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An Assessment of Polythene usage as a Packaging Product to Business Organisations in Nigeria

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Abstract- This paper assesses the use of Polythene as a packaging product for business organisations in Nigeria. Despite the challenges of polythene usage such as its threat and dangers to the life in the water bodies and marine Eco-systems, the product is still in high demand by supermarkets, grocery stores and homes due to it durability, its easily recyclable, excellent rigidity, extremely lightweight, enhances protection and very economical for packaging in Nigeria. Data were collected via primary data and analysed. Findings revealed that polythene is the most used packaging products by business organisations in Nigeria. The study recommended that recycling and re-usage of polythene products should be encouraged, enforced, invested on and educated on by individuals, organisations and also the government of Nigeria since its demand and usage is more than other packaging products.

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I. Introduction

Packaging as a subdivision of marketing can be described as a coordinated system of preparing goods for transport, warehousing, logistics, sale and end use, it entails protection, preservation, transportation, information and sales (Soroka, 2002). Brittany Nader, 2015 argued that packaging should be the 5th P of marketing mix. According to Philip Kotler, Packaging entails Protection, convenience and economy. However, Kain, (2020) explains that packaging entails protection, preservation and presentation. The five main types of packaging are plastic (polythene), metal, paper or cardboard, wood and bottle (Dube, 2021; Velarga 2017). This study will be focusing on Polythene.

According to Collins English Dictionary (2019) Polythene is a type of plastic made into thin sheets or bags and used specially to keep food fresh or to keep things dry. Polyethylene or polythene (abbreviated PE) is the most common plastic. As of 2017, over 100 million tonnes of polythene resins are produced annually worldwide, accounting for 34% of the total plastic market (Geyer, Jambeck & Law, 2017). It main usage has been in packaging such as plastic bags, plastics films, membranes, containers, bottles, door mat for wet feet, kids play mats, food wrapping, table covers, pallet cover, postal sacks, kites, metal drum tops, surgical gloves, grow bags, dustbin liners, hoses/tubes, insulation, plastic bottles and protective packaging (Trademark polythene, 2015).

Nigeria is a large, densely populated West African country with over 200 million people, a diverse geography with climates ranging from arid to humid equatorial. It's a country with a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation which consists of 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (World bank, 2022). Business Organisation in Nigeria is an entity formed for the purpose of carrying on commercial enterprise, it can be a sole proprietorship, partnership and corporation (Investopedia, 2021) depending on the size, according to Nigerian Law it must be registered under the Corporate Affairs Commission CAC (Resolutionlawng. com, 2020).

The main objective of this paper is to assess the usage of polythene as a packaging product to business organisations in Nigeria as Polythene products carry all of the characteristics of a good packaging more than any other type of packaging product.

II. Statement of the Problem

In recent time, Polythene use and throw away culture has seriously been toxic to the human life style and a cause of pollution, as the chemicals in polythene affects the survival of flora and fauna of the aquatic system. Polythene products can be seen all over the streets, drainages, rivers, waterways and neighbour hood. Polythene is the most abused chemical compound. Most countries are trying to ban this compound, as it eventually lands up in the ecosystem, and it disrupts marine life (Chatrath, 2018).

Polythene is not biodegradable, and if dumped in the soil, it becomes harmful to the plant life, as the toxic substances of polythene gets blocked among the soil particles. Polythene threatens the life in the water bodies and the chemicals in polythene affects the survival of flora and fauna of the aquatic and marine Eco-systems (Isaac & Kandasubramanian, 2021). Also, Polythene is likely to clog drains causing problems in the water flow of the pipes, these pipe blockages would cause flooding and the free flow of water is disturbed. Polythene can also be harmful for animals if swallowed (Answers, 2019). Despite these challenges, Polythene

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film is one of the most lightweight and durable packaging mediums available which makes an important contribution to reducing food spoilage rates as it enhances protection. Polythene ducting is compatible with most fans, heaters, air conditioners and air handling units. Also, Polythene bags are produced with less energy and resources than glass, paper or any other packaging product. The transparent polythene allows recipients to view the contents such as a magazine cover, prompting them to open immediately if the item is of interest or expected (Answers, 2019).

However, we can use alternatives like jute bags, paper bags and clothe bags. Taking our own bags for shopping can help reduce half of polythene waste. Nevertheless, Shop owners keep polythene bags knowing for sure that customers will come empty handed to get free polythene bags. Several people give many irrational reasons for not using cloth bags (Perveen, 2016).

Over the years, Nigeria has had timelines to ban plastic products. The former Minister of Environment, Hadiza Mailafiya, had during the 2013 World Environment Day, said all was set for the phasing out of polythene in the country. But several years since the pronouncement, polythene still serves as major useful bags in supermarkets, stores and markets for packaging of products (Okeke & Mudashir, 2018), probably because of the relevance. Despite these challenges of polythene, it has become a product that will not go out of demand and a product with the best turnover as well as profitability (Oyesola, 2017). That simply means investing in polythene products will not be out of place. Polythene production is highly profitable and viable. The product is in high demand from supermarkets, grocery stores, homes, factories and business organisations. In fact, in Nigeria every aspect of Polythene seems to be profitable, from scavenging to recycling, to manufacturing and every step of its trading is a success. The demand for polythene product is very wide in Nigeria and worldwide on a daily basis. Millions of tons of nylon are produced worldwide and the production hardly meets the demand (Oyesola, 2017) due to its advantages over other packaging product such as protection enhancement, high adaptability, extremely lightweight, economical, durability, excellent rigidity, superior flexibility and easily recyclable. It is therefore necessary to assess the usage of polythene as a packaging product in Nigerian business organisation.

III. Research Questions

The paper sought to answer the following questions:

i. Do business organisations in Nigeria use polythene more than other packaging products like paper, metal, wood and bottles?
ii. Does Polythene as a packaging product have more advantages such as protection, economic advantage, flexibility and highly adaptablility than other packaging product to Businesses in Nigeria?
iii. Does the use of polythene as packaging improve sales or customers' satisfaction?

IV. Literature Review

Packaging is a strategic tool as well as a marketing vehicle in a business organisation (Olsmats, 2002). Polythene as a packaging product carries the largest percentage of packaging materials in the world (Eurostat, 2021). Over 70 million tons of thermoplastic per year are used in textiles mostly in clothing and carpeting. This saves land, natural resources and inputs compared to the use of wool and cotton. (bettermeetsreality.com, 2022).

It is easy to look down on the advantage of polythene products due to the idea that they are environmentally unfriendly. While they certainly have ecological pitfalls, polythene products can be beneficial to retailers, consumers and even the environment as they are cost effective (Ketcham. 2021), easy to use, convenient to store, a great marketing tool, reusable, consume less energy, enhances protection, durable and highly adaptable and recyclable (plastivision, 2019) unlike paper products.

According to a statistic by Statistica (2021), in 2015 the production volume of plastic and polythene in Nigeria reached around 411,000 tons which was expected to increase to 513,000 tons of plastic by 2020. Presently over 3000 registered company exist in Nigeria as against 50 launched in the 1960s. Much of this growth is attributed to the need of polythene products by business organisations and the surge in polythene consumption. Polythene productionis highly profitable and viable. The product is in high demand from supermarkets, grocery stores, homes, factories and business organisations. The demand for polythene product is very wide in Nigeria and worldwide on a daily basis. Millions of tons of polythene bags are produced worldwide and the production hardly meets the demand (Oyesola, 2017), due to its advantages over other packaging product such as protection enhancement, High adaptability, Extremely lightweight, Economical, durability, Excellent rigidity, Superior Flexibility and Easily Recyclable (plastivision, 2019).

This study is based on Kano theory of Attractive Quality and Packaging. Kano theory of Attractive quality and Packaging was developed by Prof Noriaki Kano in 1984, the theory explores and identifies a product based on the view that functionality is not only measure of a good product but the packaging must also portray and enhance certain level of needs.

Conclusively, the theory explains that packaging must be easy to use, the information on it must be relevant so that the consumer does not misuse the product, it has to fit into storage spaces, and the

package has to facilitate all attributes. All these fits more with the functions and advantages of polythene as a packaging product.

V. Methodology

A well-structured questionnaire was employed for the primary data collection using a five Likert scale to examine how strongly subjects in the questionnaire agree or disagree. The questionnaire was administered to respondents selected through Area sampling. Each respondent representing their business organisation. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) 15% was added to the sample size of 1200 for provision of non-response making the total distributed questionnaire to be 1380.1283 number of questionnaires were returned making 93% of respondents. 1280 number of usable copies of the questionnaire for this study showed a good response rate of 92.7%. This percentage of the usable questionnaire is considered sufficient for any study (Barbie, 2007). The states selected are Kano state (north-west), Gombe state (north-east), Kwara state (north-central), Anambra state (south-east), Rivers state (South-south) and Lagos state (south-west) as each state represents a geopolitical zone in Nigeria.

VI. Conclusion

This paper revealed that polythene as a packaging product is the most used packaging product by business organisations in Nigeria, as 1184 out of the 1280 good response questionnaire confirms the use of polythene for packaging by business organisations in Nigeria. This confirms up to 92.5% of the data. Also, the percentage of the data that used other polythene product confirms they still included polythene to their packaging for finishing and protection.

Data collected confirms polythene has more advantage as a packaging product, as 1159 respondents representing 90.6% of the data collected. Most of the remaining respondent were into fresh and dry product, of which paper or cartons is the best packaging product.

Conclusively, the study reveals that polythene as a packaging product does not improve sales but customers' satisfaction can be confirmed by 72.6%. Thus, the assessment of polythene usage as packaging product by business organisations in Nigeria is positive.

VII. Recommendation

Thus, the study recommends that: The government, organisations and private individuals should invest more in scavenging and recycling of polythene product. Also, to encourage re-usage, so has to reduce waste and reduce pollution in the environment.

Furthermore, Organisations and non-profit institutions should educate and spread the word on issues related to polythene pollution and help make people aware of the problems. Finally, more support and donations should be encouraged on scientific reviews as well as general awareness on reuse and recycling of polythene products.

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