Premium elements & Premium perception:

Investigating the effect of premium elements on premium perception of food packaging to design better.

Graduation project

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1

Abstract & Introduction

Abstract

This project investigates the influence of brand elements (logo, color, illustrations, and font) on the premium perception of packaging within the packaged foods sector. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, the research comprises qualitative focus groups and a quantitative online survey to understand how these elements shape consumer perceptions of premium quality. The findings indicate that color is the most influential element, followed by logo, illustrations, and font. Color sets the tone for perceived premiumness, while prominent and well-designed logos enhance brand recognition and trust. Illustrations that tell a brand story contribute to authenticity and superior quality. The qualitative phase provided rich insights into consumer preferences, likes, and dislikes, which were then drafted into guidelines and tested and validated through statistical analysis in the quantitative phase. The study culminated in developing a practical guidebook for designers, particularly those in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in India, to create packaging that conveys added value and quality. This research offers valuable insights concerning packaging design, highlighting the crucial role of specific brand elements in influencing premium perception while acknowledging limitations such as the focus on visual assessment and specific product categories. The study sets a foundation for future research to explore additional product categories. Overall, the findings provide actionable insights for designers aiming to enhance the premium appeal of their packaging.

Introduction

Brand building in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector presents a formidable challenge, particularly for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which operate within constrained budgets and against the expansive market reach of more giant corporations (Bassi et al. (2017)). These SMEs relentlessly battle to create a distinct presence and attract consumer attention in a crowded marketplace.

The cornerstone of establishing a robust brand identity lies in the strategic development and implementation of practical brand elements. These elements—from logos and packaging to advertising themes and messaging—are not merely aesthetic tools but critical in fostering consumer brand awareness (Omoruyi et al., Elizabeth. 2019). Enhanced brand awareness is the first step in a multi-stage process that cultivates brand loyalty, stimulates purchase intentions, and encourages repeat sales. This cycle is crucial for SMEs striving to compete against the well-entrenched brands of larger companies.

A pivotal aspect of this branding strategy is the ability to make a lasting impression on consumers at crucial decision-making moments. For instance, a study indicated that nearly 70% of consumers opted to purchase an FMCG product from an SME if noticed first in a supermarket setting (Faizal et al., Zariyawati & Kamarohim, Nor Azlina & Nassir, Annuar & Othman, Manisah. (2016).). This high level of engagement highlights the significant impact of first impressions and the immediate recognition facilitated by vital brand elements. To achieve such effective consumer engagement, SMEs must develop unique and memorable brand elements that resonate well with their target audience. This involves understanding consumer preferences and the emotional and psychological triggers influencing purchasing decisions. By doing so, SMEs can design brand strategies that attract and retain customers in a highly competitive market.

Furthermore, fostering brand loyalty requires more than just visual appeal or superficial recognition. It demands a consistent and authentic brand message that aligns with the values and expectations of the consumer base (Omoruyi et al., Elizabeth. 2019). This alignment helps build a trustworthy relationship between the brand and its consumers, essential for encouraging repeat purchases and establishing a loyal customer following.

While brand-building challenges in the FMCG sector are daunting, especially for SMEs, the thoughtful application of brand elements can significantly enhance market competitiveness (Bassi, M. P. 2017). By strategically leveraging these elements to increase brand awareness, SMEs can effectively set themselves apart in the marketplace, fostering a loyal consumer base for business growth. This project focuses on understanding the various kinds of composition of brand elements(Logo, color, font, illustrations) that influence the premium perception of a food product among young Indian consumers. In this exploratory research question,

different compositions of brand elements will be explored, excluding the shape, material, and texture of the packaging of a food product and its influence on premium perception.

The motive behind the research question is to make a tool/guidebook for designers from Indian SMEs to help them design a premium package for their food product in order to compete against the enormous MNCs. The effect of different brand elements on premium perception will be used to make the necessary tool.

To reach this goal, the project is dissected into the following chapters.
Literature review
Qualitative research
Outcomes and guidelines
Redesign of a package
Testing the redesign
Discussion
Proposal for new-redesign

The first research phase is detailed in Chapter 2, where the ways to incorporate premiumness through packaging are discussed, with a introduction to how the brand elements effect purchase intention based on the existing literature. The term "premium packaging" is explored and defined through a literature review.

This chapter establishes the classification of premium packaging in comparison to other categories and identifies the elements that influence consumers' premium perception of brands. A research gap is established in this chapter with a proposed research methodology.

In Chapter 3, Based on the findings from Chapter 2, four focus group sessions were conducted with premium target group consumers to discuss and investigate the effect of brand elements stated in the previous chapter on premium perception, design cues, cross-category general premium characteristics, and individual ratings.

In Chapter 4, the outcomes from the literature review and focus group sessions are analyzed and drafted into guidelines on how to design premium packaging.

Chapter 5 focuses on redesigning the packages from the product category discussed in the focus group sessions to be tested with a more extensive set of target consumers. In Chapter 6, the redesign of one of the redesigned product categories is surveyed to test and validate the guidelines based on which the redesigns were created.

In Chapter 7, key findings are discussed by updating the guidelines based on the quantitative research. Additionally, In Chapter 8, a proposal for redesigned packaging from one of the chosen product categories will be shown with changes post-quantitative results. This includes detailed stepwise changes and considerations.

Finally, in Chapter 9, limitations, future recommendations, and conclusions are presented.

2

Literature review

Literature review

How to increase the consumer base?
According to (Bassi, M. P. 2017), one of the ways to increase the consumer base is to make the products premium as the consumers are seen to prefer premium products within FMCG; they believe they are better than the rest of their counterparts and offer more value. Making an SME product perceived as premium can make the product more visible and stand out compared to its competitors and influence a consumer's purchase intention positively towards that product.

What is premium?
First, we will start by understanding the definition of premium before we delve further into the research phase:

According to Wikipedia and Cambridge Dictionary, the word premium in the marketing and product segment refers to "something as higher quality with tangible or imaginary superior value in the upper middle to high price range." The targeted consumer group is also often referred to as "Premium." Premium brands are designed to convey exclusiveness in a mass consumer segment.

In the packaging segment, premium refers to something when the consumers perceive added value and or experience compared to other packaging (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel 2014).

The four main factors of creating a premium perception in terms of premium packaging include (Ruth Mugge, Thomas Massink, Erik Jan Hultink & Lianne van den BergWeitzel 2014)*:*

1. *Extraordinary differentiation.*
2. *Higher quality of packaging materials.*
3. *Minimalistic design.*
4. *Authenticity.*

As discussed previously, a brand begins by establishing its unique identity, designs its packaging to stand out from competitors, and completes the process by enhancing the perception of quality and even acting as the salesman of the product (Rambabu et al.; R., 2020), Research by (Reimann, Martin et al. 2010) suggests that when it comes to consumer perception, the variety in packaging is readily apparent on any store shelf, where products vie for consumer attention and, ultimately, their purchase. Innovative packaging is often preferred over well-known brands packaged in intentionally standard, generic containers, even at a higher price (Swientek, Bob 2001). Differentiation is immediately noticeable and crucial for creating a perception of premium quality at the point of purchase, as noted (Swientek & Bob, 2001). For detailed definition of the premium elements refer to Appendix B.

Before we delve into the “premium” category, let us briefly understand the different product classes and where premium stands.

Figure 1: Different kinds of packaging's visible in the racks, all of them acting as their own brand’s salesmen.

There are different classes of products available in the market. We will briefly discuss all the product classes in the market. There is a debate and many different perspectives on the exact differentiation of a product from one class to another.

The products can be divided into five classes, (1) Luxury, (2) Super-Premium, (3) Premium, (4) Regular, and (5) Budget (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel 2014); these terms will be explained in detail below, for detailed product class explanation, refer to Appendix B:

1. "Luxury" packaging refers to unique, small-scale production brands that transcend typical price, quality, and convenience considerations.

2. "Super-Premium" packaging is associated with leading national brands, often recognized as A-brands. These brands frequently introduce high-end product lines that enhance their premium status. They dominate their categories through marketing, sales efforts, and innovations in product and packaging. The classification of brands into different levels of premium and even luxury is subjective, with opinions on their positioning varying widely. The boundaries between these categories are often fluid and overlapping.
3. "Premium" Private Labels are designed to compete directly with premium brands, offering consumers a genuine alternative.
4. "Regular" label brands provide an affordable alternative to A-brands.

Figure 2: Examples from Indian chocolate segment showing different product classes ranging from (1), Luxury, (2) Super premium, (3) Premium, (4) Regular, (5) Budget class products.

5. "Budget" private label brands offer consumers some of the most cost-effective options, providing a lower-priced choice without significantly compromising quality.

This report will stick to the super-premium and premium classes of products. Premium packaging adds value by creating a perception of distinctiveness, authenticity, and high quality. It positions the brand at the forefront of its product category, reflected in a higher price point. Premium packaging not only outperforms budget private labels but also competes with premium private labels and A-brands, as well as their premium counterparts (Keller et al.; I., 2022). Luxury, while a tier above premium in price, is distinct and not directly comparable as it is more aligned with status and hedonism than tangible quality and functionality (Scholz, L. (2014).

How to incorporate premiumness?
There are multiple ways to incorporate premiums into a brand. However, since SMEs have a strict financial budget (Bassi, M. P. 2017), one of the more straightforward ways, which also carries paramount importance to the brand, is through packaging (Sali et al.; B., 2023). In order to influence a consumer on a product's premium perception, especially in the FMCG food category, the importance of packaging is paramount (Sali et al.; B., 2023). "Consumers buy satisfaction rather than the commodity. Satisfaction is affected by various factors, one of which is the packaging," as stated by (Sali et al., 2023). The author also argues that packaging is one of the crucial factors for brand image repeat sales and

Customers who are satisfied with packaging are more inclined to buy a product. This does not mean packaging exists in the FMCG sector to boost or increase sales; as stated by (J. et al., Sanjeev & Aφ, Jabir), "packaging is broadly considered as a logistics and marketing function for improving the delivery of products to consumers in an efficient manner and to enhance the consumer satisfaction with proper communication.

Hence, packaging acts as both a protective layer for the product while being transported from one place to another and as the salesman for the product.

Furthermore, after delving into another article, (Rambabu et al. R. 2020) state that "Packaging strategies have a significant impact on buying intentions and behavior according to the study." While packaging acts as a product's salesperson and protector, it can positively or negatively affect a buyer's purchase intention. This conclusion was in line with another study by (Panda et al., Sourav, Dasgupta, and Tanmoy. 2021).

A product's packaging effect on purchase intention is also studied by both parents and children from Iran, where the initial hypothesis regarding the packaging of an FMCG food product having a positive influence on purchase intention was supported (Taghavi et al., Alireza. 2015). This is also in line with the findings of (Faizal et al., Zariyawati & Kamarohim, Nor Azlina & Nassir, Annuar & Othman, Manisah. 2016), where it can be seen in the results that packaging is one of the significant driving factors in the purchase intention of an SME food product. High-quality packaging is associated with high-quality products. One of the interesting insights from a study by (Kumar et al., Sanjeev. 2019) states that “consumers do not compromise the preference of packaging type even though the brand is well established or retailer is credible.” This makes a critical point where a good brand name or credibility cannot substitute for packaging.

What does packaging have?
Packaging is judged on various aspects, like shape, size, material, and design. According to (Romeo-Arroyo et al. C. 2023), the shape significantly influences a package’s premium perception, with symmetric-shaped packages considered as more premium than the ones that are not. Coming to the material, (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel, 2014) explain that thick-pressed material/ paper is seen as significantly premium packaging material compared to regular packaging plastic.

The visual brand elements of packaging:
Apart from its physical features, as discussed above, a package’s premium perception is also judged by its visual brand elements, such as branding/logo, color, illustrations, font, and labels. The effect of these individual brand elements is discussed below.

Brand name as an element:
As we know, a brand is not just something with which we identify a particular product, but as (Kathuria et al., Paramjeet. 2013) describe, “Brand awareness can affect

perceptions and attitudes. It can also act as a driver of brand choice and even loyalty." According to (Keller, K.L. 2013), the brand name is significant since it concisely and economically represents the children's and parents' purchasing decisions and key themes or associations of a product. Not only this, but multiple other studies have also concluded that a good brand name has a positive effect on young adults, as stated in a study by (Kawa et al. S. 2013), which showed that consumers, especially young adults from Indonesia, believe that the prestige associated with a well-known brand name can increase their social image.

Another note-worthy point from the same study shows us the difference between the core beliefs of two emerging economies from south Asia (India) & (Malaysia), where Indian consumers prefer and willing to pay an extra 11-30% price for premium-packaged food products as opposed to the Malaysian counterparts (Faizal et al., Zariyawati & Kamarohim, Nor Azlina & Nassir, Annuar & Othman, Manisah. 2016), where they showed more prominence to lower prices than packaging, even in fresh foods, like fruits & vegetables. Packaging and convenience are paramount in consumers' heads (J., Ali & Kapoor, Sanjeev & Moorthy, Janakiraman. (2010).

Food labels as an element:
A study analyzed consumers' purchase intention while buying food labeled "organic" (Dangi et al., Sapna & Gupta, Sandeep. 2020). They argue that, even though consumers are positively inclined to buy organic food, they still believe it is not 100% chemical-free, which is a point of hesitation. In the era of increasing awareness among young consumers, another study (Kumar et al., Sanjeev. 2017) stated, "It is evident that more than 75 percent of respondents read the label before the purchase of food products." more than half of respondents are directly influenced by labels on a food product.

Color as an element:
A study conducted in South Africa showed that different packaging colors affected consumers differently when purchasing bottled water, showing that colors over other elements in packaging styles have the maximum impact (Beneke et al., Ozayr & Munthree, Travys & Pillay, Kavesan. 2015).

Research gap:

As mentioned by (Kumar et al. Sanjeev. 2019), young consumers of India prefer and are willing to pay a higher price for premium packaging. However, more studies must be conducted within the country on how packaging influences the premium perception of a product. Young consumers of India constitute a significant percentage of the total population, with 52% of the 1.4 billion people under 30 years of age (Kc S, Wurzer M, Springer M, Lutz W.) Finding out their perception of packaged food products will significantly benefit SMEs within that sector, as they favor and are willing to pay higher prices for premium packaged products (Kumar et al., Sanjeev. 2019).

A research gap exists on how the visual composition of brand elements on the packaging affects young consumers' perception of premium quality food products, excluding all other physical properties. We can understand that packaging is a crucial element and a point of contact between the consumer and the manufacturer. As mentioned by (Rambabu et al. R., 2020), packaging acts as a "silent salesman" as consumers make a physiological association with it. According to (Sanjeev et al. Vijay 2017), young consumers dominate the current impulsive shopping trend. Hence, focusing on the composition of elements and their influence on premium quality perception amongst young consumers could provide valuable output.

Research question: "How does the visual composition of brand elements (color, font/typeface, illustrations, logo/branding) in packaging design influence the perception of premiumness of a brand for a food product among young consumers in the Indian context?"

In this exploratory research question, different compositions of brand elements, including color, logo, font, text and iconography, and labels, will be explored, excluding the shape and texture on the packaging of a food product and its influence on the premium perception amongst the young consumers in the Indian market.

The motive behind the research question is to make a tool/guidebook for designers from Indian SMEs to help them design a premium package for their food product in order to compete against the enormous MNCs. The effect of different brand elements on premium perception will be used to make the necessary tool.

Research Methodology

This study has adopted a mixed-methods research design, incorporating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to comprehensively explore the defined research questions. The reason for employing a mixed-methods approach is its ability to provide a multifaceted perspective on research issues, facilitating richer insights than those obtainable through single-method research strategies (Panda, A., Gupta, R.K). This approach is particularly effective in addressing the complex nature of consumer behavior, allowing for both in-depth exploration and broad generalization of findings (Panda, A., Gupta, R.K).

Qualitative Phase: Focus Groups
The qualitative component of this study has been conducted using focus groups, which is ideal for exploring perceptions in detail. These sessions were held online. The choice of an online format is supported by literature suggesting that virtual focus groups can achieve comparable data richness to in-person sessions, with the added benefits of increased accessibility and reduced resource expenditure (Menary, J. & Stetkiewicz, S. & Nair, A. & Jorasch, P. & Nanda, A. & Guichaoua, A. & Rufino, M. & Fischer, A. & Davies, J. 2021).
The methodological execution of these focus groups involved a series of tasks; during these tasks, participants engaged in discussions that surfaced the underlying attitudes and beliefs regarding the subject matter. The discussions were audio and video-recorded, with the consent of the participants, and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Quantitative Phase: Surveys
Following the qualitative exploration, the study shifted to its quantitative phase, employing structured questionnaires to gather empirical data from a broader participant pool. This phase aimed to validate and extend the qualitative findings, quantitatively measuring how prevalent particular views and behaviors are among a larger group.

Participants:
For both phases of the study, participants were selected based on specific demographic criteria, targeting young consumers aged 22 to 28 within the Indian market. This age bracket is significant as it represents a key consumer segment whose purchasing patterns are intensely interesting in this study. The focus group participants were recruited using snowball sampling, a non-probability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. This method is beneficial for reaching populations that are difficult to sample when using more straightforward sampling methods (Naderifar et al., F. (2017). A total of 16 participants were used for focus groups, with each group having 4 participants.

Data Analysis:
Data analysis for the qualitative data was performed using Atlas. Ti software supports complex qualitative data analysis like coding, and the transcripts underwent thematic analysis, initially involving open coding to identify preliminary themes. These themes were continuously refined and reorganized through an iterative process to distill the data into coherent themes that provide insightful conclusions regarding consumer perceptions.

The products and classes used in this project:

The research focuses on two distinct product categories within the Indian market: chips (specifically brands available in India) and branded and packaged Indian sweets. Their substantial market capitalization and prominence informed the selection of these categories as the two most popular types of packaged Indian food products. Notably, the chips and packaged sweets sectors account for 42.1% of total sales in India's packaged food and beverage industry (Packaging India's Evolving Food Consumption - A Publication by BDO India). Not only this, the two product categories mentioned vastly differ from each other. Hence, researching these two will make it easier for different product categories to adapt the outcomes. For more information regarding choice of selection, please refer to Appendix B.

The criteria for selecting specific brands and packaging types were based on their diversity and popularity among consumers, which are crucial for enhancing the validity and comprehensiveness of the research. This approach allows the results to be generalized across the entire category and applicable to Indian cultural norms. This study primarily addresses the visual attributes of packaging, excluding considerations such as texture, weight, and other tactile properties. Thus allowing for a concentrated analysis of visual elements.

[1]
Figure 3.

Figure 3: Examples of the product categories used in the project and the qualitative research phase. (1) Chips category - Lays Gourmet chips.

[2]
Figure 4.

Figure 4: Examples of the product categories used in the project and the qualitative research phase. (2) Indian packaged sweets category - Misree sweets.

3

Qualitative research

Qualitative research

The selection process for the study involved eight distinct packaging types for each of the two product categories, specifically chosen to represent a spectrum of mid-premium to high-premium pricing and diverse flavor offerings. This approach was designed to assess the influence of flavor diversity on the perception of premium quality among consumers.
For the chips category, the following packages were selected based on their flavor profiles and market positioning:(1) Pringles - Masala tadka, (2) Lays-Gourmet, (3) Kettle Studio- Gourmet chips, (4) Wilde - Premium pork chips, (5) Beyond snack - Kerala banana chips, (6) Doritos - Sweet chili, (7) The healthy - Binge, (8) Too yum - Multigrain chips.
These selections encompass a range of different flavors in the snack market, intended to provide a comprehensive overview of consumer responses to various flavors as well. Similarly, the packaged sweets category included brands renowned for their premium positioning within the market, according to multiple reputable online sources. The chosen brands and packages in the mid-premium to the higher-premium range were: (1) Krishna sweets, (2) Misree Sweets,(3) Meethi Sweets, (4) The Bombay sweet shop, (5) Nihira Mithai, (6) Gur Chini, (7) ARQ sweets, (8) Berfila.

Figure 5: The set of packages from the chips category used for the focus group studies, as part of the qualitative research phase.

Figure 6: The set of packages from the Packaged Indian sweets category used for the focus group studies, as part of the qualitative research phase.

These selections reflect the diversity of the premium sweets segment, aiming to capture a broad perspective on how premiumness is perceived in traditional packaged foods like sweets and Western packaged foods like chips.

Focus groups:
The subjective perception of consumers is crucial since they are the ones who need to be persuaded at the point of purchase. To gather opinions on packaging, four focus group sessions were conducted with Indian consumers: a pilot session (FG1), focusing solely on chips packaging and three with consumers who are also the target audience for premium products (Focus Groups 2,3 & 4 covering both chips and Packaged sweets). The results from all groups are comparable due to the uniformity of the session setups and the alignment of the majority of the opinions. For the design of the focus group session, refer to Appendix C.

The analysis of all respondents' comments was conducted on different aspects, covering the overall design of the package, familiar premium cues, and individual element's effect, and linked to literature on premium definitions to determine what attributes contribute to premium packaging and what attributes contribute negatively for a package's premium perception. The prices of the products used in focus groups were not revealed to the participants to generate much more unbiased and rich data. Discussions included perceptions of the overall design of the packages, design cues, the significance of individual brand elements and general premium perception, and package rankings against the other packages, which were used to assess how some packages were perceived in contrast to their price and amongst other premium packages in the same product line.

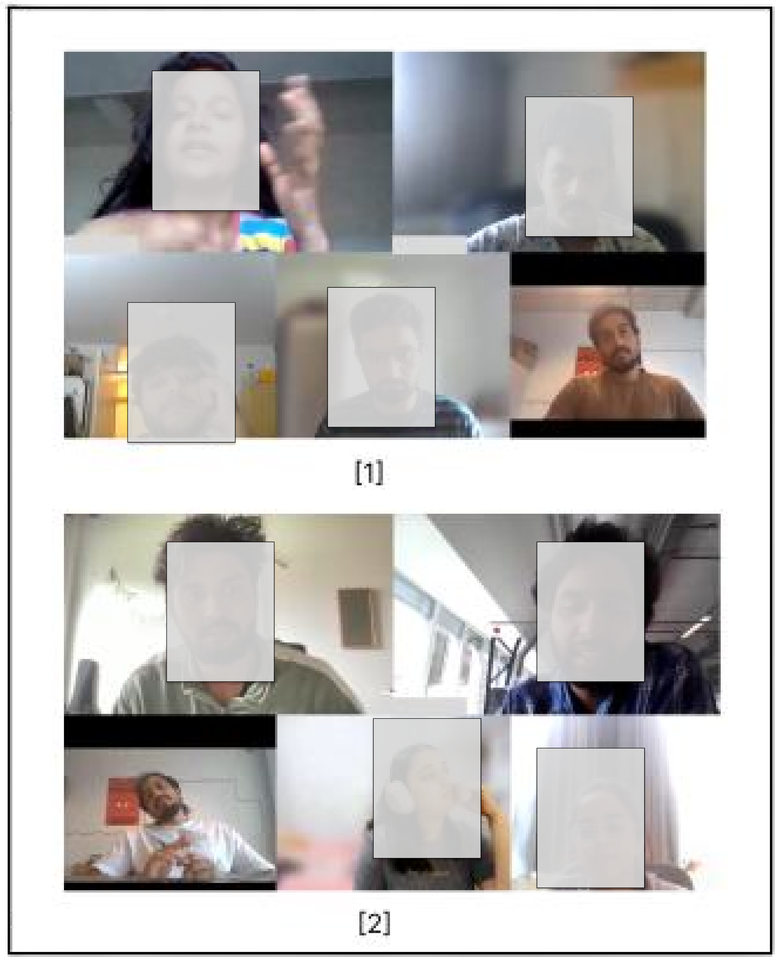


Figure 7: Snapshots from the focus group studies, from focus group 3 (1), Focus group 4 (2).

First, the participants were asked to join a online platform called “Miro” prior to the start of the session. This platform was later used for discussion of the packages, and to participate in two tasks which further prompted more discussion and insights. Once the

Participants were in a secure Microsoft teams call; they were invited to join the host on the Miro board and begin with task number one, where all four of the participants shall come together and discuss the individual aspects and brand elements of each of the eight packages and sort them into three different categories namely: Minimal design, Authentic and Different. The reason for this is to invoke all sorts of feelings from the participants regarding the design, which brought multiple deep insights. The reason for choosing these three categories is that they have been mentioned as the prime factors for premium packaging by (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel 2014), giving the participants a direction on what to look for and what they previously felt about those packages. It also made the discussion more rich as the participants knew what they had to do.

Once they were finished sorting these packages and discussing their design, the group was asked to rank these eight packages sequentially, from “ Low premium perception” to “High premium perception.” This gave a rough idea of how a group perceives a package design based on its visual composition of elements irrespective of their market selling price. The same two tasks were repeated with a different product category, “Indian Sweets,” to generate similar insightful data. The results of the two tasks for both the product categories across four sessions are presented in Appendix C.

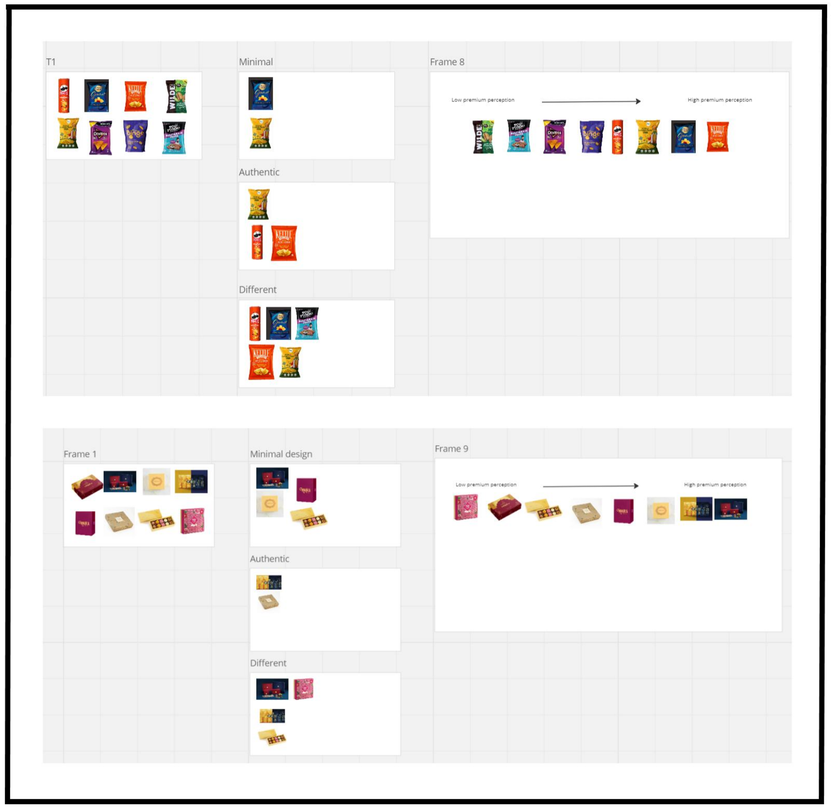


Figure 8: Snapshots from the Miro board which served as platform to communicate for the focus groups.

In each session, the respondents collectively identified several traits of premium packaging. Choices of types were discussed and analyzed; perceptions of multiple and individual elements were reviewed and rated. During the first session, the focus groups evaluated eight different brands of chip packaging based on their first impressions and the provided categories. The categorization of packages by focus groups, with target group consumers as participants are detailed in the Appendix C. In the second task, participants were asked to rank the packages from low to high premium perception as a group, facilitating discussion and exchange of opinions. The clusters of packaging rankings by the focus groups are also provided in the appendix. A similar set of tasks was repeated in the second session but with eight different types of sweet packaging.
Quotes were clustered and assigned to one or more elements of the packaging and design cues. An exemplary quote is provided for each element, with highlighted words emphasizing its relation. The descriptions given by respondents regarding packaging perception comprise multiple design cues, which together form a general idea *of premium packaging from their perspective.*

Thematic coding:
A total of 174 codes and 284 quotations were formed after transcribing four focus groups. All the codes were first categorized into six categories: Overall design, Individual element influence, Communication, General premium cues, Physical properties, and Other elements/ factors. These groups were subsequently sorted into five themes:
Overall design
Effect of Individual Brand Elements
Relationship between different brand elements
Expectations from the package
Shopping behavior at the point of purchase

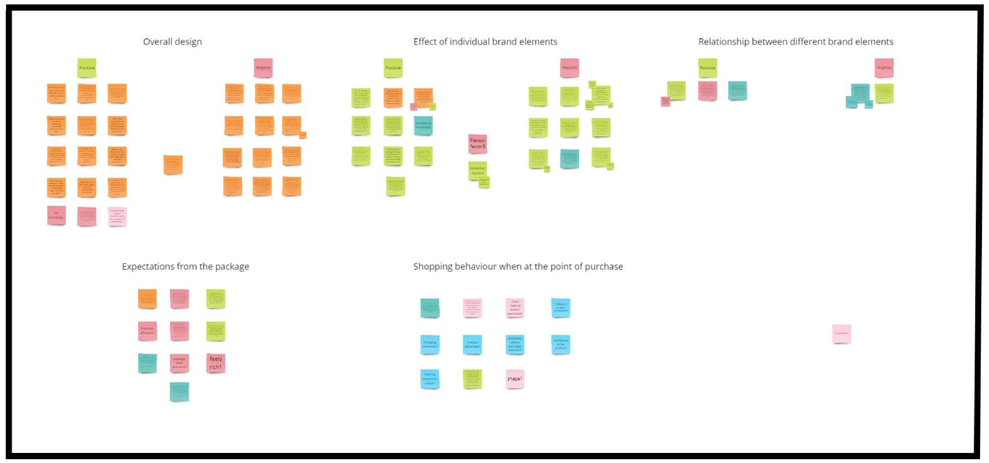


Figure 9: Snapshot of grouping from the thematic coding phase.

The themes were revisited, and codes were again regrouped to draw the feelings and behaviors of the consumers with the package. They were again regrouped into two themes: Feelings and expectations. This was done to understand the underlying emotions, opinions, and expectations for each of the elements in both product categories. These themes were separated for both product categories and individually grouped. These central themes were subdivided into Logos, Font, Graphics, and Color to determine the feelings towards those elements.

After regrouping the themes, the trans quotes were noted to express their feelings/expectations towards the design and elements. A trans quote from each observed insight is highlighted. For snapshots of codes and themes refer to Appendix D.

The insights and the corresponding quotes are then linked to the definition of premium elements as per the literature review. The descriptions given by the respondents range from holistic packing design, individual elements, expectations and feelings regarding these elements, and do's and don'ts as per the respondents.

INSIGHTS:

PREMIUM CUES FROM PARTICIPANT FOR CHIPS:
Color: Colors with a matte finish, often with contrasting combinations and golden finishes, give out a premium look. The usage of innovative new colors, instead of adhering strictly to traditional choices, also enhances this perception. According to the users, color is reported to be seen or noticed first, which either creates a positive or negative impact.
FG1-P4: *"The color of Lays is vibrant and smooth, so it feels very premium. Whenever you see that, it stands out in the group of some of the chips."*
Originality: The overall design must be unique to its brand, as even slight usage of other major brands' elements can make it look cheap and undesirable.
FG1-P1: *"I thought it's just different because I haven't seen any packaging like that. Half of it is filled with the brand name, and they have the flavor and the type of chips it has. Pretty unique and different...makes it chic, I like it!"*

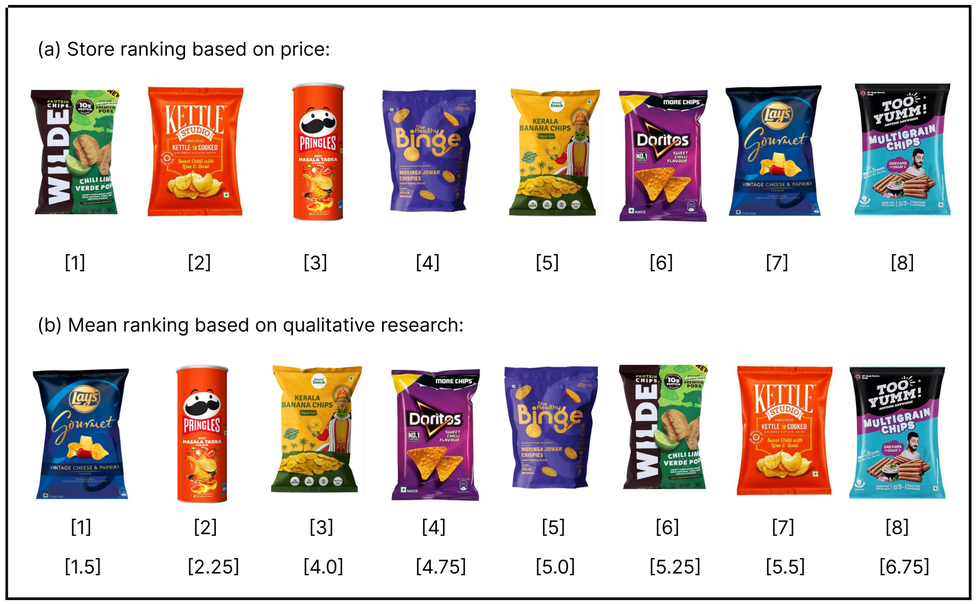


Figure 10: The original store ranking based on the price vs the mean store ranking by the respondents of focus groups. (Notice how brands like kettle studio & wilde performed way worse)

Clarity vs. Clutter: There is a limit to the amount of text that can be put on the packaging before it becomes clumsy. Apart from the necessary information like the brand name, flavor, and labels, all other information is not desired and is perceived as a cheap product.
FG1-P4: *"So if you see Doritos, they have only two nachos, so they are clear on their vision. Moreover, if you look at the flavor name, it is pretty clear from far away; you can see that, and for me, it's pretty confident, which is attractive."*
Language and Font: Western-style language, emphasizing Western culture (e.g., words like "Gourmet"), and a high level of language usage is seen as a premium cue among Indian individuals.

- *FG3-P4: "It gives a very English vibe, like a very Victorian English vibe, and it is considered as a classic vibe."*

Logo: The logo has to be of the right size—neither too big that it overshadows other elements, nor too small that it is overlooked. Participants indicated that an oversized logo makes the brand seem like it is screaming for attention, reducing its credibility. A logo consistent with the overall theme is appreciated.

- *FG2-P2: "Only the name of the kettle is big, and everything is small, so it just doesn't catch your eye. The logo is screaming for attention."*
- *FG2-P4: "Look at the Lays logo, it is just very simple and you know attractive, but gives you that premium design vibe, it gives you that premium feel."*

Illustrations: The usage of real-life, raw images, or images that tell a story and are not confusing or distracting, is recommended. Sensitive illustrations should be designed with caution (e.g., the image of a pig on WILDE).

- *FG4-P2: "And using real photos like Tyrell chips is amazing, it actually gives a very sleek vibe."*

Endorsements: The face of the endorser on the package is not appreciated, as participants felt it gave out an unprofessional and non-credible vibe as celebrities endorse multiple brands at a time.

- *FG1-P4: "It feels a bit cheap to me because if you have a good product and good design, you don't need a celebrity, also..it's just too many brands man!"*

PREMIUM CUES FROM PARTICIPANT FOR SWEETS:

Color: Dark and rich colors with a matte finish represent high quality. Black and white give a chic vibe. Gold detailing, when not overdone, adds a classy look.

- *FG3-P2: "I love how Misree sweets played around with different strong colors in a blended manner. This one is crimson, this one is blue, almost give out a jewelry vibe, yet they look like luxury sweets!"*

Overall Aesthetic Look: A consistent design with unique elements gives a premium feel.

- *FG2-P3: "Look at the crimson color here, also the seal like Golden Seal, I think it gives a super premium feel!"*

Logo and Font: A clear, straightforward logo is attractive. If the logo is unique and gives a subjective vibe, it is especially appealing, particularly if it is imprinted.

- *FG3-P3: "It definitely has a very poor design of font because four of us thought four different names of the same brand."*

Storytelling Factor: The packaging should tell a story and carry an emotion. If it does, it becomes the highlight of the entire packaging, as participants prefer storytelling in illustrations over over-the-top graphics.

- *FG2-P1: "The Bombay shop tells me the story, something like if it's a very old sweet shop and it has been around since when the city was called Bombay and it sees the city skyline grow. It's a selling point for me!"*

Cultural Relevance: Reducing cultural relevance and avoiding religious imagery is seen as a premium cue among the participants.

- *FG2-P1: "So one thing is that if you look at the Bombay Sweet shop, that package tells a story which is way different from other sweets. This is what I want, finally a brand that I can relate to!"*

Font: Uppercase font is seen as more trustworthy and credible, as lowercase font gives a more casual vibe.

- *FG3-P3: "It's nice to see everything in bold, makes you feel safe, lowercase could be fun too, but i would definitely not see it as a luxury item."*

The trans-quotes and the corresponding codes were sorted under three final themes:

1. Authenticity
2. Differentiation
3. Superior quality

Summary

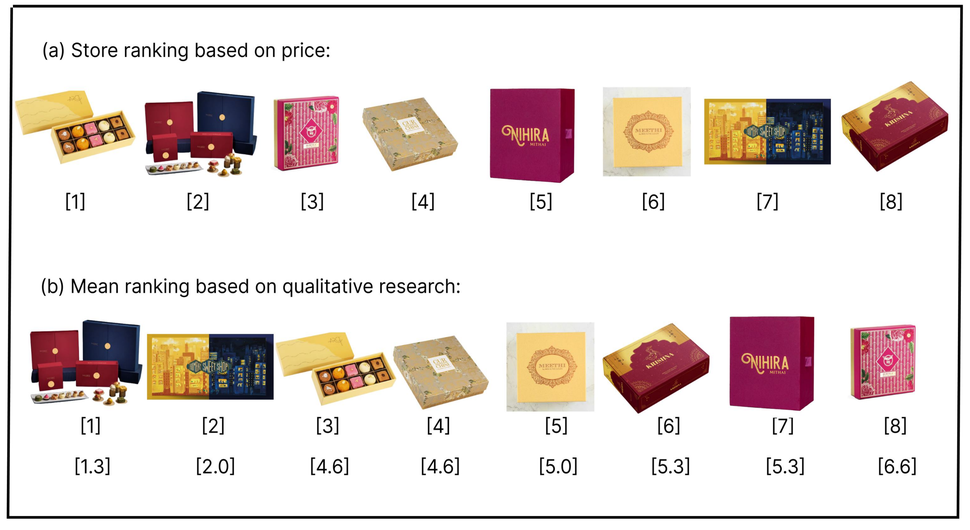


Figure 11: The original store ranking based on the price vs the mean store ranking by the respondents of focus groups. (Notice how bombay sweet shop fared extremely well due to its unconventional theme)

The feelings and expectations perceived as premium by focus group respondents include:

- Niche logo/branding: the logo should be not too big nor too small (Links to authenticity).
- Customized and minimal illustrations.(links to Authenticity and superior quality)
- Serious font (Upper case) gives a sense of trust and seriousness to the brand (authenticity).
- Innovative color: First element to be noticed which helps in standing apart from the competition and makes a mark for the brand.(links to differentiation)
- Contrasting branding/logo: It is seen as a desirable feature when a logo is popped out in the first glace rather than confuse the consumer. (links to differentiation)
- Claims/ Labels: These added in the form of illustrations increase the trust and perceived quality of the brand (Superior quality)
- Bold font: Makes the font more contrasting and visible and comes out as more confident.(links to Different & superior quality)
- Storytelling with illustrations: Using custom illustrations, abstract imagery hooks the consumer to the package and is believed to be designed with effort and increase its premium perception. (Links to superior quality)
- Matt finish colors: Gives a sense of high quality and expensive look for the brand.(Authentic & superior quality)
- Using pastel shade colors: Gives the overall package an expensive look as consumers associate pastel colors with luxury.(Superior quality)

The most essential elements that are first noticed and influence premium perception according to the focus group respondents:

Color: Color is the first element that the majority of the respondents reported to notice first. It sets the tone for the rest of the elements of premiums and the package, either in a positive way or a negative way.

Logo/branding: This was reported as the second most crucial element from our research, as a clear and bold logo always made the product more premium for the consumers, as it made them feel confident and have a trustworthy image.

Illustrations: Illustrations play a crucial role in communicating with the audience. As the respondents informed us, the simpler and more subtle the illustrations are, the higher the premium perception of the brand.

Font: Font was reported to be the least important element that impacted premium perception among the four elements. Fonts that are bolder and in uppercase are seen as more premium than lowercase font.

In short, the order in which the elements affect premium perception according to the respondents:
Color>Logo>Illustrations>Font.
According to the respondents, they found cues related to authenticity and superior quality to be more effective in deciding the premium perception of a package, even though they considered differentiation as a necessary element for noticing and grabbing attention, which affects premium perception.

Authenticity: It had a significant impact on premium perception since it influences the brand's image at first glance in the respondent's head.

Differentiation: Even though seen as a key factor in being noticed, it was not seen as important as the other two elements.

Superior quality: Respondents highlighted how the subtle art of storytelling or carrying a theme throughout gave an exclusive and high-quality feel, which significantly impacted their views on a package.

All the category-related premium design cues have been discussed and visually highlighted in the previous paragraphs, as shown in Figure 7,8.
The Kettle studio packaging is poorly ranked by respondents and will thus be redesigned based on the research outcomes.
These results are synthesized in the following chapter and processed into guidelines intended to brief SMEs and their packaging designers for redesigning and eventually testing consumer perception of the redesigned packaging.
Overall, I used the definitions of premium elements and their characteristics to link them with the insights of the focus groups to form an outcome combining both.
These derived statements will be further tested and validated in the quantitative phase.

4

Outcomes & Guidelines

Outcomes, Guidelines.

The primary objective of this research project is to investigate the premium perception among young Indian consumers regarding Logos, Illustrations, font, and color in packaging. This is done by breaking down the abstract idea of premium perception into interpretative elements and cues and, lastly, turning them into tangible guidelines.
These guidelines are written in the format of a checklist corresponding to the three elements of premium perception, which were determined through literature research and further strengthened and understood with focus group sessions.

The guidelines are written in the order of influence of each element in premium perception as per the focus groups. The order, as mentioned, is interpreted from focus groups, which will be further validated in the quantitative phase. Each guideline will be explained in subsequent paragraphs. This chapter details the research results according to the focus groups, combined into an overview that serves as a set of guidelines to consider the relevant cues for designing premium elements.

Fusion of research results:

As explained before, packaging is considered premium when it creates a sense of added value, which includes authenticity, differentiation, and high quality. This is shown in the schematic view of the guidelines, where premium perception overlaps with three main elements, Each contains its own set of guidelines for various element categories.
The reason Authenticity is followed by differentiation and later superior quality suggests the order in which packaging design happens (Mugge, R. (2011)). Starting with the brand's authentic character, making it different from competitors, and finally ensuring a well-executed design.

It's important to note that this order is a guideline and not a strict rule, as the design process involves going back and forth through different phases until all stakeholders are satisfied.
When it comes to the guidelines under the three elements, not all need to be included in the packaging, as opinions might vary among target groups, general consumers, or focus groups. However, including more of these categories generally improves the perception.
In the following paragraphs, the properties of this set of guidelines are explained. For the Initially drafted guidelines refer to Appendix D.

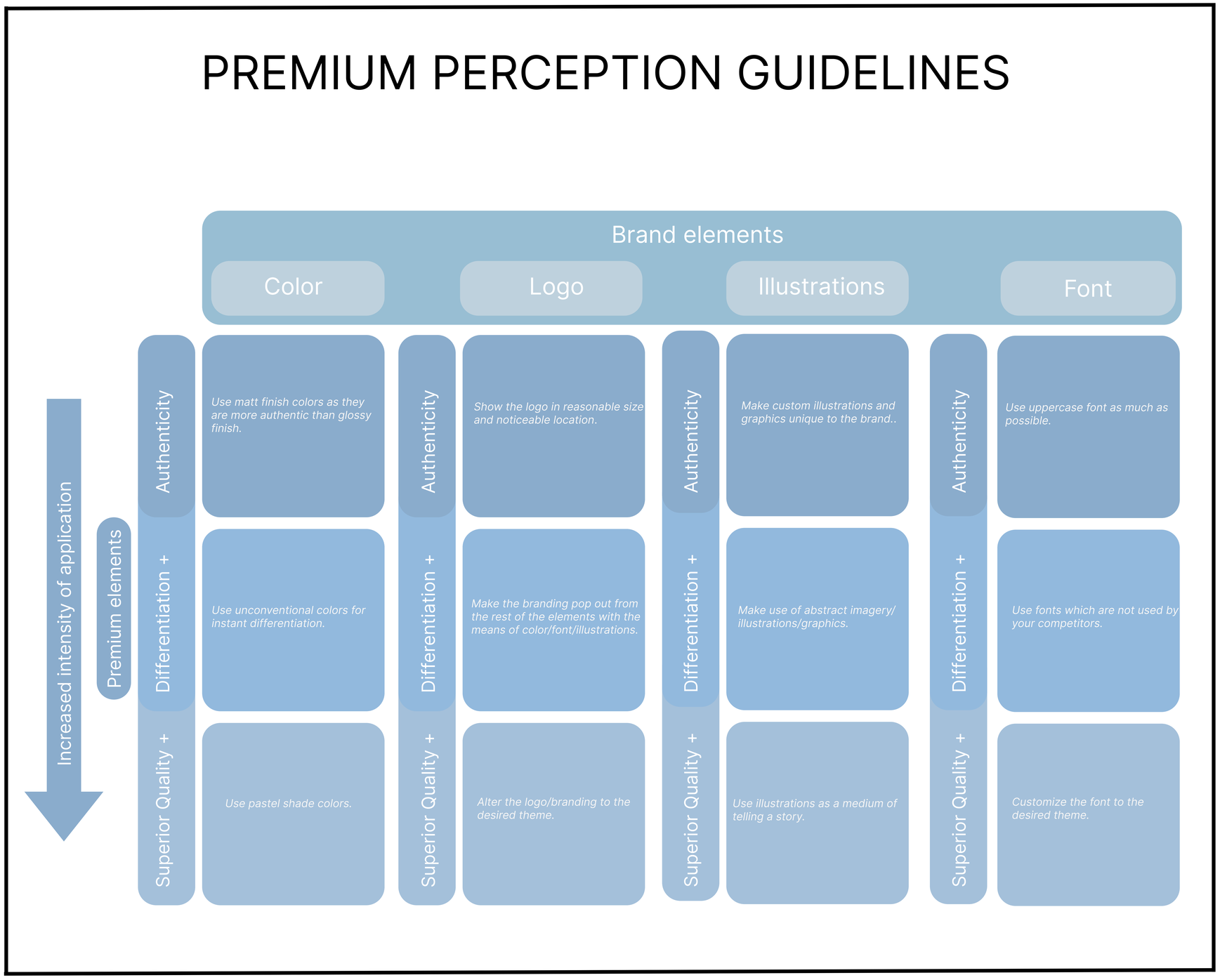


Figure 12: Design guidelines extracted from the qualitative research phase. Authentic, Unique and superior quality are the three main factors and basis for the guidelines respectively. The brand elements; color, logo, illustrations, font have been placed in this particular order as part of the deductions from the focus group sessions.

Figure 13: The Torres brand uses subtle color like white for all of its flavors giving it a authentic and classy vibe. The illustrations are straight to the point which make it a minimal design as well.

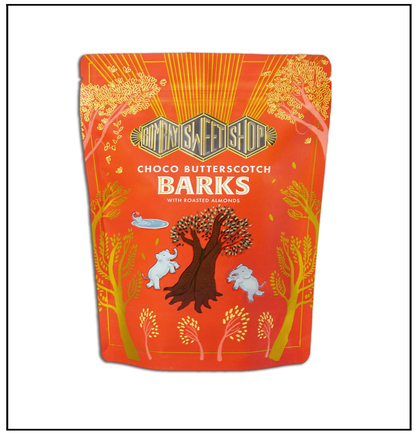


Figure 14: Bombay sweet shop's Butterscotch barks went unconventional with its bright orange color and illustrations. Along with this, it carries a theme throughout with literal tree barks as illustrations.

Authenticity
Authenticity is the first of the three, as packaging design usually begins with the specific character of the brand; the premium perception of packaging is based on an honest, genuine, and trustworthy character (Beverland, 2005).

Color: Use matt finish colors as they are more authentic than glossy finish. Matt finished colors are highly appreciated and are seen as more authentic than glossy colors, especially in food products (Marckhgott et al., Bernadette. 2019). The focus group respondents also responded in a similar way, with most of them favoring matt-finished colors. (Figures 13, 14, 20)

Logo: Show the logo in reasonable size and noticeable location. This identity area doesn't need to be huge, but it should be larger and more prominent than the items around it so it gets first attention when users look at the package (Figure 13). Excessively large logo with unnoticeable style has a negative impact on the premium perception.

Illustrations: Make custom illustrations and graphics unique to the brand. Creating illustrations specific to the brand sets an authentic image; as respondents answered, "the more you recognize brands with just fewer elements, the more authentic it feels." (Figure 14)

Font: Use uppercase font as much as possible. Using uppercase font in logo, flavors, labels sets a serious tone for the brand which is considered authentic by the consumers (Figure 13)

Figure 15: Label with claim of "Bags made with 50% recycled plastic" For the brand Sun bites. Labels with claims like these are believed to have a positive impact on premium perception.

Figure 16: (Left) TOO YUM criticized for its logo which went unnoticed and indistinguishable. (Right)The fonts in this brand are all uppercase and are seen as more premium as mentioned in the focus group sessions.

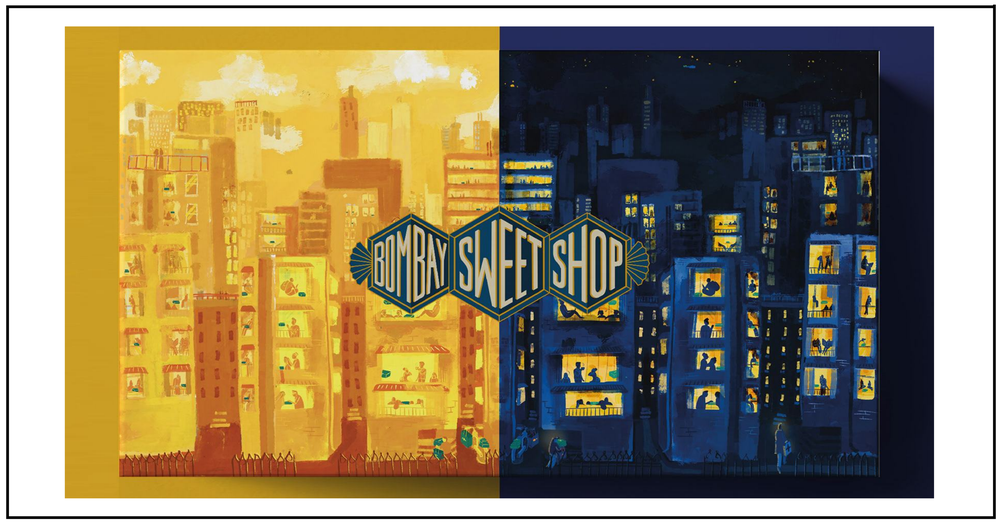


Figure 17: Package of "Bombay sweet shop." The unconventional illustration with the background where the city's skyline and it's sleepless aura are depicted. This sets its apart as most of the packaged sweet brands India focus more grandeur than storytelling.

Differentiation
Differentiation is the second guideline in creating premium perception, aligning with authenticity while distinguishing itself from the competition. As per focus groups, being unconventional and different gives the product a confident appearance and makes it more trustable.

Color: Use unconventional colors for instant differentiation. The use of an innovative color scheme, which the competitors use after that, makes the product/package stand out. It was noticed that Indian consumers associate brands with colors, and a copied color makes them look cheap and non-premium. This also meant that the brand was being recognized as some other.

Brand affects its trustworthiness; "a packaging's character and trustworthiness are based on brand recognizability" (Keller, K.L. 2013) and a severe identity (Mugge, R. 2011). Bombay Sweet Shop stood out with its unique colors (Figure 17). Another example is the orange color used by "Kettle Studio," which has already been used by "Lays" in the market for a much longer time for a similar flavor. This made the respondents believe it to be a copy/ripoff of lays.

Logo: Make the branding pop out from the rest of the elements by using color, font, and illustrations. The logo should be contrasting from the background; otherwise, they are not easily noticeable. Almost all focus group respondents criticized the "TOO YUM" logo for being indistinguishable. Example (Figure:16, left)

Figure 18: The logo of lays is usually the left side design, but for its gourmet series it designed a crafty logo to go with the theme which gave it a much more premium look.

Illustrations: Make use of abstract imagery/illustrations/ graphics.
According to the respondents, the use of abstract imagery makes the package look more "niche" compared to others (Example: Figure 20); you can see in the figure how the flavor is presented in a very abstract yet literal for easy understanding.

Font: Use fonts that are not used by your competitors.
Unique fonts are better for differentiation, Which helps the product be more noticeable in Aisle. (Example figure:13, 17, 20). A large number of brands use fonts similar to ultra-popular brands like "Lays" to be safe. Instead, they end up being rip-offs of the original, which makes them cheap.

Figure 19: Multiple premium FMCG brands in India, which originated in India but adopt a western name & cultural style to make it look more premium.

Figure 20: Illustration of "Tyrells Chips". The flavor sea salt has been depicted with three people performing a somersault on a sea shore to depict the flavor in an abstract manner.

Superior Quality
Superior quality is the final guideline in defining premium packaging perception (see Figure 12). This is described as the effort put into designing the elements, the craftsmanship, and the story these elements tell (Individually or combined). Respondents indicated that having a Western cultural reference is synonymous with high-quality perception, as they are deemed as more classic and original. They believe Western manufactured products to be of higher quality than the local ones. This makes any reference to the Western culture more classic, original, and trustworthy. This stands true for other consumer products as well and not just the food category(Kinra, Neelam. (2006)).

Figure 21: Ham jambon is a packaged chips brand in the premium category, notice how all the packages are in pastel shades. Pastel shades are seen as exclusive and luxury as per the focus groups.

As you can see in Figure 19, a wide range of brands opted for this strategy, including the government of India, which started the cosmetics brand "Lakme" as early as 1952. Matt finished colors and pastel colors were seen as a sign of a superior quality product as it made the product look more "sleek," according to the respondents. They also believed it gave a much more premium feel than a flashy color finish.

Color: Use pastel colors along with a matt finish. Pastel colors are seen as a luxury, and using them gives out a non-mass exclusive perception to the consumers, according to focus groups. Adding gold to the palette gives it a much more premium and luxurious look. (Figure:21)

Logo: Alter the logo/branding to the desired theme. The logo should be crafty and in line with the theme of the rest of the elements and the desired flavor; this gives out an exclusive design perception, which is regarded as superior by the consumers. (Figure: 18)

Illustrations: Use illustrations as a medium for telling a story. In the focus groups, the respondents praised the subtle storytelling quality of "The Bombay sweet shop" (Figure:16), where the city's skyline is depicted in the background, and the usage of the word "Bombay" instead of "Mumbai", where the city is shown as a place that never sleeps, it instantly connected well with the respondents. This shows the craftsmanship of the designers in subtly engaging in storytelling without distracting the consumers. (Figure 14, 17, 20)

Font: Customize the font to the desired theme. Just like the logo, the font should follow the theme of the package, as a single type constant font has a chance of looking odd for different themes. Notice how lays changed its font for it's gourmet selection as compared to the regular flavors. (Figure 18)

Design Cues Excluded:
Design cues from this research project are not integrated into the final version of the guidelines and cues (Figure 12) to maintain its broad cross-category applicability in the Indian market. Cues like endorsements and cultural relevance, for example, are left out. Other cues, like culturally sensitive illustrations, are also left out for the same reasons. These cues were derived from research focused on products for the Indian market. Although the guidelines are based on Indian standards, incorporating the cues would further limit its scope.

5

Redesign

Redesign

For the redesign, we are going to select a package from one of the product categories and use the guidelines and cues to create a new design for the chosen brand. The original Kettle Studio packaging faced significant criticism, even though it is one of the highest-ranked products. It was criticized primarily for its color scheme, which appeared copied as the orange color was already in use by lays for a similar flavor from much before. Respondents started assuming it to be copied from lays due to this.

Additionally, it had a super large logo, which respondents thought was unnecessary as they felt the brand was trying to get attention and leaving little to no space for other elements; with everything else cramped inside a box and lacking composition, the package was perceived as cheap as a result of all these factors.

The redesign of the original Kettle Studio packaging involved three sets of designs: Redesign 1 (Figure 20, left), Redesign 2 (Figure 21, right) and Redesign 3 (Figure 22). The changes are explained using terms related to the premium packaging guidelines. Each redesign will be subjected to a progressive increase in the intensity of the guidelines as well as the corresponding premium elements. The final redesign is expected to be designed with the aid of a maximum number of guidelines presented in the previous chapter.

Redesign

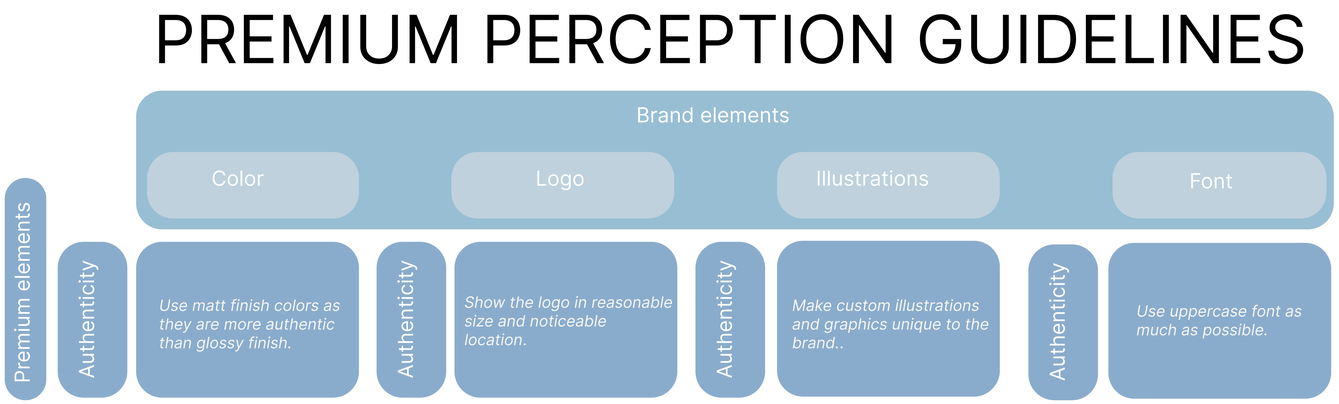


Figure 22: First redesign of "kettle studio" package.

Redesign 1:
In the first redesign, Authenticity is the premium element that has been focused on; as already discussed in the previous chapter, authenticity plays the foundational role in creating a premium package.

Several aspects have been changed; the orange color has been darkened to make it look more authentic and not as a copy (Authenticity). The logo has been reduced in size with adjusted contrast to look more chic and different (Authentic), (Different). The font has been shifted to uppercase for flavor, and "Kettle cooked" has been made bolder to be easily noticeable and trustworthy (Authentic). Golden stripes have been added to give an exclusive and non-mass look to the package (Superior quality). Customized illustrations for a chic and authentic appearance (Authenticity). The first redesign has a matte finish to make it look more expensive than the glossy finish of the original package (Superior quality).

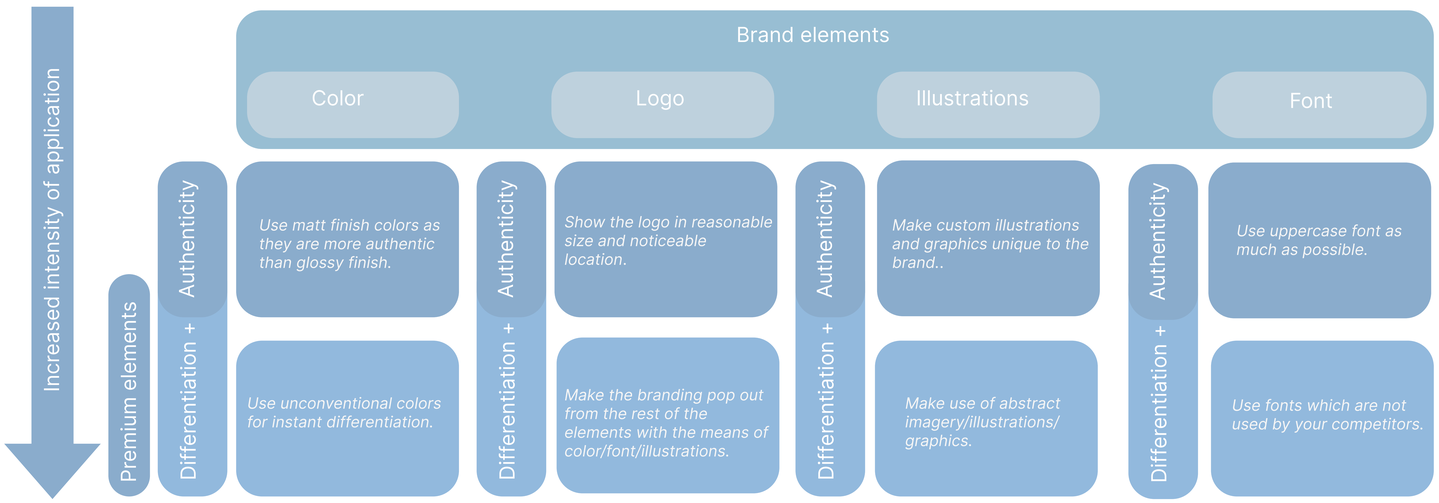


Figure 23: Second redesign of "kettle studio" package.

Redesign 2:
In the second redesign, we subject the package to an additional premium element, which is differentiation along with authenticity. This will ensure that the brand elements are more premium than the previous one. To differentiate it from its competition, a new color has been given; Maroon acts as an innovative color in its product category(Different). This also gives the package an expensive look (Superior quality), and the illustrations have been a little more extensive to give it a more serious character(Authentic). A label/claim on the top to make it more trustable and different from its competitors (Authentic & different). The new color combined with golden stripes with changed orientation for better visibility, giving it a luxurious appearance compared to its in-store counterparts (Superior quality). The logo is popping up more compared to the first iteration due to the color combination. This, in addition to the font used throughout, sets a much more serious tone, which makes it more authentic. The kettle-cooked part is written in uppercase bold font to make sure it's explicitly visible as soon as you look at the package (Differentiation). Just like the first redesign, this one has a matt finish as well to give it a high-quality look (Superior quality).

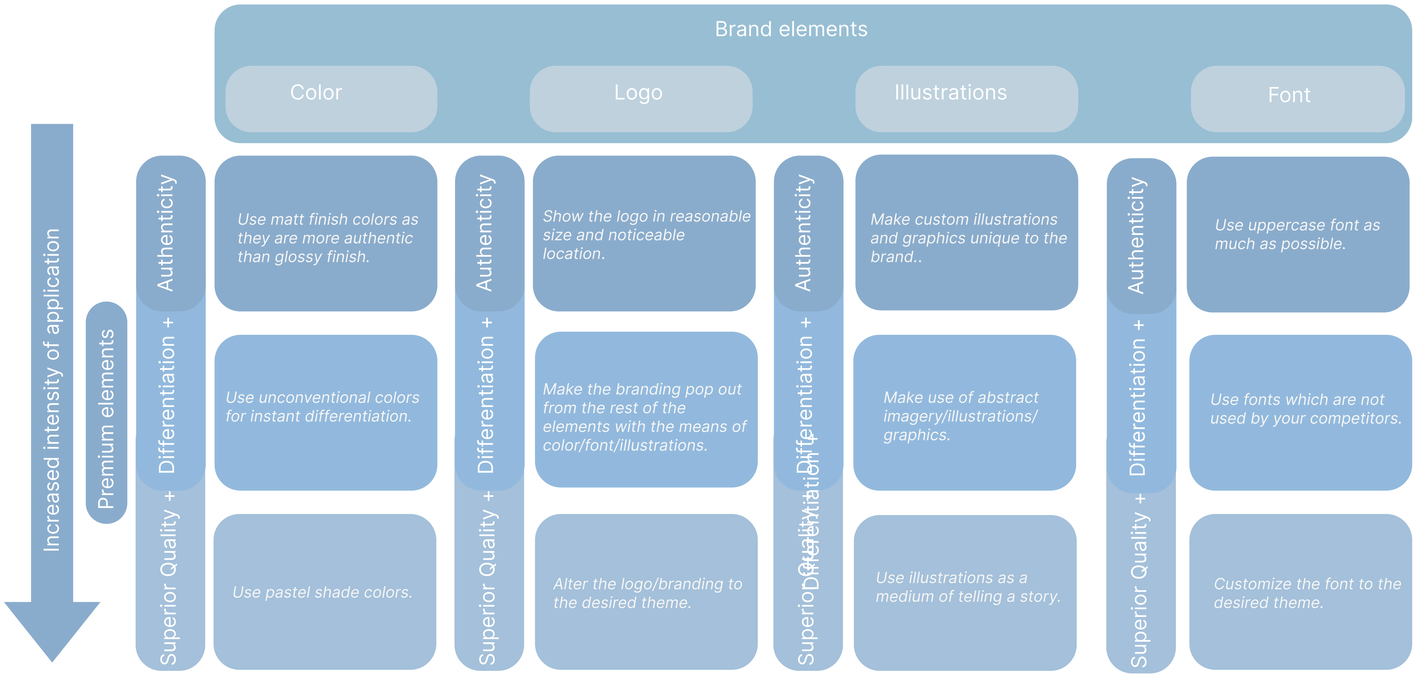


Figure 24: Third redesign of "kettle studio" package.

Design 3: The ultimate design

The final redesign (figure 21) stands out by its completely differentiated appearance from the rest of the samples used in the project (differentiation). It uses an eggshell white background color, unlike any of the other samples, with a theme of its own (Differentiation). This has a matt finish as well to give out a high-quality appearance (Superior quality). The "Kettle cooked" part is written on an illustration of a ribbon in Western style to further enhance its theme. The illustration on the package is added with a Western theme to give it a more classic appearance (Superior quality). A label was added mentioning its blend and type in a much bold manner to make it stand out. (Different) A tagline of "Raw & Rustic" was added on top of the logo, along with a mini illustration of a sheriff's star to make the entire theme more consistent and tell a story of an old western tale. (Superior quality). The appearance is further enhanced with the help of a golden strip on the side in a vertical manner, instead of two horizontal stripes to balance minimalism to give a nonmass and exclusive look, as the illustrations have been quite heavy on this design (Superior quality).

Quick glimpse of designs and changes

Original design

The original design has:

- *glossy finish with bright orange color*
- *oversized logo covering approximately 40% of the entire area.*
- *The flavor is mentioned in yellow color, which is overshadowed by the orange color.*
- *"Kettle cooked" is written with white font and uppercase font.*
- *The label "cooked in sunflower oil blend" is written in a circular label in extremely small font.*
- *graphic of chips are illustrated.*

Redesign 1

The redesign 1 has:

- *Matt finish with dark orange color*
- *Prominent logo yet smaller than the original design.*
- *The flavor is mentioned in white color, in uppercase.*
- *"Kettle cooked" is written with white font and uppercase font and in center prominent place.*
- *Custom illustrations of chilli are made to keep things minimal.*
- Golden stripes are added on both sides.

Redesign 2

The redesign 2 has:

- *Matt finish with unique maroon color as main palette.*
- *Prominent logo similar to redesign 1, yet smaller than the original design.*
- *The flavor is mentioned in white color, in extreme bold font and uppercase.*
- *"Kettle cooked" is written with white font and uppercase font and in center prominent place.*
- *Custom illustrations of chilli are made, added with basil and lime.*
- *The label "cooked in sunflower oil blend" is given a prominent space in center top position.*
- *Horizontal golden stripes are added in horizontal manner.*

Redesign 3

The redesign 3 has:

- *Matt finish with pastel white color.*
- *customized logo matching the theme, similar to redesign 1,2 yet smaller than the original design.*
- *The flavor is mentioned in extreme bold font and uppercase.*
- *"Kettle cooked" is written with white font on a western ribbon background.*
- *Thematic illustrations of western cowboys are made to give it a western theme, added with chilli.*
- *The label "cooked in sunflower oil blend" is given a prominent space in center top position.*
- *Golden stripe is added on the left in vertical manner.*

6

Quantitative research

Quantitative research

Research Design

The study adopted both within-subjects and between-subjects experimental designs to investigate the effect of different designs of brand elements (logo, illustrations, font, and color) on the perception of premium quality in chip packaging among young Indian consumers. This research design and approach were inspired by Ruth et al., van den BergWeitzel.(2014), where a similar study was conducted for designing a premium package and focused on manipulating the premium perception using premium elements, with a focus on the Western audience.

The within-subjects research design allowed participants to rank six different designs, which were compared and evaluated. This study was done as a between-subjects study with four groups of independent samples to minimize biases that could arise from participants evaluating multiple designs and reduce the risk of order effects and participant fatigue. Here, the original design was compared with three redesigns, with the original design serving as the baseline. The variables mentioned below were systematically tweaked to determine the premium perception of those variables and the desired packaging. For snapshot of survey questionnaire, refer to Appendix E

Participants: The target population was young Indian consumers aged 22 to 28. A sample of 120 participants was randomly assigned to different groups, ensuring that each participant evaluated only one packaging design. The survey involved four distinct groups, each consisting of 30 participants, thereby yielding an actual total sample size of 120 respondents.

Each group was presented with a set of six packaging designs. The first group evaluated the original Kettle Studio packaging design, the second group assessed “Redesign 1,” the third group reviewed “Redesign 2,” and the fourth group reviewed “Redesign 3.” For this particular study, premiumness was defined as the sum of the premium elements. Hence, premiumness existed in three levels for this study (Level 1, 2, 3).

The Variables:
The independent variables for this study were:

- Premiumness (Level 1)
- Premiumness (Level 2)
- Premiumness (Level 3)

Dependent Variable
Premium perception of the package.

Figure 25: The definition IV’s for this project in the form of a table.

Control Variables:

- Packaging Material: Constant across all conditions.
- Product Information: Identical across all packaging designs.
- Physical dimensions of the package.
- Shape of the package
- Texture of the package

Figure 26: Snapshot of what respondents saw for within-subjects ranking compared with other brands sample designs.

The numbering of the sample brands is as follows:
1 - Wilde
2 - Lays
3 - Kettle Studio

4 - Kerala Banana Chips
5 - Doritos
6 - Binge

Data Collection
An online survey from Qualtrics was used to collect responses. The survey included demographic questions, multiple-choice questions, rank order, and matrix tables to measure premium perception.

Procedure
The survey instrument included six questions:

1. The first two questions elicited demographic information.
2. The third question required respondents to rank the packaging designs.
3. The fourth question asked respondents to rate the perceived price of the packaging on a high-to-low scale.
4. The fifth question assessed the premium perception of the Kettle Studio as a whole by the three guidelines mentioned.
5. The final question involved rating the individual elements by their premium perception.

Data Analysis
With at least 30 respondents in each of the four surveys (n=120), the results were analyzed using the statistical software program IBM SPSS. This allowed for the investigation of relationships and comparisons.
The guidelines rated for different designs and the premium perception of individual elements across the four designs were analyzed through between-groups one-way ANOVA. The price rated for different designs was compared through post hoc tests to identify differences.

Reason for Selecting the Sample Brands
The five sample brands used for the quantitative survey were selected because the same brands had been used in the qualitative research phase. This provided a relatively stable perspective on how the Kettle Studio performed in the focus groups and how it might perform in the survey. This continuity helped in predicting how the brand elements would influence the survey, as all aspects of the different brand designs had been discussed in the focus groups.

Ethical Considerations
Participants were informed about the study's purpose, and consent was obtained. The study ensured participant confidentiality and allowed for voluntary withdrawal.

Data Analysis & Output
The designs were based on a set of guidelines extracted from literature review and qualitative research, thus testing the applicability of the guidelines. The conclusions and insights observed from the statistical output were based on the previous research carried out in this project.

Analysis of the Control Variables
The control variables for this research were largely kept constant throughout the four designs, with a single exception: the label "cooked in refined sunflower oil blend" was removed from the first redesign to

make it more minimal than the original design. Apart from that, everything, including the shape, weight, and information provided on the package, was kept constant.

Comparing differences in means of ranked packages. The four Kettle Studio designs are ranked by premiumness compared to the designs of other brands. The significance of the difference in ranking is researched by within-subjects ANOVA; see appendix for the output tables of tests of within-subject effects. The redesigns are expected to rank progressively higher than the original design with respect to other brand packages, with Redesign 3 expected to rank the highest due to the maximum implementation of the design guidelines. The original design is ranked significantly different compared to the other three designs. Bonferroni shows that the original design (Mean =4.033)does not significantly differ in means with any of the five brands it's compared with.

Redesign 1 is ranked significantly different than Wilde, Doritos, and Binge, and it is ranked higher than Kerala Banana Chips with no significant difference. redesign 2,3 are ranked significantly different and higher than Wilde, Kerala Banana Chips, Doritos, and Binge. Design 4(Mean=4.967) and 3(Mean=4.800) are ranked the most premium out of 4 designs, although the differences in means between Lays and Kettle Studio are higher in Redesign 3. Original design and Redesign 1 are ranked second after lays, but the mean difference between lays and Kettle Studio is less for Redesign 1 (Diff=-0.345)as compared to Original design (Diff=-0.733). This is exactly coherent with the intentions of the redesign. A most important insight is how the designs were progressively ranked higher and crossed “Lays” which was considered premium in most of the qualitative and quantitative study conducted.

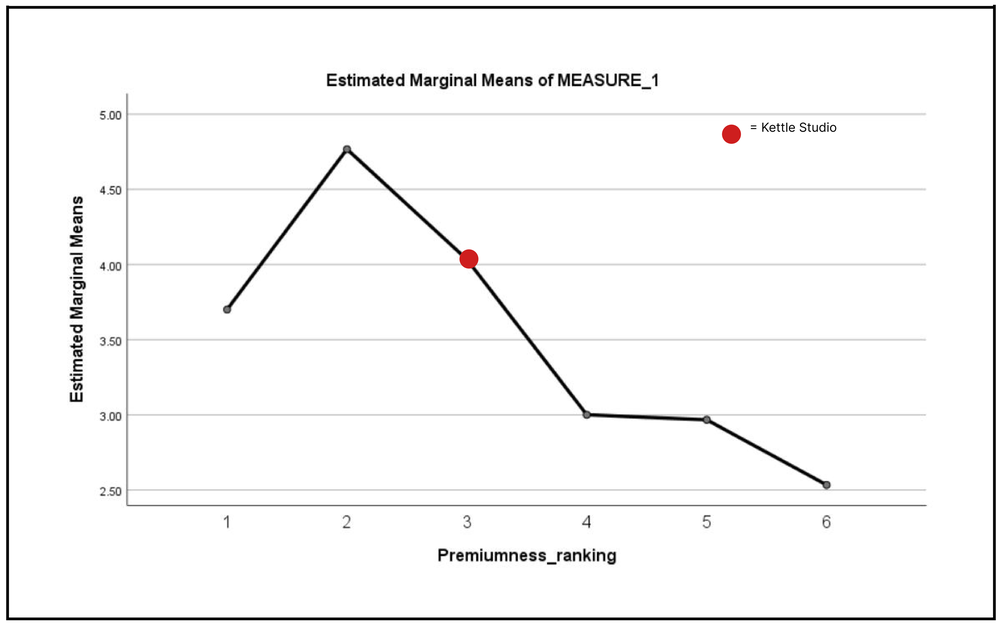


Figure 27: The mean plots of the original design ranked against other brand packages.

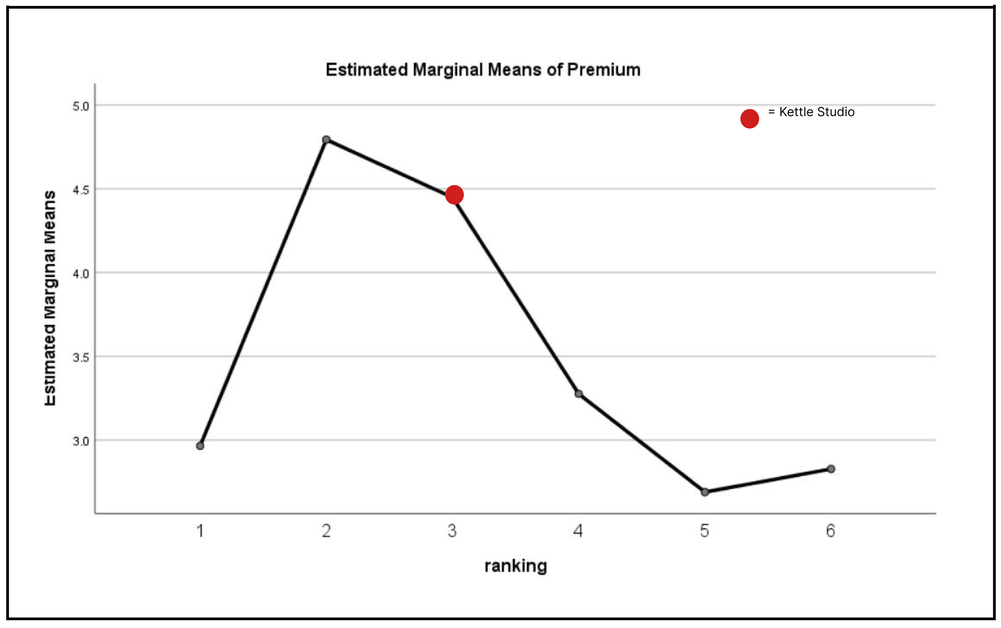


Figure 28: The mean plots of the redesign 1 ranked against other brand packages.

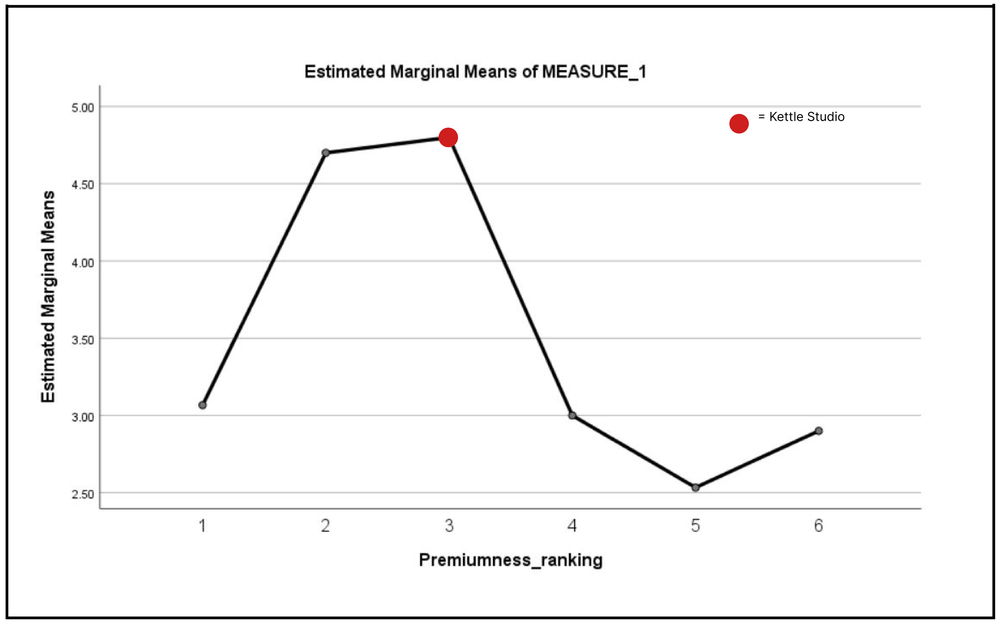


Figure 29: The mean plots of the redesign 2 ranked against other brand packages.

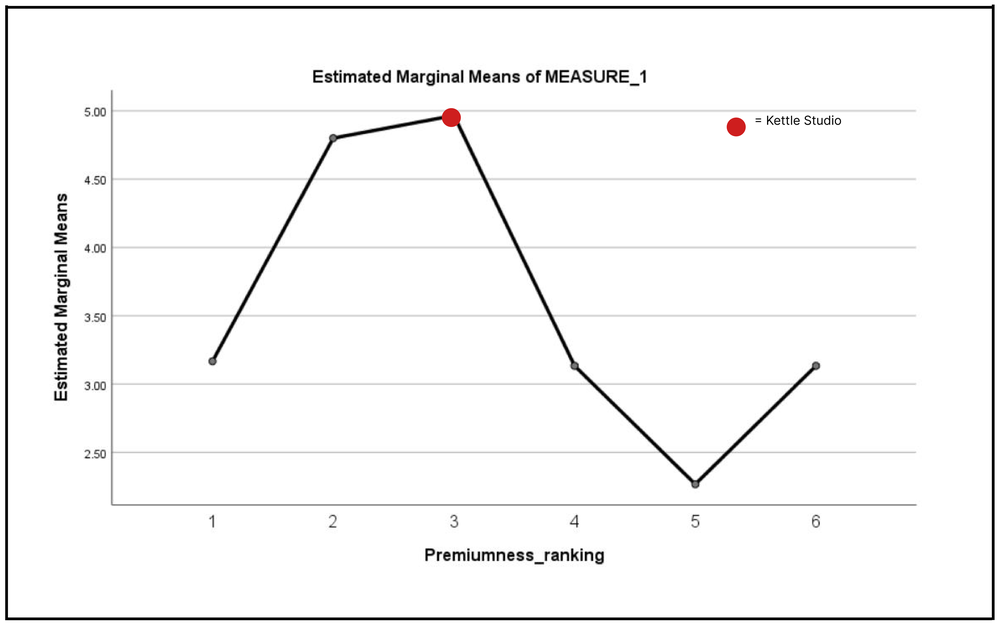


Figure 30: The mean plots of the redesign 3 ranked against other brand packages.

Comparing the means of ranking between four designs. The four designs used in the survey are compared by their means of ranking to check if the redesigns have been progressively ranked higher than their predecessors. They are expected to rank higher with each redesign, with redesign 3 ranking the highest. As expected, Redesign 3 was ranked highest based on the mean ranking, as compared to Redesign 2,1 and the original design. The mean scores of the designs were (4.03,4.45,4.80,4.97) respectively for four designs, with standard deviations of (1.54, 1.61, 1.40, and 1.36) respectively, refer to Appendix F for the table.

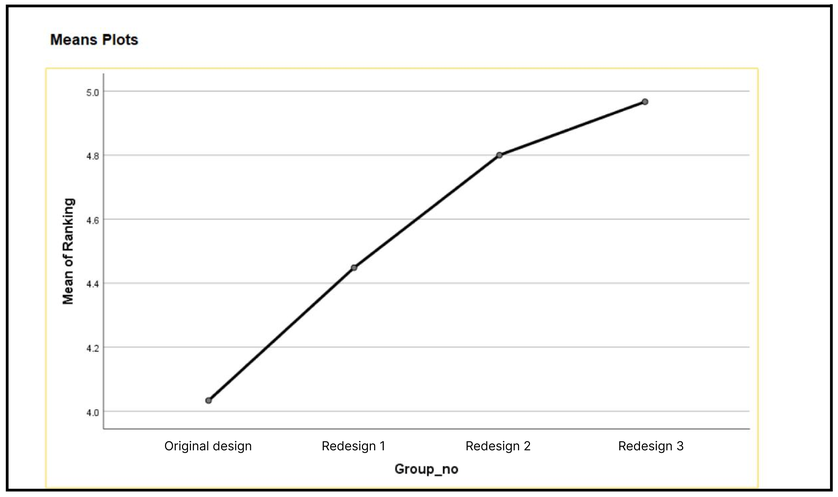


Figure 31: Means plot of average means of the four designs ranked against each other.

Comparing the means of premium packaging elements. The elements of premium packaging perception are analyzed between groups using one-way ANOVA to compare the averages of the three premium elements between different designs. The expected outcome would be that all the designs would be progressively

ranked higher starting from the original design, redesign 1, redesign 2, and redesign 3, with redesign three ranking the highest with the averages of three premium elements. The three premium elements are individually rated in the survey on a 5-point Likert scale, after which the average of three is taken as each design is designed to increase the intensity of premium elements one at a time. Stemming from the results, Redesign 3 ranked the highest, with Redesign 2 coming in second with insignificant differences. The outcome is majorly in line with the expected results, with slight variations; redesign three was expected to rank significantly higher, which is not the case. Along with this, if the rating of the premium elements is looked at individually, we see that,

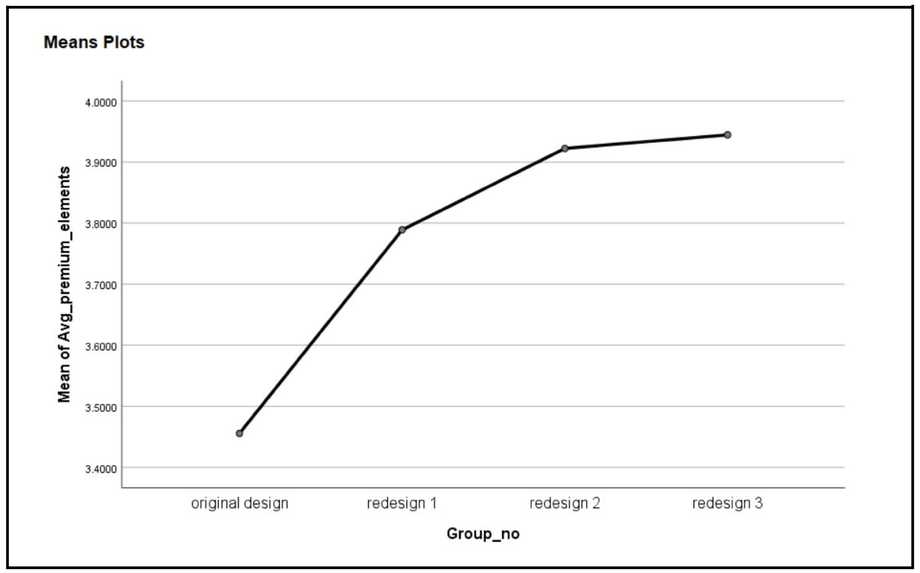


Figure 32: Means plot of averages of premium elements ranked across the four designs.

for authenticity, redesign 3 ranked the highest with a slightly higher and insignificant mean. For differentiation, redesign 2 ranked the highest, more than redesign 3, and for superior quality, redesign 3 ranked the highest, as expected. The graphs for individual premium element ranking can be found in the appendix F. The mean scores for the average of three premium elements are (3.42, 3.76, 3.90, 4.26) for each of the redesigns, respectively, with a standard deviation of (0.89, 0.88, 0.55, 0.48) respectively, refer to Appendix F for the table.. This also means that 3 is perceived to be more premium on a fundamental level than the other three designs.

Comparing the means of price.

Price is considered a handy indicator of premium perception. Participants were asked to indicate the price range of the respective kettle studio design presented to them on a 5-point Likert scale. The expected outcome would be Redesign 3 being the most expensive design, and the designs being progressively ranked expensive starting from the original design, redesign 1,2,3. The results were; Price difference is significant [F(3,120)=6.362, p=.000]. Bonferroni shows Redesign 3 as being perceived as significantly more expensive than Original Design & Redesign 1 and 2. Redesign 2 was rated as expensive as well. The outcome was majorly in line with the expected results as well. The means of the four designs were (2.96, 3.61, 3.71, 4.10) respectively, with a standard deviation of (1.21, 1.24,0.88, 1.06) respectively, refer to Appendix F for the table.

Comparing the means of premium perception of brand elements.

The brand elements selected for this project (Color, logo, illustrations, font) are analyzed based on their premiumness through one-way ANOVA. All the redesigns are expected to progressively rank better for each of the brand elements. The color of Redesign 3 is expected to rank the highest. Redesign 2 has an innovative maroon palette, and redesign 3 has a pastel shade, which is seen as an expensive and luxurious color

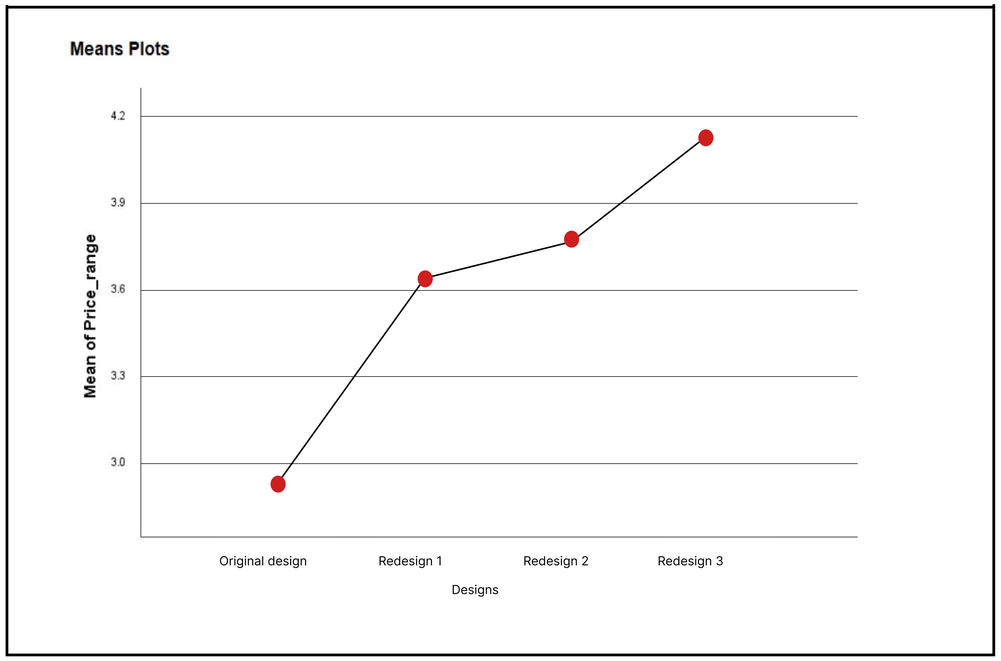


Figure 33: Means plot of perceived price range of four designs.

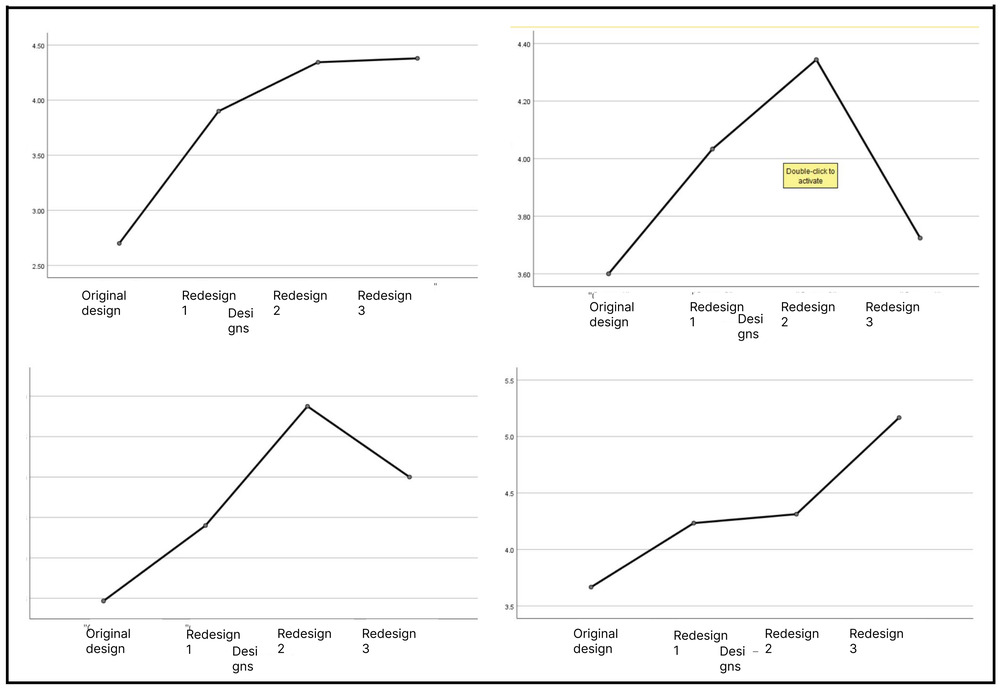


Figure 34: Means plot of brand elements ranked in each of the four designs . (Color-top left, Logo-top right, Illustrations-bottom left, Font - bottom right).

palette for food packages. The illustrations of Redesign 3 are also expected to rank the highest owing to their theme and story. Three of the four brand elements; Color [F(3,120)=6.889,p=0.00], Illustrations [F(3,120)=3.493,p=0.018], Font [F(3,120)=5.233,p=0.02] are significantly different apart from Logo [F(3,120)=1.549,p=0.206] whose difference is insignificant. Post-hoc Bonferroni shows that Redesign 3's color and font are ranked higher than the original design, redesigns 1 & 2, and significantly different from

original design, which is in line with the expected outcome. The color of Redesign 3 differs from other designs due to the pastel shade of eggshell white with golden stripes. Redesign 2 was ranked second in color's premium perception. The font of Redesign 3 is customized to match the theme of the package, unlike other designs. Redesign 2's logo and illustrations are rated higher than the original design, redesign 1 &3, with illustrations significantly different from the original design and insignificantly higher than Redesign 3.

Correlation between price and premium elements.
The correlation between premium elements amongst each other and the correlation between premium elements and the perceived price range rated by the participants are analyzed. They are expected to increase with the price, and a positive correlation is expected between elements and the price. The results indicate that there is a strong positive correlation between price and the premium elements: authenticity (Pearson's r = .436, p<.01), differentiation (Pearson's r = .385, p<.01), superior quality (Pearson's r = .431, p<.01). There is also strong positive correlation between authenticity and superior quality(Pearson's r = .479, p<.01), and superior quality and differentiation (Pearson's r = .384, p<.01) and authenticity and differentiation (Pearson's r = .389, p<.01). These results indicate that the tested design has a positive correlation, and higher price meant higher authenticity, differentiation and superior quality. Apart from this, all the premium elements are correlated to each other as well.

Correlations

		Price_range	Differentiation	Superior_quality	Authenticity
Price_range	Pearson Correlation	1	.385**	.431**	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	121	121	121	121
Differentiation	Pearson Correlation	.385**	1	.384**	.389**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	121	121	121	121
Superior_quality	Pearson Correlation	.431**	.384**	1	.479**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	121	121	121	121
Authenticity	Pearson Correlation	.436**	.389**	.479**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	121	121	121	121

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 35: Correlations table between price and premium elements (Differentiation, Superior quality, Authenticity).

Correlation between price and brand elements.
The correlation between price and brand elements is analyzed. These are expected to rise higher with increasing price, and as deduced from the qualitative research, Color is expected to correlate highest with price, followed by Logo, Illustrations, and lastly, font. There is a strong positive correlation between Color and price as expected (Pearson's r = .468, p<.01), and price and price and logo (Pearson's r = .421, p<.01), followed by font (Pearson's r = .372, p<.01) and illustrations (Pearson's r = .337, p<.01). Most of the correlations are expected apart from font, which was expected to be least correlated amongst the four. Instead, illustrations were the least correlated among the four. There is a strong positive correlation between Color and font (Pearson's r = .559, p<.01); this was expected as it was previously

discussed in the guidelines chapter, the more the font pops out, the higher the premium perception and Illustrations and logo (Pearson's r = .507, p<.01). This indicates the importance of a customized logo in accordance with the theme of the package. There is a strong positive correlation between color and illustrations (Pearson's r = .491, p<.01); this falls in line with the font's correlation, as color should not overshadow the illustration but instead complement its visibility. There is also a positive correlation between illustrations and font (Pearson's r = .354, p<.01).

Correlations

		FONT	LOGO	ILLUSTRATIONS	COLOR	PRICE
FONT	Pearson Correlation	1	.392**	.354**	.559**	.372**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	121
LOGO	Pearson Correlation	.392**	1	.507**	.443**	.421**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	121
ILLUSTRATIONS	Pearson Correlation	.354**	.507**	1	.491**	.337**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	122	122	122	122	121
COLOR	Pearson Correlation	.559**	.443**	.491**	1	.468**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	122	122	122	122	121
PRICE	Pearson Correlation	.372**	.421**	.337**	.468**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	121	121	121	121	121

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 36: Correlations table between price and brand elements (Color, Logo, Illustrations,Font).

Regression between price and premium elements.
In regression analysis, it is expected that all three elements would have a similar level of importance as all three are key to creating premium perception. After performing regression between price and each of the premium perception elements, it concluded that superior quality is the most important element for premium perception in predicting the price range by participants. The results showed a 25.5% variance in the pricing of the package [R2 adj = 25.5; F (1,120) =42.074,p<.01]. The perception of superior quality significantly affects premium perception. This is followed by Authenticity, where the results showed a 23.3% variance in the pricing of the package [R2 adj = 23.3; F (1,120) =37.129,p<.01]. Authenticity significantly affects the premium perception of the package as well. And lastly, differentiation had a 13.4% variance in the pricing of the package [R2 adj = 13.4; F (1,120) =19.603,p<.01. Although Authenticity and superior quality had a similar effect on pricing, differentiation's effect on pricing is much lower.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.489[a]	.239	.233	1.062	.239	37.129	1	118	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity
b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.883	1	41.883	37.129	.000[b]
	Residual	133.108	118	1.128		
	Total	174.992	119			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE
b. Predictors: (Constant), Authenticity

Figure 37: Regression table for premium element authenticity and it's effect on price.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.376[a]	.141	.134	1.146	.141	19.603	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Different

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.740	1	25.740	19.603	.000[b]
	Residual	156.260	119	1.313		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Different

Figure 38: Regression table for premium element differentiation and it's effect on price.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.511[a]	.261	.255	1.063	.261	42.074	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Superior_quality

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.540	1	47.540	42.074	.000[b]
	Residual	134.460	119	1.130		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), Superior_quality

Figure 39: Regression table for premium element superior quality and it's effect on price.

Regression between price and brand elements.
From regression between price and brand elements, following outputs have been observed. The expected outcome was that color had the highest effect on price, stemming from the qualitative research, followed by logo, illustrations, and font. As expected, Color had a variance of 21.3% in the pricing of the package [R2 adj = 23.3; F (1,120) =39.935,p<.01], Color is the most important brand element for premium perception, followed by logo with a 17.7% variance in pricing, as expected since Color and logo were stemmed to be the most important brand elements for premium perception. Just like the correlation analysis, the regression analysis also shows that font has a higher effect on pricing than illustrations.

Figure 40: Regression table for brand element color and it's effect on price.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.468[a]	.219	.213	1.093	.219	33.451	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), COLOR

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.935	1	39.935	33.451	.000[b]
	Residual	142.065	119	1.194		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), COLOR

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.421[a]	.177	.170	1.122	.177	25.653	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), LOGO

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	32.276	1	32.276	25.653	.000[b]
	Residual	149.724	119	1.258		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), LOGO

Figure 41: Regression table for brand element logo and it's effect on price.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.372[a]	.138	.131	1.148	.138	19.096	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), FONT

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.167	1	25.167	19.096	.000[b]
	Residual	156.833	119	1.318		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), FONT

Figure 42: Regression table for brand element font and it's effect on price.

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.337[a]	.113	.106	1.164	.113	15.217	1	119	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), ILLUSTRATIONS

b. Dependent Variable: PRICE

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	20.634	1	20.634	15.217	.000[b]
	Residual	161.366	119	1.356		
	Total	182.000	120			

a. Dependent Variable: PRICE

b. Predictors: (Constant), ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 43: Regression table for brand element illustrations and it's effect on price.

7

Discussion

Discussion

In the previous chapter, the results of the quantitative survey were presented. Combining what was found during the focus groups, quantitative survey and what was found in the various literature reviews leads to some key findings. In this chapter, first, these key findings will be discussed, organized by focus point. Afterwards, the limitations of this study and potential follow-up studies. Last, the conclusions from this research will be presented.

Key findings

Influence of premium elements on premium perception. One of the essential focus points was determining the influence of premium elements on premium perception. That is, how three different levels of premiumness defined in this project affect/influence the premium perception of a food product's packaging.

The motive behind understanding the effect of these elements was to help the SMEs' designers design a premium package for their food products. This was achieved with the help of a guidebook created with the outcomes of a literature review and qualitative and quantitative studies.

Stemming from the mentioned research phase, significant relationships have been found between the premium elements and premium perception. Based on the ranking scores from the within-subjects ranking design, it was found that increasing premiumness intensity by progressively adding the premium element's respective guidelines made the redesigns rank progressively better. This finding aligns with (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel, 2014), where it is discussed that higher intensity of premium elements application (In our case, three levels of premiumness) will result in higher premium perception. This statement is backed by the data from the price perception ranking, where we can see that the redesigns have been rated progressively higher price perception can be a handy indicator of premium perception.

In a correlation analysis conducted, strong positive correlations have been established between price perception and premium elements. This falls in line with a similar study conducted by (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel, 2014), which stated that since price perception is expected to increase with the increased intensity of premium elements application, a strong positive correlation would be established between the premium elements and price. The results from the quantitative research further validate this statement.

Authenticity:
As per focus group respondents, authenticity was seen as having a refreshing character for the brand. The package's elements should differ from those of any significant national brands or market leaders. In one of the tasks, they ranked a leading premium chips brand critically since it seemed like a rip-off of another prominent market leader. Hence, the brand elements relating to authenticity were designed to be refreshing or unique to the brand. When tested, the redesigns were progressively rated higher for authenticity, which supports the statement derived from the focus groups. Further, in correlation analysis, it was found that authenticity had the highest correlation with price perception. Similarly, it had the second-highest effect on price variance in the regression analysis conducted.

between premium elements and price perception. Here, it is essential to note that price perception is used as an indicator of premium perception. The data further supports and validates the findings from focus groups.

Differentiation:
In the qualitative research phase, although the respondents considered differentiation significant for attention-grabbing, which they mentioned as something that could affect premium perception, it did not directly affect premium perception, according to the respondents. This can be seen in the regression analysis, where it had the most minor effect on the price variance. In correlation analysis, it displayed a medium to strong positive relationship with price but not as strong a relationship as the other two premium elements.

Superior quality:
From the focus groups, when asked about superior quality, the respondents stated that they consider the subtle art of storytelling superior quality. They mentioned that if a package is able to tell a story that can be connected to the product that is inside the package, it is considered highly premium. This instantly hooked the respondents with the package. This detail was highly appreciated and was considered to be a significant component in deciding a package's premium perception. A regression analysis was conducted between premium elements and premium perception to validate this statement, and superior quality was found. to have the most significant effect on price variance compared to any other premium element. Here, we used price as an indicator for premium perception. In the correlation analysis conducted, superior quality had a strong correlation with price. This validates the statement from the qualitative research and can be considered as an addition to the existing definition of superior quality.

While comparing the averages of the three premium elements, it can be observed that the averages of the means of the three elements have been rated progressively higher, with the differences between designs becoming less prominent as they progressed. This can be explained by the individual rating of the premium elements. The rating of authenticity did not progress significantly after redesign 2; this can be explained by the completely different logo in redesign 3. In an attempt to blend the logo with the theme, The logo was made less symmetric and, in this context, less serious (relating to the font) and completely unrecognizable from the original logo. This influenced its authentic nature, which is explained in a study by (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel,.2014), where it is specified that authenticity is often linked with brand recognizability and its serious nature in branding(logo). In another study by (Luffarelli et al. H. 2019), it is mentioned that asymmetric logos are seen as less premium as compared to symmetric ones. The element differentiation peaked at redesign two and then rated lower for redesign 3; this can be attributed to the color

palette selected, with redesign 2 having maroon color as the primary color and eggshell white as the primary color for redesign 3. According to Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel,.(2014), consumers' attention is immediately grabbed by colors that are not generally used for the product category (In this case, maroon is the color that can be regularly seen in chocolates but not in chips). Hence, it made the respondents rate Redesign 2 higher for differentiation more consistently.

Overall, the premiumness levels with increased addition of premium elements on each level positively affected. the premium perception as expected. These outcomes align with multiple existing studies, further validating the results. While there are exceptions where certain types of colors performed better for individual premium elements, it can be traced back to existing literature as to why it happened. Along with this, there were some interesting findings, which could be a valuable addition to the existing definition of premium elements.

How brand elements influence premium perception.
Another crucial focus points is how brand elements effect premium perception.
Color: Color has the most significant impact on purchasing intention and premium perception. These findings fall in line with the existing research and findings by Mohebbi and Behzad. (2014), where it is said that 62-90 percent of the consumer perception and decision-making regarding packages is made on the basis of color alone. Matt finish colors are considered more premium than glossy finish per focus groups and further validated in the survey. Innovative colors unprecedented in their category are a vital differentiator, impacting its premium perception. As reported by focus group respondents, Pastel shade colors were seen as luxury and exclusive compared to other shade colors. These arguments were supported by the data produced in the surveys, where color was progressively ranked higher in all the redesigns. In the correlation and regression analysis conducted, it was observed that color has the highest correlation with premium perception, which further supports the outcomes of literature review and qualitative studies. Another fascinating insight is the strong correlation between color and font; this falls in line with the existing study conducted by (Cheng et al., Vahab & Lin, and Yingzi. 2018)(Jain et al., D. 2017), which show us the dependence of font on color for better visibility by consumers; this can be connected to differentiation in literature review and focus groups, where we discussed the importance of instant differentiation and readability for higher premium perception.

Logo: Logo had the second most significant impact on premium perception as per qualitative research, and it had paramount importance in recognizing the brand according to both literature review and focus groups, this is essential for brand recognition and premiumness. This was supported by the data from the surveys where the logo had the second highest correlation with price perception, and in regression analysis, it had the second highest impact on variance in price. This falls in line with

the studies conducted by (Keller, K.L. 2013). Logos that were too large were seen as needy, and using a similar font style as the rest of the package made it confusing to figure out the brand and hurt premium perception. This statement is supported by the data collected in the surveys, where the original design had a 50% larger logo than redesigns 1 and 2, and both the redesigns were rated higher in premium perception with respect to the logo as compared to the original design.

Illustrations: Using custom-made illustrations was seen as a plus while using generic illustrations was seen as cheap. The usage of celebrity endorsements had a negative effect as it was seen as a company's need to appeal to a large group of people, which gave a mass-produced item feel to the product. This statement falls in line with the study by (Jain et al., Subhadip & Szommer, Mari & Daswani, and Aarzoo. 2023), where the author states that celebrities in India have an overexposure to media as they endorse multiple brands at a time, which creates a negative impact for certain segments of consumers. Abstract illustrations were seen as differentiated and premium. Storytelling ability was seen as high effort and meaningful, which made it more premium. The above-stated focus group outcomes were validated through the survey and supported by other studies, including (He, J. 2023), where the author explicitly mentions the vital role of illustrations in packaging as they are the key to the entire story of the product.

Font: Font was perceived as authentic and premium when it was in uppercase. It appears more serious and trustworthy than in lowercase font. This effect was explained by (Yining et al.), who named it the "uppercase minimum effect." according to the study, "the uppercase premium effect is due to a high level of conspicuous-ness that consumers attribute to uppercase wordmarks." Along with this, the use of unprecedented font style in any product category is seen as premium, as it immediately catches a consumer's eye. The font is not discussed much individually, but when combined with the color, it played a major role in the readability of the respondents in the focus groups. They were often times frustrated with certain packages like "WILDE," "Kettle Studio," and "ARQ Sweets," where the readability was difficult due to the font's color and the primary color palette. This argument, as discussed previously, is supported by the existing study by (Jain et al. D. 2017), where font had an extreme dependability on color. This was further validated when we observed a strong correlation between font and color in the correlation analysis. It is worth noting that the font had only one strong correlation with color, unlike the other three brand elements, which exhibited at least two strong correlations with other elements and premium perception.

Overall, the brand elements researched in this project had a significant relationship with the premium perception of a package. Elements like color and logo

exhibited a strong relationship with premium perception, which fell in line with the existing literature review. Font/ typecase showed a strong relationship with color, which was expected from the focus group studies.

Guidelines for designers.
The next focus point for this project, which is of paramount importance, is the guidelines for the designers of Indian SMEs to help them design a premium package. The insights from the focus groups combined with the literature review led to creating a set of twelve guidelines for creating premium packaging. Based on the guidelines, three redesigns were created for a heavily criticized "Kettle Studio" package from the chips product category. The redesigns were designed based on 12 guidelines drafted in a 3×4 matrix, three for each of the four brand elements corresponding to the three premium elements. Starting from authenticity to differentiation and, finally, superior quality. Each redesign was progressively subjected to an increased intensity of premium levels to understand the effect of each premium element-centric brand element addition. These redesigns were then tested along with the original in four individual surveys to understand and validate the effect of these guidelines. Stemming from the results, a significant relationship was found between brand elements like color and branding and premium perception. First, the mean differences in each redesign's rankings were compared, showing that all the redesigns progressively ranked better amongst their five other sample brands. The increased intensity of the application of guidelines can explain this effect. At the other sample brands. The increased intensity of the application of guidelines can explain this effect. At the same time, the first redesign was only subjected to authenticity and four guidelines corresponding to it; the second and third redesigns were subjected to authenticity + differentiation, authenticity + differentiation + superior quality, and the corresponding guidelines, respectively. The effective application of the guidelines is further supported by another comparison of price perception, where each redesign was progressively perceived as more expensive and premium than the previous one. To understand how each brand element subjected to the respective guideline was perceived, a comparison of means of premium perception of brand elements was conducted. The data shows us that color and font were progressively ranked better, which was expected, and the guidelines for these two brand elements were validated with this output.

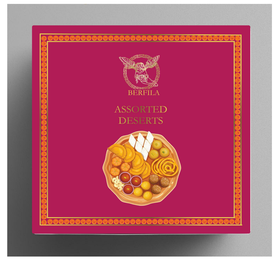
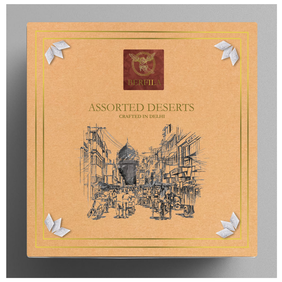
Logo and illustrations peaked at redesign two and were ranked lower for redesign 3. This can be explained by the fact that the logo of Redesign 2 was kept the same as the original while manipulating the color and contrast to differentiate it better. The logo of Redesign 3 was changed to match its theme. The logo came out as more casual and less recognizable than the logo of Redesign 2, with redesign 3’s logo being a less symmetric compared to the previous two redesigns.

These two factors influenced the ratings, and the factors are supported by the findings of Luffarelli et al. H.(2019), which talk about how asymmetric logos are less exciting, appealing, and premium than symmetric ones. The guideline has been corrected in the iterated version, where it specifies the designer to ensure it is not entirely alienated from the original logo, as it could result in consumers not recognizing the brand altogether, while keeping the symmetry in mind Regarding illustrations, the lower rating can be due to the symmetry of redesign 3; in an attempt to make the overall design minimal, as minimal designs were appreciated and seen as more premium (Ruth et al. van den BergWeitzel ,.2014), the vertical golden stripe on the right was removed. This made the package asymmetrical. This outcome falls in line with the literature review, where it is mentioned that asymmetrical packaging design might be perceived as less premium (Romeo-Arroyo et al.; C. 2023).

Quick glimpse of changes, effects and findings. (Chips)

Premiumness level / Effects	 **Redesign 1** **Premiumness** Level 1 = Premium elements Authenticity	 **Redesign 2** **Premiumness** Level 2 = Premium elements Authenticity + Differentiation	 **Redesign 3** **Premiumness** Level 3 = Premium elements Authenticity + Differentiation + Superior Quality
What is changed?	• ***COLOR:*** *Color was darkened and touched with matt finish. (Authentic)* • ***LOGO:*** *Size of the logo was reduced by 50%. (Authentic)* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Generic potato illustrations removed, custom made chilli illustration added. (Authentic)* • ***FONT:*** *Most of the typeface is changed to uppercase. (Authentic)*	• ***COLOR:*** *Color was changed to maroon (Different) and touched with matt finish. (Authentic)* • ***LOGO:*** *Size of the logo was reduced by 50%. (Authentic) with increased color contrast (Different).* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Generic potato illustrations removed, custom made chilli illustration added. (Authentic), label with claim "Cooked in refined sunflower blend" added (Different).* • ***FONT:*** *Most of the typeface is changed to uppercase. (Authentic), along with bold font style (Different).*	• ***COLOR:*** *Color was changed to eggshell white (Different + superior quality) and touched with matt finish. (Authentic)* • *LOGO: Size of the logo was reduced by 50%. (Authentic) with increased color contrast (Different), and customized to cowboy theme (Superior quality).* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Custom made chilli illustration added. (Authentic), label with claim "Cooked in refined sunflower blend" added (Different), Illustration of cowboys to convey "old western tale" theme (superior quality).* • ***FONT:*** *Most of the typeface is changed to uppercase. (Authentic), along with bold font style (Different), and font style in line with customized theme (superior quality)*
Effects observed	***PREMIUM ELEMENTS:*** • ***Authenticity:*** *Authenticity is rated higher than the original design.* ***BRAND ELEMENTS:*** • ***COLOR:*** *Color is rated higher for premium perception than the original design.* • ***LOGO:*** *Logo is rated higher for premium perception than the original design.* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design* • ***FONT:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design.*	***PREMIUM ELEMENTS:*** • ***Authenticity:*** *Authenticity is rated higher than the original design.* • ***Differentiation:*** *Rated higher than the original and redesign 1 and redesign 3.* ***BRAND ELEMENTS:*** • ***COLOR:*** *Color is rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1.* • ***LOGO:*** *Logo is rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1.* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1.* • ***FONT:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1.*	***PREMIUM ELEMENTS:*** • ***Authenticity:*** *Authenticity is rated higher than the original, redesign 1, and redesign 2.* • ***Differentiation:*** *Rated higher than the original and redesign 1, lower than redesign 2.* • ***Superior quality:*** *Rated higher than the original design, redesign 1, redesign 2.* ***BRAND ELEMENTS:*** • ***COLOR:*** *Color is rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1, redesign 2.* • ***LOGO:*** *Logo is rated higher for premium perception than the original design, lower than redesign 1 and 2.* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1 and lower than redesign 2.* • ***FONT:*** *Rated higher for premium perception than the original design, redesign 1, and 2.*
Key findings	*In the first level of premiumness, it is observed that the first redesign is indeed perceived as more premium than the original design, this data supports and validates the guidelines of premium element authenticity.*	*In the second level of premiumness, it is observed that the second iteration performed better than both original and redesign 1, and the premium element differentiation is rated even higher than redesign 3. This can be explained by the selection of color palette which is unprecedented for the product category, which made it seem much different on a more consistent basis than other designs.*	*In the third level of premiumness, it is seen that the design performed better than all the three previous designs in terms of premium elements being rated higher, when taken average of three. However, when looked at individually, the premium element authenticity is more or less saturating after second redesign and differentiation going downwards, and superior quality rating higher. This can be explained with the brand elements color, and logo. Since logo was changed drastically into a more casual style and unrecognizable to the original logo, it seemed less authentic as compared to the previous design. The color of redesign 2 was unprecedented in the product category, which made it rank higher on a much more consistent basis, even though the color palette used in redesign 3 was rated as more premium.*

Quick glimpse of changes. (Packaged sweets)

Premiumness level / Effects			
	 **Redesign 1** **Premiumness** Level 1 = Premium elements Authenticity	 **Redesign 2** **Premiumness** Level 2 = Premium elements Authenticity + Differentiation	 **Redesign 3** **Premiumness** Level 3 = Premium elements Authenticity + Differentiation + Superior Quality
What is changed?	• ***COLOR:*** *The pink color has been darkened with matt finish, to make it look more sober and authentic. (Authentic)* • ***LOGO:*** *The logo was given golden color for a premium look. Plus, the logo was moved from the center to center-top and reduced in size by about 20%. (Authentic)* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *The flowers and the leafy pattern along with leaves have been removed, and instead, a digital sketch of multiple different sweets was added. (Authentic)* • ***FONT:*** *the font has been made uppercase as its more authentic, and given similar golden palette as logo to match with the package. (Authentic)*	• ***COLOR:*** *The pink color has been removed from the package, and instead, a deep blue color (Different) with matt finish (Authentic) has been given.* • ***LOGO:*** *it is shifted from center-top to center-bottom to make space for the illustrations, yet maintaining a prominent position(Authentic), plus the color is of increased contrast and highlight for better differentiation (Differentiation)* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** The illustrations are abstract in nature to make them stand apart (Differentiation), but designed with the theme of native Indian art making it authentic (Authentic). • ***FONT:*** *The font has been changed from it's original, it has been changed to a slightly sharper font of similar style, to make it different as well as recognizable as the original brand.*	• ***COLOR:*** *The color has been changed to beige color with pressed paper style matt finish, which touches all three points of differentiation, authenticity and superior quality.* • ***LOGO:*** *The logo is given a background of it's own with chocolate brown paper finish. With a prominent top-center position (Authentic) and popping out logo (Differentiation).* • ***ILLUSTRATIONS:*** *A custom illustration showing the old-city of Delhi is depicted, to give out an authentic look (Authenticity) as well as (Differentiation)."Kaju Katli" an Indian sweet has been arranged in the form of a flower in each of the corner to make the package, which is metallic, and will be associated with luxury and (Superior quality).* • ***FONT:*** *The font has been kept the same with redesign 2, but the color has been darkened to deep brown to match with the theme of a vintage sweet brand and increase the readability, since the color shade in the font from the previous redesign had less readability on this color palette.*

The above table shows the quick glimpse of changes made in the proposal for redesign of "Berfila" from packaged Indian sweets category. These changes have been made after reiterating the guidelines post quantitative phase. The detailed changes made in each redesign will be explained in the next chapter.

8

Proposal for new redesign

Proposal for Indian sweets

In this chapter, the updated set of guidelines drafted after quantitative studies have been studies and discussed. These new set of guidelines are used in making a proposal for packaged Indian sweets brand “Berfila” has been made. The stepwise considerations and decisions are shown in this chapter, which can be used to understand on how to apply the guidelines.

Proposal for Indian sweets

After the analysis of quantitative survey results and subsequent discussion, certain aspects of the guidelines have been changed to be more in line with the outcomes of the survey and existing research. These changes are mainly concerned with the the premium element “Superior quality”. Further, stemming from the discussion, more caution was exercised while implementing the premium elements authenticity and superior quality since they had significantly more impact in influencing premium perception than differentiation.

These updated guidelines will be used to draft a proposal for another heavily criticized package design from the other product category researched in the qualitative phase. For this redesign, we are going to redesign “Berfila” brand, a brand from the packaged Indian sweets category research, using the guidelines and cues to create a new design for the chosen brand. The original packaging faced significant criticism. We will discuss it’s criticisms and stepwise changes below:

It was criticized for it’s bright pink color, which is it’s primary palette, respondents felt this is too bright of a color which gave a cheap perception in the first look. But, it’s logo was appreciated for it’s innovative design featuring an angel, which respondents thought was quite uncommon for a packaged sweets company in India. Secondly, It’s illustrations featuring a native design of leaf pattern in the background was criticized along with

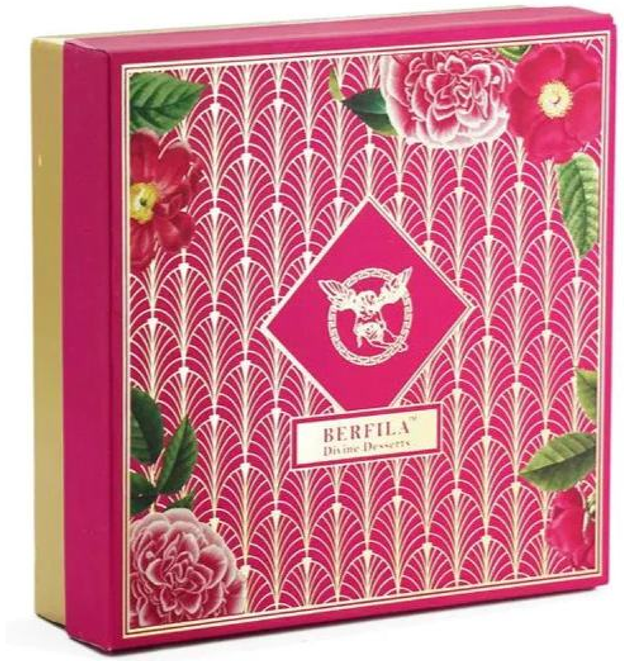


Figure 44: Original design of “Berfila”.

the graphics of flowers in each of the four corners of the package. The respondents expressed their instant distaste in the package when they saw these illustrations, which they felt were just like any other sweets packaging from down the street.

The redesign of the original Berfila packaging involves three sets of designs as well: Redesign 1 (Figure 20, left), Redesign 2 (Figure 21, right) and Redesign 3 (Figure 22). The changes are explained using terms related to the premium packaging guidelines. Each redesign will be subjected to progressive increase of intensity of the guidelines as well as the corresponding premium elements. The final redesign is expected to be designed with the aid of maximum number of guidelines presented in the guidelines chapter.

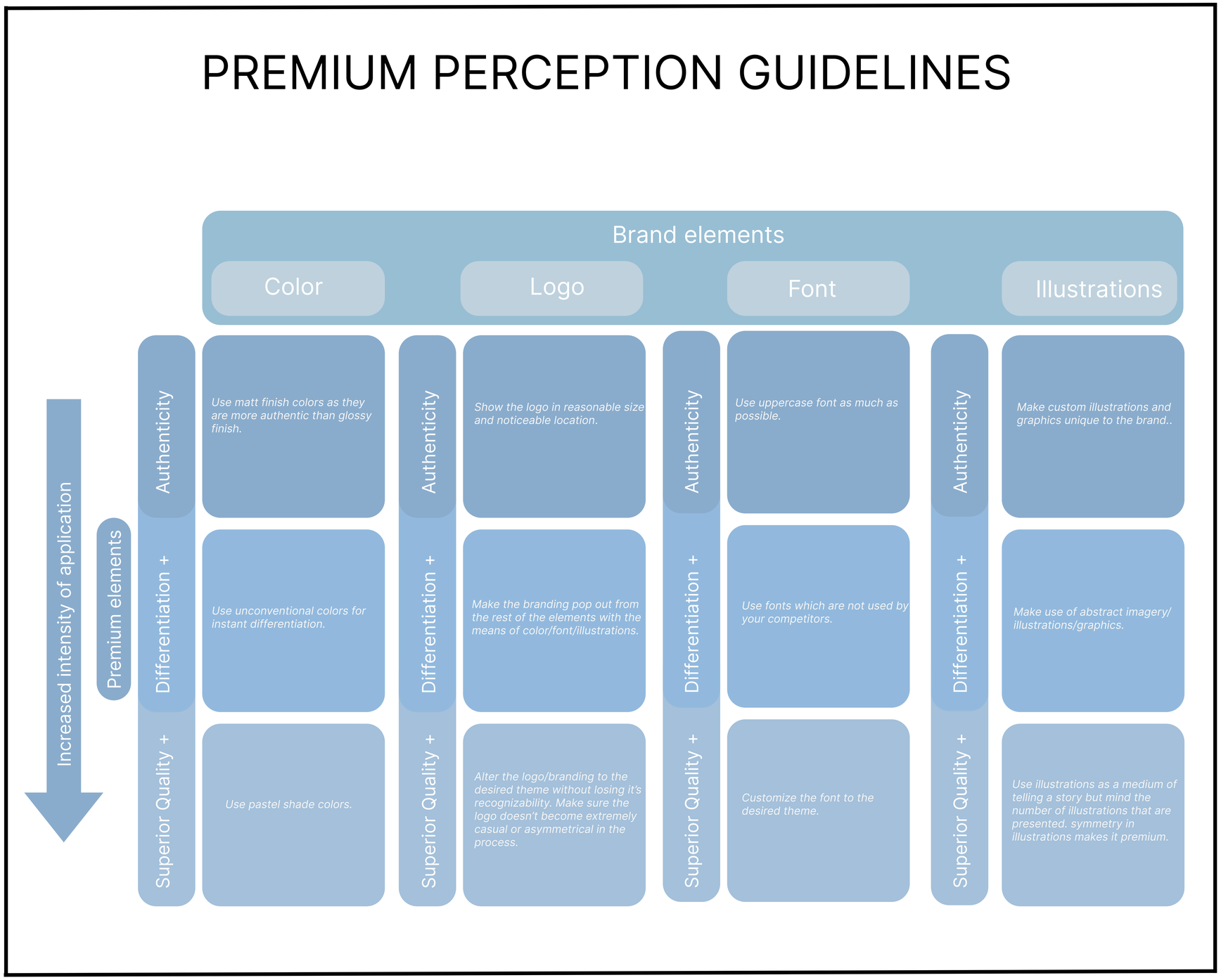


Figure 45: Updated set of Design guidelines after the quantitative research phase. Authentic, Unique and superior quality are the three main factors and basis for the guidelines respectively. The brand elements; color, logo, illustrations, font have been placed in this particular order has been tweaked after the survey and subsequent discussion.

PREMIUM PERCEPTION GUIDELINES

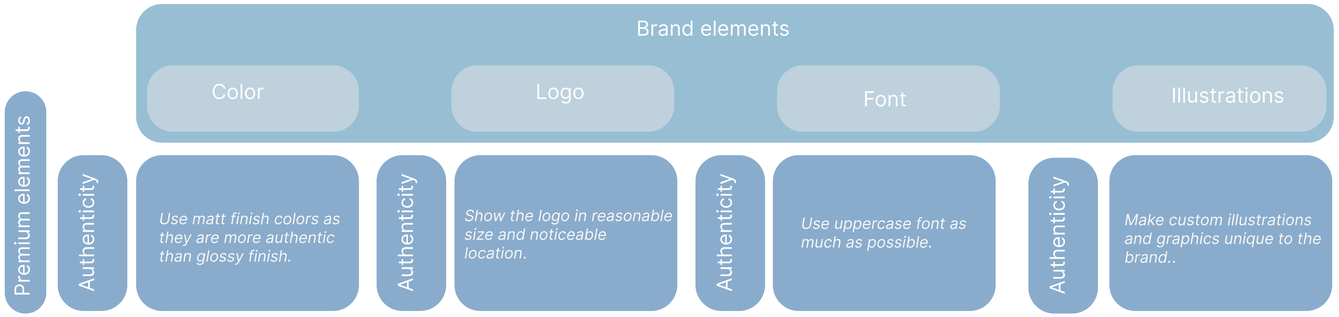


Figure 46: Redesign 1 of "Berfila".

Redesign 1:
In the first redesign, Authenticity is the premium element that has been focused, as already inferred from the previous chapters and discussion, authenticity plays the foundational role in creating a premium package, and is one of the significant element which can influence premium perception.

Color: The pink color has been darkened with matt finish and the white color is removed from the package, to make it look more sober and authentic (Authenticity).
Logo: Since the logo was appreciated, it was kept the same. This deeply affects the authenticity of the package as observed from the quantitative results, as the logo was already appreciated and recognized, minimal changes have been made to positively affect authenticity. Since white color was removed from the palette, the logo was given golden color for a premium look. Plus, the logo was moved from the center to center-top and reduced in size by about 20%, to make more space for illustrations and other texts, hence less attention seeking. (Authenticity)

Illustrations: The flowers and the leafy pattern along with leaves have been removed, and instead, a digital sketch of multiple different sweets was added to make it more custom looking, giving it an authentic look.

Font: The original design had small lower case font in the center along with the logo describing the flavor, but it was too little to be noticed at first, so the font has been made uppercase as its more authentic, and given similar golden palette as logo to match with the package.

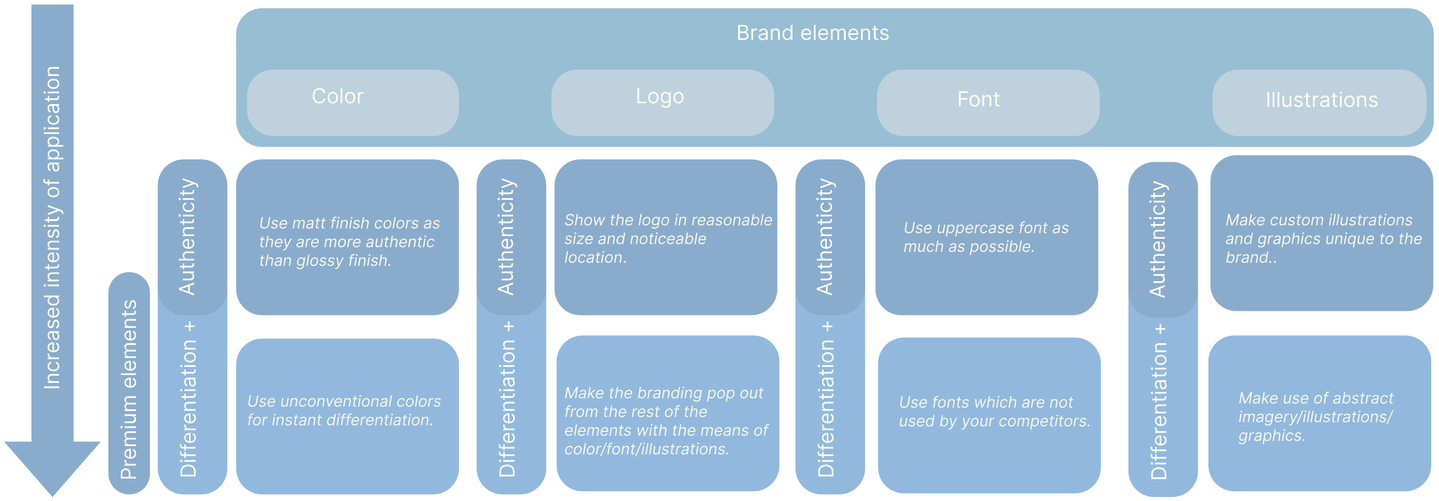


Figure 47: Redesign 2 of "Berfila".

Redesign 2:
In the second redesign, differentiation is added to Authenticity as the premium elements that are focused, While authenticity is important for building a character, differentiation is important to set the package to be noticed, which influences the premium perception.

Several aspects have been changed.
Color: The pink color has been removed from the package, and instead, a deep blue color (Different) with matt finish (Authentic) has been given.

Logo: The logo is kept the same from the previous redesign but instead, it is shifted from center-top to center-bottom to make space for the illustrations, yet maintaining a prominent position(Authentic), plus the color is of increased contrast and highlight for better differentiation (Differentiation)

Illustrations: The illustrations are abstract in nature to make them stand apart (Differentiation), but designed with the theme of native Indian art making it authentic (Authentic). Plus, the diamond shaped sweet "Kaju Katli" is placed to look as if it's raining down sweets from top, to add to the abstractness.

Font: The font has been slightly changed from it's original design, as the original font, was made up of "Trajan pro", it has been changed to a slightly sharper font of similar style, in an attempt to make it different as well as recognizable as the original brand

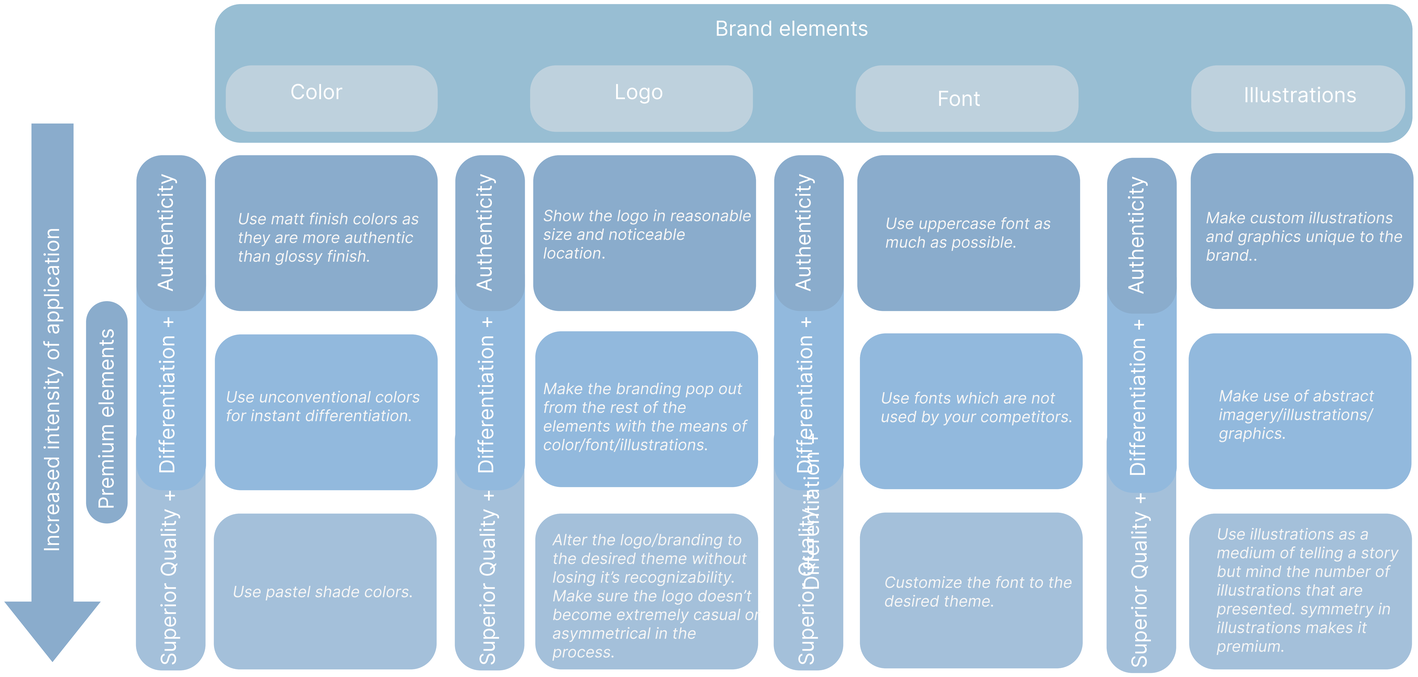


Figure 48: Redesign 3 of "Berfila".

Redesign 3:
In the third and final redesign, Superior quality is the premium element added to differentiation, authenticity as the premium elements that are focused, While authenticity is important for building a character, differentiation is important to set the package apart from competition and superior quality is crucial in crafting an effort-ful and classic image.

Several aspects have been changed.
Color: It was found that color played a crucial role in influencing premium perception. In the quantitative studies, it can be seen that colors unprecedented in the product category attract attention. Hence, The color has been changed to beige color with pressed paper style matt finish, which touches all three points of differentiation, authenticity and superior quality. Here, we are adding the pressed paper effect, which makes it extremely different in it's product category.

Logo: Stemming from the findings of of the quantitative studies, the premium element authenticity highly depends on the branding/logo as the brand has to be recognizable for it to be authentic. So, The logo has not been drastically redesigned to blend in with the theme, but just enough to fit in with the rest of the elements, as it has to be recognizable with the original brand. This iteration comes after updating the guidelines. The logo is given a background of it's own with chocolate brown

color and pressed paper finish, to highlight it from the rest of the package. With a prominent top-center position (Authentic) and popping out logo (Differentiation) and with a brown block, which is meant to give out vintage vibe, it carries a theme of it's own of vintage Delhi city look (Superior quality).

Illustrations: From the discussion, illustrations carried a crucial role in storytelling which in turn affected the superior quality of the package. Symmetry also played a key role in influencing the premium perception. To tackle this, a custom illustration showing the old-city of Delhi is depicted, to give out an authentic look (Authenticity) as well as different, since most packaged sweet brands use straightforward graphic of sweets or keep them completely plain, or have a native design (Differentiation). The illustration tells a story of a an ol-city, which has been existing for a long time, and the sweets are intended to be originating from the very old-city of Delhi. This subtle story telling makes it of superior quality. Along with that, "Kaju Katli" an Indian sweet has been arranged in the form of a flower in each of the corner to make the package look more elegant and premium, since the color of the sweet (Silver) which is metallic, is associated with luxury and premiumness. "Kaju katli" has been placed in a symmetric way to increase the premium perception as found out from the quantitative research. The entire illustration of the city is placed at the center further supports the symmetry of the package.

Font: Stemming from the results from quantitative studies, it was found that font had a strong correlation with color. This influences readability which affects the premium perception, this statement is supported by previous research findings as well. Hence, The font has been kept the same with redesign 2, but the color has been darkened to deep brown to match with the theme of a vintage sweet brand and increase the readability, since the color shade in the font from the previous redesign had less readability on this color palette. The line "Crafted in Delhi" has been written to compliment the theme and the word "craft" is associated with art, and hence more effort-full. This will add to the superior quality of the package. The font's uppercase and thin style make it authentic as well.

In conclusion, The new proposal for redesign is drafted with the help of the guidelines which have been updated after the quantitative and discussion phase and align with the existing research for better results. The proposal for the new redesign of packaged Indian sweets "Berfila" manages to touch all the premium elements for each of the brand element redesigned.

9

Conclusion

Conclusion

This chapter details on the limitations, future recommendations and conclusions of this project.

Limitations

This study is subject to several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

Sample Size.
A limited amount of focus groups have been conducted, with a limited number of participants. While sufficient for qualitative analysis, it may not fully represent the different opinions and experiences from the broader target community. In an ideal world, more focus groups would be conducted, with different participants every product category.

Workshop Setting.
Focus were conducted online, even though it did not hinder the project's research questions, it would have been optimal to include both in-person and online focus groups for a much more holistic coverage of opinions. Apart from that, few participants had to leave at the end of the focus groups, making the session somewhat hasty, which could have influenced the results.

Candidate experience with package design.
Not all candidates were equally familiar with package design or design in general. Some were designers in general who had a deeper idea than others. while others were general target consumers. As this isn't taken into consideration in the results, it's not certain whether or not this would influence how people interact and feel regarding the interpretation of brand elements.

Subjectivity in interpretation.
During this research, mostly qualitative data along with literature review were used to draft the guidelines. These insights are susceptible to interpretation, meaning that the guidelines are not fully objective. A different researcher might draft slightly different guidelines from the same data.

Updating Guidelines.
Since the guidelines are draft according to the taste of current generation of young consumers, and Indian market very quickly, these guidelines might be needed to be updated as per the taste of every new generation. This research is susceptible for fast aging. It's important to understand the context that was used during this research.

Chosen activities.
Due to limited time, not all activities during the qualitative research process could be tested. The activities were carefully chosen, however, others might have chosen different activities due to different reasons, which could lead to different conclusions.

Other factors.
The guidelines were drafted based solely based on the visual perception and not any other sensory factor was involved, if they were to be included, the outcomes of the insights and guidelines could have been different.

Prior consumer experience.
There is a possibility that the focus group respondents might have individual opinions and beliefs regarding the five sample brands presented with the redesigns in the quantitative survey. Since the sample brands are currently in the market, respondents might have different types of experiences with these brands and products. These opinions and beliefs might have affected the ranking order, which can't be the case for redesigns since the redesigns are in the market and can be judged without any pre-conceived notion. Hence, in the future, the redesigns can be ranked and measured in a different where this bias can be eliminated. That will make sure that all the redesigns are ranked against others without any prior judgment. The outcomes might be different if this were the case and can be compared with this project's results for more interesting findings and further research.

Future recommendations

After this study, several opportunities for follow-up research arise. It's crucial to note that more research will be done, not only because not everything has been explored yet, but also because of the fast pace in which consumers tastes have been changing.

Expanding sample size.
Future studies could benefit from involving a larger and more diverse group of participants. This could give more data and insights regarding the premium perception that has been gathered so far, for a broader target group. Different types of participants can be invited for focus group sessions, varying from general experience, experience with design, and cultural backgrounds. This can help validate the findings across a broader spectrum of the design community, ensuring the results are broadly applicable and inclusive.

Updated models
Since the guidelines drafted during this study are prone to rapidly changing tastes, it's beneficial to keep conducting workshops and gathering insights, and use these insights to create new guidelines. New guidelines could be drafted for a much more broader product category.

Different activities
This study only focused on two activities during the qualitative research process. However, there could be many more activities, that have not been tested yet. To fully understand how brand elements affect premium perception of a package, it's beneficial to conduct workshops with participants testing other activities of how brand elements might affect premium perception of a package. This way, a more extensive view can be gained on the impact of these elements on premium perception.

Other product categories.
Only two product categories have been researched in this project, even though the guidelines are applicable for other food product in FMCG as well. It would beneficial if other products are specifically researched and compared with the current guidelines drafted to increase the general applicability of the guidelines.

Systematic manipulation.
In this project, the premiumness is manipulated with the help of three premium elements. These elements have been progressively added for each redesign, which might not tell the individual effect of the elements after the first redesign. Hence, In future, these premium elements can be systematically manipulated one at a time to find out the individual effect of those elements on premium perception. This can be done by redesigning the packages with one premium element at a time. After that, the quantitative phase can be designed in such a way, where the individual premium

elements premium perception is targeted. This has to be done with a constant base line across all the three premium elements, so that the results are comparable. Later, the results can be compared against each other to find out the effect of the individual premium element on premium perception. The findings can be further compared with the outcomes of this project for a holistic understanding of the influence of premium elements on premium perception in a packaging.

Conclusion

At the end of this study, it's time to conclude the project. We try to conclude how the key findings directly answer the question this study all started with: "How do brand elements (color, illustrations, logo, font) influence premium perception of a food product amongst young Indian consumers?"
This was achieved by focusing on the premium elements and their application on redesign with brand elements. The findings of this study were focused on how the premiumness levels influenced the premium perception, where we progressively added the premium elements to the redesigns to test their influence on premium perception.
Along with it, we tried to create a set of guidelines for better design of a package, and understanding how these elements interact with each other and the premium perception. Besides that, the insights of this study are bundled into a guidebook that serves as a source for designers wanting to effectively design/ Re-design their food product packaging into a premium version.

The project uncovers various important and interesting factors and insights related to premium elements and their influence on premium perception. The outcomes have been aligined with the exisiting stuides while also providing valuable addition to the existing literature. regarding brand elements, some of the outcomes have

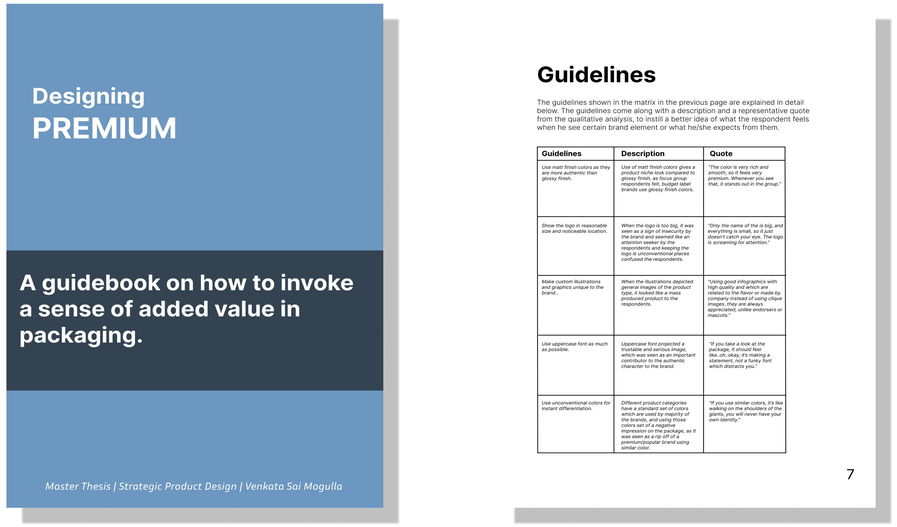


Figure 49: Snapshot of pages from the guidebook "Designing Premium" drafted from the outcomes of literature review, qualitative and quantitative phases.

been aligned with interesting existing findings like the "Uppercase minimum effect" and influence of symmetry on brand elements and packaging as a whole. The results have been discussed and the guidelines iterated in the form of a tool, in this case "The guidebook" to be used to by the designers of SME's in India to effectively redesign their package for a positive growth in-terms of sales and brand awareness and increased brand loyalty.

During this study, many insights on both how the premium elements influence the premium perception on various levels and how they are related to each other have been understood.

Apart from this, many outcomes in line with multiple existing studies have been found. As a result of this study, a guidebook has been written, bundling various of the results found into one comprehensive guide for designers from Indian SMEs. These outcomes were even used to draft a proposal for a redesigned package of an Indian sweets brand, a brand criticized in the qualitative phase of this project. The updated guidelines were carefully used and all the premium elements were completely utilized to redesign the package.

This guidebook discusses the basic definitions of premium, premium and brand elements, the designed matrix and guidelines. Besides that, it gives insights on respondent's feelings with representative quote's, approach to how to follow the matrix with guidelines and Do's and don'ts. Lastly, it gives a concrete example of how these guidelines can be put into use with the help of a proposal drafted in the product category of biscuits, which further supports the wide applicability of this guidebook.

To conclude, the guidebook can be valuable for designers and can come in handy while designing a premium package for their FMCG product. The success and impact of this guidebook is dependent on the designer's ability to use the tool, embracing it as part of the toolkit that includes many more tools and skills. Designers working on projects with this tool in their toolkits must know when and how to use the guidebook during the designing process. This might also mean that the guidelines are adapted to those designers particular needs to ensure a smooth process and great quality outcome.

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The references mentioned throughout the report can be found in this section. Each article is numbered with the author's name at the beginning for better tracing.

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