

PACKAGING INNOVATION AND CONSUMER PATRONAGE OF FOOD AND BEVERAGE BRANDS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined packaging innovation and consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria. The study adopted the correlation survey research design. Data were collected from managers and marketers of some selected quoted food and beverage companies in Rivers State. A sample of 261 respondents was used for the study. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamen's formula. A structured questionnaire was used to elicit data from the respondents. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the hypotheses were tested using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ). The SPSS 22.0 version was used to correlate the data on the study variables. The study found a significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This study also found a significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. This study equally reported a significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This study also discovered a significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. Based on these findings, it was concluded that packaging innovation significantly enhance consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria. Based on the conclusion, it was recommended that manufacturers of food and beverage products in Nigeria should embrace packaging innovation as it would enhance consumer patronage of their brand.

Keywords: Packaging innovation, consumer patronage, packaging materials innovation, packaging design innovation, consumer patronage intention, repeat patronage.

Introduction

In a competitive market where customers can easily switch from one product to another, increasing consumer patronage becomes the only way for businesses to survive. The food and beverage market is one of the most competitive markets in Nigeria. The market is so competitive due to the large number of food and beverage brands in the market – all performing similar functions. The competitive nature of the food and beverage market has made many firms to devise strategies to increase consumer patronage. Increasing consumer patronage seems to be the only way for a beverage companies to survive and sustain in the market. Every food and beverage firm strives to increase the level of consumer patronage of their brands and maximize profit. However, in order for food and beverage firms to increase the level of consumer patronage of their brands, they need to make their product packages more attractive and inviting and this can be done through packaging innovation.

Packaging innovation is the process whereby companies change the style and design of their product package to make it more attractive to target consumers (Anthony, 2010). It involves the modification of the product package by adding a set of meaningful and valued design to it in order to gain the attention of consumers (Kotler, in Komaromi, 2015). Chelumbrun (2014) stated that companies periodically modify their product package in order to make it more attractive to the

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consumers. Companies do this to gain an edge in industries where multiple competitors produce similar products (Hawks, 2015). The purpose of packaging innovation is to arrive at a position where consumers would see the product as being unique when compared to other competing brands (Dirisu, Iyiola & Ibiduni, 2013).

Creating an attractive and valued design to a product package involves modification of its physical attributes. Here, the product package is modified and improved in terms of outlook, durability, reliability, style and design (Chand, 2016). Even though the physical product did not change, the minor changes and modification of the packaging can attract more customers to the product. When a company changes its product package, it tries to give the product a new look which will make consumers to believe that the product has been innovated or improved upon. However, changes in packaging itself are not for just for fancy rather any change or modification in packaging must be attractive to buyers (Marinac, 2013). A change or modification attempt that is not attractive to buyers does not count. This implies that packaging modification counts only when buyers are attracted to the unique features and design of the product package. If consumers are attracted to the packaging, they will be tempted to buy the product and become less sensitive to other competing brands.

Packaging innovation could take the form of materials, design, size and process innovation (Anthony, 2010; Marinac, 2013). Each of these areas has the potentials of impacting on the entire company's value chain. Innovation in product packaging materials, design and size is highly essential for companies because consumers generally get tired of seeing the same old things. As Churchfield (2016) rightly stated consumers always look out for something new, something different, something that can grab their attention. For this reason, companies continuously innovate their product packaging to pass a message of continuous improvement and innovation to the target customers. Churchfield (2016) observed that companies embark on packaging innovation in order to make their products more visible when arranged alongside with other competing brands in shelves. Commenting on the visibility of product in shelves, Pranevicius (2018) noted that most products that stay longer in shelves would have stayed a shorter time in shelf if their packaging was innovated. Marinac (2013) argued that those products whose packages are innovated are more likely to get a second look and increase consumers' chances of making purchase.

Packaging innovation can help to increase the level of consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria. According to Anthony (2010), packaging innovation can make customers to develop positive perception towards the product and draws fewer comparisons with other competing brands. Once the packaging is attractive to customers, they will be tempted to buy the product. A good packaging modification strategy would increase customer patronage and ultimately increase sales performance of firms (Chelumbrun, 2014). Walsh & Whelen (2002) stated that a successful packaging innovation strategy will give a firm a competitive advantage over its competitors, increase customer patronage and improve sales performance. It is against this backdrop that this study intends to examine the relationship between packaging innovation and consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

One of the major challenges facing many food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt is how to increase the level of customer patronage of their products. Most of the food and beverage firms in Port Harcourt have continued to experience poor level of customer patronage. A good number of beverage firms have ceased from operation due to low customer patronage, while those that are still in business are struggling to increase customer patronage of their brand. Many food and beverage firms are now looking for ways to increase customer patronage of their products. Some of them have intensified their marketing efforts by embarking on extensive personal selling and

sales promotion while others are improved the quality of their products as a way of attracting customers. However, despite the efforts made by some of these food and beverage firms, the level of customer patronage of their products is still very low.

The poor level of customer patronage could be attributed to lack of packaging innovation. Most food and beverage firms make adequate efforts to improve their product quality but fail to substantiate their efforts with packaging modification (innovation). It is believed that packaging innovation can help to increase the level of customer patronage of food and beverage products. Although there is no substantial evidence that justify this claim as empirical studies that examine the relationship between packaging innovation and customer patronage of food and beverage products in Port Harcourt metropolis is remarkably absent. This has created a gap in empirical literature which the present study intends to fill.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is shown in figure 1 below:

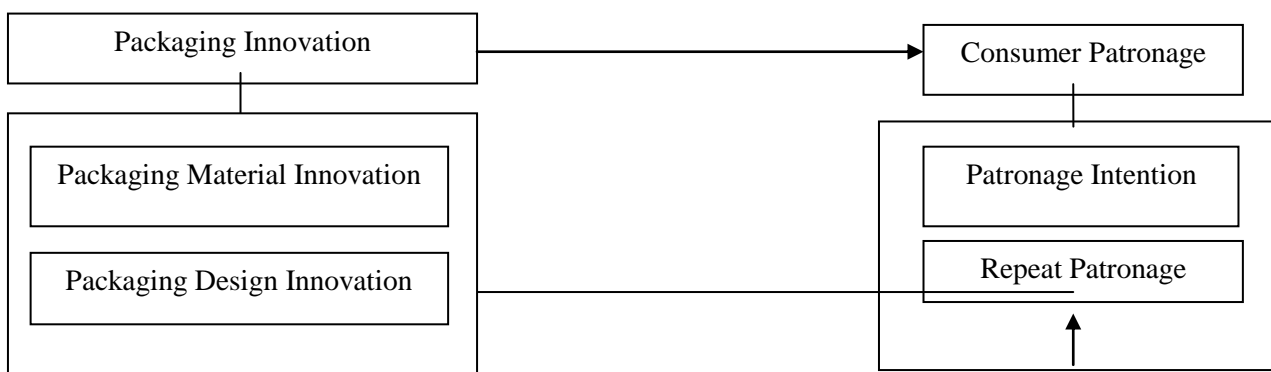


Fig.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's Conceptualization

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between packaging innovation and customer patronage of food and beverage products in Port Harcourt. The specific objectives of the study include:

1. To determine the relationship between packaging material innovation and customer patronage intention of food and beverage products.
2. To ascertain the relationship between packaging material innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products.
3. To determine the relationship between packaging design innovation and customer patronage intention of food and beverage products.
4. To examine the relationship between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products.

Research Questions

In order to effectively address the objectives of the study, the following research questions are put forward:

1. To what extent does packaging material innovation enhance customer patronage intention of food and beverage products?
2. To what extent does packaging material innovation enhance repeat patronage of food and beverage products?
3. To what extent does packaging design innovation enhance customer patronage intention of food and beverage products?

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4. To what extent does packaging design innovation enhance repeat patronage of food and beverage products?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to guide this study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between packaging material innovation and customer patronage intention of food and beverage products.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between packaging material innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between packaging design innovation and customer patronage intention of food and beverage products.
- Ho₄: There is no significant relationship between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products.

Review of Related Literature

Theoretical Review

This study is anchored on the Porter's Generic Strategy Approach which was developed in 1980. This approach explains that firms can gain a competitive advantage by adopting any of these three competitive strategies namely; cost leadership, differentiation or focus strategy. According to Porter (1980), cost leadership strategy denotes that a firm can gain a competitive advantage in the market by producing goods at the lowest possible costs than its competitors. The differentiation strategy explains that a company can gain a competitive advantage by differentiating its product from competitors' offerings i.e. on the basis of quality, attributes, features, *packaging* or price. The focus strategy connotes that a company can gain a competitive advantage by focusing on a geographical segment of the market and offers products that will meet the needs of that segment (Pulaj, Kume & Cipi, 2015).

The Porter's generic approach is very relevant in explaining the prospects of packaging innovation. The approach supports the notion that a company should innovate its product package to make it more attractive to consumers. This would enable the company differentiate itself in the market and gain a competitive advantage over its rivals. Valipour, Birjandi & Honarbakhsh (2012) argued that the differentiation strategies of Porter can be utilized by firms to increase their level of consumer patronage if they innovating and differentiate their product packaging. Haarla (2003) stated that a company that innovates its product package stands a better chance of distinguishing itself in a competitive market and increases its level of consumer patronage.

Concept of Packaging Innovation

Packaging innovation can be defined as the process of modifying the packaging of a product to make it portray a new look or improve product appearance and quality (Brown, 2012). New shapes, sizes, colour and even new slogan for the same product constitute packaging innovation (Brown, 2012). Packaging innovation is crucial to product success in the market. Hence, companies need to innovate their product packaging to give the product a new look and make it visible in shelf when arranged alongside with other similar products (Marinac, 2013). Generally, packaging innovation alongside with minor improvement in product quality can make a product to stand out among the crowd and gain a competitive advantage over their rivals (Anthony, 2010). Brown (2012) stated that a creative and eye-catching packaging design generates curiosity among consumers which could motivate them to try the product.

Packaging innovation is highly essential for companies because consumers generally get tired of seeing the same old things. They always look out for something new, something different, something that can grab their attention. For this reason, companies continuously innovate their product packaging to pass a message of continuous improvement and innovation to the target

customers. Churchfield (2016) observed that companies embark on packaging innovation in order to make their products more visible when arranged alongside with other competing brands in shelves. Commenting on the visibility of product in shelves, Pranevicius (2018) noted that most products that stay longer in shelves would have stayed a shorter time in shelf if their packaging was innovated. Marinac (2013) argued that those products whose packaging are innovated are more likely to get a second look and increase consumers' chances of making purchase.

There are several factors that drive companies to innovate their product packaging. One of such factors is the decline in sales (Brown, 2012). According to Brown, decline in sales normally create a stir among marketers and this immediately drive them to embark on research to determine the factors that are responsible for the decrease in sales. Once these factors are identified, marketers then do some brainstorming and develop marketing strategies to resolve this issue. New packaging of product has the following benefits:

1. Improved shelf visibility: In any retail shelf where there is full arrangement of similar products, unique packaging can be the most decisive element in the battle of attention at the store. A product with high quality can be unnoticeable because of poor packaging (Churchfield, 2016). Therefore, a unique packaging is important because it is the first thing that will draw the attention of consumers to the product before discovering the excellent performance inside.
2. Improved product perception: A marketer's message is usually delivered by the product packaging even without the detailed information on the label. Brown (2012) cited an example of this saying that women could view a deodorant brand packed in distinctive designed and in cool colours more feminine than a plain - packaged one and they may think that the product is worth trying. Most large companies make packaging innovation but still maintain or keep something that would link the product performance to the company's legacy. Coca Cola Bottling Company is a good example of companies that link product performance to company's legacy by sustaining the unique shape of the bottle. The company keeps innovating their packaging materials, size of bottles, caps and label print; and at the same time keeps their contoured bottle shape (Brown, 2012).
3. Functionality and satisfaction: A good product packaging communicates the functional benefits of the product, which eventually motivates consumers to try the product and get a firsthand user experience and satisfaction. This experience and satisfaction come only when a customer has tried the product. Without a unique packaging, it will be difficult for customer to be attracted to the product and even try it to experience its good quality.

Generally, packaging innovation is a strategic way of improving a product's competitiveness in the market. According to Eastlack, di Benedetto & Chandran (2008), the most important strategy in winning the battle of consumer attention lies on the product packaging. The product packaging presents visual attractions that will makes consumers want to try the product and experience its excellent qualities and functionality. Sims (2016) posited that unique packaging is what makes a product stand out in retailing shelf, drives people to make impulse purchases, and engages the customer far beyond the initial transaction. Given what is at stake, brand owners (marketers) need to manage their packaging innovation with a three-pronged approach beginning with a well-defined brand, staying within the functions of packaging, and avoiding the three major pitfalls that lead to consumer rejection (Anthony, 2010). Eastlack, di Benedetto & Chandran (2008) stated that a well managed innovative package can pre-empt a market position, create a new market and lead to greater sales and profits, just as an improved or reformulated product can.

Dimensions of Packaging Innovation

Innovation in packaging can be applied in a number of areas namely; materials, design, size and process (Anthony, 2010; Eastlack, di Benedetto & Chandran, 2008; Sims, 2016). Each of these areas has the potentials of impacting on the entire company's value chain. However, for the purpose of this paper, our focus is on packaging materials and design.

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Packaging Material Innovation

Packaging material innovation is an organizational effort to change the materials used in packaging its products to a better and improved one that will meet the changing needs and demands of consumers (Higgins, 2010). Material changes are constant and the new packaging materials seek to be more sustainable with improved properties that incorporate new functionalities. Marinanc (2013) stated that the use of barrier materials in product packaging enables the development of customized packaging based on the requirements of the product that it is going to hold. Materials innovation is all about solutions that protect the products from outside factors such as oxygen, light and humidity (Churchfield, 2016). Some products are idiosyncrasy and in such case, it is essential for the packaging materials to release preservatives or aromas that grab consumer's attention. Active packaging provides the best solution to this market demand because they come with substance which is important to consumers.

Most of the material innovation in packaging tends to meet the sustainability needs of the consumers (Anthony, 2010). Biotechnology is playing a crucial role in the generation of biopolymers, taking advantage of wastes from other industries such a food industry. Furthermore, the industry is investing in the development of biodegradable polymers that reduce environment impact. Considering the fact that this polymer shows significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, many companies across the world have taken interest in using alternative biodegradable products such as sugar, starch, reeds and corn to produce their packaging (Wisler, 2012). Before now, nearly all food items were packaged in plastics which were oil-based, produced from petroleum. As the cost of oil begun to rise, companies begins to seek for alternative ways to save money. When Wal-Mart, the largest retailer in the world announced that it will begin to sell his goods in PLA containers, the sales of biodegradable packaging increased. Wal-Mart plans to use 114 million PLA containers over a period of one year and it was estimated that this environmental friendly decision will cut down on 800,000 barrels of oil annually.

Today, there is a growing demand for this biodegradable packaging. Davis (2006) observes that the market for biodegradable packaging is growing at the rate of 20% annually. He noted that environmentalists, government and green consumers are the major forces behind this growth apart from the rising cost of crude oil today. The Chairman of Germany's International Biodegradable Polymers Association and Working Group, Harald Kaeb, in Wisler (2012) said that the growing interest in the new biodegradable packaging is motivated by the improved quality of bio-plastics, the growing market share of the products, the cost-competitiveness and more competition as new bio-plastic companies come up around the world.

Packaging Design Innovation

Packaging design innovation is the change in the design and style used in packaging a product (Sims, 2016). Packaging design and branding are essential to selling a product. Whether online or on-shelf, packaging can turn a product into a life-affirming brand. The packaging presents the product and reinforces the consumer's reason to believe in the brand. As brands fight to be top of mind in the consumer's awareness, it is the physical packaging and graphics that are the most important weapons available to them in their campaign. More robust and longer lived than advertising, innovative packaging and graphics are a constant reminder to the consumer of a brand's core values" (Anthony, 2010).

Packaging design is what makes a brand stand out on the shelf, drives consumers to make impulse purchases, and engages the customer far beyond the initial transaction (Anthony, 2010). It also needs to be fit for purpose, having a logistical function in transporting and protecting your product (Marinac, 2013). Shapes are also used to get the attention of the consumers. Apart from colour and shape, custom presentation is an established standard where multiple packs items are enclose in a single package, which helps to increase visibility on the shelf (Olawepo & Ibojo,

2015). More so, packaging create an opportunity to share unique messages about the products attributes to consumers whilst still on the shelf or at the point of sale.

Proper and stylish packaging design can help to increase the sales of a product since it draws the attention of the consumers to the brand when arranged in shelves (Stuyck, 2003). When a company used colourful graphics, shape, custom presentations, and unique style to package its product, it will attract customers to the brand when arranged in shelves alongside with other competing brands (Shaw, 2015). Sajuyigbe, Ayanleke, & Ola (2013) stated that a better box, wrapper, can or bottle, may even enable a relatively small, unknown firm to compete successfully with the established competitors. According to them, a new package change often creates a (new) product by giving either the regular customers or new target markets the existing product in a new form or quantity that is more satisfactory. Therefore making sure packaging ticks all the boxes, whilst remaining within budget, is of paramount importance to businesses wanting to gain increased market share.

Concept of Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage is a key concept in marketing. The concept has been described from the behavioural and attitudinal point of view. For instance, Ding, Lu and Ge (2015) defined consumer patronage as choice behaviour whereby a consumer prefers to patronize an organization over others in the same industry. Here, consumer patronage represents the preference for a company's products or services. Garga and Bambale (2016) defined consumer patronage as the extent to which a consumer patronizes a particular company's products or services based on the result of his or her assessment and personal experience.

Osman in Kumar (2016) proposed more simplified definition of patronage behaviour of consumer as "the repeat purchase behaviour at a particular company for either the same products or any other products." Based on the theory of planned behaviour, consumerr patronage behaviour is preceded by attitudes and intentions that are formed prior to a customer's behaviour. Attitude refers to one's overall positive or negative evaluation of performing a particular behaviour. The stronger the positive attitude towards the behaviour is, the stronger the intention and likelihood of performing the behaviour (Armitage and Conner in Jere, Aderole and Jere, 2014).

Consumer patronage is the only economic and social justification for the existence of any business and this existence is to create customer satisfaction (Garga and Bambale, 2016). When customers are satisfied with their quality of service delivery, they are more likely to consistently patronize the company. Kumar (2016) added that other factors influence customer patronage. Some of these factors include the company's location, organizational image, quality of service delivery, product quality, price, pleasant dressing rooms and parking space. However, in this study, the emphasis is on service delivery and how it influences customer patronage in the hospitality industry.

Measures of Consumer Patronage

Consumer patronage can be measured using various criteria. However, for the purpose of this paper, consumer patronage is measured using patronage intention and repeat patronage.

Patronage Intention

Patronage intention is defined as the desire and willingness of a person to patronize the products or services of an organization (Ding et al, 2015). Every company wants to increase customer patronage intention in order to maximize profitability. However, increasing consumer patronage intention would depend on how customers perceived the quality of service delivery of an organization. Basically, customers' intention to patronize a product would increase if they are certain that the product delivers expected performance. However, when customers are not certain that they can get the expected performance from the product, their patronage intention would decrease (Kumar, 2016). Customer patronage intention is function of utility (satisfaction) which

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customers expect to derive from using the product or service of an organization (Jere et al, 2014). Panda (2013) stated that a product would be attractive to consumers if it meets customer expectations. If customers do not feel that they can get satisfaction from the product, their patronage intention will decrease.

Time and money have a great influence on customer patronage intention. According to Saini, Rao & Monga in Ding et al (2015), when consumers are considering whether or not to buy a product, they would weigh the time and effort spent to search for the product and money saving. Mogilner & Aaker in Ding et al (2015) added that money and time have psychologically distinct characteristics that would affect consumers' decision. Marketers need to understand what drive the patronage intention of their target customers (Choi and Chu, 2001). Understanding what drives consumer patronage intention would help marketers predict consumers' future purchasing behaviour. Marketers can get information on consumer patronage intention by assessing their level of satisfaction toward their products or services. This information would help them influence consumer patronage decisions by delivery top quality product/services that customers expect (Panda, 2013).

Repeat Patronage

Repeat patronage is the willingness and desire of a consumer to re-patronize a particular product or organization in future (Jere, et al, 2014). Panda (2013) defined repeat patronage as a behaviour whereby a consumer repeatedly purchases his or her needs from a particular company despite the fact that there are other companies rendering the same product or services. Kumar (2016) described repeat patronage as the behaviour in which a customer frequently patronize the products and services of a particular company without considering the products and services offered by other competing organizations. Repeat patronage is a crucial factor that enhances organizational competitiveness. According to Amelia (2017), repeat patronage gives a company an edge over its competitors. It helps to sustain sales growth and increase profit margin. Garga and Bambale (2016) posited that repeat patronage is the desire of every organization because it helps to sustain the customer base of the organization. An organization that enjoys repeat patronage from its customers stands the chance of achieving business success. Panda (2013) stated that increasing repeat patronage is the key priority for business managers as it helps to sustain the customer base of the firm and increase profit margin.

Empirical Review

A number of studies have been conducted on packaging innovation and customer patronage. For instance, Sajuyigbe *et al* (2012) empirically examined the impact of packaging on organizational sales turnover. Structured questionnaire was employed to collect data with the aid of face to face interview from eighty participants through purposive sampling method. Inferential statistics was used to analyze the data, specifically, ordinary least squares multiple regression method was employed. Result showed that packaging has significant effect on sales turnover. Result also found that packaging and other factors such as brand name, pricing and promotion jointly predict organizational sales turnover, which accounted for 98% variance of sales turnover. The study concluded that a specific package must be developed for each product because variations in packaging can make a product saleable in various target markets.

Kesinro, Ojo & Adenugba (2015) empirically examined the relationship between product package and consumer brand commitment in the Food and Beverages markets of Lagos State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was adopted to examine 17,552,940 consumers of packaged food products in Lagos State (Lagos State Bureau of Statistics, 2005). The proportionate sampling technique (a variant of stratified sampling method) was used to draw a sample of 2,500 consumers across the 20 local government areas of Lagos State. Questionnaire was the main instrument for data collection rated on a 6 – point Likert scale. 2374 copies of questionnaire were successfully returned representing a response rate of 94.96%. Data were analysed using the

descriptive statistical techniques of Pearson Product moment correlation (r) and Simple Regression Analysis. The findings of the study revealed that product package significantly influence consumer brand commitment and that to guarantee consumer commitment as a result of brand physical attractiveness, brand and logo should be simplified and contain accurate information as consumers will like them.

Pranevicius (2018) carried out a study on soft drink packaging innovation and trends. His study adopted the descriptive survey research design and used a structured questionnaire for data collection. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and multiple regression analysis. The hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient which was computed using the SPSS software program version 20.0. After analyzing the data collected, the researchers found that packaging innovation enhance sales performance of soft drink producers.

Marinac (2013) investigated innovation in food and beverage packaging in the United States of America. Their data were collected from 54 beverage firms in Netherlands using as a structured questionnaire. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed statistically using multiple regression analysis which was computed with the aid of SPSS software program version 21.0. The findings revealed that packaging materials innovation and design enhance customer patronage.

Anthony (2010) carried out a study on managing packaging innovation. Their study employed the exploratory survey design and judgmental sampling method. The researchers used structured questionnaires to collect data from 147 food and beverage firms in Nairobi County. The data collected from the respondents were analyzed statistically using tables, graphs, charts while the hypotheses were tested using linear regression analysis. The findings revealed that packaging innovation enhance customer preference.

Sims (2016) examined the role of packaging innovation in purchase decisions. Her employed the survey research design and used a structured questionnaire to obtain data from 120 retail outlets in Kenya. The data collected for the study was analyzed statistically using descriptive statistic like percentage tables while the formulated hypothesis was tested using the Chi-square. The findings of the study revealed a packaging innovation significantly influence customer patronage

Oladele et al (2015) examined the effect of packaging on the patronage of toothpaste among consumers in Ado-Ekiti metropolis, Nigeria. A total of 320 questionnaires were administered to respondents who were customers to eight most popular supermarkets through purposive sampling technique. Pearson-moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between packaging information and patronage of toothpaste. Multiple regression was used to determine the influence of packaging attributes on patronage of toothpaste. The result revealed that among packaging information available on toothpaste products, expiry date, NAFDAC number and nutritional composition had the strongest relationship with patronage. The packaging attributes with highest influence were quantity, quality, and colour.

From the empirical studies reviewed, it was obvious that a number of studies have been conducted on product packaging and customer patronage but none of these studies focused on packaging innovation and relate the concept to consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria. Most of the studies conducted on packaging innovation did not relate its dimensions (packaging material innovation and design innovation) to consumer patronage of food and beverage brands rather they came to the conclusion that packaging innovation influence customer patronage without any detail empirical analysis. This has created a gap in empirical literature which this study is set to fill.

The operational framework of the study is shown in figure 2 below:

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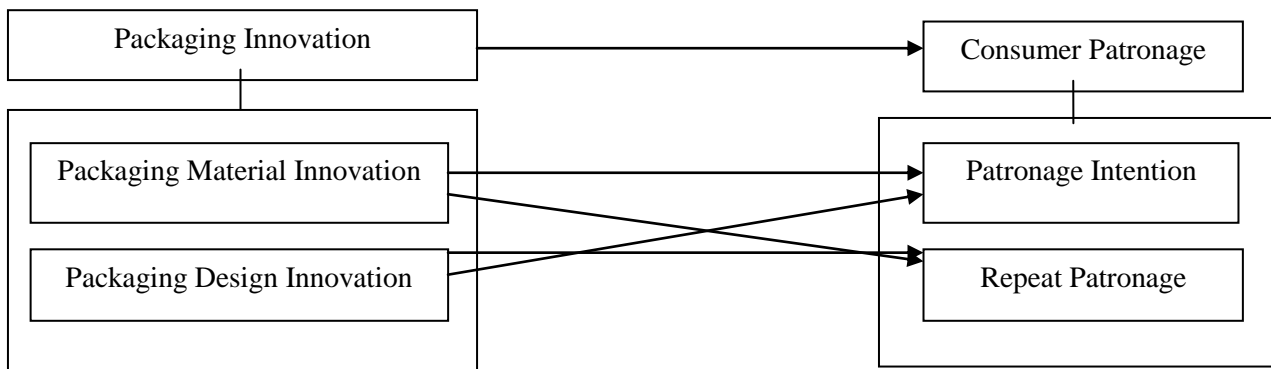


Fig 2: Operational Framework

Methodology

This study adopted the correlation survey research design. The target population of this study consisted of all the food and beverage companies quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange while the accessible population was limited to fifteen selected quoted food and beverage companies in Rivers State. A population of 753 managers and marketers was identified in fifteen (15) selected quoted companies in the food and beverage industry in Rivers State. A sample size of 261 managers and marketers was used for the study. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamene’s formula. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size for the study. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured on a four (4) points rating scale which range from Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, to Strongly Disagree. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents (managers and marketers) of the selected quoted companies in Rivers State. A total copy of 261 questionnaires was administered to the respondents and 215 copies were collected. The data collected were analyzed statistically while the hypotheses were tested using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho). A computer software program known as SPSS 22.0 version was used to correlate the data collected on the study variables.

Empirical Results and Discussion

The data collected on packaging innovation dimensions (packaging materials innovation and packaging design innovation) and consumer patronage measures (patronage intention and repeat patronage) were correlated using the SPSS software program. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in the tables below:

Table 1: Result of the correlation analysis between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands

			Packaging Materials Innovation	Consumer Patronage Intention
Spearman Rank (rho)	Packaging Materials Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.704*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.001
		N	215	215
	Consumer Patronage Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.704*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.001	.
		N	215	215

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 1 contains the result of the correlation analysis carried out between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. The result shows that packaging materials innovation is positively correlated to consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands ($\rho = .704^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that we then accept that there is significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands.

Table 2: Result of the correlation analysis between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands

			Packaging Materials Innovation	Repeat Patronage
Spearman Rank (ρ)	Packaging Materials Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.733*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.002
		N	215	215
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	.733*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.002	.
		N	215	215

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 2 presents the result of the correlation analysis carried out between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. The result shows a positive correlation between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands ($\rho = .733^*$) and the symbol * signifies that this correlation is significant at 0.05 level. As a result of this, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands.

Table 3: Result of the correlation analysis between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands

			Packaging Design Innovation	Consumer Patronage Intention
Spearman Rank (ρ)	Packaging Design Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.812*
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.	.003
		N	215	215
	Consumer Patronage Intention	Correlation Coefficient	.812*	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.003	.
		N	215	215

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 3 shows the result of the correlation analysis carried out between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. The result indicates that packaging design innovation has a positive correlation with customer patronage intention of food and beverage brands ($\rho = .812^*$) and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level as indicated by the symbol *. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands.

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Table 4: Result of the correlation analysis between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands

		Packaging Design Innovation	Repeat Patronage
Spearman Rank (rho)	Packaging Design Innovation	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.779*
		N	.004
	Repeat Patronage	Correlation Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2 tailed)	.779*
		N	.004

**Correlation is significant at 0.01 levels (2 tailed)

*Correlation is significant at 0.05 levels (2 tailed)

Source: SPSS-generated Output

Table 4 contains the result of the correlation analysis carried out between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. The result shows that packaging design innovation is positively correlated to repeat patronage of food and beverage brands ($\rho = .779^*$) and the symbol * implies that this correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. This means that we then accept that there is significant relationship between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands.

Discussion of Findings

Based on the result of the analysis carried out, it was revealed that significant relationship exists between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This finding was derived from the result of the correlation analysis carried out on the two variables in the first hypothesis. The result showed that packaging materials innovation is positively correlated to customer patronage intention of food and beverage products and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level (see table 1). Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This finding is supported by Churchfield (2016) who noted that packaging materials innovation can help to build consumer purchasing intention. If the consumers are enticed with the way and manner in which the packaging materials innovated, they will think the product itself has been improved upon and they will be motivated to try the products. Wisler (2012) also agreed with this finding when they stated that consumers develop a strong purchasing intention when they see a new packaging materials believing that the content (product) must have been improved upon.

This study also found a significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. The finding emerged from the result of the analysis carried out on the two variables in the second hypothesis. The result confirmed a positive correlation between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level (see table 2). As a result of this, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. This finding is in line with Anthony (2010)'s postulation that changing the packaging materials can easily attract customers to a product and inspire them to make repeat purchases. Davis (2006) also supported this finding when they reported that packaging materials innovation significantly enhanced repeat purchases.

This study equally revealed that packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This finding was deduced from the result of the correlation analysis carried out the two variables in the third hypothesis. The result revealed that a positive correlation between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level (see table 3). Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{03}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This implies that there is significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Marinac (2013) and Stuyck (2003) as both studies confirmed that packaging design innovation significantly helps to increase consumer purchasing intention.

Finally, it was discovered that packaging design innovation has a significant relationship with repeat patronage of food and beverage brands. This finding emerged from the result of the analysis carried out on the two variables in the fourth hypothesis. The result revealed that packaging design innovation is positively correlated to repeat patronage of food and beverage brands and this correlation is significant at 0.05 level (see table 4). Based on this result, the null hypothesis (H_{04}) was rejected and the alternate hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is significant relationship between packaging design innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products. This finding is supported by Pranevicius (2018) who noted that packaging redesigning can motivate consumers to make repeat patronage. Sajuyigbe, Ayanleke & Ola (2013) also agreed with this finding when they stated that packaging design innovation is a crucial strategy to increase repeat patronage of goods and services.

Conclusions

This study examined packaging innovation and consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria. The empirical results of this study showed a significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This study also found a significant relationship between packaging materials innovation and repeat patronage of food and beverage products. This study equally reported a significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. This study also discovered a significant relationship between packaging design innovation and consumer patronage intention of food and beverage brands. Based on these findings, it was concluded that packaging innovation significantly enhance consumer patronage of food and beverage brands in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. That, manufacturers of food and beverage products in Nigeria should innovate their product packaging as it would enhance consumer patronage of their products.
2. That, manufacturers of food and beverage products in Nigeria should change the packaging materials of their product as it would boosts customer patronage intention and repeat patronage of their products.
3. That, manufacturers of food and beverage products in Nigeria should change the design of their product package to wear a new look as it would attract more consumers and increase the level of customer patronage of their products.
4. That, manufacturers of food and beverage products in Nigeria should continuously redesign and innovate their products package to make them more attractive to customers as it would not only increase customer patronage intention but also increase repeat patronage of their products.
5. Finally, it was recommended that food and beverage manufacturers in Nigeria should not increase the prices of their products simply because they innovate their packaging as consumers are very sensitive to price and could discourage them from patronizing their products.

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