



**Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts**

**Improving Consumer Unboxing Experience: Unboxing-Worthy  
Packaging**

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# Improving Consumer Unboxing Experience: Unboxing-Worthy Packaging

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## DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Except where due acknowledgements have been made, the work is that of the author alone. The thesis has not been accepted for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree.

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## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the impact of various packaging design elements on the consumer unboxing experience, with the objective of identifying the factors that significantly enhance consumer satisfaction. Through a combination of case study, surveys, and prototype validation, the study focuses on material quality, layering, and opening mechanisms as key aspects of packaging design. Initial survey findings highlight material quality as the most important factor, emphasizing its role in the tactile and visual appeal of packaging. However, hands-on prototype testing revealed that ease and uniqueness of the opening mechanism have a greater influence on user satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of functional features during direct interaction. The study concludes that while high-quality materials and attractive visuals set the foundation for positive consumer expectations, intuitive and engaging opening mechanisms play a crucial role in delivering a memorable unboxing experience. These findings suggest that a holistic approach, which balances aesthetic appeal with practical usability, is essential for effective packaging design. Future research could further explore cultural and psychological factors that shape consumer preferences, providing deeper insights into designing packaging for diverse markets.

**Keywords:** Packaging Design, Unboxing Experience, Consumer Satisfaction, Opening Mechanism

## ***Menambah Baik Pengalaman Buka Kotak Di Kalangan Pengguna***

### ***ABSTRAK***

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti kesan bagi beberapa elemen reka bentuk pembungkusan terhadap pengalaman pembeli semasa membuka kotak serta mengenal pasti faktor-faktor yang dapat meningkatkan kepuasan pembeli. Melalui beberapa gabungan pemerhatian, tinjauan, dan pengesahan prototaip, aspek reka bentuk pembungkusan ditumpukan pada kualiti bahan, lapisan dan mekanisme pembukaan. Kualiti bahan merupakan faktor yang paling penting kerana ia mempengaruhi daya tarikan sentuhan dan visual pembungkusan. Namun, ujian prototaip secara langsung menunjukkan bahawa pembukaan kotak yang mudah dan unik mempunyai pengaruh yang lebih besar terhadap kepuasan pembeli serta menekankan kepentingan ciri-ciri fungsional semasa melakukan sentuhan langsung. Dapat disimpulkan bahawa bahan berkualiti tinggi dan visual menarik membentuk asas untuk jangkaan positif pengguna, tetapi mekanisme pembukaan yang mudah dan menarik lebih memberikan peranan penting apabila pembeli melakukan pembukaan kotak. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa daya tarikan estetik dengan kegunaan praktikal adalah penting bagi reka bentuk pembungkusan yang menarik. Penyelidikan akan datang boleh menyelidik faktor budaya dan psikologi yang mempengaruhi pilihan pengguna, memberi pandangan yang lebih mendalam bagi mereka bentuk pembungkusan untuk pelbagai pasaran*

***Kata kunci:*** *Reka Bentuk Pembungkusan, Pengalaman Membuka Bungkusan, Kepuasan Pengguna, Mekanisma Membuka Pembungkusan*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                    | <b>Page</b> |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>DECLARATION</b>                 | i           |
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>             | ii          |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>                    | iii         |
| <b>ABSTRAK</b>                     | iv          |
| <b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b>           | v           |
| <b>LIST OF TABLES</b>              | x           |
| <b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>             | xi          |
| <b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>       | xiii        |
| <b>CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION</b>      | 1           |
| 1.1 Study Background               | 1           |
| 1.2 Problem Statement              | 2           |
| 1.3 Research Question              | 4           |
| 1.4 Objectives                     | 5           |
| 1.5 Research Scope                 | 5           |
| <b>CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW</b> | 7           |
| 2.1 Packaging                      | 7           |
| 2.1.1 What is Packaging?           | 7           |

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 2.1.2 | The Role of Packaging                            | 7  |
| 2.1.3 | Elements & Principles of Packaging Design        | 8  |
| 2.1.4 | Packaging design influence on consumer behavior  | 14 |
| 2.1.5 | Current Packaging Trends                         | 14 |
| 2.1.6 | The Future of Packaging                          | 15 |
| 2.2   | Unboxing Experience                              | 16 |
| 2.2.1 | Introduction to Unboxing                         | 17 |
| 2.2.2 | The Key Elements of Unboxing                     | 17 |
| 2.2.3 | Unboxing and Consumer Buying Decisions           | 20 |
| 2.2.4 | Emotional Impact and Social Sharing              | 21 |
| 2.3   | Consumer Experience                              | 21 |
| 2.3.1 | Defining Consumer Experience                     | 22 |
| 2.3.2 | The Role of Emotions in Consumer Experience      | 22 |
| 2.3.3 | Sensory Input and Consumer Experience            | 23 |
| 2.3.4 | Packaging and Consumer Experience                | 23 |
| 2.3.5 | Measuring Consumer Experience                    | 24 |
| 2.4   | Three level of Design in the Unboxing Experience | 24 |
| 2.4.1 | Visceral Design in Unboxing                      | 25 |
| 2.4.2 | Behavioral Design in Unboxing                    | 26 |
| 2.4.3 | Reflective Design in Unboxing                    | 27 |

|                                |  |           |
|--------------------------------|--|-----------|
| 2.4.4                          | Integration of the Three Levels in Unboxing Design | 27        |
| 2.5                            | Research gap                                       | 28        |
| <b>CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY</b>   |  | <b>31</b> |
| 3.1                            | Overview   | 31        |
| 3.2                            | Research framework                                 | 32        |
| 3.3                            | Case Study   | 34        |
| 3.3.1                          | Data collection                                    | 34        |
| 3.3.2                          | Data Analysis Technique                            | 35        |
| 3.4                            | Surveys  | 36        |
| 3.4.1                          | Research Design                                    | 36        |
| 3.4.2                          | Data collection                                    | 37        |
| 3.4.3                          | Data Analysis Techniques                           | 37        |
| 3.5                            | Prototype Validation                               | 38        |
| 3.5.1                          | Prototype Design                                   | 39        |
| 3.5.2                          | Data Collection                                    | 39        |
| 3.5.3                          | Data Analysis                                      | 40        |
| <b>CHAPTER 4 DATA FINDINGS</b> |  | <b>42</b> |
| 4.1                            | Introduction                                       | 42        |
| 4.2                            | Case study findings                                | 42        |
| 4.3                            | Survey findings                                    | 71        |

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 4.3.1 | Section 1: Demographics                                  | 72  |
| 4.3.2 | Section 2: Understanding of “Unboxing”                   | 80  |
| 4.3.3 | Section 3: Unboxing Experience                           | 85  |
|       | <b>CHAPTER 5 DATA ANALYSIS</b>                           | 90  |
| 5.1   | Case study analysis                                      | 90  |
| 5.1.1 | Comparative Analysis                                     | 91  |
| 5.1.2 | Conclusion of Comparative Analysis                       | 95  |
| 5.2   | Survey analysis  | 95  |
| 5.2.1 | Conclusion of survey analysis                            | 97  |
|       | <b>CHAPTER 6 PACKAGING DESIGN: DESIGN AND VALIDATION</b> | 98  |
| 6.1   | Product selection  | 98  |
| 6.1.1 | Information on the Product                               | 98  |
| 6.1.2 | Justification for Product Selection                      | 100 |
| 6.1.3 | Current Packaging Design                                 | 101 |
| 6.1.4 | Current Packaging Design Feedback                        | 104 |
| 6.2   | Product Design Specifications                            | 110 |
| 6.3   | Prototype Proposal                                       | 112 |
| 6.4   | Result   | 117 |
| 6.5   | Analysis   | 119 |
|       | <b>CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION</b>               | 121 |
| 7.1   | Conclusion   | 121 |

|       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| 7.2   | Packaging Design Recommendations                     | 122 |
| 7.3   | Packaging Design Recommendations for Unboxing Videos | 123 |
| 7.3.2 | Conclusion   | 126 |
| 7.4   | Discussion   | 126 |
| 7.5   | Benefits of This Study                               | 127 |
| 7.6   | Future Works   | 128 |
|       | <b>REFERENCES</b>                                    | 131 |
|       | <b>APPENDICES</b>                                    | 136 |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  | <b>Page</b> |
|--|-------------|
| Table 3.1: Methodology process   | 31          |
| Table 4.1: List of videos in the case study process  | 44          |
| Table 4.2: Data findings from case study for ROG Phone 6 Pro                                     | 48          |
| Table 4.3: Data findings from case study for Oppo Reno7 Pro (League of Legends Limited Edition)  | 49          |
| Table 4.4: Data findings from case study for Oneplus 9RT (Genshin Impact Limited Edition)        | 50          |
| Table 4.5: Data findings from case study for OnePlus (PACMAN Edition)                            | 51          |
| Table 4.6: Data findings from case study for Red Magic (Transformers Decepticon limited edition) | 52          |
| Table 4.7: Data findings from case study for Samsung Galaxy Fold                                 | 53          |
| Table 4.8: Data findings from case study for iPhone 14 Pro                                       | 54          |
| Table 4.9: Data findings from case study for Apple Watch Ultra                                   | 55          |
| Table 4.10: Data findings from case study for Apple AirPods Pro 2                                | 56          |
| Table 4.11: Data findings from case study for Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra BMW M edition             | 57          |
| Table 4.12: How much does these factors contribute to your excitement when unboxing a product?   | 85          |
| Table 4.13: Reasons why respondents enjoy opening things they bought                             | 89          |
| Table 6.1: Feedback from current packaging design  | 105         |
| Table 6.2: Product Design Specifications   | 111         |
| Table 6.3: Prototype validation results  | 117         |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   | <b>Page</b> |
|---|-------------|
| Figure 2.1: Julie's biscuit colourful packaging                               | 9           |
| Figure 2.2: Toblerone signature triangle packaging                            | 11          |
| Figure 2.3: Matte textured box with embossed logo                             | 11          |
| Figure 2.4: Patek Philippe wooden box with logo                               | 12          |
| Figure 2.5: Puma shoe box design includes reusable bag designed by Yves Béhar | 15          |
| Figure 2.6: Three level of Design   | 25          |
| Figure 3.1: Research framework for this study                                 | 33          |
| Figure 4.1: ROG Phone 6 Pro packaging   | 58          |
| Figure 4.2: Oppo League of Legends Edition rocket shaped box                  | 59          |
| Figure 4.3: OnePlus Genshin Impact Edition packaging                          | 61          |
| Figure 4.4: OnePlus PacMan Edition packaging                                  | 62          |
| Figure 4.5: Red Magic Decepticon Edition packaging                            | 63          |
| Figure 4.6: Samsung Galaxy Fold packaging                                     | 64          |
| Figure 4.7: Apple iPhone 14 Pro packaging                                     | 65          |
| Figure 4.8: Apple AirPods Pro 2 packaging                                     | 66          |
| Figure 4.9: Apple Watch Ultra packaging                                       | 68          |
| Figure 4.10: Samsung Galaxy S23 Ultra BMW M Edition                           | 70          |
| Figure 4.11: Hobbies  | 72          |
| Figure 4.12: Highest level of education                                       | 73          |
| Figure 4.13: Frequency of shopping online                                     | 74          |
| Figure 4.14: Types of product purchased online                                | 75          |
| Figure 4.15: Primary considerations before purchasing items online            | 76          |
| Figure 4.16: Employment status  | 77          |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Figure 4.17: Monthly income   | 78  |
| Figure 4.18: Shopping habits  | 79  |
| Figure 4.19: Heard the term “Unboxing”  | 80  |
| Figure 4.20: Define the term “Unboxing” from your own perspective                                   | 81  |
| Figure 4.21: Do you believe the package opening experience is an important part of buying products? | 82  |
| Figure 4.22: Primary goal when watching an unboxing video   | 83  |
| Figure 4.23: Which types of unboxing videos do you typically watch?                                 | 84  |
| Figure 4.24: How much does the packaging design affect your excitement when you open something?     | 88  |
| Figure 6.1: Top design of Amazfit Active packaging.   | 102 |
| Figure 6.2: Bottom design of Amazfit Active packaging.  | 102 |
| Figure 6.3: Accessories compartment   | 103 |
| Figure 6.4: Placement of the Amazfit Active smartwatch in the box                                   | 104 |
| Figure 6.5: Exploded view of packaging prototype  | 113 |
| Figure 6.6: Proposed design of the packaging prototype  | 114 |
| Figure 6.7: Instruction on how to open the box  | 114 |
| Figure 6.8: Inside of the first layer of the packaging  | 115 |
| Figure 6.9: Opening instruction for the accessories box   | 115 |
| Figure 6.10: Inclined user-facing and centered positioned for the product holder                    | 116 |
| Figure 6.11: Tear strip opening mechanism for the user manual and stickers                          | 116 |
| Figure 6.12: Validation process with respondent   | 117 |

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PDS                      Product Design Specification

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Study Background

The concept of "unboxing" has emerged as a popular trend, gaining traction alongside the rapid growth of online sales and product reviews. In Malaysia, the convenience and variety offered by online shopping have led to a growing preference among consumers to make purchases through platforms such as Shopee and Lazada (Wicaksono et al., 2023). These online marketplaces often offer lower prices, making it more feasible for consumers to buy items that may otherwise be unaffordable in traditional retail settings.

In the context of online shopping, the traditional notion of "impulse purchase through packaging design" has become less relevant, as buyers are unable to see or touch the product packaging prior to purchase. Consequently, a customer's initial impression of the purchased product is formed when they receive it, rather than when viewing it on a store shelf. This change highlights the significance of the unboxing experience, as it constitutes the consumer's first tangible interaction with the product.

Modern consumers are increasingly discerning and often refer unboxing videos and product reviews before making a purchasing decision (Bhattacharya & Dhingra, 2023). High-value products, particularly technological gadgets, are frequently featured in popular unboxing videos on platforms like YouTube. For example, Apple products consistently attract significant attention, with unboxing experiences that are widely regarded as more engaging than those of other brands.

The unboxing experience plays a crucial role in packaging design. It serves as a vital communication channel between the seller and the consumer, substituting for the traditional in-store interaction with sales personnel. Through thoughtful packaging, brands can convey a sense of care and appreciation to their customers. Moreover, visually appealing unboxing experiences can generate organic advertising, as compelling photos and videos shared online have the potential to reach a wide audience and attract new customers.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Online shopping platforms have revolutionized the retail landscape, enabling both large corporations and small businesses to reach consumers directly. With the surge in e-commerce, the number of brands producing and selling their products online has grown significantly. However, despite this shift, a critical aspect of the online shopping experience is often overlooked: the importance of thoughtful packaging design and the unboxing experience. Although packaging has the potential to enhance customer satisfaction, build emotional connections, and foster brand loyalty, many sellers remain unaware of its impact, leading to persistent challenges in the e-commerce sector.

The problem statement regarding packaging design encompasses several critical issues, primarily focusing on the tension between quantity and quality, poor design aesthetics, inadequate instructions, lack of marketability in unboxing videos, and the emotional impact of packaging on consumers.

Firstly, the emphasis on quantity over quality in packaging design often leads to suboptimal consumer experiences. Many businesses prioritize cost cutting measures that result in poorly designed packaging, which can detract from the overall product appeal. Research indicates that effective packaging design significantly influences consumer

perceptions and purchasing behavior, where emotional resonance with packaging can enhance brand loyalty and product desirability (Patel, 2024). Furthermore, the integration of emotional design principles into packaging can create a more engaging consumer experience, which is crucial in a market saturated with similar products (Liu, C., 2024).

Moreover, poor design and inadequate instructions can severely impact user experience. Packaging that fails to communicate effectively can lead to confusion and dissatisfaction among consumers. The emotional experience of users is intertwined with the design elements of packaging, suggesting that a thoughtful approach to user experience can mitigate these issues (Song et al., 2022). For instance, packaging that incorporates clear, user-friendly instructions can enhance usability and satisfaction, thereby fostering a positive emotional connection with the product (Liu, C., 2024).

The rise of unboxing videos as a marketing tool further complicates the packaging design landscape. These videos have become a significant cultural phenomenon, influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions (Bhattacharya & Dhingra, 2023). However, packaging that is not visually appealing or engaging in the unboxing experience may fail to attract attention in these videos, which can diminish its marketability. Studies show that the aesthetic and functional aspects of packaging play a crucial role in how products are perceived during unboxing, with attractive designs leading to more favorable consumer responses (Lee, 2023). Therefore, packaging must not only serve its functional purpose but also be designed with the potential for unboxing appeal in mind.

Lastly, the emotional impact of packaging cannot be overstated. Packaging that resonates emotionally with consumers can lead to stronger brand consumer relationships and increased product desirability. The emotional design of packaging, which considers

consumer feelings and experiences, is essential for creating a lasting impression and fostering brand loyalty (Liu, C., 2024). As such, packaging should be designed not only for functionality but also to evoke positive emotional responses that align with consumer expectations and cultural associations.

In summary, the challenges in packaging design—ranging from prioritizing quantity over quality to the emotional implications of design—highlight the need for a more integrated approach that considers both aesthetic appeal and functional effectiveness. By addressing these issues, businesses can enhance consumer experiences and improve marketability, particularly in the context of the growing influence of unboxing videos.

### **1.3 Research Question**

Some key questions have been formulated in order to get a clear picture of the research direction, and the goal of this research is to answer those questions. The questions are;

- i. What are the packaging design criteria that influence unboxing experience?
- ii. How to implement design criteria that influence unboxing experience into packaging?
- iii. What are the most critical design elements that generate positive unboxing experience?

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for marketers, designers, and e-commerce companies to enhance the unboxing experience and create a positive impact on consumer perception and satisfaction. The results will contribute to the development of best

practices for packaging design and delivery process, which can lead to increased customer loyalty and brand recognition.

#### **1.4 Objectives**

A variety of elements influence the experience upon receiving and opening packages. Therefore, the goal of this study is to investigate the topic of unboxing experience in order to learn of what makes an ideal packaging which deliver positive experience towards customer. This can be achieved through the following set of objectives:

- i. To investigate key factors that influence positive unboxing experience to consumer.
- ii. To recommend specific packaging element such as material quality, opening mechanism, and layering that contribute to a positive unboxing experience
- iii. To validate the impact of these identified packaging elements on consumer unboxing experience through a proposed packaging design.

#### **1.5 Research Scope**

Packaging design is a broad field of study that can be explored in depth. However, for this study, the focus will be on the experience of unboxing such packaging in terms of design complexity, ease of opening, and the manufacturer's intended message. External factors like late-delivered products or incorrectly delivered items are not considered.

There are numerous "layers" used to distinguish the levels of packaging in the development of packaging design, notably primary, secondary, and tertiary. The primary layer, which is the first layer in direct touch with the product, will be the focus of this study.

Secondary and tertiary layers that wrap primary packaging like corrugated boxes and film packaging are ignored.

Since each product's packaging specifications vary, this study will focus on the most commonly searched products for unboxing terms, namely electronic equipment. Based on observation, smartwatch are the most suitable sample because they have multiple compartments, are affordable, and have a variety of brands to compare.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Packaging

##### 2.1.1 What is Packaging?

Packaging refers to the process of designing and producing containers or wrappers for products, serving multiple functions that are critical to marketing and consumer engagement. It plays a vital role in protecting the product, facilitating transportation, and providing essential information to consumers. Moreover, effective packaging design is closely linked to branding, as it conveys the identity and values of a brand while influencing consumer perceptions and purchasing decisions (Zhang & Yang., 2021, Mensah et al., 2022). Research indicates that packaging significantly impacts perceived quality and brand loyalty, particularly in competitive markets where visual appeal can differentiate products (Mensah et al., 2022). Additionally, the rise of sustainable packaging solutions reflects a growing consumer preference for environmentally friendly options, further emphasizing the importance of packaging in modern marketing strategies (Ocicka, 2023). Packaging is not merely a protective layer; it is a strategic tool that shapes consumer behavior and brand perception in the marketplace.

##### 2.1.2 The Role of Packaging

The role of packaging has expanded in recent years, with a growing emphasis on sustainability and environmental impact. Modern packaging must not only fulfill its primary functions but also align with consumer expectations regarding eco-friendliness and recyclability (Borman et al., 2019). Thus, packaging has become a multifaceted discipline

that encompasses design, marketing, and environmental considerations, making it essential for businesses to adopt innovative approaches to packaging design (Kovačević et al., 2020; Rahman, Z., 2023).

The role of packaging is multifaceted, encompassing protection, communication, and convenience. Firstly, packaging protects products from physical damage, contamination, and spoilage, thereby ensuring product integrity from production to consumption (Luo et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). Secondly, packaging serves as a communication tool, conveying essential information about the product, such as ingredients, usage instructions, and brand values (Wade & White, 2020; Chrysochou & Festila, 2019). This communication is particularly crucial in competitive markets where consumers rely on packaging to make informed purchasing decisions.

Moreover, packaging plays a significant role in enhancing consumer convenience. Features such as easy-open mechanisms, resealable closures, and portion control can significantly influence consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Research indicates that these functional aspects of packaging are not merely practical but also contribute to a positive consumer experience, which is essential in fostering brand loyalty (Mattia et al., 2021). For instance, easy-open features reduce the effort required to access products, making them more appealing to consumers, particularly in fast-paced environments where convenience is paramount (Vasile & Baican, 2021).

### **2.1.3 Elements & Principles of Packaging Design**

Packaging design is a critical aspect of product marketing that encompasses various elements and principles aimed at creating an effective and appealing package.

### 2.1.3.1 Elements of packaging design

Elements of packaging design are critical in shaping consumer perception and the overall user experience, including during the unboxing process. Key elements include:

#### a. Visual Elements



**Figure 2.11:** Julie's biscuit colourful packaging  
(Source: <https://www.julies.com.my/product/biscuit-assorties/>)

Color is one of the most influential visual elements in packaging design. It not only attracts attention but also evokes emotions and associations that can significantly impact consumer behavior. For instance, warm colors like red and yellow can create feelings of excitement and urgency, while cool colors like blue and green are often associated with calmness and trust. Research has shown that color can influence brand recognition and consumer preferences, making it a crucial consideration in packaging design (Li, Z., 2023). Specifically, studies have demonstrated that the choice of color can affect consumers' perceptions of healthfulness and quality, which in turn impacts their purchasing decisions (Su, J., 2024). Therefore, understanding the psychological effects of color in packaging is essential for brands aiming to create effective and appealing product presentations.