

# **Consumer responses to (a)typical label design within standardized glass packaging shape**

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Master of Business Administration

Submitted to Mag. Dr. Marion Garaus

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## **AFFIDAVIT**

I hereby affirm that this Master's Thesis represents my own written work and that I have used no sources and aids other than those indicated. All passages quoted from publications or paraphrased from these sources are properly cited and attributed.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to bring to the attention of marketers that the progression of standardized glass packaging carries design opportunities for the development of both marketing and branding strategies.

Consumer awareness of waste problems associated with discarded packaging is steadily increasing. In 2017 the packaging waste generated per EU inhabitant was 173,8kg (Eurostat 2017). Within a year, the waste generated per inhabitant in the EU increased by 200g (Eurostat 2018), warranting the necessity for further attention both to packaging design and its management. Packaging plays a key role in the transportation and protection of products throughout the various steps of their logistical networks. Both disposable and reusable containers are used in this process, while consumer concern over sustainability is encouraging the recycling and reuse of containers. A steady shift from plastic to glass has been occurring over the past years. There is further increasing attention within the EU towards the further deployment of Direct Refund Service (DRS) systems for standardized glass packaging, wherein a container is collected, reconditioned and then reused. The success of standardized beer bottles within DRS systems makes a good case for the implementation of standardized glass packaging onto further consumer goods. Current trend show that DRS systems are being discussed for further glass contained consumer goods. This would mean more products having the same packaging container, leaving marketers and branders with only the container label or lid as means of brand differentiation.

The thesis addresses why it will become of greater relevance for marketers and branders to find innovative means of making their products stand out. Through the gathering of empirical data, this paper proposes potential design opportunities and design solutions for further development by marketers and branders, in order for their products to stand out despite the restrictions of standardized glass containers. The paper concludes with reviews of the results and suggestions for further investigation.

The research and its findings are relevant to the marketing and branding sectors contributing to the currently underexplored academic field of innovative standardized glass container labeling. The primary research was of quantitative nature. An online experiment was conducted to assess the impact of atypical vs. typical packaging label design in the context standardized glass packaging on various consumer responses. The results gathered provide various new insights into consumer interest, consumer brand attitude and consumer purchase intention, when faced with (a)typical label design on standardized glass packaging.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Imagine you are standing in the supermarket aisle looking at a shelf filled with different brands of pickle jars and you have no idea which one to buy or how to differentiate them. Knowing that consumers apply heuristics when going grocery shopping (Reber et al. 2004) and that very small cues can influence their decision, a consumer might therefore be more likely to select the pickle jar with a packaging that stands out or is perceived as atypical within its product category. Atypical packaging shape has been proven to augment cognitive processing, willingness to pay and increase product quality judgement (van Ooijen et al. 2016). This, paired with research showing that consumers are prone to wanting to make quick and efficient decisions (Babin et al. 1994), highlights the importance of packaging shape and atypicality on the purchasing decision of a consumer. Now imagine that due to legislation all pickle jars look the same, how can a firm substantially differentiate itself from their competitor, if the packaging shape is the same as that of its competitor? A product's packaging is a key way to communicate brand messaging to consumers. Particularly when it comes to consumers' purchasing decisions, the latter has been recognized as the most important means of communication (Underwood et al. 2001; van Rompay et al. 2012). Though plenty of research has been undertaken in different aspects of packaging design such as texture (Veryzer and Hutchinson 1998), shape (Folkes and Matta 2004; Raghuram and Greenleaf 2006; Schoormans and Robben 1997) and color (Garaus and Halkias 2019; Labrecque and Milne 2013), little attention has been devoted to the opportunities and challenges facing packaging label design within standardized packaging shape and its potential impact on consumers.

Packaging consumption has been growing over the past years in part due to changing consumer trends and retail developments towards added convenience and lifestyle (Skoda 2017). Globalization, simpler logistics systems for single-use packaging as well as supply chains preferences for the latter, have added to the growing waste problem (Coelho et al. 2020). Packaging is presently the primary user of virgin materials. This means that its materials are sourced directly from nature in their raw form, as opposed to using recycled materials (Coelho et al. 2020), with the former using considerably more energy and straining of natural resources. In Europe, 50% of paper (CEPI 2018) and 40% of plastics (Plastics Europe 2018) are used for packaging, and 36% of municipal solid waste is generated through the latter (Eurostat 2018). Cultural and environmental influences are showing sector trends away from single-use packaging. The past 40 years have made considerable efforts to

reduce the impact of packaging on the environment through improved material selection and ‘light-weighting’ packaging (Holdway et al. 2002; Lewis et al. 2001). These redesign efforts, however, have done little to considerably dent the impact of packaging waste on our environment. Whilst Europe is recycling and recovering more packaging year on (Eurostat 2017), its growing demography means that the production of waste is also increasing (Eurostat 2018), thus rendering minimal improvements to the overall waste problems. The circular economy, encompassing among other Rethink, Reuse, Redesign, Remanufacture, Repair, Recover and other “R” variations, are currently being investigated (Potting et al. 2017; Reike et al. 2018; Kirchherr et al. 2017) as ways to shift from material recycling to packaging reuse. Despite these initiatives and advancements in eco-design, we are still seeing an increase at an average rate of 1 % per year in packaging waste across Europe (Eurostat 2011). The extensive use of refillable packaging is seen as able to effectively reduce the amount of packaging waste ending up in landfills (Lofthouse 2014). Thus, packaging reuse signifies a great opportunity to keep the function of the packaging and potentially achieve large reductions in material use and environmental impacts. The effectiveness of reusable packaging depends on the shape of the packaging container, with standardized containers being the most effective way to reuse the packaging.

Environmental trends show a sectoral shift toward increased deployment of reusable standardized packaging as well as an increase consumer partiality towards such packaging (Statista 2019; Beinschab 2020). In light of this as well as of the abundant marketing research identifying packaging shape as key for both product identification and brand positioning, it is surprising that very little research has been done so far to identify the impact standardized packaging shape has on consumer behavior. Furthermore, it is not clear which branding strategy is most suitable for reusable packaging in order to optimize product differentiation. The present research tries to empirically address this matter by investigating the relative influence that typical versus atypical packaging label design has on consumers when choosing products that all use the same packaging container. The findings contribute to research on product packaging design by emphasizing the significance of innovative packaging design within the restrictive parameters of standardized packaging shape.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Reusable Packaging: Trends and Legislations

The reuse of packaging is not a new development, but an already established practice. Prevalent both in B2B (crates, pallets etc.) and B2C (beer bottles, mineral water etc.) markets, packaging reuse has been implemented across Europe. The past decades however have seen a decrease in the deployment of reusable packaging as well as unsuccessful attempts to extend their use beyond traditional and success cases such as beer. It must however be highlighted that technological advances and the progress of product service systems gives reason to re-evaluate the position of refillable packaging systems. European countries lacking strict legislation on reuse packaging consume more single-use packaging (Golding 1999), offering simplified logistics system for both retailers and distributors. The Netherlands for example previously sold dairy products (milk, yogurt etc.) in glass and plastic reusable containers, but have since replaced these with single-use packaging. Moreover, lifestyle trends toward smaller portions and snacks, deter from reusable packaging (Hyslop 2020) resulting in more material use and waste volume that negatively impact the environment. Reusable packaging is recognized as a means of reducing the volume of packaging material, energy consumption and incurring emissions. If deployed, reusable packaging could replace 20% of plastic containers in circulation (Ellen MacArthur Foundation 2017).

As early as 1994, the European Parliament enacted the Packaging and Packaging Waste directive (EUR-Lex 1994), stating that its Member States had to comply with 'essential requirements' and meet targets for the composition, recovery and recycling of packaging. The latter pushing the issue of packaging and ways to sustainably develop it to the forefront of marketers and branders consideration. Since then, the EU has been steadily increasing its shift toward more sustainable forms of packaging. By 2030, the European Parliament has stipulated that its use of reusable packaging should be increased by 1% (Marowski 2017). As recently as March 2020, Austria joined the 'European Plastics Pact' (EPP 2020) stating that by 2025 plastic packaging and single-use packaging should become reusable. Across Europe, retailers have initiated refilling and reusing systems. These come in a multitude of forms and apply to different product categories: bulk dispensers, refillable parent packaging, returnable packaging, and transit packaging. Table 1 shows the different types of reusable packaging currently in circulation, with this paper focusing solely on returnable packaging.

<b>Type of packaging</b>	<b>Packaging examples description</b>	<b>Product examples</b>
Refillable by Bulk Dispenser	Customers use their packaging or brand's refillable packaging in-store or at a mobile truck, making the use of further packaging unnecessary.	Cereals, grains, candy, wine, juice, mineral water, beer, olive oil, vinegar, detergent, soap, hair care products, perfume, body and face lotion
Refillable Parent Packaging	<p><b>Bottle, container, pouch, pod, tablet, powder</b></p> <p>The refill packaging is made with less material than parent packaging. Parent packaging can be refilled by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pouring product inside parent packaging;</li> <li>• placing container inside of parent packaging;</li> <li>• diluting concentrated product in water inside parent packaging.</li> </ul>	Makeup, dental floss, tooth and mouth wash tabs, deodorant, perfume, cosmetics, cleaning products, hair care products, flavored water
Returnable Packaging	<p><b>Container, bottle, cup, plate, bowl</b></p> <p>Customers return empty packaging which will be cleaned and refilled for future use by the retailer/producer (can be combined with a deposit system to provide a financial incentive).</p>	<p>Beer, soft drinks, mineral water, perishables, detergent, soap, cosmetics, hair care products.</p> <p>Reusable cups, containers, plates. (for events, cafes, restaurants)</p>
Transit Packaging	<p><b>Boxes, containers, soft packages</b></p> <p>Customers receive the product in reusable packaging which is returned by door delivery/pick up or through the post office.</p> <p><b>Crates, pallets, wrappers</b></p> <p>Customer reuses packaging multiple times before being returned to the producer or disposed of.</p>	<p>Reusable packaging for transport or shipping of perishables or non-perishables.</p> <p>B2C: for moving home or office location or e-commerce delivery of apparel, furniture or perishables.</p> <p>B2B transport from producer-warehouse-store.</p>

TABLE 1 CLASSIFICATION OF REUSABLE PACKAGING.

Source: Coelho, et al. 2020

In 2018 drug store DM tested refilling stations for detergents and has since expanded the system across their stores in Austria (DM 2020). Zero Waste stores offering packaging free purchases where customers bring their own containers have also been picking up (Zero Waste Austria 2020). Aldi US supermarkets announced that 100% of its packaging would be reusable, recyclable or compostable

by 2025 (Aldi 2019) and launched their initiative to make it easier for consumers to reuse their private-label packaging materials in 2020 (Manning 2019). Coca-Cola and Nestlé have recently come under fire for being the largest plastic polluters for the third consecutive year, with Nestlé pledging that from 2025 onwards their products will only be sold in reusable and recycled bottles (McVeigh 2020). At the end of 2020, The Ferrero Group announced its commitment for 100% of packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable by 2025. It is also currently piloting a scheme in Paris together with Loop and French supermarket Carrefour, wherein shoppers can purchase reusable Nutella jars with a deposit refund scheme seeing Carrefour collect the empty jars for washing and reuse. (Ferrero 2020). Emma Priestland, Global Campaign Coordinator for 'Break Free From Plastic' states that "The only way to halt the growing global tide of plastic is to stop production, phase out single use and implement reuse systems." (McVeigh 2020). For decades now, beer bottles have been successfully reused, due to short transport distances and their high turnover rates, as well as its well-designed packaging systems. The EU's aim should be to translate this success onto further consumer products.

Due to marketing reasons, packaging design varies. In the case of reusable beer bottles, the packaging container remains the same, with only the label as means of differentiation. Nevertheless, plenty of research has been done into the impacts and advantages arising from service systems, limited attention has been paid to product packaging and the marketing and branding opportunities therein. The shift from single use to multiple use packaging is a sustainable way of transitioning to a circular economy, yet more attention needs to be placed onto branding solutions for these standardized packagings, as well as consumer preferences for such packaging options. Presently there is a lack of data on the use and market share of reusable packaging, its impact on the environment and the economy (Golding 1999; Rigamonti et al. 2019), as well as the future of branding and marketing potential within the restrictive parameters of standardized packaging shape.

## **2.2 Deposit Refund Systems (DRS)**

In the Business-to-Consumer market (B2C), the reuse model differs in terms of packaging ownership and packaging return/refill (Ellen McArthur Foundation 2017). The "Refill at home" model sees users part-take in a subscription service whereby their containers are refilled at home. The "Return from home" model sees packaging being collected from the home of a user by a pick-up service. The "Refill on the go" model has users refill their reusable packaging containers in stores or at dispensing systems. The model in this paper focuses on is the "Return on the go" model, whereby

users return packaging at a store or deposit-refund systems (DRS). Theoretical models have indicated that the DRS model is superior to alternative waste disposal policies in controlling waste pollution (Walls 2011). In the B2C market, this model is most commonly known in drinks such as beer, water or carbonated drinks. The more packaging containers are reused, the lower the impact packaging systems have on the environment. In order for a high reuse rate to be achieved, the industry has included the use of voluntary deposit refund systems (DRS) on reusable packaging. Deposit schemes see 99% of materials being recycled and here bottle-to-bottle recycling can be performed (PWC 2011). The trend is moving back to reuse for environmental concerns, where reusable bags are increasingly replacing single-use carrier bags. Charges as well as bans on light-weight carrier bags are turning consumers attention toward reuse (Radhakrishnan 2015). Some European member states have even introduced mandatory deposit refund systems on one-way packaging containers. DRS schemes sometimes include bottle crates, though the bottle labels, lids and caps are single-use. This is a factor that marketers and branders alike should take into account when considering innovative approaches to reusable and sustainable packaging. A European analysis of current trends indicates that the market share of reusable packaging and the recycling rates will continue deteriorating in some countries without the addition of new measures (European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs 2011). The separation of waste for recycling is the first activity that Europeans think of when asked how they can contribute to environmental protection (Eurobarometer 2018). An operative waste collection and recycling system is key for a material-efficient economy. DRS schemes incentivizes the consumer to return the empty container to collection points by offering a refundable deposit that the consumer paid when purchasing the item. Should a consumer choose not to return the container, the deposit is lost. Collection points can usually be found in retail outlets where consumers can either return the empty containers to a counter or to automated 'reverse vending machines' (RVMs). The empty containers are collected and either recycled into new containers or returned to beverage packaging industries for reuse and refill (Fig. 1).



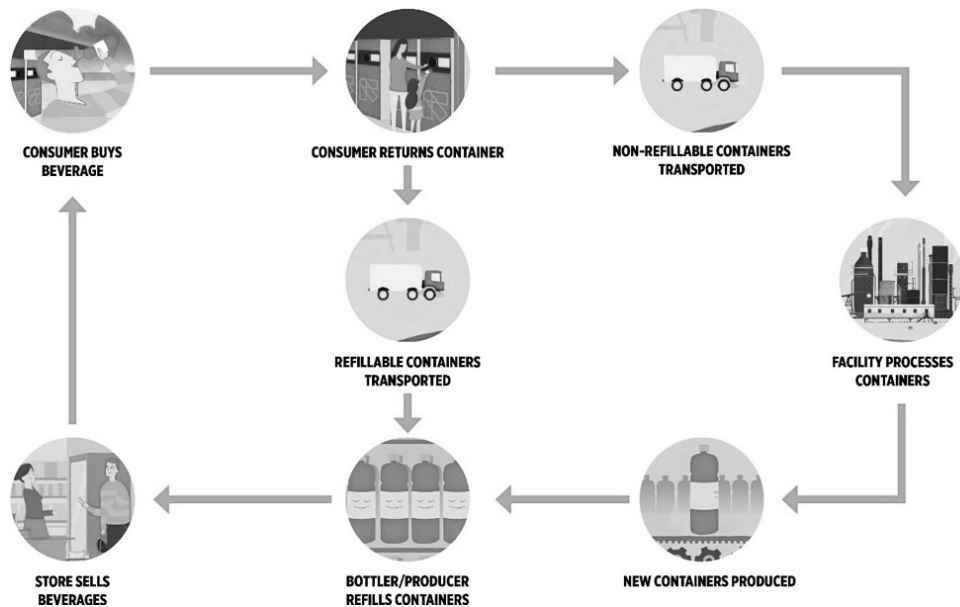


FIGURE 1. REVERSE VENDING MACHINE DIAGRAM

Source: Tomra Newsroom, 2020

DRS schemes are better for the environment by ensuring that containers can be recycled and re-used (Hogg et al. 2017). It reduces the need for raw materials to produce new containers as well as reducing the number of containers that end up in landfills. DRS Systems also keep waste and litter away from groundwater, streets and oceans. Despite the environmental benefits, reusable beverage containers have been decreasing across different product categories (Fig. 2). From 2000 to 2015 Europe saw a decrease of 20% in its sales of reusable containers (Reloop 2020). Convenience, lifestyle and cheaper packaging alternatives have aided the depreciation of consumer use of reusable containers. Currently the reusable and refillable products that remain thriving are industry and product specific i.e.: beer.

Glass containers used to be the most common packaging for beverages with consumers being used to return containers to their local supermarkets. With the introduction of PET and cartons containers in the 1990s, consumers shifted toward a more lightweight form of packaging.

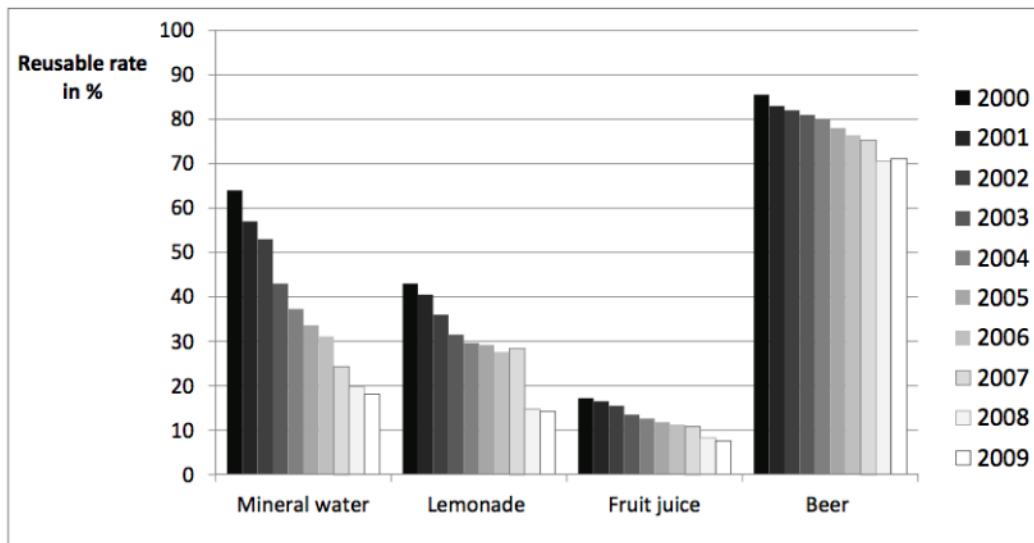


FIGURE 2. SHARE OF REUSABLE BEVERAGE PACKAGING IN AUSTRIA IN % - DEVELOPMENT FROM 2000 TO 2007  
Source: European Parliament, 2011

As this no longer offered similar possibilities of being returned, instead this material was being disposed of at home. Due to consumer pressure, retailers were forced to move further into the direction of PET and carton containers. From a purely financial standpoint, retailers were not going to continue providing consumers with returnable containers if the demand had decreased in this area and increased in the area of PET and carton containers (Spar 2020).

It must however be noted that it is only very recently that the overall sales of one-way beverage containers surpassed the refillables in Germany, and that refillables in general will remain a strong system (ReLoop 2020). The trend back to DRS schemes can be seen across multiple European countries. A 2019 UK survey of the British public found that 80% of its respondents would be likely to use DRS schemes. Of those, 58% stated they would be very likely to use it (Statista 2019). A poll conducted in 2020 found that 84% of Austrians are in favor of expanding the existing deposit system on further glass bottles (Beinschab 2020). Ten European countries currently operate legally regulated deposit refund systems, covering 26% of Europe's population. Due to strict European requirements regarding packaging waste recycling, other countries are also considering shifting toward deposit refund systems (Deloitte 2019). Talks are currently underway in Belgium, France, the UK, Slovakia, Romania, Spain, Latvia, Malta, Portugal and Austria. As of 2021 Turkey will be introducing DRS schemes (Eunomia 2019) and the following year will see Scotland - as the first region in the UK - to roll out their DRS systems (Doherty 2020). These are but a few of the current trends toward DRS systems.

Austria currently has a deposit system in place for returnable bottles such as beer and mineral water. There is, however, no deposit refund system in place for one-way containers for PET, aluminum and glass. Hofer and Lidl supermarkets are coming under considerable pressure from environmental campaigning organizations such as Greenpeace to install DRS systems (Greenpeace 2020). Billa supermarkets are already expanding their multiple-use packaging product range from Beer to milk and yogurt (Ja Natürlich 2020) and Spar Supermarkets in Austria have the largest segments of returnable glass container products, which they run under their own brand name for milk, soda water, apple juice, orange juice, cola and their herbal soda drinks (Spar 2020). After two decades of Austrian consumer stagnation vis-à-vis returnable containers, the share sale for reusable containers has been steadily increasing since 2016, albeit at a very slow but steady rate (Spar 2020). The shift from non-returnable to returnable containers is a slow and steady one due to the low demand for returnable containers. The decreased demand for reusable systems and thus the lower demand for glass containers, means some glassworks also closed shop (Spar 2020). Moreover, existing systems have been dismantled and investments in the washing and filling facilities have decreased as they are only economically beneficial when there is a high demand in the system (Spar 2020). The Austrian dairy industry first trialed one-way glass containers for milk to gauge the consumer traction on glass packaging before investing into returnable systems for milk and expanding it to further dairy products such as yogurt. Both the REWE Group, which includes Billa supermarkets, and Spar decided in March 2020 to sell their milk in reusable glass containers. Both companies use the same glass containers, meaning that the containers can be returned at either supermarket shop, easing the logistics for the consumer. The more return outlets are provided to consumers, the more enticing and seamless consumers will find the process (der Standard 2020). Currently, with the growing demand for glass containers, the existing European glassworks cannot keep up with the demand. Larger orders needed for returnable glass containers currently have a delivery schedule of up to six months (Spar 2020).

The effectiveness of reusable packaging depends on the shape of the packaging container, with standardized containers being the most effective way to reuse packaging. The success of this approach is itself dependent on DRS schemes being successfully deployed. With the European Commission placing stricter requirements on collecting and recycling containers, the future growth and continent wide roll out of deposit refund systems seems ever clearer. The positive experience of European countries that have already implemented this system shows that they can offer a range of advantages including increasing recycling waste rates, raw material improvement and promote

a pro-environmental social awareness. The successful implementation of this system in some European countries paves the way in support of a clear roadmap for the further roll out of DRS schemes onto further European countries. The European Union is considering expanding the country wide standardized glass containers onto Europe wide standardized container shapes, meaning that cross border reuse and refill can be executed. With these advancements in mind, DRS systems will have a considerable impact on the packaging market and on the sectors involved in marketing and branding the packaging, with a key challenge being product differentiation within standardized glass packaging.

### **2.3 Life Cycle Assessment of reusable packaging**

Both within the B2B and the B2C sector, research has shown that a significant amount of packaging material can be reduced through the use of reusable containers (e.g. Hekkert et al. 2000). Several environmental studies use commonly accepted Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) methods. Available studies comparing the LCA of reusable packaging have found that generally and, in most cases, reusable bottles outperform single-use bottles (Hunt and Franklin 1996). Refillable bottles emit less greenhouse emissions and have a lower environmental impact than single-use bottles (Simon et al. 2016). The consultancy c7-consult undertook a study in 2019 which's report shows results based on the ISO 14044 Life Cycle Assessment for containers pertaining to typical branded products in the beverages and detergents sector in Austria (c7-consult 2019). Their report describes the results for water, milk, soft drinks (CSD: carbonated soft drinks) and detergents as offered in the Austrian food retail trade. The results generated by the c7-consult report clearly indicate that in all impact categories - climate change, acidification potential, summer smog and water consumption, as well as across the product categories water, milk, soft drinks (CSD: carbonated soft drinks) and detergents under examination - the LCA of non-returnable glass containers perform worse than that of returnable glass container. Overall glass single-use containers have the worst performance and rPET reusable containers on average have the best overall performance (c7-consult 2019). Though rPET outperforms reusable glass containers when it comes to its impact on the climate, reusable glass containers outperform all rPET bottles in terms of their impact on the environment. PET bottles can be reused up to 20 times and glass up to 40 times. The reuse of glass bottles only up to 20 times already sees an energy saving of 76.91% (Sordo 2020). As a recyclable material, the nature of glass makes it environmentally the most desirable packaging type. With the innovation of lightweight glass offering the same resistance as the older glass but with greater stability, all the whilst reducing the volume of raw materials used, glass as a packaging type has become more environmentally

desirable (Vetropack 2021; Cleary 2013). As an infinitely and 100% recyclable material that is relatively easy to manage, glass lends itself to be a seamless material for the success of a circular and sustainable business model. The goal should therefore be to decrease the number of single-use glass containers in circulation and shift toward a consumption of predominantly multiple-use glass containers. There are key factors however that affect the environmental and economic data, among other the distance of the transported goods to their refilling centers, refillable rates and the impact of cleaning, sorting and maintenance (Dubiel 1996) as well as product damage (Welcome 2011).

## **2.4 Limitations with the roll-out of reusable packaging**

The successful introduction of reusable packaging depends on an effective interplay between consumers, producers and retailers. The varying factors contributing toward a shift in reusable packaging has been investigated by numerous scholars (e.g. Gardas et al. 2019; Silva et al. 2013). The existing literature highlights the main obstacles for consumer acceptance as being inconvenience, ineffective communication of the financial incentive and of the disposable options, as well as a limited understanding of the positive impact that the reuse of packaging has on the environment (e.g. Gardas et al. 2019; Neill et al. 2016).

For retailers, the potential roadblocks and hurdles lie in additional space for storage and dispensers, staff training, hygiene requirements, maintenance and cleaning (Coelho et al. 2020). The producers face obstacles in the restructuring of their business model which would necessitate reverse logistics, new product marketing and design, communication strategy and logistical investments (Coelho et al. 2020). For every successful reusable packaging case study such as beer bottles, there are unsuccessful case studies such as soft drinks or water. The economic assessments vary with breweries finding reusable bottles cheaper but soft drink producers asserting the opposite. With retailers, marketers, national cultures, as well as local regulations presenting different opinion and packaging preferences, it is clear that an EU-wide policy plays a key role in the development and implementation of reusable packaging. Taxing single-use packaging has been an effective way to reduce its use in Belgium, Denmark and Finland, and compulsory DRS schemes in Germany are policy measures already applied. The effectiveness of tax is best illustrated in the Finish model whereby their use of reusable bottles consisting of 73% for beer bottles and 98% for carbonated drinks saw a considerable drop when the levy on non-recyclable containers was revoked in 2008 (Morawski 2017).

## 2.5 Reusable packaging opportunities for manufacturers

Consumers are increasingly adapting to the use of service systems to satisfy their needs, wants and aspiration. What previously had to be owned, is now being shared or borrowed i.e., transportation (DriveNow, CityBike, Lime etc.) or fashion (Rent The Runway). In the business to consumer market, this model has been adapted to satisfy the sustainable aspiration of consumers by enabling them to return packaging for reuse (Coelho et al. 2020). Deliveroo has partnered with reusable packaging firm Returnr (Deliveroo 2019) to offer customers their meals in custom-designed reusable stainless-steel bowls that consumers can return to a partner restaurant in exchange for their deposit. McDonalds and Burger King have also launched similar initiatives with Burger King partnering with American firms Loop and TerraCycle's and launched their returnable packaging both for drinks and solid foods (Albrecht 2020). Reusable packaging both for standardized containers or for company specific packaging is a playground for markets and branders to uncover innovative and creative solutions, as well as to reassess desirable characteristics and novel business models. Returnable products specific to certain retail outlets provide an opportunity for retailers to increase customer loyalty. On the consumer front, demands are becoming increasingly sophisticated and include personalization and quality (Coelho et al. 2020). Seeing the impact packaging has on the environment, consumers are seeking less wasteful and more eco-friendly alternatives (Orzan et al. 2018). Consumer preferences for reusable packaging can be influenced by social behaviors, motives and awareness that accentuate the importance of reusables (Babader et al. 2016; Neill et al 2016). Producers reacting to these preferences can offer consumers more exciting packaging designs as well as packaging functionality, that allow for product personalization. The British firm Wild that produces sustainable deodorants, gives consumers the opportunity to personalize the reusable deodorant case (Wild 2021). With countless successful brand personalization cases, it could be conceivable that for firms like Procter and Gamble who recently launched their first refillable products (Procter & Gamble 2021) for Head & Shoulder, Pantene, Herbal Essence and Aussi, a likely next step would be to personalize the refillable containers. The consumer associates sustainability with the brand using returnable packaging (Neill et al. 2016), thus potentially fostering customer brand loyalty (Coelho et al. 2020). With growing brand sensitivity, these add-ons can be the swinging factor in the buying decisions making process of consumers.

For the producers, the opportunities within reusable packaging are multifaceted. It can provide an opportunity to obtain new customer segments through the forming of emotional bonds between consumer and the product or packaging. Coca-Cola Brazil standardized its glass bottle packaging for all its soda brands (Coca-Cola 2020). Its universal bottle design lowers carbon emissions, as well as

decreasing the washing, filling and costs of reverse logistics. This model replaced 200 million single-use bottles per year in Brazil and has proven to be Coca-Cola's fastest growing packaging format across Latin American 2018 (Ellen McArthur Foundation 2017). Moreover, the low-cost for refills or reusable systems as well as cost savings generated through the simplified monitoring of flows and stocks of packaging means that research and development can be placed into innovative and creative means of product customization (Kantar World Panel 2017).

## **2.6 Packaging as means of branding**

Before looking at packaging as a means of branding, it is important for the scope of this paper to define the coverage of product packaging. According to the Cambridge dictionary, packaging is "material used for wrapping or covering goods to protect them" (Cambridge 2021). A label is "a piece of paper or other material that gives you information about the object it is attached to" (Cambridge 2021). Packaging also refers to the process of design (the design of the material wrapping the product), whereas package labeling is any graphic or written communication on the packaging but on a separate label. Packaging thus includes labels, but labels do not include packaging. This distinction is important to keep in mind, as this research will focus on (a) typical labels and consumer responses to the latter.

The product itself is an in-store marketing instrument and with it the product's packaging (including its label). Alongside the technical functions of a product's packaging, such as offering protection to the content and facilitating distribution, the product packaging is a key tool for communicating a brand's image and product attributes (Becker et al. 2011; Celhay et al. 2015). The previously important role of a salesperson has been replaced with packaging (e.g., Schoormans and Robben 1996). With consumers increasingly making food purchases once in front of the supermarket shelves, product packaging has only increased in its importance (Court et al. 2009). With shelf product offering doubling in the past decades (Cross 2000), consumer decisions are increasingly based on "fast and frugal" packaging processing rather than systematic or critical product evaluation (Dijksterhuis et al. 2005; Grunert 2005). In return, marketers have been using packaging materials, shape and colors to influence consumer purchasing decisions (Piqueras-Fiszman et al. 2013; Silayoi & Speece 2007). Examples include Procter and Gamble's Pringles potato chips packaged in a tube instead of a bag or Toblerone's triangle-shaped chocolate bar. An atypical packaging shape has been proven to positively contribute to the processing of a consumer of a product's information as well as the recalling of the product claim (van Ooijen et al. 2015). A packaging characteristic that

contrasts with that of other packagings in the same environment are more likely to attract consumers' attention (Schoormans 1996). A novel stimulus such a packaging shape succeeds in interrupting a consumer's shopping routine and seizes their attention, this being key for fast-moving consumer products (Garber 1995). Product packaging is also used as a way to induce novelty and it has also been proven that vivid information provokes imagery (McGill et al. 1989), thus also maintaining consumer attention. It is also believed that this stimulation of imagery is related to the way that information contributes and improves imagination and the visualization process of the consumer (McGill et al. 1989). Schema incongruity theory posits that deviation from consumer expectation can draw attention, thus leading to more positive responses (Mandler 1982) as well as benefitting from differentiation manifested in superior market performance (Talke et al. 2017). Incongruity research however also shows that deviation from established perceptions can cause confusion and lead to unfavorable effects as they cannot be successfully accommodated within existing cognitive structures (Halkias et al. 2014). Consequently, if novel packaging shape induces consumer interest, what happens when packaging shape is standardized and how do consumers react to it? There is a lack of research into how innovative branding labelling practices within standardized multiple-use packaging (wherein the packaging shape is the same) influences consumer preferences and thus also harm or benefit a brand. From a practical point of view, marketers and branders alike need to be aware of the effect that label branding design practices have on multiple-use standardized packaging in order to adapt package design to varying needs. The present research tries to empirically address this matter by exploring the relative influence of moderate atypical and typical labelling branding on standardized glass multiple-use packaging. The findings contribute to research on typical or atypical product label design by emphasizing the importance of branding as a package element that may contribute to a brand's potential success or failure within standardized glass packaging.

## **2.7 Packaging labelling as a means of branding**

Packaging design as has been discussed as the first prompt that consumers see when they interact with a product (Orth and Malkewitz 2008) and it can influence a consumer's willingness to pay (Bloch et al. 2003). Orth and Malkewitz (2008) also demonstrate the impact that bottle design and wine labels have on consumer's assessment of a brand's personality and on consumers' willing to buy. With this in mind, product labels are an important attribute that can influence a consumer's response (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007), and marketers devote time and energy to design attention grabbing labels that appeal to consumers and disrupt their purchasing routines.



Research into packaging tends to focus on packaging as a whole, encompassing the outer packaging as well as (but not specifically) the label (e.g. Garaus et al. 2019; Schoormans et al. 1997). As the packaging under observation is that of standardised glass packaging, the label designs that will be discussed will be solely referring to their placement on glass packaging. Due to difficulties of printing on a glass bottle, the label is an integral part of bottle container packaging. Labels represents a medium of visual communication which allows customers to get all the necessary information on the product, i.e. the information that encourages them to purchase. Since it is a product placed on shelves in stores, it is reasonable to assume that the manufacturer can communicate with the customer through the visual display of the label. Few studies purely focus on labels as a facet of packaging and their effects on consumers. One product sector that does focus on the impact of label design on consumers is that of wine.

In the wine market, label designs are very important to the decision-making process, especially for occasional wine drinker, who have been shown to depend heavily on the information on the labels (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007). Wine label designs are at their most general level described as either “traditional” or “modern/contemporary” (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007) which could also be seen as either typical or atypical. The case study of wine will thus be taken as an exemplary product category to be considered, given in part due to the number of studies on wine label design. When looking at consumer goods, I will argue that contrary to other FMCG, wine is a hedonic rather than utilitarian product. Broadly speaking, wine is of occasional consumption and associated with fun, pleasures, thus more linked to a hedonic nature than other FMCG like toiletries or snacks, that are more utilitarian and practical in their nature. The second reason for looking at wine bottle labels and their effect on consumer preference is due to the fact that this study focuses on standardised glass packaging, and wine bottles are rather uniform in their nature (Fig. 3). Thus, looking at the effects of wine labels on consumers is an appropriate area for this study.



FIGURE 3. WINE SHELF AT SPAR SUPERMARKET, VIENNA, AUSTRIA  
Source: Photograph taken by the author

The studies that will be looked at shed a light on the effects that atypical labels, labels with brand personality and fun labels have on consumer interest and purchase intent. The papers are relevant to the experiment that was carried out in this paper, as they show that just because a certain type of label design favours the product category of wine, it doesn't mean that the findings can be applied or are applicable to other product categories.

#### **Consumer response to atypical wine label design:**

Celhay and Passebois (2011) looked at wine labelling in France and identified that the visual codes used in this sector were very similar and almost repetitive. In this crowded product landscape with over 1.000 different red wine types alone sold at Carrefour (Carrefour 2021), product differentiation through novel stimulus should be highly relevant. When looking at Bordeaux wine, Orth and Malkewitz (2008) determined that most labels used similar colour pallets (pale yellow and white for the background and gold, burgundy, black for the texts and borders). Furthermore, they noticed

that the typography and layout was similar. The fonts used followed uniform typographies (cursive lettering or serified capitals) and the layout was mostly centred in its alignment. Moreover, the illustrations used mostly ranged from vineyard to château depictions set within old or artisanal filters. Overall muted colours with centred artisanal etchings were favoured to bright, modern, left or right lined photographs or digital images.

The preference for these visual inclinations can be traced back to multiple facets. Firstly, due to the product's traditional characteristic and its associations with social class representation (Divard and Urien 2001). The use of cursive typography also links to sophistication and the handwriting recalls more traditional customs and tranquility. Looking at the use of colors, white being associated with purity and red with vitality, as well as red corresponding to the product's color, thus also related to the product color category's norm (Celhay and Passebois 2011). Garaus and Halkias (2019) discovered similar findings in the field of orange juice, whereby a typical color - in this case orange - proved to instill higher consumer interest than an atypical color – in their case blue. Thus, choosing colors that conform to a products category seems to be a finding that can be applied beyond the product field of wine. This line of thought would suggest that the greater the product family resemblance, the more a product is seen as typical of its category. And as visual codes within a product category are defined by those that are most common within that category, it would mean that packaging that adheres to visual codes of a product family is more likely to be perceived as typical (Celhay and Passebois 2011).

The authors Celhay and Passebois (2011) hypothesized and proved that the consumer's aesthetic appreciation of a wine label has a positive and linear correlation to the degree of perceive label design typicality. They also hypothesized and proved that there was a positive and linear correlation between the purchase intent relative to a wine brand and its aesthetic appreciation of the said wine label. If aesthetic appreciation is a mediating variable between perceived typicality and purchase intent, why is it that French merchants do not introduce moderate novelty into their packaging design in order to differentiate themselves from their competitors? Or, if consumers prefer traditional labels, to what degree is it possible to introduce novelty in order to differentiate oneself from competitors without negatively affecting consumer preference? Through their research, the authors Celhay and Passebois (2011) saw the consumer acceptance of atypical label design was linked to the level of perceived risk at the moment of purchase. A wine brand that targets consumption occasions, perceived as mildly risky, will therefore be able to moderately alter its visual codes within its product category. In their experiment the authors provided four Bordeaux wine labels all with

the same information but with different designs and tested these on 166 individuals. The respondents assessed the design of the labels in terms of perceived typicality and aesthetic preference. Respondents were then asked to state – given a choice of five different consumption occasions – what their purchase intentions would be for each label within the occasions. The results showed a clear preference for the most typical label. However, the consumer preference decreases when the perceived risk linked to the consumption occasion also decreases. Thus, for the consumption occasions seen as less risky, the respondents seemed more willing to choose labels with a moderately atypical design (Celhay and Passebois 2011).

Having said that, at the end of the questionnaire respondents were asked to make an absolute choice of one wine for each consumption scenario and the results gathered indicated that the most typical label design was preferred. Thus, in situations that are perceived as risky, consumers will select the label design they perceive a most typical, even if they find another label more aesthetically pleasing (Celhay and Passebois 2011). The results obtained show that deviations or design atypicality will be perceived as more appealing when the supposed risk is low, while it is preferable for wine merchants to opt for a typical design when the perceived risk is high. And as wine is typically seen as a high-risk & utilitarian product by consumers, typical labels will fare better from a consumer preference standpoint.

#### **Consumer response to fun wine label design:**

Though Celhay and Passebois's (2011) research finds that typical wine label designs fare better with consumers, certain atypical wine labels using humour have not only increased in their shelf appearances but have also proved in some cases to generate increased sales. An example of this being the wine brand "Fat Bastard" which has become the largest-selling French Chardonnay within six years of being on the US market (Pfanner 2006). Other examples of fun wine labels include the German wine producer Emil Bauer & Söhne or the French wine "The Arrogant Frog". Lunardo and Rickard (2019) look at the extent to which humour in wine label design can positively influence consumer preference and willingness to pay (WTP). Using humour in label design stems from research that indicates that elements that are humorous in nature can trigger positive responses in consumers such as attention (Cowan and Little 2013), purchase intention (Scott et al. 1990) and positive affect (Weinberger and Gulas 1992). Furthermore, feeling-orientated product categories (such as clothing or scents) or low-involvement products (such as most FMCG) see the use of humorous elements redirect consumer attention from product claims and arguments, and make them more susceptible to being convinced of influences (Festinger and Maccoby 1964). As Celhay and Passebois (2011)

suggested, when consumers perceive a high level of risk linked to a product, typical label designs lead to increased consumer preference than moderately incongruent label designs. This infers that the integration of fun elements into wine labels could negatively affect consumer behaviour, though atypicality is not the exact same thing as fun (Lunardo and Rickard 2019). Since fun elements in label design can be perceived as incongruent or atypical, consumers more prone to risks will react more positively to fun elements. Thus, the more typical a product is perceived to be by consumers, the more consumers can appreciate its aesthetic and prompt consumers' WTP. In their online experiment, Lunardo and Rickard (2019) looked at 271 US respondents and looked at the effects of fun elements on WTP and purchase intentions. The findings demonstrated that when consumers were faced with wine label designs that incorporate high level of fun elements, consumers were more hesitant toward the labels and the perceived wine quality decreased, which lead to a lower WTP and purchase intentions. It has to be mentioned however, that consumers with a higher risk propensity reacted more positively to a fun label, whereas consumers with a low risk propensity, reacted negatively to fun wine labels. The findings of Lunardo and Rickard (2019) similarly to those of Celhay and Passebois's (2011) indicate that wine consumers prefer typical label designs (depending on their risk propensity). Thus, marketers and branders alike should be aware of their customer segment and target group, and their individual risk propensity, before designing a wine label.

#### **Consumer response to wine label design implementing brand personality:**

Boudreaux and Palmer (2007) undertook a research to examine the effects of brand personality on purchase intention and the impact that three design elements (imagery, layout and colour) placed on wine labels have on brand personality. Brand personality is seen as "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" (Aaker 1997, p.347) and has been shown to build emotional connections to the brand (Biel 1993), influence consumer usage and preference (Sirgy 1982), and create loyalty and trust among consumers (Fournier 1994). Furthermore, it also indicates how consumers interpret and react to changes in product quality (Aaker et al. 2004). As the manipulated stimulus in this paper's experiment uses anthropomorphism in its design to display atypicality, the findings of Boudreaux and Palmer (2007) on the effects of brand personality on consumers was of particular interest and relevance. Though similar at first glance, there are differences between the two constructs. Brand anthropomorphism refers to the extent to which consumers perceive branded products as actual human beings. Brand personality conversely refers to the metaphoric reasoning that consumers undergo to describe how they see brands and products (Caprara et al.

2001). Using Aaker (1997) five primary dimensions of human brand personality – sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness – as a general framework for the online experiment, the researchers looked at how respondents made brand personality judgements and rated their purchase intention by assessing label designs different in colour, illustration and layout. Brand personality's perception is most often an unconscious process similar to the perception of human personalities, through which people would draw conclusions based on minor or incomplete evidence (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007). Therefore, the perception of a brand personality is affected by biases on stereotypes that preexist in a given consumer's environment and thus also consistent with his or her culture. In Boudreaux and Palmer's (2007) experiment, respondents were shown 15 brand personality facets in random order on a five-point Likert scale. Overall 90 fictive label designs were presented with three layouts, six color and five illustration of varying combinations. The illustrations ranged from traditional (grapes, coats of arms, chateaux and vineyards) to atypical (unusual animals). The colors varied from traditional burgundy, navy to more modern colors such as wasabi green and pink. The layouts varied from typical designs with solid white or colored backgrounds, to more modern designs including half unprinted half solid colored backgrounds. Respondents were presented the labels individually per pages and were asked to indicate (using a 7-point Likert scale) whether they would buy the wine, whether they liked the label, what the price of the wine would be (from a given range of prices) and how appropriate the ten brand personality facets described the wine label. The least desirable images were the unusual animals, and the most desirable images were the grape motifs. The lowest rated color was pink, and the highest rated and most desirable colors were those from warm palettes (burgundy, red-orange and neutrals). These were also seen as the most expensive, though the brighter palettes (wasabi green) were seen as imaginative and exciting.

Though color preferences do vary according to traditions, cultures, trends and contexts and thus must also be taken into account. In terms of layout, overall the traditional layout fared better in terms of consumer preference over the modern layout, and also in terms of perceived value, purchase intent and perceived success. Brand personality explained about half of the variances in consumer purchase intent with the facets of charming, spirited, successful and up-to-date having the strongest correlation to consumer purchase intent. Between layout, color and illustration, the latter had the greatest impact on both perceptions of brand personality and purchase intent. Overall, the use of conservative or typical illustration, layouts and colors fared better in the experiment, however in terms of brand personality, wine labels aimed for consumers at casual gatherings would

benefit from images that ranked high on ruggedness and excitement, but neutral on sophistication (such as an illustration of a bull). Conversely, a high-priced wine aimed at special occasions would fare better when emphasizing sophistication and excitement and less ruggedness with images of grapes of vineyards. The findings of Boudreaux and Palmer (2007) are broadly speaking in keeping with the findings of Lunardo and Rickard (2019) and to those of Celhay and Passebois's (2011) showing that wine consumers generally will rather opt typical or moderately atypical designs depending on the consumption occasion and consumer risk propensity. Wine as a research product, is often marketed and discussed in the similar way as coffees, olive oils, vinegars and premium chocolates (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007). Thus, it could be that above findings of wines are also applicable to other product categories such as pickled pickles.

### 3 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) market, also known as consumer-packaged goods (CPG), is known to include products that are sold quickly and positioned within a lower price point. This market includes products such as beverages, toiletries, cosmetics, packaged foods, among other consumables. From a consumer point of view, these products are bought frequently, thus resulting in a short shelf life. They have a rapid consumption and low engagement, meaning that little effort is gone into choosing the product. The FMCG's market is a key market segment for Europe with a forecasted growth of USD 17.15 billion from 2021-2025 and a market growth momentum also forecasted to speed up during this forecasted period (Technavio 2021). Irrespective of a population or size, the marketing of FMCG plays a crucial part in the advancement of a country economic progress along with the country's overall advancement (Sarangapani et al. 2008). Due to its growth and potential, it is a market segment that is highly competitive and crowded. Operating on low margins, the success within this dynamic and innovating market depends on knowing your customers behaviour and how best to promote your product within its environment. Over the years, marketing and branding strategies have been launched in order to obtain a greater consumer market share. In order to convince consumers to choose a FMCG over another, the consumer behaviour needs to be understood and implemented within strategies. Consumer behaviour studies the process by which consumers buy, use and dispose of products and services as well as the consumers' emotional behavioural and mental response to the latter. Understanding a consumers' impulse and influences is key to a successful branding or marketing campaign. It also lets marketers know how to present and advertise their products as well as how to generate the maximum impact on the consumer in order to convince them into buying a product over that of a competitor product. The marketing research firm Omnicore (Radu 2021) identified four main types of consumer behaviours that are influenced by either personal (demography, gender, culture, age etc.), psychological (perceptions and attitudes) or social factors (income, family, friends, education level, etc.). The four main types of consumer behaviour are the following (Radu 2021):

1. **Complex buying behaviour:** this is an infrequent purchase usually found within a higher price-point. Due to the nature of the price segment, a consumer is more likely to spend time researching the product and making an informed decision that will legitimise the high-value investment. An example of such a purchase could be a property or a car.
2. **Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour:** this sees the consumer struggle with making a purchasing decision based on a high number of brand choice and also the price point of the



item. Moreover, it is an item purchased on an irregular basis, therefore increase a consumer's fear of regretting his or her decision. An example of such a product would be a computer or television.

3. **Habitual buying behaviour:** this sees a consumer choose a product type over a product brand. In this case the consumer sees little involvement in the brand category. An example of such a product is fruit. Here a consumer purchases grapes or bananas, irrespective of the brand.
4. **Variety seeking buying behaviour:** this sees a consumer explicitly try a new product to seek variety rather than out of displeasure with its previous purchase. An example of such products can be found in cosmetics or cleaning products.

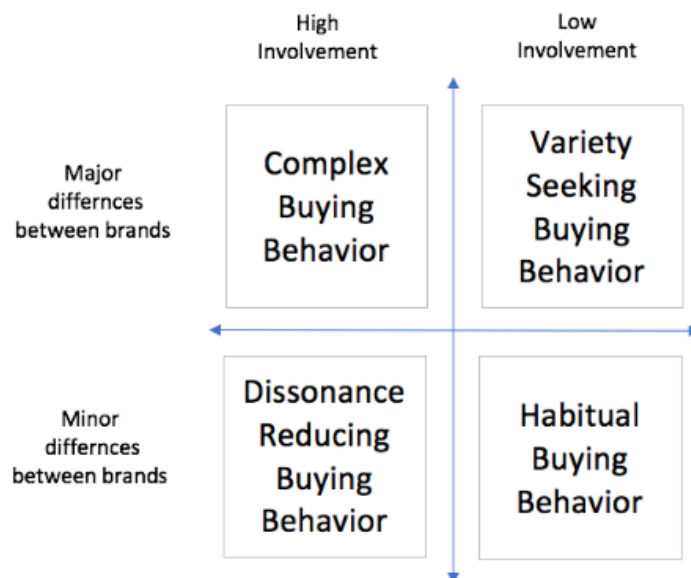


FIGURE 4. CONSUMER BUYING BEHAVIOR MODEL

Source: Radu 2021

According to the above model (Fig. 4) and findings, FMCG products falls under low involvement and minor differences between brands, meaning that they move between variety and habitual consumer behaviours. With about two-thirds of all supermarket purchases being made once consumers are in front of the shelves and with about 39% of purchase decisions being unplanned and potentially influenced by in-store marketing stimuli (Weinberg et al. 1982), finding the appropriate marketing mix is key to influencing consumer behaviours and leading consumers to alter their purchase habits. Within the FMCG segment the following theories allow for an in-depth look at con-

sumer decisions and preferences: schema incongruity theory, Heuristics, categorisation theory, deviation or atypicality and anthropomorphism. These are theories and models that will be looked at in more details and that were based on the research of Garaus and Halkias (2019). They form part of this paper's conceptual framework, through which's lens the experiment will be hypothesised and analysed.

### 3.1 Heuristics

Researchers have looked at consumer behaviors from multiples viewpoints, be it from a consumer's processing ability, as function of both situational constraints or individual differences, to motivations for consumer effort expenditure and effort reduction (Mandrik 1996). A shared thought that runs through consumer behavior research is that consumers strive to find a balance between wanting to accurately identify something vis-à-vis wanting to use minimal effort to do so. A way that consumers achieve this balance is by applying cognitive heuristics to ease their decision-making process, and to minimize the effort that goes into selecting an item, all the whilst ensuring that their judgement is correct (Mandrik 1996). Heuristics sees the brain make mental shortcuts that in turn let consumers solve problems and make efficient and quick judgements. Though heuristics can also lead to cognitive biases, wherein a consumer's behavior is influenced by the processing and interpreting of the information around them (such as being influenced by a memory). Coined by the Nobel-prize winning cognitive psychologist and economist Herbert Simon, the concept of heuristics was originally conceived to show that despite humans aiming to make rational decisions, their judgement is subject to cognitive limitation (Rachlin 2003). Numerous marketing research platforms (e.g. Secore 2021; Paleo Foundation 2021) have looked at the key components in heuristics that are key for marketers to grasp in order to best understand their consumers behavior and launch successful marketing and branding campaigns. Psychologists have developed different theories as to why humans rely on heuristics (Cherry 2021):

1. **Effort reduction** sees humans use heuristics as a form of cognitive laziness in order to reduce the mental effort needed to make decisions and choices.
2. **Fast and Frugal** sees humans use heuristics in situations in order to expedite and ascertain decisions.
3. **Attribute substitution** sees humans switch complex questions with related simpler formulations.

Especially relevant for the FMCG sector wherein consumers are confronted with copious information, they are keen to hasten their decision-making process. The human brain looks back at these

mental strategies to clarify and simplify things and increasingly make decisions based on “fast and frugal” packaging processing rather than systematic or critical product evaluation (Dijksterhuis et al. 2005; Grunert 2005). There are different types of heuristics that play individual roles within different contexts. For marketers it is important to understand these different types and to know when which are being used.

**Availability heuristic** is a mental shortcut that sees humans rely on immediate examples that come to their minds when assessing a specific decision or topic (Cherry 2021). An example of availability heuristics in marketing campaigns sees examples being given of product results in order for consumers to better imagine the effect that the product will have on them if they choose to use it (i.e. in gym or protein shake advertisements).

**Representative heuristics** see humans approximate the likelihood of an event, product or person by comparing it to an existing prototype that is already present in their minds (Cherry 2021). In doing so, humans will for example assess a product trustworthiness such as an ice cream, because their grandparents would give it to them as children, and thus immediately assume that it is trustworthy.

**Affect heuristics** is a mental shortcut that sees humans make their decisions and solve problems by being influenced by emotions, fears, pleasures etc. that they are experiencing at that moment (Cherry 2021). In marketing affect heuristics has been used in many campaigns, most notably in anti-smoking campaigns wherein the emotion of fear is used in order to create anxiety and repel the consumer from using the product.

**Anchoring heuristics** sees humans being influenced by the initial exposure they hear or learn and using it as a reference point for its subsequent judgement. Marketing campaigns have been using this when facing consumers with bulk price promotions (Cherry 2021). By supermarkets offering consumers multiple unit pricing (get three for the price of 2), consumers think that they are saving money, when actually they are spending more, because initially they just wanted to buy one.

Knowing that consumers apply heuristics when going grocery shopping (Reber et al. 2004) and that very small hues can influence their decision, including representative heuristics within one’s packaging design, might have the effect of reminding consumers of something trustworthy, and thus leading the consumers to choose this product over another.

### **3.2 Consumer response to schema incongruity**

Research into heuristics put forward that consumers use heuristics to streamline and expedite their decision-making process. A specific heuristic technique is that of schemata, a technique used to

encode and recover memories that are used in typical situations where little effort is needed to process a decision. Consumers used schemata to quickly and efficiently organize new observations into schemata and act without much effort (Kleider et al. 2008). Consisting of preferences, heuristics aid consumers decide in situation where they do have adequate information or do not care enough about the given product or make an informed decision. While a schema consists of a workflow or acts as a storyboard that tell consumers what to do in a repeated situation. A practical example would see a consumer use heuristic when purchasing a cleaning product and opt for a specific brand 'Persil' because it is the first one that comes to his or her mind. Schema, on the other hand, works with preconceived notions based on memories, meaning that before going to a party, the person has a preconceived idea of what will happen i.e. music, balloons, etc. Schemas is driven by a memory and leads to a predefined conclusion, whereas Heuristics are automatic decisions made through mental shortcuts to speed up decision making. Schema Theory in cognitive psychology puts forward that people will tend to simplify what they see around them by organizing and storing their available knowledge and experiences about their social environment in memory-based cognitive structures, otherwise known as schemata (Fiske and Taylor 1984). Moreover, Schemas provide consumers with general expectations that guide the processing of specific data or products (Fiske and Taylor 1984). Seeing as schemata influence a consumer's absorption of knowledge, it influences their attentions and thus consumers are more likely to see things that fit into their schema. Moreover, according to schema-theory, consumers will apply the accumulate knowledge they have gathered about the respective schema whenever they encounter a new schema.

Congruity theory examines how consistency or inconsistency of expectations affects a person's response, including information processing and evaluation. When consumers face new information that is congruent with their prior knowledge, they can easily absorb the information. However, if the information is incongruent, it will challenge their prior knowledge and thus, cause extra cognitive processing (Hastie 1980). For example, if a consumer has only been faced with chips in bags and goes to the grocery store and finds chips in bags, his or her expectations will be confirmed, and the instance will result in cognitive processing. When the said consumer however goes to the grocery store and finds Pringles (chips in a tube), the consumer will have to rethink his concept that all chips come in bags. Incongruity is often seen from the point of view of schema theory (Fiske & Taylor 1984). Thus, marketing researchers have used the term schema incongruity to refer to informations that are not in line with prior expectations. When schema and congruity theory are com-

bined, it results in a hybrid model known as schema-congruity or schema-incongruity theory (Peracchio and Tybout 1996). With its roots in psychology, the first schema congruity studies focused on person memory. Hastie (1980) conducted a study where subjects were asked to assimilate the initial impression of a person (i.e. honest, trustworthy, intelligent, friendly, etc.) with moments of behavior that were either incongruent or congruent with their initial impression of that person. Incongruent impressions proved to be more memorable, because, in order to understand the unusual behavior, the subjects had to recover additional information from long-term memory, therefore forming more elaborate associative networks. For products or foods however, Peracchio and Tybout (1996) proved more moderate results. There are different levels of incongruities i.e. low, moderate and high. Looking at schemas within products and foods, Peracchio and Tybout (1996) discovered that moderate incongruity proved to elicit a more positive product evaluation from consumers when their prior knowledge was low. They led an experiment wherein subject's knowledge of dessert category was under observation and found that the level of knowledge influenced the subject's attitude toward a new dessert which was either congruent to a high calorie dessert, moderately incongruent to a spicy cake and incongruent to a spicy dessert. Subjects who had little knowledge of the product category rated moderately incongruent products more favorably, than incongruent or congruent products, while subjects with deep knowledge of the product category rated incongruent products more favorably. Peracchio and Tybout (1996) therefore theorized that consumers with little product knowledge will take the time to solve moderate incongruity, leading to a positive effect. Consumers with a greater product knowledge can resolve even extreme incongruity without much effort, thus their affective reaction to moderate incongruity will be the same to their response to incongruent information. This line of thought however does not match the studies found in wine labels wherein product knowledge favors negatively to stronger incongruity. However, the research is applicable to FMCG wherein product knowledge is low, and a moderate incongruent schema could favor positively toward consumer interest. Research shows that consumers' knowledge about the market can be viewed through relevant cognitive structures, such as the product, the brand or the ad schemata. Schemata theory has therefore been applied to the field of marketing research, showing that schematic knowledge considerably affects how consumers process and respond to marketing messages (Goodstein 1993). In highly crowded and competitive environments such as the FMCG market, consumers use their schemata to merge incoming with existing data, recover information from memory, draw inferences and simplify their purchasing decisions (Sujan and Bettman 1989). Thus, the degree of incongruity is dependent on the consumers' prior knowledge

and how irrelevant and unexpected the information are, and how easily the consumer can satisfactorily reconcile the discrepancies within their existing cognitive structure (Mandler 1982). Similar to Peracchio and Tybout (1996) in his research Mandler (1982) also finds that moderate degrees of incongruity are more positively evaluated by consumers than complete congruity or extreme incongruity. By a process of assimilation and taking in the information, moderate incongruity can be resolved, which is then positively evaluated by the consumer. With extreme incongruity, consumers attempt to accommodate the incongruent information which usually leads to negative affect. Mandler's (1982) view on schema (in)congruity theory is that humans process new information based on their experienced expectations of schemas. Consumers thus process information that are congruent to schema as more familiar and therefore in an easier way, thus leading to a positive evaluation. Incongruity however, if unfamiliar and not solved is processed negatively. Conversely, if solved, incongruity results positively. Thus, markets using incongruity schema need to ensure that the level of incongruity is solvable by consumers. As we have seen from wine labelling, incongruent labels fare worse than congruent labels as they prove extreme incongruence. However, according to Mandler's schema incongruity theory, it can, if resolved, lead to positive evaluation, thus in our experiment we face respondents with (in)congruent or (a)typical labels to uncover whether within the given product categories other than wine, moderate incongruent schema or atypicality will positively influence consumer preference and interest.

### **3.3 Consumer response to deviation and atypicality**

In addition to the effect that degrees of schema incongruity have on consumer interest and preferences, researchers Schoormans & Robben (1996) and Garber (1995) look at how deviations and atypicality in stimuli appearance affect consumer interest. Looking at the effects of degrees of packaging design deviation of a well-known Dutch ground coffee brand on consumer's attention, Schoormans & Robben (1996) found that there is a positive relation between the consumer attention on a package and the degree of deviation from its appearance. Attention is understood as the momentary focusing of information processing capacity on a given stimulus. (Schoormans and Robben 1996). Within packaging design, the stimuli that form packaging characteristics are among other shape, color, size, label etc. that would direct a consumer toward a product. The ability of a stimulus to attract attention is a prerequisite for information processing (Schoormans and Robben 1996). The consumer attention rises with the package's deviation in a linear manner, however, consumer evaluation starts to decrease. This means that whilst the attention increases with the rate of deviation, a consumer product evaluation will decrease when the degree of deviation increases.

Their findings suggested that when redesigning a product appearance, marketers should be aware of the trade-off between the increased consumer attention and the decrease of product evaluation based on the degree of deviation. As a result, atypical packaging will increase the chances that a consumer will change their current behavioral routines at the point of purchase, but not if the product atypicality is extremely different to other products within its product category as then the product is evaluated less positively. The researchers argued that the reason for this might be because the consumers can no longer categorize the product to a specific product category, when deviation from its prototype is too extreme.

Garber (1995) put forward that atypical packaging designs are more likely to draw attention enabling the product to become part of the consumer's consideration, which is especially important in the FMCG sector where food products fall in highly competitive categories with multiple alternatives. There are some stimuli which's characteristics are absolute in their impact on individuals such as the attention that a loud sounds or noise has; certain stimuli are often understood within their context. According to Garber (1995), stimuli that contrast with the other stimuli in their environment are more likely to attract the attention of the consumers. It is exactly this notion of perceived **novelty** within a stimulus such as packaging shape or atypical label design or in-store communication that success in distracting consumers from their shopping patterns (Garber 1995).

Much in the same way of Mandler's schema incongruity model and Peracchio and Tybout (1996) findings, both Garber (1995) and Schoormans & Robben (1996) put forward that atypicality, novelty and moderate deviation have a positive effect and on consumer interest and consumer product purchase that follow from increased attention. Thus, a consumer would be more likely to select a product over another, with an atypical packaging design that moderately stands out from its product category, and that being that tipping scale that makes the consumer choose that product.

### **3.4 Product categorization theory**

Deviation is an established stimulus to attract attention, and deviations in a stimulus' appearance affects the way in which consumers categorize the said stimulus (Schoormans and Robben 1996).

The process of categorization is identified by psychological literature as a fundamental cognitive activity and proposes that individuals tend to naturally rely on cognitive categories as a basis for predictions and inductive inferences (Fiske 1991). Categorization is understood as the process by which humans respond to new and varied information in their environment (Schoormans and Robben 1996). Schemas themselves can also include category elements, such as attributes of a category, prototypes of a category, and attitude toward the category (Goodstein 1993). Categorization

theory puts forward that humans will group objects and events based on perceived similarity and resemblances, which results in information being stored in categories (Schoormans and Robben 1996). According to Bloch (1995) and Gestalt psychologists (Wertheimer 1925), “packaging design” is defined as the multiple elements selected and blended into a holistic design to achieve a designated sensory effect (Orth and Malkewitz 2008), this being one of the most important cues of product category activation. Product categorization is successfully enabled through different package designs that enable consumers to identify prototypes and norms, thus providing perceptual inputs (Schoormans and Robben 1997). Within product packaging research, the focus lies primarily on how (a)typical, novel, or hybrid packaging shapes can influence product categorization and how the latter affects consumers’ adoption and evaluation of new products (Orth 2012). Schoormans and Robben (1996) state that categorization of new knowledge improves the efficiency of information processing and cognitive stability. Moreover, they argue that categorization knowledge “allows us to identify novel items or events, respond to them in terms of class membership rather than their often irrelevant uniqueness, draw inferences about features, and make causal or evaluative judgments.” (Schoormans and Robben 1996, p.6), thus making this theory highly relevant for consumer responses to new products, especially within FMCG. Within categorization theory, the more typical a stimulus is, the quicker consumers respond to the question of which category it belongs to (Snelders et al. 1999). Likewise, consumer interest and curiosity in new packaging design has been shown in research and the shift in elements of visual design, such as label style are an especially appropriate way to influence consumer preference and purchasing intent (Snelders et al. 1999). The integration of new and old informations is guided by categorical structures. This in turn enables inference making which helps individuals evaluate and judge the nature of new stimulus objects (Lajos et al. 2009). When interacting with market environments, consumers learn to organize, collect and inevitably utilize market environments on the basis of existing product categories (Lajos et al. 2009). This leading to the consumer drawing conclusions and expectations about product features, functions, performances, thus in turn influencing the consumers’ thoughts, emotions and attitude towards these products (Sujan et al. 1989). Furthermore, as discussed, Garber (1995) emphasizes the effect that product appearance has on consumer attention and on product categorization. Therefore, the more typical a stimulus is, the stronger the association a consumer will have to its corresponding category, however novel stimulus pertaining to a certain product category will also elicit consumer interest and curiosity.



### 3.5 Consumer response to anthropomorphic packaging design

In keeping with atypicality and schema incongruity, anthropomorphism within brand labelling can be perceived in certain product categories as atypical, if the other products within this category do not use anthropomorphism. Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human like characteristics or behaviours to nonhuman agents, which enable consumers to perceive brands as having human features (Epley et al. 2007). Across the globe, marketers have long used anthropomorphism to promote products, primarily through the use of visual cues such as features resembling parts of a human body (Woodward 1999), verbal cues such as giving products human names (Waytz et al. 2014), and through brand personification (Delbaere et al. 2011., Wan 2015). Another angle is suggesting that brands possess mental capabilities (Waytz et al. 2014). It has been identified that nearly one in three brands sold to adults and more than five in six brands sold to children, utilises some form of anthropomorphic depiction in their branding (Triantos et al. 2016). Numerous researchers have suggested that anthropomorphism enhances positive brand appraisal (e.g., Aggarwal et al. 2012., Chen et al. 2017.). Having said that, some scholars suggest that anthropomorphic designs have no effect on brand attitudes (Delgado-Ballester et al. 2013., Yuan et al. 2017) and some scholars even suggest that it can even lead to negative effects on brand evaluations (Han et al. 2019., Puzakova et al. 2015). Researchers looked into the mixed and ubiquitous findings of the effectiveness of anthropomorphic appeals in inciting positive product evaluations from consumers (Velasco et al. 2020). By analysing 47 papers they proved that though not absolute, the results show that in general, consumers react more positively to anthropomorphic stimuli compared to non-anthropomorphic stimuli (Velasco et al. 2020). To this end I propose that anthropomorphism - seen as an atypical packaging design feature, within a designated product category - will be effective in influencing consumers' attitude toward the product.

In support of the above conceptual frameworks, researchers have also emphasized interest as a response to novelty (Sung et al. 2016). More specifically, extant studies have explored how consumers like familiarity but find novelty interesting (Sung et al. 2016). Novel stimuli or atypical package design has also been found to increase cognitive effort needed for processing package designs (Garaus et al. 2019). In support of this concept, Ulrich (1983) highlights that the emotional response interest positively correlates with information processing effort and that atypical scenes that contrast with the habitual are likely to evoke interest. Furthermore, the psychologist Silva (2005) sees interest as an emotion that heightens a person's curiosity, motivating the person to approach novel

and complex, but not necessarily enjoyable stimuli. Seeing interest as a way to understand consumer psychology and behaviour, Silvia (2006) also perceives interest as an evolutionarily adaptive emotion that pushes individuals to develop a broad set of new information, skills and experiences. It ignites and sustains a person's engagement with their environment and is important for their survival and adaptation. In his research into curiosity, Silvia (2006) saw people favour novelty as they innately feel a sensation of interest to learn about novelty or in this case atypical packaging perceived as novelty.

Consistent with the following conceptual frameworks wherein consumers apply heuristics and are affected by small cues when going grocery shopping and that these can affect their purchasing decisions (Reber et al. 2004). Furthermore, that incongruity is more positively evaluated by consumers (Mandler 1982; Peracchio and Tybout 1996) and that atypical packaging will increase the chances that a consumer will change their current behavioural routines at the point of purchase (Schoormans and Robben 1996). In addition, that novel or atypical stimuli succeed in distracting consumers from their shopping routines (Garber 1995) and that the integration of new informations led by categorization structures, allow for inferences to take place which aid consumers to evaluate new stimuli (Lajos et al. 2009). Also, that consumers - in general - react more positively to anthropomorphic stimuli (seen as atypical within a given product category) compared to non-anthropomorphic stimuli (Velasco et al. 2020), I propose - given all the above - that:

### **H<sub>1</sub> Atypical label design, as manipulated by anthropomorphic label design, increases consumers' interest**

The current research focuses on packaging as a product's means of communication rather than on its technical packaging functions. The present study will not look at the effects of packaging appearance on the intended product use (i.e. Wansink 1996). There has been considerable research into the importance of packaging design as means of influencing consumers and the impact on their purchasing decisions when scanning products (e.g. Garber et al. 2000; Schoormans et al. 1997). Among other these scholars look at the entirety of the packing design including the packaging shape. Little research focuses solely on the impact that packaging label within standardized packaging has on the consumer. Of special interest for this research is a label's moderately incongruent packaging design's ability within the strict parameters of standardized glass packaging, to positively influence consumer response. However, although extensive research has shown that package de-

sign can have a powerful impact on consumer response, it has provided only little guidance to marketers and branders in selecting package label design for standardized products. Though the wine research studies show that severe incongruency negatively impacts consumer interest and response, despite bottle designs not deviating largely in their shape. This framework has scarcely been applied to other consumer goods wherein their packaging is similar or standardized. The research gap lies in identifying to what extent atypical product design influences consumer decisions within standardized glass packaging.

Stimuli that ignite curiosity and interest are generally seen as being more intellectually challenging and linked to a higher aesthetic value (Sheinin et al. 2011). This has been exemplified in research showing that products and brand communications that challenge their category's norm increase consumer's desire to further engage with a product or message (Ang et al. 2007), this leading to increased penchant for the brand and more likely to attract consumer attention (Halkias et al. 2014; Shoormans 1997). It is within this line of thought that by presenting the consumer with an atypical packaging design in relation to its category, that it is expected that this atypical design will positively influence attitudinal responses toward the product itself. Thus, it is also predicted that:

## **H<sub>2</sub> Interest positively influences consumer's attitude toward the product**

## **H<sub>3</sub> Positive product attitude increases consumer purchase intention**

The below conceptual model describes the hypothesized relationship that has been developed and tested in the present research wherein perceived atypicality increases consumer interest which increases product attitude which in turn also increases purchase intention (Fig. 5).

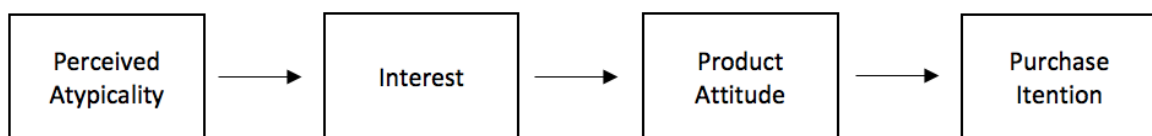


FIGURE 5. CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT 1

## 4 EXPERIMENT

As showed in the literature review and in keeping with Schema incongruity theory, a novel stimulus such a packaging shape succeeds in interrupting a consumer's shopping routine and seizes their attention and interest, this being key for the success of FMCG (Garber 1995). Looking at the penchant from retailers such as Spar and REWE to expand their offering of standardized multiple-use glass packaging, (currently including milk, yoghurt, certain sodas as well as the long-established product offering of beer), as well as the growing policy discussions across European countries to increase the rates of reuse, it can be inferred that standardized glass packaging might be rolled out onto further consumer goods. This meaning that within a designated product category, all product packaging shapes could be the same, thus the novel stimulus will no longer be the packaging shape but will have to encompass something other. In order to test how consumers, respond to a novel stimulus within standardized glass packaging, one factor (typical vs. atypical label design) between subjects in an online experiment was conducted. The experiment relied on a designated product category. The selection of the product category was made based on the following criteria:

1. Choosing a product which is currently sold in a non-standardized single-use glass container
2. Choosing a product where within its product category the packaging design is typical and somewhat uniform across the competing brands within the same product category
3. Choosing a product based on a utilitarian consumption rather than a hedonic consumption. A utilitarian consumption being that of an item wherein its purpose and function is its priority (i.e. a washing machine, medicine). Conversely a hedonic consumption refers to an item that instils emotions, pleasure and enjoyment through its use of possession (i.e. wine, perfume etc.). Pickled pickles when compared to other FMCG can be perceived as a utilitarian rather than hedonic product to be consumed

Based on the above criteria, a product within the FMCG was selected. There are two key reasons why an FMCG product was selected for this experiment: Firstly, products within the FMCG category are usually shown in cluttered environments where product competition and rivalry are in direct proximity. As consumers are increasingly relying on heuristics to make purchasing decisions, the implementation of a novel stimulus is a great way to test whether it distracts consumers in their "fast and frugal" decision making process (Dijksterhuis et al. 2005; Grunert 2005). Secondly, products within the FMCG category can have similar product packaging labelling. This being an important factor for the current experiment when testing the atypical labelling stimulus, to see whether it increases consumer interest within an environment where product uniformity is given.

These criteria lead to the selection of pickled pickles as a product category, as the product falls under the FMCG consumer buying behaviour model of a low involvement and habitual consumer behaviour. The below figure shows the uniformity of the product packaging design within the chosen product category of pickled vegetables in an Austrian supermarket (Fig. 6).



FIGURE 6. SPAR SUPERMARKET PRODUCT SHELF OFFERING WITHIN THE PICKLED VEGETABLES CATEGORY

**Source: Photograph taken by the author**

As the product packaging shape is standardised, the other available stimuli would have either been the product cap or the product label. There is research indicating that a product's cap design and cap colour does influence consumer response (Chitturi et al. 2019) and can be used to grow brand loyalty; an example of this being the brand Snapple who placed real facts into the inside of the caps (Marketing Sherpa 2014).

This experiment saw the packaging label as the target stimulus under observation. Part of the packaging design, the label is the space where the manufacturer by means of graphic elements, unites

branding and marketing ideas together with the legally prescribed product information in a way that psychologically reaches the consumer's consciousness and encourages interest (Solomon et al. 2006). Research shows that both typical and atypical packaging labelling affect consumer product responses (e.g. Celhay and Passebois 2011; Valdec et al. 2018). Thus, the experiment looks at moderate schema incongruity and deviation through the use of anthropomorphism as a stimulus to attract consumer interest in order to test the hypothesis. This was achieved by creating a stimulus with an atypical packaging label design vis-à-vis the other products within the same product category as a means to attract consumer attention. On the contrary, the control group relies on a typical label design. In order to measure the effectiveness of marketing campaigns or initiatives, control groups are used. In a marketing research context, a control group is a subgroup of a selected audience division that is excluded from receiving a specific campaign message during a given test period. These test groups are also known as the experiment placebo in scientific trials. Selected at random to represent the entire segment, the control group enables like for like comparison and is relative to the number of people in the given segment

#### **4.1 Participants**

A total sample of 151 consumers was recruited with in an online experiment which was to be completed individually. In the current experiment, 55% of the total respondents formed part of the control group which amounted to 83 respondents and 45% formed part of the target group which amounted to 68 respondents. The respondents consisted of 34,4% female and 64,2 and Male. The mean age of the respondents was 40,7 years and 51% of respondents had a university degree, 23% had a secondary education (Matura or Abitur) and the remaining 26% had other qualifications. The respondents were selected at random via the online platform Clickworker with a few parameters in place. The given parameters were that only German speaking respondents, preferably living in Germany and with access to a Desktop, were allowed to part-take in the online experiment within a given age range with the youngest respondent being no younger than 18 and the eldest no older than 65. The survey took 2 – 4 minutes, the respondents were paid 0,30 cents per completed survey and the results were obtained within 10 hours.

#### **4.2 Stimulus & Procedure**

The survey randomly allocated the respondents to two groups (atypical vs. typical label design). The respondents were asked to answer eight questions of which three were unrelated to the stimulus

(frequency of product purchase, age and level of education). To enhance the realism of the stimulus, not only one, but six different products were presented, with each product having two facings. The manipulated stimuli in both groups were shown in the top middle position. The pickle jar with the anthropomorphic label design (pickle with legs, arms and eyes) was used for the atypical packaging condition within the target group. A short introduction before the survey started, informed respondents on the purpose of the study, namely, interested in the personal opinion regarding the assessment of products. After exposing respondents to the six products, the target product (either the atypical or the typical one) appeared on the next page and respondents were asked to answer questions assessing interest, attitude, choice and purchase intention. Before sending the survey to the respondents, a pre-test test was conducted with a dozen respondents. Relevant feedback was imbedded into the survey to optimize its efficacy and response rate.

The target group were shown the following stimulus material, with the product boxed in orange (this box was not visible to respondents during the survey) being the manipulated atypical stimulus (Fig. 7).



FIGURE 7. TARGET GROUP STIMULUS MATERIAL WITH ATYPICAL CONDITION

The control group were shown the following stimulus material, with the product boxed in orange (this box was not visible to respondents during the survey) being the manipulated atypical stimulus (Fig. 8).



FIGURE 8. CONTROL GROUP STIMULUS MATERIAL WITH TYPICAL CONDITION

### 4.3 Dependent measures

Scale items were operationalized with seven-point response scales for the variables interest, typicality, anthropomorphism, attitude and purchase intention. Drawn from existing literature and adapted to the current survey, the established scales enabled respondents to evaluate the stimulus packaging label according to the variables under observation.

The interest scale was drawn from research undertaken by the psychologist Silva (2005) on appraisal structures of interest, based on theories of appraisal. According to Silva (2005), interest is poorly understood in comparison to other emotions. In his research, Silva (2005) predicts that interest consists of appraisal of novelty (factors linked to unfamiliarity and complexity) and appraisal of coping potential (ways in which to understand new and complex things). His findings on appraisal structures were supported by four experiments in which he measured and manipulated appraisals, measures of interest and interesting stimuli. Specific to interest, the appraisal perspective was an important means to construct the causes of interest.

Goedertier, Dawar, Geuens and Weiters' paper (2015) provided evidence for the typicality scale used. Firms launch new products under familiar brand names using so called extension strategies in order to increase consumer acceptance of novel products (Goedertier et al. 2015). Prototypical brands are seen as the most common in any given category of products, thus appealing for extension efforts showing strong association within their product category (Goedertier et al. 2015). Prior



research on typicality with categorization theory as a starting point however, suggested that this association could hinder the extension of prototypical brands to products belonging to other or more distant product categories (Goedertier et al. 2015). In their research the authors conducted two studies that counter-intuitively showed that new extensions on brand prototypicality increased rather than decreased consumer acceptance of new extensions in “distant” as well as “close” product categories. Furthermore, using a mediation analysis, the authors showed that the underlying mechanism of the risk-reducing advantage of prototypical brands is more important than their cemented rigid categories.

The anthropomorphism scale used in this paper was supported by evidence from the paper ‘When Temptations Come Alive: How Anthropomorphism Undermines Self-Control’ (Hur et al. 2015). In it the researchers examine how anthropomorphizing a consumer temptation impacts them and their self-control. Across six studies, the anthropomorphizing of products exhibited a lack of self-control when tempted by products, not through an augmenting of the desire toward the product, but by decreasing the consumer’s experience of conflict toward the consumption of the given product. The latter being an alarm bell signaling a need for self-control (Hur et al. 2015). The experiments resulted in consumers exhibiting less self-control and more willingness to indulge in the consumer good. Acting as another agent in the self-control dilemma, anthropomorphized products decrease the extent to which consumers link the cause of and responsibility for their product consumption to themselves.

When assessing attitude, the scale was based on the research of Holbrook and Batra (1987). In it the authors looked at developing interest in the emotional facets prevalent in consumer behavior, advocating for a broader understanding of consumption-related emotions and focusing on the role that emotions play in facilitating the effects of advertising (Holbrook et al. 1987). Looking specifically at advertisements and brands, the authors proposed an approach to examine the ways in which intervening emotional reactions facilitate the link between advertising content and attitude towards the brand or ad (Holbrook et al. 1987).

The purchase intention scale was drawn from the paper ‘Culture, product type, and price influences on consumer purchase intention to buy personalized products online’ (Moon et al. 2006). In it the authors tested three hypotheses: the first being the intention to purchase personalized product will be affected by power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity dimensions of

a national culture. The second hypothesis tested that consumers would be more likely to buy personalized search products than experience products. The third and final hypothesis looked at purchase intention of a personalized product and that it would not be influenced by price premiums up to a certain level. The results gathered showed that individualism is the only culture dimension to have a considerable effect on purchase intention. Individualism and product type by price interaction also showed to have a significant influence, while price did not.

## 4.4 Preliminary Data Analysis

### 4.4.1 Reliability analysis

Cronbach's alpha was used as a measure of internal consistency to indicate how closely related the questions asked in the survey were to the variables under observation. This measure of scale reliability ensured that the questions asked best reflected the typicality, anthropomorphism, attitude, interest and purchase intention. The coefficient of reliability (or consistency) of the four variables listed prior obtained a "good" or "excellent" value (see Table 2). Cronbach's alpha can be written as a function of the number of test items and the average inter-correlation among those items (Field 2009). Cronbach's alpha will be low if the average inter-item correlation is low. Cronbach's alpha increases as the average inter-item correlation increases, as well as when holding the number of items constant (Table 2).

Cronbach's alpha	Internal consistency
$a \geq 0.9$	Excellent
$0.9 > a \geq 0.8$	Good
$0.8 > a \geq 0.7$	Acceptable
$0.7 > a \geq 0.6$	Questionable
$0.6 > a \geq 0.5$	Poor
$0.5 > a$	Unacceptable

TABLE 2. CRONBACH'S ALPHA

Source: Field, A. (2009). 'Discovering statistics using SPSS.' Sage Publications, London.

Cronbach's alpha was performed on anthropomorphism, typicality, attitude, interest and purchase intention. The results the constructs and variables are shown in Table 3.

Survey questions (adapted to the survey context from original scales)	Cronbach's alpha
<b><u>ANTHROPOMORPHISM</u></b>	
To what extent does the design of the label remind you of human-like characteristics?	n/a
<b><u>TYPICALITY</u></b>	
How do you rate the product label? This label is a good example of pickles. This is a representative label for pickles. This is a typical label for pickles.	0.874
<b><u>ATTITUDE</u></b>	
What is your general opinion of the product shown previously? Unfavourable/Unfavourable I do not like / I like Negative/Positive Bad/Good	0.959
<b><u>INTEREST</u></b>	
Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. I find this product interesting. This product makes me curious. I am interested in this product.	0.928
<b><u>PURCHASE INTENTION</u></b>	
I would buy this product. If I had a choice, I would choose this product. There is a high probability that I would buy this product.	0.952

TABLE 3. RESULTS OF RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

#### 4.4.2 Manipulation checks

##### 4.4.2.1 Typicality

The first manipulation check under observation was that of typicality. An univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the typicality perceptions in both groups. The findings show that the mean values for perceived typicality are significant at 0.05 level (one-tailed test) of significance with the group variable at  $[F(1, 1) = 3.17, p = 0.036]$ . Comparing the mean of the Typical vs. the atypical group shows the typical group with 4.14 and the atypical group with 3.70. Thus, though the atypical group who was shown the atypical label, perceives the label as less typical for the product category, the difference between the atypical and typical group is only 0.44 which is a small, though significant, difference. This means that manipulated anthropomorphized pickle label is perceived as more atypical.

#### **4.4.2.2 Anthropomorphism**

The second manipulation check assessed if respondents in the atypical condition perceived the atypical product as more anthropomorphized as compared to participants in the typical condition. The question asked was: “To what extent does the design of the label remind you of human-like characteristics?” with respondents answering the questions on a 7-point scale.

Another ANOVA with the group variable as factor variable and perceived anthropomorphism as dependent measure revealed a significant result [ $F(1,1) = 43.52, p < 0.01$ ]. A visual inspection of the means revealed that respondents in the atypical condition perceived the label as more anthropomorphized (4.04) as compared to the typical condition (2.25). Hence, it can be concluded that anthropomorphism is a meaningful strategy for enhancing atypicality of labels.

### **4.5 Analysis and results**

#### **4.5.1 The Effect of Atypicality on Interest**

The first variable under observation was that of Interest. A univariate analysis of variance (analysis of variants ANOVA) was used to compare the interest in both groups. The findings show that the mean values for perceived interest are significant at 0.05 level of significance with the group variable at [ $F(1,1) = 4.48, p = 0.036$ ]. This means that manipulated pickle label is perceived as more interesting. Therefore, interest is higher for atypical anthropomorphized label designs.

Comparing the mean of the control vs. the target group shows the control group with 3.92 and the target group with 4.43. This is a moderate difference, with a higher interest in the target group with the atypical label, than in the control group with the typical labels.

Table 4 illustrates the mean comparisons between the atypical condition and the typical condition for the two manipulation check variables typicality and anthropomorphism and the dependent measure interest.

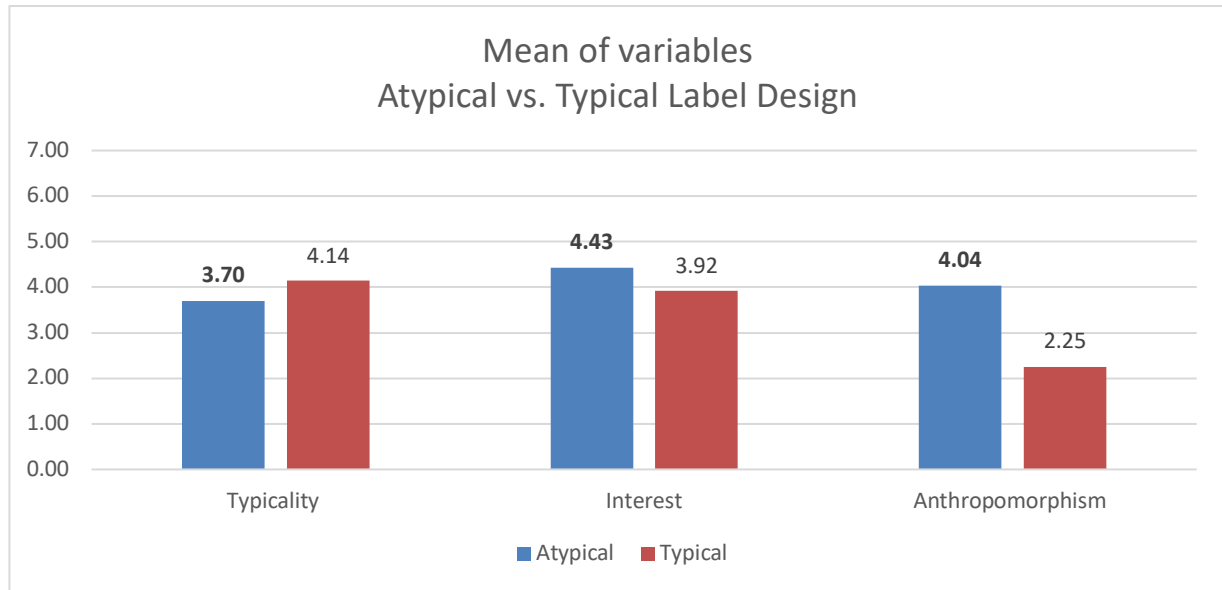


TABLE 4. BAR CHART COMPARING TYPICAL VS. ATYPICAL CONDITIONS FOR TYPICALITY, INTEREST AND ANTHRO-POMORPHISM

#### 4.5.2 The Effect of Interest on Attitude

Having confirmed that atypicality increases interest, the analysis proceeded with investigating the effect of interest on attitude. To test the second hypothesis, a linear regression was estimated, with the dependent variable attitude with the explanatory variable of Interest (Table 5).

Explanatory Variables	Coefficiente (b)	T-Statistic	Significance
Constant	1.602	7.109	0.000
interest	0.751	14.734	0.000
Adjusted R-squared	0.59		
Standard Error of Regression	0.95		
F-Statistic	21.70		

TABLE 5. LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: ATTITUDE.

The linear regression shows that the attitude toward the brand can significantly be explained by the interest in the label and its atypicality ( $\beta=0.75$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The higher the atypicality, the higher the interest and therefore the higher the attitude toward the brand. Therefore, H2 can be confirmed.

### 4.5.3 The Effect of attitude on purchase intention

Another linear regression analysis explored the effect of attitude on purchase intention (H3). More specifically, a single linear regression considered purchase intention as the dependent variable, and attitude as independent variable (Table 6).

Explanatory Variables	Coefficeince (b)	T-Statistic	Significance
Constant	0.70	0.987	0.325
Attitude	0.918	16.570	0.000
Adjusted R-squared	0.64		
Standard Error of Regression	1.01		
F-Statistic	27.46		

TABLE 6. LINEAR REGRESSION ANALYSIS. DEPENDENT VARIABLE: PURCHASE INTENTION

The linear regression shows that the purchase intention is significantly influenced by the attitude toward the brand ( $\beta=.92$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The higher the brand attitude, the higher the purchase intention. Therefore, H3 can be confirmed.

Looking at the below conceptual model and comparing it to the developed hypothesis, and the obtained results it can be shown that perceived label design atypicality through anthropomorphism, positively increases consumer interest as well as consumer interest in the product, which in turn increases the consumer purchase intention (see Figure 9).

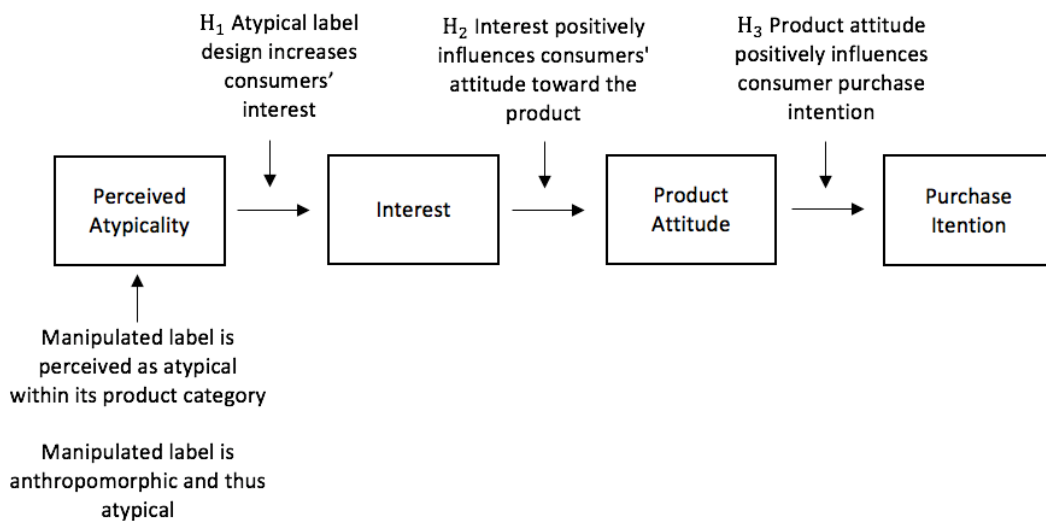


FIGURE 9. DETAILED CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND RESULTS OF EXPERIMENT 1

## 5 CONCLUSION AND CONTRIBUTION

Considering that a label design is among the first stimuli that consumers face when purchasing a standardised glass packaged product, understanding how such a label can influence consumer's interest or purchase intention, is crucial. Such understandings appear even more critical knowing the influential role that packaging shape plays in increasing a consumer's cognitive processing, willingness to pay and increased product quality judgement (van Ooijen et al. 2016). This is being reinforced when observing the growing social and legislative trend toward an expansion of standardised glass packagings, and that product differentiation using shape might become restricted. This understanding is relevant not only from a theoretical point of view, but also from a practical one, as product preference for (a)typical label designs could add or rescind from a brand's equity.

The experiment undertaken in this study shows that when packaging shapes are standardised and thus not a means of product differentiation, an atypical anthropomorphised label design increases consumer interest toward a product. Furthermore, it showed that anthropomorphism is an appropriate way of manipulating atypicality. It also shows that increased interest in the product leads to a more positive consumer attitude toward the product, which in turn leads to a higher consumer purchase intention.

There has been significant amount of research in the marketing and branding literature that look at packaging texture (Veryzer and Hutchinson 1998), shape (Folkes and Matta 2004; Raghubir and Greenleaf 2006; Schoormans and Robben 1997) and color (Garaus and Halkias 2019; Labrecque and Milne 2013), little attention however has up to date been devoted to the opportunities and challenges facing packaging label design within standardized packaging shape and its potential impact on consumers. Though conducted in a specific category of pickled pickles, the current research adds to the body of literature on label design by showing that anthropomorphised atypicality integrated into a label design has considerable effects on consumer interest, product attitude and purchase intention. It further adds to the literature by highlighting that marketers and branders alike can look at atypicality as a means of positive brand differentiation within standardised glass packaging. Crucially, the research outcomes also show that anthropomorphism is a suitable way of designing atypicality.

The present research has specific relevance for the design literature of labels and sheds light on the ways in which differentiation can be achieved. In agreement with the research of Schoormans and Robben (1997) who found that consumers were more interested in atypicality within a product category, this paper found that atypicality's ability to increase consumer interest spreads onto label design and not only to packaging shape.

The results have practical as well as theoretical implications for marketers and branders alike. From a theoretical standpoint, the theories that lead to the conceptual framework developed in this paper are long standing ones. However, their use in measuring atypical label design on consumer interest within standardised glass packaging is a novel one. It is this aspect that has implications for researchers as the conceptual model developed can be applied onto other fast-moving consumer goods that might be affected by changing legislation in standardised glass packaging. It also has implications for researchers as this paper provides a basis for further research in this area. From a practical point of view, as can be observed in multiple countries, reinforced by legislation being developed as is the case within the European Union, a shift is occurring from one-way towards multiple-way packaging, which paves the way for an increased use of standardised multiple-way packaging. While it cannot yet be determined how much time it will take for this process to reach a substantial market share, current developments all support the occurrence of such a development. This thereby has a possibly significant impact on the current and established branding processes and strategies - on the one hand creating critical limitations to what is being used by brands of all kinds and in various commodity groups and product lines. On the other hand, this development also has the potential of generating new opportunities and application options that can stimulate consumers in an entirely new approach. Early adopters of multiple way packaging could gain the support and attention from environmentally conscious consumers. Brands whose products categories might adapt to a standardised glass packaging, would benefit from considering innovative and creative label solution in advance, so as to approach the market ahead of its competitors. Furthermore, looking at the current standardised glass packagings labels in the Austrian market (milk, yoghurt and beer), atypical labels are not being used. On the contrary, the current standardised glass packaging labels follow uniformed designs. This study has shown that atypicality benefits from consumer interest, therefore incentivising existing brands to adapt their labels to a more atypical one, as well as inviting new product category brands to think ahead of the curve and already develop atypical labels for their products. While the application options and potential may not seem highly diverse for now, it should be considered that this is an area lacking relevant research and focus. This may then change fundamentally, once industry stakeholders focus on exploring application options. The rationale for these stakeholders to initiate such a focus are being made by the results gathered in this thesis. Against the backdrop of an increased rolling out of standardised glass packaging onto further product categories, the results gathered show that typical labels can be overshadowed by atypical labels.



In this regard, branders and marketers should keep in mind that atypicality doesn't only raise interest from consumers alone, but that this interest translated into a more positive product attitude and the latter into a higher purchase intention.

## 6 LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH:

The research undertaken has a number of limitations that propose interesting avenues for further research. A product's packaging is a key way to communicate a brand's message to consumers. Of particular relevance when it comes to consumers' purchasing intention, the latter has been seen as a key means of communication (Underwood et al. 2001; van Rompay et al. 2012). Consumer responses to label design can be influenced by countless variables, such as the presence of images (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007), colour (Garaus 2009) and of course price. In this research, the experiment investigated the role of atypical anthropomorphized labels to explain interest, attitude and purchase intentions. A consequence is that the results gathered do not facilitate the identification of the influence of color or label shape (the actual form of the label) on consumer interest, or whether either of those played a more persuasive role in influencing the consumer behaviour. The experiment indicated atypicality, but not specifically, which aspect of atypicality (color, label shape, anthropomorphism) influenced the consumer's interest the most.

Furthermore, as perceived among wine labels (Boudreaux and Palmer 2007) or coffee packaging (Schoormans & Robben 1997) moderate incongruity fares better within these particular product categories vis-à-vis consumer interest or preference. A further area of research could also be to assess what level of incongruity or atypicality appeals to consumers. This would mean explicitly differentiating between different levels of atypicality ranging from moderate to extreme and would again see the application of Mandler's (1982) schema incongruity theory, in order to see whether moderate incongruity from established schemata results in more favourable consumer evaluations and preferences. In keeping with this line of thought, future research could look at the application of different levels of (a)typicality and uncover which level of atypicality is most likely to generate the highest level of consumer interest and purchase intentions with consumers beyond the mere success of an efficient shopping trip to the grocery store.

Additionally, future research into the context-specific buying decision elements and the geographic location of the product can be looked into. As we saw from Celhay and Passebois' (2011) research, wine consumed at different occasions garners a higher or lower consumer response depending on the level of atypicality and risk perceived. Thus, should standardised glass packagings be rolled out onto future consumer goods, the occasion for which the said consumer good is intended needs to be taken into account. Furthermore, as was shown in Boudreaux and Palmer's (2007) research, depending on where the said product it sold, different tastes and preferences can be observed.

Future research might seek to uncover as to whether atypicality is a preferred label design in countries beyond of Germany.

The current research chose a FMCG as product category under observation. This means that the results gathered are mainly applicable to FMCG or products with a similar characteristic or within a similar product category. It must also be noted that the research setting of the current investigation was conducted online, and that the same investigation in store could potentially show dissimilar results, as consumer decision making process might vary in situ and may yield results that are more likely to mimic responses in the marketplace. The current thesis' hypothesis and findings show that within a product category where containers are all the same, atypical labels increase consumer interest. Though the research from some above academics support the findings, marketers should be aware that other products with uniform glass packaging might have consumers react differently to atypical label design. It would therefore be interesting for future researchers to see whether the results gathered in this experiment can be replicated across different product categories. Heilbrunn (2006) said that "the real aim of all packaging design is to find a balance between conformity, which reassures the end-user, and originality, which creates an element of surprise and allows a product to stand out." Thus, my recommendation to marketers would be to assess individual product categories with standardized glass packaging with their individual research and standards. Each product category needs to be treated individually and findings from one product category might not be uniformly applied to another product category. Research addressing the issues discussed above will have a significant contribution in the relevant literature.

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## 8 APPENDIX