

The Promotional Role of Packaging in Attracting Jordanian Consumers' Attention to Local Products

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Abstract. Producers, manufacturers and resellers have, for long, recognized the importance of packaging in protecting their products. However, many of them still ignore the promotional role of packaging. This phenomenon is clearly seen in the developing world, including Jordan. Therefore, this study aims at examining the importance that the Jordanian consumer attaches to this essential ingredient of products. Using quantitative approach, the research reached many conclusions and recommendations which could be of use to whoever interested in this subject.

1. Introduction

Although packaging has always been emphasized by many as the most important ingredient of products in terms of protection during storage and transportation, many still underestimate its role in the promotional image of products [1]. It is widely accepted that the main aim of packaging, during the mass-production age, was to avoid damage and deterioration of products [2]. This type of protection is still a necessity, however, packaging should also be emphasized in the promotional mix strategy, as it can have an appealing campaign theme [3].

The promotional mix strategy comprises many combinations of the five basic promotional elements, i.e., advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity. Packaging can help in enhancing the effectiveness of these promotional elements and, therefore, products must be presented in their best light and protection. In addition, packaging design should favorably influence consumers' attitudes and perceptions of

products and, hence, induce sales directly or indirectly [4].

The primary objective of this research is to examine, from consumers' point of view, the promotional role of packaging. The empirical work is done in the context of Jordan, where this type of study was never carried out before. Besides the importance of quality of their products, Jordanian marketers need to consider the issue of packaging in their promotional campaigns. This is important if they wish to compete effectively against imported products.

Jordanian consumers are marked by a great demand for imported products, which is due to the belief that foreign products are always perceived as far more superior to locally-made ones. Improving their products' packaging and emphasizing, in one way or another, this issue in their promotional strategies may help in enhancing their competitive situation. Jordanian marketers need to understand the importance of this issue to Jordanian consumers, which emphasizes the significance of this study.

2. The Product

The package is the most conspicuous identification that a product can have, and a major factor in its success. It is an ever changing panorama, with new products, improved products, and new package designs constantly appearing on the scene [5]. This is the arena in which consumer products have to fight first, to be selected by the store buying committee to get on the shelf, and second, to be plucked off the shelf by the shopper [6]. Many people are involved in packaging decisions, and the advertising director is one of them.

The package has an important role to play in the creation of a mental image of the product in the consumer's mind. Consumers often judge products by their packages and, therefore, products and packages are interrelated [7]. The package is the product and the product is the package and they could not be separated, e.g., Pepsi cola, Nestle, Adidas and Puma. A large segment of consumers tend to judge a product by its package which means that good packaging puts the product on the right track for persuading potential buyers to purchase it [8].

The organic relationship between the overall promotional strategy and the components of packaging cannot be disputed [9, 10]. Most promotional managers boldly feature the product in its package and try to position it in consumers' minds through emphasizing their packaging. This organic relationship stresses the need for close coordination between package design and the overall promotional strategy [11].

Taking into account the amount of money spent on packaging, one can conclude the importance that is attached to this issue [12]. As yet, more money is spent on the continuous changes in packaging, some of these changes resulted from immense competition and other changes resulted from environmental concerns such as litter,

disposal, and deterioration of the atmosphere [13].

Significance of packaging

Packaging involves the development of a container and a graphic design for a product. A package can be of vital part of a product. Manufacturers have, for long, realized the function of convenience that packaging can give to consumers. Large number of firms use packaging in their product differentiation strategy, e.g., family-size packaging and single-person packaging [14]. Another example of convenience-packaging is largely seen in the food industry, the use of boil-in-bag rice and the pull-tap cans are good illustrations on this issue [15]. Packages are also developed to give consumers a reuse value, such as placing cream cheese in a juice glass, and are sometimes designed as a gift item.

Good visibility of the package is another marketing factor that should be taken into consideration during the designing stage. A product will not sell easily if its shelf-visibility is not highly emphasized in the package. If this issue is emphasized, it can serve as a facilitating factor in resellers' acceptance of the product and, therefore, resellers will be more likely inclined to make decisions favorable to the producer or the manufacturer. Hence, it could be said that the design of the package should fit into resellers' environments [16].

The promotional appeal of packaging is of major importance to resellers [17]. They are always interested in high turnover and, hence, good packaging that enhances the sales volume will be greatly welcome. Wright, Warner, Winter and Zeigher, [18, pp. 96-97] stated the following:

"The addition to brand familiarity and shelf position of the product, the attractiveness of the package itself may influence purchase in the self-service store. Packages with eye appeal stand out on the shelf; some consumers will reach out for the product in the attractive package. Packages must do the work of the fast vanishing salesperson. For this reason, considerable research and examination go on in the area of package design. Such dimensions as color, shape, and size of the package are examined for impact on consumers. The ability of the product to convey status to its possessor may be enhanced by the package design."

The important promotional role of packaging in the marketing strategy cannot be disputed [19]. A unique cap or closure, a better box or wrapper, or a more convenient container size may give a firm a competitive advantage. Packaging of consumer products is extremely important at the point of sale. However, it should be mentioned that the continuous improvement of package designs made it very difficult for a particular product to dominate as a result of good packaging. This should not undervalue the importance of packaging, but it emphasizes the need for good coordination of the product mix and the overall marketing strategy.

Through personal and impersonal means of communication, the package symbols

can be used, for example, to provide consumers with information on the uses, features, content and advantages of the product. A firm can create desirable images and associations by its choice of color, design, shape and texture. Many cosmetic manufacturers, for example, design their packages to create impressions of richness, luxury, and exclusiveness [20]. Careful consideration of size, color texture and shape is necessary in package designing. Therefore, full understanding of the values attached to these issues in the target market and the likely reaction of consumers to these issues must be fully addressed.

Labeling is also an important dimension of packaging which, usually boosts the overall promotional power of packaging. Labeling's importance to consumers is aggravated for informational and legal perspectives, however, the cost of the overall packaging must also be remembered [21]. After all, the cost of packaging affects the selling price, which could mean a lot when it comes to consumers and competition.

3. Statement of the Study Problem

As mentioned in the introductory section, the main aim of this study is to examine the promotional role of packaging, from a consumer's point of view, within the Jordanian context. In addition to considering the quality of their products, Jordanian manufacturers and producers should carefully consider the issue of packaging if they wish to enhance their competitive edge.

4. Study Hypothesis

Based on the literature review, the following hypothesis was developed to be tested in this study.

"There may be a correlation between good product packaging and consumers' attraction to a particular product in Jordan".

5. Methodological Issues

Two issues (i.e., the sample of the study and data collection) are discussed under this section.

Sample of the study and data collection

Amman (the capital of Jordan) and the surrounding suburbs were selected to be the field for this study. This area was selected as it represents the different social, economic, cultural and political levels of the Jordanian society (heterogeneous). According to the latest General Population Census in 1994 [22], its area had 271,604 households (the population of this study). To reduce the sample selection bias and to create a representative sample of the population of the study, a simple random procedure was used. A random sample of 1000 households, was selected from the files of the Water Authority, which contained their names and addresses. Three hundred and fifty households refused to participate in the study and, therefore, 650 questionnaires

were hand-delivered to the remaining households (i.e., 650). An Arabic version of the questionnaire was used in collecting the required data and of the 650 delivered questionnaires, 503 usable questionnaires were returned and, thus, the response rate was 77.4%. Taking into account the financial, time and effort constraints of any research of this type, it was thought that 503 households would be adequate for the nature and scope of the study.

The questions included in the questionnaire were, mainly rating scales five-point likert-type questions ranging from "strongly agree 5" to "strongly disagree 1" for question number 2, and "to a very large extent 5" to "not at all 1" for question number 1. Rating scales are normally used in the measurement of the behavioral and psychological issues. To ensure content validity and reliability, these questions were constructed being guided by tier definitions in the literature.

6. Statistical Analysis

Table 1 reveals respondents' answers to question No. 1 which intended to examine whether good packaging would attract their attention and make them willing to buy a particular product.

Table 1. Frequencies of respondents' answers regarding the role of good packaging in attracting consumers' attention

| Statement | To a very large extent | | To a large extent | | Uncertain | | To some extent | | Not at all | |
|--|------------------------|------|-------------------|------|-----------|-----|----------------|------|------------|------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % |
| Good packaging would attract your attention and make you willing to buy a particular product | 181 | 36.0 | 143 | 28.4 | 40 | 8.0 | 78 | 15.5 | 61 | 12.1 |

n = number of valid observations.

503 cases included in the sample.

As can be seen from the above table, the majority (i.e., 64.4%) of surveyed households indicated that good product packaging attracts their attention and enhances their willingness to buy a particular product. Therefore, not only the quality of the product is important to Jordanian consumers, but the packaging of the product as well.

To examine the role of packaging regarding certain promotional issues, respondents were asked question No. 2. Table 2 reveals these issues, the mean value for each issue and the frequencies of respondents' answers.

Table 2. Frequencies of respondents' answers regarding certain promotional issues of packaging

| Statement | Level | | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Uncertain | | Quite disagree | | Strongly disagree | | Mean value* |
|--|-------|------|----------------|------|-------|------|-----------|------|----------------|------|-------------------|---|-------------|
| | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | n | % | |
| Q2a- Packaging can inform potential buyers of the product's content, features, ... etc. | 200 | 39.8 | 185 | 36.8 | 31 | 6.2 | 54 | 10.7 | 33 | 6.5 | 3,924 | | |
| Q2b- Packaging can create desirable images | 178 | 35.3 | 183 | 36.4 | 50 | 10.0 | 50 | 10.0 | 42 | 8.3 | 3,805 | | |
| Q2c- Good packaging performs a promotional role | 175 | 34.8 | 205 | 40.8 | 48 | 9.5 | 43 | 8.5 | 32 | 6.4 | 3,891 | | |
| Q2d- A package can have good promotional value | 179 | 35.6 | 195 | 38.8 | 56 | 11.1 | 37 | 7.3 | 36 | 7.2 | 3,883 | | |
| Q2e- Packaging can communicate a particular message, e.g., high class product | 184 | 36.6 | 187 | 37.1 | 60 | 11.9 | 36 | 7.2 | 36 | 7.2 | 3,889 | | |
| Q2f- Packaging can give a firm a competitive advantage | 157 | 31.2 | 170 | 33.8 | 72 | 14.3 | 49 | 9.8 | 55 | 10.9 | 3,646 | | |
| Q2g- Packaging is important at the point of purchase | 169 | 33.6 | 173 | 34.4 | 61 | 12.1 | 55 | 10.9 | 45 | 9.0 | 3,728 | | |
| Q2h- Packaging can help in establishing brand names | 152 | 30.2 | 161 | 32.0 | 81 | 16.2 | 61 | 12.1 | 48 | 9.5 | 3,612 | | |
| Q2i- Packaging is important in transporting and handling the product | 183 | 36.4 | 172 | 34.2 | 56 | 11.1 | 47 | 9.3 | 45 | 9.0 | 3,797 | | |
| Q2j- Labeling as an important dimension related to packaging, is also important in achieving the above | 188 | 37.4 | 179 | 35.6 | 45 | 9.0 | 43 | 8.5 | 48 | 9.5 | 3,827 | | |

*The higher the mean value, the higher the promotional role of the particular issue in packaging, n = number of valid observations, 503 cases included in the sample.

The general picture that anybody can draw from the above table is the strong indication that packaging has in promoting products in Jordan. To Test the study hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient was used and Table 3 shows the results.

Table 3. The relationship between the role of good packaging in attracting consumers' attention and the different promotional issues of packaging

| Issue | n | N | Pearson correlation coefficient | Level of significance (P values)* |
|--|-----|-----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Q2a- Packaging can inform potential buyers of the product's content, features, . . . etc. | 503 | 503 | 0.74 | 0.00 |
| Q2b- Packaging can create desirable images | 503 | 503 | 0.70 | 0.00 |
| Q2c- Good packaging performs a promotional role. | 503 | 503 | 0.64 | 0.00 |
| Q2d- A package can have good promotional value. | 503 | 503 | 0.58 | 0.00 |
| Q2e- Packaging can communicate a particular message, e.g., high class product. | 503 | 503 | 0.67 | 0.00 |
| Q2f- Packaging can give a firm a competitive advantage. | 503 | 503 | 0.68 | 0.00 |
| Q2g- Packaging is important at the point-of-purchase. | 503 | 503 | 0.70 | 0.00 |
| Q2h- Packaging can help in establishing brand names. | 503 | 503 | 0.56 | 0.00 |
| Q2i- Packaging is important in transporting and handling the product. | 503 | 503 | 0.59 | 0.00 |
| Q2j- Labeling as an important dimension related packaging, is also important in achieving the above. | 503 | 503 | 0.66 | 0.00 |

n = number of valid observations; N = number of cases included in the sample;

* = significant positive relationship at the 0.01 level.

It is clear from the table that strong positive correlations exist between the different promotional issues of packaging and the overall role of packaging in attracting consumers' attention to a particular product. Therefore, the study hypothesis which stated that "there may be a correlation between good product packaging and consumers' attraction to a particular product in Jordan," was accepted at the 0.01 level, and all correlations were positive.

To further examine respondents' opinions regarding the packaging and labeling of Jordanian products, Question No. 3 was included in the questionnaire. Table 4 reveals the results of respondents' answers to this question (i.e., Q3).

Table 4. Respondents' opinions regarding the packaging and labeling of Jordanian products

| Classification | n | % |
|----------------|-----|------|
| Good | 151 | 30.0 |
| Average | 295 | 58.7 |
| Bad | 57 | 11.3 |

n = number of valid observations; 503 cases included in the sample

As it can be seen from Table 4, Jordanians hold an average (neither good or bad) image of the packaging and labeling of Jordanian products.

Taking the study findings into consideration, it could be concluded that Jordanian manufacturers and producers have to develop their packaging to improve consumers' satisfaction. It was strongly indicated by respondents that packaging has an important role to play in attracting their attention to a particular product.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

In spite of all the changes in the packaging business, certain packaging functions will never change. Protecting products' contents from damage, spoilage and deterioration, from the time of production until consumption, is a basic function of packaging. Packages must also be made to fit the intended shelf, e.g., refrigerator's shelves. Moreover, the package should be easy to hold, tight but easy to open, easy to handle and stock, and has a promotional appeal.

The findings of this study showed, very clearly, that good packaging has an important promotional role to play in the Jordanian market. The strong positive correlation between consumers' attraction to good packaging and the different promotional issues of packaging, emphasizes the overall promotional role of packaging.

Jordanian producers and manufacturers should carefully consider the issue of packaging in their products. Packaging design and development should be an integral part of the overall promotional mix strategy, however, the cost of packaging should also be taken into consideration. Other considerations like, for example, whether to use single

packaging or multiple packaging and the type of labeling are also important issues in the packaging strategy. Labeling as an important part of packaging is normally used to provide information about the content of the product, its uses, safety issues, and producer or manufacturer identifications. Therefore, labels provide consumers with the required information which, in turn, performs the function of promoting the product.

When developing products, Jordanian producers and manufacturers should consider other product-related issues such as the physical characteristics and the less tangible supportive services. The product's physical characteristics that require attention are the level of quality, product features, textures and colors. Supportive services that constitute an important part of the product are, for example, warranties, repairs and replacements, and credit services. Emphasizing the physical characteristics of the product and the supportive services will enhance the package's promotional edge in the Jordanian market.

Jordanian producers and manufacturers can create desirable promotional images through the use of color, design, shape, and texture. Those producers/manufacturers can design their packages to create impressions of richness, luxury, and exclusiveness for high social class consumers in Jordan. Jordanian consumers who belong to this social class are well-known to prefer products that are perceived as prestigious and, therefore, packaging could be the trick. For example, cosmetics and bar soap Jordanian producers/manufacturers could make good use of this recommendation.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Q1. To what extent would you say that good product packaging attracts you attention and enhances your willingness to buy a particular product?

| To a very large extent | To a large extent | Uncertain | To some extent | Not at all |
|------------------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|------------|
| 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Q2. To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statements?

| Statement | Strongly agree | Agree | Uncertain | Quite disagree | Strongly disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| a) Through the symbols of packaging, potential buyers are informed about the products content, features, uses, advantages and hazards. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| b) A firm can create desirable images and associations by using certain colors, designs, shapes and textures in packages. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| c) A package can perform a promotional function when it is designed to be safer or more convenient to use. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| d) A package can have good promotional value if factors like, size, shape, texture, color and graphics are carefully considered. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| e) Packaging can communicate a particular message, e.g., high class product. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| f) Packaging can give a firm a competitive advantage. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| g) Packaging of consumer products is especially important at the point-of-purchase. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| h) Good packaging can help in establishing brand names. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| i) Good packaging is important in transporting and handling the product. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| j) Labeling as an important dimension related to packaging, is also important in achieving the above. | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Q3. How do you classify the packaging and labeling of Jordanian products?

- Good
 Average
 Bad

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الدور الترويجي للتغليف في جذب انتباه المستهلك الأردني للمنتجات المحلية

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ملخص البحث. على الرغم من الأهمية التي يوليها المنتجون والمصنعون والبائعون لموضوع التغليف من ناحية استخدامه في حماية السلعة من التلف أثناء النقل والتخزين، إلا أن الكثير من هؤلاء ما زالوا يهملون الدور الترويجي للتغليف، إن هذه الظاهرة موجودة في الدول النامية ومنها الأردن، ولذلك فقد هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التحقق من الأهمية التي يوليها المستهلك الأردني لموضوع التغليف عند شرائه لسلعة معينة. لقد تمت دراسة هذا الموضوع باستخدام الأسلوب الكمي، ولقد توصل الباحث إلى العديد من النتائج والتوصيات والتي يمكن أن تكون ذات نفع كبير للمهتمين بهذا الموضوع.