

The Effectiveness of Bumiputra SME Food Product Packaging in the Malaysian Customers' Perception

L'EFFICACITÉ DE L'EMBALLAGE DES PRODUITS ALIMENTAIRES DES PME BUMIPUTRA DANS LA PERCEPTION DES CONSOMMATEURS MALAISIEUS

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Abstract: The effectiveness of food packaging design and the role of product packaging as a vehicle for consumers' perception is an issue that is globally discussed. The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging in relation to Malaysian customers' perception. Effectiveness of packaging is very important for Bumiputra's SME as this phenomenon was found in the previous study to contribute to the increase of sales return. This study is currently important because effective food packaging is one of the problems that arise among Bumiputra's SME especially in enhancing high sales and pinfiltration strategy in the global market. To achieve effectiveness of food product packaging goals, knowledge about consumer psychology is important. Bumiputra's SME need to understand consumer responses to their packaging method employed, in order to increase their sales. This paper also seek to discuss the need to understand consumers' perception in order to correctly design the packaging with suitable color, typography and convenient of usage to the customers. Four independent variables were chosen related to design and graphical form, color, typography, and convenient of usage. This study will reports on the findings of 100 Malaysian customers randomly chosen to response on the questionnaires at the SME Expo in Seberang Jaya which are held twice a year. The evaluation of Malaysian customers' perception holds importance to those Bumiputra's SME who have been able to understand the right food packaging in the eyes of their customers.

Key words: Effectiveness of SME product packaging; Malaysian customers' perception; Color; Design and graphical form; Typography; Convenient of usage

Résumé: L'efficacité de la conception de l'emballage des produits alimentaires et le rôle de l'emballage du produit en tant qu'un véhicule pour la perception des consommateurs est une question en discussion générale. Le but de cette étude est d'examiner l'efficacité de l'emballage des produits alimentaires des PME Bumipoutra par rapport à la perception des consommateurs malaisiens. L'efficacité de l'emballage est très importante pour les PME Bumipoutra, parce que l'on a constaté dans l'étude précédente qu'elle peut affecter les retours de vente. Cette étude est d'une importance actuelle, car l'emballages alimentaire efficace est l'un des problèmes qui se posent au sein des PME Bumipoutra et plus précisément dans le renforcement de vente et dans la stratégie

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d'infiltration sur le marché mondial. Les connaissances de la psychologie des consommateurs sont importantes pour atteindre des objectifs d'efficacité de l'emballage des produits alimentaires. Les PME Bumiputra ont besoin de comprendre les avis des consommateurs sur leur méthode de l'emballage, afin d'augmenter leurs ventes. Cet article tente également de discuter de la nécessité de comprendre la perception des consommateurs afin de réaliser un bon design avec une couleur appropriée, une typographie pertinente et une utilisation commode pour les clients. Quatre variables indépendantes liées à la conception ont été choisies: la forme graphique, la couleur, la typographie et l'utilisation pratique. Cette étude présente les résultats de 100 clients malaisiens choisis au hasard pour répondre à des questionnaires à l'Expo des PME à Seberang Jaya qui a lieu deux fois par an. L'évaluation de la perception des consommateurs malaisiens revêt d'une importance pour les PME Bumiputra qui sont capables de comprendre le juste emballage des produits alimentaires dans les yeux de leurs clients.

Mots clés: Efficacité de l'emballage des produits alimentaires des PME; Perception des consommateurs malaisiens; Couleur; Design et forme graphique; Typographie; Utilisation pratique

1. INTRODUCTION

Perception of a food product has been shown to be affected by many individual factors. These factors include taste, odor, information from labeling and images, attitudes, memory from previous experience, price, prestige, nutritional content, health belief, familiarity and brand loyalty (Nazlin, 1999; Kronl & Lau, 1978, 1982; Raats et al., 1995). Sensory attributes have been known to play a significant role in overall perception and acceptance of a food product. It has been well established that the level of pleasantness or unpleasantness of a food product is affected by the intensity of food-related sensory attributes (Nazlin, 1999; Cardello, 1994). Texture and flavour have been shown to have a profound effect on perception and acceptability (Nazlin, 1999; Szczesniak, 1972). Human perception of quality is dependent on the visual image (Nazlin, 1999; Hetherington and MacDougall, 1992). It has been well established that color and appearance can have a halo effect which modifies subsequent flavour perception and food acceptability (Nazlin, 1999; Hutchings, 1994; Kostyla & Clydesdale, 1978). In a food choice situation, products with the greatest visual appeal would be chosen first (Nazlin, 1999; Clydesdale, 1975).

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have been the backbone of economic growth of an economy in driving industrial development. The potential of SMEs to promote domestic-led growth in new and existing industries and to strengthen the resilience of the economy in a competitive and challenging environment is inarguable. Economic growth in developed countries such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan and many others, was significantly generated by SME activities. The percentage contribution of SMEs to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)/total value added ranges from 60.0 percent in China, 57.0 percent in Germany, 55.3 percent in Japan and 50.0 percent in Korea, compared to 47.3 percent attained by Malaysia (Bank Negara Malaysia, 2003). The economic crisis of 1997-1998 has taught us that the country cannot be overly dependent on foreign direct investment (FDI) to stimulate economic development. Many foreign investors withdrew their investments and relocate to new destinations which are more profitable, especially those that offer cheaper labor costs. SMEs have been targeted as the mechanism in generating domestic-led investment, stimulating economic expansion and increasing the job market for the country.

SMEs in Malaysia account for 99.2 percent or 518,996 of total establishments in the three (3) key economic sectors, namely manufacturing, services and agriculture. Employment generated by SMEs was approximately 3.0 million workers (65.1 percent) of the total employment of 4.6 million engaged in the three (3) main sectors. SMEs were mainly concentrated in the Central Region (Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur and Selangor), accounting for 37.1 percent. Johor was next with 10.4 percent, followed by Perak with 7.3 percent while Perlis registered only 1.1 percent of the total establishments. The rest of the states accounted for less than 44.1 percent. SMEs accounted for 96.6 percent (37,866) of total establishments in the manufacturing sector. By industry sub-sectors, food products and beverages topped the list with 44.1 percent of output generation. Contribution of output from SMEs in food products and beverages to the sub-sector's output was 70.3 percent, which was the highest among all the sub-sectors (Normah, 2007).

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging in relation to Malaysian customers' perception. Therefore this study reveals four factors of SME food product packaging effectiveness in order for the Malaysian customers to accept it. The four factors are design and graphical form, color, typography, and convenient of usage.

This study is first presents an extensive literature review of dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is Malaysian customers' perception while independent variable are design and graphical form, color, typography,

and convenient of usage. Then a conceptual framework is develop and derived the hypothesis. Furthermore this study also reveals the methodology used to collect the data and finally the conclusion from the issues discussed.

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

- (1) To proof that design and graphical form of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging is positively influence the Malaysian customers' perception.
- (2) To proof that color of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging is positively influence the Malaysian customers' perception.
- (3) To proof that typography of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging is positively influence the Malaysian customers' perception.
- (4) To proof that convenient of usage of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging is positively influence the Malaysian customers' perception.

4. LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Design and Graphical Form of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging

Packaging design is a complicated set of influences by the business environment. Some of the major influences are the new technology, materials development, logistic requirements, environmental issues, consumer preferences and marketing aspects that all take part in making the management decisions on marketing strategy (Bo, 2009; Packaging Federation, 2004a, b). Packaging is the container that is oblique contact with product itself, which play a role to holds, protects, preserves and identifies the product as well as facilitating usage and commercialization (Olga & Natalia, 2006).

Furthermore, there are three types of packaging. The major packaging has indirect contact with the product, such as perfume bottles. Secondary packaging contains one or more primary packages and help to protect and identify them and to be in touch with the qualities of the product. It is generally unnecessary when the product is used or consumed (Olga & Natalia, 2006).

Marketing strongly depends on the visual communication of packaging in order to tell and influence consumers both at the spot of purchase and at the position of utilization. (James & Mindy, 2003; Willey, 1993). Besides that package design has become a most important way of competing and presently constitutes a \$100 billion industry (James & Mindy, 2003; Howard, 2001). The broad utilization of internet allows marketers to start to aim and interact with children on line globally and attribute packaging images on their computer screens (James & Mindy, 2003; Thomson, 2000). Packaging also is considered as a communication tool that can transmit the meanings of a brand to very young consumers through age suitable pictures and cues displayed on it (James & Mindy, 2003). According to James and Mindy (2003) packaging should have children pictures and informed about the children if the products is aimed to the children.

In addition, articles published in the magazine Advertising Age in 1972 under the title "The age of positioning" that lie in the study conducted by Olga and Natalia (2006), which served to extend and disseminate the term. According to these authors, positioning has its origins in product packaging (the concept was called product positioning). This exactly meant the shape of the product, the size of the package and its price in association to the competition. For Upper class products and elegant products, the packaging of both strategies is mostly connected with not any option in five cases such as straight line, line shape, and type of figures, elements and composition. On the other hand, for non-selective products, it is on the contrary, the packaging of this strategy is linked with horizontal lines and oblique. Furthermore for high price products, elegant products and patriotic products, the packaging of these strategies is not associated to any of the image options like photographs and illustrations and images of the product or people. For Non-selective products, it is in opposition due to the packaging of this strategy is associated with both illustrations and photographs. In addition for products based on guarantees and upper class products, the packaging of both strategies has been connected with photographs and with images of the product. But for accessible products it is in difference to the earlier strategy, the packaging of this strategy has been associated with illustrations and people (Olga & Natalia, 2006).

Furthermore, texture and graphics are also variables that can be personalized and contribute to a well package. Attractive pictures situations (mountains, beaches, luxury homes) on the package can contribute to generate lifestyle aspirations. Meanwhile, an attention-grabbing graphic will make the product show up on the shelf and be a focus for the consumer's attention (Bo, 2009). In one study, 60% of male respondents chosen male-produced designs and 75% of female respondents preferred female produced designs. Two cases (food packaging and tube station designs) male respondents preferred the female designs and in one case (drink cans) they have selected the products of male and female designers in equal proportions. (Gloria, Gabor & Rod, 2007)

H1: Design and Graphical Form of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging will be positively affected Malaysian Customers' Perception

4.2 Color of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging

Information of consumers' color preferences is important because marketers who be aware of which colors in their lines sell best may be able to trim product offerings and cut manufacturing costs (Randi & Joseph, 1999; Trent, 1993). Picture or color may provide as an effective signal by rising the possibility that nodes activate one another in mental processing (James & Mindy, 2003; Macklin, 1996). Furthermore, Pictures or colors allied with the brand displayed on a package are nodes themselves stored as one with the brand name in memory. In addition, based on James and Mindy (2003) there are three general colors of the background of children product packaging, firstly is red (20 %), blue (20 %) and brown (18 %). Children's preferences build up and change with age, showing a trend to move from warm to cool colors with increasing age (James & Mindy, 2003; Burnham et al., 1963). Then, if products directed to the upper classes, high price products and elegant so the packaging of these three positioning strategies are extremely related With cold and dark colors, primarily black and not too yellow, orange and red colors . In other hand, for a reasonably priced and accessible product it is opposite, the packaging of this strategy is linked with light colors, mostly white (Olga & Natalia, 2006). Then, the major effects of graphics on consumer perception can engage with the use of a appropriate color and thereby support the brand name or image of the product (Bo, 2009). It has been well recognized that color and appearance can have a halo effect which modifies subsequent flavour perception and food acceptability (Nazlin, 1999; Hutchings, 1994; Kostyla & Clydesdale, 1978).

Furthermore in the West, green is connected with hopefulness, white with purity, black with mourning, red with love or revolution and yellow with hatred. On the other hand, in China, white is allied with righteousness and yellow with trustworthiness. While the color black is connected with dullness and stupidity in Indian culture, while red suggests ambition and desire (Randi & Joseph, 1999; Kreiter & Kreitler, 1972). In addition, the most accepted colors for clothing were blue, red and black with black the mainly worn color for dressy occasions (Randi & Joseph, 1999; Pantone, 1992). Blue was selected because it signified cleanliness, while yellow was not seeming as clean and red was assumed to actually damage clothing (Randi & Joseph, 1999; Heath, 1997). Besides that, cultures may also characterize similar or dissimilar meanings to colors. The color red was related with love for people of China, Korea, Japan and the USA, but the Chinese also linked red with being fine tasting. (Randi and Joseph, 1999). Meanwhile, in Asian countries, the purple color was allied with expensive, but not in the USA (Randi & Joseph, 1999; Jacobs *et al.*, 1991).

Blue was the mainly ideal color in general across cultures (Satyendra, 2006; Wieggersma & Van der Elst, 1988). Orange is the most holy color in Hindu religion in India, however the Ndembo in Zambia do not even recognize orange as a color (Satyendra, 2006; Tektronix, 1988). Muslims view green as a blessed color (Satyendra, 2006). Then in terms of gender, men were more liberal of gray, white or black than women, and that women responded to the combinations of red and blue more regularly, and got confused and diverted more than men. Furthermore, it was also found that the combination of red and blue was the most preferred color by adults. (Satyendra, 2006; Khouw, 2002) In addition, color may be utilized for one more important reason in order to enhance the memory value of an advertisement. Increased recognition of advertisements leads to increased sales, which is the major aim of advertising. Color focus attention to those elements of the advertisements which are colored, and therefore it is those elements which are remembered more frequent (Nelson & Debby, 2006)

H2: Color of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging will be positively affected Malaysian Customers' Perception

4.3 Typography of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging

In terms of elegant products, it is allied with bold letters, expanded characters, upper case, large and Roman letters. Products that are intended for to the upper classes and high price products have the packaging of both positioning strategies that is extremely connected with any weight, any width, any shape and any type family. So, both strategies are "Any typography connected". Then for accessible products, the lettering of this strategy is related with serif font and sans serif font. Meanwhile for products based on guarantees, patriotic products and nonselective products, the packaging of these strategies has not been linked with weight, width, shape and type family. So, these strategies do have not a defined typography. (Olga & Natalia, 2006). Texture and graphics are also variables that can be customized and contribute to a good packaging (Bo, 2009).

H3: Typography of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging will be positively affected Malaysian Customers' Perception

4.4 Convenient of usage of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging

Packaging is offered as part of the buying and consuming process, however it is not often directly related to the ingredients that are vital for the product to function (Olga and Natalia,2006;Underwood,2003).Furthermore, for diverse products the shape of the package has been an crucial factor for achievement in the marketplace. (Bo, 2009; Wansink, 1996; Raghbir and Greenleaf, 2006). In other hand, consumer purchase low weight, easy and safe to carry package. Packaging should be convenient pack size and alternative for multiple pack sizes. It's also helps consumer storage condition for maintaining quality and freshness over a period of time. Subsequently, it is also essential to cope with different temperature and humidity. In addition, packaging should fulfill consumer usage convenience, easy to open and re-close after usage and easy to dispose of after usage. Besides that, packaging also must be environmentally friendly. It requires childproof closure for some product categories. So it is also needs some packages can turn into nice-looking form that consumers use them as containers for other purposes (Bo, 2009).

H4: Convenient of usage of Bumiputra's SME food product packaging will be positively affected Malaysian Customers' Perception

5. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

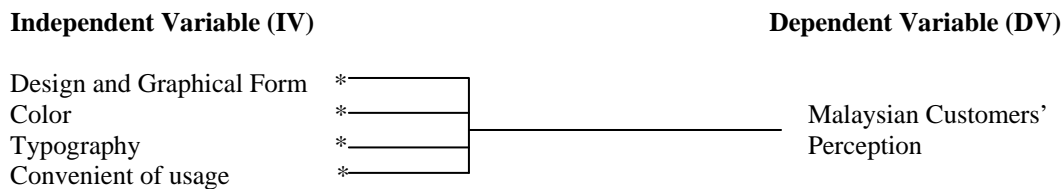


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

The figure above shows the relationship between independent variables which are design and graphical form, color, typography and convenient usage towards the dependent variable, Malaysian customers' perception.

6. RESEARCH MEASUREMENT AND SAMPLING

Probability sampling is chosen in this research. The simple random sampling is chosen in order to obtain a sample of the data. The place to collect the sample is Entrepreneurship Expo that is held in Seberang Jaya twice a year. Seberang Jaya was chosen as the place to collect the data because of its strategic location.

Seberang Jaya is located in the middle between Kedah and North of Perak. This location can represent the sample of northern sample. Based on the statistic from Department of Statistic of Malaysia year 2000, the population density of Penang is 1274 person per sq km, Kedah 175 person per sq km and Perak is 94 people per sq km. Furthermore, Seberang Jaya is under the Seberang Perai Utara district, based on the statistic the population by sex and administrative district year 2000, Seberang Perai Utara consist of 122,366 male while female consist of 121572. Thus the ratio between male and female respondent should be equal (1:1) in order to avoid bias in the sampling process. There are 3 major races in Seberang Perai Utara which are Malay (Bumiputra), Chinese and Indian. Bumiputra consist of 59.1%, while Chinese 29.1% and Indian 8.54%.

The respondents of the sampling will be randomly pick up. Questionnaires will be distributed to the respondents at the Bumiputra SME booth in the Entrepreneurship Expo. In order to determine the sample size for this study, sample size selected were based on the criteria set according to Roscoe's rule of thumb. Sample size must be larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate conducted. So, this study uses 240 questionnaires based on the rule.

$$(IV \times \text{item} \times 10 = \text{sample size})$$

Therefore,

$$4 \text{ IV} \times 6 \text{ items} \times 10 = 240 \text{ respondents}$$

Roscoe's Rule of Thumb

$$\text{Independent variables} = 4$$

$$\text{Dependent Variables} = 1$$

$$4 \times 6 = 24$$

24 x 10 = 240 respondents

So, based on the races statistic 143 questionnaires will be distributed to the Bumiputra respondents, 70 questionnaires for the Chinese respondents, 21 questionnaires for the Indian respondents and 6 questionnaires to the other races respondents.

All data that have been gathered through all the questionnaires from the target customers or respondents will be analyzed using SPSS software.

7. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is very significance due to the low sales of Bumiputra SME food product. . Effectiveness of packaging is very important for Bumiputra's SME in order to maximize their sales return. This study is important because currently without effective food packaging its difficult for Bumiputra's SME to gain high sales and difficult to penetrate global market.

To achieve effectiveness of food product packaging goals, knowledge about consumer psychology is important so that Bumiputra's SME understand consumer response to their packages. Besides that there is no specific standard of food product packaging for Bumiputra SME food producer. The failure of designing effective packaging will become a barrier to expand the business to the new market.

In addition, each independent variable in this study is significant in order to help Bumiputra SME to create their food product packaging that focusing on the right combination of the design and graphical form, color preferences, typography and convenient packaging usage for the customers.

8. LIMITATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

There are several limitations in conducting this study, which are:

- Several data might be difficult to get because respondents refuse to spend a time answering the questionnaires at the expo.
- This study cannot be generalized to the Malaysian population because it's only covers Northern area of Malaysia that consist Penang, Kedah and Northern of Perak.
- The difference of culture and background of respondents may influence the way they answer the questionnaires.
- Lack of data accuracy due to lack of respondents understanding about the issues given to them. This might lead to wrong answering the questionnaires by the respondent.
- This study only covers the food product packaging.
- This study only focusing on Bumiputra SME

Several items that can be focused for future research are:

- This study can be extended to focus on all SME not only Bumiputra but also other races that involve in SME.
- This study also can be extended to cover all area in Malaysia not only northern area in order to get full customers' view towards Bumiputra SME food product packaging.
- This study also can be extended to other product not only focusing on food product that produced by the Bumiputra's SME.

9. CONCLUSION

In order to develop the right product packaging by Bumiputra SME, previous study has stated that design, color, typography and convenient of usage play a role to create an effective food product packaging. The expectation of this study is to come out with a suitable guideline of making effective packaging. Up grading the knowledge of Bumiputra SME could help them to be more creative and enhance their understanding towards food product packaging that can attract Malaysian customers. Government also should play a role to continue to support the Bumiputra SME by organizing the seminar to enhance their skills and set up one product packaging information center in every region. Thus by introducing this product packaging information center can provide effective information for Bumiputra SME to get the consultation in order to suit their food product with a right product packaging. In addition, government also can develop

one packaging center to the Bumiputra SME. Every food product from Bumiputra SME can use this facility to create their own packaging with a reasonable charges compare to other packaging suppliers.

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