were found to ascribe greater importance to product use while men looked at the longevity of the product. The comparison of consumer views with respect to product labelling shows that women consumers give greater importance to specific product nutritional features when compared to men. Furthermore, men are found to ignore product labelling more often due to the time taken to read through the product information. On examination of literature, it is observed from the study by Smith (2000) that women are more conscious towards health food and nutritional labelling when compared to men. Smith et al. (2000) studied the use of food labels among university students and identified that consumers of both genders prefer packages which use less material and are easy to use. It was observed that the use of food labels is more by women than by men. The current research supports their view.

The primary research question of this dissertation was:

What is the role of packaging and product labelling in impacting consumers' decision making and their behavioural intent towards a product?

From the results of the study, it is clear that the packaging helps identify consumers' decisions on product storage and hygiene, while the label is used to provide information on nutrition, allergies or additional information about the product. The use of these attributes helps the consumer to take an informed decision with respect to purchase of the product.

5.2. Recommendations for Future Research

This dissertation has largely focused on general elements of product packaging and labelling which cannot provide specific recommendations for companies. It is argued that future research should address this limitation by specifically examining nutrition labelling or product packaging material to understand consumer perception.

Another limitation of the study is the limited size of the survey. The researcher was only able to reach 60 respondents, most of them belonging to the same university. These results cannot be generalised to other regions and therefore a larger geographical segregation should be carried out to expand the study to other regions in future research.

5.3. Conclusion

A product's packaging is the first element of a product that a consumer sees. Hence it will play a vital role in tempting a consumer to buy it. The importance of a package design escalates with the arrival and popularisation of self-service systems. From the review of literature, it is understood that packaging is the first element that influences a consumer to make a purchase. Self-service has eliminated the role of sales assistants as consumers can get the information they require straight from the packaging or through the various media and advertising that a product's brand invests in. This is a reason as to why the packaging is known as the 'silent salesman', according to Vidales Giovannetti (1995). Typical packaging contains a basic description of a product, its quality and benefits.

The study has clearly identified the role of product packaging and labelling. It is important for the designers of a package to understand that the design influences the consumer's decision and that consumers must approve of the product package to help increase sales. This research concludes that the consumer intent to buy depends upon the extent to which the product and its packaging meet the consumers' expectations.

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Appendix I: Questionnaire

Section I: Consumer Demographics

Please, answer the following questions. Circle the options below.

1. What is your age?

- a. 18-20
- b. 21-23
- c. 24-26
- d. 27-29
- e. More than 29
- f. Do not want to declare

2. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Other
- d. Do not want to declare

Section II: Consumer Attitude towards Specific Product Packaging and Labelling

Please, take a look at this picture.



Please, answer questions by circling the relevant option (only one).

3. What first caught your attention?

- a. Graphics/ Image
- b. Colour
- c. Product information
- d. Shape of the package

4. How did you recognise the package as milk product?

- a. By image
- b. By colours
- c. By name of the product

5. How would you rate the design of this package?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Satisfactory
- d. Poor

Now, please, take a look at this picture.



Please, answer questions by circling the relevant option (only one).

6. What first caught your attention?

- a. Graphics/ Image
- b. Colour
- c. Product information
- d. Shape of the package

7. How did you recognise the package as milk product?

- a. By image
- b. By colours
- c. By name of the product

8. How would you rate the design of this package?

- a. Excellent
- b. Good
- c. Satisfactory
- d. Poor

Section III: Consumer Views on Importance of Packaging

9. Can you rank the following with respect to the benefits of packaging?

5- Strongly Agree ----- 1- Strongly Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
Packaging of products is important as it helps in keeping the quality and product freshness					
Packaging of the product is important as it helps in keeping food products safe and hygienic					
Packaging of the product is important as it promotes food preservation at home					
Packaging of the product is important as it provides information on labels					

10. Can you rank the following with respect to the usefulness of packaging innovations? (Kindly write the rank next to the choice)

- a. Re-closable packs
- b. Split packs
- c. Packs promoting longevity of product shelf life

11. Rank the following attributes with respect to choice of a product at a supermarket? (Kindly write the rank next to the choice)

- Quality and freshness
- Look/smell of the product
- Price
- Pack size
- Packaging
- Labelling
- Value for money

Section IV: Consumer Views on Food Labelling

12. Can you rank the following with respect to the conditions under which product food labelling is identified with?

5- Strongly Agree ----- 1- Strongly Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
If the product is new and is one which is not tried before					
If there are food allergies or intolerances in the family					
If you are generally health conscious					
To determine if the product is suitable for vegetarians					
To identify if the product is organic or free range					

13. Do you agree with the following information on nutritional features?

5- Strongly Agree ----- 1- Strongly Disagree

	1	2	3	4	5
To know the quantity of ingredients					
To calculate calories/fat intake					
To calculate salt/sugar					
To calculate preservatives					
To determine quality					

14. Can you rank the following with respect to the priorities given to food labelling?

(Kindly write the rank next to the choice)

- a. Expiry date
- b. Manufactory date
- c. Presence of nutritional label
- d. Special characteristics
- e. Presence of food additives
- f. Country of manufacturing

- g. Content of package
- h. Health warning
- i. instruction for preparation
- j. Health claim
- k. Presence of information for special use

15. What are the primary reasons for not reading food labels?

- Lack of time
- Lack of understanding of the importance of food labels
- Overwhelmed/confused by too much information on labels
- Too price driven to let labels influence their purchase decisions (e.g. buy in bulk, quantity)
- Habit/Loyalty
- No food allergies or intolerances in the family
- Perception that product choice is healthy (or perceived appearance is fresh)

Thank you for your participation

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