
ECONOMICS

*Sociology***Dainora Grundey***Kaunas Faculty of Humanities**Vilnius University**Muitinės g. 8, LT 42280 Kaunas**Lithuania**Received: January, 2010**1st Revision: March, 2010**Accepted: April, 2010*

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FUNCTIONALITY OF PRODUCT PACKAGING: SURVEYING CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS SELECTED COSMETIC BRANDSⁱ

ABSTRACT. The paper reviews the functions of product packaging and applies the theoretical findings to the empirical research, focusing on secondary and primary data of packaging of cosmetic products. A survey was performed in Kaunas City, Lithuania, to determine the consumers' opinion on four selected cosmetic brands: two brands from Lithuania and two of foreign origin, namely a) Optima Linija and BLOK; b) The Body Shop and L'Occitane. The chosen cosmetic brands are presented as separate mini case studies with a diagnostic comparison at the end. Further on, these brands were evaluated by respondents in Kaunas City (Lithuania), concerning their packaging and characteristics of its functionality.

JEL Classification: M31, P2**Keywords:** products, brands (Optima Linija, BLOK, The Body Shop, L'Occitane), packaging, functionality, Lithuania.

Introduction

Packaging is one of the most important processes without which nowadays products would not be finished. When the competition is high, like it is today, the products of rivaling companies become very similar in their functions. More often than ever before, customers pick the product not by their characteristics but by the characteristics of their package. Regulations on national and international levels determine the ways of usage of packaging. For example, supermarkets are not allowed to sell unpacked products, which used to be sold loose, e.g. frozen vegetables, frozen fish and its sub-products, etc. Lithuanian supermarkets implemented this regulation four years ago. Other extremes go to brands such as *Colgate*, which advertised widely on TV that consumers pay up to 20% of the price of a product for packaging. Therefore, *Colgate* was promoting its plastic tubes of tooth-paste without paper box packaging, demonstrating how they care for customer needs by offering a lower price and adopting green technologies in their packaging policies.

From the *branding perspective*, packing works as a brand enhancer and identifier to attract consumers' attention on the store shelves and fulfils the function of brand positioning and competitive advantage.

The *purpose of the paper* is to evaluate the current state of art in product packaging by determining main types and functions as performed by packages and apply them to the practical mini cases of selected brands in cosmetics. In order to achieve the designated research goal, the following research tasks are formulated:

- to perform an overview of product packaging, by determining its types and functions in a structured manner;
- to select four cases of product packaging: two Lithuanian brands (*Optima Linija* and *BIOK*) and two international ones (*The Body Shop* and *L'Occitane*) in order to determine the packaging functionality in practice;
- to conduct a survey on consumers' attitudes towards package functionality of selected four brands.

Literature Overview

Packaging is the process of designing and producing the container or wrapper which stores, protects, identifies and promotes a product. It can include **three types of packaging** (Kotler, 2002): a) *primary*, b) *secondary* and c) *distribution (shipping) package*. Some authors also determine other types of packaging: d) *convenience packaging*, e) *wasteful packaging* (Copley, 2004). Another element could be identified as package type – *protective packaging* (see *Figure 1*). When talking about the protection function of the package, it is important that the package would protect the product from the environmental effects that could damage the product.

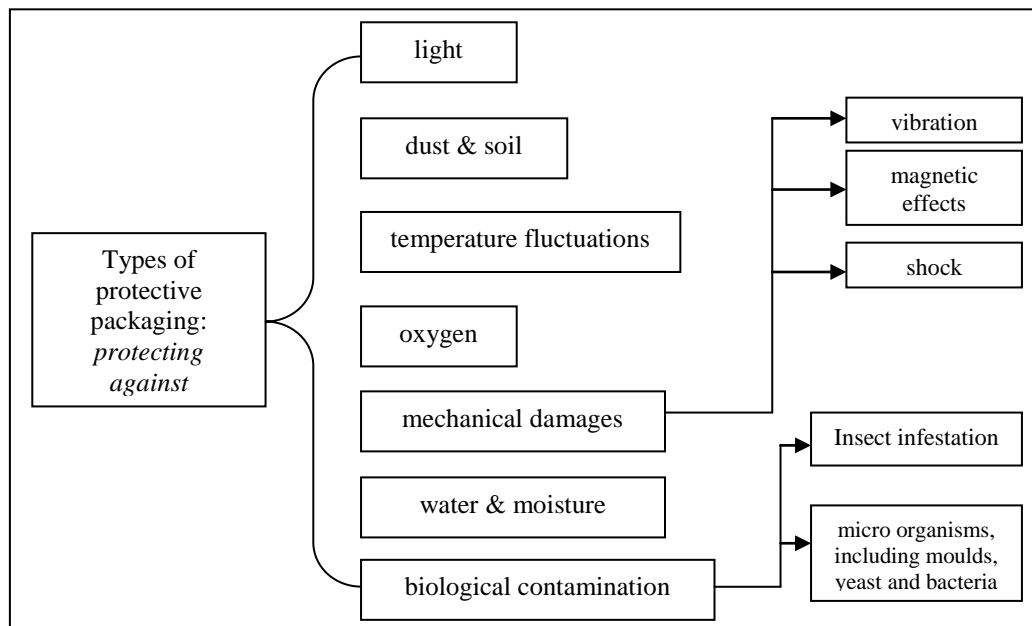


Figure 1. Types of Protective Packaging and their Constituent Elements

Source: created by the author.

The primary package is the *primary container* of the product (e.g. tube of toothpaste). *Secondary package* is that which is thrown away when the product is just to be used (e.g. cardboard box containing toothpaste tube). Distribution packages are all the packages needed to distribute the product from the manufacturer to a retailer or end user in big quantities.

Traditionally packaging functions were to store and protect the product, thus mostly only primary package was used. The package was also used to count products that could not be counted when unpacked and their package was used as a measure (e.g. bottles, boxes, bags). Increased competition made packaging an important marketing tool and so *secondary package* became important by helping to promote the product even more than only with primary package. *The primary package of products* that have no need for secondary package also became more important to maintain the competitive advantage while attracting

customers. Earlier, when the sales were lower, shipping packages were not so important, but today they also play an important role in the distribution process. Marketers have to find ways to mark *shipping packages* that it would be easy to organize the growing amounts of products being transported.

Marketers found that more and more often people choose a product not by its features but by the attractiveness and comfort of the package and packages are used to perform sales tasks like attracting attention, describing the product and selling it. The price of the package often makes up a significant part of the product price. If the package gives additional features to the customer, he will pay the higher price because of that.

When creating a new product any company must establish the packaging concept which defines how the package of the product should look like and what it should do for the product (see *Table 1*). They have to decide whether the package only protects the product or it will be used as a promotion tool. All the elements of the package (i.e. *size, shape, materials, colour, brand mark*) should work together to support the product's position and marketing strategy and must be discussed (Kotler, 2002; Kotler *et al.*, 2008). The product package is important when talking about product's advertising, pricing and distribution. "A package has to be attractive, recognizable and different" (Copley, 2004, p.197).

Packaging and package labelling have several objectives as identified by Louw and Kimber (2007, p.2-3):

- **Physical protection** – Protection of the objects enclosed in the package from shock, vibration, compression, temperature, etc.
- **Barrier protection** - A barrier from oxygen, water vapour, dust, etc.
- **Containment or agglomeration** - Small objects are typically grouped together in one package for transport and handling efficiency. Alternatively, bulk commodities (such as salt) can be divided into packages that are a more suitable size for individual households.
- **Information transmission** - Information on how to use, transport, recycle, or dispose of the package or product is often contained on the package or label.
- **Reducing theft** - Packaging that cannot be re-closed or gets physically damaged (shows signs of opening) is helpful in the prevention of theft. Packages also provide opportunities to include anti-theft devices.
- **Convenience** - features which add convenience in distribution, handling, display, sale, opening, re-closing, use, and re-use.
- **Marketing** - The packaging and labels can be used by marketers to encourage potential buyers to purchase the product".

Also the products should be packed to take as little place as possible in order to transport as compact and cost-effective as possible. The protection of the environment has become important to consumers in recent years, so much packaging is either *green, recyclable or biodegradable* (Blythe, 2005, p.153; Peattie, 2008), therefore, this packaging function is also included into the proposed functions by the author of this paper (see *Function 8* in *Table 1*).

Table 1. Selected Approaches to Product Packaging Functions

<i>Brennan et al. (1990)</i>	<i>Copley (2004, p.197)</i>	<i>Blythe (2005, p.153)</i>	<i>INCPEN (undated)</i>	<i>Author's approach</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a material-handling tool; • processing aid; • a convenience item; • a marketing tool; • a cost saving device; • protection of the product. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a tool to express brand values and images; • aesthetically pleasing; • strong visual impact; • stand out, and be eye-catching and differentiated from other brands and gain attention; • a living expression of what the brand stands for; • a value-adder; • a reminder of the brand; • provides cues; • provides an emotional link with the target. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informs customers. • Meets legal information requirements. • Sometimes aids the use of the product (e.g. ring pulls on drinks cans make it easier to open the can). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • it protects fragile goods; • it shields against damage; • it prevents leaks; • it dispenses goods; • it provides safety and hygiene; • it reduces wastage; • it conveys information; • it meets legislation; • it reduces costs; • it enables consumers to have a choice; • it reduces pilfering. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) promoting and selling a product; 2) defining product and brand identity and positioning by evoking prestige, convenience or status; 3) providing information, including various handling symbols, labeling, contents, guarantees, nutritional value, potential hazards; 4) meeting customer needs, incorporating differentiated sizes, shapes, recyclability opportunities, etc.; 5) ensuring safety and hygiene norms by adopting plastic instead of glass containers, carton instead of plastic containers, tamper-resistant packaging, blister-packs, childproof containers; 6) offering protective packaging during shipping, storage, and display. Protects food from spoilage. Helps prevent shoplifting; 7) supporting aseptic packaging, which incorporates a technology that keeps foods fresh without refrigeration for extended periods; 8) promoting environmental/ecological packaging by applying reusable, recyclable, less wasteful, biodegradable and safer for the environment versions of packaging; 9) supporting cause packaging options by promoting non-product issues such as <i>social or political causes</i>, e.g placing slogans on the packaging: "Save the children", "Feed the world", "Haiti – please give now".

Source: compiled and created by the author.

Colour can play an important role in packaging with the implication of communicating and signalling a certain promotional message, which, eventually, might evoke positive or negative emotions to consumers. As Pride and Farrell (2010, p.341) indicate:

- **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 cost;
- **red colour** connotes excitement and stimulation;
- **purple colour** is associated with dignity and stateliness;
- **yellow colour** indicates cheerfulness and joy;
- **black colour** is associated with strength and masterfulness.

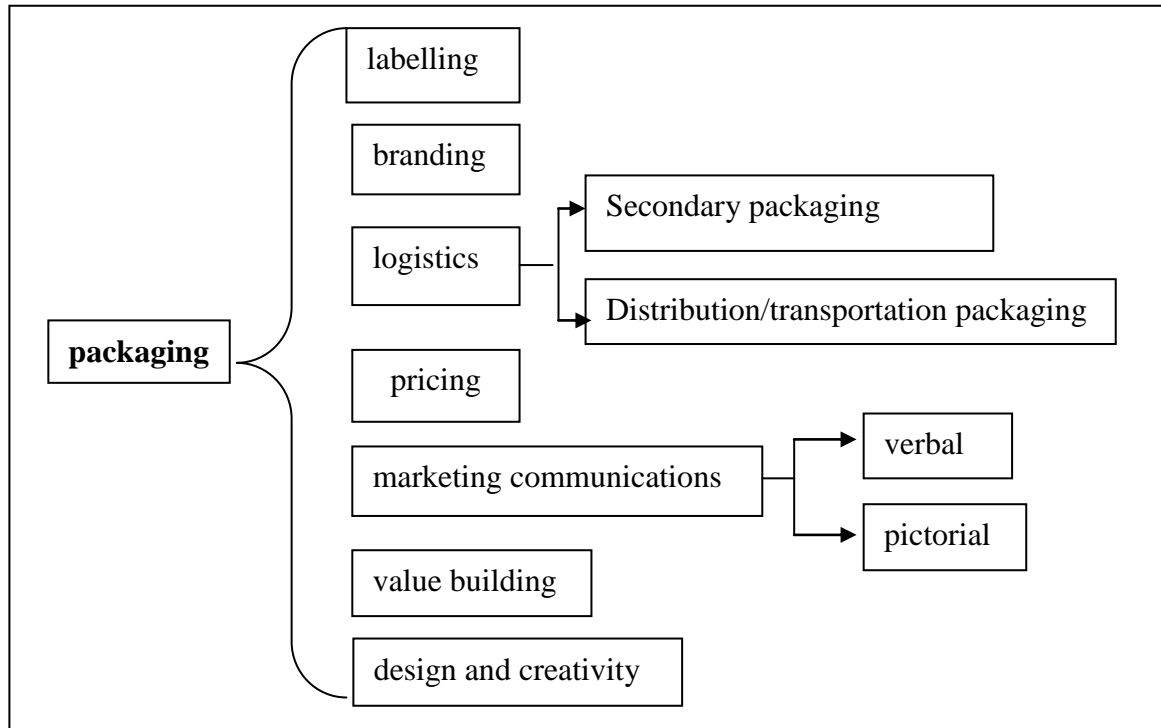


Figure 2. Impact of Packaging on Marketing Activities

Source: created by the author.

Although there are some universal perceptions in *colour associations* for certain product packaging, but in a cross-cultural setting of product promotions should take a different perspective due to cultural differences and taboos in colour usage in packaging. For example, *red colour* symbolizes prosperity and good luck in China, therefore, chocolates wrapped in red paper or chocolate box brings warm feelings and appreciation.

Another international example could be canned vegetables are packaged in tins with *green* in labels in most Asian, European and American markets; unless there are exceptional brand positioning, such like *Heinz beans* in tomato sauce, where a clearly recognizable torques blue is used for labelling.

Colour mismatch and misinterpretation could occur with *grey colour*, in Japan and China is associated with cheap and low quality goods, while it is associated with high quality, exclusive and expensive products in the US (based on Jacobs *et al.*, 1991). Amazingly, a box of head remedy in China and Japan would be contained in a grey packaging to keep a low profile, while in Europe and the USA such tablets would be packaged in red boxes with yellow or golden stripes.

As it became obvious from the literature review, presented above, packaging, though usually associated with the *product element in the marketing mix* (Kotler *et al.*, 2008; Blythe, 2005; Peattie, 2008; Pride and Farrell, 2010) has a variety of functions to perform and, consequently, impacts a wide selection of **marketing activities**, as indicated in *Table 1* and *Figure 2*: from labelling to design and creativity.

Historically brand management primarily focused on consumers. This was based on the assumption that efficient production processes could be managed to guarantee the brand's

functional values and that creative use of promotions resources, such as advertising and *packaging*, could promise emotional values (de Chernatony, 2008, p.306). Branding as indicated in *Figure 2* plays a vital role in marketing activities and it is directly affected by packaging – its design, colour, shape, labelling information, value creation and marketing communications. Therefore, packaging is perceived as a constituent element for developing and managing brand and product categories (Boone *et al.*, 2010).

Lockhart (1997) synthesized the concept of packaging into a unique tool referred to as “The Packaging Matrix”. *The purpose of this matrix* is to optimise the interface of each packaging a) *function* and b) *environment* without diminishing the performance effect of other packaging interfaces. Lockhart (1997) proposed three criteria for *packaging functions*, namely a) protection, b) utility, and c) communication. On the other axis he suggested three criteria for *environment*, namely: 1) human; 2) biospheric and 3) physical (distribution channels). A modified version of structured matrix of product packaging is presented in *Figure 3*.

<p>A1 protection-human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-opening bottles, cans, cartons and containers. • Child resistant packaging features, e.g. press-on caps on medication containers. 	<p>B1 utility-human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shape. • Size. • Texture of packaging materials. • Easy-to-open and reseal packaging to protect product freshness. • Compliance packaging. • Brand positioning and differentiation. 	<p>C1 communication-human</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brands (logo, name, graphics). • Labelling information (texts and illustrations, warnings, instructions, recommendations for daily intake, expiry date, ingredients, calories, storage information). • Shape (e.g. honey in the bear-shaped bottles). • Size. • Colour.
<p>A2 protection-biospheric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface and colour selection against UV damage. • Oxygen preventive materials. • Water and moisture preventive/retaining packaging. • Anti-microbial packaging. 	<p>B2 utility-biospheric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water and moisture preventive/retaining packaging. • Modification of packaging due to atmospheric requirements. 	<p>C2 communication-biospheric</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and temperature indicators/signs. • Pictorial explanations for bio-warnings (esp. In cases how to dispose the packaging).
<p>A3 protection-physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shipping packaging. • Cushioned/jiffy/air bags. • Strong industrial wrappings for stacks. 	<p>B3 utility-physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical modifications (shrink/expand) of packaging. • Heat/frost retaining packaging. • Additional handles for carrying odd size packaging. • Cases, designed for comfortable carrying, rolling, etc. • Adjusted packaging for frozen-to-oven usage (either by removing the top film, or poking the film with a fork, etc.) 	<p>C3 communication-physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bar codes (for item and price identification). • Pictorial warnings on packaging (this side up, fragile, handle with care, temperature indications).

Figure 3. Structured Matrix of Product Packaging

Source: created and improved by the author based on Lockhart (1997).

Employing the packaging matrix (*Figure 3*) suggests producers and marketers to apply environments and packaging functions in the process of designing and creating new product

packages or changing existing designs, implementing innovative materials, technologies and designs. On the other hand, Young (2003) considers some threats to packaging design and expresses his attitude in the following statement: “*The most attractive or popular design is not necessarily the most effective one at the point of sale, because it may get lost in shelf clutter and/or fail to communicate key messages (and a point of difference) quickly and clearly*” (Young, 2003, p. 3).

In recent years, because of the huge upsurge in world trade, it has also become necessary to consider the **legal requirements of labelling**, which differ from one country to the next; *nutritional information* may have to be in a different form for each country (for example, in the United States food has to be labelled with the amount of fat it contains expressed as a percentage of a 2000 calorie daily intake).

Packaging can often be used for **integrated marketing promotions** of other products in the manufacturer’s range (via recipe instructions, for example) or for joint promotions with non-competing companies.

In **international practice**, packaging and labelling are elements that frequently need some adaptation to accommodate to local customers’ needs and business practices. “Even when the product is the same, if the firm entered a market in the initial stages more instructions may be required in the packaging to inform and educate consumers on product usage. Labels may have to follow local regulations and directives. Packages and labelling may also need to have their colours changed to fit local symbolism” (da Rocha and da Silva, 2008, p.496).

Methodology of the Research

This *Section* of the article presents the methodology of the qualitative and quantitative research, pointing out a) the logical structure of the research on functionality of product packaging in cosmetics (see *Figure 4*), b) a scheme of structured features of functionality of product packaging as applied to the current research (see *Figure 5*).

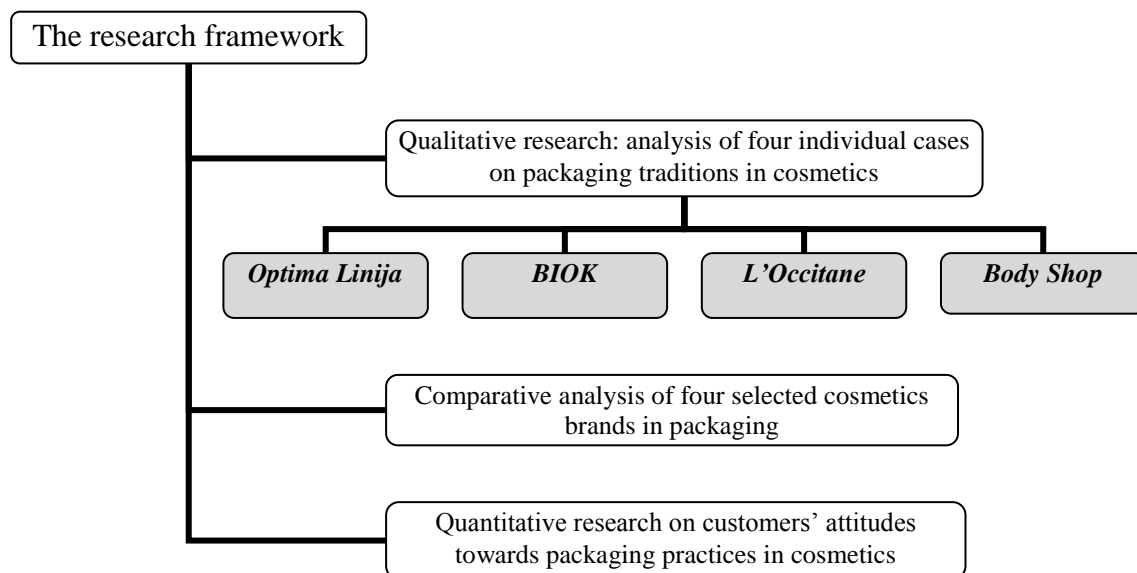


Figure 4. The Logic of Current Empirical Research on Functionality of Product Packaging

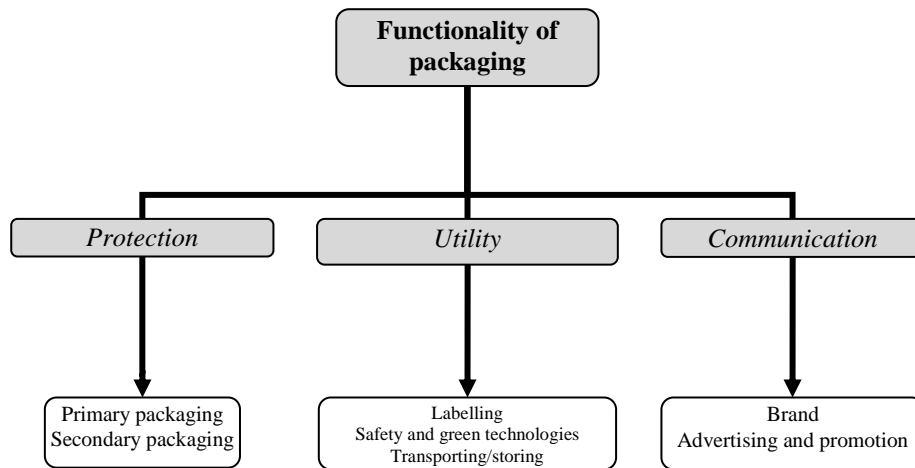


Figure 5. Structured Features of Functionality of Product Packaging for the Empirical Research

As indicated in *Figure 5*, the structured packaging functionality will take the following shape:

- **The function of protection:**
 - *Primary packaging.* Protecting the product from environmental effects, e.g. a tube, a container, a jar, a box, etc.
 - *Secondary packaging.* Protecting the quality of the products from environmental effects while transporting and from natural loss of quality because of bad packaging.
- **The function of utility:**
 - *Labelling.* Packaging is used to provide customers with the information about the product. Here, we also allot size, shape, materials, colour, text.
 - *Transporting/storing.* Packaging should help companies when transporting many products and should be made in a way that it would be easy to store the products.
 - *Safety and green technologies.* Packaging gives the utility of safety and protecting the content of the product. It also implies the usage of green technologies and design of product packaging.
- **The function of communication:**
 - *Brand.* The logo identification.
 - *Advertising and promotion.* Companies use packaging to advertise their product and make customers buy their product instead of other companies' product.

The indicated structured functions of packaging will be applied for the *qualitative research*, while determining their applicability in the mini cases of cosmetic brands: two Lithuanian brands (*Optima Linija* and *BIOK*) and two international ones (*The Body Shop* and *L'Occitane*).

For the *quantitative research* a questionnaire was prepared, inquiring the respondents upon the four afore-mentioned brands in cosmetics and the way they perceive the packaging function of cosmetic products. The sample of the survey was 211 university students, 85% females and 15% of males; 73% bachelor degree students, 18% master degree students and 9% doctoral students. This proportion naturally proves the fact who is more interested in cosmetics products. The questions were formulated on the brand perception first and then, packaging issues were discussed, relating to urgent issues in packaging, concerning children protection against harmful packaging and green packaging.

Mini Cases in the Functionality of Cosmetic Packaging: The Findings of Qualitative Research

“Optima linija”

MAXIMA (the biggest supermarket chain in Lithuania, comprising 36% of the market) sells almost 65,000 brands. More than 18,000 brands are owned by *Maxima* and “*Optima linija*” is one of them. It is a brand that stands for low prices and includes both food and non-food products. Mass buying and simple packaging are the reasons why “*Optima linija*” products have low prices (*Table 2*). This brand is oriented to buyers whose main concern is price.

Table 2. Functionality of packing for a Lithuanian brand “*Optima linija*”

Protection function	<i>Primary packaging</i>	Concept of the packaging is to protect the product, give basic information and promote it by enabling people to see its colour.
	<i>Secondary packaging</i>	None.
Utility function	<i>Labelling</i>	Size depending on the optimal quantity of the product. The package is as cheap as possible to keep the total price low.
		Shape is mostly bottle shape.
		Materials - plastic.
		Colour - transparent.
	<i>Safety and green technologies</i>	No safety from children, only a warning on the label to keep away from children. No concern on environment, packages are plastic, not of eco-friendly materials.
<i>Transporting/storing</i>	Packaging is made of plastic that protect the product during the distribution process.	
Communication function	<i>Brand</i>	Big letters, on the front side label, good visibility.
	<i>Advertising and promotion</i>	No visible advertising on their packaging.

Source: created by the author.

“*Optima linija*” tries to keep the packaging as simple as possible in order, as mentioned earlier, to keep the prices of their products low. They use simple plastic bottles to store their body care products. *No secondary packaging* is used, because “*Optima linija*” does not use packaging as a tool of promotion, only to keep the product safe from environmental impact while the products are being distributed (*Table 2*). The plastic is transparent, so that the colour of the product would be visible, and this is the only characteristic of the packaging which is used for promotion.

The label of the “*Optima linija*” body care products is basic. Anyway, the brand name written on it is easily recognisable due to a large font. Also, there is a picture on the label which gives consumer an information about the product flavour.

The packaging does not stand out with its size nor shape or colours (*Table 2*). The size of the packaging depends on the optimal quantity of the product that can be sold as one unit and the shape is basically a bottle shape which is most comfortable to hold.

“BIOK”

The biotech company *BIOK laboratorija* was founded in 1988 in Lithuania (www.biok.lt). It was established by doctors of chemistry and former research fellows R. Petniūnas, J. Steponavičius, R. Rašap and others.

In 1991, first skincare product *Margarita* was launched in the category of face creams. As the ingredients of the cream were based on organic nature, its shelf-life was as short as six months, but this fact did not stop the consumers and the new Lithuanian product quickly gained its popularity at the time. Soon after, *BIOK* extended its product range and began manufacturing body and hair care products.

Table 3. Functionality of packing for a Lithuanian brand “BIOK”

Protection function	<i>Primary packaging</i>	Plastic bottles, containers, tubes used for protection, promotion and information.
	<i>Secondary packaging</i>	Carton boxes (for a few products).
Utility function	<i>Labelling</i>	Size is ordinary. Have mini sizes suitable for flights.
		Shape is traditional for bottles, containers and tubes.
		Materials: primary packaging is plastic; in cases when secondary packaging is used, a combination of paper and plastic can be used.
		Colours are natural, white and black. Every brand has different colour, therefore, works as a brand differentiator.
	Text on the label is of appropriate size, every brand has different font.	
<i>Safety and green technologies</i>	Packages do not have hard-to-open function. No indication for green/recyclable technologies.	
<i>Transporting/storing</i>	Strong so that it can stand the strain of transportation, handling and shelf-life.	
Communication function	<i>Brand</i>	Manufacturer’s and brand names are written on every package. Capital letters are used.
	<i>Advertising and promotion</i>	Minimal advertising of the brand and the manufacturer.

Source: created by the author.

Consumers have a choice of nearly a hundred different products from face and body creams to cleansing milks and tonics, from shampoos to shower gels and deodorants due to the expansion of manufacturing and new formula creation.

BIOK Laboratorija produces exceptionally natural and organic products enriched with plant-based ingredients that are reliable and effective. Skincare products are manufactured using a minimum amount of preservatives so they have a very short shelf-life – only 12–18 months after the manufacturing date. Interesting fact is that due to their very short usage period, the products are manufactured under retail contracts and only a small stock of goods is warehoused. Today, *BIOK Laboratorija* produces several skincare brands such as *Margarita*, *Rasa*, and *Aras*.

I. Margarita series include multifunctional skin and hair care products for all age groups. As this brand has many different products there are many different shapes and colour of packages. For example, soft tubes, bottles, containers, and carton boxes as secondary packages (Table 3).

A variety of colours, such as brown, orange, green, blue, yellow, is used. The choice of colour is not accidental, *yellow* symbolizes happiness, *green* – life and nature, *brown* –

earth, and blue is intended to be calming. All these colours are pastel and it is usually described as feminine (*Table 3*). While analyzing this example we can see a tendency that marketing specialists put a lot of effort into designing packages.

II. Rasa is a brand for women. It consists of four different product lines: products for sensitive, normal, and combined skin; also products for mature women are available (www.biok.lt). Every line just mentioned has a different target market. For this reason, every line has a unique package. As *BIOK laboratorija* designer commented, “the idea of this line packages was to help brand to become more popular in new “premium” class products market” (www.biok.lt). Company decided to use both primary and secondary packages as world biggest cosmetics companies do.

What is more, colours were really carefully chosen, it means they used *light* colours like *pink*, *blue* or light *orange* as usually light colours symbolizes purity, cleanliness, and innocence. These are the feelings that people expect to feel after using any cosmetics.

But company is concerned not just about design of the package. Safety and distribution are also very important aspects to look at before designing new packages. The company has decided to renew old bottles and made advanced packages, which protect filling from contact with air not just in the period of shelf – life, but also while product is used.

III. Aras is a brand for men. So naturally the packages are *dark – black*. This colour is chosen as many men in Lithuania are still quite conservative cosmetics buyers (www.biok.lt). The same decision was made by L’Oreal marketers.

To sum up, it is clearly seen that *BIOK laboratory* has strong packaging strategy which helps them to adapt to fast changing market. The company uses examples that guaranteed successes for world leading cosmetic manufacturers, such as L’Oreal or other. What is more, *BIOK* is a company which tries to stay innovative in every field they work in.

L’Occitane

L’Occitane is a French company which adopts Provence traditions and techniques to make their natural beauty products. The story of *L’Occitane* begins in 1976 when the company was founded by Olivier Baussan (www.loccitane.com). Since then company acts in socially responsible way: shows respect for both man and the environment.

L’Occitane has a lot of different product lines of skin care, bath and body, hair care and fragrance for both women and men. Each of them has recognizable, similar design package which represents both the company and the product. As the company states, their packages give precise information about the content and origin of a product. Moreover, it helps to promote and protect the good inside it. *L’Occitane* uses aluminium, paper, glass and plastic for their packaging. As this is an environmentally concerned company, they limit the usage of those materials and strive to use recycled or recyclable ones. Furthermore, they use paper, cardboard and wood from sustainably managed forests and also some packages are made of harvested seaweed from the cleaning of the Venice lagoon.

L’Occitane makes many various types of primary packaging that differs not only in materials used, but also in shapes, sizes and colours. However, all of them have a similar design which brings the beauty of the land of Provence region onto the package. As a result the colours used are very natural and rustic. The palette varies from *bright white* to *matt dark* colours, though the *brown* is the most common. The company mixes all the tones of brown with other colours to separate the product lines. Another colour which is often used in *L’Occitane* packaging is dark blue. This usually occurs in product lines targeted at men. On the contrary, pastel colours are used for feminine product lines. Shapes of the packages also vary according to the product inside. Size of them is ordinary, but important is the fact that

the same product may be offered in different size packages to satisfy different quantity needs (Table 4).

Table 4. Functionality of packing for a Lithuanian brand “L’Occitane”

Protection function	<i>Primary packaging</i>	Glass and plastic bottles, tubes, paper, containers.
	<i>Secondary packaging</i>	Carton boxes (for a few products).
Utility function	<i>Labelling</i>	Size is ordinary. May have different sizes for the same product.
		Shapes are various, differentiated according to market segments.
		Materials: glass, plastic packaging.
		Colours and their shades create natural, organic, earthy, rustic look. Brown dominates.
	Text is of appropriate size. Unique font. Braille is often used	
<i>Safety and green technologies</i>	There are special safety features: not tested on animals. Packaging proves that the company cares about greening it on a large scale, usually using recycled paper/carton.	
<i>Transporting/storing</i>	Strong enough to stand the transportation process, handling and shelf-life.	
Communication function	<i>Brand</i>	Brand name is clearly identifiable on the primary and secondary packaging. It is used in back against light background and in white against the dark colour background.
	<i>Advertising and promotion</i>	Packaging works as a perfect communicator, promoting the product and its content.

Source: created by the author.

Packages of L’Occitane production are strong enough to stand the distribution processes. As we state that distribution lasts till the consumer carries the product to his home, we should mention that for the safety reason some of the firm’s products have secondary packages. However a small proportion of products that have secondary packages prove us about the company’s care of reducing unnecessary usage of materials.

All the labels of L’Occitane production have precise information about the product origins, content and the using instructions in spite of putting a picture. They also have the brand name (which in full is “L’Occitane en Provence”) printed on them in a unique and easily recognizable font which is a part of positioning strategy (www.loccitane.com). So it could be said that the label helps the package to promote the brand. Another important point about L’Occitane labels is that some of them have the instructions printed on the reverse side. This is another way how the company reduces the unnecessary waste of paper. The text in the labels is written in an appropriate size in specially adopted font. What we should take into consideration is the fact that since 1997 L’Occitane featured the name of the range and product in Braille on the packages – given in English so that it can be understood by the greatest number of people (www.loccitane.com).

As a special service L’Occitane offers gift wrapping with no additional payment. This increases consumer satisfaction, especially the fact that each gift is packed individually for a customer so he/she gets both a product and a feeling of exclusiveness.

To draw a conclusion we should say that L’Occitane has one clear packaging strategy which is improving according to growing customer needs and expectations. The company has their own packaging principles starting with the colouring and ending with environmental

concern about the usage of materials. Moreover, they are going further with introducing such implementations as Braille on the packages, that constructs a great company's image and creates a better brand position in terms of competition.

The Body Shop

The Body Shop is a global cosmetic company that was established in 1976 by Anita Roddick. The company is quite successful due to the strong values that they follow. The Body Shop always puts the needs of customers and society first, though there were various questionable issues raised by animal activists, green activists, etc.

The Body Shop has more than 700 natural beauty products for skin and facial care. Even though the company states that they "believe each individual is unique and beautiful, regardless of age, skin colour, size or background", we identified several patterns (mainly colour schemes and labelling) used by this firm in designing packaging for their products (www.thebodyshop-usa.com).

Firstly, the company has a big range of products for young people: body butters, body scrubs, hands care and lips treatment. For this age of customers, the company uses more colourful primary packaging that has strong "five-second" commercial which attracts young people attention. So, the packaging of these products is used not only for protection but for promotion as well. This is due to the label they use for products. Each label of the product has specific attractive graphics that promotes the flavour, the brand and the main values of the company (Table 5). For example, the label states: "the Olive Body Butter with community trade oil". Talking more about the colour of the packaging, it always tries to represent the flavour of the product or seasonal celebrations (for example, Christmas).

Table 5. Functionality of packing for a Lithuanian brand "The Body Shop"

Protection function	<i>Primary packaging</i>	Glass and plastic bottles, tubes and containers.
	<i>Secondary packaging</i>	They use paper boxes and cotton bags for special gift offer.
Utility function	<i>Labelling</i>	Sizes are different to suit the customer needs.
		Shapes are mostly oval, round.
		Materials: organic, natural, from recycled materials.
		Colours for young female consumers are bright and playful; for mid-age and seniors – lighter colours; men: black colours.
		Text presents information about product flavour, size and shows its values in English and French.
	<i>Safety and green technologies</i>	Safety is a strong issue: not tested against animals. Eco-friendly packaging, use recycled materials.
	<i>Transporting/storing</i>	Packaging is made of strong plastic.
Communication function	<i>Brand</i>	Established brand and logo, identifiable on every packaging.
	<i>Advertising and promotion</i>	They usually try to present new production, based on natural ingredients and flavours, because it is more colourful and better attracts people attention. Specific attractive graphics that promotes the flavour, the brand and the main values of the company.

Source: created by the author.

Secondly, the company targets older customers, both women and men. Different packaging is immediately noticeable. Colours are lighter and softer; this usually occurs when

targeting women (*Table 5*). For products targeted at men they use **dark blue** colour. Labelling for these products emphasizes informational qualities: they forgo fancy graphics in favour of informing the customer of the contents.

Also, the primary packaging has specific elements that advertise the product. Usually, the company uses bottles, tubes and containers that have a unique oval shape in various sizes for different customer needs. The primary packaging is made of strong material due to transportation concerns. The company's use of secondary packaging, such as paper and cotton boxes, is more limited. It is mainly used for gift packages. Moreover, The Body Shop has a very strong brand mark that is displayed on every product.

In creating packaging, the company also tries to stay environmentally conscious. According to their website, they try to create for their production the most Earth-friendly packaging possible. At the moment, all of their packaging is made with a minimum of 30% recycled plastic and some of their accessories are made of 50% post-consumer recycled material (e.g. recycled compact mirrors). All in all, The Body Shop claims a high corporate social responsibility. By purchasing this cream, customers can show their support for children and young people who suffer from sex trafficking. They also have *Tantalizing Lip Butter* that support campaign of *Staying Alive Foundation* against HIV and AIDS (www.thebodyshop-usa.com).

To conclude, The Body Shop dedicated its time and money to create effective packaging. They succeed to create strong specific features of the packaging that reinforce the products' positioning and help to make millions of sales.

The comparison of the functionality of four selected brands' packaging

After analyzing the functionality of two Lithuanian and two international products' packaging, main differences and similarities could be identified.

The main similarities occurred in:

- packaging concept,
- safety factors,
- features for distribution processes
- peculiarities of primary and secondary packaging.

All these factors were quite the same for four companies' packaging so we will not discuss it once more.

What we are more interested in is the differences between "*L'Occitane*", "*The Body Shop*", "*Optima Linija*" and "*Biok Laboratorija*" packaging features. They occurred in three main areas which are: environmental concern; physical appearance; advertising.

First of all, when analyzing environmental concern we can easily divide companies in two groups: those, which perform sustainable activities related with packaging and those which don't. So "*The Body Shop*" and "*L'Occitane*" are in the first group because they use recycled and recyclable materials for their packages. On the contrary, "*Optima Linija*" and "*Biok Laboratorija*" products packages are not eco-friendly.

Physical appearance is a factor, which differentiates companies' packages the most. Designs of packages differ in colour, text fonts and shapes. Small differences may also occur in used materials though the most common material is plastic.

Colours used for "*The Body Shop*" packages are usually very vivid, while "*L'Occitane*" and "*Biok Laboratorija*" use natural, matt and pastel colours. When analyzing colour we should take into consideration that "*Optima Linija*" has a transparent packages so in this case we should mention the products' colours (because they are visible), which are especially vivid.

Packaging makes the advertising function in all of the cases except “*Optima Linija*”, because their label is as simple as it could be and has no special unique designs that helps to position the product (with the exception of the brand mark).

To conclude the comparison we should say that two foreign companies packaging are more similar than domestic ones. It is also very important to mention that “*Biok Laboratorija*” has very similar packaging strategy to those foreign companies, and as well as them is open for innovations and new features implementations.

Survey of the Functionality of Cosmetic Packaging: The Findings of Quantitative Research

After analyzing the four brand packages we decided to make a survey, the purpose of which was to determine respondents’ attitude towards packaging and question its functionality. Seven questions were formulated and the survey was placed online for an easier access.

The first question determined a brand’s image and respondents’ perception of brands. By using the Likert scale from 1-bad to 5-very good, the brand’s image was identified for four above-discussed cosmetic brands. *L’Occitane* came out as a leader (47%) and the Lithuanian brand, fostered by Maxima supermarket, *Optima Linija* was assessed as the worst brand (66%) (Figure 6). Nobody ranked *Optima Linija* as a very good brand, therefore, this brand, by positioning itself as a cheap product assortment, did not catch the attention of surveyed students. Other Lithuanian cosmetics brand *BIOK* scored 35% as a brand having *medium* image. *The Body Shop* scored 43% as a brand pertaining *good* brand image.

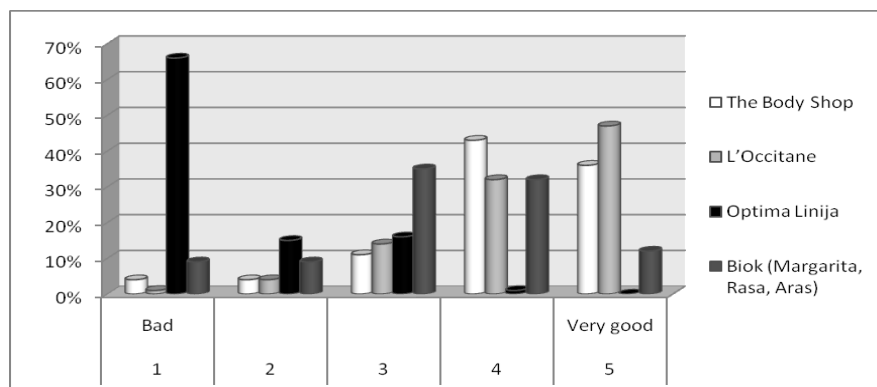


Figure 6. Perception of Selected Brands’ Image in Lithuania, 2009

Source: created by the author.

The second question was directly related to the research object of the paper, enquiring, which brand a respondent would choose if the only criterion was the packaging. Results were predictable, as *L’Occitane* was the leader with 63% and followed by *the Body Shop* with 31%. Therefore, the packaging criterion is very important to consumers as a means of *communication, promotion and brand identification*, in which the Lithuanian brands of cosmetics lost the battle.

In order to detail the causes, why the surveyed respondents chose *L’Occitane* as a brand leading in its packaging strategy, questions were posed to identify the functions of packaging being most attractive to the respondents. The survey demonstrated the respondents’ preferences towards cosmetics packaging was as follows: informative packaging and labelling (63%), shape (52%), colour (46%) and type of material the package is made of (29%).

One of the brand identity criteria is the identification of the brand judging from its packaging without seeing its brand name. Experiments proved that Coca-cola bottles could

be easily recognised on the shelf without seeing the logo. Even the colour was change to green instead red, it was still identifiable.

A similar situation was simulated in the survey, when the respondents were asked if they could recognize a package and label of a cosmetic product without seeing a brand name. The findings were as follows:

- 1) 74% of respondents claimed that they could easily identify *L'Occitane* packaging,
- 2) 71% of respondents were also very positive in the case of *The Body Shop* packaging,
- 3) 56% of customers would recognize *Optima linija* packaging,
- 4) 50% would identify *BIOK*.

These findings reckon that producers have been working towards brand positioning quite effectively, as half or over of the surveyed respondents are familiar with current packaging policies of the four brands. What is more, 72% of survey participants mentioned that all four brands should work harder of safety measures in packaging; as they (62%) would expect cosmetic packages to be hard-to-open to ensure children safety.

Following questions dealt with the materials cosmetic packaging is made of. Respondents were asked if they were concerned about ecological materials used in production of packages. The respondents split into two positions: 49% expressed their concern and 51% were quite indifferent. A question was formulated towards the necessity of secondary packaging. Almost all respondents (38%) who said that there is no need to have two packages were talking about ecological issues. At least 12% of respondents voted for secondary packaging, arguing that it could better protect a product in the shipping process or prolong its shelf – life in warehouses and shopping stores.

Conclusions

To conclude the findings of theoretical and empirical research on the functionality of packaging, it could be generalised that it plays an important role in the process of creating a product, promoting it and finally selling it. It can be said that today's consumers buy the package alongside the product, whether they prefer it or not.

These main functions of packaging can be down-sized to, though the paper suggests a variety of approaches to the functionality of product packaging:

- protection,
- utility,
- communication.

All these functions are important and have to be analyzed when creating a new product because if they are not judged correctly the price of the product can be too high or the product can be unattractive to consumers and thus they will not be willing to purchase it.

After comparing the four chosen brands of body care products, the main similarities were in the field of: features of primary and secondary packages, the packaging concept, safety factors, features of distribution process.

Despite the similarities, one can see that the surveyed brands were different. The two foreign brands of *The Body Shop* and *L'Occitane* were more similar to each other; it was a discovery that a Lithuanian brand *BIOK* was not far different from them, they had a similar packaging strategy and were open for innovations.

However, another Lithuanian brand "*Optima Linija*" stands out for a market follower position in packaging strategies. Its packaging strategy is very simple – to keep the prices of their products as low as possible. They use simple and cheap packaging and earn their customers because of low prices and mass production.

As for the last part of the paper, which incorporated the surveying of consumers' attitude towards the functionality of packaging by the four afore-mentioned cosmetic brands,

there is a tendency in Lithuania that cosmetic brands could be recognised only from the packaging without knowing the brand; cosmetic brands these days try to use neutral, earth, natural and recycled materials for the choice of packaging design, which greatly appeals to consumers. Applying green and innovative technologies in packaging also plays as a strong positioning factor for cosmetic brands and their primary and secondary packaging to support transportation and prolong self-life.

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Website of surveyed brands:

1. www.biok.lt
2. www.loccitane.com
3. www.thebodyshop-usa.com
4. www.maxima.lt/pirkeju-klubas/.../optima-linija/

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