

INFLUENCE OF PACKAGING ON CONSUMERS' BUYING BEHAVIOUR OF SOFT DRINKS IN ACCRA, GHANA

Ibrahim Ofosu-Boateng

Lecturer/Dean of Students, Faculty of Business Administration, West End University College
Amanfro, Ghana, P.O.Box AN 15796, Accra North, Ghana-W/Africa

ABSTRACT: *The study assesses the influence of packaging on consumers' buying behaviour of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana. The objective of the study was to examine the forms of packaging used by the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana; to find out the relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour in the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana and to determine the elements of packaging influencing consumer buying behaviour in the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana. The study adopted the survey design. Data were gathered from a convenient selected sample of 220 soft drink consumers in Accra, Ghana using a structured interview guide and data analyses carried out using SPSS version 20. The findings of the study revealed plastic bottles packaging ranked first, aluminium cans packaging ranked second, paper packaging ranked third and glass bottle packaging ranked fourth as forms of packaging used by the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana. At another level, the study shows a significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour. Based on the findings, the study recommends the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana to concentrate on the use of plastic, aluminium can and paper as forms of packaging to influence consumers' buying behaviour whilst reducing the use of glass bottle packaging. Also, It is recommended that packaging should be given utmost priority by soft drink producers in Accra since it has a significant relationship with consumer buying behaviour; can act as a 'silent salesperson', helping consumers by bringing a particular brand to their attention.*

KEY WORDS: packaging, consumer buying behaviour, soft drinks

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

In this era of intense competition, organizations operate in a complex and competitive environment where demands are constantly changing and consumers have become sophisticated. To confront this challenge, companies adopt several promotional strategies to influence consumers' buying decision. Packaging is considered as one of such promotional strategies (Rettie & Brewer, 2000). Packaging is described as the rapping material around a consumer item that serves to contain, identify, describe, protect, display, promote, and otherwise make the product marketable and clean (Kotler, 2010). According to Rundh, (2005) packaging attracts consumers' attention towards brands, enhances its image and influences consumers' perceptions about products. Packaging, thus imparts unique value to products (Underwood *et al.*, 2001; Silayoi & Specee, 2004) works as a tool for differentiation (Wells *et al.*, 2007)

Packaging, as we know today is the result of a long development process in the history of human civilization. It is the product of continues research aimed at finding better methods of packaging the various goods we use , including our food in order to ensure the best protection for them. The very first people to tread the earth, back in the depths of pre-history, sought to conserve the surplus food collected during their hunting, fishing and food gathering for the longest possible time so as to be well prepared for any future food shortage (Berger, 2002). Conservation of food during this period consisted of leaves, shells and gourds which later gave way to materials that were of natural origin, such as animal organs, containers made of woven grasses and logs that were hollowed (Berger, 2002).

Clearly, these early forms of packaging had shown to be very rudimentary and not hygienic with the result that daily life at that time revolved around the search for food. The continuous quest by mankind to find new methods of conserving food and transporting products has allowed us to move from a society living from one day to the next, dependent on available food sources to a world which manages its resources in the long term. Efficient packaging which can be adapted to all kinds of goods has made this possible. Modern packaging is what allows us to reheat a frozen meal as well as to ensure that foods can be sent to the other world and arrive in one piece (Mckinlay, 2004). Today, packaging of a product is more than a medium of protection and storage and it plays a vital role for a consumer when buying a product. Behaeghel, (1991) and Peters, (1994) suggest that packaging may be the biggest medium of communication. The following three reasons are given for this: its extensive reach to nearly all purchasers of the category; its presence at the point when the purchase decision is made; and the high level of involvement for users who will actively scan packaging for information. Thus, packaging has become a critical factor in the decision-making process because it communicates to the consumers (Silayoi & Speece, 2004).

Today, the Ghanaian soft drink industry has adapted to this new marketing concept that started modern packaging as part of their strategic marketing tools. The new marketing concept was borne out of post – war economy of scarcity, pent up consumers demand and growing customer confidence, sophisticated and informed customers and global competitors, delivering superior value based on their distinctive competences. In the olden days, Ghanaian firms were considering packaging as just containers, boxes and bottles that were used to hold, store and protect a product. Modern packaging goes beyond this. Ghanaian manufacturing companies now see packaging as a marketing tool which can send message to consumers and also influence their purchasing decisions. In the soft drink industry, the final stage of the manufacturing is packaging. At this stage, the finished product is packed for final supply with the aim of influencing consumers' purchasing decision. The study therefore seeks to examine the influence of packaging of the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana.

Statement of the Problem

The importance of packaging is replete in many studies (Parmar, *et al.*, 2012; Gonzalez *et al.*, 2007; Madden *et al.*, 2000; Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Pinya & Mark, (2004) attributed this realization as quoted by Prendergast & Pitt, (1996) that “packaging seems to be one of the five most important factors in influencing purchasing decisions made at the point of sale, and is an essential part in the selling process. Rundh, (2005) posited that the significance is also due to the fact that packaging attracts consumers’ concentration to buy a particular brand and increase brand image and influence towards consumers. Wells *et al.*, (2007) equally stressed that packaging characteristics enhance the ability to differentiate between similar products and induces customers to make a purchase decision. In buttressing this, Louw, (2006) intimated that it could be used to enable a brand to establish a position which is special in the market environment and in consumers’ minds.

Obviously, the emergence of packaging has been embraced by organizations and marketing practitioners as something indispensable to have happened in the business environment. In Accra Ghana, the soft drink and beverage industry which is in fierce competition has also sought to embrace the use of packaging not only as a protective material but also as a communication tool to influence a purchase decision. A plethora of studies had been carried out on the influence of packaging on consumer behaviour (Underwood *et al.*, 2001; Silayoi & Speece, 2004; Wells *et al.*, 2007; Court *et al.*, 2009; Rita, 2009; Louw & Kimber, 2007; Marsh & Bugusu). However, these studies tend to examine packaging influence on consumers buying behaviour in relation to their geographical environment. Accra, which is the administrative capital of Ghana with substantial soft drinks firms, it appears there is paucity of studies carried out to examine quantitatively the influence of packaging on consumers’ buying behaviour. This study is aimed at closing this gap and more so contributing to the existing academic literature.

Aim of the Study

The primary aim of the study is to assess the influence of packaging on consumers’ buying behaviour of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana.

Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the stated aim of the study above, the following objectives have been set;

1. To examine the forms of packaging used by the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana.
2. To determine the relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour in the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana.
3. To find out the elements of packaging influencing consumer buying behaviour in the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana.

Scope of the study

The study examined the influence of packaging on consumers’ buying behaviour of soft drink in Accra, Ghana. The study was conducted in Accra, the administrative capital of Ghana and it

involved 220 consumers of soft drink in Accra, Ghana. Other regional capitals fall outside the scope of the study.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study were significant to the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana in diverse ways. First it will inform the soft drink industry on the form(s) of packaging required to influence the buying behaviour of consumers. Second, the soft drink industry will be exposed to packaging elements appealing to consumers to influence buying behaviour. Also, academicians and marketing students who want to research further in the area of packaging will find this study significant thus contributing to the existing literature.

Limitations of the study

The administration of questionnaire was a great limitation. To address this limitation, the researcher had to employ the services of others to assist in the administration of questionnaire at a cost. Another limitation was the unwillingness of some respondents to partake in the study since it is unethical for respondents to participate under duress.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Packaging defined

Packaging has been defined differently by different authors over time. For instance, Kotler, (2003) defines packaging as “the wrapping material around a consumer item that serves to contain, identify, describe, protect, display, promote and otherwise make the product marketable”. Saghir, (2002) also defines packaging as linked manner of managing goods for safe, efficient, secure and efficient handling, transportation, distribution, storage, retailing, usage and recovery, reuse or disposal in addition to increasing the value of the consumer, sales and therefore profit. Similarly, according to Panwar, (2004) packaging is the act of containing, protecting and presenting the contents through the long chain of production, handling and transportation to their destinations in as good a state, as they were, at the time of production. For the purpose of the study, the definition of Kotler, (2003) was adopted.

Forms of Packaging

Various forms of packaging materials are used in the package of soft drinks, however Johansson *et al.*, (1997) states the following: plastic, aluminum can, paper and glass.

Plastic

Plastic materials are made up of large, organic (carbon-containing) molecules that can be formed into a variety of useful products, they are fluid, moldable, easy to print, and can be integrated into production processes where the package is formed, filled, and sealed in the same production line (Marsh & Bugusu, 2007). The use of plastics in soft drink packaging has continued to increase due to the low cost of materials and functional advantages (such as optical properties,

and unlimited sizes and shapes) over traditional materials such as glass and tinplate (Emamifar *et al.*, 2010). According to Paine & Paine, (2012) its use worldwide has increased with an estimate at 280 metric tons. In buttressing this, Smye Holland (2013) posits that more than 90% of flexible packaging is made of plastics, compared to only 17% of rigid packaging. Wells, (2008) attributes its acceptance to cost-efficient, recyclable, extremely light-weight storage option and extremely easy to transport. Smye, (2013) asseverates also that plastic packaging allows the manufacturers to mention important information about the product on the package such as preservative, nutrients that cause allergies, the usability of the product, recommended amount, etc.

Aluminium Cans

Aluminium cans for soft drinks are made from tinplated steel or aluminum and are lined with specific lacquers for packaging. Cans have a number of advantages over other types of containers; when sealed with a double-seam they provide total protection of the contents; they are tamperproof; and they can be made in a wide range of shapes and sizes. Aluminium can is enjoying growing popularity; consumers appreciate the can as modern, practical and recyclable packaging. Young consumers especially find cans cool and trendy (Draskovic, 2009). In some areas the aluminum can is by far the most favorably viewed of the three soft drink and beverage packages, significantly outdistancing either glass or plastic bottles (Can Manufacturing Institute, 2015). With a large printable surface area and a wide range of sizes, shapes and decorating options, aluminum cans are the perfect packaging format for soft drink manufacturers to create a compelling brand presence where it counts — on the shelf and in consumers' hands.

Paper

The use of paper packaging among soft drink producers in Ghana has been welcomed and according to Berry, (2010) paper is the most commonly used packaging material worldwide. This position has been achieved due to several advantageous features of paper such as: renewability, biodegradability, recyclability, unmatched printability, light in weight, cheap in price and easily available. Paper is made from natural and renewable resources and it has multiple advantages, such as low price, flexibility, printability, recyclability, good temperature resistance, excellent strength properties, good insulation properties, easiness in coating and lamination due to its compatibility with other packaging materials Marsh & Bugusu, (2007). Paper can be produced anywhere in the world, using local resources and at relatively low cost, which also makes it the most sustainable packaging material (Motarjemi & Lelieveld, 2014).

Glass

Glass bottles are widely used for beers, wines, spirits, liqueurs, soft drinks and mineral water. Growth in the world glass packaging industry, according to a report by global industry analysts is expected to continue despite the emergence of packaging alternatives (Wells, 2008). According to Grayhurst & Girling, (2011) glass bottles which have narrow necks are mainly the types of glass containers used in food and soft drink packaging. Glass packaging material has almost been

given up, especially for food items e.g. for soft drink because any slight jerk or shock causes it to break into pieces, which is not only material loss but also is harmful for human health; usage of glass has been replaced with tin and plastic (Grayhurst & Girling, 2011).

Elements of Packaging

Silayoi & Speece, (2007) based on the review of the relevant literature, define that there are four core packaging elements which affect a consumer's buying decision. These elements are divided into two categories: visual and informational elements. The visual elements include graphics, colour, size/shape of packaging. Informational elements consist of product information and information about the technologies used on the package.

Visual Elements

Graphics

Graphics include image layout, color combination, typography, and product photography. The combination of all these components communicates an image. Graphics on the package are telling detailed information about the product. It becomes a product branding or identity, followed by the information. According to Herrington & Capella, (1995) when the consumers examine packages in the supermarket, the differential perception and the positioning of the graphics can be the difference between identifying and missing the product (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007). However, eye-catching graphics make the product stand out on the shelf and attract the consumers. Graphics can affect through colours and printed lines on the package on which different signs and symbols are located. Holograms and combinations of various materials can encourage consumers to touch the package, thereby inspiring them to try the product (Rundh, 2009).

Colour

Cheskin, (2007) says that the selection of the colours and colour combinations is a necessary process for creating a good design package. Colour is a key element of design due to the fact that it is usually vivid and memorable. The package colour can have a significant effect on consumers' ability to recognize the product, the meaning conveyed by the package, its novelty and contrast to other brands and company's names. The package colour can be modified without changing the costs, product characteristics and functionality (Garber *et al.*, 2000). Packaging applications have many colour-coded messages which are associated with the particular product category (Stewart, 2004; Garber *et al.*, 2000). Koch & Koch, (2003) say that in case of food package, colour can influence product expectations and perceptions (e.g. taste). Product packages in similar colours may attract attention by means of brand or product category. Therefore, the right choice of colours is an important factor in creating the impression needed to influence brand and product selection (Gofman *et al.*, 2010).

Size and Shape

Packaging size and shape are also significant factors in designing the package. A consumer interacts with these two elements in order to make volume judgments, e.g. consumers perceive more elongated packages to be larger (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007). Packaging sizes depend on the different involvement levels. The low involvement food products have a low price which is generated through cost savings created by reduced packaging and promotional expenses. The effect of package size has a strong influence on the purchasing choice when the quality of the product is hard to determine. Therefore, the elongated shape and appropriate size causes the consumer to think of the package as having better product volume and cost efficiency. (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007)

Informational Elements

Product information

Communication of information is one of the core functions of the packaging. This helps customers to make the right decisions in the purchasing process. Coulson, (2000) gives an example of information significance using a food labeling case: the trend to consume healthy food has emphasized the importance of labeling, which gives the consumer the opportunity to consider alternative products and to make an informed product choice (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007). Packaging information can create contrary results. It can lead to misleading or inaccurate information through small fronts and dense writing styles which are used on the package. Hausman, (2000) suggests that experience makes consumers select prospectively the product and it, however, restricts the area of their choice (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007). Hence, the purchase decision making factor depends on the interconnection between information and choices. Here, consumer involvement also takes place. Vakratsas & Amber, (1999) tell that low involvement includes in attentively reading and examining product information, while high involvement consists of careful evaluation of information and may lead to purchase intentions (Silayoi & Speece 2004).

Technology image

McNeal & Ji, (2003) deem that the role of packaging in marketing communications is implemented by developments in technology. Here, the technology creates the packages according to trends and consumers' attitudes and behaviors. The role of technology is to meet consumers' needs and requirements. As far as the technology is a communication element, it should be presented visually and, therefore, it will catch more attention and be convenient for consumers (Silayoi *et al.*, 2007).

CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR

Consumer behaviour is defined as the study of the consumer and the exchange processes involved in acquiring, consuming and disposing of goods, services to satisfy their needs and desires (Linehan, 2008). In other words, consumer behaviour is influenced by lifestyle, personality, knowledge, motivation, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings. Linehan, (2008) also suggests that the behaviour of a consumer has three activities; acquisition, consumption, and

disposition. Acquisition being the activities leading to the actual purchase, consumption is how, where and under what circumstances the consumer will use the product and disposition this being the action by which the consumer disposes of the products which they have consumed.

A consumer is generally thought of as an individual who recognises a need or desire, makes a purchase, and then disposes of the product during the three stages in the consumption process. The term consumer behaviour is used to describe two separate consumer entities; the personal consumer and the organisational consumer. The personal consumer purchases products for his/her own use, intended for use in the household, or as a gift. In each of these situations the product is purchased for final use by individuals, who are also known as ultimate consumers. The organisational consumer includes companies, schools, hospitals, etc. purchase products that are required to run their organisation (Schiffman *et al.*, 2008). According to Chaudhuri, (2013) the decisions of all consumers are influenced by several individual characteristics that are linked to the consumers' individual needs.

Factors influencing consumer buying behaviour

Consumers around the world are different in gender, age, income, education level, living habits, and tastes. When a product is purchased, consumers demonstrate incredible difference; their behaviours could be influenced by many factors, such as cultural, personal, social and psychological (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009).

Culture factors

Culture is an important factor in consumer buying behavior. Culture distinguishes one human group from others. A people's culture includes their beliefs, rules of behavior, language, rituals, art, technology, styles of dress, ways of producing and cooking food, religion, and political and economic systems (Kim & Ahn, 2006). The most famous authority on culture study is Geert Hofstede, he has determined that culture as "mental programming" which each person has his or her own pattern of thinking, feeling or action which has learned through their life time (Hofstede, 2001). Culture can be best expressed in the complex interactions of values, attitudes, and behavioral assumptions of a society (Schwartz, 1994).

Personal factors

Personal factors influence buying decisions; it includes economic, age, gender, occupation, lifestyle, and situation, etc (Linehan & Cadogan, 2000). Peoples buying habits and tastes change with age. We have different needs and different outlook on life as we grow older. As the different family cycle stages changes over time the needs also change .This is a very important for the marketer to understand as to the distribution of people in regards to ages. Marketers will try to identify age groups that have more than the average interest in their products and services. Armstrong and Kotler also has similar opinions and found that people with good secure job and regular income tend to buy more expensive and even luxury product whereas people with less income and less secure jobs tend to buy cheaper products. This can be expressed in hobbies, shopping, sports social events, food, fashion, etc. "Therefore if economic indicators point to a

recession, marketers can take steps to redesign, and reprise and their product closely (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009).

Social factors

Armstrong & Kotler, (2009) suggested that people choose their product for their social status, when they buy product, it is not to enjoy them, but to let others know that they can afford them, they hope that product can reflect their status. Kim *et al.*, (2002) addressed consumers product choice for a particular or brand are affected by a complex social influence, and Linehan & Cadogan (2000) proposed that social factor also influence consumers behavior, like family, peer group and status. In real life, individual influence each other in different ways. Peer group will exert a particular type of behavior and put pressure on the person to conform (Linehan & Cadogan, 2000).

Psychological factors

Armstrong & Kotler, (2009) discussed that person's buying decisions are further influenced by their motivation attitude and perception. Linehan & Cadogan, (2000) explained internal elements that influence an individual buying behavior. Attitude is an evaluation, feeling or tendency toward something; difficult to change them as people have attitudes toward just about everything (Armstrong & Kotler, 2009). A person has many needs at any given time; some are biological, arising from states of tension such as hunger, thirst or discomfort. Armstrong & Kotler, (2009) point out that a person's needs could be biological, such as hunger, thirst, or discomfort. Other needs are psychological, such as it arising from the need for recognition, esteem, or belonging, but in fact, most of these needs will not be strong enough to motivate the person to act at a given point in time.

The Relationship between Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Consumer's attention to a particular product enhances its image and influences consumer's perceptions about the product. Also package imparts unique value to products. Accordingly, Underwood *et al.*, (2001) and Silayoi & Speece, (2004) posited that packaging works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from wide range of similar products, stimulates customers buying behaviour. Thus package performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision (Wells *et al.*, 2007). Packaging communicates brand personality through many elements, including a combination of brand logo, colours, fonts, package materials, pictorials, product descriptions, shapes and other elements that provide rich brand associations (Underwood, 2003). More so, Rita, (2009) explained that packaging attracts consumer's attention to a brand; arouses interest and result to spontaneous purchase. A study performed by CM Research (cited in Gautier, 1996) demonstrated that consumers subconsciously purchase products on shelves as a result of attractive packaging alone. Research conducted by Wisenblitz, (1999) on colour influence on purchasing decision, the author emphasized the influence of colour as a packaging element on consumers' purchasing decision.

The author stressed that in instances where consumers have little information about a product, packaging acts as a deciding factor. Underwood, (2001) highlighted the importance of both colour and packaging as a brand communication vehicle. Hence, the study's hypothesis: *Ho: There is no significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour. H1: There is a significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour.*

Empirical Review

Silayoi & Speece, (2004) did a co-joint study among consumers for analysing the importance of packaging and the role of packaging as a vehicle for communication and building up brands. They suggest that the package standing out on the shelf affects the consumer decision process. Similarly, Ampeuro & Vila, (2006) conducted an extensive research on consumer perception of product packaging. According to them, once consumers have perceived the product in their own way, they develop an attitude which will eventually affect consumers' decision to procure that product. More so, Wells *et al.*, (2007) conclude from their research that packaging characteristics give the ability to differentiate between the similar products and induces the consumers for purchase.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study was quantitative in nature. Descriptive cross-sectional survey research was used in collecting data at one point in time for a sample selected to represent a larger population. According to Owens (2002), cross-sectional surveys make it possible for a group of respondents to be asked a set of questions at one point in time. In this study attempts were made to determine the behaviour of soft drinks consumers in Accra with regards to packaging in the sample at specific time frames and this timeline made it vital in collecting bit by bit relevant data for the study as posited by Owens (2002).

Population of the study

A population is the aggregate of all the elements showing some common set of characteristics that comprises the universe for the purpose of the marketing research problem (Malhotra, 1996). In this study, all consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana were the population of the study.

Sampling Technique and Sampling Size

Sampling techniques are population reduction methods used to restrict data collection to a subgroup of a population since it is almost impossible to collect data from every single individual or units within a population in most cases. The study uses a non-probability sampling particularly convenience sampling technique to achieve the set objective. This is in line with the work of other researchers (Amoah *et al.*, 2007; Stanley & Thurnell, 2014).

Sample Size

Sampling is the process of selecting a number of individuals for a study (Kothari, 2004). In this study, a sample of 220 consumers of soft drinks was conveniently selected and structured questionnaires were administered to assess the influence of packaging on consumers' buying behaviour in Accra, Ghana. According to Dillman (2000), a sample size of more than a hundred (100) is sufficient to provide a fair representation of the study population.

Sources of data

The main source of data for the study was the field survey. A close-ended structured questionnaire and in-depth interviews were used in carrying out the survey.

Distribution of the Questionnaire

It took the researcher approximately 16 days to administer the questionnaires and conduct interviews. Averagely, each respondent took about 25 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The respondents (consumers) were approached mostly on weekends after lunch since most of them were found shopping during time. The adopted method ensured more participation.

Data Analysis

All information received from the respondents via the data collection instrument was entered, coded and analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. Data were presented by tables of frequencies and percentages which were computed for each item. Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis was done on the responses that were received from the respondents. The mean and standard deviation used to rank the responses of respondents whilst a simple correlation was used to establish the relationship between packaging and consumer behaviour.

Validity and Reliability

Joppe, (2000) defines validity as the extent to which the research truly measures what it is intended to measure and how truthful the research is known. In this study, the questionnaire was pre-tested using 12 consumers of soft drinks for the simple reason that the characteristics of the respondents were similar to those in the study. The final interview guide was not modified or changed and no changes were made to the items after the pre-test since the respondents could grasp the meaning of the items. The reliability of the study was also ascertained by testing the internal consistency of the responses received from the respondents by using Cronbach's alpha coefficient analysis.

Ethical Consideration

Neuman, (2003) defined ethics as what is or is not legitimate to do or what moral research procedure ought to be involved by the investigator. Kumeorpor (2002) emphasized that the most important elements in the research enterprise are the respondents, and everything must be done

to alleviate their fears and anxiety. To this end, the researcher explained the purpose of the study to participants and participants participated in their own volition without being coerced.

Overview of the Soft Drink Industry in Ghana

The soft drink industry in Ghana is a booming one with both the state and private individuals engaged in the business. Some of the firms in the industry import the raw materials while others have them locally. There are carbonated and non-carbonated drinks. The carbonated soft drinks contain carbon dioxide. They are readily taken without dilution and are generally of shorter life-span. Examples of carbonated drinks are Pepsi and Coca Cola, Mirinda, Portello, Fanta, Lola lemon, Frouta Orange, etc. On the other hand, non-carbonated drinks which are also known as cordials soft drinks can be taken can only be taken after being diluted with water or without diluting and are of longer life-span as compared to the carbonated drinks. Examples of cordials are Tono, Lime and Orange drink. Drinks such Malta Guinness, Beta Malt, Power Malt and Super Malt, Alvaro have become popular lately in Ghana and are served in social gatherings like, funeral, weddings, parties, etc.

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	%
Gender (N=220)		
Male	80	36.4
Female	140	63.6
Age in years (N=220)		
20-30	100	45.5
31-41	80	36.4
42-52	30	13.6
53 & above	10	4.5
Educational Background (N=220)		
Diploma	40	18.2
Bachelor	80	36.4
Masters	60	27.2
Others	40	18.2
Employment status (N=220)		
Employed	210	95.5
Unemployed	10	4.5

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

According to findings obtained from the administration of questionnaires to respondents, it was observed that 63.6% of respondents were females whereas 36.4% of the respondents are males. It

can be concluded that there were more female respondents than males although this was not predetermined at the beginning of the questionnaire distribution.

As can be seen from the table above, the percentage of respondents who are between the ages of 20-30 years was 45.5% while those between the age of 31-41 years was found out to be 36.4%. It was revealed from the research also that 13.6% of the respondents are between the ages of 42-52 years whilst the age 53 and above years was 4.5%. The study showed that the majority of consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana are in the age group of 20-30 years. The findings showed that consumers with diploma and other certificates accounted for the least group of respondents with only 18.2% of the total respondents respectively. Master degree holders followed with 27.2%. Bachelor holders accounted for the most with 36.4%. From the statistics above it is obvious that most consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana are bachelor degree holders.

It was part of demographic information to ascertain the employability of respondents. The results showed that 95.5% of the total respondents were employed whereas a paltry of 4.5% of the respondents were unemployed. It can be observed that most of the consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana were employed.

Forms of Packaging used by the Soft Drink Industry in Accra, Ghana Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of responses received from respondents was 0.812. According to Tavakol & Dennick, (2011) a coefficient value of Cronbach's alpha between 0.800 to 0.900 is good for research hence the internal consistency of the responses was validated. Table 2 delineates the reliability statistics of the responses received on forms of packaging used by the soft drink industry to influence consumer's buying behaviour.

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.812	4

Source: Researcher's field work, 201

Findings and Discussions

The findings on the forms of packaging used by the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana to influence consumer's buying behaviour revealed that plastic bottles packaging ranked first with a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.142; aluminium cans packaging ranked second with a mean of 4.53 and a standard deviation of 0.146; paper packaging ranked third with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.144; glass bottles ranked fourth with a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.142.

According to Allen & Seaman, (2007) a five-point Likert scale with a confidence interval of 95% should be at least 3.50 to be considered significant. This implies that most of the respondents agreed on the variables given in the questionnaires as the form of packaging used by the soft drink industry in Accra to influence consumer's buying behaviour. Again, this assertion is buttressed by the fact that the standard errors (S.E) were small (that is, relatively close to zero), thus implying that the packaging forms used by the soft drink industry in Accra to influence consumer's buying behaviour as chosen by the respondents were a true reflection of the study's population. According to Altman & Bland, (2005) the S.E is the standard deviation of the sampling distribution of the mean and also a degree of how likely a sample represents the population. Therefore, a large S.E relative to the sample mean implies that there were a lot of variations between the means and the samples while a small S.E relative to the sample mean implies that most sample means are similar to the population.

The findings of the study espouse the work of Raheem, (2013) who intimated that plastic being the youngest in comparison with other packaging material, has been well accepted by manufacturers of soft drinks.

Table 3 Forms of Packaging used by the soft drink industry in Ghana

Forms of Packaging used	Mean			Rank
	Statistics	S.E	S.D	
Plastic	4.56	0.030	0.142	1 st
Aluminium can	4.53	0.029	0.146	2 nd
Paper	4.45	0.027	0.144	3 rd
Glass bottle	4.44	0.024	0.142	4 th

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

The Relationship between Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Table 4 Showing Pearson's Correlation between Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour

Variables	Mean	Std. Dv.	N.	R.	P	Remark
Consumer buying behaviour	3.047980	.9187783				
Packaging	3.037485	.8923938	308	.889**	000	Sig.

Note. ** Sig. at .01 level

Source: Researcher's fieldwork, 2019

The statistics in table 4 demonstrates a significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour ($r = .889^{**}$, $N = 308$, $P < .01$). As a result, H_0 : "there is no significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour" was rejected whilst. H_1 : "there is a significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour" was

accepted. By implication, it can be deduced that a 1% appeal in packaging will result in 88.9% change in consumer buying behaviour. Hence, it could be deduced that packaging influence consumers' buying behaviour in the study. This is supported by earlier study of Louw & Kimber, (2000) who concluded in their study that packaging promotes and reinforces the purchase decision not only at the point of purchase, but also every time the product is used

ELEMENTS OF PACKAGING INFLUENCING CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN THE SOFT DRINK INDUSTRY IN GHANA

Reliability Statistics

To ascertain the responses of respondents on the elements of packaging influencing buying behaviour, Coefficient analysis of Cronbach alpha was used and a value of 0.771 was realized. Inferring from Tavakol & Dennick, (2011) a coefficient value of Cronbach alpha between 0.700 and 0.800 is acceptable for research. The internal consistency of the responses received from the respondents was thus valid. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 3 below.

Table 5 Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
0.771	5

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis in table 6 on elements of packaging influencing consumers' buying behaviour of the soft drink industry in Accra, Ghana revealed that; colour ranked first with a mean of 4.66 and a standard deviation of 0.128; size/shape ranked second with a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.134; graphics third with a mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.126, product information ranked fourth with a mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.134 and technology image ranked fifth with a mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.132. The findings of the analysis on the elements of packaging influencing consumers' buying behaviour buttress the findings of earlier researches by Keller, (2009). According to Keller, colour is an essential component of packaging because consumers expect certain type of colors for particular products. Also, Ragland, (2008) asserted that when consumers were asked, "Which physical elements of packaging have the most impact on brand and consumer identity?", the findings were that the colours, shapes and images are the primary visual cues consumers use in decoding brand messages, and the majority of consumers extracted similar meanings from each. In corroborating the work of Ragland, Wästlund *et al.*, (2005) has shown that 60-80% of purchasing decisions are made in-store and that 90% of consumer decisions are made just by looking at the front of the package without touching the product itself.

Table 6: Elements of Packaging influencing consumer buying behaviour of soft drink industry in Ghana

Packaging Elements	Mean			Rank
	Statistics	S.E	S.D	
Colour	4.46	0.030	0.128	1 st
Size/Shape	4.44	0.032	0.134	2 nd
Graphics	4.42	0.028	0.126	3 rd
Product information	4.36	0.024	0.134	4 th
Technology image	4.24	0.033	0.132	5 th

Source: Researcher's field work, 2019

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

1. It can be concluded that there were more female consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana than male consumers although this was not predetermined at the beginning of the questionnaire distribution.
2. From the results of the study, 36.4% of the respondents were in the age group of 31-41 years. Majority (45.5%) of the respondents were within the age group of 20-30 years which denotes an active year group, whilst the age groups 42-52 and 53 and above years accounted for the least (13.6%) and (4.5%) respectively. This might be due to the health reasons.
3. The statistics of the study regarding education revealed mix findings with bachelor degree holders accounting for (36.4%) and master degree holders accounting for (27.2%). Also, diploma and other certificates holders accounted for the least with 18.2% respectively. It is evident that all the respondents have had some level of education.
4. The results revealed that majority (95.5%) of consumers of soft drinks in Accra, Ghana were employed whilst a meager (4.5%) of consumers were unemployed.
5. The results of the analysis showed plastic bottle packaging ranked first with a mean of 4.56 and a standard deviation of 0.142; aluminium cans packaging ranked second with a mean of 4.53 and a standard deviation of 0.146; paper packaging ranked third with a mean of 4.45 and a standard deviation of 0.144; glass bottles ranked fourth with a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.142.
6. Analysis of data on the relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour demonstrates a significant relationship between packaging and consumer buying behaviour ($r = .889^{**}$, $N = 308$, $P < .01$).
7. The statistics on the elements of packaging influencing consumer buying behaviour revealed colour ranked first with a mean of 4.66 and a standard deviation of 0.128; size/shape ranked second with a mean of 4.44 and a standard deviation of 0.134; graphics ranked third with a mean of 4.42 and a standard deviation of 0.126, product information

ranked fourth with a mean of 4.36 and a standard deviation of 0.134 and technology image ranked fifth with a mean of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 0.132.

Recommendations

8. The study recommends soft drink producers in Accra, Ghana to concentrate on the use of plastic, aluminium can and paper as a form of packaging to influence consumers' buying behaviour whilst reducing the use of glass bottle packaging.
9. It is recommended that packaging should be given utmost priority by soft drink producers in Accra, Ghana since it has a positive relationship with consumer buying behaviour; can act as a 'silent salesperson', helping consumers by bringing a particular brand to their attention.
10. Also, packaging must be recognised as having that potency of communicating and disseminating messages to consumers at the point of purchase.
11. It is also recommended that the use of visual elements such as colour, size/shape, graphics, and product information must not be compromised. Technology image must also be enhanced to make the packaging more aesthetic to appeal to the buying behaviour of consumer.

Areas for Future Research

The study focused on the influence of packaging on consumers buying behaviour in Accra, Ghana only. Future studies can be conducted in other capitals of Ghana with a larger sample size. Also, only five elements of packaging were examined to influence consumers' buying behaviour. Other elements could as well be examined to determine their influence on consumer behaviour.

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