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Abstract

This paper uses the decision making in children and the influence of advertising and packaging on the decision making of children. It uses past studies and research on influence of advertising and influence of packaging. The review suggests that there is a combined effect of packaging and advertising on the decision making in children and that combined effect has an influence on the brand loyalty in children. Conceptual and research issues of the past such as (1) lack of conclusive empirical evidence and (2) methodological concerns are discussed later in the paper. Finally, recommendations for further research in the area are presented.

Introduction

Market of children's products is very huge. Parents have a hard time raising children the way they want to and kids are being increasingly influenced by commercialism that often goes against what parents are trying to do.

Children during the preschool years, from 1 to 5 years, start to learn about colours and start to see the world with different eyes. This is the time when most of the thing is visual for them. As we know, children from 3 to 7 years are concrete about their demand, they make some decisions without strategies. This together makes children and visuals be a good combination to the trade world, because using this, the companies can establish a good relation with them. But, they need something more, because it is not the son or the daughter who is going to make the purchase. So, using advertising they can show good points about their product and make both sides be excited about it.

By comparing the different parameters it can be set up and determined what impact the packaging has on children's decision making and on the purchase of the product. Various internal and external influences can manipulate children's decision making and control their desires and needs.

Children often reach for products that have packaging that is substantially designed for their age. Colour, shape, structure, images of packaging products and research carried out can conclude which of these factors attracting children's attention. Packaging products is closely connected with the psychological side and rational reasoning that at a young age is often not sufficiently developed. In that environment producers can easily determine and shape the packaging which could attract a larger population of children as consumers.

The target market of “Children” today is a large, thriving market to advertisers. Advertisements are made targeting the children in such a way that they feel they could be the ones in the advertisements. This makes them want the product even if they may not actually require it.

Children do not really have one particular need. In their initial years they are given all the necessary things they want. In fact, they have perks of being a child and also get awarded by parents. The process of consumer decision making in children is little different than that of adults. Children as consumers do not have a specific need, they just want a product because it is attractive to them. Also, they do not compare alternatives as normal consumers would do. They do not evaluate as such which is normally seen in a consumer process. Infact, packaging has a big role to play in their decision. They may find two products (for eg: cream biscuit) attractive and would want to buy both at the same time even when they saw only one on the advertisement. They see the product’s packaging and choose it because they like how it looked. The advertisement of a product is closely related to the packaging too. Children tend to remember the attractive packaging they might have have seen on the television or on a street hoarding.



Fig. 1 Children’s Consumer Decision Making Process

The goal of this paper is to prove that the product advertisements and packaging affect children’s consumer decision making process. This will be achieved through analysis of previous studies and research focusing on advertising and packaging geared towards children. Ultimately, this study aims to discuss how children are primarily visual consumers, and that

product and brand loyalty comes second to the way in which the product is visually marketed. This paper's contributions can potentially aid in the creation of a children's consumer decision making model, much like that of the existing consumer decision making model except focusing on children as consumers.

Also, a brand should not rely completely on children. Their taste, perception, choices change very fast. They may find something attractive while watching advertisements but may end up buying some other product which may seem more attractive when they visit a store. The loyalty of children will normally fluctuate as there are new products that are launched in the market every day. They should be marketed in such a way that it not only attracts the end users who are the children but also the real purchasers who are the parents.

Conceptual Framework

In today's society, children from all over the world are exposed to a great number of marketing and advertising activities. They represent a huge market for advertisers and with a lot of platforms, entertainment and modern culture, the companies are trying to get more of their attention. So, considering the children who have not yet formed their tastes, desires and preferences, become an ultimate target for advertisers and remain as such throughout adulthood.

Children, nowadays, grow up using Internet and electronic devices. This is considered an important and dangerous point for a marketing person because in one hand, due to their vulnerability, inexperience and lack of critical thinking, it's easy to get their attention. However, on the other hand, the marketing person needs to be careful, because there are some rules they need to follow so that the advertising will not be considered as abusive.

A lot of research was conducted on the topic of the impact of packaging products to the influence of parents who are the main implicated in the link between children's needs and purchase products. We believe that packaging can affect and have an impact on the reactions and decision making of children, while parents as primary decision maker on the purchase reduces impulsive impact and they have rational thinking about packaging as a feature of the product, and for them it's placed on the second plan.

In the research of Ike-Elechi Ogba, Rebecca Johnson, (2010) study shows that packaging does affect the product preferences of children. Children want to buy and they are particularly interested and influenced the purchase of unhealthy food. While on the other hand, the study shows that parents have not succumbed to the influence of children and their requirements.

In a study presented by Naser Azada, Mojtaba Rafieeb and Leila Hamdavipourc (2011) empirical research yields results about the relationship between food packaging and children. In the presented hypotheses they came to the following conclusions: first hypothesis assumed there was a meaningful relationship between children's food packaging characteristic and parent 'intention on purchasing product. The second hypothesis examined the relationship between the packaging of food for children and parents purchasing priority buying products,

while the third hypothesis examined the relationship between children's food selection and the parent purchasing decision. All three hypotheses have shown and provided evidence that the packaging has a significant impact on the intention of the parents to buy food product for children.

We can also look back on a study conducted in Guatemala, which included 37 children, age range 7-12 years old in focus group, the authors Letona P., V. Chacon, Roberto C., Barnoya J. (2014) point out that children are likely to buy salty snacks most often and most children choose their products based on the perception of taste. This can affect food packaging. Visual elements (characters, color) affecting children and choose their favorite packaging, some children are mistaken thinking. When children generated their own drawings of a new product, the most frequently included packaging elements and the drawings were product name, price, product image and characters, suggesting those aspects of food packaging were most significant to them.

Young children acquaint themselves with their environment first by visually observing their surroundings. Children rely heavily on their perception and their senses, which is why colorful and interactive toys are suitable for them to develop various skills. With this in mind, advertisers and package designers take into account that young children are easily attracted by objects that are colorful and interactive when they create advertisements or design packaging for children. The visual aspect of products are important when reviewing advertisements and packaging's combined influence on children's consumer decision making habits. These decision making habits are can ultimately be linked to brand loyalty. A study by Moschis, Moore, and Stanley (1984) suggested that a child's socio-economic factors and socialisation (through family and peers) largely contribute to the creation of brand preference and brand loyalty in young people. The study also suggests that advertising and prolonged exposure to a certain product can create brand loyalty because the consumer's brand recall aids brand preference. Advertising and packaging contribute largely to brand recall.

A normal consumer's decision making process is different from that of children. Basically we see that a consumer has a need or a want which can be categorised from the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Then the consumer proceeds to find information about the product that arose from the need. After gaining the information he tries to evaluate its pros and cons with that of other alternatives. The best one according to his perception is purchased which then gives rise to post purchase evaluation. The feedback may be positive or negative which will lead to future brand loyalty towards the product/brand. If the feedback is positive, it will result in repeated sales and greater brand loyalty.

But this is not the case with children's decision making process. They watch an advertisement on television and if the product is attractive or motivational (like something which gives you power or some free toy), it gets registered in their mind and they use it when they go to the store. But, if the child finds something more attractive due to the colour or shape of the product at the store, he demands for that product instead of the one he wanted after looking at the advertisement. This shows that there is no pre evaluation of products done by the children at

the time of purchase. Their brand loyalty fluctuates as they easily get attracted to a colourful product. The advertisers should make efforts to increase the motivational aspects in the advertisements to have a positive effect on children and the real purchasers (parents). It is also important to focus on the packaging of these products as children are more of visual consumers. Both elements together will increase brand loyalty and sales. The child will get back to the product if the advertisement and packaging both left an impact on him. Oreo is a fine example of such a product. Hence, loyalty will be impacted positively.

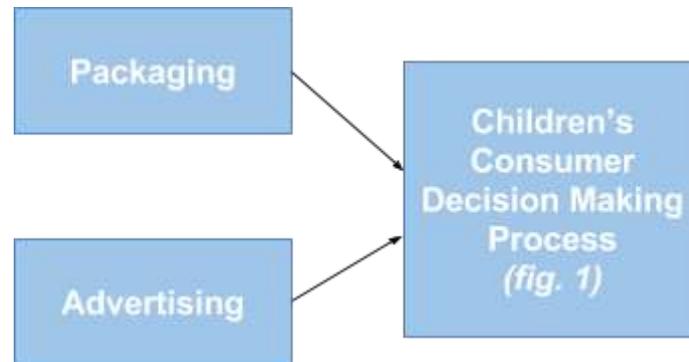


Fig. 2 Influence of Packaging and Advertising on Children's Consumer Decision Making

Therefore, we **hypothesise** the following:

H1: Advertising has an influence on children's consumer decision making.

H2: Packaging has an influence on children's consumer decision making.

Conceptual and Methodological Critique

Children and advertising have a strong link and numerous studies have been conducted in order to see how this link may have a positive or negative impact on children. Some of these studies point to the fact that children and advertising may have a negative effect. Considering the way that the children see the advertising by their capacity to understand, they are an easy target as consumers. However, those in marketing must understand their power over the children as consumers.

This area has already been delved upon by numerous studies, but not enough analysis using another part of children's perceptions, specifically packaging, has been conducted. So, from that, the two ideas are together making other point of view which can be further researched upon.

As we can see, the article "*Integrating results from children's television advertising research*" (2013), written by Alan J. Resnik; Bruce L. Stern; and Barbara Alberty, they just talk about advertising without mentioning other points that can influence children's decision and thoughts.

This may make the main idea of the article be weak and inconsistent, because there are a lot of variables that can call children’s attention.

Some earlier studies as this one of authors: Laura Enax, Bernd Weber, Maren Ahlers, Ulrike Kaiser, Katharina Diethelm, Dominik Holtkamp, Ulya Faupel, Hartmut H. Holzmüller, and Mathilde Kersting (2015) conducted provide empirical proof of a cause-effect relationship between food packaging and children's preferences matter to the healthy snack products. Child-directed packaging cues with unknown cartoon characters enhanced the attractiveness of a healthy snack amongst elementary school children. The fun label snack stated significantly increased taste perception and the motivation to work for the product. This study was conducted in samples of school children in four primary schools in Dortmund, Germany, in 2012 and 2014, with children of the 3rd and 4th grade (aged 8–10 years). This study has its disadvantages, such includes only children aged 8-10, who are possibly not as vulnerable as younger children to marketing cues.

It is important to determine to what extent the packaging has an impact on children's psychological decision on the desirability of the product. Most of the studies that have been carried out to give us information that is not based on sufficient, relevant facts. Research flaws become apparent in the lack of definition for age range, as well as age as a variable in the decision making process of children.

As previously discussed, numerous studies have been conducted focusing on packaging and advertising and their effects on children’s consumer decision making process however this topic has not been explored extensively.

Conclusion

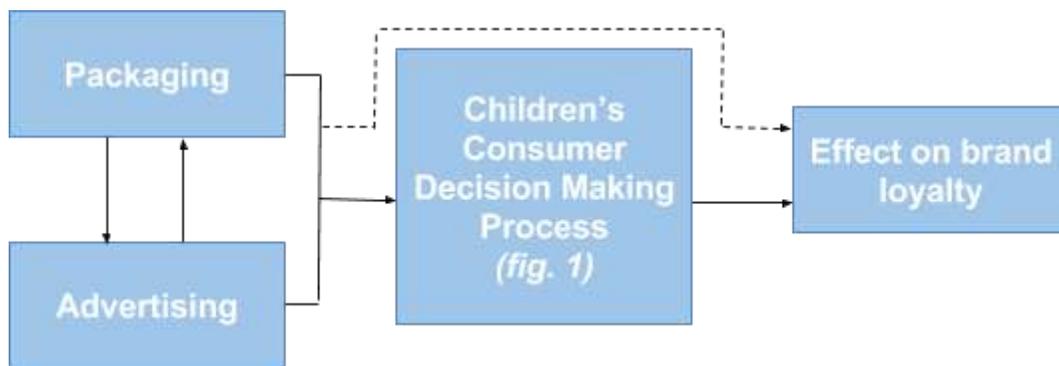


Fig. 3 Combined Influence of Packaging and Advertising on Children’s Consumer Decision Making

The influence of advertising and packaging on the children’s decision making process has been highlighted in the introduction. Previous research papers have shown how advertising influences children and also what effect packaging has on them. However, Hota and Charry (2014) suggest that children’s recall of packaging elements has a very weak impact on

children's subsequent purchase influence as there are several aspects of product marketing that can impact upon children's purchase influence motivations besides packaging. Further, Raju and Lonial mention in their study that advertising does not have a profound effect on children's desire to purchase the product especially when it is new. Repeated and varied exposure to the advertisement and the product is needed in order to profoundly affect their desire for the product. Finally, Hota and Charry (2014) mention that the demonstration of products affect a child's packaging recall. Children are exposed to demonstration of products through advertisements, whether it be television commercials or print ads. A popular example of this would be Oreo's "twist, lick and dunk" that shows how one is supposed to eat an Oreo. In such advertisements, children observe product demonstration and see the product's packaging all at once. Therefore, it is important for advertisers to understand the combined effect of advertising and packaging on the children as they both play a vital role in their decision making process. Thus, this leads to the first research objective which is to see a combined effect of advertising and packaging on the children's decision making process.

Also seen in the introduction is the fact that a brand cannot rely completely on children as their taste, demands, perception keeps changing with age. There are many social and external factors due to which it happens. It is necessary that the advertisements create a positive effect on children which can in turn help to develop brand loyalty. Though research has been conducted on brand loyalty and children, the effect of advertising and packaging is often not highlighted in their theoretical framework. There has been past research done on brand loyalty among adults and what factors that influence them. The children's market is volatile and there are several factors that affect their decision making process. Some papers have shown how peers and other social groups influence children and their brand preference and loyalty, however it should also focus on the lower age groups where the influence of packaging and advertising has been shown on the decision making of children. It is crucial to understand the influence of advertising and packaging on brand loyalty. Therefore, it is important to show the combined effect of packaging and advertising on brand loyalty. Hence, this leads to the second research objective which is to see the combined effect of advertising and packaging on brand loyalty in children's decision making process.

The review of the literature thus indicates that there is scope to build a theoretical model of 'children's consumer decision making process' and conduct further research, as long as one takes care of the issues with past research. A schematic representation of the revised relative influence model is given in Figure 3, incorporating the combined effect of packaging and advertising on the decision making in children and the influence that it has on the brand loyalty.

Recommendations for Future Research

Firstly, future research should study the influence of advertising and packaging together because separately the effect of advertising and packaging contribute very little in the decision making of children. Both packaging and advertising have a significant role in forming a child's desire for a certain product and therefore affects their children's decision making. They are

influenced by several other factors. Their decision making process is different from that of adults. The future study can be on how advertising and packaging together influence decision making process in children. The advertisers must consider long term effects when creating marketing strategies geared towards young consumers.

Secondly, the future research can be drawn between the combined effect of advertising and packaging on children ultimately leading to brand loyalty, because this topic has not been explored extensively with advertising and packaging as influential factors. We know that the child market is very volatile and that there are several factors that affect their choices. Their preferences keep fluctuating. We cannot trust children completely on being brand loyal as their choices are affected by numerous external and internal factors. Reviewing this is significant in the further research in the field of children as consumers as these are all vital factors that must be considered when reviewing a child's consumer decision making process. Ultimately, further research into the combined influence of packaging and advertising on children's consumer decision making process and brand loyalty can lead to the creation of a children's consumer decision making model.

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