

Beyond the Box: Packaging and Branding as Tools for Differentiation in a Competitive Retail Market

Mark Anthony Yu Alvar

Masters in Business Administration, Graduate School, University of Baguio

Abstract

The study's goal was to investigate how customers perceive various design components of milk tea packaging and to provide crucial data for businesses about consumer appeal and the significance of design features from the customer's viewpoint. This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge already available in the packaging and marketing fields by shedding more light on the psychology of color and its effects on packaging and marketing. It expounds upon several facets of packaging and encapsulates the conclusions of the latest studies carried out thus far, which have examined packaging from various angles. There is an importance in studying and delving into the deep essence of branding and packaging so that consumers notice businesses' packages first and represent the brand. Ensuring that the packaging aligns with the company's brand and beliefs is crucial. The brand's packaging should communicate its goals, core values, and distinctive selling points. The researcher employed the following methods to gather information: (1) analysis, (2) interviews/personal interviews, and (3) validated tool/guide. Qualitative information was gathered from 20 tool replies. The study's findings demonstrated the significance of packaging design in customer purchasing habits. Through the analysis of customer perception, it was discovered that packaging design components including color, graphics, and product details are important since they are part of decision-making and guarantee the customer's focus. Based on the results, it was determined that an effective milk tea package design could be produced through collaboration between the client and the business. Additional studies might examine the design features of various product packaging.

Keywords: Packaging, Branding, Consumer, Owner, and Marketing

Introduction

When product packaging and branding are combined, the consumer's consumption and purchasing behavior are greatly impacted. Because of social media's influence, this effect is strengthened even more in the digital age. Coomber (2002) states that a brand is usually a name, term, sign, symbol, or a combination of these which enables people to identify the goods or services of one group of sellers from other competitors. Naturally, products with well-known brands and eye-catching packaging entice consumers, who then share their purchases on social media. They influence other prospective customers' opinions through their comments and responses. While negative feedback highlights areas that need improvement, positive reviews have the power to draw in more business.

Decisions about product branding and packaging are crucial since, in the current era of globalization, consumers have access to a wide range of brands and merchandise. Since not every customer likes every brand, they choose their brand only after carefully considering a variety of variables related to the product, its manufacturer, its brand name, its packaging, its price, its contents, and several other considerations (Reader, 2021).

The beverage business is one well-known example of how branding and packaging are essential in the worldwide market, especially with soft drinks. The competition between Coca-Cola and PepsiCo, two of the biggest beverage corporations in the world, is a prime illustration of branding and packaging tactics in action on a worldwide level. Both businesses make significant investments in branding and marketing to set themselves apart from one another and other businesses (Morgan, 2023). Both Coca-Cola and Pepsi, with their iconic logos, advertising campaigns, and brand messaging, have created strong emotional connections with consumers worldwide, catering to a wide range of demographics and cultural preferences.

Packaging and branding are important in several businesses in the Philippines, representing the nation's diverse customer preferences and cultural influences. In their branding and packaging, many Filipino food products highlight traditional tastes and cultural history (BMplus, 2020). Brands like "Barrio Fiesta" and "Oishi" are two examples of how they do this by using vibrant package designs and imagery that convey a sense of Filipino identity—such as local products, well-known places, or traditional festivals

The local handicraft business in Baguio City is one major area where branding and packaging are evident, especially with woven items like bags, baskets, and fabrics manufactured by indigenous people like the Cordillerans. An excellent example of how branding and packaging interact with cultural identity, tourism, and economic growth is the local handicraft sector in Baguio City. Craftspeople in Baguio City can draw attention to their unique designs, use traditional techniques, and provide creative packaging to highlight their cultural history and contribute to the city's thriving artisan sector (See & See, 2022). To establish a branding system for goods created in Baguio, Councilor Leandro Yangot, Jr. is proposing an ordinance that would require high-quality items to have a "seal of excellence." The proposed ordinance states that the City Government of Baguio will establish a branding system to accredit producers of Baguio-made goods to improve the quality, standards, excellence, and marketability of goods that the city and its residents can be proud of (Tribune, 2022).

In the competitive business world, packaging and branding are essential. They assist businesses in making a lasting impression on customers and standing out among their target market. According to Verma (2019), when brands develop their packaging, they must ensure that it conveys a renewed vision and mandate, thus businesses must choose appropriate packaging because it raises the perceived value of products. Effective packaging influences consumers' choices by considering the product's quality in addition to its design. In the end, it provides customers with an experience they won't forget.

Packaging must represent the company's values, guiding principles, objectives, and distinctive selling propositions for branding to be successful. Fisher-Buttinger and Vallaster (2020) reinforce this concept in their book, emphasizing that packaging should revolve around a concise set of values embraced by the entire organization, extending outward to all key stakeholders. As a result, it sets a business apart from competitors' offerings and leaves a lasting impression on customers.

Branding helps a business stand out from the competition in terms of the products it offers, making it a crucial component of marketing strategies. Although the main purpose of branding and packaging is to

promote products, as recorded in most marketing textbooks, they also aid in general business promotion. Customers are initially drawn to a product because it is housed in eye-catching packaging, which goes a long way toward influencing how they view the brand in the long run. This is confirmed in an article by Agariya et al. (2020); according to them, consumers view packaging as crucial when buying products because it serves as a signal and provides information. They further elaborated that packaging is indeed important since it is the first thing a consumer sees before making the final decision to buy. Better packaging also increases the likelihood that customers will turn out.

In marketing, two basic elements cannot be separated: consumer happiness and organizational goal fulfillment. The operations of the company should benefit both the consumers and the business (Adivarekar, 2023). Businesses should flexibly offer products that are reasonably acceptable for their customers, while consumers should have the freedom to choose products without being restricted to these goods. In such a situation, both the customer and the company would benefit.

Kotler (2003) defines packaging as wrapping material around a consumer item that serves to contain, identify, describe, protect, display, promote, and make the product marketable. A box is a typical example and mostly used type of packaging for a certain product bought. Packaging helps preserve the product and its quality during shipping and also while creating a long-lasting branded experience even once it arrives to a customer (Kotler, 2019). These boxes or packaging may come in a variety of shapes and sizes, depending also on the type of material used.

Consumers connect with brands that align with their lifestyles, and they are motivated to choose products that reflect their identities (Mininni, 2019). This connection goes beyond superficial aspects like packaging. Packaging serves as an asset to the product by conveying that there is substance beyond the exterior. It must reflect the quality of the product it contains. Additionally, packaging should have aesthetic appeal, enticing customers to engage with it and initiating a lasting experience that surpasses their expectations (Kotler, 2019).

Literature Review

Kotler and Keller (2019) articulated that a successful branding strategy establishes a connection with the audience, fostering enduring relationships and inspiring customer loyalty. Creating a brand that deeply resonates with consumers sets a company apart, positioning it for success. When consumers emotionally connect with a brand's perception, it captivates their hearts on a deeper level. The strength of a company's brand can make all the difference between thriving as an enterprise or struggling for recognition and revenue. A good example of a company that created a long-lasting connection with its customers is Apple, as highlighted by Wildfeuer (2019) in her thesis.

Overall, a well-crafted brand identity integrated with thoughtful packaging not only influences consumer decisions but also establishes a strong brand presence in the market. Prioritizing customer satisfaction while aligning with business goals is essential for success in today's market environment (Admin, 2023). Found in supermarkets, restaurants, and more, packaging has become an essential component of our everyday routines. Its main function is to guarantee that products or contents are protected throughout handling, transportation, and storage, regardless of their destination (Hellström et al., 2019). Moreover, packaging plays a significant role in prolonging the lifespan of items, ensuring their freshness and edibility for an extended duration (Lindh et al., 2019).

Packaging in today's market must strike a harmonious balance between practicality and aesthetics, as outlined by Шершнева (2022) in his article. It should prioritize user-friendliness and convenience

without compromising its visual appeal and attractiveness. Additionally, modern packaging needs to meet certain criteria, such as utilizing biodegradable or bio-based materials, so as not to contribute to the growing toxic waste that poses a threat to our environment (Nilsen-Nygaard et al., 2021). Embracing innovative approaches, particularly the incorporation of recyclable materials such as paper, is highly valued within the packaging industry.

The increasing demand for sustainable and eco-friendly practices prompts businesses to consider the role of packaging in shaping their overall identity. Particularly, food packaging holds immense significance as it not only contributes to a business's image but also needs to meet the specific requirements of the food it contains. By embracing environmentally conscious packaging methods, companies can showcase their dedication to ensuring customer satisfaction and environmental responsibility (Admin, 2020).

Plastics have emerged as the most widely used material for packaging due to their advantageous characteristics (Nilsen-Nygaard et al., 2021). Being lightweight, they offer convenience in handling and transportation. Additionally, their low cost makes them economically attractive for businesses. Plastics also possess moldability, allowing for various shapes and sizes, and their vibrant colors and appearance often attract consumers.

However, a critical consideration when using plastic packaging is whether it truly sustains the quality of the food and beverage products being sold in the market. Walaszczyk et al. (2019) outlined the same consideration in their article, which focused on food safety. The food industry heavily relies on packaging to maintain the freshness and integrity of its products, and it is essential to ensure that the chosen packaging materials effectively protect against contamination.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework/Paradigm of the Study

To create new experiences, sensations, and relationships with the audience, a brand's visual, together with its packaging aspect, holds significant weight (Keller, 2019). It encompasses graphic elements that set the brand and packaging apart and make an enduring impression on consumers, creating within them a sense of connection. The brand and package act as the initial step in showcasing a company's identity to customers by offering products and services. It is therefore important to note that the brand and package must possess a distinctive and defined presence in terms of looks, conduct, and efficacy in the fiercely competitive market (Kladou et al., 2019).

Brand / Branding

Branding is more significant than a company might realize. On the surface, the brand could appear to be made up just of visual components like logos and colors, but it encompasses all aspects of your company's identity. The personal brand defines the business itself (Jones, 2021).

Kladou et al. (2019) stated that a brand represents the desired impression that a business intends to leave in the minds of its target market, incorporating its distinct characteristics. The identity itself influences the behavior, personality, and appearance of the business towards its consumers. It encompasses both tangible and intangible aspects of a certain business, such as the products being offered and services as well as the background of the business, the name itself, the brand image of the logo, and its personality (Farhana, 2019). Developing a brand aids with the overall marketing of the business. As the business develops its brand identity, it undertakes essential steps and adheres to specific procedures. Through ideas, creativity, and personification, this brand identity fosters a strong connection with the target

market. When a brand identity has been created, it sets the business apart from competitors offering similar products and services.

Keller (2019) emphasized that thinking and creating a business brand identity must be composed of the seven (7) key elements to make it as authentic as possible, which includes the following: The story, personality, visual identity, communication style, product or service, the brand name, and the sensory identity. The story unveils the distinctive origins of the business and the progression of its products and services from its inception to the present state. Additionally, it may highlight significant events, pivotal moments, and success stories that the business founders have experienced throughout the years of its operation. With regard to the brand name, it is intended to be easily recalled by people, promoting recognition and evoking feelings of emotion (Kotler, 2019). Depending on how unique it is, it might be a combination of words, letters, or even numbers. A brand's personality is akin to that of a human being in a way that it may move people with its behaviors and values. It serves as the basis for a company's identity, both verbally and visually. The brand turns into a tool for communicating with various audiences, delivering the intended message of the company through speech, energy, emotions, and different communication channels (Agariya et al., 2019). It embodies and represents all of the business's characteristics thus the products and services must complement the entire brand and identity of the company because customers frequently judge businesses by their brands, names, and identities.

Package / Packaging

Packaging not only serves a purpose but also greatly influences a company's image. It plays a crucial part in encouraging responsible consumption, especially within the food and beverage industry. As the importance of being environmentally aware increases, packaging is now faced with the task of being environmentally friendly, hence businesses resort to sustainable packaging. Sustainable packaging not only addresses environmental issues but also ensures the safety of food and prevents illnesses caused by contamination. By preserving the quality of food and beverages, packaging plays a crucial role in satisfying and protecting customers (Admin, 2023).

Packaging plays a significant role in the business industry. Walaszczyk et al. (2019) agree that packaging not only enhances product presentation but also ensures the safety of the contents. The sustainability of packaging relies on various factors such as selecting appropriate raw materials, incorporating renewable resources, and ensuring the overall effectiveness and efficiency of packaging solutions. When businesses prioritize sustainable practices and materials, they contribute positively to the environment while meeting consumer demands for high-quality and safe products.

Statement of the Problem

This paper critically examines the significant impact of branding and packaging in the highly competitive retail market. Through this research, valuable insights will be gained into the standing and exposure of various companies' brands in the marketplace, shedding light on the true potency of branding and packaging compared to their competitors. By studying the competitive market, this research aims to uncover the profound effects of packaging and branding on the marketing productivity of products.

Significance of the Study

This study helps business owners understand how effective branding and packaging result in high sales volume, positive corporate images, and consumer loyalty. This study also helps consumers understand their legal entitlement to branded, well-packaged goods so they can make informed decisions when shopping for high-quality goods. The research will add to the body of information already available on branding and product packaging. Finally, it will contribute to the provision of reliable data for the next researchers on the subject.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To identify the factors that have influenced packaging and branding as a marketing strategy;
- To explore the reasons driving businesses in their labeling and packaging approaches;
- To establish the correlation between product branding and the development of corporate imagery;
- To assess the extent of product branding and packaging; and
- To examine the impact of packaging and branding on a company's marketing efficiency.

Methodology

Research, as defined by Sekaran (2019) entails structured, methodical, data-based, critical, unbiased, scientific research or examination of a particular issue. It is carried out to find answers or solutions to given problems. Consequently, the methodologies used in this study's investigation are consistently applied throughout the study's execution to achieve its primary goal of determining whether the impacts of packaging and branding have any discernible effect on the marketing effectiveness of milk tea products.

Study Design

The structure and methodology of a study constitute what is known as the research design. In this research, the survey research approach was adopted. This approach to investigating products was chosen for its consistent cross-sectional nature, aiming to capture individual perspectives on specific aspects of branding and product packaging. By extracting data from numerous distinct cases, this approach provides generic statistics that offer valuable insights.

Sample / Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised various owners or managers of twenty (20) renowned and established milk tea establishments situated within the City of Baguio, particularly those located in the central business district, specifically in Session Road and General Luna areas, which were pre-selected based on the visibility of the milk tea establishment where customers usually pass by. Establishment owners and managers play a crucial role in the day-to-day operations and overall success of milk tea establishments. Therefore, understanding their perspectives and experiences is vital for developing strategies that can enhance sustainability and growth.

These milk tea establishments have crafted uniquely designed beverages with the intention of enticing consumers to showcase their creations on social media platforms. This strategy has gained popularity and attracted significant attention. As a result, there is a widespread desire to engage in the social phenomenon that has emerged around the beverages' visual appeal and taste.

Data Gathering Tools

The primary data source for this study was a self-developed interview guide. The interview guide encompassed two main sections: the initial section gathered respondents' personal information, while the sole focus of the second section was on aspects related to branding and product packaging and their implications for the business. The tool guide for the interview was validated with a validation tool, which became the basis for the research.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher employed the following methods to gather information: (1) analysis, (2) interviews/personal interviews, and (3) validated tool/guide. The research addressed the following issues through questions designed to guide and empower the respondents. These questions were presented to the respondents through a printed tool guide with accompanying instructions, allowing them to express their opinions and share observations. The researcher derived conclusions by carefully listening to the answers provided during the interviews.

Treatment of Data

To understand the opinions of several businesses and goods, it's crucial to collect data and insights from target audiences, employers, and managers of different milk tea shops in the City of Baguio. Because it yields more in-depth information, open-ended inquiries are typically the most beneficial approach to obtain the information needed in this research. Questions that need more than a simple "Yes/No" or multiple-choice response are known to be as open-ended questions. To get fresh, frequently subjective information from the respondents in their own words, open-ended inquiries are phrased to necessitate an explanatory response.

Open-ended inquiries provide greater details and in-depth responses. Open-ended survey creation and distribution are made simple with the help of questionnaires and interviews. The researcher's output from the employer's or manager's interview/feedback data from interviews to prepare it for automated analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Respondents must participate voluntarily in this study. They are free to leave the research at any time if they choose to do so. To comply with the principle of informed consent, the researcher provided respondents with sufficient information and assurances. This enables them to fully comprehend the potential consequences and make an independent decision on whether or not to participate, without any undue pressure or coercion.

Further, it is also important to avoid using derogatory, insensitive, or any other undesirable language when creating survey, interview, and focus group questions. Ensuring respondent confidentiality and anonymity are of utmost significance. Additionally, maintaining a maximum degree of objectivity throughout the research both in conversations and analyses is crucial.

Results and Discussion

Factors that have influenced packaging and branding as a marketing strategy

Respondents, as collated, identified the factors that have influenced packaging and branding as a marketing strategy. The result of the survey questionnaire yielded the following top five factors

influencing packaging and branding as a marketing strategy: 1) for product/service recognition of the target market, 2) for benchmarking purposes, 3) for aesthetic purposes, 4) to be unique from other competitors in the market with the use of different types of packaging, and 5) customized packaging for visibility purposes. The above-stated factors, especially items 1, 3, 4, and 5, agree with Verma's (2019) statement in his book that packaging often creates brand awareness and imagery among customers. However, he also stated that the contribution of packaging towards a brand's performance might be difficult to establish but its influence cannot be completely ruled out.

In a separate book, Jones' (2021) idea that a personal brand sets a business apart encapsulates the above findings as they agree. The conclusions drawn from the compiled respondent data highlight branding and packaging's diverse effects as crucial marketing tactics. True to Verma's (2010) statements, packaging is not just a pretty face; it has a deeper meaning. It includes useful factors like retailer acceptability and transportation durability. Therefore, to maintain product integrity and market accessibility, packaging design must strike a balance between functional requirements and aesthetic appeal. Packaging is essentially a brand's face and an important point of contact with customers. Its impact is multifaceted, ranging from improving brand identification and uniqueness to handling issues and concerns.

Reasons driving businesses in their labeling and packaging approaches

Technology (2024) discussed on its website that in today's competitive market, accurate labeling is crucial for brand recognition, differentiation, and increasing awareness. A carefully crafted and informative label builds trust and loyalty among customers, which drives product promotion and marketing success. About this, the respondents cited the following reasons that drove their business towards labeling and packaging: 1) ensuring customer comfort - customer satisfaction and easy access, 2) enhancing recognition by the target market through its products and services, 3) expanding branding efforts for better recognition, 4) aligning with management policies on the usage of packaging, 5) leveraging social media impact, especially on marketing strategy, and 6) incorporating packaging as part of its trademark and aesthetic value.

One respondent emphasized the importance of effective packaging as the second reason why they opted for it, stating, "Mas madali po makita at maalala ng mga bibili yung product namin." (It makes our product easier to spot and remember for potential buyers.). This sentiment aligns with one of the fundamental principles of marketing, as outlined by Adivarekar (2023), which emphasizes that company operations should benefit both the business and the customer. It is beneficial for the customer in the sense that packaging improves their overall shopping experience by making products more convenient for buyers to identify and purchase.

Package components that ultimately influence customer choice when selecting distinct items from a collection of convenience goods were identified through empirical testing of the suggested study model. The responses from participants were compiled to provide insight into the various reasons behind the labeling and packaging strategies used by companies. It also reveals the elements of the package that affect customers' decisions when choosing products from a range of convenience goods. Through an understanding of consumer preferences and behavior, companies can enhance their packaging strategies to more successfully engage target audiences and increase sales.

Correlation between product branding and the development of corporate imagery

Product branding, as discussed by Coomber (2019), involves creating a unique identity and perception for a specific product or service, often reflecting and contributing to the overall corporate imagery of a company. Respondents echo this sentiment regarding the correlation between product branding and the development of corporate imagery. In a follow-up interview, respondents with established corporate imagery affirmed a strong correlation. One respondent summarized it by stating, "the way people see a company, like its logo, how it looks, what it says, and what people think about it, affects how they see its products. So, when a company makes its products stand out, they usually use the same style and ideas as the company's overall image to make everything feel connected and remind people of the brand."

While packaging is generally considered a crucial element of product design, it serves a purpose beyond functionality. In branding and marketing, packaging plays an important role because it influences consumer behavior, communicates brand messages, and ultimately affects sales. Thimothy (2019) stated in an article in Forbes that "presentation is everything". In today's market context, business owners or managers may contemplate establishing a brand-new venture or investing in an existing franchise.

The responses from the respondents highlight the connection between corporate image development and product branding. Even though packaging is typically thought of as a useful element of product design, its importance goes beyond that (Agariya et al., 2020). Packaging plays a critical role in branding and marketing because it has the power to influence consumer behavior, communicate brand messages, and affect purchase decisions, all of which impact sales performance, as stated by Keller (2019). By comparing and contrasting the branding and packaging strategies of proprietary and franchised milk tea shops, businesses can glean important lessons for maximizing their marketing efforts. In an increasingly competitive market, insights obtained from such analysis can drive sustainable growth and inform strategic decision-making, whether one is establishing a new venture or improving an existing one (Kladou et al., 2019).

The extent of product branding and packaging

Hanna (2023) mentioned in her article that product branding and packaging play critical roles in the success of a product within the marketplace. It is for these reasons that most companies exert much effort in making their products stand out from others and ensuring customers feel good about buying them.

Respondents, especially those individually owned, stated that most of them did extensive planning beforehand before establishing their shops. Some even benchmarked other established shops to get ideas for their branding and unique packaging. These actions by some respondents show that packaging plays a vital role in a business's marketing strategy.

While packaging is necessary, respondents noted the following difficulties or considerations emerging from the company's choice to package its products: 1) Durability of the packaging - some packaging is damaged during delivery from the suppliers and others may become damaged or cracked upon delivery to customers through delivery partners such as Foodpanda and GrabFood.; 2) Supply delays – Packaging supplies are sometimes delayed in delivery from the supplier due to weather conditions, availability of stocks and priority lists; 3) Spillage of items – This can occur due to undue sealing of cups and burnt seals; and 4) Cost of packaging - The City Government's strict implementation of non-usage of plastics has forced companies to adopt more expensive, eco-friendly packaging.

The results of the assessments made by the respondents highlight how important product branding and packaging are in determining how businesses approach marketing. Although packaging plays a crucial role in communicating brand identity and drawing in customers as mentioned by Keller (2019), selecting the right packaging options presents several issues and concerns. Businesses need to take proactive steps to reduce risks and streamline their packaging procedures in light of these difficulties. Implementing quality control measures to guarantee packaging durability, diversifying supplier sources to reduce supply chain disruptions, investing in training to improve packaging sealing techniques, and looking into affordable yet environmentally friendly packaging solutions to meet regulations while cutting costs are a few examples of strategies (Lindh et al., 2019).

Impact of packaging and branding on a company's marketing efficiency

Finally, respondents emphasized and examined the impact of packaging and branding on a company's marketing efficiency, stating that packaging and branding greatly affect the company's effectiveness. In today's digital era, promoting products and services has become highly influential, leading to increased sales and profits (Fadila et al., 2022). Innovative promotions such as "Forever Buy 1 Take 1" set them apart from competitors, inviting more customers to patronize their products and services. With its uniqueness in the brand and taste, it creates long-lasting loyalty from customers.

The insights from the responses highlight how packaging and branding have a significant impact on how effectively a company markets its products. Fadila et al. (2022) stated that sales growth and profitability in the increasingly digital era are largely dependent on the efficient promotion of goods and services. In an increasingly competitive market, respondents acknowledge the significance of creative marketing tactics in setting themselves apart from competitors and attracting customers. Businesses can improve their marketing effectiveness and achieve sustainable growth in today's competitive landscape by giving priority to packaging and branding strategies that connect with target audiences and communicate unique value propositions (Шершнева, 2022). To create lasting brand relationships and promote long-term business success, it is essential to embrace innovation, make use of digital platforms, and prioritize customer-centric approaches.

Modern food packaging offers a means of making food dependable, hygienic, shelf-stable, and safe. Unfortunately, the majority of food packaging is single-use only and cannot be recycled. Thus, discarded packaging frequently leaves a mess in our rivers. The United Nations has characterized the contamination of oceans with plastics as "a planetary crisis" because of how much food packaging, particularly plastic, has found its way into waterways. This is a concern not only for humans but for all aquatic life. Food packaging also has environmental impacts on our air and soil (Bodamer, 2016).

The main objective of packaging is to safeguard its contents from potential damage that might occur during handling, storage, and transportation. Throughout the whole logistical chain, from the manufacturer to the end-user, packaging maintains the quality of goods. It protects against moisture, light, heat, and other external elements (Tiuttu, 2020).

The retail sector has shifted its emphasis in recent years toward packaging and design (Wildfeuer, 2019). It is generally acknowledged that the way items are displayed significantly affects consumer behavior (Agariya et al., 2019). Studies have demonstrated, for instance, that customers are prepared to pay more for products that are packaged in an eco-friendly manner because they consider them to have better value. As a result, companies are increasingly employing eco-friendly packaging to encourage customers to buy their goods (Walaszczyk et al., 2019).

Various package signals influence how a product is viewed, according to packaging research conducted by Immonen (2019). Customers may find it challenging to distinguish between the product and its packaging as they frequently view the packaging as an integral part of it. Details like the color of the package, the font, the pictures, and the designs may impact the way a product is seen.

The product packaging is essential for drawing customers, convincing them to purchase the goods, and communicating the brand. Consumers' decision-making is facilitated by the product's improved appeal and attractiveness. Two important fields that are closely related to one another are design and marketing. Good design sets apart businesses and makes items stand out from the competition, creating an impression in the eyes of customers. Customers are not just buying a product or a service; they are also buying what it stands for (Thimothy, 2019), hence the importance of making sure that product branding is done effectively.

Considerations for product branding include the appropriate layout and location, the company's logo, the product's packaging, and, notably, a name that accurately communicates the benefits of a certain product. Crafting a product name, according to Ross (2019), requires imagination, linguistic ingenuity, and authenticity to create a product's shorthand identification, especially as technology advances at an increasingly rapid rate.

Conclusion and Recommendations

One of the most valuable instruments in today's marketing communications may be the packaging and the brand. This calls for a more thorough examination of their components and an examination of how those components affect customers' purchasing decisions. Furthermore, beyond each element's purpose, a well-executed combination of these aspects can make the product more visually appealing.

The impact of a package and its elements on consumer purchasing decisions can be revealed by analyzing the importance of their separate elements for consumer choice. Moreover, the impact of package elements on consumers' purchase decisions should be evaluated depending on the consumer's level of involvement, time pressure, or individual characteristics, which are more significant than a company might realize.

The findings of this study indicate that most customers are satisfied with the product quality of the items they purchase, even when there is not a perfect match between high-quality products and their packaging. However, there is a noticeable tendency and favorable mindset towards well-designed packaging which is associated with a perception of higher product quality. In actuality, individuals are becoming more discerning. Packaging has steadily demonstrated its significance in assisting customers by offering delivery services and information. Considering its distinct capability to facilitate communication with customers, there is no doubt about the growing significance of packaging as a tactical tool to draw in customers' focus and impression of the quality of the product.

Branding indeed holds significant importance, and thus businesses must consider this strategy into account. The researcher recommends that businesses, especially milk tea businesses, must take into consideration what draws in clients, safeguards their merchandise, and upholds the integrity of their offerings.

In addition, the researcher also recommends that businesses with properly labeled and packed goods may foster a sense of confidence in consumers and create excitement when consumers open the box. Maintaining uniform packaging and labeling across all items contributes to maintaining a consistent brand identity.

Customers, in today's era of technology and innovations, must look into the quality of products beginning with its packaging and branding. Customers must discover why businesses have chosen such packaging for their products. What's within the box is what matters, after all. The way a product is packaged has a significant impact on how customers view its quality. It acts as the customer's initial point of contact with the product and frequently serves as the foundation for snap decisions.

The researcher also recommends that the University of Baguio, its graduate programs, and even undergraduate programs conduct more research on the impact of packaging and branding on the competitive retail market. Packaging research assists students, who will be future entrepreneurs, in precisely determining what drives customers to choose one product over another (or not at all) and in understanding how effectively their pack works on the shelf. Brands may use this type of study to determine whether a packaging design is likely to succeed or fail. The study of package design involves more than just technical knowledge. Students in a standard curriculum will also be able to produce distinctive, imaginative, sophisticated, and contemporary package designs for future businesses' packaging and branding ideas.

The researcher also recommends that the City Government of Baguio strictly implements City Ordinance number 37 series of 2017 on banning the use of plastics and styro foams in all packaging of the products sold in every establishment around the city. Implementation of the ordinance would help every establishment to adopt innovations and look for other possible packaging that would improve the quality and aesthetic value of their products eco-friendly packaging.

Furthermore, milk tea business owners believe that labels play an important role in guiding customers in terms of consumption and patronage choices. The details provided on the label and its worth must be emphasized while marketing the goods in the marketplace. Moreover, labels should be informative. For instance, as observed during the research, cultural differences do influence businesses' efforts to create product packaging. Therefore, the researcher emphasizes the importance of considering cultural variations when designing the product bundle for milk tea businesses.

References

1. Adivarekar, A. (2023 March 6). *The Impact of Packaging on Branding and Marketing*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-packaging-branding-marketing-akshay-advarekar>
2. Admin. (2020, September 28). *Difference between Branding and Packaging: Meaning, Objectives, Benefits*. BYJUS. <https://byjus.com/commerce/difference-between-branding-and-packaging/>
3. Admin. (2023, August 8). *Difference between branding and packaging* | The Brandsmen. The Brandsmen. <https://thebrandsmen.com/branding-and-packaging>
4. Agariya, A. K., Johari, A., Sharma, H., Chandraul, U., & Singh, D. (2019). *The role of packaging in brand communication*. International Journal of Scientific & Engineering Research, 3(2), ISSN 2229-5518.
5. Biyani, A. (2023 April 20). *What is Franchise Marketing: Importance, Types and Benefits*. Nicejob. <https://get.nicejob.com/resources/franchise-marketing>
6. BMPlus. (2020, October 6). *Barrio Fiesta sees bright spot in rise of 'home cooks,' online entrepreneurs amid pandemic* | BMPlus. BusinessMirror. <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/10/06/barrio-fiesta-sees-bright-spot-in-rise-of-home-cooks-online-entrepreneurs-amid-pandemic/>

7. Copley, M. (2022, May 6). *Branding and packaging: How are they connected?* / *Pioneer Packaging worldwide*. Pioneer Packaging Worldwide. <https://pioneerphoenix.com/branding-and-packaging-how-are-theyconnected/#:~:text=The%20elements%3A%20Packaging%20and%20branding,long%2Dterm%20associations%20with%20customers.>
8. Fadila, D., Lupikawaty, M., Saputra, A. F., Nastiti, A. A., & Aprianti, R. D. (2022). *Branding, packaging, and digital marketing strategies for processed fish business in Pedamaran Village*. *Golden Ratio of Community Services and Dedication*, 2(2), 10–17. <https://doi.org/10.52970/grcsd.v2i2.196>
9. Farhana, M. (2019). *Brand elements lead to brand equity: differentiate or die*. *Information Management and Business Review*, 4(4), 223–233. <https://doi.org/10.22610/imbr.v4i4.983>
10. Fisher-Buttinger, C., & Vallaster, C. (2019). *Connective Branding: Building brand equity in a demanding world*. https://openlibrary.org/books/OL29014416M/Connective_Branding
11. Hellström, D., Olsson, A., & Nilsson, F. (2019). *Managing Packaging Design for Sustainable Development: A compass for Strategic directions*. <https://lup.lub.lu.se/record/8976af3f-9bdc-4f9d-9585-bd4d63aa3f8e>
12. Ibrahim, I., Hamam, Y., et.al. (2022 October 20). *Need for Sustainable Packaging: An Overview*. NCBI. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9609329/>
13. Immonen, L. (2019). *Package cues and their influence on the perception of Premium quality of Premium private label products*. <https://aaltodoc.aalto.fi/items/c3a95344-b48b-4661-96de-2599e3df7901>
14. Jones, K. (2021 March 24). *The Importance of Branding in Business*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2021/03/24/the-importance-of-branding-in-business/?sh=3c26c97b67f7>
15. Keller, K. L. (2019). *Designing and implementing branding strategies*. *Journal of Brand Management*, 6(5), 315–332. <https://doi.org/10.1057/bm.1999.22>
16. Kladou, S., Kavaratzis, M., Rigopoulou, I., & Salonika, E. (2019). *The role of brand elements in destination branding*. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management*, 6(4), 426–435. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jdmm.2016.06.011>
17. Kotler, P. (2003). *The role played by the broadening of marketing movement in the history of marketing thought*. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 24(1), 114–116. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.24.1.114.63903>
18. Lindh, H., Williams, H., Olsson, A., & Wikström, F. (2016). *Elucidating the Indirect Contributions of packaging to Sustainable Development: A Terminology of Packaging Functions and features*. *Packaging Technology & Science/Packaging Technology and Science*, 29(4–5), 225–246. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pts.2197>
19. Marion (2023, March 30). *The Power of a Strong Brand Identity: Definition, Importance, and Key Elements*. *The Branding Journal*
20. Morgan, W. (2023, March 6). *What is the actual difference between Coke and Pepsi?* Sporked. <https://sporked.com/article/coke-vs-pepsi/#:~:text=Pepsi%20contains%20citric%20acid%2C%20while,over%20Pepsi%20from%20the%20beginning.>

21. Nilsen-Nygaard, J., Fernández, E. N., Radusin, T., Rotabakk, B. T., Sarfraz, J., Sharmin, N., Sivertsvik, M., Sone, I., & Pettersen, M. K. (2021). *Current status of biobased and biodegradable food packaging materials: Impact on food quality and effect of innovative processing technologies*. *Comprehensive Reviews in Food Science and Food Safety*, 20(2), 1333–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1541-4337.12715>
22. Reader, B. (2021, May 29). *Branding and packaging for the globalized market*. BXP Magazine. <https://www.bxpmagazine.com/branding-and-packaging-for-the-globalized-market/>
23. Ross, M. (2019). *Branding basics for small business: How to Create an Irresistible Brand on Any Budget*. Norlightspress.com.
24. See, D. A., & See, D. A. (2022, September 23). *Branding system for Baguio products proposed*. HERALD EXPRESS | News in Cordillera and Northern Luzon. <https://baguioheraldexpressonline.com/branding-system-for-baguio-products-proposed/>
25. Technology, P. (2024, March 21). *Why is Effective Product Labelling Important for Packaging? Precision*. <https://pwtech.in/importance-of-product-packaging-and-labelling-solutions/>
26. Tiuttu, T. (2020 January 27). *5 Reasons Why Packaging is Important*. Circularity. <https://4circularity.com/5-reasons-why-packaging-is-important/#:~:text=The%20primary%20purpose%20of%20packaging,heat%20and%20other%20external%20factors.>
27. Timothy, S. (2019, October 31). *Why brand image matters more than you think*. Forbes. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2016/10/31/why-brand-image-matters-more-than-you-think/?sh=29efd62710b8>
28. Tribune, H. (2022, September 22). *Branding system for Baguio Products eyed*. Highland Tribune. <https://highlandtribune.com/news/branding-system-for-baguio-products-eyed/>
29. Walaszczyk, A., Jałmużna, I., & Lewandowski, J. (2019). *Production management and packaging*. *Food Safety and Industry 4.0*. Wydawnictwo Politechniki Łódzkiej Lodz University of Technology. Press. <https://doi.org/10.34658/9788372839206>
30. Wildfeuer, J. (2019). *Branding and Customer Satisfaction: A Research about the Adidas Group*. <https://www.theseus.fi/bitstream/10024/146318/1/Bachelor%20Thesis%20Julia%20Wildfeuer.pdf>
31. Шершнева, Е. Г. (2022). *Biodegradable food packaging: benefits and adverse effects*. *IOP Conference Series. Earth and Environmental Science (Online)*, 988(2), 022006. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/988/2/022006>