

THE INFLUENCE OF DESIGN ELEMENTS IN CHOOSING PRODUCTS ON DAIRY MARKET

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Abstract: *Design and aesthetics are among the factors that play a decisive role in ensuring the success of a product and brand on the market. Through design and aesthetics, dairy farmers are trying to persuade and influence consumers. The article aims to provide a clear picture of how design and aesthetics are used by renowned producers on the dairy market and of how consumers perceive these elements. In this sense, the present paper features quantitative marketing research methods employed in the process of data collection, such as the questionnaire, based on a sample comprising 204 persons. The results indicated that design and aesthetics have a strong influence on consumers on the dairy market in Romania.*

Keywords: *dairy products, design, aesthetics, design/appearance, quantitative research, strategies.*

1. Introduction

In a developed society, meeting the consumption needs of the population implies the existence of a wide range of products. From the human being to the social and natural environment in which people live, everything that exists can be described by certain characteristics. These, in turn, can be judged by aesthetic criteria, taking into account the harmony of forms, colours, sounds, and more. The elements of design and aesthetics play an important role in establishing a diversified offer on the market, where packaging occupies a special place.

For any firm to succeed and resist on the market, it is essential to anticipate the future and the design packaging that will match the changes in consumer behaviour, their needs and tastes, as well as permanent alignment with the competitive environment (Neacşu, Baltescu, Boşcor, Bălăşescu, 2017).

Due to its multiple health benefits, dairy products can be consumed by anyone, with no consumption restrictions. There are a lot of dairy products on the market: alongside traditional ones, we can find fat-free dairy products that have been increasingly sought by consumers in recent years. One of the most important features of the local market is its fragmentation, most players being small local companies.

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In Romania, the biggest players on the dairy market are Lactalis Group (which owns LaDorna, Albalact, Covalact, Rarăul, Lactate Harghita), Friesland Foods Group (which owns the Mili, Oke and Napolact brands), and Danone.

On the dairy market, packaging is an important element of design and aesthetics, contributing to good communication with consumers and helping to establish a competitive advantage. Diversifying commodity assortment and increasing product processing have enhanced packaging functions.

2. Literature Review

Intangible aspects such as sensory experiences are key selling points. The attractive aesthetic message and rehearsal forms increase the durability of visual signs (Semra, 2012; Hoegg, Joseph, Darren, 2010) in the minds of consumers, therefore products are more easily recognized and selected at the time of purchase, and thus consumer loyalty is determined (Chou, Huang, Yang, 2014). Aesthetics is the science that studies the laws and categories of art and is considered to be the highest form of creation and reception of beauty; a set of problems regarding the essence of art, the relations with reality, the methods of artistic creation, the artistic criteria and genres (Pamfilie, Procopie, 2002).

A basic aspect of the design and the aesthetics of goods is the packaging, which is the main element subject to change when a manufacturer makes brand changes.

Packaging has many roles, which can vary by brand and category. Packaging fulfils a functional role to cover and protect product continuity both in the shop and in the buyer's home, but in many markets, packaging has developed functions that link it to the product experience, for example, sports caps and added devices to beer cans that create foam when the beer is poured into the glass (www.magazinulprogresiv.ro).

Packaging plays an important role as an informational vehicle, containing details about ingredients, how to use, storage, nutritional intake and price. Buyers go over hundreds of brands when they visit a store, and aesthetics are essential to make the brand stand out, to capture buyers' attention and make users find it easily. Sometimes called the "silent seller" due to its ability to influence consumers at the point of purchase, packaging is also a way of brand communication, conveying the personality, positioning, values and advantages of the brand. Not all buyers are the same, so different types of packaging are needed to reach different buyer typologies (Magazinul Progresiv, 2018).

Classic elements of packaging design are: form, colour, and graphics (Madar, 2015). The form of packaging should be considered as an aesthetic element by taking into account certain conditions such as the constraints imposed by the product, in terms of shape, production and use conditions, the quality class to which it belongs, the importance of the information component and aesthetic in forming the decision to purchase the products, which determines the forms of packaging in which they become visible; the use of modular forms of packaging for certain product groups, the correlation of the shape between the packaging and the material used for the manufacture of the packaging, the construction system, the particularities of use. There is a wide variety of packaging styles, and designers still have many possibilities to

increase their number according to the requirements of different customers in terms of tastes, traditions, habits, and incomes (Neacsu, 2015).

In parallel with the development of the production of large series of packaging, the label has appeared and is the carrier of information necessary to facilitate commercial operations such as: name of the product, name of the manufacturer, trade mark, place of origin of the product, consignee, date of manufacture and term validity, quantity, etc. (Dinu, Schileru, Atanase, Negrea, Diaconescu, 2008).

Design and aesthetic elements specific to dairy packaging are: graphic shape, balance, light, colour, movement, tension, expression.

For graphics dairy packaging is important and includes all the photographs, drawings, slogans, and symbols that contribute to the initial impact that a dairy product has on consumers. Graphic elements play an important role in communicating information and product impressions (Răbonțu, Chirila, 2011). The information must be easy to understand, accurate and explicit (Anton, 2010). Letters can be an element for the aesthetics of dairy packaging by their shape, colour and layout (Schmitt, Simonson, 2002). The advertising effect of packaging is complemented by the manufacturing mark. For some buyers, it is enough to recognize a particular branded packaging to make the purchase decision. The trademark can be done in words or in combined images. According to some studies, the marks represented in words are more often used because they read and memorize more easily (Pamfilie, Procopie, 2002). In addition to the trademark symbol, colour is certainly the second most important element in identifying the packaging of dairy products. Colour is one of the most important means that designers possess to make dairy packaging an effective communication tool. But before deciding on the use of colours, it is necessary to know their effect and the mechanism of their perception (Pascu, Părăian, 2010).

Regarding the external demand, the efforts to find new markets should be continued, as well as the endeavour to discover new market segments and to convince foreign consumers about the quality of Romanian products (Bărbulescu, 2017).

3. Methodology

The research done and presented in this article was of a quantitative nature and aimed at identifying and analysing consumers' views on the design and aesthetics of dairy packaging and how their purchasing decision influences them. The main objective of the paper is to create a clear picture of the use of design and aesthetics by the major producers on the dairy market and how consumers perceive these elements.

The sampling method used was non-aliasing sampling and resulted in a sample of 204 people, structured as shown in Table 1.

He (who?) referred to CAWI - Computer Assisted Web Interviewing, a method by which the questionnaire is displayed on a web page, the respondent completing the answers directly in the browser. The period in which this study was conducted is October 2018 - January 2019. Data collection was based on a questionnaire containing 21 questions, of which 5 are demographic and 16 are on the views and attitudes of the people surveyed on the design and aesthetics of dairy packaging.

In terms of gender distribution, 75% of respondents were females and 25% males. The information on age group distribution of respondents can be found in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive information of survey participants

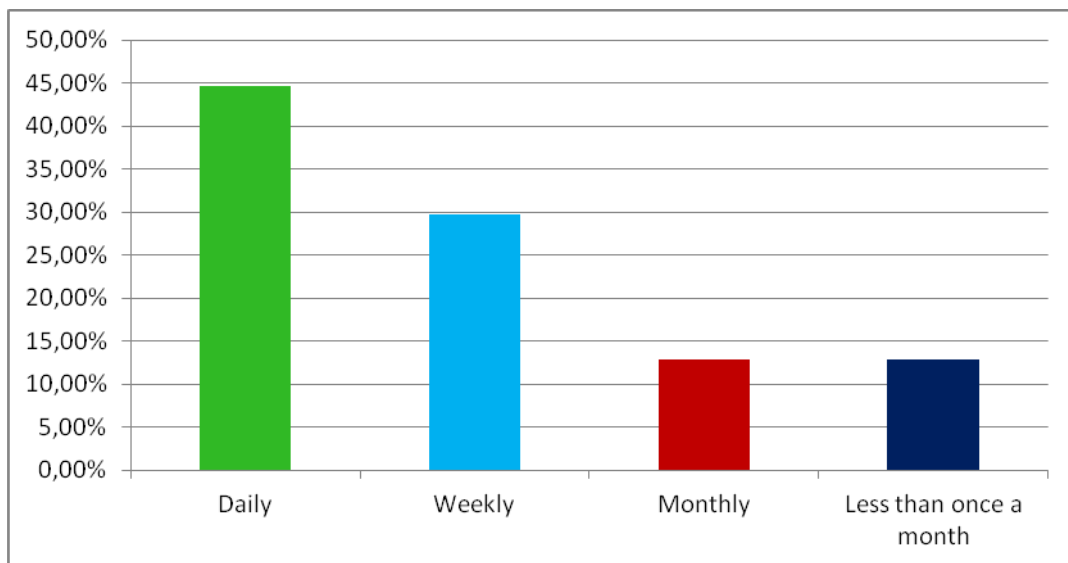
Age	18-30 years	31-43 years	44-56 years	57-70 years
Number	51	54	52	47
(%)	25,00	26,47	25,49	23,04

Source: *Author's own research*

4. Results

Following the analysis, most subjects are satisfied with the products and diversity of the dairy supply compared to other food markets.

Dairy products are part of the basic commodity food for people's nutrition that enjoys high demand and is frequently bought. Most respondents often buy these products. Thus, among the respondents, 44.7% buy dairy products daily, 29.8% buy weekly dairy products, 12.8% buy dairy products monthly, and 12.8% buy dairy products less frequently (Figure 1).

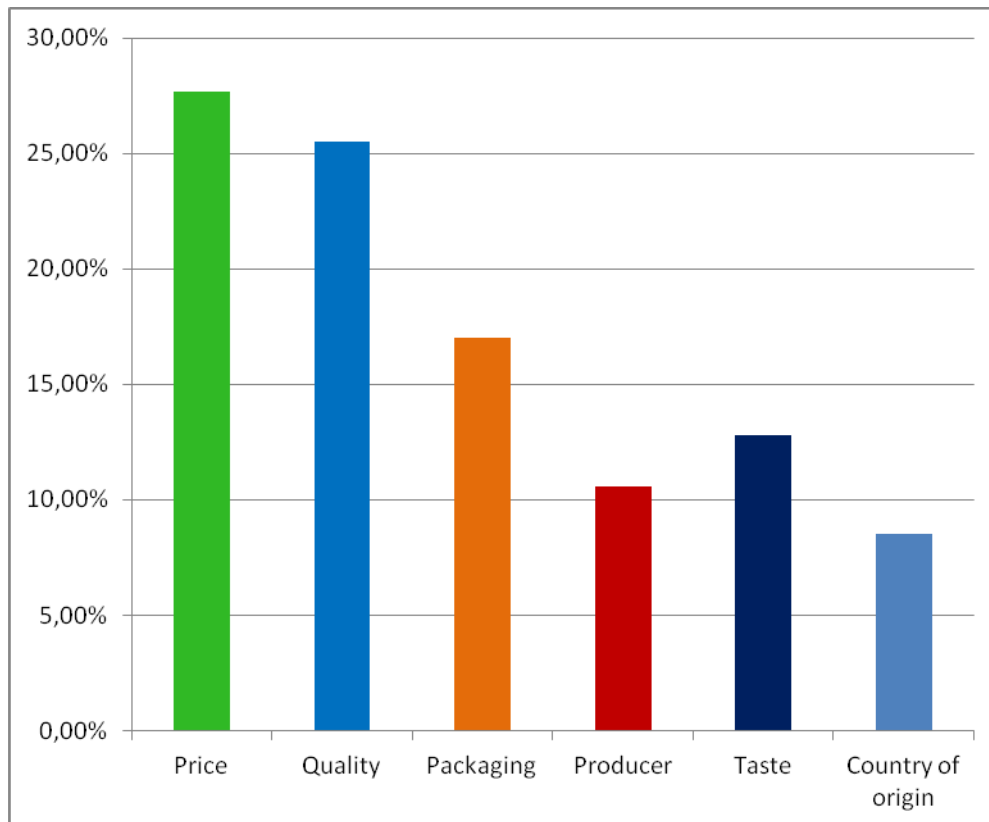


Source: *Author's own research*

Fig. 1. *Dairy products consumption*

As shown in Figure 2, the factors that influence the largest share of the people of Brasov when choosing the dairy brand is the price, this variant being chosen by 27.7% of the respondents, and the following factors are: the quality of the products 25, 5%, 17% package, 10.6% manufacturer and 12.8% taste. Respondents give the least importance

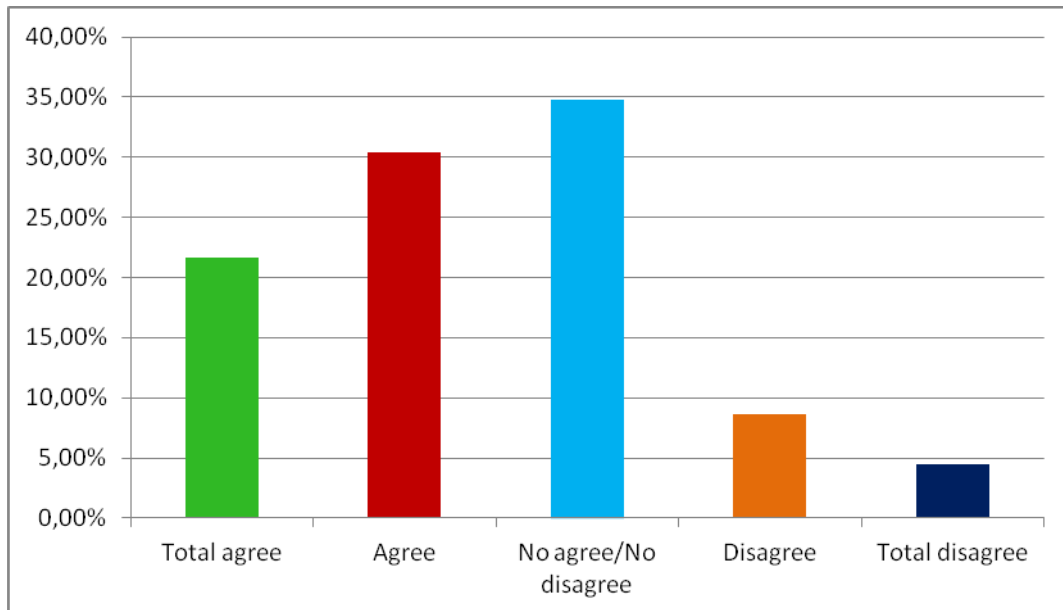
to the country of origin of the desired product, only 8.5% of them claiming they are paying attention to this aspect



Source: *Author's own research*

Fig. 2. *The factors that influence the largest share of the people of Brasov when choosing the dairy brand*

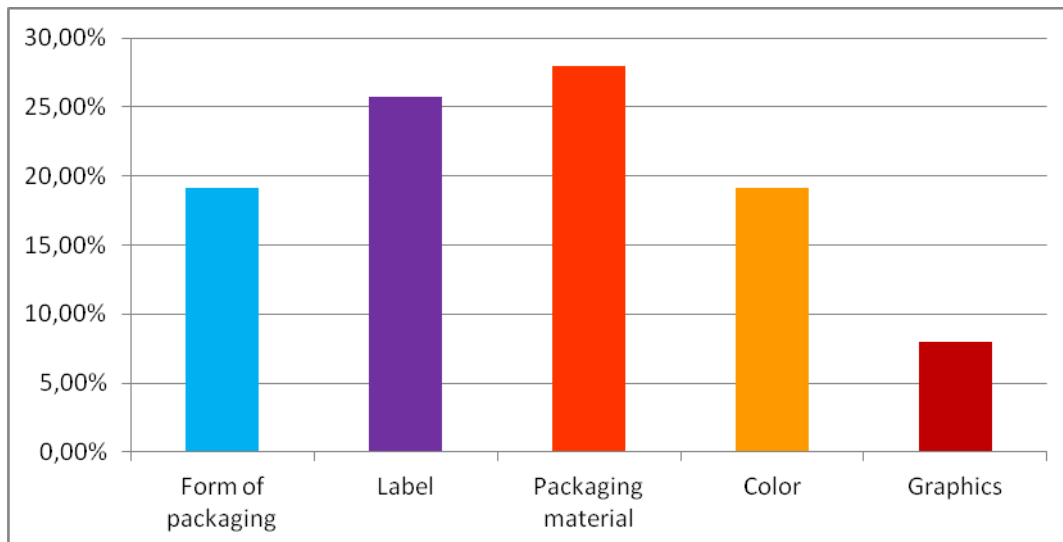
Asked to indicate to what extent they agree that packaging influences their purchasing decision, 34.8% of the respondents chose the middle option, namely "no agreement or disagreement", and 30.4% have agreed to the statement. This answer shows that subjects also take packaging into consideration when choosing the dairy products they consume (Figure 3).



Source: *Author's own research*

Fig. 3. *How packaging influences the purchasing decision*

Asked to identify what element of the packaging influences them the most when choosing dairy products the respondents answered: 19.12% packaging size, 25.49% label / packaging information, packaging material 27.94%, colour 19.12%, graphics 8.33%.



Source: *Author's own research*

Fig. 4. *What element of the packaging influences consumers the most when choosing dairy products*

A correlation was made between the age of the respondents and the aesthetics and design aspects that influence them in the decision to buy dairy products. Young respondents aged 18 to 30 are mainly interested in graphics and the type of packaging material, while older respondents aged over 44 are mainly interested in the form of packaging and its label.

Table 2

The correlation between the age of the consumers and the aesthetic elements of the packaging

	18-30 years	31-43 years	44-56 years	57-70 years
Form of packaging	5	12	10	12
Label	12	13	13	14
Packaging material	19	12	17	9
Colour	8	14	7	10
Graphics	7	3	5	2
(%)	25,00	26,47	25,49	23,04

Source: *Author's own research*

5. Conclusions

At present, design and aesthetics play an important role in choosing products, including food.

In the design of dairy packaging, attractive colours (green, blue) are used to present the product in a natural way; a suggestive graphic that presents the dairy product in an appealing and triggering immediate effect so that the product is desired by the buyer.

Research has found that the decision to buy a particular dairy product is based on the following criteria: price, product quality, packaging, producer, taste, and the country of origin of the product.

As regards the marketing practices used by producers and traders to attract as many buyers as possible, the research revealed that subjects are hard to resist (?) and remain unaffected by these strategies and techniques.

To be successful on the market, enterprises concentrate their efforts more and more on understanding the implicit and explicit requirements of customers in order to continuously increase the satisfaction of their needs and expectations, taking into account both current customers and prospects (Bălășescu, 2017).

In the case of dairy products, aesthetics and design elements are used with maximum efficiency on this market because through a colourful packaging, a special shape and a well-developed graphic, it influences consumers to choose different brands. In addition to the taste of the product and the function of satisfying a particular need, its aspect is taken into account and carefully studied by both producers and traders as well as consumers.

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