
Abstract No. 51

PaperTitle **Child Consumers 'Perception of the of the Colour and Graphics in Cereal Box Packaging Design.**

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ABSTRACT

The main objective was focused on finding whether seven-year-old child consumers' have specific preferences regarding the colour and graphics on cereal box packaging.

According to Valkenburga (2001) children as young as five increasingly exhibit independent purchasing behaviour. This and other studies suggest that children are active shoppers, which highlight a few practical implications for retailers and manufacturers. A question raised in the South African context is how do marketers reach this emerging segment of consumers. Colour and graphics could be highlighted as authors such as McNeal and Ji (1999) reported that children seem to respond better to these elements as a result of their limited reasoning and reading abilities.

Due to the limited empirical nature of this topic within the South African context, a qualitative study was designed. The cereal box was chosen as it is often targeted at the children's segment of the consumer population (Wilson & Wood, 2004). Data collection techniques included semi-structured interviews in addition to specific projective techniques and mock-up cereal box shelves.

The findings of the study suggest very specific colour and graphic preferences. Graphics were found to be very useful in identifying existing brands of breakfast cereals. Analysis also brought to light their association of flavours with particular colours. Perhaps most significant, is their preoccupation with matching graphics to background colours of the packaging and vice versa. Noteworthy consequences of this study for the industry are that colour and graphics seem to be important elements in drawing the attention of child consumers and should therefore be taken into consideration.