COMMUNICATING HEALTH AND WELLNESS THROUGH PACKAGING

Polymeros Chrysochou & Alexandra Festila
OUR FOOD PRACTICES HIGHLY INTERACT WITH PACKAGING
THE ROLE OF FOOD PACKAGING

- To contain
- To preserve
- To protect
- ...
- To ease purchase
- To communicate
HEALTH AND WELLNESS IN PACKAGING THROUGH...

- Communication
- Safety
- Consumption monitoring
CAN PACKAGING DESIGN ENHANCE HEALTHINESS OF FOOD PRODUCTS?
Which pack design makes the product be perceived as healthier?

- Concave: 0%
- Convex: 0%
PACKAGING ELEMENTS CONVEY HEALTH!
CLASSIFICATION OF PACKAGING DESIGN ELEMENTS
(FESTILA AND CHRYSOCHOU, UNDER REVIEW)

Informational Elements
(e.g. nutrition information, health claims)

Graphic Elements
(e.g. colour, imagery)

Structural Elements
(e.g. shape, size, material)

Health is communicated explicitly
Conscious/mindful consumer efforts

Health is communicated implicitly

Unconscious/mindless consumer efforts
HEALTH POSITIONED PRODUCTS USE....

- More light colors
- Images of nature
- More paper and plastic material; less glass
- More angular and less rounded shape
ARE SUCH STRATEGIES EFFECTIVE?

- Two examples
  - The role of packaging shape
  - The impact of message location
THE ROLE OF PACKAGING SHAPE IN HEALTH COMMUNICATION

SLIMMER BOTTLE = HEALTHIER PRODUCT

Calories estimation

Health perception

SLIMMER BOTTLE

HEALTHIER PRODUCT
CONTROLLED EATERS → MORE GUILTY EATING FROM THE CONVEX BOTTLE
MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- Enhance perception of healthfulness by using a concave container
- Especially relevant for those products targeted at consumers concerned with their weight or overall diet
- As they would see the product in the concave container more in line with their health goals
IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND CONSUMERS

Dilemma

- In a product choice context (i.e. supermarket), health-oriented consumers more likely to choose a product in a concave container
- This information can also be used by marketers to conceal the real nature of the food – make unhealthy product appear healthier

Actions

- Ethical business practices should be encouraged
- Concave containers used only to nudge actual healthy choices
HEALTH INFORMATION LOCATION ON THE PACKAGE

PACKAGING CONTENT ANALYSIS

% Products

- Top
- Middle
- Bottom

0%  20%  40%  60%  80%  100%
H: We propose that healthy is associated with up and unhealthy/tasty with down and this can influence how effective the message is.

P1: Individuals naturally associate lighter items with a higher position in the vertical plane and heavier items with a lower position.

P2: Healthy foods are perceived as lighter than unhealthy/indulging foods.

H: We propose that healthy is associated with up and unhealthy/tasty with down and this can influence how effective the message is.
LOCATED AT THE **TOP** OF THE PACKAGE

LOCATED AT THE **BOTTOM** OF THE PACKAGE
IMPLICATIONS

- Health information at the top is more effective
- Relatively cheap to implement!!
CONCLUSION

- Food packaging is important in regards to communicating health and wellness
- Packaging design elements should be chosen carefully
- Powerful in “nudging” consumers, especially those who are less-health concerned
- Ethical considerations?
QUESTIONS?