

## Product Packaging Characteristics and Consumer Buying Decision of Bread Brands in Delta State, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Product packaging is a marketing tool primarily designed to hold and protect firm product's image in the mind of the consumers. In recent times, firms are gradually realizing the efficacy of good packaging so as to elicit and create immediate consumer recognition of a brand. To this end, this study investigated the influence of product packaging on consumer buying decisions of brands of bread in Delta State. The specific objectives were to investigate the influence of product package emotional appeal, product package workability, and product package size on consumer buying decisions on brands of bread in Delta State. The study adopted a descriptive research design using a survey research method. The population of the study comprised the consumers of brands of bread in Delta State. The sample size was 384 consumers which was derived using the Cochran sample determination. A structured questionnaire was used as an instrument of data collection for the study. Findings of the study showed that product package workability and product package size have positive and significant influence on consumer buying decisions of bread brands in Delta State. The study also found that product package emotional appeal does not have a significant influence on consumer buying decisions on brands of bread in Delta State of Nigeria. Based on these findings, the study concludes that product packaging has a positive effect on consumer buying decisions on brands of bread in Delta State, Nigeria. The study recommended amongst others that brand managers and dealers should continue to maintain and also invest more on the functional attributes of the bread package for improved consumer repurchase decisions.

**Keywords:** Consumer buying decision, product packaging, product emotional appeal, product package workability, product package size

### 1. Introduction

The advent of globalisation and the increasing integration of economies and societies worldwide have led to sophisticated consumer tastes, perceptions, expectations, and preferences for product packaging. This is made possible by advanced information, communication, and transportation technology (ICTT), such as the internet, GSM, TV/cable networks, In today's competitive market, stakeholders' interests are more sophisticated and are evolving away from planned product and technology obsolescence and towards ethical, corporate social responsibility, and environmental considerations when it comes to product packaging. Resourceful firms must understand the influence of organizational buying centre in the purchase decision-making process and consumer buying influence as regards products' packaging. Constant consumer research has helped firms to create the 'right' packaging for a product as well as the packaging elements that are essential to consumers. Shukla et al. (2022) stated that company's overall intentions are to develop or create brands in order to retain the existing consumer and attract potential and prospective customers.

Packaging offers a platform for communicating information about the brand and product to the intended audience. It also helps to communicate the qualities of the brand that will help consumers remember it and ultimately set it apart from its rivals. As packaging is frequently the first point of contact a consumer has with a brand, it greatly attracts their attention and also conveys the message that will present and support the brand. In contrast, most marketers believe that packaging is the fifth "P" of the marketing mix, along with

the other four "Ps" of product, price, promotion, and place (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). A product's actual packaging materials play a significant role in protecting the entire brand statement. If a brand's packaging is unattractive and of poor quality, it cannot be positioned as a decent product. Maimuna et al. (2021) opined that product packaging has occupied an important position in delivering the product for the consumers. It has been noted as important tool of making the product distinctive from the similar kinds of product available in the market. Communicating a brand, the message transcends the information and visuals seen on the packaging. Every product needs modification and improvement, so as to favourably compete and meet the expectations of consumers. As a result, packaging influences consumer judgments about what to buy and is crucial to marketing communications (Chukwu & Enudu, 2018).

Product packaging captures the attention of consumers as it is the first appealing thing they see and plays a crucial function in setting a brand apart from the competition. Typically, a consumer's last impression of a product is its packing before they decide to make a final purchase. This is the reasons Borishade et al. (2015) argued that packaging is a silent salesman in the store and is the only communication between a product and the final consumer at the point of sales.

In other for packaging to perform its functions properly, emotional appeal, workability and sizes, are characteristics that are capable of influencing buying decisions. For instance, emotional appeal is the packaging ability to induce feelings of want or mood support and communicate the product's quality; while workability is the functionality of packaging, that is more than just a way of communicating, including; whether the packaging protects the content of the product, and whether the packaging facilitates the effort of consumers in accessing and using the product. And the product packaging size helps to penetrate brands product into new market, to gain market share ((Benjamin et al., 2019; Hiren, 2023). To what extend these characteristics have been able to influence consumer buying decisions especially in the context of bread brand in Delta State of Nigeria is still unclear in the literature which necessitate the motivation for this study.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **Product Packaging**

Packaging is the enclosing of a physical object, typically a product that is offered for sale. It is the process of getting goods and equipment ready for transportation and storage. It includes product preservation, identification, and packaging (Hiren, 2023). This means that packaging enhances product or brand identity and communicates value to customers. Deliya (2012) opined that A product's packaging serves as its container. Packaging refers to the outward look of a product's container, which may include its design, colour, the shape, the labeling and the materials used, which helps in brand identification. Packaging contains product information and this may include, instructions for use, contents, ingredients or raw materials used, nutritional value, country of origin, manufacture date, expiration date, and approval by relevant government agencies and care of the product (Adetayo, Opele & Olasehinde, 2019).

Numerous authors have previously proven the crucial impact that packaging plays in the appraisal of products at the point of purchase. Many producers and marketers are investing more in product packaging as a result of the widespread recognition of the crucial functions that packaging plays. They understand that customers interact with products more than they do with manufacturers. It is important to remember that a manufacturer's product is first encountered by customers through its packaging. Packaging, in the opinion of Shukla. Singh, and Wang (2022), is the activities involved in the provision of container for a product with a view to protecting and presenting it to the customers in good condition, as it was, at the time of production. Gomez, Martins and Molina, (2015) define packaging as product identification, brand identity and value.

In this study,' packaging is define as an instrument for creating an image in customer's mind and increases expectations for what is inside the displayed product.

### **Consumer Buying Decision**

Consumer buying behaviour can be defined as specific actions taken by an individual that are directly related to the usage of products and services, as well as decision-making regarding the planning and execution of activities (Nwobodo, et al., 2023; Unukpo & Okpighe, 2025). The process by which consumers

become aware of and identify their wants, gather information on how to best address these needs, weigh their options, decide what to buy, and then evaluate their purchase is known as the consumer buying decision making process, according to Swastha (2012).

The procedure is a multi-stage approach to problem solving. Customers do not always go through the entire procedure when making decisions on recurring purchases or continuous purchases of the same goods (Anetoh, Nnabuko, Anetoh & Chendo, 2020). The process by which customers make decisions about market transactions prior to, during, and following the purchase of a good or service is known as the buying decision process. When there are several options, it can be viewed as a specific type of cost-benefit analysis (Okeke & Amobi, 2020).

### **Emotional Appeal of Packaging and Consumer Buying Decision**

Emotional appeal pertains to a package's capacity to elicit a desired emotion in clients. This emotion might be positive and create a calm atmosphere that is conducive to buying. Font style used in the text affect the consumer perceptions. Different types of font create different mood of the consumers. Font style of package makes it looks different and attractive, a good font consistent with packaging colour, design and product category can make an extra appealing package (Sethna & Blythe, 2016). The most crucial and indispensable component of marketing is the creation of emotional packaging. In a market where hundreds of different products are vying for consumers' attention, it assists them in making the best decisions. Effective product packaging should create a strong bond between your company and its clients by balancing emotional and rational aspects.

From the view of Xinqile et al. (2022), emotional appeal is a marketing strategy that increases market share and gains a competitive edge by using psychological and emotional communication to obtain consumers' trust and preference. Consumers buy based on how well they think a product will meet their needs both physically and emotionally, so it essential that the packaging design and format conveys the brand personality and positioning to appeal to consumer to emotional needs, if the product is premium brand, the product package will need a packaging to evoke a sense of luxury, if the brand is all about natural health it will need to work fresh and natural.

Empirical studies on the relationship between emotional appeal of packaging and consumer buying decision have brought up some results. Unukpo and Okpighe (2025) investigate the influence of product packaging information and visibility on consumer buying decision and found that product package information and visibility had a positive significant influence on consumer buying decision for brands of bread. Similarly, Ighomereho (2022) showed that bakery success is greatly influenced by product, price, distribution, and client orientation. In addition, Ajeng et al. (2019) conducted research in Jakartian Indonesia and revealed that the visual element of packaging, namely the graphic elements of packaging and the informational elements of packaging significantly influence the purchase decision. Against this backdrop, we hypothesise as follows:

*H<sub>01</sub>: Package emotional appeal has a significant influence on consumer buying decisions of brands of bread in Delta State*

### **Product Package Workability and Consumer Buying Decisions**

Workability refers to the function of packaging to suggest to the consumer the ability of the package to perform its function of protecting and preserving the freshness of the contents after opening (Anyasor et al., 2014). The objective is to create a package that is as economically viable for merchants and customers as feasible. Packaging is becoming more and more important as a key component in the creation of modern marketing tactics (Akabogu, 2013). The role of packaging in being reviewed by manufacturers and marketers to include using a workable product package as a silent and effective salesperson. According to Ulrich (2009), in addition to being utilised to identify the product, packaging is crucial in attracting consumers. Packaging now plays a crucial role in drawing in customers and motivating them to make a purchase, rather than only serving as a protective container for the goods. The package needs to be durable, protect the goods within, and be easy to use and mere simply environmentally friendly if it is a fragile

product it needs more protection as consumers will be disappointed if they find their favourite (brands of bread) crushed. If the product is designed for older consumers it needs to be easy to open. If the brand is organic using lots of plastic packaging it might not appeal to those buyers. Packaging has to be cost effective in order to maximise profitability (Okeke, 2023).

According to Muhammed and Didin (2019), some of the workability issues quite prominent, including whether the packaging protects the content of the product, whether the packaging facilitate the ease of storing goods for both consumers and retailers whether the packaging facilitates of work of consumers in accessing and using the product, whether the packaging protect the retailers against accidental damage to the hoop consumers from theft and whether the packaging is what attracts consumers, so that consumers come to the decision to buy the product due to workability of visual and verbal element of the package. The practicality of a package's workability is contingent upon its packaging quality, which encompasses structural integrity, sturdiness, and longevity.

Studies on the relationship between product package workability and consumer buying decisions also abound with different results. Shayimaa (2022) identify consumer attitudes towards the visual and verbal elements of food product packaging and revealed that the visual elements of packaging (colour, design, shape) affect positively consumer’s buying decision while Benjamin et al (2019) found that packaging elements are main factors for easement and decision-making. Marr (2023) in a research sought to investigate the predictive correlations between product packaging and buying decisions of consumers and found that package workability significantly influences consumer buying behaviour. In view of the forgoing, the second hypothesis is formulated thus:

*Ho<sub>2</sub>: Product package workability has a significant influence on consumer buying decisions of brands of bread in Delta State.*

**Product Package Size and Consumer Buying Decisions**

Packaging size has a strong influence on the buying, when the quality of the product is hard to determine according to Silayoi et al (2007). Packaging size helps in products feature and target market share, as different packaging size is a way to extend a product into a new markets. The two visual elements shape and size are intertwined with each other. There is a common saying among designers, that form follows function though technological changes in materials such as plastics has lead to new approaches in packaging where various design paradigm are today part of the brand image.

Prior studies on the relationship between product package size and consumer buying decisions are also diverse. For example, Waheed et al. (2023) results showed that consumer purchase intentions are significantly influenced by product packaging. However, study by Shukla et al. (2022) applying the optimal-arousal theory showed no significant influence of product package size on buying decisions of consumers. In view of this, we frame our third hypothesis as:

*Ho<sub>3</sub>: Product package size has no significant influence on consumer buying decisions of brands of bread in Delta State.*

**3. Methodology**

The survey research design was adopted for the conduct of this study. The population of the study comprises the consumers of brands of bread under study in Warri, Asaba and Sapele. The sample size of the study was determined using Cochran formula (1963) which is used for unknown population.

**Table 1: Determination of Proportion of P and Q through Pilot Survey**

Name	Consumers of brands of bread under review (Yes)	Non-consumers of brands of bread under review (No)	Total
Asaba	9	11	20
Warri	27	33	60
Sapele	12	8	20

<b>Grand total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Proportion</b>	<b>P(0.48)</b>	<b>Q(0.52)</b>	<b>1.00</b>
<b>Percent</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Pilot Study, 2025.

Table 1 shows that out of one hundred persons contacted in Asaba, Warri and Sapele (20 persons each from Asaba and Sapele and 60 from Warri) to determine the proportion of the consumers of brands of bread under investigation and also those who are not. 48 persons representing P(0.48) were consumers while 52 persons representing Q(0.52) were not consumers of brands of bread under review in the geographical areas visited.

Applying the Cochran formula;

$$n = Z^2 (PQ) / e^2$$

Where,

e = is the desired level of precision ie the imagine of error

z = Confidence level of 95% ie 1.96

P = Proportion of the population which has the attribute in question those likely to be included (consumers) = 0.48

Q = is 1-p Proportion of negative response or those to be excluded (non- consumers) = 0.52

e = Error margin (5% level of significance)

The z value is found in a z table

Applying the formula

$$n = (1.96)^2 \times 0.48 \times 0.52 / (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 3.8416 (0.2496) / 0.0025$$

$$n = 0.95886336 / 0.0025 = 383.54$$

Therefore, the sample size (n) = 384 (approximately).

### Model Specification

Based on the theoretical literature and earlier empirical studies on product packaging and consumer buying decisions, this study adapted the model specified by Nwobodo et al. (2023) which was modified for the purpose of establishing the relationship between the dependent variables and the linear combinations of several determining variables captured in the study. Succinctly, the econometric form of the model is expressed as follows:

$$CBD_i = f(PKG)$$

This can be stated as thus;

$$CBD_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1PEMO_i + \beta_2PWOK_i + \beta_3PSZE_i + U_i$$

Where:

CBB= Consumer Buying Decision; PEMO = pack emotional appeal; PWOK = product pack workability; PSZE = products pack size; U = Error term; i = sampled consumers;  $\beta_0$  = Constant;  $\beta_1$ , to  $\beta_3$ = Coefficients of the parameters.

### 4. Results And Discussion

Three hundred and eighty four copies of the questionnaire were distributed out of which 346 copies were returned and found valid for analysis. The gender of the respondents shows that 41 percent respondents are male while 59 percent are female. The age of the respondents indicates that 43 percent of the respondents are below 30 years; 27 percent of respondents fall within the age bracket of 31-40 years while 46 percent of respondents are above 40 years. Concerning the marital status, that 29 percent of the respondents are still single; 61 percent of the respondents are married while 10 percent of the respondents fall under divorced /separated/widow or widower.

## Regression Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	P-value (Sig.)	Decision
		B	Std. Error	$\beta$ (Beta)			
1	(Constant)	0.692	0.035		7.834	.000	
	PEMO	0.124	.134	0.121	1.233	.142	Not Significant
	PWOR	0.682	.017	0.669	7.820	.000	Significant
	PSIZ	0.283	.083	0.272	2.781	.045	Significant
a. Dependent Variable: Consumer Buying Decisions on Brands of bread							

Estimates from table 3 serves as the basis for testing the formulated hypotheses and the results are discussed thus:

First, the relationship between product package emotional and consumer buying decision was subjected to empirical test. Based on the t-value of product package emotional appeal is 1.233 and p-value of 0.142, the null hypothesis is accepted based on the stipulated significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the emotional appeal of a product package does not significantly impact consumers' decisions to purchase specific brands of bread in Delta State, Nigeria. This did not meet the expectation and is not consistent with prior studies such as Shukla et al. (2022) and Ajeng et al. (2019) that reported a significant effect of product package emotional on consumer buying decision.

As regards product package workability (functionality) and consumer buying decision, we read off the regression estimates in table 3 to test this hypothesis. The t-value of product package workability (functionality) is 7.820 with a p-value of 0.000. Based on the specified significance level of 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, we draw the conclusion that consumers' judgements about which bread brands to purchase in Delta State are significantly influenced by the workability (functionality) of product packaging. This result meets our a priori expectation and conforms to previous research by Benjamin et al (2019), Nwobodo et al. (2023), and Shayimaa (2022) who found in their separate studies that product package workability (functionality) positively influence consumer buying decision.

Finally, the effect of product package size on consumer buying decision was also subjected to empirical test using estimates on table 3. Based the t-value of product package size of 2.781 and the p-value of 0.045, the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis accepted. Therefore, we conclude that product package size has a significant influence on consumer buying decisions of brands of bread in Delta State. This result is in tandem with prior studies such as Shayimaa (2022) and Ighomereho (2022) which showed that bakery success is greatly influenced by product, price, distribution, and client orientation.

### 5. Conclusion And Recommendations

Despite the relevance of product packaging, limited studies have examined how it influences consumer buying decision. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to fill this gap in knowledge by investigating how packaging influence consumers' decisions to purchase different brands of bread in Delta State. Findings of the study showed that product package workability and product package size have positively and significantly influenced consumer buying decisions on bread brands in Delta State, Nigeria. The study also found that product package emotional appeal does not have a significant influence on consumer buying decisions on brands of bread in Delta State of Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, we conclude that

product packaging has a positive effect on consumer buying decisions on brands of bread in Delta State of Nigeria.

The study therefore recommended that brand managers and dealers should continue to maintain and also invest more on the functional attributes of the bread package for improved consumer repurchase decisions. It is also recommended that brand managers should continue to improve on the product package size of brands of bread so as to uphold consumer repurchase engagement.

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