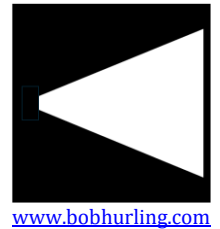


Keep it Symbolically Simple: A Research Paper on Packaging Design

Ton, L.A., Smith, R.K., & Sevilla, J. (2023). Symbolically Simple: How Simple Packaging Design Influences Willingness to Pay for Consumable Products. Journal of Marketing, 88(2), 121-140.



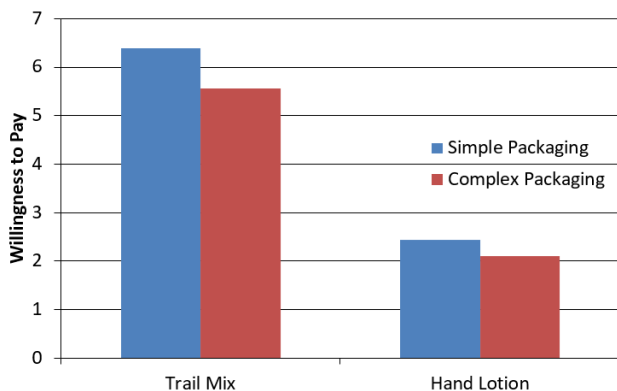
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Overview:

1. Simplicity in packaging design signals purity and influences willingness to pay more.
2. Simplicity has stronger effects for non-store brands and health-conscious consumers.
3. The effect can diminish when ingredients are explicitly listed, or the product is a store brand.

Approach:

The researchers included data from 1,353 packages and several controlled experiments, concluding that simple packaging leads to higher perceived product purity due to consumer inferences about fewer ingredients.



Minimalism enhances consumer willingness to pay, especially for non-store brands or when consumers have health goals. Boundary conditions include the diminishing effect of simplicity when ingredients are listed prominently, or the product is a store brand.

The graph shows the difference in willingness to pay (WTP) between simple and complex packaging across different product categories.

Real-World Packaging Examples:

Aesop: simple and elegant packaging, using minimal colors and design elements, emphasizing product purity and luxury.
Apple: famously simple, using clean lines and a minimalist aesthetic that signals premium quality and attention to detail.
Muji: often bare, using plain materials and minimal text, focusing on the product's functionality and purity.



Action Point:

With this information in mind, consider how minimalist design could be applied in your own packaging or product choices to create a lasting impression and appeal to consumers' preferences.