

Effect of Tangible Aspects on Purchase Decision: A Comparison between Generations

Keywords: Generational Cohorts, Purchase Decision, Tangible Aspects

The tangible aspects of a determined product can be essential for proper positioning of the brand, since these aspects are projected as recognized elements of the product. Due to this reason, the current study had the goal of exploring the relationship between the process of consumer purchases at the moment of acquiring personal care products and the tangible aspects of packaging. These tangible aspects of packaging are those visual aspects that a product contains. These are identified in this present study as graphic elements and informational elements. This study looked at consumer decision-making made by participants from three generational cohorts: Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. This research provides evidence about existing relationships between the graphic elements and the terms generational cohorts, as well as some statistical differences between these cohorts in terms of informational elements.

Introduction

The 21st century has given rise to increasing levels of competitiveness between organizations where enterprises have the challenge to develop strategies that allow them to excel over their greatest competitors. Throughout history, organizations have understood that their most valuable resource is their brand, which is associated with their identity (Kotler, 1990). Due to the importance of the brand, the physical image that the brand projects may be a critical factor in the communication of a certain product. Related to the physical image of a determined product, the role of packaging is also important, in that it is often the first impression the consumers have of the company. For this reason, the package of the product has been identified as the main method of communication that has evolved throughout times (Keller, 2003).

The product must be considered one of the “four P’s” of the marketing mixture. “The four P’s are: product, price, place and promotion (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004 p. 63)”. The product is an object whose sole medium of identification is through the visual mode and appearance. According to Bloch (1995), individuals of all identified cultures find delight through using their sense of sight. As so, humans find visual beauty in diverse objects. However, since 1930, there has been an increase in the awareness of the importance of product design (Bruce, Thill & Mescon, 2007). Before that time, packages were primarily recognized as a primary means of protecting the product. Since 1930, however, package design has become used as a creative method to obtain a competitive advantage in a global market (Berkowitz, 1987; Bruce & Whitehead, 1988). Due to this, there seems to be a significant increase in the role of product design as being a vehicle of communication for the brand’s managers (Underwood & Klein, 2002).

However, after recognizing the historical background related to the product image and the importance it has had in the marketing of the products, academics and professionals have finally become aware that both the product and the image that the product has have an effect in the decision-making process of the consumer. It appears that consumers show interest in products that represent pleasing aesthetics, thereby making the buying process of interest (Aaker, 1991; Batra & Homer, 2004; Hirshman & Holbrook, 1982; Schmitt & Simonson, 1995). Nevertheless, in conjunction with the buying process, the

informative area of the product must also be a part of the tangible aspect of the process. For this reason, the process of the design of the package can be a delicate one for manufacturers as the package must be a complete element in all its parts.

At the same time, when an organization needs to change the image of its product, a disparity can arise, causing doubts about which segments of the target market the image of this product will trigger a significant change in decisions made in the buying process, and which elements of the product will impel them to make this decision. This problem must be solved in order to attract the target market selected by the enterprises. It could be helpful to conduct a study that presents the possibility to know the effect of the image of the product in the buying process of various consumers according to their generation by evaluating two image aspects that have been found to be significant in the decision-making process of purchasing: graphic elements (colors, format of the fonts, and packaging form) and informational elements (ingredients, amount in ounces or other measure established, indications, usage instructions, benefits, identifications of the best products in the market, among other indicators) (Bloch 2005; Silayoi & Speece, 2004).

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2004), the segmentation of markets allows businesses to divide their prospective clients into smaller groups with the same needs, tastes, lifestyles, and similar characteristics. The term market segmentation was introduced for the first time by Wendell Smith (1956), who terrified by the increased amount of competence of similar products, proposed segmentation to attract and meet the needs of particular markets. Through this method, he presented homogenous groups within the market that held diverse characteristics. Businesses have recognized that they cannot attract every buyer, as they are increasingly different in their customs, needs, and particular wishes. Recognized businesses have opted for this strategy when their products have a great acceptance before the public they wish to impact. According to the United States Census Bureau (2011), the 2010 Census reports that the population of the United States of America including their territories increased by 9.7 % since the last Census of 2000. According to Levy (2011), the largest section of the population can be segregate according to three demographic groups defined by age. The groups are: Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-197), and Generation Y (1977-1993). These generational cohorts are so important that organizations should consider studying consumer behavior through the lenses of these generational cohorts.

However, to design a study based on the demographic segmentation theory will allow analyzing if the tangible aspects of a product create a similar effect in the process of selecting a specific product. Personal care products were selected for this study due to their diverse competitiveness in the market.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

Throughout history, it has been discovered that individuals find pleasure and, at the same time, profound admiration when using the sense of sight (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson, 1990). Through the sense of sight, the eyes are the axis of the more renowned images in history. The tangible attributes or design of a product is created with the purpose of creating beauty, to entertain spectators, and, at the same time, to find acceptance.

When it comes to marketing, however, there are no differences in terms of the tendency of people to admire and evaluate products based on their visual attributes. According to Bloch (1995), the visual attributes of a product may be a key element for its success in the market. According to Keller (2003, 2007), organizations are responsible for the design of the product in order to communicate its benefits, achieve differentiation, and attract the consumer to feel identified with the need or desire to achieve satisfaction. As a consequence, it can be considered that consumers are spectators and judges of the task done by an organization. It can be considered simple, but the increasing competition, technological advances, and changes in the consumer's lifestyles are only some of some aspects that have added a complexity level of the organizations. The organizations have been featuring questions concerning the development of products that can be recognized and accepted in the market through successful tangible image that shows safety and value for the product purchased.

Importance of Product Design

In order to launch a product to the market, the product must possess all the elements that determine its identity as a means of breaking up all homogeneous parameters. For this reason, each product must possess unique characteristics to be able to compete in the desired market. Keller (2002, 2007) states that, when launching a product to the market, it is imperative to work on the differentiation elements that will be its identity.

Incredibly, the main role of the design of a specific product would be to be used as a means of communication and promotion of the brand (Rettie & Brewer, 2000). According to various authors, (González, Thorhsbury, & Twede, 2007; Silayoi & Speece, 2004; Underwood, 2003) in order to achieve a higher position, it is important to focus part of the market on the identity of the brand. It is through this mechanism that differentiation is achieved and equity on the brand is acquired. The key elements to developing the brand identity are based on the tangible aspects of the product that allows the recognition while obtaining its first impression.

For example, when the consumer observes a bottle with a shape inspired by an hourglass and its logo established on Spencerian Font, it can be easily identified that it is Coca-Cola. In this case, it can be perceived a total set of the tangible attributes of the brand as it is considered the integral part of the product (Orth & Malkewitz, 2008). When it comes to marketing, however, there are no differences in terms of the tendency of people to admire and evaluate products based on their visual attributes. According to Bloch (1995), the visual attributes of a product may be a key element for its success in the market. According to Keller (2003, 2007), organizations are responsible for the design of the product in order to communicate its benefits, achieve differentiation, and attract the consumer to feel identified with the need or desire to achieve satisfaction. As a consequence, it can be considered that consumers are spectators and judges of the task done by an organization. It can be considered simple, but the increasing competition, technological advances, and changes in the consumer's lifestyles are only some of some aspects that have added a complexity level of the organizations. The organizations have been featuring questions concerning the

development of products that can be recognized and accepted in the market through successful tangible image that shows safety and value for the product purchased.

The Strategic Role of Package Design

According to Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1987), the subject of the design of the product has been discussed since the 1920s. However, evidence demonstrates that the topic of the design of a determined product is similar as technology, a process of constant evolution according to the lifestyles of the consumer (Danger, 1987). The packaging of a product has the main role of protecting a determined product. However, more than just being a security method to protect the product, it has been recognized as a communication method in the marketing area. The researchers have made sure that the packaging is the central mechanism to promote a design that is the principal axis of communication (Bahaeqnel, 1991; Peters, 1994). However, one of the greatest objectives when designing a package to create a new product is to create a unique personality that would be recognized and to make the product the preferred in the target market.

Walter Landor (1913-1995), despite the fact that he did not publish all of his ideas, is considered the pioneer in the area of brand design as a marketing instrument (Myers & Lubliner, 1998). Landor, who founded the company Walter Landor and Associates, is considered as the pioneer, as a distinguished phrase became the most successful theory to express the importance of design of a determined product. The role of the image of the product and, at the same time, its packaging, was explained in the following terms: "Products are created in a factory, but brands are created in the mind" (Myers & Lubliner, 1998 p. 22).

Throughout this theory, it was explained that, similar to an individual who likes a friend, dislikes a neighbor, or is indifferent to a co-worker, the design of a product package through diverse images could serve as a prejudice for the product without even trying it first. The perception of the consumer creates a "personality" for the product that has different levels of recognition and acceptance. At the same time, he counseled the companies about the need for innovation as time passes and also the need to understand the changes in lifestyles of the consumers. However, it is understood that is imperative to embark on the process of innovation, having in mind the concept of creativity, this is, looking for new mechanisms, innovating the design, and adapting it to the consumer lifestyle without forgetting the most important factor for organizations which is to minimize innovation costs while not increasing significantly the final price (Kotler & Armstrong, 2007).

Normally a department store or supermarket displays thousands of products in order to be selected by the client. However, throughout times, many researchers have stated that the selection process of a product, in many cases, is done at the moment of buying the product (Bloch, 1995; Prone, 1993; Raphael, 1969). Rettie and Bruwer (2000), however, determined that the consumer selects a product at the moment of purchasing it. They state that decisions about acquiring a specific product are taken at the moment of purchasing the products, particularly the health care products. For this reason, it would be challenging to imagine going in a store and find all the products with no identification created from one unique mold.

Due to this, it has been perceived that, through the advances, the perception of the product design has developed an important role in marketing and, therefore, it is understood that the decision process is also as important (Danton de Rouffignac, 1990; Keller & Kotler, 2006). So it is determined that a product can be successful or fail based on its image, this being the first impression the consumer has. In Bloch's (1995) Model, the design or the package of the product determines that the selection of the product is based on a psychological response divided into: cognitive responses and affective responses. The cognitive response is based on the visual perception that processes the differentiation of elements, while the affective response evaluates the diverse alternatives that a product may present to satisfy certain need or desire.

In order to strengthen Bloch's model, Silayoi and Speece (2004) divided the image of the product as contained by the package into two categories, both tangibles: visual elements and information elements. Among the visual elements, one can find elements such as: colors, graphics, and the shape of the package, material, and the font used. Among the information elements, these include: general information about the product, production site, the ingredients of the product, quantity of the product, special indications, and the brand of the product. Silayoi and Speece (2007) stated that the visual aspects transmit information, present effect on the consumer's emotions. The information elements impact has cognitive orientation, that is, the aptitude of knowing or understanding. This contradicts to Keller (2003, 2007), who states that the consumer obtains his/her wishes or needs through graphic aspects. However, between these two extremes, it seems that the selection process involves either emotional or cognitive processes. It is assumed that this may depend on the pressure of time, level of participation, and individual characteristics of a determined consumer or segment (Butkeviciene, Stravinskiene, & Rutelione, 2008).

Package Design for Special Markets

The study of the buying behavior of the consumer and the knowledge of his/her needs, tastes, and wishes is a starting pointing order to be able to implement with validity the marketing strategies by the organizations. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2000; 2004; 2006), the buying behavior of the consumer pertains to the specific way in which consumers buy on a more personal consumption. Actually, the market of the United States believes that there are above 300 million individuals (United States, Census 2010). However, consumers vary on age, income, education level, and social status, among other aspects.

A determinant little amount of research has been done about how the design of a product affects the consumer according to his/her individual characteristics (Myers & Lubliner, 1998). However, among the contributions of Butkeviciene, Stravinskiene, and Rutelione (2008), they suggest that this determinant, emphasizing that the individual characteristics of a specific consumer or segment, may affect the selection process of a product. Kotler and Keller (2006) point out that the same product in different presentation formats may address diverse segments, for example: different genders, different social status, and different places, among other factors.

Parameswar Krishnakumar (1974) conducted a study in which he analyzed the influence of country of origin on the product images of people from selected countries. This study focused on presenting products with distinctive image of manufactured

products in underdeveloped countries and products manufactured in the United States of America. The results showed that, in underdeveloped countries, products manufactured in their own countries did not catch the eye of the consumers as much as those products manufactured in the United States.

Garber, Burke, and Morgan (2000), conducted a study in which customers ages 18-65 contributed to the investigation. First, the consumers responded to general questions about their shopping habits and later, they make a selection from four product categories. The participants/ consumers were requested to select one product from each category. Through the study, it was determined that most participants took around 82 seconds to make their selections. At the same time, the results support that new packages whose colors are very different from the old package will attract customers. Both studies, however, supported that the consumers take more time in the selection process when they observe changes in the design.

Underwood and Klein (2002) studied the effect that the image of a packaging of food may have. This study attempted to evaluate if a new brand in the market can achieve a high position by comparing it to a more attractive packaging of the same product. The study consisted of a sample of university students. The experimental design created three groups. The subjects from one group were presented with two new products in which the packages presented the consumer with an attractive image and the other presented a less attractive image with opaque colors. The subjects of the other group had two packages of famous brands with the same conditions as the first group. The third group had three packages of famous and not so famous brands and some of the products did not have attractive images and one with no image at all. The study determined that the subjects in all three groups focused their shopping decision in a visual manner. As a consequence, the products with attractive images obtained the same acceptance that famous brands have had in the market for years. Contrary to the study of Krishnakumar (1974), where he conducted a comparison of consumers according to their culture, the study focused only in subjects from a large, unidentified university in the United States.

Limon, Khale, and Ulrich (2009) researched how packaging may be a communication barrier at the moment of selecting a product and how culture can affect the decision-making process. The subjects of the study were adolescents from two countries, Germany and Turkey. The subject completed a questionnaire in which the products evaluated were chocolate and salt. The results indicated that, besides the packaging representing a key factor at the moment of purchasing the product, there might be variations according to the consumer culture and more by the shopping conduct of each particular consumer.

Consequently, in order to test the effect of tangible aspect on purchase decision according to their generational cohort the researcher selected the convenience products. Especially the personal care products, the most acquired products throughout the United States. With this intention the researcher hypothesize the following:

H₁: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

H₂: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

H₃: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

H₄: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

H₅: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

H₆: There is a statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

Methodology

The proposed quantitative research was designed with the intention to study the statistical differences between the scores of the tangible aspects of the personal care product packaging; including graphic elements score and informational elements score and the generational cohorts. Convenience products, especially personal care products, are the most acquired products throughout the United States (Personal Care Products Council, 2012).

This research study was limited to the western area of Puerto Rico, specifically, the region of Mayagüez. The following three generational cohorts were studied: Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1976), and Generation Y (born 1977-1993) (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). The random sampling that the research used was a stratified sampling effort in which each generation was assigned in a proportionate amount. Before the pilot test, the sample includes 162 Baby Boomers, 105 individuals from Generation X, and 170 from Generation Y for a total of 437.

The instrument was developed by the researcher and was organized into two sections: the first section addressed the demographic information of the participants, and the second section evaluated the process of consumer decision-making according to the tangible aspects of the personal care product packaging. The 20 questions employed were in a Likert scale was used to measure the established values. With this in mind, the questionnaire was divided into 10 questions about the graphic elements of packaging and 10 questions about the informational aspects.

Results

The researcher used statistical analysis to assess the process of consumer purchase decision-making based on tangible aspects of personal care product packaging (graphic elements versus informational elements) as dependent variables, in relationship to the generational cohorts of the individual participants (Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) as independent variables. The scores that the respondents reported in the two types of tangible aspects (graphic elements versus informational elements) were utilized in a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) statistical analysis where the researcher was able

to test the hypotheses of the research study.

Ho₁: There is no statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of MANOVA between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects, specifically the graphic elements the results were ($p = .727 > .05$).

Ho₂: There is no statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of the MANOVA between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects, specifically the graphic elements, the findings were ($p = .379 > .05$).

Ho₃: There is no statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of MANOVA conducted between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects, specifically the informational elements, the results were ($p = .498 > .05$) (see Table 11). Due to this score, the researcher failed to reject the null hypothesis. That means that there is no statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation X and the tangible aspects of personal care products (informational elements).

Ha₄: There is statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of MANOVA conducted between the purchase decision process of Baby Boomers versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects, specifically the informational elements, the results were ($p = .00 < .05$) (see Table 11). In effect, the null hypothesis four was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was sustained.

There is indeed a statistical difference between the purchasing process of Baby Boomers versus the purchasing process of Generation Y in terms of informational elements, it can be assumed that consumers with larger ranges of ages between them that are relatively dissimilar focus on different experiences, tastes, and preferences (MacInnins, 2010). At the same time, these results support Levy (2011), who assured that Generation Y, a generation that has grown up along with many of the modern technologies, tend to be completely visual in their orientation and less analytical at the moment of making a purchase. That can establish that the youngest group of buyers in the market, in this case, Generation Y, is not very attracted to focusing on elements that are not of a graphic, visual manner at the moment of making decisions or purchasing certain products.

Ho₅: There is no statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (graphic elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of MANOVA conducted between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects, specifically the graphic elements, the results were ($p = .913 > .05$).

H_{a6} : There is statistical difference between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products.

According to the results of Generation Y and the tangible aspects (informational elements) of personal care products, MANOVA conducted between the purchase decision process of Generation X versus Generation Y and the tangible aspects, specifically the informational elements, the results were ($p = .00 < .05$).

This highlights again that consumers from Generation Y tend to present certain challenges to the present market and to organizations that are used to marketing their products to older generations. Consumers from Generation Y tend to have specific tastes and preferences in some aspects that are distinct from older generations, such as Generation X and the Baby Boomers. Silayoi, and Speece (2007) noted that there are some consumers who are able to make purchase decisions based only on visual cues, which might be the case for those from Generation Y, who show some types of buying behavior that is different from the older generational cohorts. That also indicates that Generation Y does not pay significant amounts of attention to verbal elements on packaging for any type of product, since it seems to be sufficient for those from Generation Y to recognize the graphic elements of their favorite brands to make purchase decisions.

Table 1

MANOVA Analysis

Scheffe

Dependent Variable	(I) Generation group	(J) Generation group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval		
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Graphic elements score	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1976)	-.73	.913	.727	-2.97	1.51	
		Generation Y (1977-1993)	-1.12	.800	.379	-3.08	.85	
	Generation X (1965-1976)	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	.73	.913	.727	-1.51	2.97	
		Generation Y (1977-1993)	-.39	.904	.913	-2.61	1.83	
	Generation Y (1977-1993)	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	1.12	.800	.379	-.85	3.08	
		Generation X (1965-1976)	.39	.904	.913	-1.83	2.61	
	Informational elements score	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1976)	1.18	.999	.498	-1.27	3.63
			Generation Y (1977-1993)	9.83*	.875	.000	7.68	11.98
Generation X (1965-1976)		Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	-1.18	.999	.498	-3.63	1.27	
		Generation Y (1977-1993)	8.65*	.990	.000	6.21	11.08	
Generation Y (1977-1993)	Baby Boomer (1946-1964)	-9.83*	.875	.000	-11.98	-7.68		
	Generation X (1965-1976)	-8.65*	.990	.000	-11.08	-6.21		

Based on observed means.

The error term is Mean Square (Error) = 63.555.

Interesting Findings by Generational Cohorts

Graphics Elements. The researcher identified that there were certain similarities and differences between each of the participating generational cohorts in terms of the factors that they paid more or less attention to during the process of purchase decision-making of personal care products. These tangible aspects of the packaging design that were considered in the study were classified as graphic elements and informational elements. In terms of the most considered aspects of the three generational cohorts studied, all three generations paid more attention to the recognition of the brand's logo in terms of graphic elements of the product.

Just as there were some elements that participants paid the most attention to, there were also certain elements that were identified to be less considered than others in the process of purchase decision-making regarding personal care products. In general, all three generational cohorts paid less attention to the colors of the packaging. Baby Boomers and participants from Generation X reflected that they did not pay much attention to neon colors, while Generation Y participants reflected that they did not pay much attention to pastel colors.

Informational elements. Just like with the graphic elements, the findings from the study regarding the informational elements showed certain similarities and differences. The instrument responses found that there were certain factors of the informational elements that there were different factors of the informational elements to which each generation cohort paid more or less attention. In terms of those aspects that were most paid attention to amongst the informational elements, respondents from both Generation X and the Baby Boomer generational cohorts were found to pay more attention to reading warnings on personal care products at the moment of selecting a product. Respondents from Generation Y identified that they paid more attention to reading the brand name of the product.

In terms of the informational elements, the participants from the three generational cohorts reported that they paid less attention to the country where the personal care product was manufactured. While all three generational cohorts identified this factor as the factor that they paid the least attention to, the proportions of these results differed between the generations. The Baby Boomer generation, expressed that they paid attention to all of the aspects identified as informational elements; reading the brand, recognizing the manufacturing company, identifying the country where the product was manufactured, reading warnings, identifying measurements, reading the instructions, recognizing the ingredients and chemical components, legible wording, and color contrasts that allow wording and promotional messages to be read. At the same time, identifying the country where the product was manufactured was the element with the least scoring in spite of the fact that a majority of the respondents from the Baby Boomer generation identified that the country where the product is manufactured was significant. Due to this, within the Baby Boomer generation, no one element could be considered of least attention. Like the Baby Boomers, those respondents from the Generation X cohort, reported that they paid attention to all of the factors identified as informational elements. At the same time, the recognition of the country where a product was manufactured was identified as

the element that the largest group of Generation X respondents indicated not to consider as an important factor, even though there were a significant number of respondents from this generational cohort that did recognize this as an important factor. In terms of the respondent from Generation Y, there were several aspects of the informational elements that were not considered to be of importance at the moment of making a purchase decision. At the same time, however, the country where the product was manufactured was considered even less by individuals from Generation Y than other factors. From this group, 84.1% were in complete disagreement that the country where a product is manufactured is of importance.

Discussion

Looking at the problem outlined, it has been identified that modern organizations are part of a wild competitiveness, where companies are setting forth their best strategies in the hopes of gaining a competitive advantage. It has been identified that the tangible image of the products has been a very well known topic within the marketplace, where the popular phrase “same product, new image” has been distinguished. The packaging of a product is the primary promoter of the brand in the face of the competition on the shelves at the store. Due to this, it has been found that the physical attributes of product packaging can be the perfect tool to be able to achieve the desired success. At the same time, poor planning in the selection of the tangible elements of the packaging can represent an unpredicted failure for the brand. For this reason, companies require more information about consumers and about consumer purchasing behavior in terms of the tangible aspects of product packaging. Naturally, there is not enough research that allows companies to fully appreciate the effect on consumers in their purchase decision-making based on the tangible aspects of product packaging

After obtaining the results of the present study that was conducted it was determined that it is an old-fashioned idea to believe that the sole purpose of packaging is for the protection of the product. It is important to note that the findings show that the segmentations of markets can be a strategy to attract consumers according to their behavior and their responses to diverse stimuli. Through the evaluation of the results as seen through the responses of each generational cohort, it is noted that there is a narrow relationship between the preferences of the consumers at the moment of evaluating personal care products between graphic elements and informational elements. By establishing a comparison between the generational cohort groups, the researcher was able to establish that as consumers increase in age, their behavior does tend to incline towards different perspectives. This was seen in the study findings that between Baby Boomers and Generation Xers in the area of evaluating almost all of the informational elements on packages of personal care products, compared to those respondents from Generation Y, the youngest generational cohort in the study, who showed that they did not pay the same type of attention at evaluating the informational aspects of personal care products.

Therefore, the results discussed urge organizations to educate themselves about the preferences of consumers in terms of the tangible aspects of products before making the decision to change the packaging of their products. In particular, it was noted that this is true for organizations that manufacture personal care products, where there is a vast and growing competitiveness. It

is of note to point out that the personal care product industry is an area where there are less than 760 organizations dedicated to produce and market personal care products in the United States, in a sector that represents \$50 billion in annual sales (Personal Care Products Council, 2012).

Further Research

Due to this finding, it is hoped that this present study can become a starting point for new research in this area. It would also be recommended to increase the type of research into comparing cultural factors and to include regions not only within Puerto Rico, but also in other regions of the United States and other countries. Culture is the most basic origin of the desires and behaviors in individuals (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006). Identifying the cultural factors that contribute to consumer purchase decisions through increased research in this area would make a contribution specifically for those managers of international organizations, especially those who develop personal care products. Jenner, MacNeb, Briley, Brislin, and Wortheley (2010) referred to cultural aspects as a variable that directly affects marketing strategies from the development of new products to the way in which these are marketed and published. Further research in this area would specifically contribute to better understanding the particular characteristics that impact the final consumer buying behavior of consumers at the point of sale, consumers who should be the primary target of all modern organizations.

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