

## The Determinants of Purchasing Decisions: The Case of Snack Products

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### Abstract

Parents' decisions to buy snacks are likely influenced by packaging designs, the colors of the snack packagings, and their children. Children are unique influencers because they cannot afford to buy snacks they desire, but they can influence and even direct their parents to buy the desired snacks. In this article, I investigate how snack packaging designs and colors attract consumers' attention and affect their purchasing decisions. In particular, this study seeks to analyze the effects of snack packaging design and snack packaging color on parents' purchasing decisions. The data was generated by using questionnaires that asked 90 parents who have children aged 4-7 years old. **Findings.** The Study demonstrate that snack packaging designs and colors affect parents' purchasing decisions.

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## 1. Introduction

Consumers may respond instantaneously to packaging designs before making purchasing decisions on certain products (Njoto, 2016). Accordingly, firms display packaging with attractive designs and various colors to impress potential buyers. Thus, firms use packaging designs to survive increasingly competitive markets. Products' attractiveness is closely related to their designs. Producers used to design packaging to protect their products, but they currently design packaging to sell their protected products (Meiliani, 2014). Packaging designs make products easily recognizable that potentially trigger purchasing decisions because they are directly visible to consumers. Unique and attractive packaging increase consumers' curiosity about displayed products. Consequently, packaging significantly encourage consumers to provide favorable responses in buying products because the ultimate goal of packaging is to create sales (Cenadi, 2015). Thus, packaging also gives or adds the products' benefits and it also be vital for the consumption of the product (Rundh, 2009).

In a business, packaging holds a dominant role as it is clarify as the wrappers and containers for a product (Rahman, Harun, & Johari, 2020), especially in the area of grocery products, spirits and perfumes (Rundh, 2009). Susetyarsi (2012) explains packagings refer to activities to design and produce wraps that include wrap designs and product wrap production. Meanwhile, packaging

designs can be defined as the creativity that consists of form, typography, image, and other elements of designs that contain information about sold products (Shidiqy, 2016). Ampuero & Vila (2007) classify packaging components into two elements, namely graphical element that consists of typography and image and structural element that consists of size, form, and materials. The criteria of packaging designs are not correct or incorrect design, but the proper or improper design (Natadjaja, 2002). All products look the same without different packagings (Resmi & Wismiarsi, 2015). Thus, it can be concluded that visual attractiveness plays a crucial role in attracting consumers to certain products that will be added values in sales.

Besides packaging designs, consumers also likely consider food packaging colors when making purchasing decisions. Color is one of the most potential features of product design in the food industry (Deliza, Macfie, & Hedderley, 2003). Unique colors are the products' attractiveness and features that are intentionally created to become the products' unique identity. For example, blue or green packaging colors usually refer to healthy food, while red packagings generally represent delicious but less healthy food (Huang, 2015). Thus, color is one of the product elements that largely affect consumers' decisions and attitudes.

Displayed food packaging colors potentially create various individual perceptions. According to Huang (2015), the aesthetics of packaging colors are usually based on the color harmony that fit visually. Deliza et al. (2003) establish that colors are the function of light and various waves and also one of the strongest features of product designs in the food industry. Based on their impacts, colors can be categorized into warm and cool colors. Warm colors, such as red and yellow, exhibit longer influences than cool colors, such as blue and green (Mehta & Zhu, 2009). Meanwhile, Shi (2012) argues that colors are a very significant aspect of marketing because most transactions take place in environments in which colors serve as the background of products. Colors are an essential part of the image creation of a firm, especially if the colors involve a firm's logo (Natadjaja, 2002). Thus, one can argue that packaging colors contribute positively to product sales.

The first impression of products or services is crucial. Consequently, firms need to differentiate their products that potentially have similar features or prices to other products (Oktavia, 2017). In purchasing decisions, consumers will make favorable or unfavorable responses to offered goods. In this respect, business owners seek to understand consumers' needs and desires. Consequently, they need to understand consumers' needs and desires that depend on consumers' behavior (Tjiptono, 2009).

Shidiqy (2016) finds that packaging designs do not affect consumers' purchasing decisions because they are not consumers' primary considerations in buying products. However, Njoto (2016) and Oktavia (2017) demonstrate that packaging designs affect consumers' purchasing decisions because consumers are attracted to flagrant designs. Packaging colors are the most crucial stimulator of packagings that influence consumers' purchasing decisions (Natadjaja, 2002). This study seeks to modify Shidiqy (2016) and Oktavia (2017) by adding the packaging color variable because colors attract individuals' emotions more strongly, and people tend to love colors (Natadjaja, 2002). Different from Shidiqy (2016) and Oktavia (2017), this study analyzes children of 4-7 years old, as children is a unique segment, by adding a research variable of packaging color. Children's packaging is intended to a special treatment and considerations. To overcome n this matter, attractive graphic design elements, colors and presence of a cartoon character are usually included (Mzoughi, Bree, & Cherif, 2017).

More specifically, this study asks whether consumers still buy when the packaging designs do not use flagrant colors and attractive typography and whether color differences in food packagings lead to different individual perceptions. Color plays a big role to attract the children

(Zhang, 2013). Children are memorized the colors, shapes, size and illustrations on the packaging (Christino, Cardozo, Silva, & Mazzini, 2019). Color can be used to attract customers on an emotional level (Krishna, Cian, & Aydinoglu, 2016). As reported by *Liputan6*, Betina Piqueras-Fizman from the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain, and Charles Spence from the University of Oxford, the UK, invited 57 volunteers to taste hot chocolate served in plastic glasses in various colors, such as red, orange, white, and beige with the white color inside the glasses. Their volunteers chose hot chocolate served in orange or beige plastic glasses because they considered the chocolate more delicious (Wisnuwardani, 2015). In a similar vein, as reported by *Bisnis UKM*, Maichi's packaging attracts consumers because its red color successfully indicates spicy taste and stimulates consumers' curiosity on its spicy flavor. Based on these two previous studies, this study predicts that food or beverage packaging colors affect individuals' perception of taste and eventually create purchasing decisions.

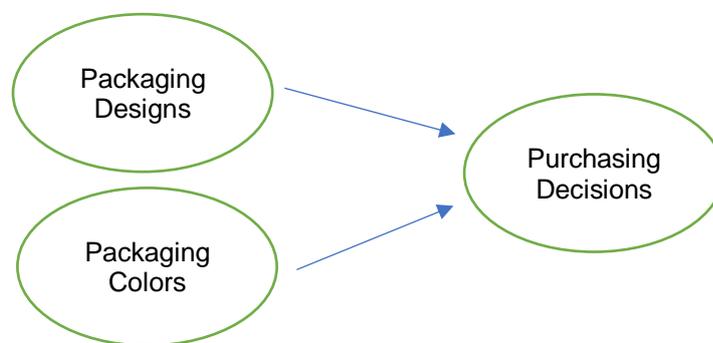
Purchasing decisions refer to a process that combines knowledge to evaluate several alternative products and select from these alternatives. Another research suggests that purchasing decisions are individuals that are directly involved in decision making to buy products (Kotler & Armstrong, 2008). Kotler & Armstrong (2014) propose five stages of purchasing decisions. First, the problem identification phase starts when buyers realize the differences between the actual and expected conditions. In this phase, needs emerge as a consequence of buyers' internal factors or external factors. Second, the information searching phase refers to the period when consumers begin to develop their interests and potentially search for more information. Third, the alternative assessment phase takes place when consumers assess several alternative options and make further decisions. Fourth, the purchasing decision phase refers to the period when consumers decide whether they will buy or not. Fifth, the post-purchasing decision phase takes place when consumers show their (dis)satisfaction.

This study analyzes packaging designs and colors differently because packaging designs are arguably more related to the illustrations and writings in snack packagings. Packagings are considered appropriate if they represent the product concepts intended by producers to induce buyers (Meiliani, 2014). According to Oktavia (2017), firms use product designs to persuade teenage and adult consumers to make purchasing decisions. These young consumers are often targeted by the marketing campaign because of their power, lifelong brand consumer potential and their influence on domestic shopping (Kelly, King, Chapman, Boyland, Bauman, & Baur, 2015). Moreover, products segmented for children have a special attention to be paid on packaging and items, such as color, packaging shapes, characters, gifts, stickers and fun product design (Christino, Cardozo, Silva, & Mazzini, 2019). Children are influenced by packaging, not brand (Mzoughi, Bree, & Cherif, 2017).

In this respect, packaging designs likely affect parents' purchasing decisions because parents seek to fulfill their children's needs and desires. Wibowo (2014) emphasizes that packaging designs potentially attract children aged 4-7 years old because these children have stronger desires and fantasies. Moreover, the children, especially those up to 12 years old, can implement a variety of tactics (pointing or picking up desired items): asking, begging, yelling, negotiating, persuading and using emotional strategies such as being pleasant and helpful (Christino, Cardozo, Silva, & Mazzini, 2019). By doing so, these actions are encouraged children's demands from their parents.

Also, packaging colors are one of the strong elements of packaging designs that this study mainly focuses on their strong psychological effects on packagings. Color usage is the center of all packagings designing process that should support firms' objectives (Natadajaja, 2002). Firms must consider various factors in selecting packaging colors are consumers' perception, product color, market condition, and sales that affect purchasing decisions. Packaging colors likely attract

children aged 4-7 years old because they can represent children's favorites (Wibowo, 2014). Packaging designs and colors are both visual signs that are likely responded by children, such as packagings with cartoon characters and attractive colors (Mehta, Phillips, Ward, Coveney, Handsley, & Carter, 2011). This study choose the snack packaging design and color variables to investigate to what extent producers create attractive packagings to attract consumers, induce them to own the products, and eventually make purchasing decisions. This study analyzes the decisions of parents with children age 4-7 years old to select and buy snacks for their children. Children can exert their influences on parents' consumption patterns (Ramzy, Ogden, Ogden, & Zakaria, 2012). Children's purchasing power likely controls their parents' money either directly or indirectly. Wang & Holloway (2007) observe that such influence exists when a family member believes that other family members have affected their purchasing decisions. Thus, our study questions are: (1) do snack packaging designs affect parents' purchasing decisions? and (2) do snack packaging colors affect parents' purchasing decisions? Furthermore, the research model is as follow.



**Figure 1.** Research model

Source: (Nata djaja, 2002), (Meiliani, 2014), (Oktavia, 2017), *modified*

## 2. Research Method

The research population was consumers who had purchased snacks with the sample number of at least five times the number of questions in the questionnaire. In particular, the research criteria were parents who have children aged 4-7 years old and at least once a week bought snacks. My research variables were two independent variables and one dependent variable that include 18 questions. Thus, the sample number was  $18 \times 5 = 90$  respondents that were selected by using the purposive sampling method.

I collected the primary data by distributing the questionnaires to the selected respondents. The measurement scale of the research concepts is the interval scale (Likert scale). The Likert scale's score ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Next, I ran the validity test to ensure the validity of data by using SPSS. Data is considered valid if the statements in the questionnaire represented the concepts to be measured by the questionnaire. Statistically, data is valid if the corrected item to total correlation  $\geq 0.361$  (Ghozali, 2015).

I also ran the classical assumption test to ensure that the data met the criteria of Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE) and produced valid parameters (Supramono & Haryanto, 2005). Ghozali (2011) explains that a regression equation aims to analyze the effects of several independent variables (X) on an independent variable (Y). Accordingly, the following is the regression specification of this research (Djarwanto & Subagyo, 2011):

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \varepsilon_i$$

where:

- Y = Purchasing decisions  
 i = i<sup>th</sup> respondent  
 α = constant  
 β<sub>1</sub>, β<sub>2</sub> = regression coefficient  
 X<sub>1</sub> = Packaging Designs  
 X<sub>2</sub> = Packaging Color  
 ε = Error Term

### 3. Results And Discussions

The pilot test analyzed 30 respondents and indicated that three questions in the packaging designs variable were not valid, namely “My child easily remembers the logo form of the snacks,” “The layout of the snack designs are the unique features of the products that I buy,” and “I buy snacks with good product images.” Meanwhile, in the packaging colors variable, there were two invalid questions, namely “Packaging colors shape my child’s perception on the taste of the snacks” and “Packaging colors are the unique features of the products that I buy.” Lastly, there are three invalid questions in the purchasing decisions variable, namely “I will search for information on the products/snacks that my child wish from my friends,” “I confirm that the products/ snacks that I buy are safe for my child,” and “I always fulfill my child’s choices without further considerations.” Consequently, the packaging design variable had five question items, the packaging color six question items, and the purchasing decisions variable seven questions, totaling in 18 questions.

Respondents played a very crucial role in this study. Consequently, the following table displays respondents’ characteristics that consist of age, sex, education level, monthly expenditure, occupation, and snacks that their child often bought.

**Table 1.** Respondents’ Characteristics

No	Explanation	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age	20-25 years	9	10%
		26-30 years	21	23.3%
		31-35 years	26	28.9%
		36-40 years	24	26.7%
		41-45 years	10	11.1%
2	Sex	Female	68	75.6%
		Male	22	24.4%
3	Highest Education	Junior High School	1	1.1%
		Senior High School	30	33.3%
		Diploma	17	18.9%
		Bachelor	41	45.6%
4	Monthly Expenditure	< 1 million	6	6.7%
		1-2 million	21	23.3%
		2-3 million	18	20%
		3-4 million	17	18.9%
		4-5 million	10	11.1%
		>5 million	18	20%
5	Occupation	Employee - private firm	20	22.2%

No	Explanation	Sub-category	Frequency	Percentage
		Civil servant	8	8.9%
		Entrepreneur	27	30%
		Housewife	32	35.6%
		University student	2	2.2%
		Police	1	1.1%
6	Snack most frequently bought by the child	Chitato	6	6.7%
		Taro	38	42.2%
		Lays	11	12.2%
		Chiki	12	13.3%
		Piatos	6	6.7%
		Cheetos	15	16.7%
		Momogi	2	2.2%

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

Table 1 informs that from 90 respondents, 26 of them aged 31-35 years old, and 68 of them were female. Based on the respondents' highest education level, most respondents (41 individuals) obtained a bachelor degree. Also, 21 respondents spent between 1-2 million rupiahs per month, and 32 respondents were housewives.

### Validity and Reliability Tests

Data is considered valid if the questions in the questionnaire effectively represent something to be measured by the questionnaire or statistically if the corrected item to total correlation coefficient  $> 0,05$ . The validity test suggests that the packaging designs ( $X_1$ ), packaging colors ( $X_2$ ), and purchasing decisions (Y) variables were valid because  $r_{\text{statistic}} > r_{\text{table}}$  or  $> 0.361$ .

The reliability test aims to evaluate whether the questionnaire is consistent after repeated implementations. The acceptable reliability rate is  $\geq 0,70$ . The reliability test of my three research variables indicates that the packaging designs ( $X_1$ ), packaging colors ( $X_2$ ), and purchasing decisions (Y) variables were reliable because the Cronbach's alpha value ( $\alpha$ ) was  $> 0.70$ .

**Table 2.** Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	r Table	Result
Packaging Designs	0,705	0,70	Reliable
Packaging Colors	0,804	0,70	Reliable
Purchasing Decisions	0,767	0,70	Reliable

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

### Test of Classical Assumption

The test of classical assumption seeks to ensure that the data meets the criteria of *Best Linear Unbiased Estimator (BLUE)* and produces valid parameters. Accordingly, I ran the test of the classical assumption that consists of the normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests.

### Normality Test

I relied on the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. If  $p < 0.05$ , then residuals are not normally distributed. The normality test aims to analyze whether the data is normally distributed. As illustrated by the following Table 4, the normality test indicates that  $p\text{-value} = 0.200 > 0.05$ , implying that the residuals were normally distributed.

**Table 3.**Normality Test

<b>n</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>	<b>Result</b>
90	0.200	0.05	Normal Distribution

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

### Multicollinearity

The test aims to analyze whether the independent variables are highly correlated with each other. The test evaluates the tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. Serious multicollinearity exists when the tolerance value is below 0.10 and VIF value is above 10.

**Table 4.**Multicollinearity Test

<b>Model</b>	<b>Tolerance</b>	<b>VIF</b>
(Constant)		
Packaging Designs	0.983	1.017
Packaging Colors	0.983	1.017

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

The results suggest the absence of serious multicollinearity between the independent variables because the tolerance value was above 0.10 and  $VIF < 10$ .

### Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity test analyzes whether the data violates the heteroscedasticity assumption, i.e., variance differences of residuals for all observations in the regression model. My test relied on the Glejser test with a significance value  $> 0.05$  indicates no heteroscedasticity problem.

**Table 5.**Heteroskedasticity Test

<b>Model</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
(Constant)		
Packaging Designs	0.119	0.05
Packaging Colors	0.079	0.05

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

The above table demonstrates that the significance values of the packaging designs and packaging color variables were 0.119 and 0.079 ( $>0.05$ ), respectively, suggesting no heteroskedasticity.

### Hypothesis Testing

The researchers used a t-test to test the hypotheses partially, i.e., to investigate whether each independent variable (X) partially affects the dependent variable (Y). With the significance value of  $\alpha = 0.05$ .  $H_1$  is supported and  $H_0$  rejected if  $t_{\text{statistic}} < t_{\text{table}}$ .

**Table 6.** Partial Test (t-test)

Model	$\beta$	T	Sig.	R square	Adjusted R Square
(Constant)	11.073	3.486	0.001		
Packaging Designs	0.450	3.390	0.001	0.217	0.199
Packaging Colors	0.316	3.086	0.003		

Source: Primary data (2019), processed

The table above informs that the  $t_{\text{statistic}}$  of the packaging designs variable was 3.390 with the significance value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ , implying that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  supported. Meanwhile, the  $t_{\text{statistic}}$  of the packaging colors variable was 3.086, with the significance value of  $0.003 < 0.05$ , suggesting that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_2$  supported.

### 3.1. Discussions

#### The Effect of Snack Packaging Designs on Parents' Purchasing Decisions

The actions of consumers, especially parents, in sale locations will encourage them to make several decisions based on what they see. Consequently, packagings should attract consumers, and their designs should be easily recognizable from both near and far distances. Packaging is one critical aspect to the marketing offerings. Thus, it gives impact to customer experience (Krishna, Cian, & Aydinoglu, 2016). Attractive packaging designs will likely motivate consumers to make purchasing decisions. Table 6 demonstrates that snack packaging designs significantly affect parents' purchasing decisions. Also, Table 6 informs that the  $t_{\text{stat}}$  of the packaging designs variable was 3.390 with the significance value of  $0.001 < 0.05$ , implying that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  supported. Thus, snack packaging designs significantly affect parents' purchasing decisions.

Ampuero & Vila (2007) propose that packagings can be classified into two elements, namely graphical (consisting of typography and picture) and structural (size, form, and materials). Fifty-seven (57) respondents agreed that the packaging designs of snacks they bought created unique brand identity (average = 4.12). This finding is in line with Widaningsih *et al.* (2014), who observe that consumers consider unique brand identities that attract them to buy the represented products when making purchasing decisions. Their results indicate that consumers are more motivated to buy products with more unique brand identities, such as logo and typography (Ampuero & Vila, 2007). Also, 59 respondents agreed that the packagings of the snacks they bought determined their purchasing decisions (average = 3.89), implying that parents consider the forms and size of snack

packagings when purchasing snacks. This implies that packaging is critical (Krishna, Cian, & Aydinoglu, 2016). The uniqueness and attractiveness of packagings increase consumers' curiosity about displayed products. If products attract visual attention, consumers are more likely to touch them as well; and, if they touch them, they are even more likely to purchase them (Peck & Childers, 2006). Consequently, packagings significantly encourage consumers to provide favourable responses in buying products because the final goal of packaging is to increase sales (Cenadi, 2015).

The results of the hypothesis testing that demonstrates the significant effect of packaging designs on purchasing decisions are in line with (Widaningsih *et al.*, 2014), (Njoto, 2016), (Resmi & Wismiarsi, 2015), and (Susetyarsi, 2012). Njoto (2016) document that before buying, respondents are attracted to packaging designs that are unique or continuously improving. Thus, snack packaging designs that are continuously more attractive will enhance purchasing decisions. Resmi & Wismiarsi (2015) establish that consumers consider packagings' structural elements to ensure that the foods they buy are adequately protected. Susetyarsi (2012) also explains that products with attractive packagings will improve consumers' perception and visually stimulate consumers that will significantly affect their purchasing decisions.

### **The Effect of Snack Packaging Colors on Parents' Purchasing Decisions**

The huge development of children's food consumption attracts to the children's food packaging designer (Zhang, 2013). It leads to improve the visual part on the product. As part of the design process, color plays a big role to attract the children. Moreover, the color design should visually intrusive children's condition (Zhang, 2013). Color cannot be replaced by other languages or words; it can go beyond the obstacles which are created by different languages, ages and cultural degree to express information (Boyatzis & Varghese, 1994). Attractive packaging colors should display their identities without requiring consumers' attentive observations because colors can offer different psychological stimulates to consumers. Color can be used to attract customers on an emotional level (Krishna, Cian, & Aydinoglu, 2016). Wibowo (2014) argues that children prefer bright colors such as red, orange, yellow, green, and so on. Consequently, colors can attract children aged 4-7 years old because they can represent children's favorites. Consumers tend to select colors that offer positive perceptions of certain products. Thus, snack packaging colors likely affect purchasing decisions.

Table 6 illustrates that snack packaging colors affect parents' purchasing decisions. Also, Table 6 indicates that the  $t_{stat}$  of the packaging colors variable was 3.086 with the significance value of  $0.003 < 0.05$ , indicating that  $H_0$  was rejected and  $H_1$  was supported. Thus, snack packaging colors significantly affect parents' purchasing decisions.

(Monica & Luzar, 2011) propose the advantages of using appropriate colors in designing packagings, namely: (1) brand recognition increases; (2) colorful advertisement designs will be read more frequently; (3) flagrantly colorful designs are more attractive and more likely to result in purchasing decisions. Forty-nine (49) parents agreed that flagrant packagings attracted their children more (average=3.84). Accordingly, packaging colors that are attractive, creative, and compatible with packaging designs will motivate consumers to buy. The colour design to the packaging, shape and pattern in children's food could enhance purchasing desire (Zhang, 2013).

Parents tend to refuse their children's requests on certain products by distracting their children's attention from their requests. However, because children are the influencers, parents tend to fulfill their children's requests with certain conditions (Wibowo, 2014). Parents who are alert on their children's favorite snacks try to compare various snacks before making purchasing

decisions. This study observes that 32 parents who work as housewife agreed to compare various snacks because they believe that they made the best decisions for their children. As parents, they seek to choose products that provide a healthy food and also want to enable their children eat foods they like.

The results that suggest that snack packaging colors affect purchasing decisions are in line with (Shi, 2012), (Mehta, Phillips, Ward, Coveney, Handsley, & Carter, 2011) and (Natadjaja, 2002). Shi (2012) argues that firms need to select product colors that positively affect consumers' mood to boost the sales of their products. The visual feature, vivid color, has a strong visual impact to differentiate one brand to other alternatives brand (Mzoughi, Bree, & Cherif, 2017). Mehta et al. (2009) explain that packaging colors are the visual signal that will be responded by children, such as packagings with cartoon characters and appropriate colors. Natadjaja (2002) holds that consumers consider packaging colors in selecting and buying products that will eventually affect their product perceptions. Afterwards, the choice of dominant color in a packaging allows children to recognize the brand name (Mzoughi, Bree, & Cherif, 2017).

#### **4. Conclusions**

Unique snack packaging designs such as logo and clear information on the products offer reliable assurance to individuals about their purchasing decisions. Also, snack packaging colors affect parents' purchasing decisions. Snack packaging colors are not only attractive but also improve children's moods. This study confirms Njoto (2016) and Oktavia (2017), who document that snack products with attractive packagings will enhance consumers' perception and visually stimulate them to remember and consider the products when making purchasing decisions. Snack packaging colors affect parents' purchasing decisions. This study is in line with Natadjaja (2002), who observes that consumers consider packaging colors in selecting and buying products, and packaging colors affect consumers' perception of the products. Marketers need to deliver knowledge on product packaging designs and colors effectively through advertisements or packaging information that their products' ingredients are safe. In targeting the children market (snack products), marketers need to focus on reference groups to parents as purchasing decision-makers. Besides, parents are also influenced by their friends or other family members in their daily purchasing decisions. Parents will buy the products if they consider the products high-quality.

#### **Limitations and Agenda for Future Studies**

This study only observed children aged 4-7 years old in Salatiga. Consequently, future studies need to use respondents from numerous cities. Also, this paper advises future research to compare parents and children's perception regarding package designs and colors and investigate snack brand designs and the psychology of color that likely affect children's attitude. Lastly, future studies can use more detailed children's data in terms of age and gender to analyze whether younger/older or male/female children exhibit a more significant influence on their parents' purchasing decisions.

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