

Analysis of Design Elements on Soda Drink Packaging in Influencing Youth Consumer Purchase Decision

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ABSTRACT

The development of the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector shows a high upward trend and is growing rapidly. There are many brands of products for this sector in the market and it creates a great competition. Young generations are seen as target consumers who contribute to this sector. Packaging design is one of the important elements that contribute to an effective marketing strategy. Therefore, this study which focuses on soda drinks was conducted to analyse what elements of design are most effective in influencing the decision of young consumers in the decision to buy soda drinks. The data was collected using content analysis and questionnaire surveys. The analysis shows that youth consumers are very influenced with the elements of design that are used for the design of cans or bottles of soda drinks. The colour and imagery are two important elements that influence the decision of youth consumers to purchase soda drinks. The result of this study provides important insight to soda drink product brands concerning the need to adopt appropriate elements of design for their packaging designs that target young consumers.

Keywords: Packaging, Element of Design, Youth Purchase Behaviour



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1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) industry is growing rapidly, especially after the pandemic where consumers now expect a consistent experience whether they're online or in a store. There are various brands of products in the market and creating great competition for each brand to produce products that are able to attract the interest of consumers. Young people between 13 to 40 years old are seen as the target consumers for this industry due to the relatively significant increase in consumer trends. Industry players and product manufacturers should think of good strategies to ensure that their products get the attention of the right target audience.

For brands that target youth, the right selection packaging design can attract the interest of this group. 72% of people believe that the design of a product's packaging plays a decisive role in their purchase decision (Ivanov & Filiposkyi, 2023b). This is because people are more likely to connect with packaging that conveys their identity, speaks to their personal tastes and preferences, and acknowledges their emotions. Elements of design use such as colour, typography, imagery and layout for packaging design are seen to be able to influence consumer purchasing behaviour. Elements such as attractive colour combinations, unique typography and illustrations on packaging increase the perception of quality, driving purchase decisions (Azka Belliza & Nurrani Kusumawati, 2024).

This study explores the influence of design elements in soda drink packaging in Malaysia, focusing on their ability to attract youth consumers and shape their purchasing decisions.

1.1 Problem Statement

According to Abdulkarim (2018), people are facing a high flow of information and new content through the immediatism of social networks. This consequently reflected in brands that find it more and more difficult to capture and keep customers' attention. Therefore, the constant effort of brands to stand out and relate with customers has resulted in an increasingly competitive market (Aaker, 2012). To maintain competitive advantage, it is necessary for brands to adapt to the constant changes in the market and distinguish themselves from the competition by being fearless, unique and innovative (Grant, 2011; Hegarty, 2014). To stand out from the competition, brands must adapt and establish distinctive, unique and brave strategies to differentiate themselves from competition. Creativity has become an even more important component in marketing, helping firms to build a distinctive personality and effectively engage with consumers. Creativity has been established definitively as a key element in marketing. Such capability helps brands to distinguish from competing ones in the same market (Kemp Robertson & Barth, 2018). However, not all brands are willing to take the associated risks involved in creativity (Brand Creative Courage: Its Importance in Brand Communication, 2023).

The food and beverage industry in Malaysia faces significant challenges in 2023, where various current issues that require urgent attention and innovative solutions are taken (StaffAny Malaysia, 2023). Among the problems that need to be acted upon immediately is related to changes in consumer demand. Brands need to work hard to stand out in today's highly competitive market (Ivanov & Filipyski, 2023).

Generation Z is the main consumer group in social networks (Ekaterina Grigoreva, 2021) and brands targeting youth consumers face major challenges in differentiating their products, especially in the soda segment. With young people increasingly appreciating products that match their identity, preferences and emotions, traditional packaging designs often fail to capture their attention effectively. A brand with an emotional difference can potentially command a premium (Ian Spero Merlin Stone, 2004).

Packaging design is one of the marketing strategies for a brand to communicate with the target consumers. Packaging 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 consumers' purchase decision (Rita Kuvykaite, 2009). According to Nirdeh Singh, packaging design plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour, with visual appeal and usefulness being key factors in attracting customers' attention and influencing their purchasing decisions (Nirdeh Singh, 2024).

In the productive and active food industry development, staying competitive is the key to success and sustainability. Brands should have a good strategy to remain competitive in the industry. It goes beyond mere participation; it's about thriving amidst intense competition, meeting consumer expectations, and outperforming rivals. Competitiveness can be defined as an ability of a food business to strategically position itself, exceed competitors and continuously meet customers' expectations (Babayev & Balajayeva, 2023).

1.2 Research Objective

The objective of this study has to provide insights into the use of design elements, including colour, typography, imagery, and layout, in soda drink packaging within the Malaysian market. It seeks to identify how these elements can be tailored to attract and resonate with younger consumers, ultimately influencing their purchasing decisions.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW PURCHASE INTENTIONS

Intention to buy is known as advancing a planned decision to buy a certain product in the future and does not need to carry out the will to buy because it depends on the individual's ability to carry it out (Yeo et al., 2018). When an individual has made an arrangement to buy a certain item or service within a period of time, the intention to buy will arise (Liat & Wuan, 2014). From Keller's study, what influences people's decision to purchase are that person's behaviour, awareness of the products and perspective (Keller, 2009).

2.1 Packaging Design

A brand's packaging plays a big role and component in a brand's marketing strategy and in conveying its values and message. For brands to convey a message that appeals to consumers' need and emotions and also communicate a message well to consumers', marketing information can be designed into visual elements that are applied on the packaging (Alervall & Saied, 2013). Each component on the packaging has different impacts during the various processes of consumer behaviour (Jafari et al., 2013). Packaging captures potential buyers' attention. It changes consumer beliefs about products (Muniz, 2023). Packaging also influences consumer purchase decisions. Emotional resonance in packaging stimulates consumer willingness to buy (Xu Yuk Yung, 2023). According to Nirdesh's study, it reveals that packaging design plays a significant impact and role in influencing consumer behaviour by visual appeal and usefulness being key factors in attracting customers' attention and influencing their purchasing decisions (Nirdesh Singh, 2024). According to 72% respondents, they believe that product packaging designs play a decisive impact in influencing their purchase decision (Ivanov & Filipskiy, 2023b).

2.2 Elements of Design

Visual appeal plays a major impact on Generation Z purchase decisions, mostly through the mediating variable of perceived quality. Elements such as eye-catching colour combinations, distinctive typography, and illustrations on packaging enhance perceived quality, leading to purchase decisions. Visual elements such as product photography and shape also contribute to the overall attractiveness and perceived quality of the packaging. Illustrations on packaging significantly impact purchase decisions, while eco-friendly packaging materials positively affect perceived quality (Azka Belliza, 2024). Viktoria's study showed that 'colour' is the visual element the brands use to catch consumers' attention and effectively influence consumers emotions (Alervall & Saied, 2013). In the Saberi study, the results of the present study indicate that buyers of food products pay special attention to factors and components of the package when they want to buy them. Findings show that information on package; shape, size, colour, and the type of package have the highest priority and importance, respectively (Jafari et al., 2013).

2.3 Youth Consumer Purchase Decisions

According to an industry market report, 68% of consumers in the youth category drink soda at least once a month. The younger generation is gradually becoming the main force and taking the lead in the consumer market. Growing up in the internet era, the young consumers generally have higher education levels and a broader global outlook, and come from a relatively strong economic background (Young Consumer Market, 2025). Their consumption behaviour differs significantly from that of previous generations. Younger consumers prefer more personalized and diverse products that align with their emotional needs and growing sense of self-worth. To meet these evolving consumer demands, it is essential to drive the growth of the consumer market by adapting to the shifting trends in consumer behaviour (Lixin, 2024). Packaging design elements significantly influence youth purchase intentions toward junk food. Packaging colour, graphics, size, and labels were identified as key factors that positively impact consumer decision-making, with each element playing a crucial role in attracting attention and driving purchases. However, the packaging material was found to have no

significant effect on consumer purchase intentions, indicating that its influence is minimal compared to other design elements (Rahman et al., 2020).

3 METHODOLOGY






To obtain data for this study, mix mode methods were used which are content analysis and conducting a survey. A content analysis was conducted on 10 soda drink packaging samples, divided into two categories. Category 1 includes Red Bull Pomelo Flavor, Coca-cola Classic, 100 Plus Classic, Pepsi Classic and Sprite - brands that have been in the market for over 10 years. Category 2 consists of Warrior Strawberry, Tinge Spritzer, Boom, Vida Grape, and Haus Boom - brands that have been in the market for less than 10 years. This content analysis has been conducted to analyse the use of elements of design - colour, typography, imagery and overall visual in each can/bottle design. The purpose was to identify whether each brand emphasizes the use of elements of design in their packaging design and to evaluate what kind of elements they used in the packaging drinking product.

There are five major packaging elements that affect purchasing decisions made by consumers, according to the model made by Silayoi and Speece (2004), which can be divided further into two categories: visual and informational elements. The visual elements are graphical, shape, and size of the package, which contribute most to the influencing part of decision-making. For this paper, the focus is on visual elements, specifically graphical aspects, which include colours, images, and design on the package. These elements play a crucial role in capturing attention and creating an emotional connection with consumers, influencing their preferences and choices. The second method used was by conducting a survey to the target group, which is teenagers aged 15-40 years old according to their respective categories. This is to see which visual elements are able to resonate well with their purchasing behaviour. To obtain data, questionnaire had been conducted centred on five key variables within graphical elements: colour, typography, illustration, pattern and line, and logo. Colour examines the impact of hues, saturation, and contrast on consumer perception, while typography assesses how font styles influence packaging appeal. Illustration explores the role of visuals and drawings in enhancing the aesthetic and message of the package. Pattern and line investigate how repeated designs and linear elements add to visual interest, and the logo evaluates the significance of brand identity symbols in capturing consumer attention. These variables collectively provide insights into how graphical elements contribute to the visual appeal of packaging and their influence on consumer behaviour, particularly among youth.

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS CONTENT ANALYSIS






The first table is the content analysis for five (5) brands that have been in the market for more than 10 years. The chosen brand is a brand that is well known by each group of consumers. The brands chosen for this study are Red Bull Pomelo Flavour, Coca-cola Classic, 100 Plus Classic, Pepsi Classic and Sprite.

Table 1 Brand more than 10 years in market

Product	Colour		Typography		Imagery		Others	
	Bright	Pastel	Basic	Basic	Fancy	Abstract	Illustration	Shape Line
Red Bull Pomelo Flavour								
	✓			✓				✓
Coca-Cola Classic								
			✓ Red	✓				
100 Plus Classic								
			✓ Red, Blue, Green, White	✓				✓
Pepsi Classic								
			✓ Blue, Red, White	✓				✓
Sprite								
			✓ Blue, Green, Yellow, White	✓				✓

The second table is the content analysis for five (5) brands that have been in the market less than 10 years. The chosen brand is a brand that is not familiar for some consumers. The brands chosen for this study are Warrior Strawberry, Tinge Spritzer, Boom, Vida Grape, and Haus Boom bottle version.

Table 2 Brand less than 10 years in market

Product	Colour		Typography		Imagery		Others	
	Bright	Pastel	Basic	Fancy	Abstract	Illustration	Shape	Line
Warrior Strawberry								
	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tinge Spritzer								
	✓			✓		✓	✓	
Boom								
	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	
Vida Grape								
		✓	✓			✓	✓	
Haus Boom								
	✓			✓		✓		

5 QUESTIONNAIRE

The survey was conducted on the target group, youth aged 13 - 40 years old. The questionnaire consists of 3 sections with, distributed through the google form platform. This questionnaire is to identify which elements of design are able to resonate well with youth consumer purchasing behaviour.

6 RESULTS

Table 1

The results of the analysis found that brands that have been in the market for more than 10 years choose to maintain minimal elements in the design of their drink cans. It can be seen that not many elements of design are applied to the packaging design of the can drinks. The use of elements is also basic in terms of the use of basic colours (red, blue, yellow, white and green). The selection of typography is also from the basic category, not fancy. There is no use of images in the design in order to maintain a minimal concept. It can be seen that emphasis is placed on large logo sizes. It can be concluded that brands that have been in the market for more than 10 years choose to maintain a minimal concept in their packaging design and emphasis is placed on branding where the highlight is the size of the logo.

Table 2

The results of the analysis found that brands that have been in the market for less than 10 years emphasize the use of elements of design in their packaging design. The selection of bright colours, the use of more fancy typography with a combination of elements, shapes, abstract and illustrations. The size of the logo is not emphasized and it can be seen that emphasis is placed on colour elements, typography and imagery. More than 3 elements applied on the design and the brand goes for maximalism design.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire was responded to amongst 47 individuals. The questions asked the participants demographic details about age group, gender and interest in buying soda drinks. 36.2% of the respondents were male. 63.8% of the respondents were female. For age group, 27.7% respondents under Y generation age 31-40 years old, 38.3 % respondents under Z generations age 16-30 years old and 34% respondents under Alpha generation age 15 years old. 55% of respondents like to buy soda drinks while 44.7% of respondents don't like it.

Design Elements

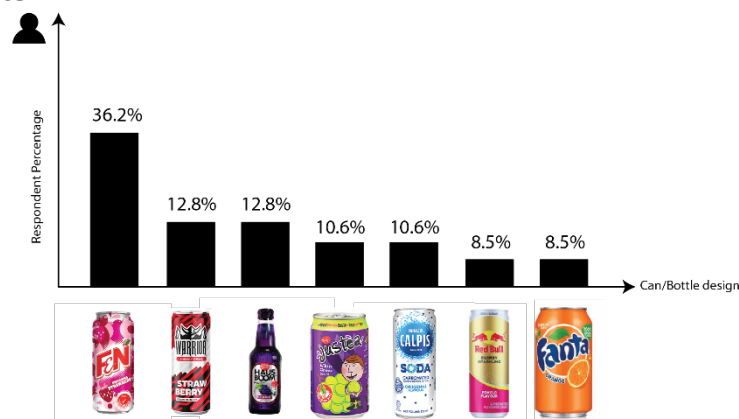


Figure 1 Soda can/bottle brand in market that resonate well with respondent

For this question, respondents are given the choice of soda drink they like without putting any variables measurement. Evaluation based on the overall appearance of the product. 36.2% of respondents chose F&N Strawberry flavour, 12.8% of respondents chose Warrior Strawberry flavour and Haus Boom Grape flavour, 10.6% of respondents chose JusTea and Calpis Soda while 8.5% of respondents chose Redbull Pameló Flavour and Fanta Orange Flavour.

This shows that the highest choice with a percentage difference of 23.4% was to the F&N brand which has been in the market for more than 10 years. If viewed in terms of packaging design, F&N applies the use of elements of design prominently in its packaging design.

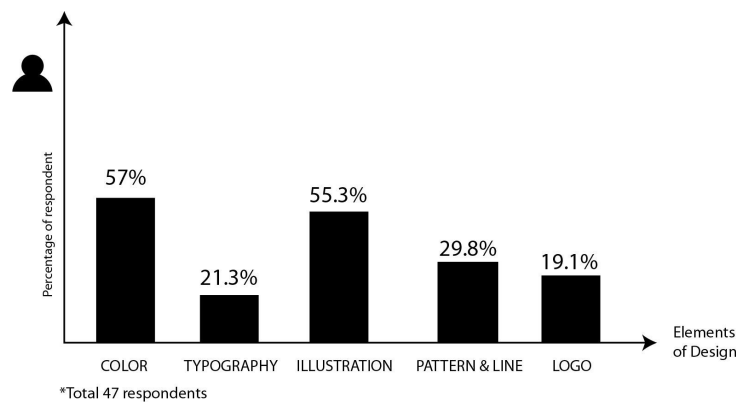


Figure 2 Elements of Design on packaging that catch respondent attention first

From figure 2, it shows that 57% of respondents chose the colour element as the element that would first attract their attention to the packaging of soda drinks. While 55.3% respondents chose illustration elements, 29.8% respondents chose pattern and line elements, 21.3% respondents chose typography elements and 19.1% respondents chose logo elements.

51.1% responded that colour elements influence their choice to buy soda drinks. 46.8% responded neutral and 2.1% responded that the element of colour did not influence their decision when choosing a soda drink.

For the typography element, 46.8% responded it influenced their decision, 44.7% responded neutral and 8.5% responded it did not influence their decision.

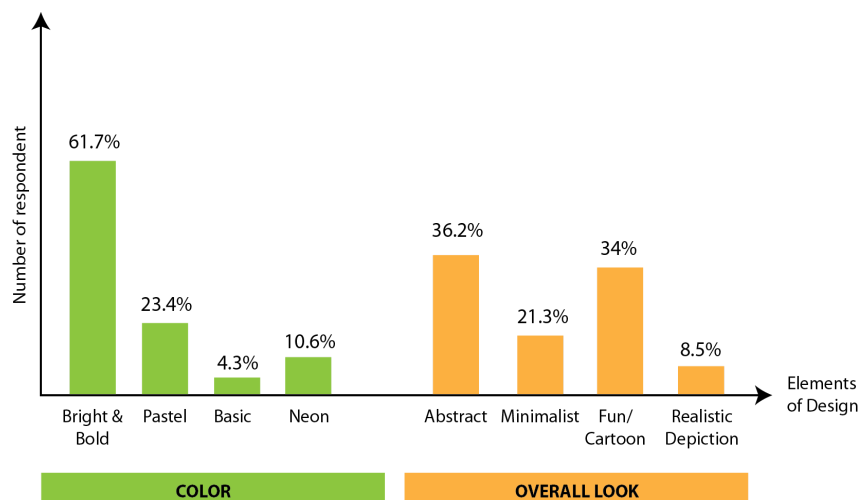


Figure 3 Scheme of colour and overall look that resonate with the respondent

Figure 3 is a question designed to see if the element of colour is the main choice that influences the decision of youth consumers in buying drinking water, then what colour category influences them. From the survey it shows that 61.5% of respondents choose bright colours and the gap is quite high with other colour categories. Questions were also given to respondents to see if the overall look of the packaging could influence their buying decision and 36.2% of respondents chose abstract look and 34% chose fun/cartoon look. There is a relatively small percentage difference between these two styles.

For session 3, the result shows that 72.3% of respondents chose the element of imagery to play the most important role in influencing their decisions in buying soda drinks. While logo design is the element that least influences the purchase decision.

7 RESEARCH LIMITATION

This demographic only focuses on the youth consumers between age 15-40 years old with no specific area, profession, location and style. Based on the survey conducted, there is an apparent lack of knowledge and understanding on design terms indicated in the questionnaire, for example regarding Typography, Pastel and Illustration.

8 DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the elements of design play an important role in shaping the purchasing decisions of youth consumers. Elements like imagery and colour appear as particularly influential consumers' purchase decisions. Youth consumers are more responsive to vibrant and engaging colours that capture their attention instantly. Bright, bold, or eye-catching colours tend to capture and evoke emotions and create a sense of connection with the product. The use of attractive and relatable elements of imagery/illustration resonates strongly with young audiences, often aligning with their mood, lifestyle, preferences, and aspirations. These visual elements not only attract attention but also enhance the overall product appeal, making it more resonating to this target demographic. This proves the importance for brands to strategically design their packaging to effectively leverage these elements to engage and attract young consumers.

However, further research needed to study from the point of view of consumers' loyalty towards the brand. Do beverage brands that have been strong in the market also influence these young people in making purchase decisions. Is loyalty to the brand more powerful than the use of elements of design. This may be a factor why brands that have been strong in the market such as Pepsi, Coca-cola take the approach of maintaining a minimal packaging design and emphasis is only given to the prominence of the logo.

Besides that, this study only focuses on soda drinks and youth consumers. The result may not be generalized to other drink packaging. Future studies could extend this research by considering employing the comparative study of demographics of consumers, or additionally study on the other type of drinks.

9 CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the literature for future research. The results of the study provide a better understanding of the effective use of elements of design in the design of soda drink packaging. The findings indicate that colour and imagery elements on the soda packaging design influence youth consumer purchase decisions. This study contributes to industry players and brand owners' important knowledge to improve their packaging design and creative directions to ensure that they can compete in the market and attract the attention of the right target consumers. This indirectly increases sales profits and reduces losses for unsold products.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

All authors played equal contributions towards the production of this paper.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest with respect to the research authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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