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PACKAGING AS A BRANDING TOOL IN COSMETIC INDUSTRY. CONSUMER PERCEPTION VS REALITY

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ABSTRACT

As a crucial branding and marketing tool at the point of sale, packaging design has a big impact on consumer perception and purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry. The importance of aesthetically pleasing and useful packaging has increased in the Indian cosmetics market due to growing awareness of health, aesthetics, and lifestyle. According to the study, packaging components like colour, shape, material, and typography have a significant impact on consumer trust, brand image, and impulsive purchasing behaviour. Visual cues predominate in decision-making because cosmetic purchases frequently involve minimal consumer involvement. According to the study's findings, packaging design that is in line with consumer expectations and incorporates feedback improves brand perception and gives businesses a competitive edge.

KEYWORDS: Online Shopping, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Digital Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, E-commerce, Purchase Intention, Brand Influence.

INTRODUCTION

Packaging plays a crucial role in shaping how consumers perceive cosmetic brands in today's competitive market. Beyond protecting the product, packaging acts as a powerful branding and communication tool at the point of sale. Consumers often associate attractive and well-designed packaging with superior quality and brand credibility. In the cosmetic industry, visual appeal, functionality, and sustainability of packaging strongly influence purchase decisions. However, there is often a gap between what packaging promises and the actual performance of the product. Understanding this difference between consumer perception and brand reality is essential for effective marketing.

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This study examines packaging decisions as a branding tool in the cosmetic industry and their impact on consumer behaviour.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Sitopu and Firdaus (2024) examined packaging decisions as a branding tool in the cosmetic industry, highlighting the influence of visual appeal, functional usability, brand alignment, sustainability, and emotional connection on consumer purchase intention, satisfaction, and loyalty. Their findings emphasise that attractive, user-friendly, and environmentally responsible packaging strengthens brand perception.

Dibie and Olannye (2022) analysed the impact of packaging dimensions such as product information, materials, and graphic design on consumer buying behaviour in supermarkets. The study revealed that all packaging elements positively affect purchase decisions, with superior visual design and material quality attracting greater consumer attention.

Abubakar and Mina (2024) examined the effect of packaging elements on consumer purchase decisions for locally made cosmetic products in Rivers State. Using data from 100 respondents, the study found that packaging design, graphics, and labelling significantly influence buying behaviour by conveying product quality. The authors recommended further research on the role of packaging technology in consumer decisions.

RESEARCH GAP

Although several studies have examined the concept and impact of online shopping and digital marketing on consumer behaviour, there is limited research focusing on recent changes in consumer preferences in the post-pandemic and technology-driven environment. Most existing studies rely on older data and do not adequately consider emerging factors such as social media influence, trust, and personalisation. Additionally, there is a lack of region-specific and demographic-based analysis. Hence, further research is needed to address these gaps using updated data and contemporary consumer behaviour patterns.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study how packaging design influences consumer perceptions of cosmetic brands.
2. To determine the impact of packaging on consumers' buying decisions within the cosmetic market.
3. To examine the alignment between consumer interpretations of packaging and the branding strategies intended by cosmetic companies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate how packaging affects consumer perceptions and purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry, this study uses a descriptive research design. To accomplish the goals of the study, primary and secondary data sources were utilised. An online Google Form was used to administer a structured questionnaire to respondents in order to gather primary data that was pertinent to the study's goals. To corroborate and validate the results,

secondary data was collected from published literature, corporate records, research articles, and online sources. One of India's largest cities, Chennai, was the site of the study. Data was gathered from a sample of 101 respondents using a convenience sampling technique. In order to derive significant conclusions about how consumers view cosmetic packaging, the gathered data was methodically examined.

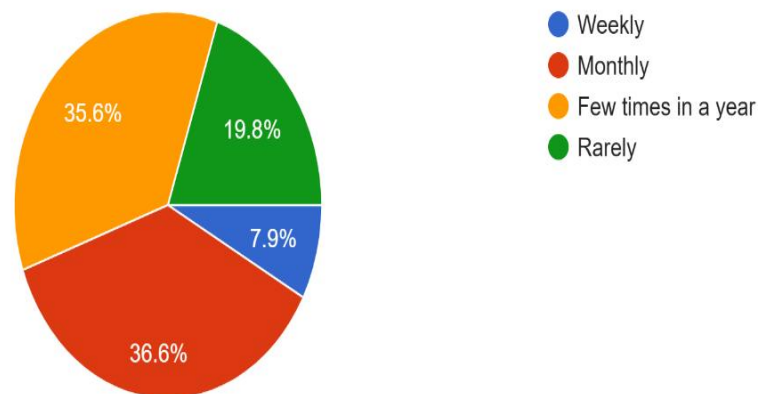
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to the study, packaging has a big impact on how consumers perceive and purchase cosmetics. The majority of respondents, who are mostly young female consumers, believe that better quality and brand trust are associated with attractive and well-designed packaging. Consistency in design enhances brand recognition, and packaging has a significant impact on purchase decisions and impulsive purchases at the point of sale. Customers recognise that product performance is more important than appearance, even though premium packaging increases appeal. A growing but balanced concern for sustainability is indicated by the moderate impact of eco-friendly packaging. All things considered, packaging plays a significant role in cosmetic consumers' branding and decision-making.

FIGURE 1

How often do you purchase cosmetic products?

101 responses

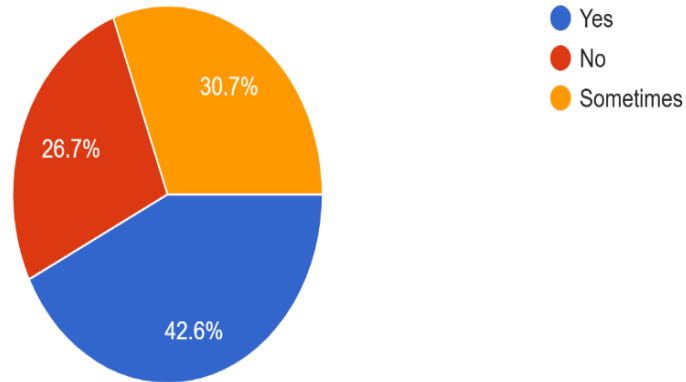


This figure shows that usage of cosmetic product.

FIGURE 2

Does luxurious packaging make you believe the product is more effective?

101 responses

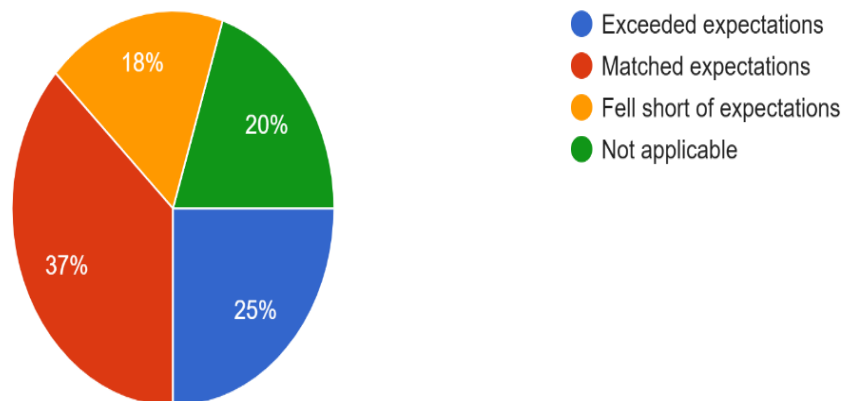


This figure shows the perception of the respondents believing the luxurious product is more effective

FIGURE 3

If yes, did the product's performance match your expectations based on the packaging?

100 responses



This figure shows the products performance based on the expectations of packaging

DISCUSSION

According to the study, consumer perceptions and purchase decisions in the cosmetics industry are greatly influenced by packaging. Consumers interpreted attractive design, informative labelling, and visual appeal as markers of quality and brand value, which generally aligned with businesses' branding goals. However, the study's small sample size and reliance on self-reported answers, which might not accurately reflect real purchasing behaviour, limit its applicability. Future studies can broaden the focus by examining the effects of sustainable packaging trends, a wider and more varied consumer base, and comparative brand analysis.

SCOPE FOR THE FUTURE RESEARCH

The scope for future research can be extended by examining consumer buying behaviour using more recent data and advanced digital platforms. Future studies may focus on the role of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, influencer marketing, and personalized advertisements in shaping purchase decisions. Comparative studies across different regions, age groups, and income levels can provide deeper insights. Further research can also explore trust, data privacy, and ethical concerns in online marketing to better understand evolving consumer expectations.

CONCLUSION

Since packaging is the main way that brand identity is conveyed on store shelves, it is vital to branding in the cosmetics industry. Design components have a significant impact on consumer perception and aid in product differentiation, particularly visual elements like colour, shape, and imagery. Packaging plays a significant role in subconscious and impulsive purchasing decisions because cosmetic purchases are frequently low-involvement and influenced by visual cues at the point of sale. The study emphasises how crucial it is to match branding strategies with packaging design and recommends that future studies take customer feedback into account to improve packaging efficacy.

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