

A study on impact of packaging & colors used in packaging on buying behavior of children

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Abstract-

Children see the world through their eyes. Bright colors catch their attention. These colors attract children, as they are easier for them to see & differentiate. It is observed that a baby of the aged 4-5 months old can observe colors with their rudimentary vision, though distinguishing bright colors comes easier to them. As children grow with time, they continue to get attracted toward bright colors. Colors also play an important role in packaging especially when the products are meant for children. Color plays an important role in marketing products as it is a powerful tool of marketing. Many companies use this strategy to draw attention of children towards their products through packaging materials. It plays an important role in consumer behavior. This study is based on secondary data.

Key words- children, colors, packaging

1.1 Introduction-

It is a well-known fact that the colors used in advertising & packaging has some or the other effect on human being's mind. In this study the effect of colors used in packaging is studied with special reference to children.

Needless to say that It is color/s that catches attention of the human eye. It has a great effect on human brain & psychology. Different colors carry different meanings. Companies use these colors to form a meaningful impact on the children's mind.

Talking about packaging, color is one of the most significant components for attracting buyers, especially children. Colors are the first things children notice from a visibly far distance rather than a copy, illustrations or graphics.

Packaging styles adopted by the companies are now determining the success of the product. Many children buy the products only because they like the way it is packed.

Marketers must experiment with different combination of colors in their packaging for successful marketing of products. Today almost all the products sold have colorful frontages. Color psychology is broadly used in marketing and branding. Many companies strongly believe that color plays an important part in marketing promotions & packaging as colors are used to stimulate consumers' sentiments and sensitivities /perceptions of goods and services. Companies also use color psychology while deciding logos for the brands. Colors are also very important for window displays or point of purchase.

It shouldn't sound as an exaggeration if a researcher feels that a success of a product greatly depends on the packaging style & colors that are chosen for packaging.

In this study the impact of colors used in packaging on children is studied.

1.2 Statement of the Problem-

The world children live in is not pale or black and white but it's colorful, vibrant, and buoyant. Children get attracted towards colorful packaging. They can recognize the brand from a far distance through colors e.g. - in shops, on highways or in a crowded market place. What will be the reaction of a child if it is exposed to a light, pale & dull shaded product like a chocolate, candy or an ice cream brand? Probably the brand will go unnoticed by a child, thanks to the poorly chosen colors!

Children's market is rapidly becoming a lucrative segment for companies. They are the commercial targets for the companies as they play a role of "initiator & user" in terms of buying roles. Today's children are capable of influencing their parents purchase decision unlike the previous generations. This very fact is making marketing brains of the companies to distinguish their products on the shelves than the competitors. Different color combinations used by the companies play a crucial role in making a child what a company wants it to see, feel & do.

This has prompted the researcher to make a diagnostic study on the impact of packaging colors on children.

1.3 Research question-

The research question for this paper is-
Why packaging is important for children?
What is its effect on children buying behavior?

1.4 Objective of the Study-

1) To understand and explain how the packaging & colors stimulates children in buying products.

1.4 Research methodology-

This study is based on secondary data with exploratory analysis. The sources of secondary data used in this paper are research articles, different websites etc.

1.6 Review of literature-

According to research by marketing specialists, WebpageFX, consumers make a subconscious judgement about a product in less than 90 seconds of viewing it, and 62-90% of them base that assessment solely on color, which could be attributed to the fact that color registers much faster than text or complex graphics. What's more, almost 85% of consumers say that color is the determining factor when purchasing a particular product. (Clearn N. 2016)

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A study by McNeal and Ji requiring children to 'draw a cereal box' resulted in 97% of children drawing pictures with detailed brand imagery, thereby revealing the extent of detailed brand symbolism stored in children's memories. (Mehta K. & et.al 2014)

According to one study, the package is one of the most important factors persuading consumers at the POS (Prendergast, 1996) and has become a significant component of branding, positioning and communication (Ahmed A. & et.al 2005)

It also attracts consumer's attention, enhances product image, influences consumer's perception about the product, provides information, distinguishes one product from another, and stimulates impulsive buying behavior (Rundh B. 2005 & Butkeviciene V. & et al 2008)

Food marketers have proven successful when targeting children through visual elements. Research has found that licensed characters (Roberto CA & et.al 2010 & Letona P. & et.al 2014) branding (Robinson TN & et.al 2007) decorative designs (Elliott CD & et.al 2013) and sports celebrity endorsements (Dixon H. & et.al 2014) on packaging influence children's taste and food preferences. In addition, informational elements such as health claims, lead children to prefer the taste of products with such claims and to perceive them as healthier than those without claims ((Dixon H. & et.al 2014)

According to one study, Food marketing influences preference, stimulates demand, increases purchase frequency, builds brand awareness and loyalty, and encourages children to try new products. Marketing techniques (e.g. packaging, product design and placement) effectively create brand recognition at the point-of-sale

among children as young as 2 to 3 years of age (McGinnis JM & et.al 2006)

One study indicates the pester power of children on parents to buy certain snacks "Consequently, children persuade parents to purchase child-oriented snack foods through pester power" (Dixon H. & et.al 2006)

Child-oriented packaging with brand-specific or licensed characters from popular movies and television programs is designed to attract children's attention. Food branding and licensed characters on packaging have been found to significantly influence children's snack preferences (Roberto CA & et.al 2010 & Robinson TN & et.al 2007)

In one study (Cimbalo, Beck, Sendziak, 1978) children were presented with pictures of scenes that judges had previously rated as sad & happy. While the children were looking at each picture they were asked to color them with the color of their choice.

Their choices reflected strong color-emotion associations. When viewing scenes, children used green, orange, yellow & blue colors whereas while viewing sad scenes children chose brown, red & black.

McDonald's chooses high-energy colors like red and yellow which appeal to children, kindle appetites and create a sense of urgency. Of course, Ronald McDonald himself is popular with the kids, but he's also sure to agitate parents quickly. This facilitates faster customer turnover. (Burst D. 2018))

Children's food packaging requires uniqueness. Children are more imaginative and curious. They are more inclined to be interested in various color and novel image. Therefore, the design of children food packaging should be novel and unique, so as to attract the attention of children. Children's nature is active and lively, but at the same time, their attention is not easy to focus; only interesting packaging can instantly capture their attention. To a large extent, children don't care about the goods itself, but are rather attracted by their appearance. They buy the food just to satisfy their curiosity. (Ning W.)

Smoothie Safari connect their straw and the packaging to bring the animal to life, Beehive use the bear on pack as a fun way to encourage children to eat their breakfast cereal, Bla Bla use their packaging as an open mouth to display the products. An exciting way for kids to open the pack and dispense the sweet for consumption. Similarly Cloetta use the mouth concept as a cool way to open the chocolate inside. Squid soap have redesigned their packaging so it definitely stands out a lot more on shelf !(Gilbody A. 2010) In terms of colors, Kinder Joy uses gender customization to be more appealing. For girls, it is pink with pictures of Barbies, while for boys it is brushed in blue with Transformers as the cover photo. What sets Kinder Joys' packaging apart from other confectionery products is its unique, colorful, handy egg. Unlike the usual trend of going for rectangular or square shape, the choice of an egg is an extremely smart move. (Gupta V. 2017)

When launching a product in an already saturated market, think differently. With Paperboat, right from the shape, to the base white color, the brand attracts a consumer's attention within that crucial 5-minute walk across the Department Store aisle. (Gupta V. 2017)

According to one web article “Children are drawn to color like bees to flowers. Don’t forget, however, that parents are more likely to (subconsciously) follow the rules of color psychology. In other words, don’t pick your colors willy-nilly but make sure they match the product. Fluorescent hues, for example, give off an artificial vibe, which is the last thing you want when you’re trying to sell organic foods or drinks.”(Dec 2018)

As per one web article, the parents also pay attention to the health benefits of the snack their child is consuming- “As consumers become more concerned about harmful additives contained in everyday foods, many are opting to spend slightly more in order to ensure high quality of ingredients, which is best communicated through carefully curated branding schemes that allude to wholesome beginnings.” (Byers R. 2016)

In an attempt to capitalize on the uprising popularity of Disney’s latest animated film Frozen, many Japanese food manufacturers are selling food products covered in images of princess Elsa and Anna. Many of the food products spin-off from the themes and setting of the Frozen film. Cheeses, yogurts, cookies and water bottles are a few examples. One interesting product is a series of braided breads that are dyed to resemble Anna and Elsa’s colored locks. (Saban M. 2014)

In one web article the author mentions about a Russian brand of pasta, “...the packaging depicts the pasta as part of the ocean, a river, a cup of steaming tea, an instrument and as a bowl of soup. The colors are vibrant and the faces of the characters smiling and happy. Consumers are easily drawn to products with which they feel at ease or a sense of familiarity. Businesses that are able to create products with which consumers can create a personal relation will benefit tremendously. (Neely J. 2011)

1.6 Findings based on literature review-

- The most important finding in this study is that the packaging style & colors used in children’s product play an important role in attracting their attention.
- The companies are trying new & innovative ways to attract these young customers.
- The packaging styles have had a paradigm shift.
- The marketers are using packaging to communicate with children (consumers) as well as with the parents (customers).
- The packaging is done in such a way that the product is made visible to the consumers which lead to purchase.
- The companies also use packaging to engage the children by providing the game/activity printed inside the pack. E.g- Pediasure, Kinderjoy etc.

1.7 Conclusion-

Color is an important factor influencing the consumer buying decision process. Food packaging for children is not a child’s play. Tremendous thought process is involved in designing strategies related to packaging. The competition in this market is so fierce that if a company wants to stand apart it has to come up with innovative packaging idea that will attract these young minds. Marketers need to invest sufficient time in choosing colors that reflect the preferences of the target audience.

Benefits of doing so? increased sales, brand recognition and consumer loyalty. It is also to be kept in mind that the color trends might change over a period of time, so it is important for the marketers to rely on current market research data & change the packaging design accordingly. A new concept - Neuro marketing can play an important role here as it has a great influence and role to play in understanding consumer behavior with respect to colors.

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