

# A Study on the Relevance of Packaging in Children's Purchase Decision of Branded Potato Chips

## Abstract

*Packaging has been acknowledged as a strategic tool for enhancing competitiveness of food products by experts. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between packaging as an essential tool and childrens influence on purchase decision based on the appearance of the package. This research has tried to explore and compare purchase decision behavior of the target audience. The respondents in the pilot study comprised of convent school children who were assigned a task for self expression with the D-I-Y (Do It Yourself) tool. In the final study, school children go through a brand identity test based on their liking and try to justify their choice. The findings depict that the majority of the children consider colour of the package a vital attribute in the purchase decision process of potato chips. Around 90% of the children in the study associate the flavour of the potato chips with the colour of the package.*

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## Introduction

Packaging is the science, art and technology of enclosing or protecting products for distribution, storage, sale, and use. Packaging also refers to the process of design, evaluation, and production of packages. Packaging can be described as a coordinated system of preparing goods for transport, warehousing, logistics, sale, and end use. Today it has grown in importance and is regarded as a vital marketing tool. Packaging plays an important role in the marketing of a product. It is an integral part in the process of communicating the marketing objective of a specific product to the consumer (Stern 1981, Meyer 1981, Dichter 1981). To perform its role, packaging must be attractive, informative, and clearly identify the product and communicate its real benefits. Nickels and Jolson (1976) have described packaging as the fifth "P" in the marketing mix. Dichter (1981), on the other hand, has stated that consumers tend to view a product and its packaging as one. They tend to relate emotionally not to the facts of the products/packages but rather to their perceived reality of the whole market entity. In previous studies in marketing, the importance of packaging in consumer purchasing decision has not been widely researched. One of the most critical roles for packaging is promoting products. Indeed, just as ease-of-use and readability are elements of the strategic



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packaging mix, packaging is an important part of a company's strategic marketing-mix. Most packages for consumer products are designed for one of three purposes: 1) to improve the packaging of an existing product; 2) to add a new product to an existing product line; or 3) to contain an entirely new product. Attention drawing power refers to the aesthetics and obtrusiveness of the package design. Depending on the product and the goals of the marketers, the package may be made to appear attractive, exciting, pure, soft, sexy, scary, intriguing, or to evoke some other emotion. In most cases, though, the product is displayed on the front of the package in the form of a picture, art, or see-through window. In addition, bright colors, glossy stock, obtrusive carton displays, and other elements can garner positive attention, if used prudently. A quality impression is an important sales requirement for packaging because items that are perceived to be of low quality are usually assumed to be a poor value, regardless of price. Examples of packaging mistakes that convey low quality or poor value include: faded lettering or colors, tacky designs or strange typeface, outdated pictures and designs, and cheap construction. Readability is the fourth basic sales requirement for successful package design. This element is of paramount importance for products like breakfast cereal that are shelved next to several competing brands and products. If the package attempts to convey too many messages, it will likely fail to connect with the consumer. Because of the mass of buying choices, buyers typically do not take time to absorb messages on packaging, with the possible exception of high-priced specialty items. Among other guidelines, letters or logos should be large and printed in the same type style as that used in complementary print and television advertising. The requirement of readability contributes to the difficulty in packaging completely new products.

Marketing strategy should address the critical issues of (a) response to competitor's actions (b) response to changing consumer trends (c) response to changing market environment (d) response to changes in technology (e) decisions regarding the entry and exit. Businesses operate in a dynamic environment which is witnessing changes every day.

The objective of this paper is to empirically explore the relationship between several aspects of packaging and childrens' intention to purchase a specific brand. This Study examines the way in which Children's perception and purchase decision making of potato chips are influenced by product, packaging, brand image and consumer self- expression. The research builds upon previous studies done in this field by making an attempt to understand the packaging of potato chips carried out by different firms, gathering information about physical aspects of existing package designs and comparing it with qualitative data on consumer self expression and brand identity. The research provides understanding of the link between packaging, brand and the consumers in the form of children for companies to develop suitable marketing strategies for the target market.

### **Litreature Review**

Tate Kent Ragaland (2009) examined the consumer self expression and brand identity through a qualitative and quantative methodology where it's not only winning a new customer only but also reinforcing and building a consumer brand relationship. The work stated that the use of colour on a package might result in a different quality of expression of strength, durability, reliability, cleanness, freshness, efficacy, professionalism, culture, and nationality. Colour exerts a strong symbolic force that influences consumers' perception toward the product. In a study on cigarette packaging involving an ideal brand, a regular brand and two test packages (identical contents but different packaging), reported that respondents tended to select the better preferred package as being closer to the ideal brand. Logo (lettering style of the name) may symbolize different things to the consumers. Certain logo types may connote strength, power and solidarity while some others may signify elegance, delicateness and softness Packaging exerts an influence on

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consumer purchasing decision through the cognitive process. A package needs to attract the attention of the consumers to trigger the necessary hierarchy of cognitive effects from awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction to purchase. In his book "Total Branding by Design", Paul Southgate (1994) examines the role of packaging in the creation of brand identity. It states that marketing neglects the role of packaging as a branding tool. He states that there are no advertisements at the point of sale, but just the packs, as a result they act as an advertisement and a brand recall.

### **Rationale of Study**

The study would signify the importance of consumer behavior, branding and packaging as influencing factor for the purchase decisions. This is an exploratory study to make an initial breakthrough into children purchase behaviour decision and lays ground work for subsequent investigations to apply similar methods of enquiry to different product categories and consumer groups to expand the knowledge base of all parties involved.

This research has tried to analyze the childrens buying behaviour with samples taken from an English medium Jesuit school ranging from Standard 5 to 10. The research is only concerned with physical factors of packaging such as Shape, Colour, Design, Logo type of the brand and other visual communication. A potential limitation of this study is the difficulty for the children to comprehend some of the attitude measurement questions presented to them. The study has looked into the relationship of the purchase decision with the demographics of children, who are supposedly the prime consumers of potato chips.

### **Objectives**

- To study the relevance of packaging as an important tool of purchase decision for Branded Potato chips by children.
- To analyze childrens buying behavior towards different brands through self expression and brand identity
- To know the importance of packaging in the overall purchase decision of potato chips

### **Research Design**

The D- I- Y (Do it yourself) pilot study is a method through which we guage the childrens self expression to help them recall about a Chips packaging which they have seen or they can visualize. This was done with a view to understand the various factors of the packaging aspect to which childrens attention is drawn such as the logo, package design, colour on package, product information. The pilot study gave direction to design the questionnaire by considering the variables which will form part of the final study such as brand logo, shape, package design, colour, and flavour of the potato chips. Secondly, to examine the aspect of brand identity a survey was undertook with the help of a questionnaire to study the various factors which are relevant in the purchase decision of children and this is done through brand identity of the potato chips. It was also indicative to keep the language and structure of the questionnaire short and simple so that it could be easily understood by the children. The analyzed facts & findings are presented in the form of pie charts and bar graphs.

### **Methodology**

The study was undertaken with the above mentioned pilot study by approaching English medium Jesuit co-education school children from a school in Bhubaneswar. The pilot study took place in

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the school campus with the permission of the Principal and with the coordination of Art & craft teacher. The teacher randomly called out students who were having free classes from standard 7-9. A group of 12 children were assembled in an empty classroom, they were given a briefing about the task to be done which is to draw and design with use of colour the packaging of a potato chip packet according to their thoughts and creativity. They were handed over the necessary stationery items such as colour, pencil, paper etc and then instructed to draw and colour according to them what a chips package should look, this gives them an opportunity to express their creativity and showcase their talent of drawing and ways of self expression. After the exercise was complete the different designs were collected and few open ended questions were posed to each respondent for their feedback to justify their work that was conducted.

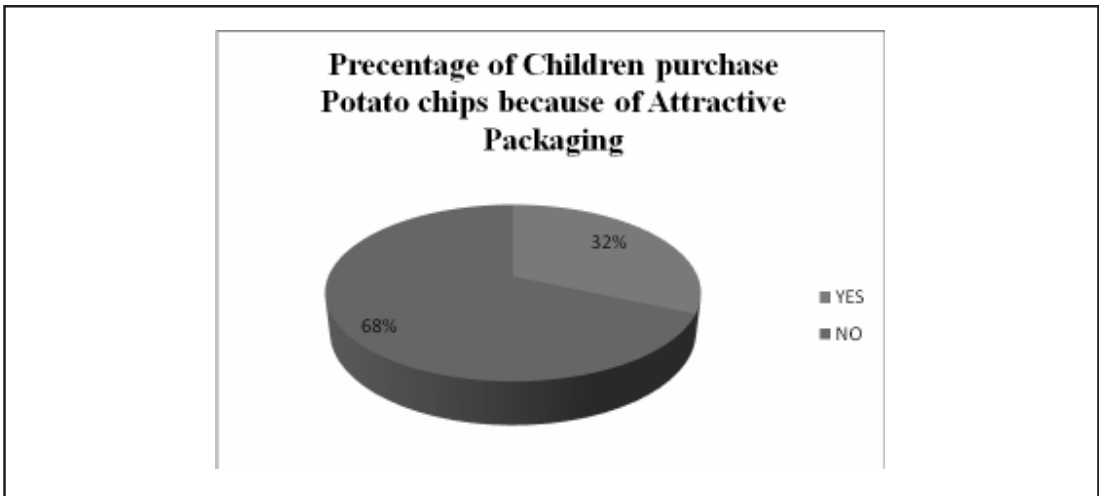
The second phase of the research work involves conducting a survey with the help of a questionnaire on the children from the school. Students were randomly selected from the roll call register of the different classes and were instructed to assemble in an empty classroom. They were given the questionnaire and asked to fill it up with appropriate choice(s). They were shown three branded packages of potato chips namely "Parle's Wafers" from Parle biscuits Pvt. Ltd., "Lays" from Pepsi co. Ltd and "Bingo" from ITC Ltd. and were instructed to select one, purely on the basis of the external packaging. Based on the package selected, all the sixty students filled the questionnaire and the same was collected back further tabulation and analysis.

The sample size for the (DO-It-Yourself) Pilot study was (n=12) and for conducting the survey was consisting of (n=60) children. These samples comprise of school children ranging from Standard 5 to 10. The sampling technique adopted is simple random sampling where children were called out from the attendance register for the purpose of both the exercises of data collection.

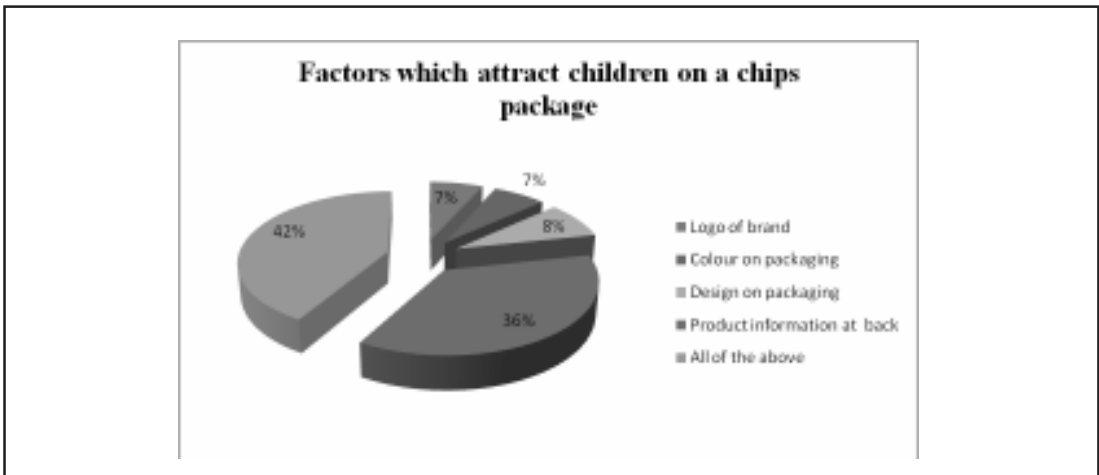
### **Findings and Analysis**

Out of the different age groups of children who took part in the survey and responded to the questionnaire, majority of the children were from age group 11, 12 and 13. The demographics were diversified so as to understand the perspective of all age groups and the most influential section was from the same who have a high consumption pattern for potato chips. There were children from different grades ranging from standard 5 to 9. The survey was conducted on 31 boys and 29 girls respectively. 28% of them choose other factors such as taste, flavour variants and design respectively. While 24% had Logo of brand in mind, 20% get attracted to their choice of brand of potato chip. About 87% of the children like the font style used by the company on their choice of branded potato chips while rest 13% feel that the font style is not attractive enough. It shows the percentage of children who think color as a factor plays an important role in purchase decision. The result shows that 53% agree that colour plays an important role while the rest 47% which is very marginal think colour plays no role. About 90% of the Children think flavour as an important factor for the colour of the packaging while the rest 10 % think that flavour should not be taken into consideration while choosing the colour of the package. About 78 % of the children think packaging should have themes based on festivals and occasions to make it more attractive. The following represents results in the form of pie-charts and bar diagrams elaborating about the findings.

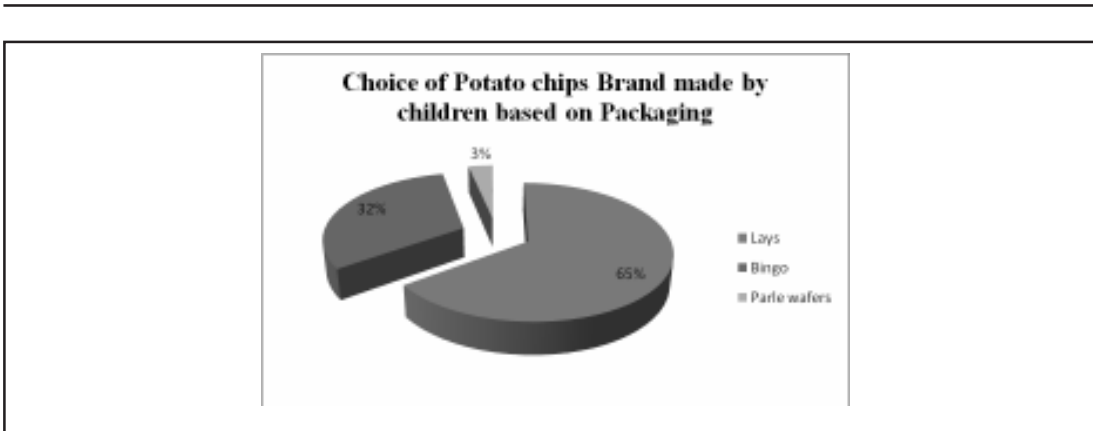
- 1) Children when asked whether they purchase potato chips because of the attractive packaging about 32 % said yes on the other hand 68 % said that No this which means the various brands in the market have to make strategic changes in its marketing plans for the changing dynamic Indian market shown in fig 1.1



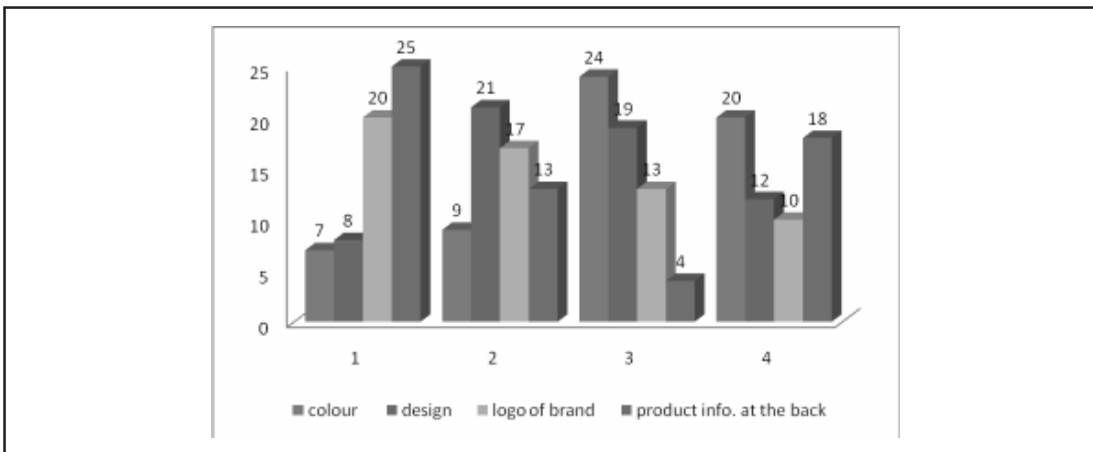
- 2) When asked about the different factors which attract children on a potato chip package, the response was 42% said all the factors are equally important while 36% thought product information is an important factor, 8% thought of design while 7% of them felt logo of brand and colour play a role respectively. This is shown in fig 1.2



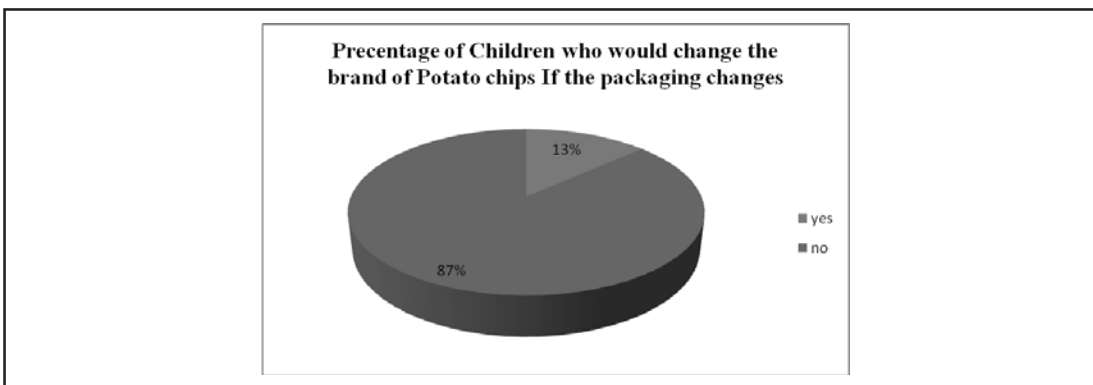
- 3) The children were shown three brand of Potato chips and asked to choose one which according to them has most attractive packaging and the results showed 65 % of the children choose Lays, 32 % made Bingo their popular choice while a meagre 3 % liked Parle Wafers as depicted in fig 1.3



4) According to fig 1.4, the four factors which form part of a potato chips package are ranked from 1-4 (1 being most important and 4 being least important) The result is shown for each factor Rank wise.



5. An important finding according to fig 1.5 states that 87 % of the children would not change the brand of potato chips If in future the packaging changes while 13 % of them are sensitive and would change their brand if it does so. Dynamic influence which packaging has on the buying influence on children. Its indicative so that which a change in the market strategy in which Packaging plays an important role its has to be looked into as a matter of improving quality and factors



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## Conclusions

Thus it can be stated that from this study we come to know about the children purchase decision behaviour based on the external and visual communication played by the packaging of branded potato chips and its relevance in the children's mindset before going for a purchase. We come to learn that children take into consideration all factors such as Brand logo, package design, colour combination and product information as primary requirement for purchasing potato chips. 65% agree that Lays is the popular choice of brand based on external packaging, Bingo comes into second spot and then Parle Wafers. For their choice of brand, children lay emphasis on Package design and brand logo as the two most important factors. To continue further, font style of the popular brand of potato chips being Lays is liked by most children in majority. More than 50% children think that colour of the package plays an important role in the purchase decision of Potato chips. Close to 90% of the children think that flavour is an important factor for the colour of the package. In future, children have suggested for the chips packaging to come up with theme based on festivals and occasions of national and international importance and also variants in more flavours. Lastly an important finding of this study is that 87% of the children state that they would not change the brand of potato chips if in future the packaging changes while on the other hand an odd 13% are still sensitive and feel that they would change the brand of potato chip if the packaging changes. Demographics should be an essential element considered for developing a marketing strategy. However, in today's media too much marketing attention is given to the younger age groups. The marketer needs to bear in mind the size of other target segment and the children who have a major say in the purchase decisions. Packaging does play a pivotal role, relevant enough to influence the purchase decision for the first time buyers who get attracted to the packages. Thus it's a constant endeavor of the Company to come up with new and innovative modes of economical and attractive packaging to keep the children engaged and influence their consumption pattern for potato chips.

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**Pilot Study Exhibits**



Rohan Mahapatra  
Class VIII  
13 Yrs, Male



Ajeet Patnaik  
Class VIII  
13 Yrs, Male



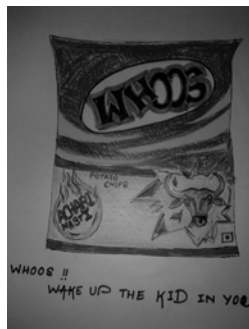
Badal Murmu  
Class VIII  
13 Yrs, Male



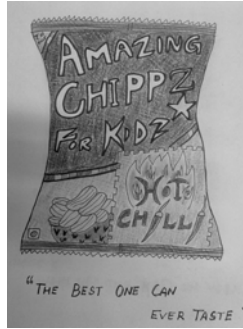
Khirabdi Mohapatra  
Class IX  
14 Yrs, Female



Sanchita  
Class IX  
14 Yrs, Female



Biswajit Nayak  
Class VIII  
13 Yrs, Male



Suprit Mohapatra  
Class IX  
15 Yrs, Male



Disha Das  
Class VII  
13 Yrs, Female



Abhijit Mohanty  
Class IX  
15 Yrs, Male



Umbulsen Karketta  
Class IX  
14 Yrs, Male



Yuvraj Sen  
Class IX  
14 Yrs, Male



Jagannath Dasgupta  
Class IX  
15 Yrs, Male