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Original Article (Quantified)

Proposing a Model for the Typology of Consumer Behavior in Response to Packaging Messages in the Iraqi Market

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to present a model for the typology of consumer behavior in response to packaging messages in the Iraqi market. In terms of purpose, this research is a developmental study; in terms of data collection, it is a survey; and in terms of nature, it is exploratory. The study was conducted quantitatively employing structural equation modeling (SEM). The statistical population consisted of managers, owners, marketing and production managers, as well as customers of these products in Iraq. Based on Cochran's formula, a sample size of 476 participants was selected through simple random sampling. Data were collected by a questionnaire. Data analysis was performed by SPSS 27 and SmartPLS 4.0 software. The findings indicated that packaging color has a significant effect on environmental awareness, packaging retention, social influence, and packaging value choice. Environmental awareness also affects social influence and packaging value choice. Furthermore, packaging imagery influences packaging value choice, while packaging retention also has a significant effect on packaging value choice. In addition, quick information scanning influences environmental awareness, packaging retention, social influence, and packaging value choice. Information-seeking behavior also affects packaging value choice, and social influence has a significant impact on packaging value choice.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The dynamic and highly competitive conditions of today's business environment have compelled companies to differentiate their products from those of their competitors. A fundamental element of this environmental instability is consumers, who have become significantly different from the past and increasingly seek personal development within their social environment. Changes in lifestyle and the expansion of individual skills among the general public have raised the level of awareness regarding the content and characteristics of consumer goods. Consequently, companies can successfully sell products only when they properly understand and respond to changes in consumer behavior (Yokokawa et al., 2021).

Packaging is considered the outermost layer of a product, and consumers often evaluate both the product and its contents based on it. If the packaging aligns with their needs and behavioral preferences, they are more likely to make a purchase (Shukla et al., 2022). Packaging is one of the essential elements of a product and refers to the container that comes into direct contact with the product, holds and protects it, provides relevant information about it, and facilitates transportation and commercialization (Afif et al., 2022). Industry analysts suggest that the visual attractiveness of packaging design plays a crucial role in influencing customer decision-making at the retail level. Brands typically have only about seven seconds to create a positive impression before customers move on to the next option. As retailers increasingly recognize the impact of point-of-purchase decisions, they invest heavily in packaging design (Shukla et al., 2022).

Studies indicate that consumers have certain expectations of successful packaging that contribute to its sustainable competitiveness compared with rival products and its survival in the turbulent market environment (Habib et al., 2023; Dilucia et al., 2020). A careful analysis of these studies suggests that customer expectations and behaviors when encountering packaging can be categorized into two main groups: technical and environmental criteria. Technical criteria relate to the physical, mechanical, chemical, or biological properties of packaging and the product itself. These include dimensions, weight, strength, durability, compatibility, stability, permeability, biodegradability, and similar attributes. Environmental criteria, on the other hand, concern the impact and interaction of packaging and products with the natural and social environment. These include energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, waste generation, recycling potential, toxicity, safety, and regulatory compliance.

In other words, consumers increasingly demand packaging that is sustainable and friendly to both human health and the environment. In response to these expectations, companies often conduct packaging tests and evaluations to ensure that their products meet these requirements. Accordingly, the present study seeks to answer the following research question:

What is the appropriate model for the typology of consumer behavior in response to packaging messages in the Iraqi market?

Theoretical Framework

Product Packaging

Packaging, often described as a silent salesperson, represents the final and frequently the most critical point of contact between a brand and a potential consumer before a purchase decision is made. It serves as the container of brand identity, a canvas for communicating brand promises, and a tangible interface within the otherwise intangible world of marketing messages. Through its visual and informational elements, packaging conveys product characteristics and brand values while simultaneously shaping consumer perceptions.

While marketing literature is rich with studies examining the influence of individual packaging elements—such as color, typography, or material—on consumer perception and purchase intention, a significant gap remains in understanding how consumers respond to the holistic gestalt of packaging as distinct behavioral types (Moniri Moghadam, 2022). In other words, most existing studies focus on isolated design components, whereas fewer investigations explore how the combined set of packaging messages collectively influences different patterns of consumer behavior.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior refers to the decisions made by consumers regarding the consumption and use of goods, services, time, and ideas by human decision-making units. Therefore, entrepreneurs and businesses must identify the goods and services that consumers need. In particular, firms should focus on understanding the actions consumers take when purchasing products and the factors that influence their buying and consumption behavior. Several key factors affect consumer behavior, including cultural, social, personal, and psychological factors (Baskabadi & Rasti, 2021).

Dhawan and Garga (2025) examined the influence of demographic variables on consumer preferences for purchasing electronic products through online and offline channels. Their findings indicate that younger consumers with higher disposable incomes tend to prefer online shopping, whereas older individuals and lower-income groups rely more on offline retail stores. Furthermore, factors such as trust, convenience of purchase, pricing, product variety, and product information play significant roles in shaping consumer choices. The study highlights the importance for businesses to adopt a multichannel strategy that integrates the strengths of both online and offline platforms. Marketers can utilize these insights to design targeted campaigns, improve customer experience, and enhance consumer engagement.

Amirhosseini and Najafi (2025) investigated the impact of packaging elements of Donic sports products on consumers' purchasing behavior. The results showed that packaging materials and packaging design significantly influence the post-purchase behavior of consumers of Donic sports products, explaining approximately 7 percent of the variance in consumers' pre-purchase behavior.

Research Methodology

In terms of purpose, this study is developmental; in terms of data collection, it adopts a survey method; and in terms of nature, it is exploratory. The research was conducted by a quantitative approach and structural equation modeling (SEM).

The statistical population consisted of managers, owners, marketing and production managers, as well as customers of these products in Iraq. Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of 476 participants was determined and selected through simple random sampling. The primary instrument for data collection was a questionnaire.

Research Findings

Data analysis was conducted by SPSS 27 and SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results of the structural equation modeling indicated several significant relationships among the study variables.

The findings revealed that packaging color has a significant effect on environmental awareness, packaging retention, social influence, and packaging value choice. Additionally, environmental awareness significantly influences both social influence and packaging value choice.

The results further showed that packaging imagery has a significant impact on packaging value choice, and packaging retention also significantly affects packaging value choice.

Moreover, quick information scanning significantly influences environmental awareness, packaging retention, social influence, and packaging value choice. In addition, information-seeking behavior has a significant effect on packaging value choice, and social influence itself significantly affects packaging value choice.

Overall, the findings highlight that both visual and informational packaging cues, along with cognitive and social factors, play a crucial role in shaping consumers' packaging value selection in the Iraqi market.

Conclusion

The present study aimed to propose a model for the typology of consumer behavior in response to packaging messages in the Iraqi market. The findings of this study are consistent with the results reported by Premendra (2024), Su and Wang (2024), Hallez et al. (2023), Ketelsen et al. (2020), Mahmoud et al. (2022), Liu et al. (2025), Charif Hamdar (2018), Oloyede and Lignou (2021), Boz et al. (2020), Zhang et al. (2023), Chirilli et al. (2022), Mokha (2018), Nguyen et al. (2020), Herbes et al. (2020), Seo and Scammon (2017), Zhao et al. (2021), Liang et al. (2024), and Miao et al.

(2025). Premendra (2024) demonstrated that packaging color, particularly when influenced by children's preferences, can affect parents' purchasing decisions, illustrating a form of family-based social influence.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendation is proposed: managers should avoid overloading packaging with dense textual information that requires active investigation by consumers. Instead, resources should be focused on **visual and easily scannable cues**, which can simplify consumer decision-making while also reducing printing costs and maintaining effectiveness in fast-paced retail environments.