

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**Beverages Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour: The Case of University of  
KwaZulu-Natal Students.**

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## **Abstract**

Time and expense has been spent on developing the functional aspects of packaging to ensure food safety, while providing innovations such as plastic trays that can go in the oven, microwave and freezer. Now, consumers are being faced with increasing changes in the way that their favourite products look on the shelf, as companies undertake sometimes large operations to update packaging. The beverage industry is one among the front-liners where massive investments are being made for expansion and technological upgradation. The packaging of beverages both carbonated and non-carbonated, is a complex technological branch in the Food Processing /Packaging industry. The traditional returnable glass bottle has given way to newer plastic containers as well as cartons. The current trend is to improve the conventional containers, extend their share in the large market, extend the shelf-life of the products, provide greater consumer convenience and ultimately to produce economic packages.

Due to increasing self-service and changing consumers' lifestyle the interest in package as a tool of sales promotion and stimulator of impulsive buying behaviour is growing increasingly. So package performs an important role in marketing communications, especially in the point of sale and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumer's purchase decision. Literature analysis on question under investigation has shown that there is no agreement on classification of package elements as well as on research methods of package impact on consumer's purchase decision. This dissertation reports on an investigation into the role of packaging and how it influences the consumer when buying their choice of beverages. The study was limited to University of KwaZulu-Natal students. Taking into consideration that package could be treated as a set of various elements communicating different messages to a consumer; the research model was developed and tested in order to reveal impact of visual and verbal package elements on consumer's purchase decisions.

Five research questions were developed to address the objectives and the aim of the study. The study concluded that the packaging plays a big role in attracting the consumer's attention and influencing them when buying their choice of beverages.

## Table of Contents

<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
Title Page	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
List of Tables	viii

### **CHAPTER ONE - The Introduction**

1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Motivation for the Study	2
1.3	Focus of the Study	2
1.4	Problem Statement of the Study	3
1.5	Objectives	3
1.6	Research Questions	3
1.7	Limitations of the Study	4
1.8	Research methodology	4
1.9	Value of the study	5
1.10	Summary	5

### **CHAPTER TWO - Conceptual, Theoretical framework and Literature Review**

2.1	Introduction	6
2.2	Conceptual framework	6
2.3	Theoretical framework	7
2.4	The impact of packaging in consumer buying a particular beverage	8
2.5	The characteristics of packaging that helps in developing a brand loyalty	11
2.6	Role of packaging in influencing brand preference	13
2.7	Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage	15
2.8	Innovation in packaging	19

2.9	Summary	20
-----	---------	----

### **CHAPTER THREE - Research Methodology**

3.1	Introduction	22
3.1.1	Aim and objective of the study	22
3.2	Research design	22
3.3	Questionnaire design and administration	23
3.3.1	Step 1: Specifying the data required	23
3.3.2	Step 2: Specifying the survey method	23
3.3.3	Step 3: Developing measurement scales	24
3.3.4	Step 4: Reliability and validity test	24
3.3.5	Step 5: Preparing draft questionnaire	25
3.3.6	Step 6: Testing, revising and distributing the questionnaire	26
3.3.7	Step 7: Questionnaire administration	26
3.4	Sampling strategy	26
3.5	Data analysis strategy	27
3.6	Summary	28

### **CHAPTER FOUR - Presentation of Results and Analyses**

4.1	Introduction	29
4.2	Data preparation	29
4.3	Descriptive statistics	29
4.3.1	Demographics	30
4.3.2	The impact of packaging in consumer buying a particular beverage	31
4.3.3	The characteristics of packaging that help in developing a brand loyalty	32
4.3.4	Role of packaging in influencing brand (beverage) preference	34
4.3.5	Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage	38
4.3.6	Innovation in beverage packaging	40
4.3.7	Reliability Test	43
4.4	Summary	43

## **CHAPTER FIVE - Discussion, conclusion and Recommendations**

5.1	Introduction	44
5.2	Discussion	44
5.2.1	The impact of packaging in consumers buying a particular beverage	44
5.2.2	The characteristics of packaging that helps in developing a brand loyalty	45
5.2.3	Role of packaging in influencing brand 9beverage0 preference	46
5.2.4	Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage	46
5.2.5	Innovation in beverage packaging	47
5.3	Conclusions	47
5.4	Recommendations and areas of future research	48
5.5	Summary	48

<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	49
---------------------	----

**Appendix 1** Questionnaire

**Appendix 2** Ethical clearance

**Appendix 3** Turnitin report



## List of Tables

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Page</b>
Table 4.1	Demographics results	30
Table 4.2	I like the packaging of my beverage brand	31
Table 4.3	I generally prefer to buy consumer goods with packaging	31
Table 4.4	I like the colour of packaging materials	32
Table 4.5	Colour of packaging matters when purchasing beverages	33
Table 4.6	I like beautiful backgrounds on beverage packages	33
Table 4.7	I prefer beverage packaging with attractive background	34
Table 4.8	I prefer beverage products packed in high quality package	34
Table 4.9	The design in product's packaging inspired me in my purchasing	35
Table 4.10	I like to read printed information on the package of beverage products	36
Table 4.11	I evaluate products according to the printed information while purchasing	36
Table 4.12	I am loyal to my brand because of its packaging	37
Table 4.13	I purchase beverages as advised by family or friends	38
Table 4.14	Beverage products offered by leading brand are always better	38
Table 4.15	I select products according to my life style	39
Table 4.16	The higher quality of packaging serves beverage products better	39
Table 4.17	Innovation is important in beverage packaging	40
Table 4.18	The innovation packaging can influence your purchasing decision	40
Table 4.19	Font size is attractive	41
Table 4.20	I like attractive font styles in beverage packaging	42
Table 4.21	Have you ever purchased product on the basis of good packaging	42
Table 4.22	Do you think glass is a better packaging than a can for beverages	43

# CHAPTER ONE

## The Introduction

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### 1.1 Introduction

Packaging can be perceived as having a significant influence on a brand's competitiveness and sales. The difficulty lies in measuring or projecting the marketplace impact of a particular design system of packaging. Customers are increasingly recognizing the power of package design, they also demand greater accountability, and survey research has become one important way to document the value of package design.

This chapter is structured as follows:

The perceived role of packaging in marketing is explained and this is followed by a discussion of the motivation for the study. The definition of packaging as it will be the focus of the study is laid out together with a detailed definition of the problem statement and the relation of the packaging to consumer buying behaviour. The objectives, research question, limitations, research methodology, and the value of the study are discussed here in details.

## **1.2 Motivation for the study**

In recent years packaging has developed well beyond its original function as merely a means of product protection and now plays a key marketing role in developing shelf appeal, providing product information and establishing brand image and awareness (Cateora and Graham, 2002, pp 358-360). As packaging's role in the marketing mix gains momentum, so research into this arena becomes increasingly important. Given the potential for packaging to successfully achieve marketing goals; does research into packaging truly reflect its value within the marketing mix? Is there a fully understanding of the role that packaging plays in a marketing environment and how best to leverage this tool to influence consumers? If packaging is so important, what is the best way to measure its effectiveness? The study has been motivated by the above questions and will address the same. The notion is supported by the following writers as they share that most marketing textbooks consider packaging to be an integral part of the "product" component of the 4 P's of marketing: product, price, place and promotion (Cateora and Graham, 2002, pp 358-360). Authors argue that packaging serves as a promotional tool rather than merely an extension of the product: Keller (1998) considers packaging to be an attribute that is not related to the product. For him it is one of the five elements of the brand – together with the name, the logo and/or graphic symbol, the personality and the slogans.

## **1.3 Focus of the study**

The definitions of 'packaging' vary and range from being simple and functionally focused to more extensive, holistic interpretations.

Packaging can be defined as an extrinsic element of the product (Olson and Jacoby, 1972) – an attribute that is related to the product but does not form part of the physical product itself. "Packaging is the container for a product – encompassing the physical appearance of the container and including the design, colour, shape, labeling and materials used" (Arens, 1996).

While the main use for packaging can be considered to be protection of the goods inside, packaging also fulfils a key role in that it provides consumers with a recognizable logo, or packaging, so that they instantly know what goods are inside. From the consumer perspective, packaging plays a major role when products are purchased – as both a cue and a source of information. Packaging is crucial, given that it is the first thing that the consumer sees before making the final decision to buy (Giovannetti, 1995).

#### **1.4 Problem statement**

Development and implementation of good packaging strategies in Consumer Goods which include beverages can have a positive influence on the performance of the products or services in the market place. Thus, it has to be ascertained what exactly the role of packaging in consumer's beverage choice is.

#### **1.5 Objectives**

The objectives of this research are therefore:

- to determine the impact of packaging in customers buying a particular beverage,
- to identify the characteristics of packaging that help developing brand loyalty,
- to investigate the reasons for brand preference with respect to packaging,
- to identify customers' perception of product packaging, and
- to make recommendations for developing customer loyalty through packaging.

#### **1.6 Research questions**

The following questions were thus researched:

- What is the impact of packaging on a customer buying a particular beverage?
- What are the characteristics of packaging that help in brand loyalty?
- What are the brand attributes that contribute to brand preference with respect to packaging?

- What are customers' perceptions of product packaging?
- What are recommendations of developing customer loyalty through packaging?

To test these research questions, a field survey using a questionnaire was developed for the research objectives.

### **1.7 Possible limitations of the study**

The major limitation for this research could be that it is confined to the University of KwaZulu-Natal's three major campuses i.e. Durban, Westville and Pietermaritzburg. However, this geographical limitation is not only accepted because of time and access restrictions, but also because of the fact that the majority of the population is concentrated in these three campuses. Thus it is considered as a good representation of the sampled population.

Furthermore this research is only researching the consumer buying behaviour of beverages, since the consumption pattern from other products may differ. Consumers show a unique buying behaviour for different products.

This research also limits itself to the KwaZulu-Natal university students or consumers, since it is considered that consumers of different parts of the world behave differently because of cultural factors. This is as a result of time and administration restrictions. Hence, not all possible results are explored by this study.

### **1.8 Research methodology**

This research uses a mixed approach of two research strategies; exploratory and descriptive research. Each of these strategies plays a distinct but complementary role in order to get an answer to the research problem. The survey design is being considered as the most appropriate technique for descriptive research since the aim is to obtain primary data. Questionnaires (primary data) enable the researcher to identify

and describe the opinion of the respondents. Moreover, it is simple to administrate, provides relatively reliable data and is time limited.

### **1.9. Value of the study**

The research will fill in the gaps in the marketing of beverage packaging due to the lack of research in this area (role of packaging). Even though information regarding buying behaviour may be helpful to beverage marketers, research about this issue is sparse. An anticipated benefit is to provide guidance for beverages packaging marketing activities; the results of this research may provide potential benefits to the marketers or retailers. Marketing campaigns may be aimed more towards the (potential) customer by having the right information about the consumer. For example, building the product image of health, pureness or taste depends on findings of consumers' perception and buying behaviour of beverage.

### **1.10 Summary**

This chapter determined the motivation, focus, and the value of the study. It also introduced the research methodology that followed during the study, and discussed the limitations of the study. The research objectives, research questions and problem statement were covered in this chapter. The next chapter (chapter 2) will investigate the theoretical framework and review the literature related to this research study.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Conceptual Framework, Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

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#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes the existing literature on beverage packaging and consumer buying behaviour. Hence, on the basis of the existing literature, this chapter expands a theoretical framework which will be tested by this research.

#### 2.2 Conceptual framework

Kotler and Armstrong (2009) provided a definition that: “Consumers are all the individuals and households who buy or acquire goods and services for personal consumption”. As it will be noted from the definition above, referral is made to an individual. Therefore, one should first focus on human behaviour, since consumer behaviour, according to Kotler and Keller (2009: p. 190), represents a subset of human behaviour. Human behaviour therefore refers to “the total process whereby the individual interacts with his environment” (Walter 1974: p. 6).

Belch and Belch (1990: p. 91) provide a link between human behaviour and consumer behaviour, by stating that consumer behaviour has been defined as the study of human behaviour in a consumer role. Consumer behaviour according to Kotler and Keller (2009: p. 190), is the study of how individuals, groups, and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of goods, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants.

According to Kotler and Keller (2009:195), it is a difficult task to discover the reasons why people buy, as they are subject to many influences. One reason is that humans are significantly influenced by their consciousness, which eventually leads to overt purchase response.

Keller (2003: p. 175) suggests that brand elements called brand identities are a perfect tool to influence consumers. He defined the brand elements as “those trade-markable devices that serve to identify and differentiate the brand”. The main brand elements that he referred to are the brand names, URLs, logos, symbols, characters, spokespeople, slogans, jingles, packages and signage. Keller (2003: p. 175) concludes that brand elements can be chosen to enhance brand awareness; facilitate the formation of strong favourable and unique brand associations or educe positive brand judgments and feelings.

According to Keller (2003), packaging involves the activities of designing and producing containers or wrappers for a product. He concludes that packaging like other elements, must achieve a number of objectives from the perspective of both the firm and consumers namely, identity of brand; convey descriptive and persuasive information; facilitate product transportation and protection; assist at-home storage and aid product consumption. “To achieve the marketing objective for the brand and satisfy the desires of consumer, the aesthetic and functional components of packaging must be chosen correctly” (Keller, 2003: p. 210). Kapferer (1997) asserts that the aesthetic considerations relate to a package’s size and shape, material, colour, text and graphics.

### **2.3 Theoretical framework**

Within the sphere of influence of this research there are subsets of topics and concerns. This framework will be used as a tool to organize and prioritize the concerns of the investigation, and as a means for understanding the interconnected relationships among these disciplines. The overall focus of this investigation is the connection between packaging and identity, specifically, the impact of packaging on consumer buying their choice of beverage. In addition, the co-dependent relationship between brand and consumer identity serves to close the loop and establish a circuit of identity production. The theoretical framework illustrates this circuit.



## **2.4 The impact of packaging in consumers buying a particular beverage**

In today's supermarket environment, fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs) are competing for the customer's attention in an increasingly competitive retail environment. In this context, packaging has been recognized as a silent salesman ever since 1973 (Pilditch, 1973). The task of being a silent salesman involves not only grasping the attention of shoppers but also keeping it in the visual clamour of competing products and brands (Judd, Aalders & Melis, 1989). Finding a product on the shelf has become a challenge, not only because of large numbers of options, but also because of shared product attributes and copy-cat products that are available at the point-of-purchase (POP).

The branding concept of 'distinctive assets' (DA) works with the big picture, the managerial view, while packaging view must be rooted within the retail environment, because the package faces the challenge of representing the brand and being the physical contact with consumers (Warlop , et al., 2005; Zeithaml, 1988; Rossiter and Percy, 1987). These packaging differences incorporate new variables to the problem of distinctiveness; one of them is time. For instance, almost 50% of shoppers spent five seconds or less at the point of purchase (Dickson and Sawyer, 1990), so a package has to be distinctive quicker than its competition and accurately recognized.

The study conducted by Sharma (2008) focused on existing practice of branding, packaging and labeling of new products in consumer-product manufacturing units. The study method was a descriptive presentation of facts collected through questionnaire surveys concerned with different sections of consumer new products and the study further investigated the new consumer-product packaging and labeling status in manufacturing units. The study concluded that consumers are aware of the value of packaging and labeling. The majority of the consumer products (84.37%) use product labels as a simple tag attached to the product or an elaborately designed graphic that is part of the package.

Understanding how the product attracts the consumer's attention from the multitude of commodity packaging is the first step that leads to success (Wang and Chen 2007). If the packaging can further lead the consumer to a positive buying emotion, the goal of invigorating the sales volume will possibly be achieved (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Sherman , et al., 1997). To observe this tendency, the illustration has a more common visual-design performance, and it lets the person feel more approachable.

A study reported on Wright (2010) asserted that the food and drink industry accounts for more than half of the world's packaging market, ahead of sectors such as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and healthcare/medicine. The share of the packaging market taken by food and drink is particularly high in the glass sector, owing to the dominance of glass bottles in the beverages industry (Wright, 2010). However, food and drink applications account for more than half of apparent consumption for all types of packaging material except metal (which has a share of fewer than 50%) (Wright, 2010). By 2014, the plastics sector is expected to become the market's largest share, driven by continuing technological innovations such as improvements in barrier protection. This trend is expected to increase the penetration of flexible forms of plastic packaging such as pouches within the food industry. In contrast, demand for paper, glass and metal packaging is likely to remain at more static levels, although all three materials are expected to retain a significant presence in the food and drink industry (Wright, 2010).

According to Kuvykaite (2009), descriptive-research package attracts a consumer's attention to a particular brand, enhances its image, and influences the consumer's perceptions about a product. Packaging imparts unique value to products (Underwood , et al., 2001 and Silayoi & Speece, 2004). It also works as a tool for differentiation as it helps consumers to choose the product from a wide range of similar products, i.e. stimulates customers buying behaviour (Wells , et al., 2007). Thus packaging performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumers' purchase of beverage; its elements and their impact on consumers' buying behaviour becomes a relevant issue.

Using packaging elements by consumers is an important issue for low involvement products. Generally, information elements require more mental effort to process than to do visual elements, which evoke more of an emotional response (Silayoi and Speece, 2004). The role of imagery in information-processing pictures may exert an influence on judgments through their mediating impact on the images they provide of the situations they describe. However, images may be elicited by verbal description of the situation as well. The role of imagery in consumer behaviour has been recognized in research by Escalas (2004). That is, individuals who read a story may often imagine themselves as a protagonist in the narrative. As a consequence of being transported into the situation portrayed in advertisements they may be more influenced by it (Wanke, 2009).

Consistent with Young's (2006) assertion, packaging also differs from advertising in that it is normally positioned directly next to its primary competitors. In other words, packaging is seldom viewed or considered in isolation—and all communication is intrinsically on a relative or comparative basis (that is, with your package in a person's left hand and a competing package in his or her right hand). In advertising, the emphasis is often on historical "norms" and absolute measures. Research for packaging, the most relevant norm is nearly always competition—and it is critical that a study gather directly comparable data regarding competitive packaging (Young, 2006).

Louw and Kimber's (2006) study concluded packaging has a better reach than advertising does, and can set a brand apart from its competitors. It promotes and reinforces the purchase decision not only at the point of purchase, but also every time the product is used (Louw and Kimber, 2006). Research into packaging has found that different packaging cues impact how a product is perceived (Louw and Kimber, 2006). They stated that the packaging is perceived to be part of the product and it can be difficult for consumers to separate the two. Aspects such as packaging colour, typography, illustrations and graphics can influence how a product is perceived.

## **2.5 The characteristics of packaging that helps in developing a brand loyalty**

These days specialized package designers bring artistic techniques and scientific skills to packaging design in an attempt to meet the marketing objectives for a brand. Designers often refer to the “shelf impact” of a package – the visual effect that the package has at the point of the purchase when seen in the context of other packages in the category (Keller, 2003: p. 214). The importance of packaging is reflected in the fact that some marketing observers refer to it as the “fifth P” of the marketing mix (Keller, 2003: p. 217). Keller (2003: p. 217) concluded that packaging can play an important role in building brand equity directly through points of difference created by functional or aesthetic elements of the packaging or indirectly through the reinforcement of brand awareness and image.

The theoretical analysis of package elements and their impact on consumers’ purchase decisions empirically reveal the elements having the ultimate effect on consumer choice. Rita (2009) offers six variables that must be taken into consideration by producers and designers when creating efficient packages: form, size, colour, graphics, material and flavour. Similarly, Kotler (2003) distinguishes six elements that must be evaluated when employing packaging decisions: size, form, material, colour, text and brand. The research result of Rita (2009) shows the impact of package elements on consumer purchase decisions can be stronger. The study concluded that packaging could be treated as one of the most valuable tools in today’s marketing communications, necessitating more detailed analysis of its elements and an impact of those elements on consumers’ buying behaviour. The impact of package and its elements on consumers’ purchase decisions can be revealed by analyzing the importance of its separate elements for the consumer’s choice.

Kuvykaite’s (2009) research on the impact of package elements on consumer purchase decision economics and management concluded that material is the most important visual elements for purchasing; colour and graphics were regarded as unimportant elements of package. Comparing the impact of visual and verbal elements of package

on consumers' purchase decisions it could be stated that verbal elements are more important than visual ones.

Packaging has several tasks including cutting through the muddle to get consumers to notice/see the product; communicating marketing information; stimulating brand impressions; and providing various brand cues (Louw and Kimber, 2006). However, product choice involves time pressure and cluttered conditions as consumers are looking for anything that helps them navigate their way through the 'noise' of the category (Rushton, 2006). People cannot process the huge number of messages they are bombarded with (Jugger, 1999), but elements such as colour, and package shape have been suggested as a means of creating distinctiveness (Gaillard, 2007). Previous research in branding found shape, colour, logo, slogan, font, taste, texture, scent, character, celebrity, music, sound and advertising style as potential DA(s) to be used across different communication platforms (Gaillard, Romaniuk, Sharp, 2005; Gaillard, Sharp, Romaniuk, 2006; Romanuik and Sharp, 2004).

Ragland (2008) asserted that when consumers were asked, "Which physical elements of packaging have the most impact on brand and consumer identity?", the findings were that the colours, shapes and images are the primary visual cues consumers use in decoding brand messages, and the majority of consumers extracted similar meanings from each. For example, the colour green communicates a nearly universal understanding of a brand's concern for the environment; images of nature have a similar effect. Simple geometric shapes, sans serif, fonts and clear materials also communicate safe, gentle, and honest brand values. He asserted that the connection between the colour green and images of nature to concern for the environment seems straightforward. Consumers have grown accustomed to this visual language, but it seems that it is becoming a cliché. Simple design attributes are already beginning to be understood and acknowledged by eco-conscious consumers. He concluded that as brand identities change and evolves in response to consumer perceptions; these attributes will likely be incorporated into more package designs.

## **2.6 Role of packaging in influencing brand preference**

A study conducted by Wästlund , et al. (2005) has shown that 60-80% of purchasing decisions are made in-store and that 90% of consumer decisions are made just by looking at the front of the package without touching the product itself. The point-of-purchase (POP) has become the playing field for packages to stand out from their competitors giving the best packaging a better competitive advantage. Thus, the question is how to design packages with better POP qualities. Underwood and Klein (2002) concluded that for decisions made at the point of purchase, packaging takes on a heightened importance relative to other communication tools because of its easy availability.

As the only part of the marketing communication that the consumer takes home, packaging plays a key role in communicating and reinforcing brand values over time (Louw and Kimber, 2006). Packaging has the power to make, but also to break brand relationships (Louw and Kimber, 2006). A key example of the latter is a case cited by Hofmeyr and Rice (2007), where a change in pack design contributed towards a drop in a leading beer brand's market share by more than 20% in the space of just one year. Nothing other than the packaging had changed – the product itself had not changed in any way. The pack change, although not dramatic (the same style but with lighter colouring), led to a perception that the beer's quality had been compromised and that it was now weaker. This is a clear example of the power of bad packaging. Although a non-favourable advertisement might be quickly forgotten, poor packaging (if it remains with the brand throughout its usage cycle) provides a continual reminder of the brand's perceived failing. Likewise, favourable packaging can be a means of continually reinforcing the brand's appeal. If packaging is unwieldy it can hamper the relationship with the brand, for instance if it breaks easily, doesn't fit in the fridge, can cut the consumer, etc., the experience with the product can be negative.

The package is a decisive factor in the consumer decision-making process because it truly communicates to the consumer in the store (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). The

package encourages purchasing behaviour because it is a medium of attention, information, and aesthetics (Bech-Larsen, 1996). A package that is able to capture the customer's attention can facilitate quick, in-store decision-making (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). Overall, the results of previous research into packaging and package design suggest that packaging is an extremely influential element at the POP, with its importunate impact on customers during their purchasing-decision process (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008).

At this stage it can be assumed that the consumer's decision about modifying, postponing or avoiding purchase decisions is highly dependent on the mental risk of decision perceived by consumers. Vasquez, , et al. (2003) concluded that with food products, which consumers generally perceive less risk than other products, the packaging plays an important role. This study shows that packaging with reliance on information and visual elements plays the most important role in consumer purchase decisions at this stage in comparison with the other stages. The food-product buyers mostly pay attention to information written on food packages when they are going to make their ultimate purchase decision. Moreover, the other image elements such as colour shape and technology of packaging also has a significant effect on consumer purchase decision at stores (Warlop , et al., 2005).

“Packaging can have an important brand equity benefits for a company” (Keller, 2003: p. 212). Keller (2003: p. 212) offers that one of the strongest associations that consumers have with a brand relates to the look of its packaging. The package appearance can become an important means of brand recognition. Keller (2003: p. 212) emphasizes that the information conveyed or inferred from the package can build or reinforce valuable brand associations. According to Keller (2003: p. 212) structural packaging innovations can create a point of difference that permits a higher margin. He continues that new packages can also expand a market and capture new market segments.

## **2.7 Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage**

A study conducted by Gersen (2000) concluded that consumers have developed personal norms about choosing environment-friendly packaging and the personal norm is a significant predictor of their (self-reported) propensity to choose environment-friendly packaging in the supermarket.

According to a study by Estiri , et al. (2010) packaging has become a critical marketing issue for food industry, especially beverages in the current competitive market. Industry experts believed that product innovation and packaging are keys to enhance competitiveness of packed food products. A key to maximizing package impact is understanding consumer response to packaging. Understanding issues that concern consumers in one highly competitive market should provide a useful guide for others, even if details of execution might be different across countries.

Packaging design studies are relevant to industry and marketing knowledge as packaging represents a substantial investment for companies. Approximately 40% of marketing budgets are allocated to pack design (Wanke, cited in Campaign, 1997). So, a better understanding of packaging distinctiveness is likely to assist marketers in pack design and aid consumers in decision-making as well as help producers and manufactures to take informed decisions about packaging changes and the legal protection of their packaging assets.

A study conducted by Ragland (2008) stated that when consumers were asked to design a product package for a brand that was eco-conscious and socially responsible, the majority of the participants selected a simple cylinder with a traditional spray top. It was noted that participants have chosen this shape because it “stands out” and was “different” and “modern.” In addition, one participant suggested that the simple shape of the bottle “probably took less water to make,” therefore, reinforcing the eco-friendly values of the brand. The most popular colours used by participants in the



exercise were green and clear. The majority of respondents requested that their container be made of a “clear” material—recycled plastic, polycarbonate, or glass. The study also noted that green was also a popular colour because many respondents equated the colour with “nature” and “eco-friendliness.” Red was the only colour respondents overtly noted they would not want to see on a package. Red was considered to signal toxicity, which respondents considered to be inappropriate with the mission of an eco-conscious brand. Among the range of font preferences, 50% of participants chose a script font, 33% chose a sans serif font, and 17% chose the more fanciful bubble font. The serif font provided was not selected by anyone. Participants that chose the script font noted that it felt “soft,” “elegant” and “gentle,” while those that chose the sans serif font described their choice as “simple,” “clean” and “basic.”

Obtaining customers’ attention can be difficult because of the large number of stimuli in a store and because most of these stimuli are ignored by customers who shop habitually (Underwood, Klein, & Burke, 2001). Nevertheless, once the shopper’s attention has been caught, the package’s overall features can highlight the uniqueness and originality of the product (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). Moreover, visual packaging elements play a major role, representing the product to many consumers, especially during low-involvement shopping or rushed shopping situations (Silayoi & Speece, 2004). As the customer’s eye tracks across the products on the shelves, some packages stand out from their competitors, attracting the customer’s attention. Although it is difficult to accurately predict purchasing behaviour based solely on overt attention and on the most basic level, it can be concluded that the unseen is unsold.

A study conducted by Yeung and Wyer (2004) found that when products were described by verbal attribute information alone, participants’ evaluations of the product depended on whether they were told to use affective or utilitarian criteria. When they were shown a picture of the product before receiving the verbal attribute information, however, they formed an initial impression of the product on the basis of the picture alone. That is, the attribute information they received later had little effect (Wanke, 2009).

In a series of studies by Childers , et al. (2009), it was found that when people with a disposition to form visual images (i.e. visualizers) receive attribute descriptions of a product that is unfamiliar to them, they often find it difficult to construct an image of it and react unfavourably to the product being described (Wanke, 2009). However, providing a picture of the product can substantially increase their evaluations of it, but the impact of the picture on visualizers' evaluations of it, depends in part on whether the verbal and pictorial information can be integrated into a single image. In contrast, when individuals have a disposition to process information semantically without forming visual images, they are unaffected by these factors (Wanke, 2009).

A study conducted by Wang and Chen (2007) found that expression technique and drawing media and simplification of illustration influences consumers' joyful feeling. Based on a statistical method of investigating food packaging in the market, 167 samples were found that use illustration in the package design. This research pointed out:

- (a) High sharp of expression technique (60.48%) and rendering graphic (52.69%) that are used mostly on packaging surface design.
- (b) The association of high sharp expression with drawing media of airbrush painting, and pictorial illustration accounted for the market maximum proportion (36.53%) in the investigation of association of "expression technique and drawing media" and "simplification of illustration".
- (c) The association of high sharp expression with drawing media of coloured pencil painting, and rendering graphic causes the highest (grade 4.05) positive buying emotion in terms of happiness, joyfulness, satisfaction, leisure, and expectation.

The association of high sharp expression with drawing media of block print painting, and graphic simplification effectively causes negative buying emotion. The finding of the research results suggests that packaging surface design tendency from marketplace presents an inverse relationship with the consumer's buying emotion.

Young (2006) in his exploratory study offered that usability studies can show that a new packaging system provides efficient benefits (making the product easier to open or protecting the product more fully, for instance). Graphics studies can show that a new packaging system coerces improvements in imagery or appeal. However, findings of this nature fall short in answering the marketer's critical question:

- Will these functional or attitudinal advantages translate into incremental revenue and provide a positive return on investment (ROI)?

Wang and Chen (2007) wrote that apart from paying attention to product quality and usability, consumers enjoy the package design of the product when purchasing commodities. They offered that using an illustration in the package design can draw more attention to the product. Based on the results of that previous research, they concluded that having illustrations in the package design is one of the factors which influence buying emotion. Their study also offered that a consumer can be easily attracted by more complex and novel external characteristic packaging and visual graphic designs. Likewise, this leads consumers to a positive buying emotion and leads them to buy this attractive product (Holbrook and Moore, 1982).

Warlop , et al. (2010), study deduced that consumers form perceptions of various food products through their comprehension of the visual stimuli on food packaging that attract their attention. These perceptions directly affect their purchasing decision at the point of purchase, which emphasizes the importance of attention-capturing packaging attributes Warlop , et al. (2010).

## **2.8 Innovation in packaging**

According to Louw and Kimber (2006) an innovative pack design can help to set a brand apart from its competitors. The marketing world is full of examples of brands that have used packaging to carve a unique position in the marketplace (Louw and Kimber, 2006). The design of the pack itself can act as an incentive for purchase (Hall,

1993). A strong, well-built mineral water bottle might be chosen over its competitors, not for its content, but rather for its ability to be reused on future occasions (Louw and Kimber, 2006).

A taller container will be perceived to contain more than a shorter container of the same volume (Gersen , et al., 2005). This is a relevant question for product managers whose product ranges include containers of different shapes but the same volume: for example, beer bottles versus beer cans (Gersen , et al., 2005). If the taller item in their product line is estimated to be bigger than the shorter one, with fewer units of it purchased as a consequence, managers should be aware of this so that they can control it (through increasing the salience of product volume information on the package label, or changing the shapes of their cans to make them closer to the height of their bottles) or leverage it (through producing more cans than bottles) (Gersen , et al., 2005).

The Gersen , et al. (2005) research on the effect of package shape on consumer established that across four studies using a multi-method approach, their results demonstrate that:

(i) elongated containers are perceived to contain more even in the context of frequently purchased products where package labels mention the actual volume of the container, (ii) the more usage experience a consumer has, the lower the effect of package elongation on volume perception and purchase quantity, (iii) in the context of multi-unit purchases, a smaller quantity of units are purchased if the package is more elongated, holding actual volume, price, promotion, and desired consumption level constant, (iv) these effects are strongest when the consumption context is a single occasion without the presence of social norms providing external anchors for purchase quantity, and (v) these effects are strongest when the desired consumption level is constant.

Wright's (2010) study on consumer behaviour concluded that customers' evaluations of products are greatly affected by appearances and design, including such things as

touch, taste, smell and texture. His findings were that the packaging that surrounds the product has become at least as important, if not more so in some cases, than the product itself and it continues to be an integral part contributing to the overall attractiveness of the product and becoming a quintessential ingredient in the emotive process of brand building. Companies spend billions on consumer and packaging research, making certain that such things as material used, colour combinations, wording and overall appropriateness match (or exceed) customer wants and expectations (Wright, 2010).

New packaging concepts should be evaluated in context, not in isolation. If possible, packaging research should simulate both the shopping and usage experience, giving people an opportunity to interact and feel the package's functionality, shelf visibility and impact on brand imagery (Jugger, 1999). Also, packaging research should, as far as possible, take into consideration current relationships and usage behaviour within that category (Sinclair and Knowles, 2006).

## **2.9 Summary**

In this chapter, the conceptual and theoretical framework was explained. A review of relevant literature and previous studies were examined in relation to the impact of packaging in consumers buying their choice of beverages; the characteristics of packaging that help in developing brand loyalty and the influence of packaging on brand preferences. The theory and some literature outlining the importance of innovation in packaging design as well as the consumer's perception of packaging were examined. This research study will study the role of packaging in influencing the consumer to purchase their choice of beverage. The next chapter will discuss in details the research methodology used to conduct the research.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Research Methodology**

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#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the methodology which is used for this research to collect the data needed. There are several steps to follow in order to gather the right data. Before explaining these steps, the next section will firstly explain why this methodology was chosen.

##### **3.1.1 Aim and objectives of the study**

The aim of the research is to reveal the elements of packaging which impact on consumer choice. The research objectives are:

- to determine the impact of packaging in the customer buying a particular beverage,
- to identify the characteristics of packaging that helps in developing brand loyalty,
- to investigate the reasons for brand preference with respect to packaging,
- to identify customers' perception of product packaging, and
- to make recommendations for developing customer loyalty through packaging.

#### **3.2 Research design**

Research design is a plan which outlines how information is to be gathered for an assessment. It includes identifying the data-gathering method(s), the instruments to be used or created, how the instruments will be administered, and how the information will be organized and analyzed (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

This is a descriptive research. It is used to test and to answer the research question. (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). This is carried out by a survey design and therefore consists of designing and administrating the questionnaire, constructing the sampling strategy and analyzing the results (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

The survey design was considered as the most appropriate technique for descriptive research since the aim is to obtain primary data. Questionnaires (primary data) enable the researcher more easily to identify and describe the opinion of the respondents. Moreover, it is simple to administrate, provides relatively reliable data and is time limited (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Every respondent is asked to answer the same set of structured and predetermined questions; therefore coding, data treatment and interpretation are relatively easy.

### **3.3 Questionnaire design and administration**

Firstly, all questions and formats are standardized so that all respondents face the same questionnaire. Second, the questionnaire is designed comprehensively, in order to motivate respondents to cooperate and accurately complete it. The questionnaire used for this research is included in Appendix 1.

#### **3.3.1 Step 1: Specifying the data required**

The first step in questionnaire design is to accurately determine the required information to achieve the research objectives. Based on the research questions, problem statement and the exploratory research, the independent and dependent variables are identified.

#### **3.3.2 Step 2: Specifying the survey method**

The next step of the questionnaire design is to specify the survey method. The survey method is the research technique which gathers information from people through the use of surveys or questionnaires (Hair , et al., 2003: p. 195). Primary data can be collected in a number of ways. However, every type of survey method has its advantages and disadvantages. Hence, the choice of a self-administered survey for this research is based on the research objectives and an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of survey methods.

A self-administered survey is a survey in which respondents answer questions directly on a questionnaire without an interviewer's interaction (Hair , et al., 2003: p. 195). The respondents complete the survey on their own and can choose their own pace and time to complete the survey.

This type of method was considered as the most appropriate method for this research for several reasons. Not only is it cost-efficient, but it also improves the reliability of the results since respondents are not rushed to fill it out. However, the possible disadvantages of a self-administered survey are also taken into consideration carefully. For example, it is important that the respondents understand the questions and answer it in an understandable way. Therefore the questions are formulated as clearly as possible. There is also a chance that respondents will not complete the questionnaire or will not respond in a timely manner. These factors are taken into consideration as 'errors' (see section 3.4).

### **3.3.3 Step 3: Developing measurement scales**

Closely related to the design of the questionnaire is selecting the format of response for measurement. There are four types of scales: nominal, ordinal, ratio and interval. The three types of measurement scales in the questionnaire of this research are nominal, ordinal and interval. For example question one (Gender) has a nominal scale, since there is no magnitude, no equal interval and no absolute zero in the possible answers (Saunders , et al., 2003: p. 310). Question three (Education) is ordinal because of possible ranking but no magnitude and absolute zero point. Questions five up to twenty are treated as questions with interval scales

### **3.3.4 Step 4: Reliability and validity test**

The reliability and validity test was adopted from Social Research Methods (2010). It offered that any questionnaire should be reliable and valid in order to use the right results for further actions. Reliability is the consistency of your measurement. It is the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects. In short, it is the repeatability of your



measurement. A measure is considered to be reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar.

In order to test the reliability of this questionnaire, a pilot test was carried out prior to the field survey within a relatively small sample of 10 respondents to identify and eliminate possible problems and errors. The comments from the pilot study were used to prepare the final questionnaire.

Validity is concerned with the strength of our conclusions, inferences or propositions (Social Research Methods, 2010). More formally, (Cook and Campbell, 1979) define it as the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion.

Regarding this research, the validity was verified by the supervisor of this research, who looked into the appropriateness of questions and the scales of measurement. Changes to the questionnaire were made after the pilot study and consultation with the supervisor. The supervisor agreed to the final format of the questionnaire before it was submitted for ethical clearance.

### **3.3.5 Step 5: Preparing draft questionnaire**

To design a good questionnaire, principles were applied to the content, wording and structure of the questions. Double-barreled and sensitive questions were avoided. As for wording, care was taken to ensure that each word has only one meaning and there are no biased words, phrases, abbreviations, double negatives and incomplete sentences. In relation to the structure, all questions have a clear structure and the questionnaire is divided into three parts. They are ordered from the most easy ones (personal information) to the more time-consuming and topic-related ones. Furthermore, questions with similar structure are grouped together.

### **3.3.6 Step 6: Testing, revising and distributing the questionnaire**

As mentioned in section 3.3.4, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were assessed in the testing phase. Revision took place on the basis of the feedback from the respondents for example, some questions were changed into statements and vice versa. The distribution of the questionnaires was conducted through the internet (email) designed on Questionpro; this form of distribution was chosen due to limited time available and its ease of distribution.

### **3.3.7 Step 7: Questionnaire administration**

As required, this questionnaire was designed to encourage responses as much as possible. Hence, it was designed to appear quick and easy to answer, mostly by the close-ended questions. The average time required to complete the questionnaire was confined to between 5 - 10 minutes. Finally, an introduction with the identity of the researcher, the nature and importance of the research and principles to ensure anonymity.

## **3.4 Sampling strategy**

Another crucial step in conducting the survey is to determine which subjects shall be surveyed to obtain the appropriate information for the research objectives. To decide which type of sampling was the most appropriate one for this survey, the characteristics of both probability and non-probability sampling were considered.

Sekaran and Bougie (2010) offer that in probability sampling, the elements in the population have some known non-zero chance or probability of being selected as sample subjects. And in non-probability sampling, the elements do not have a known or predetermined chance of being selected as subjects.

In this research, the population under study consisted of UKZN students on the three main campuses i.e. Durban, Westville and Pietermaritzburg, who had at least a foundation education.

The most appropriate sampling method for this research was quota sampling, a form of non-probability sampling. In quota sampling the population is first segmented into mutually exclusive sub-groups. Then judgment is used to select the subjects or units from each segment based on a specified proportion. This type of sampling is considered as the most appropriate for this research because of two main reasons. Firstly, it enables the researcher to list relevant control characteristics and secondly it determines the distribution of these characteristics in the targeted population. Demographic data, such as age and sex, can more easily be explored by quota sampling (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010).

Determining the sample size for probability samples involves financial, statistical and objective considerations. Due to the limited time for this research, the sample size of this study was 100. The population size was based on the MBA 3 students. In addition, a sample size of 20 was taken into consideration for errors. Thereafter the implementation of the sampling plan was initiated after all necessary preparations. The participants had a choice to participate in the study, and were requested to read and accept the consent letter before commencing with the survey. They were aware that participation was voluntary and that the data would be handled in a confidential and anonymous manner.

### **3.5 Data analysis strategy**

The data collected from the questionnaires was completely summarized and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 15.0. SPSS enables accuracy and makes it relatively easy to interpret data. The following analysis statistics were carried out in SPSS for further analysis:

1. frequencies,
2. descriptive

### **3.6 Summary**

In this chapter, the research methodology was explained. The sampling and data analysis method was discussed in detail. The next chapter presents the research findings and analyses.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Presentation of Results and Analyses**

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#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents an analysis of all data collected through the questionnaires in order to understand the role of packaging in consumers buying their choice of beverage. The results are presented within each objective.

#### **4.2 Data preparation**

In order to make all the collected data suitable for the analysis, all returned questionnaires were screened to determine whether they were complete. The incomplete questionnaires were considered as errors and removed from the survey data.

Each question and possible answer of the questionnaire has a code, since coding of data is necessary for transferring and editing data in SPSS.

The answer possibilities are recoded before the analysis. This was to make it possible that a higher score of the respondents corresponds with a higher correlation between the variables.

#### **4.3 Descriptive statistics**

The mean represents to what extent the sample group consents or does not agree with the different statement. The lower the mean, the more the respondents disagree with the statement. The higher the mean, the more the respondents agree with the statement.

### 4.3.1 Demographics

The demographics of the participants are given by the table below. The sample was dominated by males and Africans.

Race	
African	57
Coloured	0
Indian	27
White	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	
Male	60
Female	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Age	
18 - 25	8
26 - 34	46
35 - 44	33
45+	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Highest Education Level	
Primary	0
Secondary	7
Bachelor's Degree	48
Post Graduate	45
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 4.1:** Demographics results

The above table shows the demographics and socio-economics of the participants. The sample included 60 males and 40 females who answered the survey. The sample was predominantly Africans ( $n = 57$ ). The racial skewness of the sample was not intentional, but rather represented the various racial groups who purchased beverages; this may be a true representative of the country's demographics. The largest portion of the sample ( $n = 48$ ) had a university bachelor's degree.

### 4.3.2 The impact of packaging in consumers buying a particular beverage.

The following results represent the findings in relation to the impact of packaging in consumers buying a particular beverage

#### A.

I like the packaging of my beverage brand		
Strongly Agree	15	15.31%
Agree	27	27.55%
Neutral	22	22.45%
Disagree	<b>29</b>	<b>29.59%</b>
Strongly Disagree	7	5.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	
Mean	2.82	
Standard Dev.	1.17	
Variance	1.37	

**Table 4.2:** I like the packaging of my beverage brand

The results here show an even distribution of results although the majority of participants (n = 42) indicated that they like the packaging of their beverage brands. The evenly distributed results confirm that packaging institutes a direct link with the consumers at the point of purchase as it can very well change the opinions they have for a particular brand. A product has to draw the attention of the consumers through an outstanding packaging design.

#### B.

I generally prefer to buy consumer goods with packaging.		
Strongly Agree	39	
Agree	<b>48</b>	
Neutral	7	
Disagree	5	
Strongly Disagree	1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	
Mean	1.84	
Standard Dev.	0.85	
Variance	0.72	

**Table 4.3:** I generally prefer to buy consumer goods with packaging

The results indicated that more than half of the participants preferred beverages in packaging. The literature had suggested that packaging was considered only a container to put a product in. The results exhibited here supports the literature given

on this objective and confirm the role of packaging in consumers choosing their beverages. In this context, packaging has been recognized as a silent salesman ever since 1973 (Pilditch, 1973). The task of being a silent salesman involves not only grasping the attention of shoppers but also keeping it in the visual clamour of competing products and brands (Judd, Aalders & Melis, 1989). Finding a product on the shelf has become a challenge, not only because of large numbers of options, but also because of shared product attributes and copy-cat products that are available at the point-of-purchase (POP).

### 4.3.3 The characteristics of packaging that help in developing a brand loyalty

These days specialized package designers bring artistic techniques and scientific skills to packaging design in an attempt to meet the marketing objectives for a brand. Designers often refer to the “shelf impact” of a package – the visual effect that the package has at the point of the purchase when seen in the context of other packages in the category (Keller, 2003: p. 214).

#### A.

I like the colour of packaging materials.	
Strongly Agree	19
Agree	<b>46</b>
Neutral	26
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.23
Standard Dev.	0.87
Variance	0.76

**Table 4.4:** I like the colour of packaging materials

The theoretical analysis of package elements and their impact on consumers’ purchase decisions empirically reveal the elements having the ultimate effect on consumer choice. The results in table 4.4, confirms the importance of the colour in a package. The majority of the respondents (n = 65) indicated that they like the colour of their beverage packaging.



People cannot process the huge number of messages they are bombarded with (Jugger, 1999) but elements such as colour, and package shape have been suggested as a means of creating distinctiveness (Gaillard, 2007).

**B.**

Colour of packaging matters when purchasing beverages.	
Strongly Agree	16
Agree	<b>40</b>
Neutral	22
Disagree	20
Strongly Disagree	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.60
Standard Dev.	1.12
Variance	1.25

**Table 4.5:** Colour of packaging matters when purchasing beverages

According to Warlop , et al. (2005), image elements such as colour and shape of package have a significant effect on consumer purchasing decision. The majority (n = 56) of the participants indicated that they like the colour of the packaging.

**C.**

I like beautiful backgrounds on beverage packages	
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	<b>48</b>
Neutral	17
Disagree	13
Strongly Disagree	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.34
Standard Dev.	0.98
Variance	0.96

**Table 4.6:** I like beautiful backgrounds on beverage packages

Underwood and Klein (2002) concluded that for decisions made at the point of purchase, packaging takes on a heightened importance relative to other communication tools because of its easy availability. If the packaging can further lead the consumer to a positive buying emotion, the goal of invigorating the sales volume will possibly be achieved (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982; Sherman , et al., 1997). From the results presented in table 4.6, it can be concluded that a beverage package with attractive or beautiful background will attract the attention of the consumers. Table 4.6

also confirms these finding with 63 of the respondents responding positively to the question with regards to attractive backgrounds.

**D.**

I prefer beverage packaging w ith attractive background.	
Strongly Agree	24
Agree	<b>39</b>
Neutral	23
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.32
Standard Dev.	0.97
Variance	0.94

**Table 4.7:** I prefer beverage packaging with attractive background

Wanke (2009) concluded that when individuals have a disposition to process information semantically without forming visual images, they are unaffected by these factors. However, providing a picture of the product or beautiful background can substantially increase their evaluations of it.

**4.3.4 Role of packaging in influencing brand (beverage) preference**

A study conducted by Wästlund , et al. (2005) has shown that 60-80% of purchasing decisions are made in-store and that 90% of consumer decisions are made just by looking at the front of the package without touching the product itself.

**A.**

I prefer beverage products packed in high quality package.	
Strongly Agree	23
Agree	<b>49</b>
Neutral	15
Disagree	10
Strongly Agree	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.12
Standard Dev.	0.89
Variance	0.80

**Table 4.8:** I prefer beverage products packed in high quality package

A sentiment shared by Stokes (2007) is that best product must provide best quality of which consumers will be willing to pay a premium price for. The package can provide

two key roles in consumers' satisfaction or dissatisfaction. At first the package provides desired condition for keeping products and this can lead to satisfaction (Steinka , et al., 2006). When the consumers finally consume the product, they compare all information written on the package with actual product. Should the product performance be lower than their expectation this will lead to dissatisfaction. The findings by Warlop , et al. (2005) revealed that different packaging elements can remind consumers the perceived quality and this can influence their decision in future decisions. As presented in table 4.7, the quality of packaging is as important to consumers as the product itself.

**B.**

The design in product's packaging inspired me in my purchasing.	
Strongly Agree	15
Agree	<b>45</b>
Neutral	21
Disagree	15
Strongly Disagree	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.38
Standard Dev.	0.93
Variance	0.87

**Table 4.9:** The design in product's packaging inspired me in my purchasing

The actual design of the packaging is important as indicated by over 50% of the surveyed. The survey result indicates that the majority of the participants are inspired by the package design when making their purchases. Vasquez et. al (2003) offered that consumers' decision about modifying, postponing or avoiding purchase decision is highly reliant on the mental risk of decision perceived by the individual. He continued that food products are generally perceived less risk than other products and the package plays a vital role.

**C.**

I like to read printed information on the package of beverage product.	
Strongly Agree	22
Agree	<b>47</b>
Neutral	10
Disagree	16
Strongly Disagree	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.24
Standard Dev.	1.02
Variance	1.05

**Table 4.10:** I like to read printed information on the package of beverage products

The role of imagery in consumer behaviour has been recognized in research by Escalas (2004). That is, individuals who read a story may often imagine themselves as a protagonist in the narrative. As a consequence of being transported into the situation portrayed in advertisements is that they may be more influenced by it (Wanke, 2009). Keller (2003) concluded that packaging like other elements, must achieve a number of objectives from the perspective of both the firm and consumers namely, identity of brand; convey descriptive and persuasive information. From the results of the study it can be deduced that the packaging plays a role in conveying product information to consumers; this has been confirmed by 69 of the participants.

**D.**

I evaluate products according to the printed information while purchasing.	
Strongly Agree	17
Agree	<b>41</b>
Neutral	24
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.39
Standard Dev.	0.97
Variance	0.95

**Table 4.11:** I evaluate products according to the printed information while purchasing

The above findings are similar to table 4.12 below. Consumers may choose their beverage based on the information provided on the packaging.

The results in table 4.11 contradicts a study conducted by Hofmeyr and Rice (2007), which stated that packaging a change in pack design contributed towards a drop in a leading beer brand's market share by more than 20% in the space of just one year. Nothing other than the packaging had changed - the product itself had not changed in any way. The pack change although not dramatic (the same style but with lighter colouring), led to a perception that the beer's quality had been compromised and that it was now weaker.

**E.**

I am loyal to my brand because of its packaging.	
Strongly Agree	10
Agree	19
Neutral	23
Disagree	<b>41</b>
Strongly Agree	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	3.25
Standard Dev.	1.06
Variance	1.12

**Table 4.12:** I am loyal to my brand because of its packaging

As much as packaging is important in choosing a beverage, the results above indicate that consumers will not continue or change their beverage or products because of changes in packaging. It also works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from a wide range of similar products, stimulates customers buying behaviour (Wells , et al., 2007). Thus packaging performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumers' purchase of beverage; its elements and their impact on consumers' buying behaviour becomes a relevant issue.

### 4.3.5 Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage.

Warlop , et al.'s (2010), study deduced that consumers form perceptions of various food products through their comprehension of the visual stimuli on food packaging that attract their attention. These perceptions directly affect their purchasing decision at the point of purchase, which emphasizes the importance of attention-capturing packaging attributes (Warlop , et al., 2010).

#### A.

I purchase beverages as advised by my family or friends.	
Strongly Agree	10
Agree	<b>36</b>
Neutral	31
Disagree	20
Strongly Disagree	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.75
Standard Dev.	0.97
Variance	0.94

**Table 4.13:** I purchase beverages as advised by my family or friends

Advice received from somebody else influenced the decision to buy their beverage product.

#### B.

Beverage products offered by leading brand are always better.	
Strongly Agree	18
Agree	<b>42</b>
Neutral	17
Disagree	18
Strongly Disagree	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.45
Standard Dev.	1.09
Variance	1.18

**Table 4.14:** Beverage products offered by leading brand are always better

According to Rossiter and Prey (1987), brand awareness precedes all other steps in the buying process. A brand attitude cannot be created, unless a consumer is aware of the brand. In memory theory, brand awareness is positioned as a vital first step in building the bundle of associations which are attached to the brand in memory (Stokes, 1985).

The results here confirm the above theory as the majority (n = 60) of the respondents felt that the beverage products offered by leading brands are always better.

**C.**

I select products according to my life style?	
Strongly Agree	41
Agree	<b>48</b>
Neutral	4
Disagree	4
Strongly Disagree	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	1.70
Standard Dev.	0.74
Variance	0.55

**Table 4.15:** I select products according to my life style

The life style of the target consumer need to be considered when designing a packaging for beverage product as almost the entire sample (92%) indicated their decision in choosing a product is influenced by their lifestyle.

**D.**

The higher quality of packaging material serves beverage products better.	
Strongly Agree	25
Agree	<b>46</b>
Neutral	18
Disagree	9
Strongly Disagree	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.11
Standard Dev.	0.90
Variance	0.80

**Table 4.16:** The higher quality of packaging serves beverage products better

Wright’s (2010) study on consumer behaviour concluded that customers’ evaluations of products are greatly affected by appearances and design, including such things as touch, taste, smell and texture. His findings were that the packaging that surrounds the product has become at least as important, if not more so in some cases, than the product itself and it continues to be an integral part contributing to the overall attractiveness of the product and becoming a quintessential ingredient in the emotive process of brand building. The result here also support this findings as the majority (n

= 71) of the respondents have the perception that higher quality of the packaging material serves their beverage products better.

#### 4.3.6 Innovation in beverage packaging.

According to Louw and Kimber (2006) an innovative pack design can help to set a brand apart from its competitors. The marketing world is full of examples of brands that have used packaging to carve a unique position in the marketplace (Louw and Kimber, (2006).

##### A.

Innovation is important in beverage packaging.	
Strongly Agree	40
Agree	<b>41</b>
Neutral	12
Disagree	7
Strongly Disagree	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	1.79
Standard Dev.	0.82
Variance	0.67

**Table 4.17:** Innovation is important in beverage packaging

Eighty one of the respondents believe that innovation is important in beverage packaging; this is in line with the literature. Looking at table 4.17, consumers confirm that innovation in packaging can influence their purchasing decision.

##### B.

The innovative packaging can influence my purchasing decision.	
Strongly Agree	29
Agree	<b>45</b>
Neutral	12
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.03
Standard Dev.	0.94
Variance	0.88

**Table 4.18:** The innovative packaging can influence your purchasing decision



New packaging concepts should be evaluated in context, not in isolation. If possible, packaging research should simulate both the shopping and usage experience, giving people an opportunity to interact and feel the package’s functionality, shelf visibility and impact on brand imagery (Jugger, 1999). Also, packaging research should, as far as possible, take into consideration current relationships and usage behaviour within that category (Sinclair and Knowles, 2006). Some of the things that can be changed with innovation are colours, font size and package size.

**C.**

Font size is attractive.	
Strongly Agree	20
Agree	<b>37</b>
Neutral	30
Disagree	11
Strongly Disagree	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.38
Standard Dev.	0.95
Variance	0.91

**Table 4.19:** Font size is attractive

Ragland (2008) asserted that simple geometric shapes, sans serif, fonts and clear materials communicate safe, gentle, and honest brand values. He concluded that as brand identities change and evolves in response to consumer perceptions; these attributes will likely be incorporated into more package designs. More than half of the participants indicated that they find font attractive in packaging.

**D.**

I like creative font styles in beverage packaging.	
Strongly Agree	18
Agree	<b>36</b>
Neutral	30
Disagree	14
Strongly Disagree	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	2.52
Standard Dev.	0.98
Variance	0.97

**Table 4.20:** I like creative font styles in beverage packaging

The result in table 4.20 confirms the results in table 4.19. The study results in both these tables indicate that, in beverage products, the package and the information written on it is one of the vital and common information resources. This is supported by the study conducted by Angela et al (1997) of the positive influence of food package labels on purchase decisions of these products. The study showed 58% of food products consumers pay attention to the information written on the package when they are evaluating different alternatives. The font chosen can enhance the readability of the information on the package material.

**E.**

Have you ever purchased product on the basis of good packaging?	
Yes	<b>48</b>
May Be	40
No	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Mean	1.66
Standard Dev.	0.70
Variance	0.49

**Table 4.21:** Have you ever purchased product on the basis of good packaging?

Understanding how the product attracts the consumer's attention from the multitude of commodity packaging is the first step that leads to success (Wang and Chen, 2007). If the packaging can further lead the consumer to a positive buying emotion, the goal of invigorating the sales volume will possibly be achieved (Donovan and Rossiter, 1982;

Sherman , et al., 1997). These results confirm the importance of the packaging in consumers choosing their product.

**F.**

Do you think glass is a better packaging than a Can for bevarages or food items?		
Yes	43	44.33%
May be	22	22.68%
No	32	32.99%
<b>Total</b>	<b>97</b>	
Mean	1.89	
Standard Dev.	0.88	
Variance	0.77	

**Table 4.22:** Do you think glass is a better packaging than a Can for beverages or food items?

**4.3.7 Reliability Test**

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.991	.992	28

**Independent Variable**

The data of independent variables or predictors is reliable; because the value of Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.991 which is greater than 0.7. The value is also positive, so the data used for analysis is reliable

**4.4 Summary**

This chapter begins with a profile (expressed in numbers and percentages) of the collected data to gain some insights. The profile shows the demographic factors and the beverage packaging buying behaviour of the sample size. The distribution of the sample size is also shown by the profile, as it must adequately represent all parts of the sample. By showing the descriptive results, insights are gained of both the dependent

and the independent variables. The next chapter is discussion, conclusion and recommendation for future research.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations**

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#### **5.1 Introduction**

The dissertation reports on an investigation into the role of packaging and how it influences the consumer when buying their choice of beverages. The main finding of the study will be presented and discussed according to each objective/research question as presented at the beginning of this dissertation. The conclusion and recommendation will follow after the discussion of the main findings. An evaluation of the study will be discussed and presented in this chapter.

#### **5.2 Discussion**

According to Rundh (2005) package attracts consumers' attention to a particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumers' perceptions about the product. Also package imparts unique value to products. Through an extensive literature review an initial model is proposed which encompasses how packaging elements mediates the relationship with packaging colour, background, packaging material, font style, printed information, package design and innovation in packaging. The literature review has provided the basic theoretical evidence with regard to the link between packaging and buying behaviour. Chapter 4 presents an analysis of all data collected through structured questionnaires in order to understand if packaging influences consumers buying beverages.

##### **5.2.1 The impact of packaging in consumers buying a particular beverage**

The results were presented in 4.3.2. Communication designers and brand managers are confronted with the challenge of creating packaging systems for new products that communicate and highlight their unique functional benefits in addition to the broader

values of the company. The majority of the consumers showed that they like the packaging of their beverages. The packaging plays an important role in capturing consumers' attention at the point of purchase. As the only part of the marketing communication that the consumer takes home, packaging plays a key role in communicating and reinforcing brand values over time. Packaging has the power to make, but also to break, brand relationships. It could be maintained that "the package may be the only communication between a product and the final consumer in the store" (Gonzalez , et al., 2007: p.63). Consequently the role of package in marketing communications increases: it must attract consumers' attention and transmit adequate value of the product to the consumer in the short period right in the place of sale.

### **5.2.2 The characteristics of packaging that helps in developing a brand loyalty**

The results were presented in 4.3.3. The study shows that customers can adopt a product based on its packaging background. Kuvykaite's (2009) study concluded that the material is the most important visual element for purchasing with colour and graphic regarded as unimportant elements of package. From a functional perspective, packaging is often part of the usage/consumption experience. Not only is it a means of providing any necessary information, but it can also form part of the actual product and provides functional benefits for example, being easy to use, fitting into storage space (Louw and Kimber, 2006). The study results showed more than half of the participants like the background, this includes colour, of the beverage packaging. Rettie & Brewer (2000) stressed the importance of proper positioning of elements of package, dividing the elements into two groups: verbal (for example, brand slogans) and visual (visual appeal, picture, etc.) elements. In a similar way package elements were classified by Butkeviciene, Stravinskiene & Rutelione (2008). Analysing consumers' decision-making process they distinguish between non-verbal elements of package (colour, form, size, imageries, graphics, materials and smell) and verbal elements of package (product name, brand, producer, country, information, special offers, instruction of usage). Their classification includes brand as a verbal component, whereas Keller (2003), for example, considers packaging as one of the

five elements of the brand, together with name, logo, graphic symbol, personality, and the slogans.

### **5.2.3 Role of packaging in influencing brand (beverage) preference**

The results were presented in 4.3.4. Underwood and Klein (2002) concluded that for decisions made at the point of purchase, packaging takes on a heightened importance relative to other communication tools because of its easy availability. According to Rundh (2005) package attracts consumers' attention to a particular brand, enhances its image, and influences consumers' perceptions about the product. Also package imparts unique value to products (Underwood, Klein & Burke, 2001; Silayoi & Speece, 2004), works as a tool for differentiation, i.e. helps consumers to choose the product from a wide range of similar products, stimulates customers buying behaviour (Wells, Farley & Armstrong, 2007). Thus package performs an important role in marketing communications and could be treated as one of the most important factors influencing consumers' purchase decision. The study concurred with the literature, more than two third of the respondents indicated that they get inspired purchasing and influenced by the quality of the packaging material when making their purchasing decision. It was noted that they also enjoy reading the information written on the packages. Written information forms part of the packaging.

### **5.2.4 Consumers' perception of packaging and package design when choosing their beverage**

The results were presented in 4.3.5. According to the literature (Silayoi & Speece, 2004, Grossman & Wisenblit, 1999, Butkeviciene , et al., 2008) the impact of package elements on consumers' purchase decisions can be stronger or weaker depending on the consumer's involvement level, time pressure or individual characteristics of consumers. Warlop , et al. (2010) offered that consumers' perceptions directly influence their purchasing decision and that perception can easily be influenced by visual stimuli provided by products packaging. The results in this study confirmed this notion and also added that consumers' perception can be influenced by family or

friends. Consumers have the perception that leading brands should have better packaging.

### **5.2.5 Innovation in beverage packaging**

The results were presented in 4.3.6. Participants indicated the need for new ideas and innovation in packaging although a change in packaging design will not influence their choice of beverage. According to Keller (2003:p.212) structural packaging innovations can create a point of difference that permits a higher margin. He continued that new packages can also expand a market and capture new market segments. The majority (81%) of the respondents would like to see innovation in beverage packaging, this emphasizes the point that packaging should not just be viewed as the protecting material for a product but as the marketing tool.

## **5.3 Conclusions**

Packaging plays an important role in the marketing of beverage products. The correct packaging can help a brand earn a unique position in the marketplace and in the minds of consumers.

Although the literature had suggested that a change in packaging can result in loss of sales, the results of this study indicated the opposite; while the consumers see the packaging as important they will not change their beverage choice due to changes in packaging. Packaging promotes and reinforces the purchase decision not only at the point of purchase, but also every time the product is used.

As the market becomes more competitive and shelf space is at a premium, products need to be able to stand out from the crowd and packaging needs to provide more than just functional benefits and information. Under time pressure and in low-involvement purchases, less time is spent looking at the detail and information provided on packaging. Nonetheless, consumers show that they like reading the information,

background and/or images on the packaging material. This research into packaging has found that different packaging cues impact how a product is perceived. Often the packaging is perceived to be part of the product and it can be difficult for consumers to separate the two. Aspects such as packaging colour, typography, illustrations and graphics can influence how a product is perceived.

#### **5.4 Recommendations and areas of future research**

Suggested areas for future research include a more in-depth analysis into the relationship between product attributes and total product assessment – how exactly does the research process influence overall opinions, what is the best way to gain insight into preference without biasing the results? Is this possible? More research into the elements of pack design and how it influences consumer perceptions – are there universal rules or do they differ by product category and culture?

#### **5.5 Summary**

This chapter concludes the research study. The findings were discussed in relation to the objectives set out at the beginning; the conclusion drawn from the study which supported that the packaging is important as a marketing tool when consumers are choosing their beverages.



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# **APPENDICES**

# Appendix 1

Dear Participant: MBA Research Project  
Researcher: Mthokozisi Ralph Bhengu 079 896 7811  
Supervisor: Dr. M. Phiri +27 33 260 5843  
Research Office: Ms P Ximba 031-26035871

I, Mthokozisi Ralph Bhengu, am a MBA student, at the Graduate School of Business, of the University of Kwazulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: Beverages Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal Students. The aim of this study is to determine the role of packaging in consumer buying behaviour. Through your participation I hope to understand consumer buying patterns and trends with regards to packaging choice. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks associated with this project. However, if you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you can withdraw from the survey at any point. It is very important for us to learn your opinions. Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business, UKZN. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may contact Mthokozisi Bhengu at 079 896 7811 or by email - [ralph.bhengu@valspareurope.com](mailto:ralph.bhengu@valspareurope.com). The survey should take you approximately 10 minutes.

## Race

1. African
2. Coloured
3. Indian
4. White

## Gender

1. Male
2. Female

## Age

1. 18 - 25
2. 26 - 34
3. 35 - 44
4. 45+

## Highest Education Level

1. Primary
2. Secondary
3. Bachelor
4. Post Graduate

Monthly income including pocket money

1. <R1000
2. R1000 - R1999
3. R2000 - R3999
4. R4000+

Please tick the answer which Mostly matches your opinion at the following statements/questions

Note: There is only one (1) answer possible.

I like the packaging of any product or brand. (Results: 4.3.2A).

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I generally prefer to buy consumer goods with packaging. (Results 4.3.2B).

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I purchase goods as advised by your family or friends. (Results: 4.3.5A).

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Products offered by leading brand are always better. (Results: 4.3.5B).

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I select products according to my life style? (Results: 4.3.5C)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I like the colour of packaging materials. (Results: 4.3.3A)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Colour of packaging matters in me when purchasing a product. (Results: 4.3.3B)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I like beautiful backgrounds. (Results: 4.3.3C)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I prefer the products package having attractive background. (4.3.3D)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

The quality of packaging serve product better.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I prefer products packed in high quality material or package. (Results: 4.3.4A)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Agree

Font size is attractive. (Results: 4.3.6C)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I like creative font styles in package of any material. (Results: 4.3.6D)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Wrapper design is important in packaging.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

The design in products packaging inspired me in my purchasing. (Results: 4.3.4B)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I like to read printed information on the package of product. (Results: 4.3.4C)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I evaluate products according to the printed information while purchasing. (Results: 4.3.4D)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I prefer packaging with better handling and transportation.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Innovation is important in packaging. (Results: 4.3.6A)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree

3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

The innovative packaging can influence your purchasing decision. (Results: 4.3.6B)

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

If cans were designed like glass bottles; I would buy my beverages packed in a cans.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

I am loyal to my brand because of its packaging.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Agree

Please select some of the goods that you had not bought because of poor packaging?

1. Food Item
2. Beverage
3. Other

Please select characteristics that you look for when buying a product?

1. Quality
2. Packaging
3. Price
4. Availability

Do you think a strong brand should be a well packed product?

1. Yes
2. May be
3. No

Have you ever purchased product on the basis of good packaging? (Results: 4.3.6E)

1. Yes
2. May Be
3. No

Do you choose your choice of beverage because of good packaging?

1. Yes
2. May be
3. No

Do you think glass is a better packaging than a Can for beverages or food items? (Results: 4.3.6F)

1. Yes
2. May be
3. No

**APPENDIX 2**  
**Ethical Clearance**





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Westville Campus  
Private Bag x54001  
DURBAN, 4000  
Tel No: +27 31 260 3587  
Fax No: +27 31 260 4609  
[mohunp@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohunp@ukzn.ac.za)

28 June 2011

Mr MR Bhengu (209509263)  
Graduate School of Business  
Faculty of Management Studies  
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Bhengu

**PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0398/011M**

**PROJECT TITLE: Beverages Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour: The Case of University of KwaZulu-Natal Students**

In response to your application dated 23 June 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

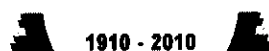
**PLEASE NOTE:** Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....  
**Professor Steven Collings (Chair)**  
**HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

cc. Supervisor: Dr M Phiri  
cc. Mrs C Haddon



100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

20 June 2011

Mr MR Bhengu  
Graduate School of Business  
UKZN

Email: [Ralph.Bhengu@valspareurope.com](mailto:Ralph.Bhengu@valspareurope.com)

Dear Mr Bhengu,

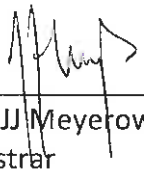
**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Gatekeeper's permission is hereby granted for you to conduct research at the University of KwaZulu-Natal towards your MBA in the following project, provided Ethical clearance has been obtained via the Research Office:

- 1) Beverages Packaging and Consumer Buying Behaviour: The Case of University of KwaZulu-Natal students

Please note that the data collected must be treated with confidentiality and anonymity.

Yours sincerely,



Prof JJ Meyerowitz  
Registrar

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Website: [www.ukzn.ac.za](http://www.ukzn.ac.za)

  
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Founding Campuses:  Edgewood  Howard College  Medical School  Pietermaritzburg  Westville