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The Role of Packaging Aesthetics in Presentation and Acceptability of Selected Imported and Nigerian made Herbal Products in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract: Packaging aesthetics encapsulate basic packaging features in terms of colour, material, graphics, shape and design that considerably influence the presentation and acceptability of herbal products (HP). Therefore, it is a form of communication and stimulus in influencing consumers' purchase behaviour. More importantly, packaging aesthetics require advanced technology, visual professionalism and quality materials to promote good packaging. The study discovers that the materials used and technology applied in the packaging of imported herbal products had more intricate and sophisticated finishing; making for user convenience and comparatively, better aesthetics than the local ones. Good packaging aesthetics also caused price disparity between imported and local herbal products, as the imported ones were more expensive, yet they reportedly enjoyed greater acceptability, leading to higher patronage. The study uses ethnographic methods and Bradley Carter's Classical Theory of Packaging to explain the roles of aesthetics in the presentation and acceptability of selected imported and Nigerian made herbal products in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Keywords: Packaging aesthetics; presentation; acceptability; Imported herbal products; Nigerian made herbal products; Lagos State

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1. Introduction

Packaging serves as the initial medium of communication between a product and its intended audience. Thus, it is a powerful tool for marketing, building trusting connections with customers. Packaging aesthetics is a vital tool in this regard, and according to Pathak (2014, p. 61), it is the different parts chosen and integrated into a holistic design to generate a specific sensory experience, for the purpose of achieving effective communication among end-users.

In essence, packaging serves multiple roles beyond mere product containment. It acts as a silent salesperson, a brand ambassador, and a reflection of corporate values (Ford et al., 2012, pp. 340-341). The aesthetic design and execution of packaging can significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions, while also addressing practical concerns such as product protection and environmental sustainability. As such, effective packaging requires a careful balance of aesthetic appeal, functional design, and responsible production practices to meet the diverse demands of modern consumers and businesses alike.

The impact of packaging aesthetics on consumer behaviour and purchasing decisions is multifaceted and profound. The materials used in packaging, along with its design elements such as colour, shape, and imagery, play a crucial role in influencing consumers' choices. These elements, combined with strategic packaging approaches used in product promotion, can significantly sway consumer decisions at the point of purchase (Ford et al., 2012, pp. 339-341; Magnier & Schoormans, 2015, p. 54). Some packaging designs incorporate mythical themes to create narrative literary texts that transcend basic labelling requirements. This approach allows brands to convey specific messages and create emotional connections with consumers (Chen & Lobo, 2012, p. 296).

The quality of a product is often reflected in its packaging aesthetic design. Consumers tend to make judgments about product quality based on the appearance and feel of the packaging. High-quality, well-designed packaging can suggest a premium product, while poor or generic packaging might imply lower quality. This perception of quality, conveyed through packaging, can significantly influence consumer behaviour and willingness to purchase. Efficient packaging aesthetic design also promotes product familiarity which is another crucial element in the product-consumer interaction that can be enhanced through packaging. Familiar packaging designs can create a sense of trust and reliability, making consumers more likely to choose a product they recognise. On the other hand, innovative packaging

can attract attention and curiosity, potentially leading to new product trials (Jimenez-Guerrero et. al., 2015, p. 81).

The information provided on packaging, such as nutritional content or country of origin, is an important component of packaging aesthetics and also plays a vital role in purchasing decisions. In an era of increased health consciousness and ethical consumerism, clear and detailed product information can be a deciding factor for many consumers. For instance, packaging that highlights organic ingredients, sustainable sourcing, or local production can appeal to environmentally conscious consumers (Morris, 2017, p. 631).

Indeed, packaging aesthetics is a great stimulus in buyers' purchase decision and largely explains the high-quality presentation and acceptability of imported herbal products over the local ones.

2. Methodology

The ethnographic design was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 HPs, based on their nature and packaging methods (five local and five imported): four powders, two gel and four liquids. Key informant interviews were conducted with 10 founders/managers of the herbal product companies. In-depth interviews were conducted with 20 purposively selected factory workers adept in packaging and 57 end-users by convenient sampling. Ten focus group discussions were held with workers of HP companies, and participant observation was done.

Table 1. Sample Composition

Ten (10) Herbal Medicine Products	Place of Interview	Herbal medicine producers/ Managers	Package Designers	End Users	Total
Jobelyn	Health Forever Product Limited, Allen Avenue, Lagos.	1	2	6	8
Maltreat tea	Pax Herbal Limited, Ikeja, Lagos.	1	3	6	11
Oroki	Nured Industrial and Commercial Company,	1	3	6	12

	Agbado-Ijaye, Lagos.				
Yoyo Bitters	Abllat Company Limited, Ikotun-Ijegun, Lagos.	1	3	6	9
Dashaka	Dashaka Green Village, Ogba Lagos	1	2	6	8
Biogenic tea	Zhejiang Chengmao Holding Group, Okokomaiko Lagos.	1	2	5	9
Lecithin	Baihe Global Nigeria Limited, Ikeja Lagos	1	1	6	8
Organo Gourmet	Lomo Resources Limited, Ikeja Lagos	1	1	5	8
Cat Claws	Nature Answers, Lekki Epe, Lagos	1	2	6	8
Aloe vera gel	Forever Living Products, Ikeja Lagos.	1	1	5	6
		10	20	57	87

Source: Field work, 2025

While relevant academic literature such as Journal articles, books and dissertations relating to packaging aesthetics and its application in the presentation and acceptability of herbal products were reviewed. Both the primary and secondary data were content-analysed using interpretive and descriptive method.

3. Theoretical Framework

Bradley Carter's 1991 theory has made a substantial contribution to the study of consumer behaviour analysis. The basic tenet of Bradley Carter's classical theory of packaging is that packaging is the main and most important factor influencing customer behaviour when it comes to consumer goods purchases. To put it another way, packaging is the key element that most successfully prompts customers to view, evaluate, select, and eventually purchase a consumer good. The actor, stimulus, and

subject are the three main components that the theoretical framework outlines as being essential to the interaction between consumer behaviour and packaging.

Interpretatively, the actor represents the buyers/users; the subject is the product (e.g. herbal products) while the stimulus is the packaging aesthetics. Thus, the stimulus encompasses a spectrum of elements encompassing aspects such as colour schemes, wrapper design, packaging material quality, brand identity, and informational content displayed on packaging. Packaging colour, for instance, refers to the amalgamation of colours employed in the design of consumer product packaging. Meanwhile, wrapper design encapsulates the visual and graphic motifs adorning consumer product packaging. Moreover, packaging material quality pertains to the texture or composition of materials utilised in crafting consumer product packaging. Brand identity denotes the official emblem of a brand serving as a distinguishing marker for consumers, while packaging information entails the quantity of product-specific details and other essential data showcased on consumer product packaging.

This theory posits that the role of packaging aesthetics in the presentation and acceptability of herbal products in the urban area of Lagos is of significant importance. In accordance with this perspective, the packaging of herbal products stands out as a crucial factor that plays a pivotal role in attracting the attention of consumers, facilitating their evaluation process, aiding in their selection process, and ultimately leading to the purchase of these products. The perspective asserts that the link between packaging and consumer preference for herbal products encompasses three key components, specifically: the consumer (as the active participant), packaging aesthetics (as the influential factor), and herbal products (as the focal point). As per the perspective, individuals who utilise herbal products (as the active participants) are swayed towards acquiring and using these products (as the focal point) due to the impact of packaging (as the influential factor). Packaging, being the influential factor, has a greater effect on end-users, who are the active participants, when the packaging has a recognisable brand name, visually appealing graphic designs, high-quality packaging materials, and comprehensive information about the product.

4. Literature Review

Packaging features encompass both visual and informational attributes that define a product's presentation. These features, as described by Overduin (2016, p. 1) and Celikoz, Erisen and Sahin (2016, p. 33), can be categorised into aesthetic and

informational elements. Aesthetic features comprise non-verbal, visual aspects such as colour, size, shape, graphic design, smell, and imagery. Informational attributes, on the other hand, include verbal elements like product origin, usage instructions, and other crucial details that enhance consumer understanding of the product (Annan, 2018, p. 21; Wilhoit, 2010, p. 2; Rettie & Brewer, 2000, pp. 57-58).

Bloch et al. (2003, p. 551) outline four key components of visual product aesthetics: (1) Value derived from product appearance; (2) Ability to recognise, classify, and evaluate product design; (3) Degree of response to visual design forms; and (4) Influence of visual aesthetics on product choice and purchase satisfaction. However, Bloch (1995, p. 16) notes that aesthetical factors in product design can be complex, as they play a crucial role in product perception, adding value and attracting customers. Conversely, substandard aesthetic features can diminish product value through lower prices and reduced customer attraction. In essence, the power of packaging in influencing purchase decisions largely stems from its aesthetic and typographic features, highlighting the importance of thoughtful design in product marketing and consumer engagement.

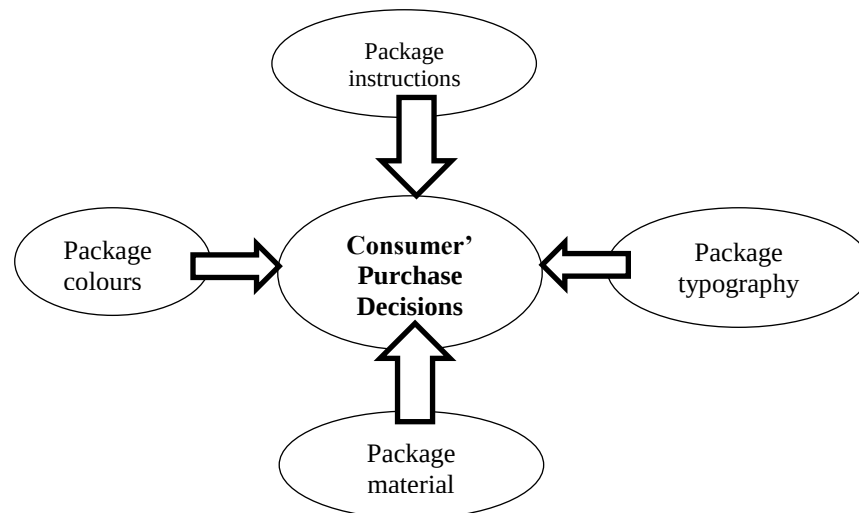


Figure 1. Aesthetics Package design elements that affect consumers' purchase decisions

Source: Mutsikiwa, M. and Marumba, J. (2013). *The impacts of aesthetics package design elements on consumer purchase decisions: A case of locally produced dairy products in Southern Zimbabwe.* IOSR Journal of Business and Management.

Agariya et al. (2012, pp. 5-6) view packaging as a collection of various elements that connect different messages to consumers. It often serves as the final impression consumers have of a product before making a purchase decision. The significance of packaging is further emphasised by the fact that approximately 50% of all purchases are unplanned, highlighting the crucial role of effective product presentation on shelves (Nancarrow, Wright & Brace, 1998, 110). Package design offers multiple advantages beyond merely representing brand values, differentiating the product from competitors, and protecting it during distribution (Nawaz et al., 2012, p. 2).

This multifaceted role of packaging underscores its importance in the marketing mix, serving not only as a protective container but also as a powerful communication tool that can significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions. The ability of packaging to attract attention, convey information, and shape expectations makes it a critical element in product marketing strategies, particularly in competitive retail environments where split-second decisions can determine a product's success.

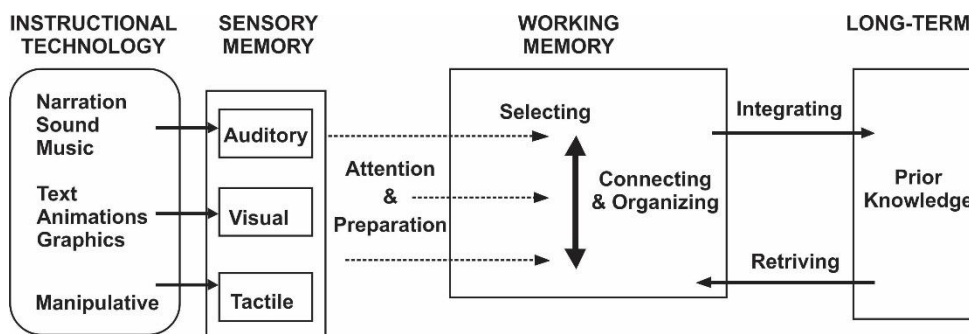


Figure 2. Cognitive Effects of Packaging Aesthetics

Source: Ford, Z. (2019). *User experience evaluation research of mobile dictionaries. Thesis for: Masters. Doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.34555.87847.*

Waheed, Khan and Ahmad (2018, p. 98) define consumer purchase intention as the likelihood of buying a product in the future, typically after evaluation. Several factors influence this intention, including brand image, packaging, and peer experiences. Understanding purchase intentions helps marketers forecast consumer behaviour and develop appropriate strategies. Visual elements of packaging play a crucial role in enhancing consumer purchase intentions, which directly influence actual behaviour (Morwitz, 2014, pp. 182-190). These visual stimuli include:

1. Graphics/Image: These represent concrete data and elicit sensory information processing (Underwood & Klein, 2002, pp. 59-61). Figl *et al.* (2010, p. 360) explain

that designers use visual symbols to express abstract aspirations and stimulate associations, attention, and interest. Effective placement of pictorial and verbal elements on packaging can influence consumer memory and perception (Rettie & Brewer, 2000, p. 56; Westerman et al., 2013, p. 148).

2. Colour: Packaging colour helps consumers differentiate brands and can influence perceptions of quality and price (Aydin & Ozer, 2005, p. 912; Becker *et al.*, 2011, p. 17). Different colours have various cultural associations and meanings, which can affect consumer preferences and purchase intentions (Aslam, 2006, p. 16; Kauppinen-Raisanen & Luomala, 2010, p. 294).

3. Shape: Package shape can convey different feelings and perceptions of volume (Figl et al., 2010, 363; Raghubir & Krishna, 1999, pp. 313-314). Consumers tend to categorise packages into four shape types: cylinders, kegs, bottles, and spatulates, each with distinct effects on perceived volume (Garber, Hyatt & Boya, 2009, p. 215).

4. Material: Packaging material reflects product quality and image, influencing consumer buying behaviour (Underwood, Klein & Burke, 2001, p. 403; Holt, Quelch & Taylor, 2004, pp. 70-71). Customers frequently use the packaging material's perceived quality to determine the quality of a product.

5. Font Style (Typography): Font style is crucial for effective communication and product visibility (Mutsikiwa & Marumbwa, 2013, p. 67). It can significantly influence consumer purchase intentions, sometimes even more than colour or shape (Nayyar, 2012, p. 14). Appropriate font styles can enhance product visibility and help consumers decode intended messages (Akpoyomare, Adeosun & Ganiyu, 2012, p. 197).

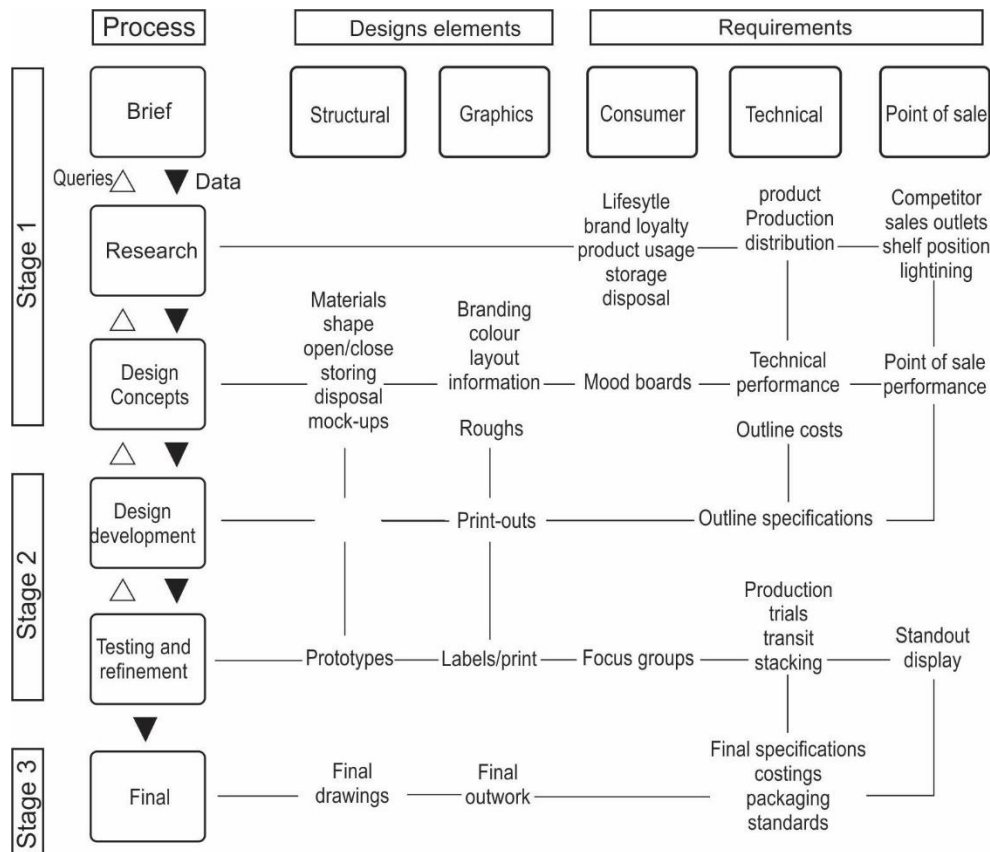


Figure 3. Aesthetics Process, Design Elements and Requirements for Quality Packaging

Source: Steenis, N. D. et al., (2017). "Consumer response to packaging design: The role of packaging materials and graphics in sustainability perceptions and product evaluations". *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 162, pp. 286-298.

5. Findings

Study Area

Lagos metropolis, which is the selected area of this study, is situated in the south-western area of Nigeria. According to the UN World Population Review (2025), out of the top ten populous cities listed (Lagos, Onitsha, Kano, Owerri, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, Benin city, Warri and Uyo), Lagos is the most populous city in the country with estimated population of 12,791,699. The city has plethora of industries which have impacted on employment opportunities and created

consciousness of traditional medicine. Yet despite the prospects of this city, the aspect of packaging aesthetics of herbal medicine products is still far behind compared to the foremost leading herbal medicine industry countries in the world, namely, China, India, Japan, USA to mention a few. However, the problem inherently lies in the failure of African traditional practitioners to realise that no medicine, either Western or traditional can be widely acceptable and circulated without good packaging aesthetic features. Since packaging essence is embedded in the simplicity of its communicative features which make administration of herbal products easier, presentable and courteous.

The table below signifies selected imported and Nigerian made herbal products and their companies/distributors' names. Respondents were selected from these companies, majorly located in six areas of Lagos State, namely: Ikeja, Lekki-Epe, Okokomaiko, Ogba, Agbado Ijaye and Ikotun-Ijegan. Also, these areas have the highest concentration of modernised traditional health facilities and herbal marketing companies and representative.

Table 2. Profiling of all the Selected Herbal Products

Lists of the Herbal Products (Latin names of the components)	Companies/Distributors ' Names	Main Indications
Selected Locally Produced Herbal Products		
Jobelyn® (<i>Sorghum bicolor</i> Moench leaves, <i>parquetina nigrescences</i> , <i>Harungana Madagascariensis</i> , <i>Anacardium occidentale</i> , <i>Waltheria indica</i>)	Health Forever Product Limited. 11, Dipeolu Street, Allen Avenue Lagos.	Treatment and prevention of stroke, increases CD4 count in HIV infected patients, boosts blood cells, improves the general well-being of a patient, and for treating arthritis.
Yoyo Cleanser Bitters® (<i>Aloe vera</i> , <i>Achinus avensis</i> , <i>Chenopodium murale</i> , <i>Citrus</i> <i>aurantifolia</i> , <i>Cinamomum</i> <i>aromaticum</i>)	Abllat Company Limited. 12, Ajayi Close, Ikotun- Ijegan, Lagos.	Improves digestion, boosts immune system, and prevents chronic fatigue.
Oroki Herbal Mixture® Stem bark of African mahogany (<i>Khaya ivorensis</i> A Chev.) tree, stem (<i>Seccharum officinarum</i>), pattern wood (<i>Alstonia</i> <i>congensis</i> Engl), root (<i>Securidaca long pedunculate</i>), leaves of mango (<i>Mangifera</i>	Nured Industrial and Commercial Company. 4, Ifelodun Street, Off Ojokoro Road, Agbado Ijaye Lagos.	It is traditionally used for pile, dysentery, constipation, fibroid, diarrhea, bloody stool, abdominal and waist pain during menstruation, haemorrhoid and erectile dysfunction in men.

<i>indica L.</i>), Leaves (<i>Ocimum basillicum</i>), Sorghum (<i>Sorghum bicolour Moench</i>)		
Dashaka Green Soap® A therapeutic herbal soap made from natural herbs and finest of waters.	Dashaka Green Village for Healings. Marketed in Lagos by BGA Communications 27, Thomas Salako Street, Ogba, Lagos.	It rejuvenates the body
Maltreat® A poly-herbal drug which consists of medicinal plants, namely: Bariyara (<i>Sida acuta</i>), Stool wood (<i>Alstonei boonei</i>), <i>Tridax procumbens</i> , <i>Phyllanthus amarus</i> , Sweet orange (<i>Citrus sinensis</i>).	Pax herbal Limited, Seidu Ajibowu Street, Olowu, Ikeja Lagos.	It is used for the management and treatment of malaria symptoms.
Selected Imported Herbal Products		
Aloe vera Gel An herbal medicine extracts from <i>Aloe vera</i>	Forever Living Products, United States of America. Lagos branch: 21 – 23, Aromire Avenue, Ikeja Lagos.	It helps to clear the blood vessels for effective flow of blood to the heart hereby reducing blood pressure. Regenerates and accelerates the production of new cells in the body while eliminating old ones. It contains polysaccharides which are long chained sugar that give a robust support to the immune system. Detoxifies the body from toxic substances that get into the body. It increases the body's energy level by promoting good metabolism. Aloe Vera gel contains a wide range of vitamins such as vitamins A, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B12. These supplements are needed for staying healthy.

		<p>A good remedy for acute inflammation due to its strong anti-inflammatory and antimicrobial properties.</p> <p>Aids digestion as a result of its laxative ability. It increases intestinal water content and facilitates the evacuation of the bowels.</p>
<p>Biogenic Chinese Tea</p> <p>A brand of unadulterated tea leaves (<i>Camellia Sinensis</i>).</p>	<p>Zhejiang Chengmao Holding Group Col. 5, Front Road, Meizha Town Xinchangzhejiang, China, and Marketed in Nigeria by Edig Pharmacy. 77, Akuberu Street, Kenbem, Okokomaiko Lagos.</p>	<p>It controls body weight, diabetes, arthritis, cold and flu, heart attack, stroke, cancer, aging, allergic reactions and mouth odour. It also boost metabolism and keep the body healthy.</p>
<p>Lecithin-Softgels, Soya Lecithin</p> <p>A mixture of fats that are essential to cells in the human body.</p>	<p>Baihe Global Nigeria Limited. Plot 5, Agboku Street, Opebi, Ikeja Lagos.</p>	<p>It serves as the main source of choline, a nutrient similar to the B vitamins. Lecithin is converted into acetylcholine, a substance that transmits nerve impulses.</p> <p>It is used for Alzheimer disease and dementia, Parkinson disease, and many other conditions.</p>
<p>Organo Gold (Café Latte)TM</p> <p>A herbal coffee blend with steamed milk and benefits of ginseng, Ganoderma, and <i>eurycoma longifolia</i></p>	<p>Made in Canada, marketed in Nigeria by Lomo Resources Limited. 31/37, Toyin Street, Ikeja, Lagos.</p>	<p>It is used for energising.</p>
<p>Cat's Claw</p> <p>Bark of the <i>Uncaria tomentosa</i></p>	<p>Nature Answers, USA. Marketed in Nigeria. KM 19, Lekki Conservation Centre, Lekki – Epe Road, Lagos</p>	<p>It is used for anti-inflammatory and immune modulating effects in the treatment of fever, fatigue, muscle and joint aches and the symptoms of chronic inflammatory conditions.</p>

Source: Field work, 2025

Aesthetic Differences in Selected Imported and Nigerian Made Herbal Products

For the purpose of objectivity, the researcher via a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) display the locally produced herbal products on one side and imported herbal products on the other side for the participants to assess them thoroughly (see appendix 1). Many of the participants (including producers/managers, package designers and end-users) affirms that the foreign produced herbal products are more attractive, more user friendly, well-labelled, well-sealed, and have distinctive packaging aesthetic features compared to the locally produced ones. Their comments were as follows:

- “To be honest, most foreign packaged herbal products are very good”
- “The increasing success of foreign herbal products are in the mode of presentation and acceptability than the locally produced herbal products can be adduced to full government backing and financial support”
- “Most herbal products producers in Nigeria and other African countries lack government support and backing”
- “creativity matters a lot, package designers of locally produced herbal products must be more dynamic in their ideas”
- “When you compare foreign and locally packaged herbal medicine products, my brother you will opt for the foreign ones”
- “Foreign packaging are often very unique”
“Foreign packaging are captivating, seductive, attractive and has well-finished packaging” because the materials used and technology applied in the packaging of imported herbal products had more intricate and sophisticated finishing; making for user convenience and comparatively better aesthetics than the local ones.
- “Indeed, Foreign packaging is tempting”

The reason for the wide acceptability of the packaging mode of presentation of foreign made herbal products has been further pinpointed by manager of Pax Herbal Limited, Makers of Malatreat Tea that was engaged in an FGD with his workers by the researcher thus:

The major problem we (local producers) have is capital, they (foreign producers) invest so much and besides they sell it across the world. Not

that local producer cannot do such standardised packaging but how much are they going to sell it?

The above view brings us to the issue of wide price differences between locally produced herbal products and foreign produced herbal products. The reason which has been adduced to the distinctiveness of package design of the foreign herbal products compared to the locally produced ones.

Table 3. Price Differentiations of Selected Local and Foreign Herbal Medicine Products

Local Herbal Medicine Products	Price (₦)	Foreign Herbal Medicine Product	Price (₦)
Jobelyn	1,200	Biogenic tea	6,500
Maltreat tea	1,000	Lecithin	10,000
Oroki	1,000	Organo Gourmet	15,000
Yoyo Bitters	1,500	Cat's Claw	14,000
Dashaka	1,000	Aloe vera gel	24,000

Source: Authors' Fieldwork, 2025

One of the respondents interviewed even affirmed that generally local herbal producers are still learning about packaging. As indicated in his words:

Although they (local producers) have knowledge, they are not adequately empowered enough in terms of capital to have a package that can measure up with the international packaging standards. There is need for government to step down on the regulations for local herbal product producers so they can meet up.

Based on the above assertion which majority of the end-users respondents as well considerably acknowledged, the researcher raised a pertinent question with regard to, "How can our local herbal products be improved to meet up with foreign produced herbal products?" This as well generated lots of reactions and comments which can be enumerated as follows:

- "Information should be adequately provided on the packaged herbal products especially caution message"
- "Scientific name of the medicinal herbs used must be clearly indicated"
- "herbal medicine producers and designers need adequate trainings and orientations on packaging designs that can meet up with their foreign substitute products"

- “There is need for capital empowerment”
- “Herbal producers must follow the standard measures of the regulatory bodies for instance; the packaging should be well-sealed, well-labelled, while the expiring date should be well-indicated”.

The Roles of Aesthetic in Presentation and Acceptability of Herbal Products

With regard to the role of aesthetic in the presentation and acceptability of herbal products, the researcher gathered facts from holistic perspectives. Thus, all the fifty-seven (57) end-users/buyers, (20) package designers (10) producers/managers of the ten (10) selected herbal products were engaged in in-depth interviews; while FGD was conducted among the workers.

The ten (10) selected herbal products were displayed for participants to see, observe and evaluate while issues were raised with regard to how graphics/image, colour, shape, and product information influence the presentation and acceptability of the ten (10) selected herbal products. The findings were therefore sectionalised under four major headings as follows:

Producers Perspective

Most of the producers interviewed affirmed the importance of all packaging aesthetic visual elements that is, graphics/image, colour, shape, material and font style (typography) in the presentation and acceptability of herbal products. On the other hand, some sees their package designers, quality control managers, and production and marketing managers to be in the best position to answer the question with regard to ‘the role of aesthetics in the presentation and acceptability of herbal products’.

However, the researcher was made to know that there is clear difference between packaging aesthetics and users’ intention for buying any products in the market. According to a respondent, “A package can be attractive (graphics/image) but might not meet the taste of the buyers in terms of colour, shape, experience or recommendations”. The stance of this respondent further clarifies the fact that consumers’ intention for buying can be considerably influenced by their different thinking styles either by intuition or reasoning. Indeed, this fact cannot be undervalued when analysing factors influencing the presentation and acceptability of herbal products.

Thus, the producers’ respondents were able to assert that aside from visual aesthetics elements like graphics/images, colour, shape, material, and font style; other cognitive factors via product labelling or information, peers experiences,

referrals/recommendations and advertorials also constitute potential stimulus influencing buyers/end-users in accepting packaged herbal products.

Designers Perspective

The in-depth interview conducted with the managers of each of the ten (10) selected herbal products companies vehemently reinstate the fact that designers often capitalise on the emotional needs of the end-users of herbal products to create package design ‘message’ that will be unique, captivating, seductive and tempting for buyers to easily pick at the point of buying herbal products. This has always been their guiding principle in employing all the visual elements of packaging (namely, graphics/image, colour, shape/size, font styles and materials) in products’ packaged design.

Nevertheless, the greater part of the participants picked colour, followed by graphics, product information and lastly shape. As a consequence, the combination of colour and graphics was a dominant choice among the participant. They go on to explain their reasoning: a lot of participants selected colour as their first option, believing that because end users' and buyers' attention spans are short, it is important to capture their attention with colour, as this component directly communicates to each buyer's preference; people are also highly receptive to colour, as it is one of the most instantaneously emotive elements that our visual senses can respond to; the ability to capture people's attention quickly was also a reason why a lot of respondents selected graphics as one of the primary components for emotional influence; one participant added that colour is the most effective element for impacting emotions because people can readily associate it with it. Hence, colour and graphics were the two crucial visual elements identified by the designers as being very effective for influencing emotions of buyers or end-users.

It is on the foregoing perception that some of the participants stated that it is crucial for one or two specific visual elements to stand out the most by being the focus of the package because each end-user group is different. In the manner that certain end users react better to unique materials, while others react better to colour, and so on. According to a response, designers will thus determine which visual components would cleverly draw in and appeal to these end consumers after a target demographic has been established.

Marketers Perspective

All the participants within this specified cohort unanimously confirmed the notion that the utilisation of every single visual component is not a prerequisite in order to

craft a message that resonates with the emotions of potential buyers. Furthermore, a subset of the marketing professionals also supplemented this viewpoint by asserting that the internal aspects of the packaging hold equal significance in conveying a message, akin to the external facets; for instance, the quality of the wrapping materials aids purchasers in recollecting the product. An individual respondent articulated that the realm of commerce is fiercely competitive on a global scale, and any slight advantageous position that can be secured over rivals will assist customers in recalling and distinguishing the merchandise from the plethora of alternatives available, thereby underscoring the necessity to incorporate all visual elements. It is essential for marketers to consistently explore novel strategies for packaging to command attention and to integrate colours, forms, and other components that are not only innovative but also visually appealing to the end-users.

A substantial proportion, specifically forty percent, of the survey participants highlighted that colour emerges as the preeminent visual element in influencing the emotions of potential buyers. The rationale behind this assertion is anchored in the belief that colours are intricately linked to our primal instincts, aiding in instantaneous recognition of the product brand and serving as attention magnets. A respondent expounded on the pivotal role played by colour psychology, asserting its profound impact on consumer behavior in subconscious ways. Despite the majority of respondents pinpointing colour as the most potent influencer, an individual respondent abstained from singling out one element, contending that the amalgamation of all elements is crucial since it is the holistic package that remains ingrained in people's memories.

Moreover, a significant portion of the participants contended that every visual component of a package should synergistically collaborate to effectively convey the overarching message of a product. An individual respondent expounded on the perpetual nature of the creative process involved in intertwining these visual elements. As per another respondent's perspective, this perpetual endeavor is imperative as marketers strive to instill a sense of gratification and belonging in consumers, aiming to craft an enduring impression in the consumer's psyche. It is underscored that the packaging transcends mere product presentation, instead serving as a conduit for marketing a lifestyle that resonates with the target demographic.

Citing the viewpoint of a respondent, it is posited that all elements become interconnected once a marketer adeptly fulfills their role by attentively heeding the preferences of end-users. This observation aligns with a common thread woven

through the responses, which pertains to the significance of product information. The data conveyed on a product's packaging must be articulated with utmost clarity, and the judicious amalgamation of graphics, colours, and other visual elements collectively contribute to the creation of a memorable package.

While the majority of marketers delved into the procedural aspects that visual elements must adhere to in order to bolster the acceptability of products, two respondents accentuated the significance of the design process. According to one respondent's perspective, the decision to integrate all elements or selectively incorporate a few hinges on meticulous consideration of shape and size, attributing importance to spatial management within retail settings and liaising the need to align with the product's essence.

Table 4. Summary of Respondents' Packaging Aesthetic Findings Result

<i>Aesthetic Features</i>	End-Users	Producers	Designers	Marketers
<i>Graphics</i>	30.0%	30.8%	36.0%	30.7%
<i>Colour</i>	40.0%	32.0%	44.0%	40.0%
<i>Product Information</i>	24.8%	22.2%	12.6%	20.5%
<i>Shape</i>	5.2%	15.0%	7.4%	8.8%

Source: Author's fieldwork, 2025

When it comes to constructing a package that appeals to the emotions of purchasers, the majority of respondents (marketers, manufacturers, and end users) unequivocally confirmed that all five visual aspects are essential. The aforementioned studies have also brought attention to the linguistic element in product information. However, colour appears to be one of the most potent visual components that may swiftly alter people's moods. In a similar vein, Grundey (2010, p. 91) contends that colour may have a significant impact on packaging by conveying and indicating certain advertising messages that may ultimately cause customers to experience either happy or negative feelings. Pride and Farrell (2010, p. 200) go on to suggest the following variety implications for various packaging colour types:

- **blue colour** is soothing; it is also associated with wealth, trust and security;
- **grey colour** is associated with strength, exclusivity and success;
- **orange colour** often signifies low coast;
- **red colour** connotes excitement and stimulation;

- **purple colour** is associated with dignity and stateliness;
- **yellow colour** indicates cheerfulness and joy;
- **black colour** associated with strength and masterfulness.

Three purposes of packing colours have been recognised by Kauppinen-Raisanen and Luomala (2010, pp. 288-290): communication, attention, and aesthetic experience. This is evident from the respondents' responses, which stressed colour's capacity to visually create illusions that give the impression that the box is made of different materials or sizes in addition to its ability to convey through symbolic meaning. Thus, we discover that colour plays a crucial role in packaging design since it immediately imbues a product with values, culture, and a potent emotional impression. A product's success can be greatly impacted by its packaging, particularly by choosing the “right” or “wrong” hue to convey the spirit of the product.

6. Summary of Research Findings

Specific findings gathered through FGDs conducted with end-users, producers, designers and marketers also signify their diverse opinions and perspectives especially with regards to packaging aesthetics and acceptability of the 10 selected herbal products in Lagos State. For instance, the end-users maintained that herbal products are expected to portray the empirical reality of their naturalness through the colours in their packaged designs. End-users also rated packaging aesthetic features (that is, graphics/image, colour, material, and font styles) and product information of the foreign produced herbal products much higher than the locally produced ones.

The producers that were engaged indicate that there is clear difference between packaging aesthetics and users' intention for buying any products in the market because consumers' intention for buying can be considerably influenced by their different thinking styles either by intuition or reasoning. Producers also argues that aside from visual aesthetics elements like graphics/images, colour, shape, material, and font style; other cognitive factors via product labelling or information, peers experiences, referrals/recommendations and advertorials also constitute potential stimulus influencing buyers/end-users in accepting packaging presentation of herbal products. The designers on the other hand make it clear that they often capitalise on the emotional needs of the end-users of herbal products to create package design ‘message’ that will be unique, captivating, seductive and tempting for buyers to

easily pick at the point of buying herbal medicine products. Designers also picked colour as dominant aesthetic feature, followed by graphics, product information and lastly shape.

7. Discussion

The key highlights enumerated below have been carefully considered through data analysis and discuss throughout the process of this study:

Evolving Nature of Herbal Product Packaging: The study highlights the critical role packaging plays in the herbal product industry. As the nature of herbal products evolves, so must their packaging methods. This implies a need for continuous innovation in packaging design to keep pace with product development and changing consumer preferences. Manufacturers and marketers of herbal products must stay attuned to these changes to remain competitive.

Market Competitiveness: The research underscores how effective packaging aesthetics has enabled herbal products to compete with foreign products. This implies that local herbal product manufacturers can potentially increase their market share and even expand internationally by investing in high-quality packaging. It suggests that packaging is not just a container but a powerful marketing tool that can level the playing field between local and foreign products.

Information Dissemination and User Safety: The study sees packaging as the first point of contact between consumers and healthcare providers, conveying crucial information about safe and appropriate use. This implies that packaging aesthetic design must prioritise clear, accurate, and easily understandable information to ensure proper product use and consumer safety.

Human-Centered Design Approach: The reference to human factors principles suggests a need for a user-centric approach in packaging design. This implies that manufacturers should conduct thorough user research and testing to ensure their packaging meet the needs and preferences of their target consumers.

Holistic and Sustainable Packaging: The mention of holistic and sustainability features in packaging implies a growing need for environmentally friendly packaging solutions. This suggests that herbal product manufacturers must consider the environmental impact of their packaging choices, potentially leading to innovations in eco-friendly materials and designs.

Quality Gap between Local and Foreign Products: The study highlights persistent gaps in quality assurance between locally produced and foreign herbal products. This implies a need for local manufacturers to invest in improving their packaging aesthetic standards to match global benchmarks, potentially leading to increased competitiveness in international markets.

Regulatory and Industry Standards: The emphasis on packaging as a key factor in product acceptability and regulatory approval implies a need for standardisation in the herbal product industry. This could lead to the development of more stringent packaging guidelines and standards specific to herbal products.

Interdisciplinary Approach: The study's focus on various aspects of packaging – from aesthetics to information design to sustainability – implies the need for an interdisciplinary approach in packaging development. This suggests that herbal product manufacturers may need to collaborate with experts from various fields such as design, materials science, and environmental studies to create optimal packaging solutions.

Conclusion

Packaging aesthetics influenced the acceptability of imported and local herbal products in Lagos State, Nigeria, in favour of the former. Therefore, producers of herbal products should make quality packaging central to their business plan, so as to enhance acceptability and good presentation of herbal products. Thus, packaging supposed to be of immense quality in terms of graphics, colour, shape, materials, font-style, and product information. Since these are essential key elements that could appeal to emotional and cognitive sense of users as well as facilitate easy use, easy understanding and good manufacturing practices of packaged products with reverberating consequences on the promotion and enhancement of end-users' interests towards products' acceptability.

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