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A sétima edição da DESIGNA assume o escopo de promover a discussão e dar visibilidade à investigação sobre a relação que o Design estabelece com o Território, nas suas múltiplas e complexas vertentes.

O Design interage com o Território, sendo-lhe reconhecido o papel crucial que desempenha na valorização dos recursos locais, bem como o seu contributo para a identificação da história, cultura e outros atributos das comunidades onde são gerados os diversos produtos e serviços que projecta. Mas o Design também transforma o território, dado a sua função passar inevitavelmente pela inovação e renovação conceptual dos produtos, dos procedimentos de produção, das estratégias de comunicação e dos serviços associados aos diversos bens. O foco, no Design, é susceptível de alterar a percepção que os distintos agentes de uma determinada cadeia de valor têm sobre o potencial dos distintos territórios, sobretudo pela sua capacidade de integrar diferentes âmbitos da actividade humana, desde a agricultura ao turismo, do artesanato à ciência, da gastronomia à indústria.

O Design contemporâneo e toda a plêiade de conhecimentos e valores a ele associados pode, com facilidade, colocar em diálogo, integrar e explorar dimensões de indivíduos e comunidades outrora subestimados, tanto à escala local como num

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CONSUMER RESPONSES TO PACKAGING ATTRIBUTES OF GIFTWARE DESIGN AS DRIVERS OF BUSINESS INNOVATION GROWTH IN MALAYSIA

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In today's massive, rapid changes in consumers' demand and purchase desires, consumer responses to packaging attributes are significant for the businesses. It creates a better relationship with consumers, producing new ideas to enhance businesses' marketing performances, strategies and innovation growth. However, when entering a Malaysian market this is unique because it is a multiracial country; the marketers and designers must be aware of its complex social behaviour in order to build strong relationships with consumers. This paper presents selected findings of doctoral research exploring how SMEs in Malaysia are leveraging on packaging attributes of giftware design to enhance consumers' involvement with products and emphasising consumers' responses as drivers for business innovation growth from a management point of view. A gualitative method was used, conducting in-depth interviews with three companies to examine how local SME's develop packaging attributes of giftware design to fulfil specific consumer needs and influence their purchase intention in Malaysia. The results show that consumer responses to packaging attributes of giftware design such as colour, typography, ease of use, materials and shape can generate positive or negative responses and have a significant role in influencing their purchase intentions. The main conclusion of this paper is significant for businesses and marketers because it shows how the impact of packaging attributes of giftware design can establish an effective competitive

marketing strategy and using consumer responses from packaging attributes drives business innovation growth in the right direction.

#### Keywords

Consumer purchase intention; packaging attributes; giftware design; Malaysia

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The multi-racial cultural of Malaysia drives the packaging development and innovation in Malaysia. The various cultures of various people of Malaysia become a significant factor for businesses to produce or design packaging to reflect all races' needs and desires and correspond with all consumers' values and traits at once. In the Malaysian multi-racial market, the giftware products are extremely significant as in other developed countries' markets, however, due to cultural differences, the marketers and designers must understand the cultural meanings attached when producing a product with its packaging attributes (Othman, Ong, & Teng, 2005). In the marketing strategies, packaging attributes is significant for businesses to communicate the benefit of products to consumers and influence the process of decision-making (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). The shape and material of packaging are powerful primary attributes because consumers have direct contact with products and these distinguish the brand from other competitors (Hildebrandt, 2012). Primary packaging in giftware design plays a significant role in reflecting the business image and enable the business to communicate with consumers to attract their purchase attention. Rundh (2013) argued that packaging contributes to business success where it comprises the consideration process of design and development such as logistic, commercial and environmental functions. Therefore, this study will address a research gap about consumer responses to packaging attributes of giftware design in Malaysia and its role to influence the purchase intention to make a purchase. The result of this study is expected to contribute to the correlations of consumer responses with packaging and marketing as a driver of business innovation in Malaysia. Even though packaging attributes become a significant marketing tool for business success, however, the responses from consumers of their perceptions of packaging value can enhance their loyalty and promote long-term consumer-brand relationships (Chiu, Hsieh, Li, & Lee, 2005). From a managerial perspective, the manufacturers and marketers must develop strategies by focusing on consumer-perceived value of packaging attributes to minimise the problems by anticipating consumer needs in the right direction. This paper will therefore discuss the significance of consumer responses to packaging attributes and their role as innovation key driver of

business growth. Moreover, the rest of paper will also discuss the role of packaging attributes create opportunities for the manufacturers and designers to generate unique designs in order to maintain with the changing consumer demands and to differentiate from other competitors.

# 2.PACKAGING FROM MARKETING PERSPECTIVES

The packaging is a powerful selling point to communicate with consumers, attracting new consumers' attention and influencing their perceptions and evaluations of products (Simms & Trott, 2010). This argument is supported by Bloch (1995) and Veryzer (1995) who write that product design or package appearance can influence consumer's evaluation or choice towards a product. For instance, Rundh (2009) argues that packaging which has substantial features such as a brand communication medium for consumer products, create brand identity and differentiation from homogeneous consumer products, protecting products and capturing consumer attention on the store shelf. Packaging attributes such as shape, colour, orientation and graphics can be described as an interactive tool at the point of sale and the image of brands which influence consumer purchase intention and their decision-making process (Westerman et al., 2013). In this sense, packaging design enhances consumers' unintentional purchase decisions at the shelf, gains attention for unfamiliar brands, increases sales, and reduces spending on traditional brand--building mass-media advertising and growing management recognition to create differentiation and identity of brand (Underwood, 2003; Underwood & Klein, 2002; Underwood, Klein, & Burke, 2001).

The term of packaging is understood as used in communication activities, however, it is also used to influence decision-making processes. In this term, the combination of packaging attributes such as brand logo, colours, fonts, materials, typography, descriptions, shapes, size and other attributes provide rich brand associations and simulate the purchase intention. Packaging is the consumer's first impression that evokes their attention before making a final decision to purchase the product (Ampuero & Vila, 2006). The brand communicates with consumers through packaging attributes such as colour, design, form and message (Silayoi & Speece, 2004, 2007).

# 2.1 Packaging as a marketing tactic in Malaysian context

The Sixth Malaysia Plan had a massive impact on positive social and spiritual values in order to enhance the sense of national pride and consciousness within the public. Therefore, the government of Malaysia has encouraged the local manufacturers to

produce products that are designed with some added values to fit Malaysian tastes and preferences in order to produce successful products. People now are aware of and concerned with the product they purchase and consume, therefore the attributes of packaging become a significant medium to convey messages and to provide information as well as the quality of products. The elements of packaging build consumers' confidence and regain trust in products brand name and guality (Latiff, Rezai, Mohamed, & Ayob, 2016). The demographic and psychological factors also reflect the consumers' choices, consumer behaviour intentions and consumption attitudes towards packaging attributes in Malaysia. Moreover, packaging has become a significant tool in marketing for innovation and product differentiation at the stores. Therefore, understanding the process of families' decision-making in purchasing goods must be taken into account by businesses because it may vary depending on other variables such as family status, household size and income, demographic and others. The involvement between businesses, marketers and others in product development should reflect what design intentions are to be communicated and should assess whether their intentions are in line with people's personal or social values and whether their products can be aesthetically appreciated (Da Silva, Crilly, & Hekkert, 2015).

#### 2.2 Consumer responses to packaging attributes

From a marketing point of view, according to Cui (2015) nostalgic psychology of the consumer has been used widely by businesses as their marketing strategy where it is used as a medium to express and promote nostalgia culture and create an effective marketing promotion. The responses from consumers in Malaysia represents another significant element for businesses managing long-term consumer-product relationship. It is because the purchase experience and definition of product value through its attributes are different than in other countries. The culture influence on the purchase intention of product have different purposes. Overby, Woodruff, & Gardial (2005) emphasise consumer value perception and means-end theory by Wood (1997), where consumer value is perceived by consumers, attached to a product/ service in the context of use situations and a worthwhile trade-off between what a consumer receives from a seller and what s/he gives up. From a consumer perspective, a nostalgic packaging attributes stimulate consumers to purchase the product and attract their attention by reminiscing the memories and specific symbolism that related to their personal lives, thus stimulating their purchase intention (Cui, 2015). The use of shape to attract consumers' attention has been investigated by Sevilla & Kahn (2014). The role of shape in packaging affects consumers' size perception, preference and consumption quantities. The findings also suggest that the 'completeness' shape of product can stimulate consumers' perceptions, enhance consumptions and their purchase intention. Packaging enhances the image and reputation of business, therefore consumers' perceptions and its capability linked with product offerings such as its reputations for innovation or quality (Brodie, Whittome, & Brush, 2009).

Figure 1 presents a conceptual framework which visually interprets situating designer intent within the context of the other determinants of product form (Crilly, Moultrie, & Clarkson, 2009). In the context of consumption, the intended consumer responses are able "to draw attention to the product; foster recognition of product type; generate attraction or desire; support comprehension of function; encourage attribution of qualities; promote personal identification; stimulate emotion and provoke action" (p.230). The theoretical framework was based on the product form; however, the framework used as a guideline because it is well suited for the use to examining to address the issues by examining the role of consumer responses toward packaging attributes as a driver of business innovation in Malaysia.

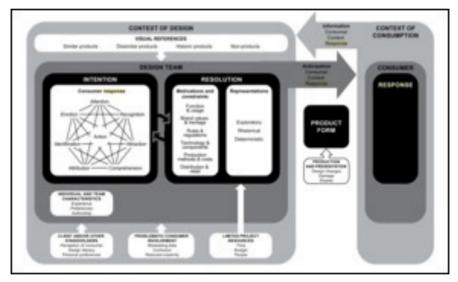


Figure 1 – A conceptual framework

# 3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers, marketers and designers to gain an in-depth insight of the impact packaging attributes to attract consumers' attention and purchase intention. Semi-structured interviews were used to achieve optimum use of interview time, and the interview guide serves to explore the participants more systematically and comprehensively. This method involves face-to-face interview and general focus to gain in-depth insight and understanding of the studied phenomenon (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In-depth interview is also used to understand the point of view by having conversations with specific people and to illuminate research topics, also with a systematic questions list with an individual or in a group (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Yeo et al., 2014).

The interviews were undertaken at three companies in Malaysia with approximately 45 to 60 minutes per session. The participants were associated with varied backgrounds specialising in administrative, design, marketing and production experiences. The companies were chosen because they specialise in giftware products. A total of eleven semi-structured interviews were undertaken at three companies to obtain the employees' perspectives and opinions toward the company's management as well as marketing strategies. This interview served to strengthen the data of how packaging design attributes can evoke consumer responses from certain cultures. The interviews were used to strengthen the data of how packaging attributes can stimulate consumer purchase intention from various cultures. They also provide detail and wide perspectives of how companies integrate brand marketing strategy to influence consumer perceptions and the purchase intention based on specific demographics.

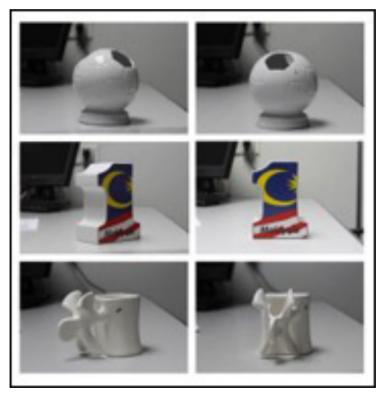
## 4. RESULTS

The results from the interviews indicate that consumer responses to packaging attributes of giftware design have a significant role in driving business innovation growth in Malaysia. The participants mentioned that packaging design plays an important role in helping companies to increase business sales and the product innovation add-values. They also stated that effective packaging not only portrayed through its design shape, functionality and structure but the graphic and typography brings out the fundamental innovation of packaging. From the manufacturer and designer points of view, this indicates that packaging attributes are the key to attracting consumer attention to purchase the product as well as to make it stand out on the shelves from other competitors.

The shape of packaging represents the company's identity and style to attract consumers to the product. Shape of packaging is a significant factor for eliciting consumers' emotional responses and attracting their purchase intention. By providing personalisation as a marketing strategy, it is a way to influence consumers' perceptions and capability to satisfy their needs by highlighting specific elements to enhance personal value based on consumers' requirements and giving a premium look to the brand. Consumer experience using the product through its packaging attributes can create brand loyalty when they are willing to repurchase the product. The emotional attachment created between consumers and personalised products can gain brand loyalty which influences them to repurchase the products. It is also demonstrated that consumer responses to personalised packaging are more attractive, encouraging them to purchase the product. Malaysia is a multi-racial country and therefore, Malaysia has many festivals and cultural celebrations in one year. For instance, Eid Mubarak (celebrated by Malays), Chinese New Year (celebrated by Chinese), Diwali (celebrated by Indians) and Christmas (celebrated by Christians). The shape, colour and graphics of packaging design include added festive elements to enhance sales at point of sale. The packaging attributes convey messages and information effectively where people are looking for specific products as seasonal gifts or appreciation gifts.

The results show that overall shape and colour of packaging attributes give a premium look to the brand and give impact to consumers' purchase intention because of the packaging can convey its uniqueness and make it memorable rather than 'nice to look at'. Consumer responses to the choice of products, brand, dealer, quantities and frequency can be influenced by several levels of society: culture, subcultures, social classes, reference groups and face-to-face groups (Kotler, 1965).

The packaging can also be used as a medium to influence culture and values that fit with the local preferences and influence their purchase intention. Focusing on the consumer responses to business innovation growth, the packaging shape was found to have significantly important attributes that have a strong relationship with consumer purchase intention. The aesthetic packaging attributes has influence in consumers' minds on the product's perceived expectations, symbolic meaning and guality. For example, Figure 2 shows personalised pen holders and mug which represent the unique and symbolise specific meanings. The top photos are designed as a gift for the participants for the football match and has ball shape that inspired by the football event. Then, the next pen holder represented 1 Malaysia logo which was a programme designed by the 6th Malaysian Prime Minister to promote ethnic harmony, national unity and efficient government. Meanwhile, the mug indicates the bone character and was designed specifically for the orthopaedic event in Malaysia. Particularly, the participants indicated that the shape of packaging communicates specific message that elicits consumers' emotion and maximise consumers' mind to memorise the meanings attached from it.



*Figure 2* – Personalised shapes of packaging evokes memories and influences purchase intention

Furthermore, the material for packaging is one of the significant attributes. The participants pointed out that the local consumers are not particularly concerned about the 100% local made, therefore, the corporation focuses on the cost of materials and its quality to enhance consumers' intention to purchase. The sustainability of packaging material has always been a consideration in the manufacturing process. Previously, the participants used plastics for the packaging and now they have changed by using recycled paper for the packaging. The participants are concerned about environmental issues and preferring non-toxic materials and processes, as well as maintaining profit. Moreover, the corporation is directing on sustainable business, minimal impact on environment and expanding the business into a global market, not only in Asia. In this sense, the manufacturers and designers use sustainable packaging material to attract consumers using the value of environmental responsibility and thus attracting to purchase the product.



Figure 3 – Personalised packaging for festive seasons

The participants pointed out that consumers' responses to packaging attributes can be translated into satisfaction and feeling appreciated. Packaging attributes represent the quality of products and differentiation. The uniqueness and quality derived from packaging attributes create brand lovalty as well as enhancing the product value. The participants also demonstrated that the designers ensuring the ingredient and manufacturing processes sustain the guality of end products as their business strategy. The longer duration of product use can create positive consumer judgements and benefits, and make consumers loval to the brand. The visual form of packaging becomes a significant factor to present specific symbolic associations and meanings. Therefore, during the design process, the manufacturers and designers must have a better understanding of consumer needs in developing and improving new and existing packaging. The first impression of the product is packaging that represents the product guality and its originality. The relationship between product guality, functionality and long-term reliability as well as business success can strengthen the consumer loyalty towards the brand. The businesses must determine the important elements packaging of products to consumers such as the reliability, durability and product support to lead a better business performance (Garvin, 1984). Providing high guality products is a way to influence consumers' judgements and capability to satisfy their needs. Consumer experience using the product through its packaging attributes can create brand loyalty when they are willing to repurchase the product.

In addition, colours are a significant main contributor to business innovation growth where the packaging allows consumer to identify and recognise the brand on shelves. The colours are also the first impression of what consumers can expect from the product. Colour communicates the image of brand and influences consumers' perceptions with specific meanings towards the product. Figure 3 showed that colour is one significant packaging element to attract consumers in different ways where it elicits emotional responses and influences consumers' perceptions towards the product. for example, the red colour for packaging were chosen: these are particularly carefully selected to represent the company and symbolises the Chinese culture and sell during Chinese New Year in Malaysia. The participants pointed out that the colour of packaging is part of the brand's identity as well as to differentiate from other competing offerings to enhance business profits. The influence of colour of packaging significantly influences consumer perception, behaviour and preferences of the appearance of product (Piqueras-Fiszman & Spence, 2012). The results of the study highlighted consumers' minds trigger memories of their brand in packaging. The colours enhance brand's personality which consumers are able to recognise and identify the brand, which strongly influences the purchase intention.

# 5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the interviews with managers, marketers and designers with three companies shown an interesting perception from managerial perspectives of the impact packaging attributes to consumer responses in driving business innovation growth. The study has provided an in-depth understanding of consumer responses in a cross-cultural context. The attributes of packaging such as shape, materials and colours in giftware design become significant as marketing tools to influence consumer purchase intention and for differentiation purposes as the designs need to be unique and stand out for consumers to remember. Furthermore, packaging is capable of creating nostalgic marketing where it is able to evoke consumers' memories and stimulate desire to purchase the product. Consumer responses towards the packaging attributes facilitate businesses to strengthen the brand values that relate to personal purposes. Personalised shapes of packaging such as inspired by and symbolising relationships, affection, friendship, or nationalism can create and evoke memories for specific seasonal festivals (e.g. Christmas, Eid Mubarak, National day, Friendship day or other specific occasions). The study shows the significance of correlations between consumer responses to packaging attributes and businesses' marketing strategy.

The results of this study suggest that, from a marketing perspective of packaging in the Malaysian context, the attributes of packaging such as colours, materials and shapes communicate with consumer experiences and memories. Moreover, it is also used to show differentiation of its uniqueness and stimulate positive consumer responses that can enhance innovation growth in business. The result is coherent with Cui (2015) who studied the implementation of nostalgia marketing and Rundh (2016) of the role of packaging within marketing and value creation. Further studies focusing on consumers' expectations of how they choose their products in a straightforward manner in the Malaysian context will also consider determining consumers' characteristics such as goals, roles, behaviour, product physical attributes, needs, preferences, opinions, innovation and environmental factors that can influence purchase intention. Furthermore, the effect of packaging design forms through new idea development in the design process will be further explored.

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