

The Rural Indian's Outlook Towards Packaging Of A Micro Pack – An Empirical Study

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Abstract: This study offers and validates a comprehensive approach to explain the the attitude of the rural Indian consumer towards packaging elements of a micro pack. In order to attain these objectives a sample of 250 respondents belonging to rural areas in two districts of Punjab, was taken. The respondents were divided into three income categories; Below Rupees 20,000, 20,000-40,000 and 40,000 and above per month. Non-probability convenient sampling was adopted for selecting the respondents. It was however; found that a majority of respondents consider the prominence of 'Information' like usage directions, list of ingredients as central elements of a virtuous package. Companies need to lay emphasis on the packaging material and need to develop recyclable packaging.

Keywords: Packaging, Micro Packs, Visibility, Recyclability

I. INTRODUCTION

The rural customers of India are customarily daily wage earners and have lesser disposable income matched to their urban contemporaries. They generally have a weekly or a daily budget and small packs provide a consumption that lasts for a day or a week the most. Offering of low cost, low quantity units of recognized products has demonstrated to be a very rewarding strategy for penetrating the rural markets in the country. Small packs have helped in the creation of consciousness of the existence of certain products, supported trials and lead foremost consumer goods companies like Nestle, HUL, Britannia, Marico, Godrej and Colgate-Palmolive etc. to gain a significant existence in the rural market. There has been a conspicuous shift from unbranded and native products to nationalized brands because of these small packs. Little investment costs have led purchasers into trying branded products presented by FMCG companies.

Foremost multinational company, Coca-Cola India grasped a sizeable amount of the rural market when it created a consciousness of the drink by presenting a Rs 5 bottles and engaging popular actor Aamir Khan for its advertising campaigns (Mehra, Gupta, 2010). The company also introduced a drink concentrate Sunfill, which was available in sachets of 25 gm. Costing Rs 2. It also gained colossal

popularity. The affordability, single usage, comfortable storability and handiness are the main reasons that have led the rural consumer to acquire small packs (Girisha and Deepukumar, 2011).

Today, the Indian rural market is engulfed with all kinds of products available in small packaging; soft drinks, single soap bar, tooth paste, tooth powder, oils, face cream, biscuits, toffees, snacks, chocolates and medicines. All in a mini volume to satisfy a day's prerequisite.

OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

The objective of the study is to explore the attitude of the rural consumer towards packaging of micro packs.

II. METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of conducting the study both primary and secondary methods of data collection were employed. Primary data, which is of immense importance and backbone of the study, was amassed by interviewing the chosen respondents with the help of a pre-tested questionnaire of a structured and non-disguised type. Literature on the subject was reviewed and discussion was carried out with specialists in the area for

framing the questionnaire. The initial draft of the questionnaire was prepared and pre-tested on 50 respondents. This enabled the refining of the questionnaire. After a few additions and deletions, a final questionnaire was developed and administered to a sample of 250 respondents belonging to rural areas in outskirts of two districts of Punjab. The validity of the questionnaire was tested with the help of a readability test. The respondents were divided into three income categories; Below Rupees 20,000, 20,000-40,000 and 40,000 and above per month.

III. ANALYSIS

A. ATTITUDE TOWARDS MICRO PACK PACKAGE

This section explores attitude of respondents towards packaging of micro packs in general. It also includes the level of thoughtfulness paid to the micro pack design and significance given to packaging attributes like the presence of usage instructions, different colour schemes, clarity of words mentioned on the pack, quality of package and the possibility of the pack being recyclable.

In order to have an insight into the attitude of respondents towards packaging in general, five statements have been used. All the statements have been gauged on a five point scale (from strongly agree to strongly disagree) and the respondents were asked to express their level of agreement/disagreement towards the statements. To determine the level of agreement/disagreement towards the statements relating to packaging as expressed by the respondents belonging to different income categories, the mean scores were computed by assigning weights 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 to 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' in that order. A higher score indicates greater agreement with a statement than the lower score.

To examine whether there is any significant difference amongst the respondents belonging to different income groups with respect to some aspects of packaging, the following null hypothesis has been tested.

H₀-1: There is no significant difference among the respondents belonging to different income groups regarding their preferences for various statements depicting different aspects of packaging of a micro pack.

In order to compare income-wise mean scores of the responses, F-ratios have been applied to the responses of each statement. Mean scores along with F-ratios for various statements depicting attitude of the respondents towards packaging is presented in Table 1.

Sr.No.	Statements	Overall	I ₁	I ₂	I ₃	F-Ratio
		Means	Means	Means	Means	
S ₁	I pay consideration to the most delightfully packaged product	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.81	1.96
S ₂	I pay attentiveness to the instructions clarifying usage,	4.55	4.69	4.99	4.58	2.02

	revealed on the package of a product					
S ₃	I frequently buy my usually brand irrespective of an attractive brand	3.57	3.50	3.56	3.62	1.96
S ₄	I switch to a brand with an appealing package	3.34	3.39	3.33	3.38	2.06
Total (N)		250	110	90	50	

Table 1: Attitude towards Micro Pack Package

The responses in Table 1 indicate that most of the respondents agreed with the statements 'I pay attentiveness to the instructions clarifying usage, revealed on the package of a product' (MS=4.55) and 'I pay consideration to the most delightfully packaged product' (MS=3.9) as the mean scores are close to 4 or higher. Statements 'I switch to a brand with an appealing package' and 'I pay consideration to the most delightfully packaged product' have low mean scores thus, signifying that most of the respondents 'neither agree nor disagree' with these statements. The F-values obtained in the table confirm that the respondents belonging to different income categories are completely unanimous in their attitude towards packaging, as no significant differences have been found among the different income categories with respect to different statements representing attitude regarding packaging. Hence, the null hypothesis is accepted.

B. PACKAGING ELEMENTS CONTEMPLATED IN PROCURING MICRO PACKS

The more the interest in a particular attribute, the higher is the importance ascribed to it by the respondents. For judging the importance attached to packaging, five attributes were identified. These attributes include 'beautiful colours', 'visibility of instructions', 'visibility of ingredients', 'material of package' and 'recyclability of a pack'. Respondents were asked to rank these attributes in order of their preferences. In order to analyse the responses in terms of weighted rankings, weights were assigned to different ranks, starting from 9 to rank 1, 8 to rank 2, 7 to rank 3 and so on. The weights thus signify the importance attached to the attribute of the packaging as the higher weights like 9 or 8 signify the attributes which are most important while weights like 2 or 1 indicate attributes which are least important.

Table 2 shows the overall as well as different income-wise weighted ranks given by the respondents towards different aspects of packaging of products.

Sr. No.	Attributes	Overall	I ₁	I ₂	I ₃	K-W (HTest) Statistics
1	Captivating colors	551	156	231	164	2.791
2	Visibility of instructions	369	95	178	96	4.678
3	Visibility of ingredients	1017	258	385	239	7.82
4	Recyclability of a pack	949	250	352	217	2.23

5	Material of package	1026	210	480	196	1.86
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Note: K-W (H test) values have been derived on the basis of original rankings.

Table 2: Overall and Income-wise Weighted Ranking Scores for most Attractive Aspect of Packaging of a Product

The table reveals that 'Visibility of ingredients' (WR=1017) and 'Material of package' (WR=1026) are the two attributes that are ranked as most important by a large number of the respondents. The other attributes have been preferred lesser. 'Recyclability of a pack' (WR=949) has been relatively given lesser importance than the looks of a pack.

The results of the K-W statistic reveal that there is a significant agreement among respondents belonging to different income categories, with respect to their ranking towards almost all elements. The ranking of the respondents differ significantly with respect to the attribute 'Recyclability of a pack' as the p-value for this is less than or equal to the assumed p-value.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

While picking a pack for purchase, the consumers consider the visibility of 'Basic Information' like usage directions, list of ingredients as fundamental elements of a

good package. Attention also needs to be given by the marketers on brightness and colours used on a micro pack. Bearing in mind that consumers will not buy a certain brand simply because of an eye-catching package, marketers must focus on visibility of usage and content information. Also companies need to focus on the packaging material and need to develop eco-friendly packaging know-hows as these will provide an advantage of low cost and improved quality micro packages.

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