

APPEARANCE MATTERS: THE INFLUENCE OF PACKAGING ON CONSUMER  
BEHAVIOR: THE CASE OF PERFUME PACKAGING IN THE LEBANESE  
MARKET

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A Thesis

presented to

the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics  
at Notre Dame University-Louaize

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Science in Business Strategy

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by

TINA HAYEK

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Notre Dame University - Louaize  
Faculty of Business Administration and Economics  
Department of Management and Marketing

We hereby approve the thesis of

Tina Hayek

Candidate for the degree of Master of Science in Business Strategy

Grade: B+



Dr. Marwan Azouri

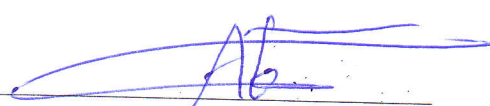
Supervisor, Chair



Dr. Sandra Khalil

Reader

Dr. Atef Harb



Chairperson, DMM

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## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to evaluate and describe the role that perfume packaging plays in consumer behavior and how it affects the Lebanese consumer's choice of perfume. The objective is to detail factors affecting perfume choice and describe the influence of packaging on this process. For that, secondary and primary data is collected and analyzed in order to elaborate and test the hypotheses.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A deductive quantitative research was conducted using a questionnaire distributed online and answered by Lebanese perfume buyers. The data obtained from 307 individuals was analyzed using SPSS to test the hypotheses and answer the research question.

**Findings** – The findings obtained highlight a correlation between the independent variable, set as hedonic value from packaging, and the dependent variable defined as consumer decision making process concerning perfume choice. Also, the study shows the notable role played by perfume packaging in Lebanese consumers' decision-making process as well as its importance for both online and offline purchase.

**Research limitations/implications** – Adopting the random sampling based on social media users can be considered as a limitation of this research. Also, time and situation limitation can be found due to the fact that the study was conducted during economic, political and health turmoil.

**Practical implications** – This research's outcomes add to the understanding of consumer buying choice determinants when it comes to perfume packaging and place the latter element as a strategic marketing tool. Managers can therefore have the confidence to

integrate packaging in their marketing strategy in order to give their brand a competitive edge and increase market share.

**Originality/value** – The originality of this study lays in the fact that it is one of the few researches tackling the subject of the determinants of consumer buying behavior regarding the perfume industry in Lebanon. Indeed, it focuses on packaging as a factor affecting purchase choice which remains an element that is studied to a limited degree in this part of the world.

**Keywords** Consumers' purchase decision, Packaging, Perfume, Consumer behavior, Hedonic value, Perception, Differentiation and positioning, Lebanon

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## **Introduction**

### General background about the topic

Nowadays, with the wide expansion of globalization, the booming of online sales as well as the ever-changing nature of consumption patterns, it is necessary for any firm to gain deeper insights about what makes consumers buy a product or service. Indeed, in our highly competitive marketplace, brands must be aware of what makes an individual “tick” and pushes him/her to choose a certain product or service over a multitude of other options.

Consumer behavior is the study “of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society” (Ahlers, 2019, p30). This field of research allows organizations to have a deeper understanding of the consumer and consumption process which, if applied right, can have remarkable effects on improving overall sales (Ahlers, 2019). Indeed, consumer behavior insights have great impact on corporate decision making as it dictates which product or service is best suited to the desired target market, which marketing and advertising efforts appeal best to consumers and how to ameliorate overall strategies with the goal of becoming the buyers’ chosen brand. In addition, consumer behavior is broadly defined as being the set of value seeking activities occurring as one attempts to fulfill his/her needs or wants. This process, which results in value creation, involves psychological happenings encompassing feeling, thinking and behaving (Babin & Harris, 2015).

Moreover, according to the American Marketing Association (2017, para. 2) “Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering,

and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.” Numbers of researchers stressed on the idea that thorough understanding of marketing and consumer behavior allow firms to earn competitive advantage by responding more precisely to market needs, which will be reflected in greater customer satisfaction, higher profitability and increased market share (Rundh, 2016).

Keller (2012) highlights the role of packaging as a powerful marketing tool capable of ameliorating a firm’s performance. Indeed, packaging falls into the Product section of the fundamental four Ps of marketing and is considered by Kotler and Keller (2011) as a crucial touch point between brands and their potential consumers. Being the salesman on the rack at the place of transaction (Rettie & Brewer, 2000), packaging is by all means the last point of communication between brands and shoppers in the retail setting. Therefore, the importance of packaging as a mean of communication and branding is increasingly gaining significance since there is evidence of the correlation between it, consumer behavior and purchase decision (Nesselhauf et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Abdullah et al. (2013) broadly defines packaging as being any material which purpose is to be used for the containment, protection, handling and distribution of a product from manufacturer to end consumer. On another hand, Keller (2012) and Underwood (2003) stresses on the idea that packaging is a wholesome part of the brand and contributes to the buying and consuming process. Also, Salem (2017) classifies packaging elements into visual elements encompassing color, shape, size, pictures and graphics as well as verbal elements grouping product information and language. The latter elements, along with packaging benefits such as functional, emotional or social benefits, have a positive influence on shopper’s decision.

In today's market, the consumer is faced with more products options, placed on more cluttered shelves, and must make a relatively quick decision. Therefore, packaging becomes an undeniable tool to grab customer's attention, differentiate the product, build brand identity and nurture customer loyalty. It is also an element that plays a determining role during online shopping for experience products such as perfume because, when buying online, consumers have to count on other available sources of information such as packaging rather than the perfume scent itself in order to minimize perceived risks (Mahdavi et al., 2019). In addition, it is obvious that in a retail setting, the consumer's first touch point with a perfume is its packaging and not its smell as perfume shoppers "smell" with their eyes first (Foti, 2015).

According to Jackie White (2000), perfume packaging is by all means a marketing tool that tells a story. Indeed, in order for a perfume to gain success, its bottle and packaging design should be integrated with its smell as well as with the marketing message and brand image built by the company. Annette Green, president of the New York-based Fragrance Foundation, believes that since consumers are presented with many choices, they are becoming more and more demanding and expect more than "just perfume". "They want something that entertains them, relaxes them or soothes them. The marketing is really driven by the consumer" (White, 2010, para. 9).

It is also important to note that expenditures dedicated to creative perfume packaging design conveyed the desired images cues, informational cues as well as want to purchase, and have led to more profit than advertising expenditures on media (Foti, 2015). Table 1 shows the amount in USD spent on fragrance ads in Lebanon as well as the frequency and number of campaigns of those ads during the years 2018 to 2020 on both offline and online

media.

The numbers highlight the fact that the theory stated by Foti (2015) could be applicable to the Lebanese market. Indeed, advertising expenditures dedicated to perfume are obviously low which means that the perfume industry in Lebanon does not rely mainly on advertising.

**Table 1: Offline and online advertising expenditures of the fragrance category for the years 2017 till 2020**

<b>Category: Fragrance</b>				
	<b>Offline Media</b>		<b>Online Media</b>	
<b>Year</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Amount \$</b>	<b>Campaigns</b>	<b>Amount \$</b>
2020	4,833	2,105,005	51	181,830
2019	4,867	4,269,134	110	120,080
2018	4,584	6,945,333	67	114,800
2017	6,099	11,584,009	43	106,320
Totals	20,383	24,903,481	271	523,030

Source: Statex, 2021

Therefore, uncovering the marketing strategies used by perfume brands to maintain and grow their market share is essential for companies in order to stay on top of their category. Knowing that perfume packaging is closely correlated with the marketing mix and branding strategic decisions (Underwood, 2003), we chose to have an in-depth study on the effect of perfume packaging on Lebanese consumers' behavior.

## Need for the study

Globalization, technological breakthrough and psychological discoveries have all shaped the current marketplace in which brands compete for consumer's interest and loyalty. Attracting new customers and retaining old ones, providing superior value to the end user while increasing company's income and brand wealth constitute major success keys for any firm. For that, understanding buyer's behavior and shaping products and services in accordance to market needs are at the heart of a winning marketing strategy. Indeed, throughout the years, researchers attempted to discover marketing variables that drives consumers' behavior and the processes through which purchasing choices are determined.

Being an unmissable element of the marketing mix, packaging was largely studied. Many research examined the components of packaging and their benefits but few defined the relationships tying packaging attributes to a product's choice and particularly in the luxury industry. Moreover, the Middle East, and more specifically Lebanon, lacks research directed toward uncovering what drives consumers to buy a particular brand and what role does packaging play in shaping perceptions and defining buyers' decision.

On another hand, the global perfume and fragrance market is growing as it has witnessed an increased demand in the past years and is forecasted to attain USD 64.6 billion at a CAGR of 6.00% by 2023 in terms of value (Wiseguy research consultants, 2018). As a result, it is important for business strategists to study this category since it is predicted to generate greater revenues in the following years.

In addition, with the surge of online shopping, it is crucial to uncover elements that determine product choice for experience goods as the shopper cannot sense physically the

product being bought online and needs other cues to determine his purchase choice and decrease perceived risk. Moreover, with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a decrease in face to face interaction and shopping in malls as well as the necessity to cover with a face mask and to avoid touching and smelling objects, it is necessary for industries to adapt to change. The study of the drivers that could influence consumers' choice in a growing industry such as the fragrance category is therefore of ultimate importance.

Consequently, the need for a study investigating the effect of perfume packaging on consumers' behavior in Lebanon comes from the lack of literature available on this subject and in this particular country. Knowing that the Lebanese population is highly interested in personal care products and fragrances, a study focusing on the latter subject would enrich the present literature and shed the light on a subject particularly significant to both marketers and consumers.

Therefore, the importance of this study lays in helping brands to understand if and how the packaging elements of their perfume can be a determinant in affecting drivers of consumer behavior and consequently shaping buyers' choice. The latter leading to the development of targeted strategies to achieve the desired outcomes and becoming consumers' brand of choice. This research will also give curious buyers a deeper outlook on their behaviors and choices. It will enlighten the consumer about the subtle ways affecting their decision making process and the positioning of the product in their own mind.

## Objective of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate and describe the role that perfume packaging plays in consumer behavior and how can it affect the choice of perfume regarding the Lebanese consumer. Indeed, a thorough study of literature conducted and published in the field of marketing and consumer behavior is summarized and presented. In addition, a quantitative research reveals the results obtained by a questionnaire administered to Lebanese perfume buyers and focused on the effect of perfume packaging on consumer buying behavior.

The literature review's objective is mainly focused on describing previously stated theories regarding consumer behavior and marketing. It defines the basis and elements of the variables adopted for this study. It also gathers previously tested concepts highlighting the effect of perfume packaging on consumer behavior by focusing on the mechanisms through which packaging affects buying choice. It shows the elements that packaging alters and consequently the ways it influences the buying process.

The quantitative study developed and administered through a questionnaire survey aims at examining if and how differentiation and positioning, hedonic value and perception created through perfume packaging can be a determinant in shaping buyers' choice. The objective is therefore to highlight meaningful correlations connecting the dependent and independent variables mentioned in order to gain insights about major marketing concepts such as packaging and consumer behavior.



## Overview of chapters

This research's body is divided into five main parts starting with the introduction then the review of literature, followed by the research methodology resulting in the results and analysis and finally the conclusion and recommendations.

First of all, the introduction goes over the general background of the study stating some broad concepts of marketing, consumer behavior and packaging that will be considered as the pillars of this research. After that, the need for the study and purpose of the research is presented by highlighting the importance of investigating the effect of perfume packaging on Lebanese buyers as well as the specific objectives adopted.

Chapter one, which details the literature review, presents the state of knowledge in the field studied by underlining theories and researches done by peers in the domain. Indeed, it first starts by going over concepts of marketing, branding and marketing mix and then presenting notions of consumer behavior such as the consumer value framework, perception, differentiation and value. Those elements will be taken as the basis of the independent variables adopted. After that, the purchase decision is explained in depth by stating its processes, perspectives, factors and model. Packaging elements such as shape, color, information and benefits as well as the perfume industry are also clarified meticulously in this chapter. The research question is finally drawn and explained.

Chapter two introduces the research model as well as the procedures and methodology implemented for this research. Indeed, the hypotheses guiding the study as well as the selected dependent and independent variables are presented. Also in this chapter, the positivist approach and the deductive reasoning are explained followed by the quantitative

research method applied. The survey method and questionnaire design is detailed as well as the sampling and statistical package used.

Chapter three uncovers the findings of the study. It presents in details the results of the questionnaire by describing the statistics covering sample demographics as well as consumer behavior tendencies and Likert scale data results. It also shows the reliability of the methods adopted and discusses the hypotheses presented by showing which ones are rejected or supported.

Finally, in the conclusion and recommendations, the main findings are paralleled with previously stated theories and studies. The limitations of the research are also presented objectively and recommendations for future investigations are proposed. Theories are also reflected into practical managerial implications showing the impact of this study on the real business and marketing world.

## **Chapter 1: Literature Review**

Present literature about the main concepts constituting the pillars of this study are presented and detailed in this chapter. The latter refers to the secondary data collected which is the data that was already collected for the aim of other studies and therefore that exist already independently of this thesis.

The literature review, which encompasses theories and findings elaborated by marketing gurus and researchers, is divided into five main sections. Section one describes the theoretical overview of marketing and consumer behavior, followed by section two which is a discussion about existing knowledge concerning the purchase decision. Section three focuses on the theoretical overview governing packaging, followed by section four which overviews the perfume industry. The last section of the literature review is dedicated to hypotheses development and statement of the conceptual model.

### Section 1: Theoretical overview of marketing and consumer behavior

#### **1.1.1 Marketing**

Understanding the core essence of marketing and its elements is crucial for any business researcher and is particularly helpful as it constitutes the main subject of this thesis. Therefore, the following comprises general statements and definitions regarding marketing as well as details about the marketing mix elements and the concepts of branding and brand equity.

##### *1.1.1.1 Marketing and branding*

Mullins and Walker (2013) define marketing as being a social process comprising the activities permitting organizations and individuals to fulfill their needs and wants through

exchanges and to cultivate exchange relationships. Also, the American Marketing Association (2017, para. 2) defines marketing as “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”. Moreover, Babin and Harris (2015) state that marketing strategy is the approach taken by a company in order to create value for the consumer. The authors stress on the fact that this strategy should deliver value in a unique way, be hard to copy by competitors and should not be only limited to a physical product.

According to the American Marketing Association (2017), a brand is considered as being an intangible asset that is associated with a unique image in stakeholders’ mind and leads to the creation of value. A certain design, symbol, name or any distinctive characteristic permitting to identify a good from its competitors can be considered as part of the brand.

In addition, branding plays a role in the purchase decision as it helps differentiate products, facilitates shopping, simplifies purchase options cues, provides reassurance to the customer that he made the right choice, can be a symbol of status, and could guarantee quality (Mullins & Walker, 2013). On another hand, brand equity can be ameliorated by a firm’s branding work. Indeed, brand equity is constituted of the following four main elements: brand association, brand name awareness, perceived quality as well as brand loyalty. Therefore, by combining branding efforts, a firm can enhance the value offered and improve its brand equity in order to appeal to the desired market and consequently increase sales (Mullins & Walker, 2013).

### *1.1.1.2 Marketing mix*

Being the blend of product, price, place and promotion aiming to position a certain offering in the marketplace, the marketing mix is considered to be how a company implements its marketing strategy in a certain exchange market (Babin & Harris, 2015). In addition, Oke et al. (2016) defines the marketing mix, also known as the four Ps of marketing, as being the controllable variables enabling an organization to operate in a changing environment and responding to its target market's needs and wants.

Based on the sayings of the American Marketing Association (2017) as well as Oke et al. (2016) and Marušić (2019), the four elements of the marketing mix are detailed as follows and summarized in figure 1:

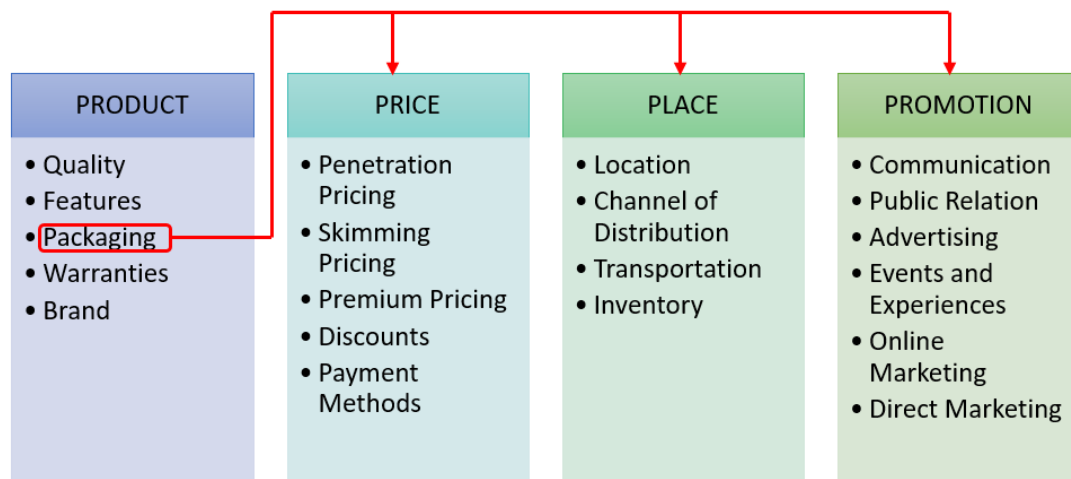
- Product: product refers to both goods and services as it can be intangible or tangible. It comprises various attributes tailored to satisfy the consumer's needs and supports the brand offering. The product elements include features, quality, branding, packaging, warranties etc... A product should always be elaborated with the consumers in mind in order to appeal to their needs and wants and be differentiated from the competition.
- Price: price is the amount of money needed to acquire a product and represents how much the consumer is willing to pay for that product. Pricing strategies include penetration pricing, premium pricing which is usually used for luxuries, and skimming pricing. If placed right, price positioning can participate in product differentiation and influence purchase decision.
  - Place: place refers to the location where a product can be found and acquired. Place includes the channel of distribution that also plays a role in creating value for the consumer.

- Promotion: promotion denotes the communication between the company and the public. It can be also thought of the bundle of activities that encourage purchase and can be measurable in term of profit, share and volume. The promotional mix includes public relations, advertising, direct marketing, sale promotion, personal selling, as well as online and social media marketing, events and experiences.

Marušić (2019) compares the elements of the marketing mix to pieces of a puzzle, a necessary combination of all four elements in order to achieve the full potential of a successful product. Optimal marketing strategy and marketing mix goes therefore hand in hand. It is crucial for a product to differentiate itself from the clutter through its marketing mix and consequently appeal to consumers and be their chosen product.

Packaging, which elements and functions will be detailed in section three, is a notable and sometimes overlooked part of the marketing mix. Although it is generally thought of as part of the product section, it has a notable role to play in price, place and promotion. Indeed, materials and technics used for packages can influence costs which in return will have repercussion on pricing strategy. Also, packaging should be well studied in order for the product to go through the transportation channels which is related to the place strategy. Finally, the communication function of packaging which will be detailed later on is greatly related to the promotional element of the four Ps.

**Figure 1: The marketing mix**



Source: Adapted from Mullins and Walker, 2013

### 1.1.2 Consumer behavior

Generally speaking, the more effective the marketing strategy, the easier it is to get the money out of the customer's hand (Barmola & Srivastava, 2010). Indeed, a part of marketing consists of understanding the customer's needs and creating a want for a product. Consequently, in order to accomplish this, marketers should have a deep knowledge of consumers' behaviors.

#### *1.1.2.1 Definition of consumer behavior and consumer value framework*

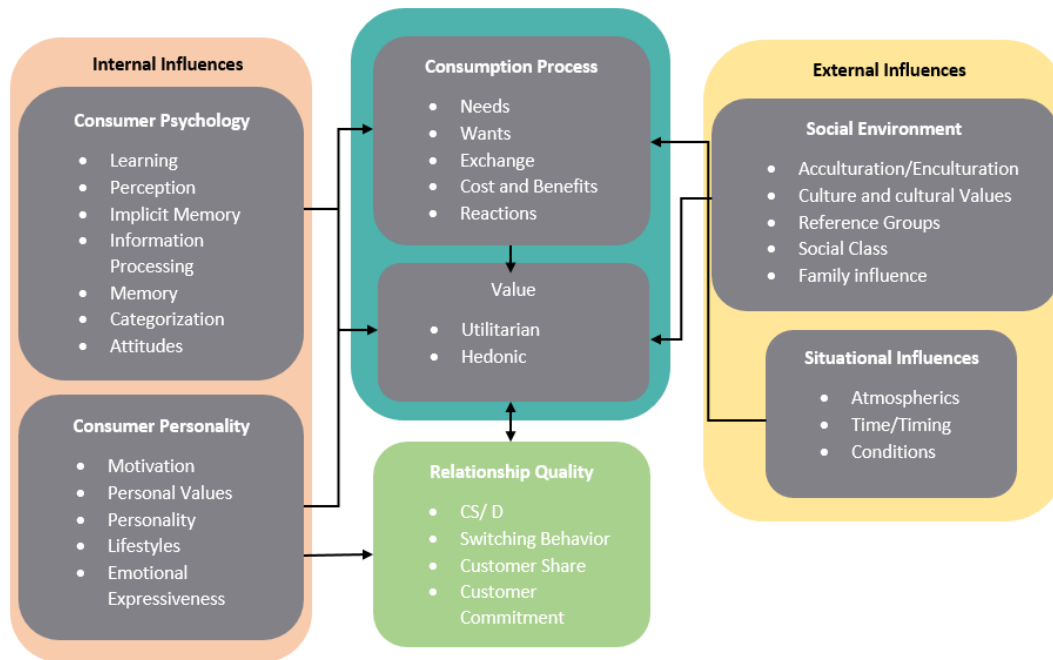
Understanding consumer behavior is at the core of successful marketing and business strategy and is a key aspect for increasing a company's sales revenues and therefore its profits (Ahlers, 2019). According to Karimi (2013), the study of consumer behavior started in the mid- to late 1960s and takes its roots from many disciplines such as psychology,

anthropology, social psychology, sociology and is used in parallel with a variety of fields like marketing, neuro-marketing, economics and behavioral science.

By definition, consumer behavior is the study “of individuals, groups, or organizations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society” (Ahlers, 2019, p30). Moreover, Babin and Harris (2015) highlight the fact that the consumer behavior’s discipline is related to the study of individuals while they undergo the consumption process. In other words, it is the set of value seeking activities occurring as one attempts to fulfill his/her needs or wants. This process, which results in value creation, involves psychological happenings encompassing feeling, thinking and behaving. Getting deeper into this multidisciplinary field of research, Babin and Harris (2015) summarize one of the most popular theories of consumer behavior in a framework referred to as the consumer value framework and presented in figure 2.



**Figure 2: The consumer value framework**



Source: Adapted from Babin and Harris, 2015

Indeed, the consumer value framework states that the consumption process, which is meant to create value (utilitarian or hedonic), is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internal factors encompass elements such as learning, perception, memory, personality, lifestyle, emotion; and external elements include environmental and situational influences.

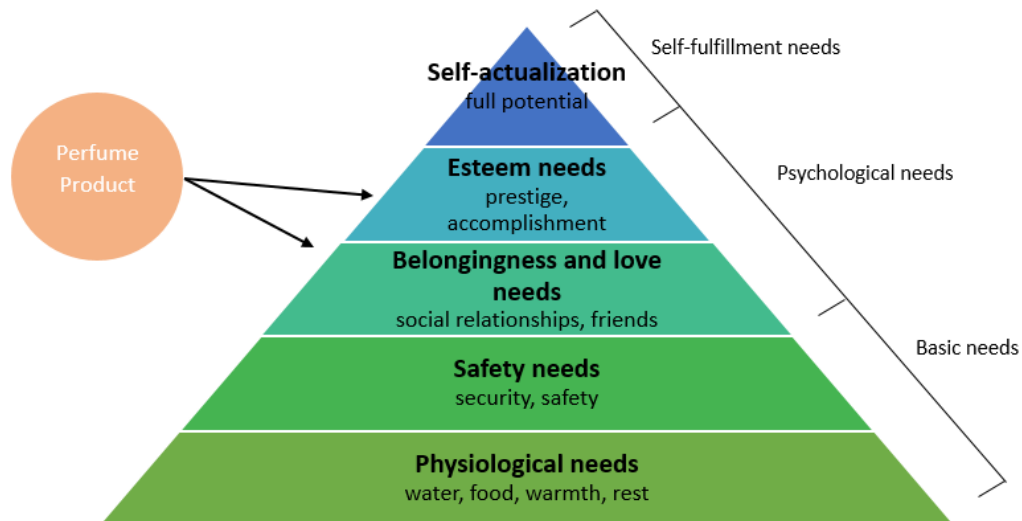
The focus of this paper will be guided toward selected elements governing the consumer value framework such as needs, wants, value, perception and emotions, which will be discussed in details in the following paragraphs.

### *1.1.2.2 Needs, wants and Maslow's hierarchy of needs*

The concepts of need and want were thoroughly studied and defined throughout the marketing literature and constitute an important aspect of consumer behavior and the consumption process. Indeed, a need is related to something that is necessary for an individual to live a decent life, whereas a want is related to a desire, in other words, an option available to satisfy the need (Babin & Harris, 2015).

Based on the above mentioned concepts, Maslow's hierarchy of needs classifies consumers' needs into five categories starting from the most basic need which is the physiological need related to utilitarian value and going to the self-actualization need which represents ultimate fulfillment related to hedonic value (Babin & Harris, 2015). Maslow's pyramid presented in figure 3 details belongingness and love needs also known as social needs as encompassing the feeling of being loved and accepted by one's peers as well as feeling love for others. This level of need is related to interpersonal relationship between an individual and his entourage comprising social groups interactions. Moreover, esteem needs are focused on feelings of self-confidence accomplishment, value for one's self and appreciation in addition to the need for respect and good reputation. Finally, self-actualization comes at the peak of Maslow's hierarchy of needs as it relates to ultimate fulfillment of one self by seeking the full potential and peak personal growth. It is important to note that achieving full self-actualization is rare.

**Figure 3: Maslow's hierarchy of needs**



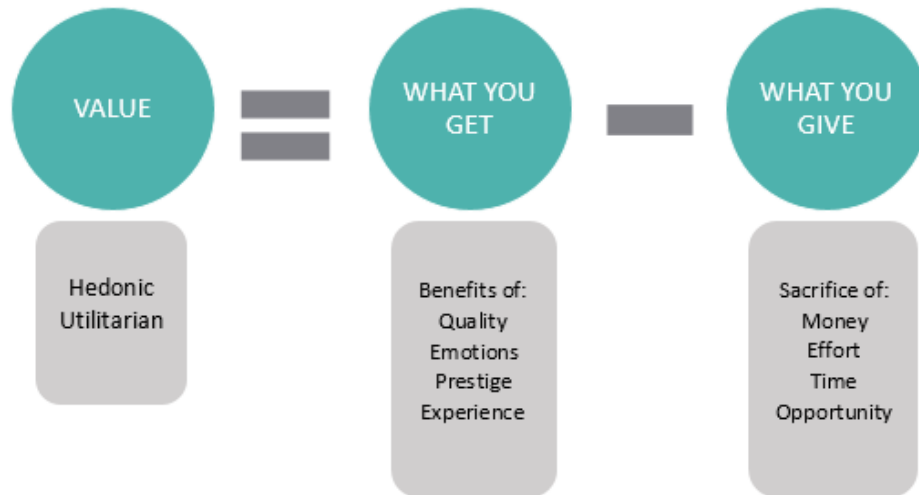
Source: Adapted from Babin and Harris, 2015

Tackling the subject of consumer behavior toward perfume packaging, we can say that the product studied in this paper relates mainly to the esteem need and social needs as it provides hedonic value for the consumer and tackles the main points stated by Maslow for each of these needs.

#### *1.1.2.3 Value and attitude*

The concept of value can be illustrated by the value equation illustrated in figure 4.

**Figure 4: The value equation**



Source: Adapted from Babin and Harris, 2015

The value derived from consumption can be either hedonic and/or utilitarian. Hedonic value refers to the value obtained by evaluating criteria related to subjective attributes and emotions; it is a mainly experiential process. Rather than being a mean to an end, hedonic value is an end by itself. On the other hand, utilitarian value comes from the economic or functional aspect of an attribute and is considered as being a mean to an end (Babin & Harris, 2015).

Following the above mentioned theory, Ahler (2019) identifies two types of consumption: utilitarian and hedonic. The first one refers to the consumption of a product or service for the basic needs of living such as food or medication. Whereas hedonic consumption is related to the product or service meaning rather than its exact functionality. Indeed, this aspect of consumption goes back to the individual's emotions and is related to multiple

senses as the consumption of product turns into an experience in itself which creates a sort of long-lasting enjoyment and happiness.

This paper is therefore focused on hedonic consumption and value since it tackles the consumption of the perfume product.

Babin and Harris (2015) state that attitudes motivate consumers to behave in a certain way and consequently have a role in dictating purchase behaviors. Attitudes are closely related and intertwined to the concept of value as when a product or service offers considerable value it will be welcomed with positive attitude and a motivation to purchase and vice versa. Attitudes are defined as being the evaluations individuals have about products and services. Adding to that, attitude encompasses three components: cognitive (related to beliefs about the product), affect (related to the feelings about an object) and behavioral (related to the intention to behave).

#### *1.1.2.4 Perception*

Perception is one of the factors that shape consumer behavior. A concept supported by Marta et al. (2017) who, based on the saying of Kotler and Rath (1984), stressed on the fact that positive perception will lead to the desire to own a product since, when faced with two equally priced goods, the consumer will choose the most attractive one.

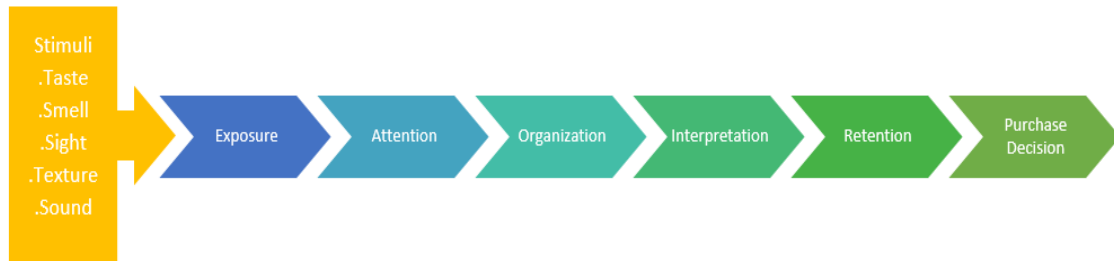
According to Babin and Harris (2015) perception is the individual's awareness and interpretation of reality as consumers develop their own subjective perceptions that does not necessarily match reality. In addition, perception and decision making are positively correlated. First, an individual senses stimulus through his brain's sensory receptors, then

organizes and code them, which means that the human brain makes sense of the sensory stimuli felt, and then react to what was perceived.

Azouri (2012), based on the theory of Hawkins et al. (1992), Barceló et al. (2017) as well as Solomon et al. (2010), summarizes the stages of the consumer perception process which outcome will be the determination of perception toward a product and ultimately the purchase choice. Those stages are illustrated in figure 5.

The concept of the consumer perception process idea is also related to the stimulus response model of consumer behavior that will be detailed in section two. Adofo (2014) stresses on the fact that individuals are selective toward which stimuli they pay attention to in order for them to avoid sensory overload. It is important to note that the meaning assigned to stimuli depends on each individuals frame of reference which is related to the individuals own likes and dislikes, previous experiences, as well as feelings, beliefs and psychology (Azouri, 2012). Moreover, the frame of reference comprises affective, cognitive and behavioral elements through which the stimuli is evaluated and assessed in order to come up with a decision. Lindberg et al. (2018) highlight the fact that the way sensory information is analyzed can be a key for purchase choice. Indeed, the authors discuss how the five senses (vision, olfaction, taste, hearing and touch) can affect impression and give perception data with the visual sense ranking as the most important to human when perceiving their surroundings. Moreover, Ahler (2019) notes that emotions influence perceptions and motivation to buy, which leads to the choice of a particular product or brand.

**Figure 5: The consumer perception process**



Source: Adapted from Hawkins et al., 1992

#### *1.1.2.5 Differentiation and positioning*

Product and service differentiation occurs when an individual sees the latter as different from one another in contrast to having all competing products being indistinguishable. Differentiation constitutes the basis of product positioning as it defines how a product is perceived by consumers. This is done by modifying goods' characteristics in order for a firm to achieve the desired position in consumers' mind (Babin & Harris, 2015). According to Mullins and Walker (2013), differentiation is generally the reason for product choice as it gives a certain brand or product competitive advantage over available options in a saturated marketplace.

In addition, Ries and Trout promoted the concept of brand positioning in 1993. The authors defined brand positioning as being the way a brand is distinguished in comparison to its competitors as well as the place it occupies in people's mind. Therefore, brand positioning and differentiation go hand in hand. In order to achieve the desired positioning, marketers can modify four main levels:

- Simple physically based attributes: related to product physical features such as size and quality.
- Complex physically based attributes: depending on the importance given to product attributes.
- Essentially abstract attributes: subjective and not related to physical attributes, such as the prestige of a perfume.
- Price: can be an indicator of prestige and quality.

In addition, having a distinguished brand personality is a way for firms to differentiate their products from the competition and drive sales. Indeed, brand personality refers to the human traits that can be linked to a brand as it can be thought of by the five dimensions: sophistication, sincerity, excitement, ruggedness and competence. Once a company has good understanding of its targets' characteristics as well as their needs and wants, it can reflect it in its brand personality. Products will therefore have a higher appeal and consequently be the chosen brand while the firm also builds relationship with its customers. For a brand personality to be successful and increase sales, it should be seen by customers as having notable degrees of clarity, favorability and originality (Babin & Harris, 2015). Moreover, according to Orth and Malkewitz (2008), brand personality is a way for consumers to express themselves or their ideal self and is a determinant factor in differentiation as it carries a clear message or idea.



## Section 2: The purchase decision

Individuals are faced with daily problems that call for decision making and choice in order to satisfy a particular need or want. Indeed, the decision making process is an ever present phenomenon and a wholesome part of the consumer's behavior. This section will present a grouping of knowledge concerning the purchase decision process and decision making, as well as theories concerning the factors affecting consumer buying decision, and a description of the stimulus response model.

### **1.2.1 The purchase decision process**

The consumer decision making process is always linked to choices related to value and encompasses five steps: problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase decision, and post purchase evaluation. Figure 6 summarizes the latter mentioned relationships.

Oke et al. (2016) as well as Babin and Harris (2015) detail the five steps of the decision making process as listed below:

1. Need recognition: First of all, a person will come to realize the presence of an unsatisfied need which means a difference between his actual state and the desired state he would like to attain. Actual and desired states are prone to constant change which leads to a gap between the two. However, what is called "opportunity recognition" occurs when an individual actual state stays the same but a drastic change in the desired stage is noticed. This case is mainly the result of a firm's marketing effort to create a want and eventually transform it into a need.

Moreover, a need can be either functional which relates to the practical performance of the product or service, or psychological which is linked to the individual's feelings and emotions towards the product or service.

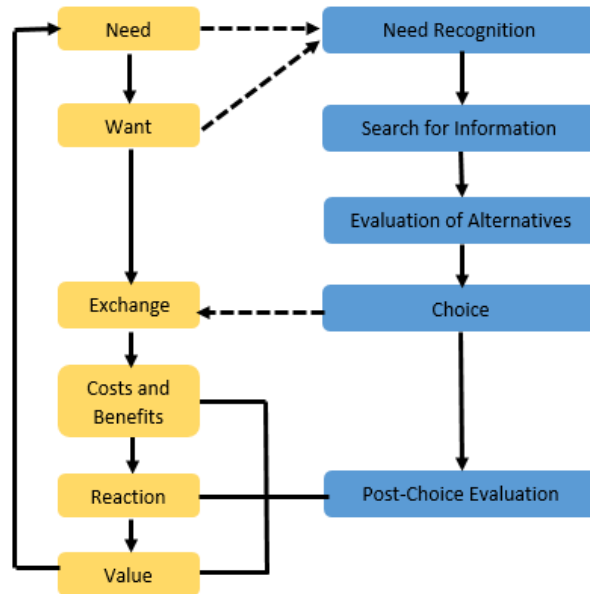
2. Internal and external information search: During the second stage, potential buyers search for information that will be of use in order to satisfy their need/want. Internal search, which happens when an individual digs in his/her memory for clues coming from past experiences, is usually the first that occurs. External search implies that one will examine the available external environment such as public or commercial sources as well as other consumers in order to discover more insights about the products or services needed.
3. Evaluation of alternatives: Before making the buying decision, individuals evaluate available options and brands according to certain standards of quality, price, quantity and therefore of value offered. In this stage it is important to distinguish between a feature which refers to the attribute performance of a product, and a benefit which is the perceived positive outcome that is related to the presence of a certain feature. It is mainly the benefit that affects the creation of value. Moreover, it is when the concept of value comes into play.

Also, evaluation of alternatives can be based on two aspects. Emotions, overall feeling and positive mood play a crucial role in what is called affect based evaluation of a product or service. Positive feelings and emotions will therefore motivate a purchase based on affect. As opposed to this, attribute-based evaluation is related to rational decision making done with careful evaluation and comparison of alternatives.

4. Purchase decision: After the evaluation of alternatives, the buying decision becomes highly influenced by retailers, salespeople and in-store selection. Choice of retailer is therefore included during this step as point of purchase settings, sales associates and visuals exhibitions all play a role during this phase. It is when the consumer chooses the product he/she will buy.
5. Post-purchase: This final step comprises three stages where first of all, the buyer will consume the service or product bought, then he/she will evaluate the experience and level of satisfaction, and finally, he/she will dispose or recycle the consumed good. Loyalty and repeat purchase are determined in this stage.

It is important to note that individuals do not always proceed with the above mentioned steps in order, as they can simplify the decision making process and skip some stages using mental shortcuts or they could simply decide not to meet their need or want and stop the process without attaining the final stages (Babin & Harris, 2015).

**Figure 6: Basic consumption process and decision making**



Source: Adapted from Babin and Harris, 2015

### 1.2.2 Decision making perspective and factors affecting consumer buying decision

According to Babin and Harris (2015), decision making can be either rational, experiential or behavioral. The first one refers to when consumers carefully evaluate available options and make informed decisions, it is related mainly to utilitarian value. In addition, experiential decision making is influenced by feeling and emotion derived by consuming the product and generally focus on hedonic value. Finally, the behavioral decision-making denotes decisions that constitute responses to environmental stimuli and influences. According to Cottrell (2016), current consumers are shifting their focus from product utility to product experience as feelings and emotions are preferred over the functional aspects of a product. Therefore, it is crucial for brands to understand consumer behavior, know what drives consumer choice and reflect it in their product packaging. It is important to highlight

that the decision-making concerning cosmetics and perfume can be mainly categorized as being emotional or experimental.

Moreover, factors affecting consumer buying decision and the decision making process were thoroughly studied over time and insights were looked after by marketers eager to discover what makes a target choose and buy a certain product or service. Oke et al. (2016), based on the views of Kotler et al. (2005) and Lamb et al. (2004), split those factors into four main elements:

a) Extrinsic factors including:

a.1) Cultural elements related to the cultures, subcultures, shared values and social classes divisions.

a.2) Social elements encompassing variables such as avoidance and inspirational groups, opinions leaders, peer groups and friends or family entourage.

As individuals are always interacting with one another and in order to create shortcut related to search and evaluation, the above mentioned factors can determine what consumers choose by influencing their attitude and behaviors.

b) Intrinsic factors including:

b.1) Individual features such as the difference in age, income, lifestyle, personality, interest and self-concept since each of those variables calls for different needs, motivations and preferences.

b.2) Psychological features which are related to perceptions, motivations, learning, beliefs and attitudes.

These factors therefore dictate how an individual perceive the offering, what he/she values and determine his/her attitudes and liking of the product. It is also important to note that intrinsic factors are subjective to each consumer and vary from one individual to another.

### **1.2.3 Stimulus response model**

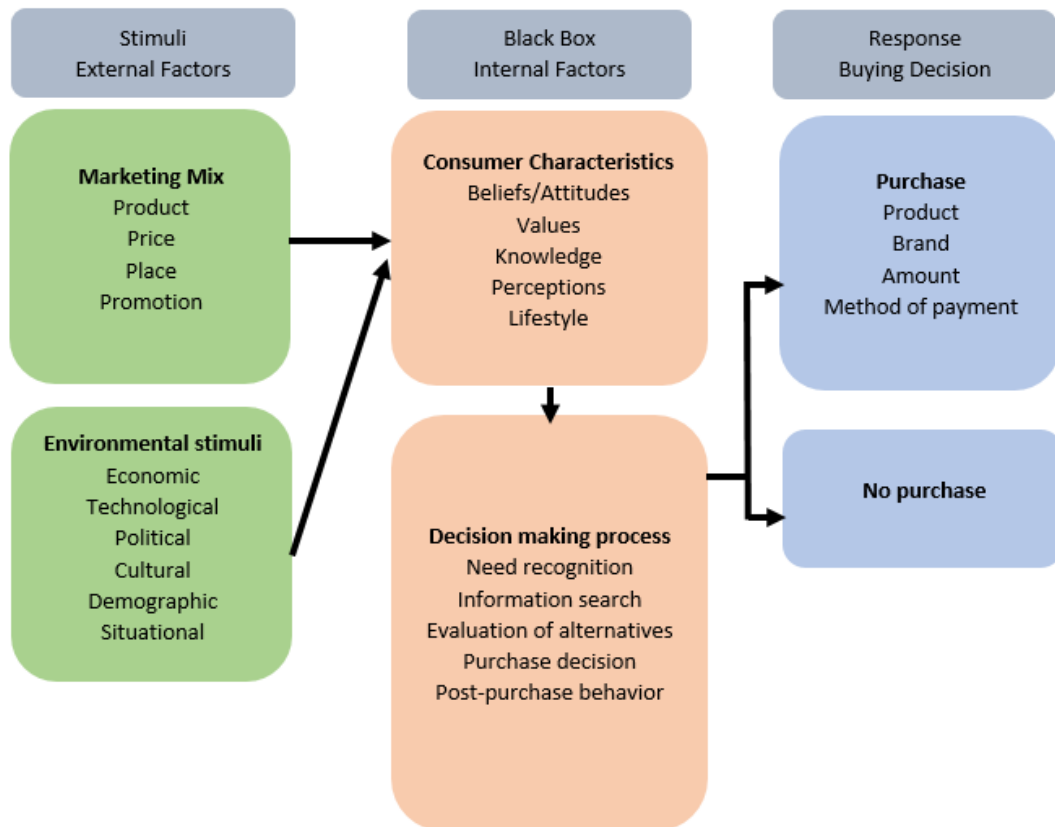
According to Theerathamkorn et al. (2018) and based on theories of Kotler et al. (2012), individuals make purchase decisions according to the stimulus response model. This model shows how buying decisions are majorly influenced by factors referred to as stimulus that enter what is referred to the customer's black box and therefore result in a response for the presented good or service. Each individual reacts differently to those stimuli. Moreover, this model contains four main components:

- The stimulus input which are external factors encompassing marketing mix (product, price, place and promotion) and environmental elements (economical, technological, political and cultural factors)
- The communication channels
- The buyer characteristics which are internal factors including individual characteristics (beliefs, attitude, values, knowledge, motives, perception, and lifestyle) and consumer decision making process
- The purchase output which refers to whether the purchase occurs or not.

Understanding the relationship between external factors stimuli, individual's mind and output is crucial in order to gasp consumer behavior and achieve market success by creating adequate products. In the context of this paper, it is important to note that the stimulus

studied will be product perfume packaging which is part of the product element of the marketing mix.

**Figure 7: Stimulus-response model**



Source: Adapted from Kotler and Keller, 2012

## Section 3: Packaging definition and theories

### **1.3.1 Packaging**

Being a part of the marketing mix, packaging is considered as a stimulus that could trigger an individual's response and have an effect on consumer behavior and choice. Packaging element and benefit are therefore detailed in this section.

#### *1.3.1.1 Definition*

Marketing literature discussed benefits and elements of packaging as many writers defined and classified the latter stating numerous characterizations for the sole package. Indeed, as a broad definition, packaging can be seen as being any material which purpose is to be used for the containment, protection, handling and distribution of a product from manufacturer to end consumer (Salem, 2018). According to Cottrell (2016) packaging groups both technical and marketing functions as it serves four main purposes: contain, protect, transport as well as inform and sell.

Ampuero and Vila (2006) also state that packaging can be thought of as three kinds:

- Primary packaging which is directly in contact with the product
- Secondary packaging which purpose is to protect primary packaging and communicate product attributes
- Tertiary packaging which use is mainly for distribution in order to shield the products on their way through the commercial chain. It contains the primary and secondary packaging.

As an example, considering the perfume product illustrated in figure 8, the bottle is referred to as being the primary packaging, the card box containing this bottle as well the protecting



film is the secondary packaging and finally, the box including many perfume boxes is thought of as tertiary packaging (Ampuero & Vila, 2006).

**Figure 8: Types of packaging**



Source: Adapted from Ampuero and Vila, 2006

More precisely, Ampuero and Vila (2006) based on the theories of Underwood (2003) and Smith and Taylor (2004), classify packaging elements into structural elements encompassing the form and size of the containers and materials as well as the graphical elements including color, typography, shapes used and images. On another hand, Salem (2018) groups packaging features into visual elements and verbal elements, a concept based on the views of Rettie and Brewer (2000) and Silayoi and Speece (2007) and which will be considered throughout this paper.

First of all, visual elements include colors, shapes, size, pictures and graphics; those features are closely related to the consumer's emotions. Second, verbal elements include product information, brand name and language and are associated with the buyer' cognitive

process. Salem (2018) believes that each of those elements have a role in determining buyer's choice and consumption process. Moreover, Butkevicienė et al (2008) highlight the fact that the combination of packaging elements plays a crucial role in the development of sensorial and cognitive expectation and will influence individual's mood, emotions and attentions and therefore will have an impact on consumer behavior.

The following paragraphs will detail theories related to the mentioned packaging elements.

### 1.3.1.2 Packaging color

According to Salem (2018), packaging colors are responsible for arousing feelings and consequently modifying consumer's perception. They play a role in forming consumer's attitudes concerning the quality, smell and attractiveness of a product, and create a lasting impression in consumer's mind. Therefore, packaging colors are studied for their role in creating a negative or positive image and feelings toward a particular product. Silva (2014) highlights the fact that different colors can be associated with different feelings and quality in a quite recurrent manner. Indeed, table 2 illustrates the percentage of association between colors and symbolic qualities.

**Table 2: : Example of association between colors and symbolic qualities**

	Joy	Strength	Anger	Sensuality	Wisdom	Comfort
Yellow	40%	3%	0%	3%	11%	7%
Blue	12%	10%	0%	1%	30%	30%
Red	10%	29%	40%	38%	2%	0%
Green	7%	3%	1%	0%	12%	10%
Purple	1%	5%	15%	17%	5%	3%
Orange	24%	5%	3%	0%	2%	3%
Pink	3%	0%	0%	17%	0%	1%
White	3%	3%	1%	8%	25%	21%
Grey	0%	3%	6%	0%	4%	7%
Brown	0%	11%	10%	1%	4%	9%
Black	0%	28%	25%	15%	6%	6%
Others (non specified)	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	2%

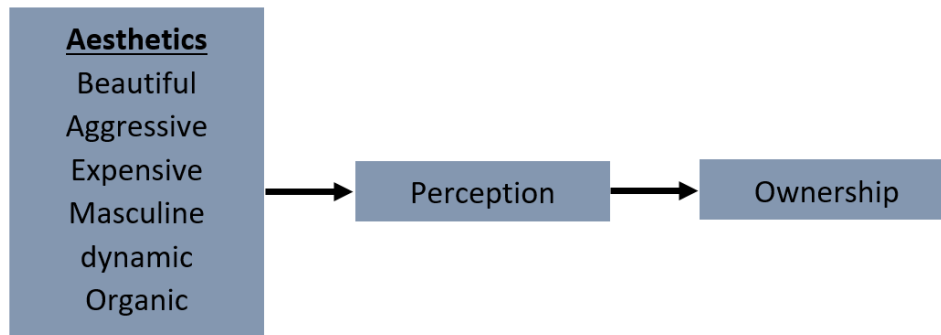
Source: Silva, 2014

In addition, being an intangible aspect of the brand, colors can participate in creating the brand's unique selling proposition as it conveys undeniably a message about the product and attracts customer attention among cluttered shelves (Salem, 2018). Also, Yu-Jin Kim's study in 2011 highlights the existence of a correspondence between smell and color vision. Indeed, it has been shown that odor perception is strongly affected by visual stimuli, which means that the color of perfume packaging has a role in determining the judgment of perfume and affects its liking. Different perfume smell notes can be associated to certain color hues and vice versa, therefore finding the perfect smell/color match can enhance the consumption process.

#### *1.3.1.3 Packaging shape and size*

According to Salem (2018), customers are attracted by a product's shape and can base their purchase decision on its liking. Moreover, a well-studied packaging can constitute a notable element in a product differentiation and can transfer fun as well as value to the consumer. Shape also plays a role in arousing customers' emotions and consequently modifying perceptions of a product and can therefore add a unique touch to the presented good (Salem, 2018). Marta et al. (2017) found significant correlation between design features such as shape, perception and ownership of a certain product. Indeed, the latter mentioned authors highlight the relationship between how a good is perceived such as being elegant, feminine, expensive or beautiful and the desire to own this good. On another hand, the authors found a relationship between describing elements of the shape of a product and its effect on how it is perceived. This connection is illustrated in figure 9. In addition, product size, which should be in accordance to customers' needs and wants, permits potential buyers to estimate the product's volume.

**Figure 9: Relationship between shape, perception and ownership**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021 (adapted from Marta et al, 2017)

#### *1.3.1.4 Packaging pictures and graphics*

Salem (2018) confirms the study done by Ampuero and Vila (2006) stating that distinguished graphics and pictures on a product packaging helps the customer to make their purchase decision more quickly as some graphics can be associated with higher quality products. Indeed, pictures and graphics can play a communicative role as they translate a certain mood and evoke feelings and aspirations that can align with customers' personal aspirations. Also, pictures and graphics are essential elements of the brand image and brand identity as they help to establish the uniqueness and individuality of a brand in order to be remembered. For example, in the study done by Ampuero and Vila (2006), the graphics constituted of straight lines, single elements, symmetrical composition and vertical lines were associated with prestige, guarantee and high price.

#### *1.3.1.5 Packaging product information and language*

According to Salem (2018), written information about the product such as ingredients, usage, production and expiry dates, producer and country of origin are all communicated to the consumer mainly through packaging. Indeed, being the last touch point between the

brand and the consumer, packaging can transmit crucial information that would influence the purchase decision. Moreover, written content on packaging carries details often required by laws in order to provide full transparency to the market. In addition, Al-Samarraie et al. (2019) stress on the fact that label information tackles the cognitive and emotional process as well as affects behaviors. Accordingly, a noticeable brand name found on a product packaging transmits positive feelings to the consumer and helps stimulates individuals' memory as well as participates in building differentiation and consumer perception (Al-Samarraie et al., 2019).

#### *1.3.1.6 Packaging benefits*

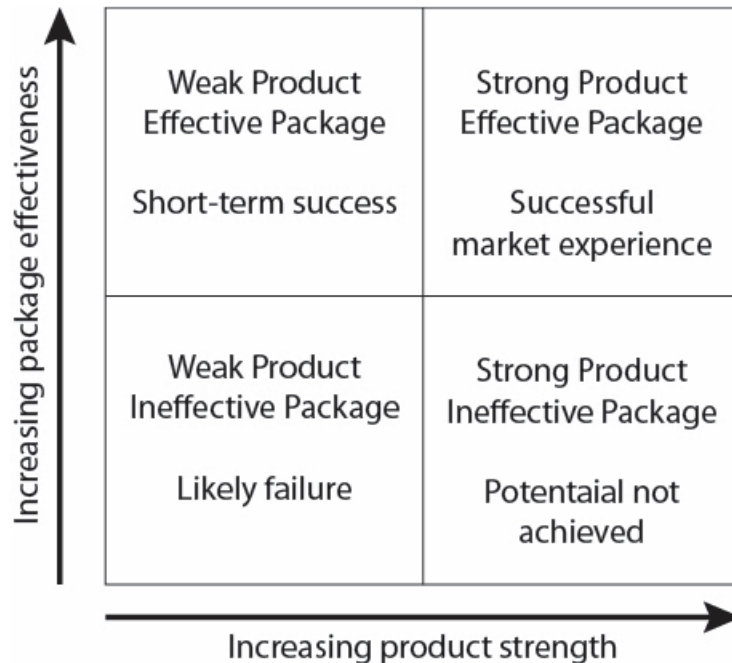
Salem (2018) classifies packaging benefits as functional, emotional, social and environmental. The functional benefit relates to the basic role of packaging which is to protect and store, expand shelf life and facilitate product consumption. This aspect of packaging is mainly related to Maslow's (1970) physiological and safety needs. Moreover, packaging conveys certain moods, emotions and personalities such as romance, masculinity, tenderness or freedom. This characteristic can considerably affect the buying decision as it relates to the emotional and social benefits by targeting internal sentiments as well as peer belonging. It is also stated in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Finally, packaging carries environmental benefits since being a part of our everyday consumption habits, it has a considerable ecological impact. Indeed, with our society shifting toward more ecofriendly behaviors, today, more than ever, a successful packaging is the one that fulfills its role while reducing its environmental footprint. The latter idea is related to esteem need.

### **1.3.2 Packaging as a strategic marketing tool**

Several researchers focused their efforts on uncovering the role of packaging in decision making. Indeed, being an integral element of the marketing mix, packaging has transitioned from being only a protective cover for the product to becoming an asset that grabs the individual's physical, emotional and cognitive attention (Al-Samarraie et al., 2019). The latter idea is also supported by Cottrell (2016) who states both the technical functions of packaging (contain, measure, dispense, store) and also the marketing function of packaging (promote, communicate, sell, motivate, inform).

Cottrell (2016) highlights the fact that product and packaging are intertwined as brands should incorporate great marketing efforts into their packaging in order to succeed. Indeed, since the package influences purchase decision, it is crucial for it to appeal to consumer as product quality itself might be overlooked if the packaging is not adequate. The author also mentions the fact that marketing through packaging elements is crucial for product's success which is illustrated in figure 10 (based on the studies of Soroka, 2002).

**Figure 10: Correlation between increased package effectiveness and a successful marketing**



Source: Soroka, 2002

### *1.3.2.1 Role of packaging in differentiation and positioning*

According to Reimann et al. (2010) individuals are strongly influenced by a product's appearance that creates positive emotions and has a stronger effect than the product's direct utility. In addition, in a market saturated by products meeting consumers' basic needs, packaging and esthetic are notable differentiators that influence consumers' choice. Indeed, esthetic packaging design has been linked to the willingness to pay a higher price to own the object, a desire to choose and buy the product, as well as an increase in care for the good. Products with good packaging design are also more likely to be cherished beyond their sole functional purpose and after the latter has served its role. Reimann et al. (2010) discuss the importance of differentiation in consumer choice and distinguish between

affective and cognitive product, the first one focusing on hedonic value, pleasure and emotions. This leads to the idea that esthetic product packaging is a strong element related to hedonist value that constitutes a strong emotional differentiator.

According to Rundh (2016), an attractive packaging is of great help when a consumer is undecided as it can stand as a competitive advantage that differentiates a brand from another. Indeed, by discovering the winning combination between packaging elements, a company can communicate a certain message to the potential buyer, attract his/her attention and eventually create a profound desire for the product that will lead to its sale. Ampuero and Vila (2006) state that the outcome of a positioning strategy gains its importance when a product is seen paralleled to its competitors. The characteristic of packaging as being a permanent and tangible asset of a brand and its presence at the moment of decision making makes it the ultimate efficient mean to transmit the desired positioning.

According to Ampuero and Vila (2006), success of a brand or a product is closely related to the positioning strategy adopted. For that, marketers should juggle strategically the marketing mix elements which are product, price, place and promotion in the best way possible to establish the desired position in consumers' mind. In addition, with the increased clutter on the shelves, the trend toward self-servicing and the increased need to communicate with the buyers until the moment of purchase, product packaging can be considered as a crucial element for the positioning of a brand. Moreover, packaging goes beyond its role in the retail setting to enter consumers' houses and be part of their daily life. As a result, this permits a brand to transfer its positioning in a form of live experience

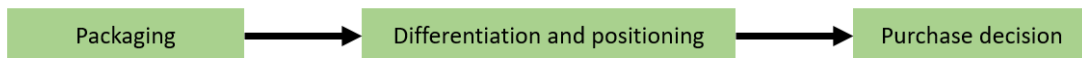


by becoming an intimate fragment of the buyer's life and communicating brand messages at the heart of the consumer's house (Ampuero & Vila, 2006).

Mohebbi (2014) stresses on the fact that packaging, branding and brand equity go hand in hand as they lead to a strong position of a certain product and attract consumers' attention. They will create brand preferences which will lead to purchase choice. Also, packaging plays a crucial role in decision making as it is present at the exact moment of choice and projects perceptions that lead to marketing success. A well designed packaging will accompany the consumer into his everyday life and emits a pleasing experience that leads to customer satisfaction which creates competitive advantage that enhances sales.

Based on the above mentioned authors' work the relationship between packaging, differentiation and positioning and purchase choice is summarized in figure 11.

**Figure 11: Relationship between packaging, differentiation and positioning and purchase choice**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

*1.3.2.2 Role of packaging in product perception*

According to Al-Samarraie et al. (2019), packaging modifies the way consumers perceive a product, which in return affects the buying choice. Indeed, he also confirms that effective packaging attracts significantly the shopper's attention toward a certain brand or product. Also, Al-Samarraie et al. (2019) research denotes that packaging does not only influence retail purchase, but also has a great effect on purchase decision for online shopping.

Mohebbi (2014) states that packaging is intertwined with marketing communication and branding as it conveys content information, promotional information as well as direct communication with the consumer. Mohebbi (2014) mentions that elements of packaging are an essential marketing tool to grab customer attention and touch their feelings, thoughts and behaviors. Indeed, visual cues have great effect on customers' perception of the product which affect their purchase decision.

In addition, packages should be designed with the anticipation of the feelings and opinions they will generate in consumers' mind which means that they are intended to affect consumers' perception and consequently trigger a certain behavior. Once done, potential buyers will translate those perceptions into attitude and evaluations which in return will determine the purchase choice and favors a particular product over its competitors on the shelves (Rundh, 2016). Packaging is therefore an important marketing tool.

Cottrell (2016) stresses on the fact that, in order for a product to be purchased, it has to be noticed on the shelves. Indeed, packaging plays an important role in attracting consumers' attention through various processes. One way to attract an individual toward a certain product is affective packaging design that provides not only functional benefits but also moves the shopper's emotions. In addition, Cottrell (2016) discusses how the mix of colors, typography and graphics have an effect on consumer's attitudes and behavior toward a product.

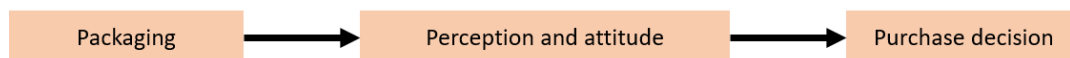
A number of researchers such as Rundh (2016) confirm the influence of packaging and packaging elements on consumers buying choices. It is stated that packaging plays a role in brand identification, product evaluation as well as the individual attitude toward the brand and the product itself. Mohebbi (2014) also highlights the idea that a poorly designed

package will affect negatively consumers' attitude and consequently drives them away from buying the product. On another hand, Ampuero and Vila (2006) as well as Salem (2018) agree on the fact that product packaging can trigger similar perceptions in consumers' mind. This means that packaging strategies are translated to harmonious meaning understood almost the same way by a majority of people.

To get deeper in details, neuromarketing researches done by Boldbaatar (2018), show that sudden buying decisions based on feelings, mood and emotions are regulated in the limbic system whereas well thought decisions are processed in the brain cortex. Therefore, packaging attributes such as colors mainly operate on the limbic system by triggering signals to our brain that would consequently lead to a favorable perception according to customers' expectations, which results in the buying choice (Theerathamakorn et al., 2018).

Based on the above mentioned authors work the relationship between packaging, perception and attitude and purchase choice is summarized in figure 12.

**Figure 12: Relationship between packaging, perception and attitude and purchase choice**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

### *1.3.2.3 Role of packaging in product value*

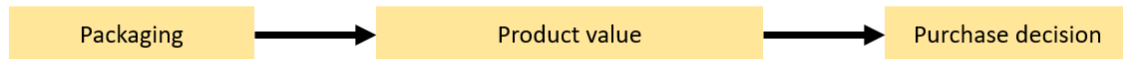
Rundh (2016), argues that packaging provides value to consumers by having a competitive advantage offering a low cost option or a superior brand position. Throughout this thesis

the concept of value will refer to value by differentiation which is achieved when a company is able to offer a packaging that is seen as unique in comparison to its competitors. This will increase brand loyalty and lower customers price sensitivity toward a certain perfume. Silva (2014) argues that perfume packaging does not only serve as a protective layer, but also as a communicator about the attributes of the said perfumes. As a result, the perfume and its packaging are closely intertwined. Indeed, packaging can give the fragrance an added value and affirms the previously stated theories of being a differentiator, a provider of value, and therefore influences the purchase decision. According to Butkevicieno et al (2008), being an integral part of the product and brand communication and differentiation, packaging transfers cues to the customer at the point of sale and is therefore an undeniable factor determining product choice. The authors also stress on the shift of marketing efforts and budget from traditional advertising methods toward an increased focus on promotion through packaging and the creation of value. Mundel et al. (2018), also asserts the fact that packaging elements are crucial attention grabbers at the moment of purchase as they eventually play a role in decision making by influencing quality judgment.

According to Ahmed et al. (2014), a good having a superior packaging sells itself as the packaging of products can have great influence on consumers' perception, brand image and brand value. Indeed, packaging stands as a strategic tool that drags customer choice toward a particular product while overlooking less attractive goods. Packaging is therefore an undeniable promotional asset that accompanies the individual at the moment of purchase and is the last touchpoint between a brand and its market as 60 to 70 % of buying choice are made in store (Salem,2018).

Based on the above mentioned authors work the relationship between packaging, product value and purchase choice is summarized in figure 13.

**Figure 13: Relationship between packaging, perception and attitude and purchase choice**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

## Section 4: Perfume

### **1.4.1 History and definition**

By definition, perfume refers to a liquid emitting pleasant scent, used for a variety of reasons among which aesthetics (Soanes, 2020). Foti (2015) considers perfume as an affordable luxury that embodies individuals' emotions, reflects dreams and expresses ambitions. Silva (2014) relates perfume as being a sign, which means that the perfume product holds a certain meaning or idea to someone as the perfume aims to represent a given concept.

The first popular known historic trace of perfume goes back to the ancient Egyptians as fragrances were used during the process of mummification and also were adopted by the wealthy such as Cleopatra who used perfume as a symbol of seduction and luxury. Throughout the years, civilizations used perfumes for religious purposes with roots in Christian and Islamic traditions as well as for its hygienic and social aspects (Reinarz, 2014). Aslo, Groom (1992) details how Arabs played a notable role in perfumes' making

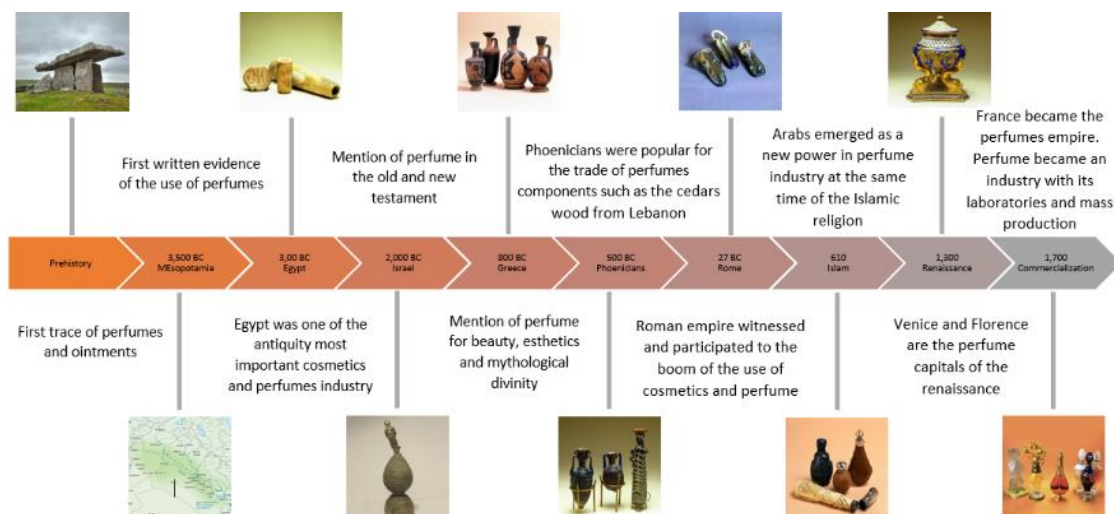
and development since ancient ages. For instance, wealthy Arabs used fragrances for seduction. Also, they were the main exporters of perfume ingredients to Europe providing various components unknown to the rest of the world. In addition, the author mentions Lebanon as having sources of Cassie Ancienne and Cedars, both ingredients being used as a natural source for fragrances making.

Reinarz (2014) highlights the fact that the perfume bottle appearance and scent go hand in hand as the bottle is almost as important as the fragrance smell itself. Indeed, the author notes the significance of perfume visual packaging since the beginning of its uses for either religious or personal purposes as it had to capture the eye's attention as much as the nose's sensory element. The containers used for storing fragrances in ancient times were artistic and well thought of designs such as ornate vessels made of materials like glass, alabaster, blue marble, faience, bone or wood, which were widely used by Egyptians. With the modern perfume trade starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, new elements such as gold and silver made their entry into perfume packaging as the trend shifted toward more personalized bottles considered as work of art for the wealthiest. The 19<sup>th</sup> century brought with it attention catching packaging designed by professionals to add value and symbolism to the perfume scent itself as fragrances were being popularized for the big public and not only the rich. Notable names such as Guerlain and Coco Chanel made it their mission to keep esthetic packaging designs in order to keep the luxury feel although it was heading toward mass market. Despite the different economic crises and wars, the perfume industry kept on growing, generating more and more sales and expanding while creating more designer bottles and scents to appeal to all tastes. With the rise of consumer capitalism during the end of the twentieth century, the use of perfume began to boom with a society

shifting its habits toward enjoyment consumption (Reinarz, 2014). The perfume began therefore to represent the personality of the person wearing it, carrying with it various meanings and values (Silva, 2014). Perfume composition also shifted from natural raw material such as flowers and oils found in wildlife to more chemical and synthetic components heavily used during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, however, natural and chemical elements are incorporated to get the perfect blend (Reinarz, 2014).

The timeline in figure 14 gives a summarized overview of the history of perfume adapted from the museum del perfume in Spain.

**Figure 14 : History of perfume**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021 (adapted from Museu Del Parfum, 2020)

According to Silva (2014), perfume can be classified in line with the below categories:

- Parfum: 15%-35% of extract
- Eau de parfum: 10%-18% extract
- Eau de toilette: 5%-10% of extract

- Eau de cologne: 3%-5% of extract
- Splash or deo cologne: up to 3% of extract

The first three categories will be considered throughout this paper.

#### **1.4.2 Current perfume market**

Mundel (2018), highlights the shift of consumers buying pattern toward hedonistic products. Indeed, he states that individuals are increasingly allocating income to be spent on hedonistic products for the pleasure and emotion they produce when consumed.

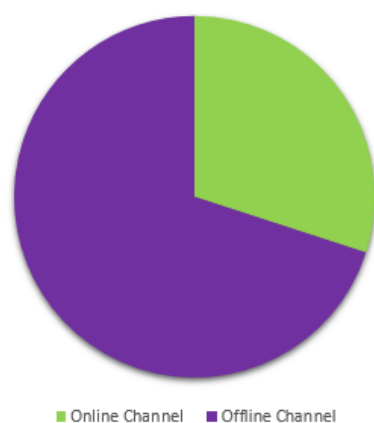
The global perfume market is expected to grow in terms of both revenue and demand and it is forecasted to attain USD 64.6 billion at a CAGR of 6.00% by 2023 in terms of value (Wiseguy research consultants, 2018). This progression is mainly caused by an increase in consumers' budget dedicated to personal care/beauty and luxury products, a rise in perfume usage noticed among the younger generation's consumers as well as the widespread use of online retail markets in addition to the traditional brick and mortar facilities. Moreover, it is important to note that attractive packaging was stated as a factor encouraging the booming of perfume sales in the following years.

With the rise of the Covid 19 pandemic around the globe, the beauty and personal care industry got its share of losses and faced a decline in sales. However, this industry was not affected as much as others by the recent events since consumers shifted their spending toward safer and more reliable products. Premium perfumes, which accounted for the majority of the industry's share in 2018, are expected to stay on top as the preference for high quality product coupled with an increase in environmental concern is emerging.



Concerning the distribution channels, the offline channels for perfume purchases constituted 70% of global perfume market share whereas the online channels accounted for around 30% (Grand View Research, 2019).

**Figure 15: Global perfume market share by distribution channel, 2018**



Source: Adapted from Grand View Research, 2019

Concerning the Lebanese market, and according to the Brandpuls survey done in 2019 in Lebanon, we can note that perfume users are equally distributed between males and females, and the age group 20-24 contains the heaviest users of perfume. On another hand, table 4 lists the top 15 brands of perfume chosen by Lebanese consumers according to gender. Lacoste is the number one chosen brand of perfume for male users with 25.54% of male choosing it, whereas Channel tops the chart for female buyers with 44.19%.

**Table 3: Frequency of perfume consumption in Lebanon by age**

How often do you buy perfumes?	Once a month or more	Once every 1-2 months	Once every 3-6 months	Once per year/12 months	Never
15 - 19	17.22	12.63	7.93	9.43	11.37
20 - 24	18.99	10.71	11.24	9.21	11.43
25 - 29	12.11	11.21	11.79	6.69	10.09
30 - 34	8.35	8.20	9.22	7.51	6.71
35 - 39	6.71	11.48	7.81	6.43	1.35
40 - 44	7.07	9.95	9.42	9.75	4.70
45 - 49	7.79	8.45	6.69	8.06	8.04
50 - 54	7.06	9.20	6.33	7.52	10.05
55 years or more	14.70	18.17	29.56	35.40	36.28

Source: BrandPuls, 2019

**Table 4: Top 15 perfume brands in Lebanon by gender**

Between which PERFUMES brands do you choose?	MEN		WOMEN	
1	LACOSTE	25.54	CHANEL	44.19
2	HUGO	22.67	BURBERRY	24.49
3	CHANEL	20.51	CHRISTIAN DIOR	21.96
4	GIVENCHY	17.85	ESCADA	18.64
5	CALVIN KLEIN	17.02	DOLCE & GABBANA	18.54
6	ADIDAS	16.31	NINA RICCI	16.40
7	GIORGIO ARMANI	16.00	GIVENCHY	15.32
8	DOLCE & GABBANA	15.49	CAROLINA HERRERA	12.49
9	BOSS	14.57	LACOSTE	10.83
10	BURBERRY	13.84	LANCOME	10.25
11	CHRISTIAN DIOR	12.42	GIORGIO ARMANI	9.38
12	PACCO RABANNE	12.11	KENZO	9.37
13	AZZARO	10.57	YVES SAINT LAURENT	8.49
14	DAVIDOFF	9.54	CALVIN KLEIN	8.29
15	KENZO	7.90	GUCCI	7.62

Source: BrandPuls, 2019

### **1.4.3 Online market**

Online shops are expected to gain more and more market share over the upcoming years, a phenomenon leading perfume manufacturers to focus on digital platforms and invest in ecommerce in order to stay aligned with shoppers' ever changing behavior. Online retail penetration is increasing and is expected to see an additional boost during the following year for many products including perfume (M2 Presswire, 2018). Bovell (2018), stresses on the fact that luxury goods' sales, among which the sales of perfumes, are expected to grow online. This shows the importance for marketers to know how to attract customers and differentiate their product online. Mohebbi (2014) highlights the fact that ecommerce has led to a decline of the human salesperson's role in boosting sale and shifted the light on the importance of packaging in promoting sales.

Also, Al-Samarraie et al. (2019) states that packaging elements have a role in online purchase decision as they direct customer attention toward a product and define its perception and brand image. Moreover, according to Mahdavi et al. (2019) online perfume shoppers seek the help of non-olfactory cues in order to minimize the risk of buying an experience product online. Therefore, nowadays, packaging plays an undeniable role in perfume choice especially when buying over the web.

According to the Brandpuls survey done in 2019 in Lebanon, 7.73% of perfume users use the web for online shopping. Moreover, with the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic and the decrease of face to face interaction as well as the closure of shopping malls and the risk of contamination, online shopping is expected to witness a rise as shoppers focus on safer ways to effectuate their purchases.

## Section 5: Research question and conceptual model

To sum up, needs, wants and value creation are at the core of business exchanges and understanding marketing concepts is essential for commercial success. The combination of the marketing mix including product, place, price and promotion, as well as branding work are able to draw customers toward a certain product, create value and ameliorate brand equity.

Understanding consumer behavior, which relates to the value seeking activities undergone by an individual in order to fulfill his/her need, is essential for the success of any marketing strategy. A number of researchers highlighted the fact that differentiation, positioning, brand personality and emotions have an effect on consumer perception toward products or brands, which is an internal factor influencing consumer behaviors. Also, consumer attitude, which is intertwined with the concept of value modifies consumer behavior.

The buying decision process is a core element of consumer behavior. It consists of five elements leading to the choice of a product and its purchase or not. The stimulus response model is used to explain how factors called stimulus (marketing mix and environmental factors) enter the consumer's mind referred to as the black box (containing the consumer characteristics and the decision making process evaluation) and leads to a response which is the choice of a product and its purchase or not.

Being in its basic essence a protective shield for the product, packaging is an undeniable component of the marketing mix that has become an essential part of a product's positioning strategy. Indeed, through its visual and verbal elements such as color, shape and size, picture and graphics, information and language as well as benefit, packaging is

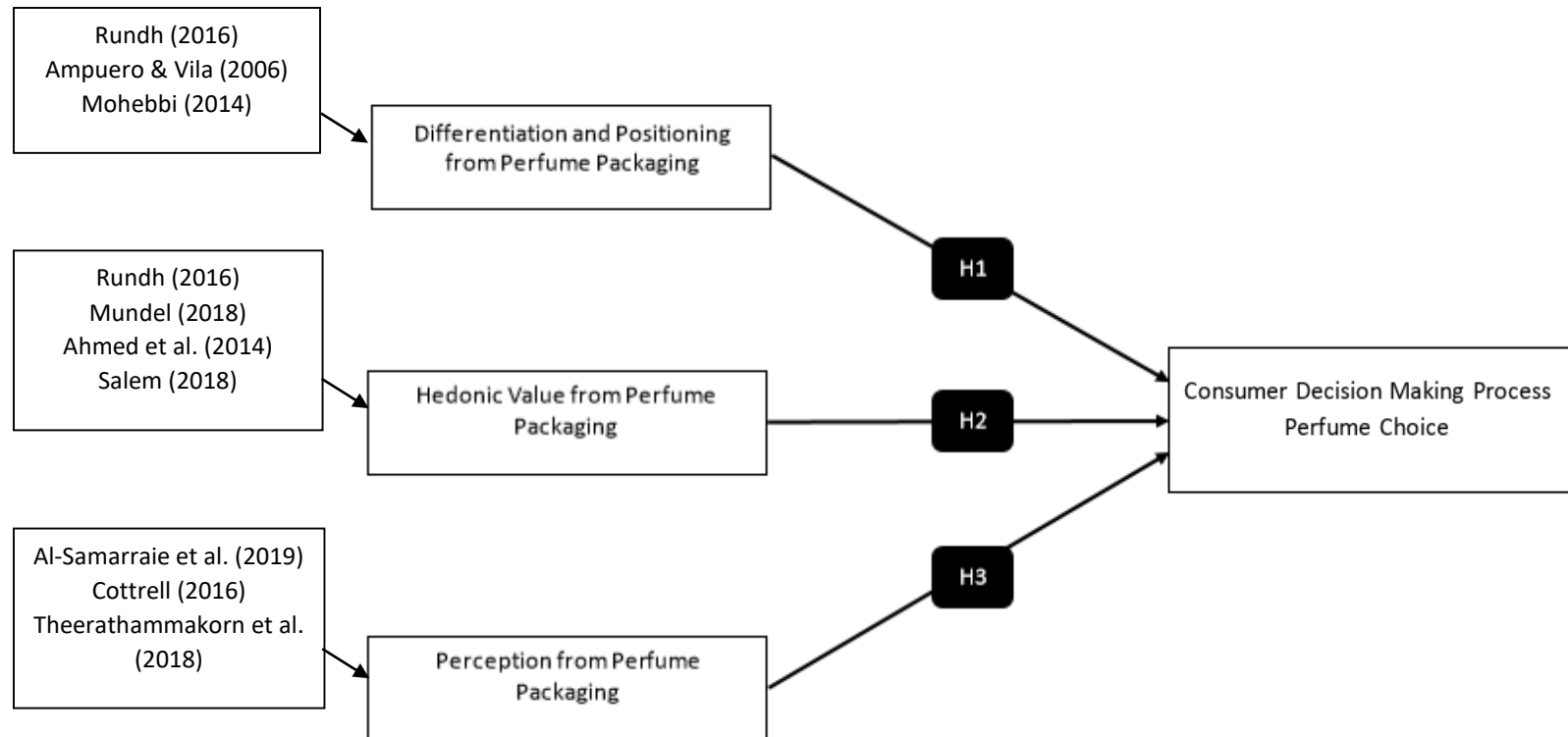
considered as a strategic marketing tool that influences consumers' buying decision. The latter is a result of packaging having an effect on numerous factors among which brand value, product evaluation, differentiation and consumer perceptions and attitudes.

In today's market, the perfume industry is growing and expected to develop even more in the following years as both retail and online sales are expected to increase. This movement is due to change in society's lifestyle and the fact that perfume has and will have an important part in our daily life. The consumption of perfume is mainly related to hedonic value as, in addition to emitting a nice smell, putting on perfume is an experience in itself that creates long lasting enjoyment and happiness. We can say that it relates to both belongingness needs and esteem needs. Therefore, it is necessary for marketers to establish a well-rounded strategy in order to gain success and surf the wave of a growing industry. Researchers have stated that perfume and its packaging are intertwined as the elements of packaging seem to have an effect on perfume perception and choice. It is also important to note that expenditures dedicated to creative perfume packaging design have led to more profit than advertising expenditures on media.

As a result of the above summary and conclusion, the research question that will guide this thesis is:

What is the effect of perfume packaging on Lebanese consumers' buying behavior determinants and purchase choice?

Consequently, the research model proposed is illustrated in figure 16.

**Figure 16: Theoretical framework**

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

## **Chapter 2: Methodology**

Secondary data refer to the data that was already collected for the aim of other studies and therefore that exist already independently of this thesis (Hair et al., 2008). External secondary data was collected from reliable online sources including previous peer reviewed published researches and articles obtained through the NDU library portal. In addition, offline sources included marketing textbooks as well as data obtained from IPSOS software such as Statex and Brandpuls. Secondary data related to the concepts of marketing, consumer behaviors, perception, value, buying process, differentiation as well as ideas of packaging and perfume were gathered and detailed in chapter one related to literature review. Chapter one overviewed the existing researches, theories and relationships governing the mentioned concepts. Indeed, the objective of this research is to uncover the effect of perfume packaging on consumer behavior in Lebanon.

Consequently, the research question governing this thesis was elaborated and the research model was illustrated in figure 16.

Following the literature review, chapter two will include details about the research design as it encompasses the procedures followed to answer the research question as well as the methods used to test the research hypotheses. Indeed, the hypotheses as well as the dependent and independent variables are presented. Moreover, this chapter contains an overview of the research epistemology and research methodology which can follow an inductive or deductive reasoning. Also, the research methods will be detailed as researchers have the choice between an exploratory and qualitative approach or a descriptive and

quantitative approach. Finally, questionnaire design and data collection tools adopted will be discussed as well as the sampling and statistical package used.

## 2.1 Hypotheses and variables

### **2.1.1 Research hypotheses**

Following the above mentioned research model and in order to answer the suggested research questions, the hypotheses to be tested are:

H1: Differentiation and positioning from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice.

H2: Hedonic value from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice.

H3: Perception from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice.

It is important to note that the research model as well as the mentioned hypotheses are based on previous researches and studies done in the field and closely related to this thesis' subject and objective. All theories and findings from which the model and hypotheses are adapted are previously stated in chapter one.

### **2.1.2 Research variables**

According to Hair et al. (2008), an independent variable explains or predicts the outcome of another variable as it can be referred to as the cause. On another hand, a dependent variable is the variable researchers seek to explain since its outcome depends on the variation of the independent variable and can be referred to as the effect.



In order to answer the research questions, hypotheses will be based on three independent variables as the effect they have on consumer buying behavior of perfume will be studied:

- Differentiation and positioning from packaging
- Hedonic value from packaging
- Perception from packaging

Perfume packaging will encompass primary and secondary packaging. Colors, shape and size, pictures and graphics as well as information and language will all be considered as elements of the perfume packaging and grouped under the latter.

Consumer decision making process concerning the perfume choice will therefore be considered as the dependent variable for this research model.

Those variables were defined in chapter one containing the literature review. Each variable will have a dedicated set of questions to be answered in a survey in order to uncover the correlations between the independent and dependent variables. The survey method adopted will be detailed at the end of this chapter.

## 2.2 Research design

### **2.2.1 Philosophical and reasoning approach**

This research will be mainly focused on the positivist philosophical approach as we will assume that there are general patterns of cause and effect that can be used as a basis for predicting and controlling phenomenon. The positivist paradigm provides an objective reality against which researchers can compare their claims and ascertain truth. It involves hypothesis generation and testing. Moreover, Lancaster (2008) support the idea that a positivist research usually adopts a deductive approach. Also, Collins (2010), states that

quantifiable observations that generates statistical analysis are mainly used in accordance with positivism in addition. The researcher following a positivist approach will be independent of the study, which makes the research purely objective.

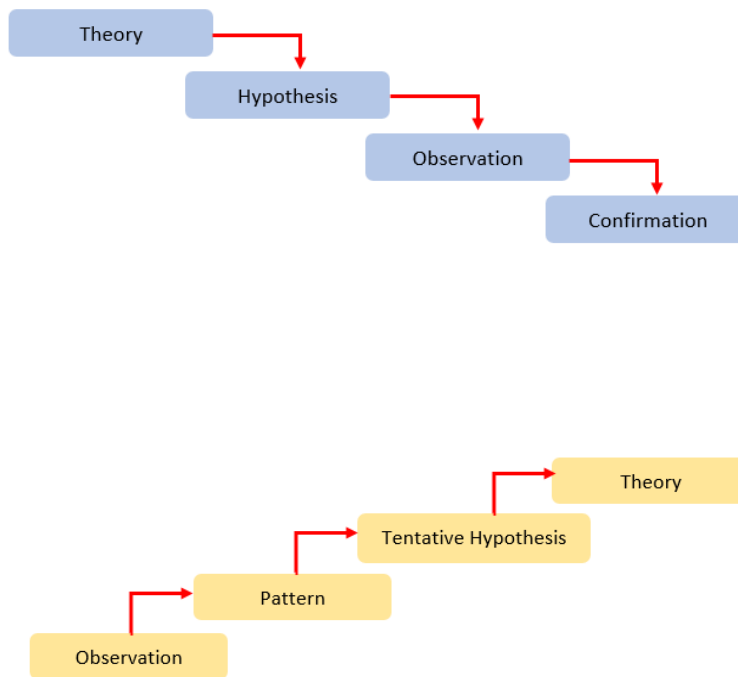
In order to answer the research question, we will focus on the deductive research approach, also known as the top-down approach. The latter consists of developing hypotheses based on existing theories and then developing a research strategy to test the hypotheses. The goal is to begin with an expected pattern and test it against observations. Table 5 and figure 18 present the difference between the deductive approach adopted for this thesis as opposed to the inductive approach.

**Table 5: Deductive versus inductive research methodology**

	<b>Deductive</b>	<b>Inductive</b>
<b>Aim</b>	Test an existing theory	Develop a theory
<b>Direction</b>	From generalization to specific observation	From specific observation to generalization
	Top - down approach	Bottom - up approach
<b>Use</b>	Start from an expected pattern and test it against observations.	When there is no to little Literature about the subject

Source: Adapted from Trochim, 2020

**Figure 17: Deductive versus inductive research methodology**



Source: Adapted from Trochim, 2020

### 2.2.2 Research method

Since the broad aim of this study is to describe and identify the effect of perfume packaging on consumer purchase decision, we will adopt a descriptive and quantitative research as opposed to an exploratory and qualitative approach. According to Hair et al. (2008), the descriptive approach is intertwined with quantitative data and is best used when three factors are met: first, the nature of the decision problem calls for an evaluation of marketing mix strategies or a description of particular characteristics of a current market condition. Second, the research questions emphasize the what, who, where, when and how, for a certain structure or target. Third, the research goal is to confirm the validity of correlations or identify significant relationships.

Indeed, since the goal is to identify meaningful relationships, descriptive research helps to better define an attitude or behavior held by individuals as its purpose is to describe, explain and validate research findings. For that, it uses numeric data to answer the research question and therefore focuses on a quantitative data collection method. Quantitative studies help to uncover relationships between numerically measured variables with the application of statistical techniques.

Therefore, the problem, questions and objective of this research meet the above mentioned criteria for descriptive approach. In addition, Salem (2018) used the descriptive and quantitative approach in his study on the effect of perfume packaging on Basque female consumers purchase decision.

On another hand, exploratory and qualitative research can be used to come up with new theories or gain in-depth insights about a problem. It focuses on the collection of non-numerical data considering a rather small sample size. Its objective is to understand concepts and give meanings on how people apprehend the world. In contrast, quantitative research method, which will be adopted for this study, focuses on the collection of numerical data. This type of research is used to uncover causal relationships between dependent and independent variables as well as to find patterns and generalize results to larger population. Characteristics identifying qualitative and quantitative research methods are presented in table 6.

**Table 6: Characteristics of qualitative and quantitative methods**

	<b>Qualitative</b>	<b>Quantitative</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Discovery of new relationships and ideas	Validation of relationships
<b>Type of research</b>	Exploratory	Descriptive and causal
<b>Type of questions</b>	Mostly open ended	Mostly structured with the use of scale
<b>Representativeness</b>	Small sample	Large sample, can represent population
<b>Generalizability</b>	Limited	Very good
<b>Data</b>	Mainly words	Mainly numbers
<b>Analysis</b>	Interpretation	Statistical

Source: Adapted from Hair et al., 2008

### **2.2.3 Survey method and questionnaire design**

In order to best answer the research question, the survey method was adopted to obtain our primary data. For that, a questionnaire was created and distributed online for self-administration. The survey method was chosen as it can accommodate large sample size with ease of distribution and low to null cost. In addition, data collection is made practical through Google Forms format and therefore can facilitate advance statistical analysis. The questionnaire can also be easily administered and answers can be recorded for the structured questions. Moreover, surveys give the ability to uncover detailed differences and study a variety of factors such as demographics, attitudes, preferences and behaviors (Hair et al., 2008). It is also important to note that with the numerous lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and road blocking following riots and the unstable political situation in Lebanon, online survey distribution is the most adequate data collection method since it

provides the possibility to reach the needed number of people without the necessity to be physically present with them.

The questionnaire containing 14 questions spread over three main parts was elaborated then reviewed by people specialized in the business and marketing field. A pilot test was also distributed to a sample audience in order to make sure that all vocabulary used was easily understood. The questionnaire was designed in a way to cover all concepts needed to analyze the hypotheses and answer the research questions. Questions were inspired and adapted from previous researches and studies done in the field and mentioned in the literature review. Questionnaire design focused on avoiding biases and errors such as leading or double barreled questions as well as minimizing ambiguity and abstraction. Therefore, content, and construct validity were taken into consideration and checked. Moreover, internal reliability was measured by the Cronbach alpha test detailed in the next chapter. The questionnaire included a concise introduction about the study's subject directed to the respondents and presenting the importance of their participation for achieving research objectives. It also stated the needed time of completion, in addition to a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality and a thank you message.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections. The first one, section A, contains six questions related to consumers' buying behavior of fragrances in Lebanon. The first question is a filtering question, if the respondent answer is that he/she never buys perfume, he/she will be excluded from the study. Section B uses a five point Likert scale (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree) and comprises four main questions related to the effect of packaging on perfume choice. Each question focuses on a different variable to be studied: the decision making process,

differentiation and positioning from packaging, hedonic value from packaging and perception from packaging. Finally, section C contains demographics questions related to gender, age, marital status and occupation of the respondents. Table 7 details the structure of the questionnaire and its relation with the hypotheses and variables.

**Table 7: Questionnaire structure**

Section	Question Number	Type of Scale	Question	Research Variable Tackled
Section A: Consumer buying behavior of fragrances in Lebanon	I	Ordinal	How often do you buy perfumes?	
	II	Nominal	What does perfume represent in your opinion?	
	III	Nominal	What factors do you consider for your choice of perfume other than its smell?	
	IV	Dichotomous	Do you buy perfume online?	
	V	Ordinal	How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance in a retail store?	
	VI	Ordinal	How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance online?	
Section B: Effect of packaging on perfume choice	VII	Likert	Influence of perfume packaging on the decision making process	Consumer decision making process concerning the perfume choice (Dependent variable)
	VIII	Likert	Influence of perfume packaging on differentiation and positioning	Differentiation and positioning from packaging (Independent variable)
	IX	Likert	Influence of perfume packaging on product hedonic value	Hedonic value from packaging (Independent variable)
	X	Likert	Influence of perfume packaging on perception	Perception from packaging (Independent variable)
Section C: Demographics	XI	Nominal	Gender	
	XII	Ordinal	Age	
	XIII	Nominal	Marital Status	
	XIV	Nominal	Occupational status	

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021



## 2.3 Sampling and statistical package

### **2.3.1 Population description and sampling technique**

According to Brandpuls (2019), total Lebanese population is constituted of 3,161,995 individuals with 2,853,000 individuals being 19 and older (Ipsos, 2019). In addition, 88% of Lebanese older than 19 years bought perfume at least once.

To collect the sample needed, the probability sampling was adopted with a simple random sample. External validity is maximized by trying to minimize place and people bias. However, time bias could have an unknown effect due to the fact that the study is conducted during the covid-19 pandemic and throughout a critical political and economic situation.

The ideal sample to be obtained is 385 responses calculated at the confidence level of 95% and consequently having 5% of margin of error (Salem, 2018). This number was obtained following the below formula (where N= population size, e= Margin). of error, z= z-score)

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left( \frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N} \right)}$$

### **2.3.2 Statistical package**

The questionnaire created was designed on Google Forms and distributed through a link on social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and WhatsApp.

The data obtained was coded and analyzed on SPSS statistical software version 26.0. This platform was chosen for the robust set of features it delivers as it permits efficient data conditioning and provides quick and reliable analysis for the needed data. It is also important to note that SPSS is a comprehensive platform with high data security protocol.

First, the demographics of the sample and consumer buying behavior of perfumes are presented. The latter covers part I and III of the questionnaire and gives detailed insights about the respondents and their consumption habits concerning perfumes. In addition, factor analysis and regression were the statistical techniques adopted in order to analyze the data obtained by the questions in part II of the survey which included the Likert scale questions focused on the independent and dependent variables chosen.

## **Chapter 3: Results and Analysis**

After detailing current theories and definitions related to consumer behavior and perfume packaging and following the description of the methodology followed for hypotheses testing, chapter 3 presents the results and analysis of the primary data collected by the questionnaire. First, information about sample demographics are described followed by the examination of general consumer buying behavior of fragrance in Lebanon. After that, the effect of packaging on perfume choice is presented by statically analyzing the results obtained. Finally, a discussion of the hypotheses and conceptual model is presented.

### **3.1 Sample demographics**

After sharing the questionnaire link during 10 days on various social media platforms, a total of 307 answers were collected.

Section C of the questionnaire focused on demographics characteristics of the sample. Survey respondents were split between 64.5% females and 35.5% males. On another hand, the biggest portion of respondents were aged between 25 and 34 years old with 59% total respondents, whereas people aged 45 years and older constituted the smallest part with 6.2%. Individuals aged between 35 to 44 and 18 to 24 constituted respectively 12.7% and 22.1% of total answers. This result is mainly due to the fact that a younger crowd usually uses social media platforms and is prone to answer online surveys about luxury items. In addition, marital status percentages were distributed homogeneously with 44.3% of single, 23.5% of married and 30.9% being in a relationship. This indicates that the number of respondents having a significant other (54.4%) is almost equal to the number of respondents who are single (44.3%). Having a variety of marital status among the

respondents adds diversity to the answers obtained. Finally, the clear majority of individuals who participated in the survey are employed or self-employed, accounting for 79.5% of answers followed by 14% of students and 4.9% of unemployed individuals. This occupational status distribution reflects the fact that most people surveyed, possess their own disposable income to use as they wish on items such a perfumes. Table 8 summarizes the demographics data related to the questionnaire respondents.

**Table 8: Sample demographics**

<b>Demographic Criteria</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Gender	Female	198	64.5
	Male	109	35.5
	<b>Total</b>	307	100
Age	18 - 24	68	22.1
	25 - 34	181	59
	35 - 44	39	12.7
	45+	19	6.2
	<b>Total</b>	307	100
Marital Status	Single	136	44.3
	In a relationship	95	30.9
	Married	72	23.5
	Other	4	1.3
	<b>Total</b>	307	100
Occupation	Employed/ Self-employed	244	79.5
	Unemployed	15	4.9
	Student	43	14
	Other	5	1.6
	<b>Total</b>	307	100

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

### 3.2 Consumer buying behavior of fragrances in Lebanon

Section A of the questionnaire consisted of queries aiming at uncovering Lebanese consumers' buying behavior related to perfume purchase. Indeed, the results obtained in

table 9 show that almost half of the respondents (46.9%) buy perfume every 3 to 6 months which makes perfume a frequent purchase.

**Table 9: How often do you buy perfumes?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Once per year	116	37.8	37.8	37.8
Once every 3-6 months	144	46.9	46.9	84.7
Once every 1-2 months	39	12.7	12.7	97.4
Once a month or more	8	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

Moreover, with drastic lifestyle changes happening nowadays following the Covid-19 pandemic as well as various roadblocks in Lebanon it is essential to have a look on the place individuals buy perfume from. Following the survey's result in table 10, we can notice that 24.4% of respondents buy perfume online which is a significant number that is also expected to grow in the upcoming years. 75.6% of the sample still prefers the traditional brick and mortar channel to buy perfume which can be related to different factors that are out of the scope of this research.

**Table 10: Online buying channels**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	75	24.4	24.4	24.4
No	232	75.6	75.6	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

The importance of perfume packaging was also tackled for both online and retail purchases through questions 5 and 6 of the questionnaire. Concerning traditional brick and mortar shopping, 16.3% of the respondents consider perfume packaging to be very important when choosing to buy a perfume. The majority of answers varied between somewhat important with 33.1% of total answers and important with 40.1 % which indicates that perfume packaging has a significant importance to retail shoppers. On another hand, concerning online perfume shoppers, 18.9% consider perfume packaging to be very important when choosing a perfume. Also, the majority of answers ranged between important with 29% of answers and somewhat important having 22.5% of the share. What is interesting to note is that the percentage of individuals considering perfume packaging as being not important to their purchase is almost the same for online and retail buyers with respectively 8.1 % and 9.8% of respondents answering not important. 21.5% of the respondents judged perfume packaging importance as not applicable which does not match the results gotten in question 4 related to online perfume purchase that showed 75.6% of the sample not buying online. This could be due to the fact that

individuals browse perfume online but do not effectuate a purchase from the web. The latter presented statistics results are illustrated in table 11 and 12.

**Table 11 How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance in a retail store?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not applicable	2	.7	.7	.7
Not important	30	9.8	9.8	10.4
Somewhat important	102	33.2	33.2	43.6
Important	123	40.1	40.1	83.7
Very important	50	16.3	16.3	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

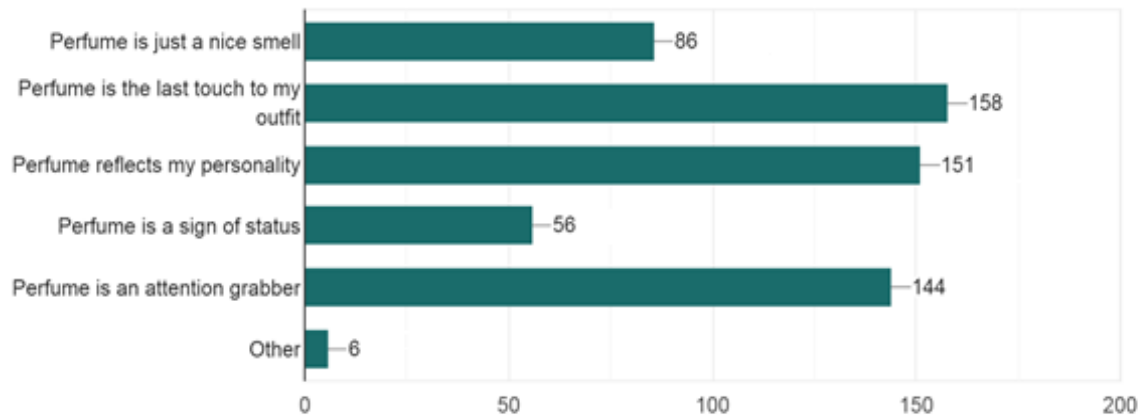
**Table 12 How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance in an online store?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not applicable	66	21.5	21.5	21.5
Not important	25	8.1	8.1	29.6
Somewhat important	69	22.5	22.5	52.1
Important	89	29.0	29.0	81.1
Very important	58	18.9	18.9	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

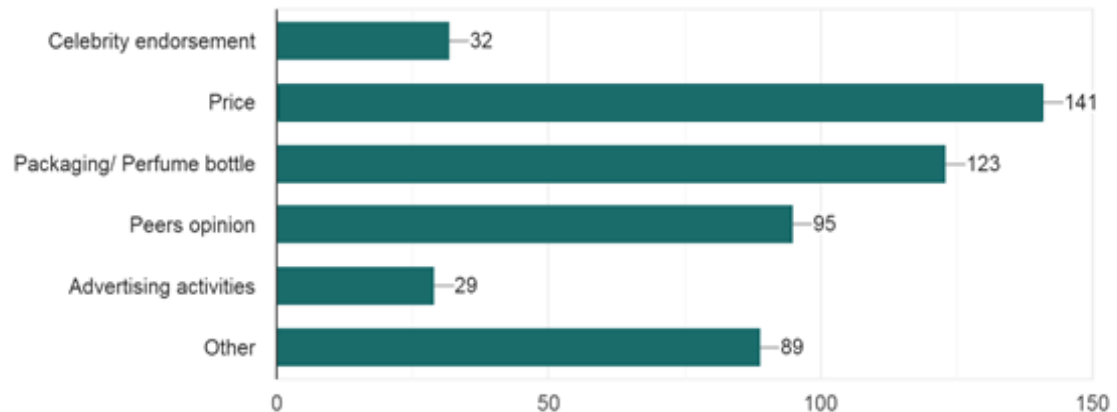
Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

The last two questions to be discussed concerning part A of the questionnaire focus on the factors, other than smell, that respondents consider when choosing to buy a perfume as well as what does perfume represents for them. Indeed, two multiple answers questions were dedicated to the latter and described sample sentiment insights about their purchase behavior of perfume. “Perfume is the last touch to my outfit” got the most answers (158 selections) from the respondents when asked about the representation of perfume. “Perfume reflects my personality” and “perfume is an attention grabber” come in second and third place respectively relating to the most chosen answers. The latter indicates that the sample studied allocates importance to the meaning of perfume and what it represents in addition to just considering it as a nice smell. On another hand when asked about the factors taken into consideration when buying a perfume other than its smell, price is the most chosen answer with 141 individuals considering it. Packaging and perfume bottle is the second most chosen with 123 individuals, followed by “peers’ opinion”. It is also interesting to note that advertising campaigns are the least chosen factor with 29 selections. Figure 18 and 19 highlight the results obtained from the multiple answer questions.



**Figure 18: Perfume representation**

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Figure 19: Factors considered when buying perfume**

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

### 3.3 Effect of packaging on perfume choice

#### **3.3.1 Cronbach alpha reliably test**

Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient test was conducted on SPSS in order to test the reliability of the Likert scale used. Indeed, Cronbach alpha is referred to as being a coefficient of reliability that aims to show how narrowly related various items are as a group. Therefore, we ran a

reliability analysis on item questions 7 to 10 and obtained the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for each scale question group as well as the scale if item is deleted. Table 13, that represents the reliability statistics for each of the four items studied, shows all Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient being higher than 0.7. Indeed, the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient related to question VII is equal to 0.883, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  related to question VIII is equal to 0.9, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  related to question IX is equal to 0.891 and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  related to question X is equal to 0.894. This means that there's a high and excellent internal consistency in most scale items detailed in table 14 and all elements of the four questions analyzed are worthy of retention as their removal will lead to a decrease in alpha as detailed in table 15.

**Table 13: Reliability statistics**

Question	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
VII	0.883	0.884	7
VIII	0.900	0.900	6
IX	0.891	0.892	7
X	0.894	0.894	6

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 14: Inter-Item Correlation Matrix**

		VII-1	VII-2	VII-3	VII-4	VII-5	VII-6	VII-7
Question VII	VII-1. Packaging shifts my attention towards a certain perfume	1.000	0.630	0.665	0.428	0.498	0.488	0.559
	VII-2. Packaging helps me remember a perfume	0.630	1.000	0.628	0.326	0.282	0.362	0.525
	VII-3. Packaging encourages me to try the perfume	0.665	0.628	1.000	0.393	0.497	0.503	0.613
	VII-4 .I compare perfumes based on their packaging	0.428	0.326	0.393	1.000	0.632	0.519	0.435

	VII-5. I consider packaging among the reasons that pushes me to choose a perfume over another	0.498	0.282	0.497	0.632	1.000	0.738	0.578
	VII-6. Perfume packaging affects my purchase decision	0.488	0.362	0.503	0.519	0.738	1.000	0.628
	VII-7. Good packaging enhances my post purchase experience as I enjoy using a perfume with great packaging	0.559	0.525	0.613	0.435	0.578	0.628	1.000
Question VIII		<b>VIII-8</b>	<b>VIII-9</b>	<b>VIII-10</b>	<b>VIII-11</b>	<b>VIII-12</b>	<b>VIII-13</b>	
	VIII-8. Perfume packaging helps me identify and recognize a brand	1.000	0.751	0.466	0.657	0.707	0.532	
	VIII-9. Attractive perfume packaging draws my attention to the product among its competitors	0.751	1.000	0.480	0.628	0.655	0.560	
	VIII-10. I find a perfume unique based on its packaging	0.466	0.480	1.000	0.654	0.511	0.570	
	VIII-11. Good packaging makes the perfume product stand out	0.657	0.628	0.654	1.000	0.728	0.578	
	VIII-12. Perfume packaging elements convey a clear brand image	0.707	0.655	0.511	0.728	1.000	0.539	
	VIII-13. I can match the packaging to a perfume personality and smell	0.532	0.560	0.570	0.578	0.539	1.000	
Question IX		<b>IX-14</b>	<b>IX-15</b>	<b>IX-16</b>	<b>IX-17</b>	<b>IX-18</b>	<b>IX-19</b>	<b>IX-20</b>
	IX-14. Appealing packaging leads to positive feelings toward the perfume	1.000	0.412	0.662	0.405	0.640	0.315	0.559
	IX-15. I like or dislike a perfume based on its packaging	0.412	1.000	0.509	0.687	0.505	0.575	0.552
	IX-16. Good packaging enhances my experience and satisfaction with the perfume	0.662	0.509	1.000	0.491	0.674	0.460	0.559
	IX-17. I choose the perfume that reflects my personality through its packaging	0.405	0.687	0.491	1.000	0.531	0.691	0.525
	IX-18. Appealing packaging implicates	0.640	0.505	0.674	0.531	1.000	0.488	0.641

	pleasure for product use							
	IX-19. I am ready to pay a higher price for a perfume which packaging I like	0.315	0.575	0.460	0.691	0.488	1.000	0.498
	IX-20. Quality packaging reflects a better perfume	0.559	0.552	0.559	0.525	0.641	0.498	1.000
Question X		<b>X-21</b>	<b>X-22</b>	<b>X-23</b>	<b>X-24</b>	<b>X-25</b>	<b>X-26</b>	
	X-21. Packaging influences how I perceive the quality of a perfume	1.000	0.579	0.664	0.668	0.598	0.560	
	X-22. Packaging influences how I perceive the smell of a perfume	0.579	1.000	0.538	0.457	0.425	0.572	
	X-23. Packaging elements stimulate my feelings toward a product	0.664	0.538	1.000	0.636	0.616	0.623	
	X-24. I notice clearly the differences between packaging options when looking at perfumes	0.668	0.457	0.636	1.000	0.655	0.618	
	X-25. I remember a perfume based on its packaging	0.598	0.425	0.616	0.655	1.000	0.555	
	X-26. I create a positive or negative image about a perfume based on its packaging	0.560	0.572	0.623	0.618	0.555	1.000	

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 15: Item-Total Statistics**

		Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Question VII	VII-1. Packaging shifts my attention towards a certain perfume	19.221	23.428	0.710	0.564	0.861
	VII-2. Packaging helps me remember a perfume	18.945	23.954	0.582	0.519	0.878
	VII-3. Packaging encourages me to try the perfume	19.029	23.408	0.718	0.580	0.860
	VII-4. I compare perfumes based on their packaging	19.964	24.662	0.577	0.427	0.878

	VII-5. I consider packaging among the reasons that pushes me to choose a perfume over another	19.857	23.345	0.693	0.664	0.863
	VII-6. Perfume packaging affects my purchase decision	19.710	23.494	0.700	0.610	0.863
	VII-7. Good packaging enhances my post purchase experience as I enjoy using a perfume with great packaging	19.339	22.728	0.726	0.552	0.859
Question VIII	VIII-8. Perfume packaging helps me identify and recognize a brand	17.664	18.315	0.758	0.657	0.877
	VIII-9. Attractive perfume packaging draws my attention to the product among its competitors	17.756	18.466	0.748	0.622	0.879
	VIII-10. I find a perfume unique based on its packaging	18.225	19.292	0.638	0.484	0.895
	VIII-11. Good packaging makes the perfume product stand out	17.860	18.369	0.797	0.666	0.872
	VIII-12. Perfume packaging elements convey a clear brand image	17.775	18.554	0.766	0.634	0.876
	VIII-13. I can match the packaging to a perfume personality and smell	18.130	18.852	0.665	0.457	0.892
Question IX	IX-14. Appealing packaging leads to positive feelings toward the perfume	17.681	25.930	0.625	0.534	0.883
	IX-15. I like or dislike a perfume based on its packaging	18.629	25.019	0.690	0.542	0.876
	IX-16. Good packaging enhances my experience and satisfaction with the perfume	18.026	24.470	0.709	0.578	0.873
	IX-17. I choose the perfume that reflects my personality through its packaging	18.502	24.231	0.712	0.618	0.873
	IX-18. Appealing packaging implicates pleasure for product use	18.026	24.150	0.743	0.604	0.869
	IX-19. I am ready to pay a higher price for a perfume which packaging I like	18.632	24.305	0.639	0.527	0.883
	IX-20. Quality packaging reflects a better perfume	18.029	23.826	0.707	0.522	0.873
Question X	X-21. Packaging influences how I perceive the quality of a perfume	16.450	17.765	0.758	0.597	0.868

X-22. Packaging influences how I perceive the smell of a perfume	16.857	19.071	0.616	0.436	0.890
X-23. Packaging elements stimulate my feelings toward a product	16.427	18.193	0.761	0.583	0.869
X-24. I notice clearly the differences between packaging options when looking at perfumes	16.319	17.754	0.749	0.598	0.870
X-25. I remember a perfume based on its packaging	16.098	18.075	0.695	0.518	0.878
X-26. I create a positive or negative image about a perfume based on its packaging	16.596	18.019	0.716	0.533	0.875

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

### 3.3.2 Factor analysis and regression

KMO and Bartlett Test was used to verify the suitability of factor analysis for the purpose of this research and is detailed in table 16. The KMO obtained was 0.953 which is above the acceptable level at sig.000. This highlights sample adequacy and makes the data suitable for reduction by factor analysis.

Factor Analysis was adopted as a method of data reduction to group together variables that describe a similar construct (Green & Salkind, 2016). Factors having an eigenvalue higher than one were considered and kept as an acceptable factor. The total variance explained table 17 demonstrates clearly that four factors can be retained. In addition, as shown by the scree plot graph in figure 19, the scree like curve starts to form after the 4<sup>th</sup> point which confirms the availability of four main factors. In addition, the first four factors account for 69.16% of total variance.

**Table 16: KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.953
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	6081.120
	df
	325
	Sig.
	.000

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 17: Total Variance Explained**

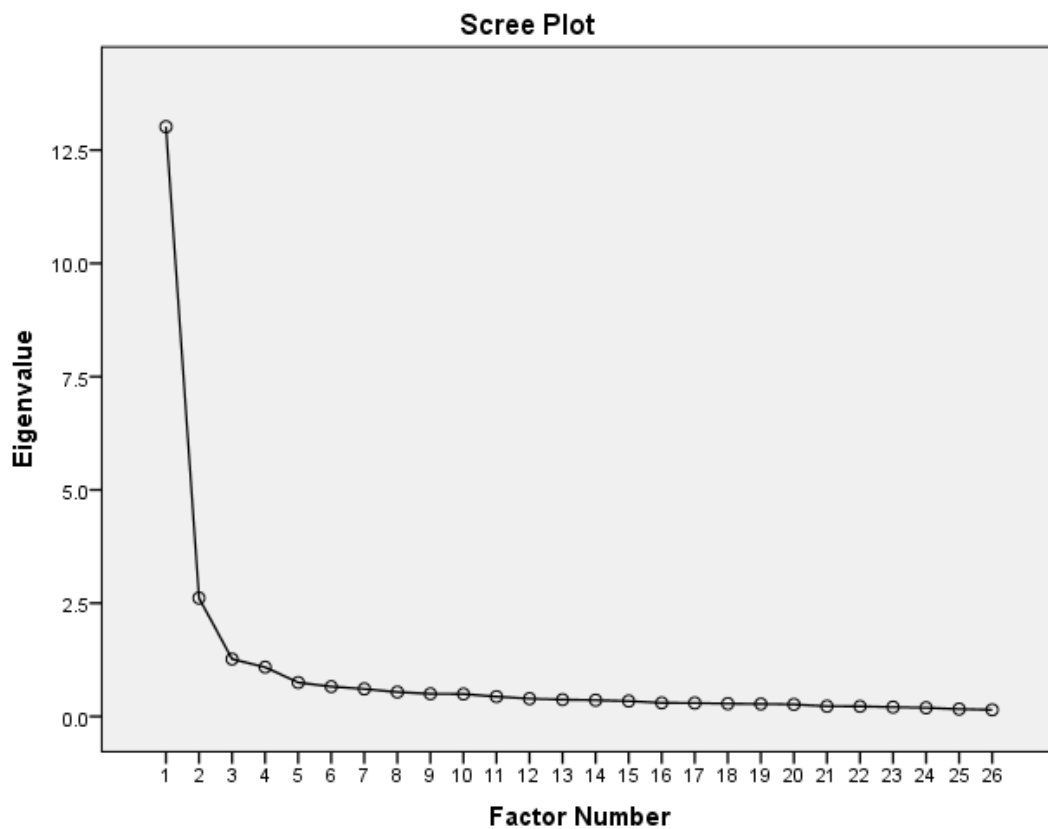
Factor	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	13.017	50.067	50.067	12.645	48.636	48.636	6.521	25.082	25.082
2	2.612	10.048	60.114	2.278	8.760	57.396	4.110	15.806	40.888
3	1.266	4.869	64.983	.909	3.498	60.894	3.162	12.162	53.050
4	1.087	4.181	69.165	.709	2.725	63.619	2.748	10.570	63.619
5	.749	2.883	72.047						
6	.657	2.525	74.573						
7	.608	2.338	76.910						
8	.538	2.068	78.978						
9	.500	1.922	80.900						
10	.495	1.904	82.804						
11	.437	1.682	84.485						
12	.392	1.509	85.994						
13	.371	1.427	87.421						
14	.360	1.383	88.804						
15	.339	1.305	90.109						
16	.299	1.149	91.258						
17	.296	1.140	92.398						
18	.282	1.086	93.484						
19	.277	1.064	94.548						
20	.264	1.017	95.564						
21	.225	.865	96.430						
22	.221	.851	97.281						
23	.206	.793	98.073						

24	.192	.737	98.811						
25	.163	.627	99.438						
26	.146	.562	100.000						

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Figure 20: Scree plot**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

In addition, table 18 related to the rotated factor matrix is used to maximize variable loading on a particular factor. It indicates the variable to be considered under each factors as follows:



Factor I: includes high correlation among the following variables: VII 1, 2, 3, and 7 till IX 14. This factor was therefore named **positioning** since digging down into the above, similarity can be found with respect to awareness, attention, positioning and differentiation (One construct).

Factor II: includes IX 15 till 20 variables that all explain the second construct: **hedonic value from packaging**

Factor III: includes X 21 till 26 variables that all explain a third construct: **perception**

Factor IV: includes VII 4, 5, and 6 variables explaining the fourth construct: **effect on buying decisions**, which eventually becomes the dependent variable in the regression model.

The above mentioned factors were converted into four standardized variables each one named according to the construct represented.

**Table 18: Rotated Factor Matrix**

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
VII-1.Packaging shifts my attention towards a certain perfume	.612	.167	.175	.412
VII-2.Packaging helps me remember a perfume	.747	.052	.162	.215
VII-3.Packaging encourages me to try the perfume	.620	.242	.210	.361
VII-4.I compare perfumes based on their packaging	.115	.193	.237	.671
VII-5.I consider packaging among the reasons that pushes me to choose a perfume over another	.179	.432	.213	.699
VII-6.Perfume packaging affects my purchase decision	.271	.452	.096	.624
VII-7.Good packaging enhances my post purchase experience as I enjoy using a perfume with great packaging	.512	.387	.244	.362
VIII-8.Perfume packaging helps me identify and recognize a brand	.817	.023	.292	.074

VIII-9. Attractive perfume packaging draws my attention to the product among its competitors	.750	.159	.255	.188
VIII-10. I find a perfume unique based on its packaging	.495	.429	.179	.203
VIII-11. Good packaging makes the perfume product stand out	.741	.322	.153	.031
VIII-12. Perfume packaging elements convey a clear brand image	.796	.155	.161	.011
VIII-13. I can match the packaging to a perfume personality and smell	.525	.449	.230	.219
IX-14. Appealing packaging leads to positive feelings toward the perfume	.672	.406	.278	.051
IX-15. I like or dislike a perfume based on its packaging	.102	.648	.263	.352
IX-16. Good packaging enhances my experience and satisfaction with the perfume	.495	.580	.221	.074
IX-17. I choose the perfume that reflects my personality through its packaging	.110	.678	.182	.396
IX-18. Appealing packaging implicates pleasure for product use	.501	.542	.322	.135
IX-19. I am ready to pay a higher price for a perfume which packaging I like	.084	.610	.164	.393
IX-20. Quality packaging reflects a better perfume	.335	.559	.302	.174
X-21. Packaging influences how I perceive the quality of a perfume	.390	.264	.630	.148
X-22. Packaging influences how I perceive the smell of a perfume	.132	.345	.499	.333
X-23. Packaging elements stimulate my feelings toward a product	.378	.335	.590	.217
X-24. I notice clearly the differences between packaging options when looking at perfumes	.344	.230	.682	.147
X-25. I remember a perfume based on its packaging	.573	.036	.604	.155
X-26. I create a positive or negative image about a perfume based on its packaging	.203	.435	.576	.306

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 21 iterations.

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

Multiple regression, which is commonly employed for behavioral sciences (Salem, 2018) was adopted using the "stepwise" method. The results in table 19 show that only hedonic

value from perfume packaging has a significant effect on buying decision and the two other variables were rejected from the model as they were not considered statistically significant as indicated in table 20.

**Table 19: Variables Entered/Removed**

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	REGR Hedonic value from packaging	.	Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq$ .050, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq$ .100).

a. Dependent Variable: REGR Effects on Buying Decision

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 20: Excluded Variable**

Model	Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
					Tolerance
1 REGR Positioning from packaging	.001 <sup>b</sup>	.018	.986	.001	.999
REGR Perception from packaging	.038 <sup>b</sup>	.663	.508	.038	.995

a. Dependent Variable: REGR Effects on Buying Decision

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), REGR Hedonic value from packaging

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

According to the model summary in table 21, R square is equal to 0.21 which means that approximately 2.1% of the variance of the perfume buying decision is accounted for by the model. In addition, looking at the ANOVA analysis shown in table 22, the F test indicates that F is equal to 6.661 and the p value is smaller than the significance level adopted of 0.05 which shows that the model is statically significant. This means that the regression model predicts the dependent variable significantly well.

The coefficients in table 23 highlight a positive B which indicates a positive correlation between dependent and independent variables. The t test is equal to 2.581 and is statically significant which means that the regression coefficient is significantly different from zero. The standardized coefficient for hedonic customer value is 0.144 which means that for a one-unit increase of customer value we can expect a 0.144 increase in its effect on buying decision. The standardized coefficient Beta indicates that one standard deviation increase in hedonic value leads to a 0.146 increase in standard deviation for customer choice of perfume.

**Table 21: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.146 <sup>a</sup>	.021	.018	.86792828	2.075

a. Predictors: (Constant), REGR Packaging & Customer Value

b. Dependent Variable: REGR Effects on Buying Decisions

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 22: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.018	1	5.018	6.661	.010 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	229.756	305	.753		
	Total	234.774	306			

a. Dependent Variable: REGR Effects on Buying Decision

b. Predictors: (Constant), REGR Hedonic Value from packaging

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Table 23: Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4.784E-17	.050		.000	1.000
	REGR Hedonic Value from packaging	.144	.056	.146	2.581	.010

a. Dependent Variable: REGR Effects on Buying Decision

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

### 3.4 Discussion of the hypotheses and conceptual model

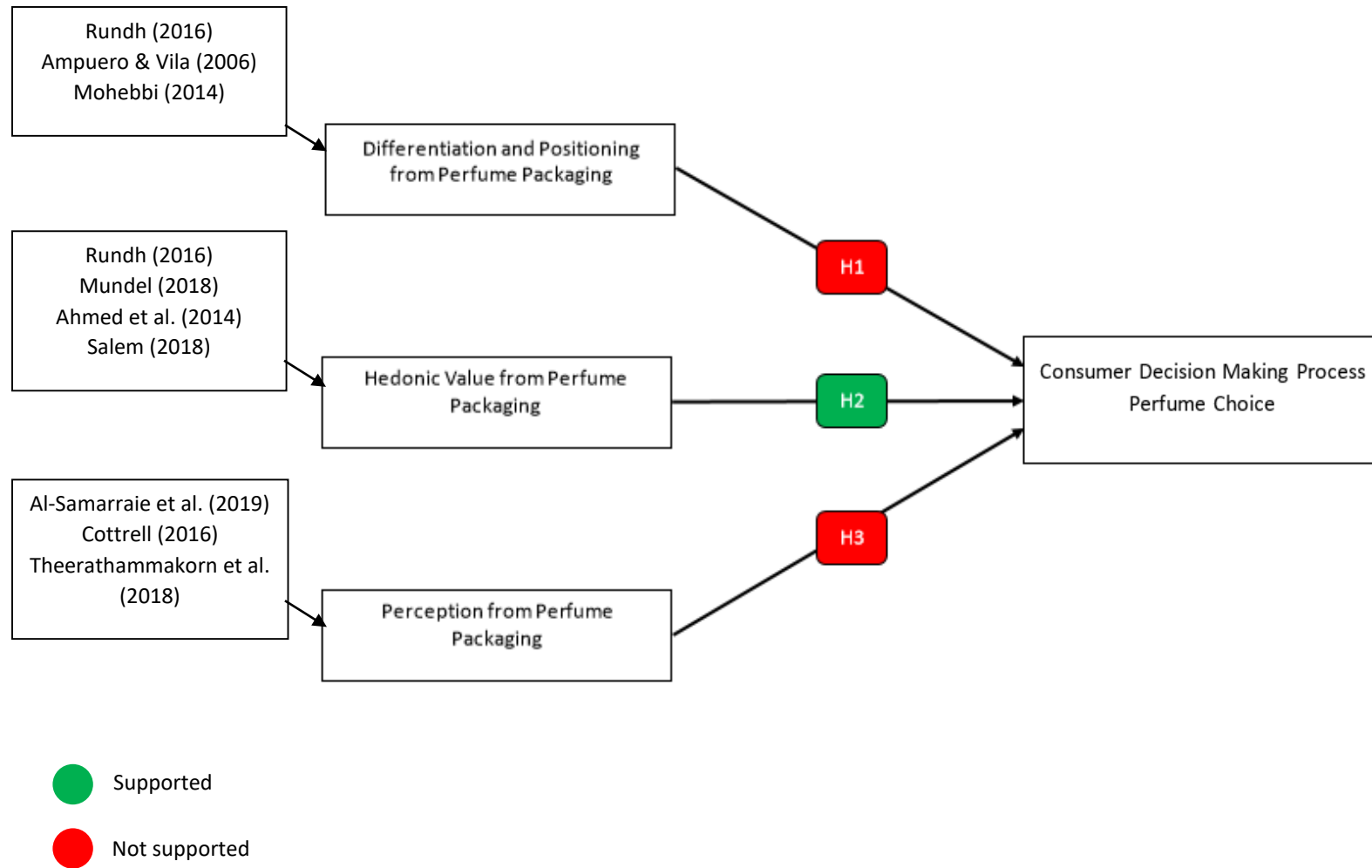
In order to test the proposed hypotheses, the results obtained by the administered questionnaire were thoroughly studied and analyzed. Looking closely at the results obtained from Cronbach alpha and the factor analysis, we can confirm the availability of four reliable factors representing the dependent and independent variables used as basis of the chosen hypotheses. In addition, the regression analysis led to the lack of support of hypothesis 1 and 3. Indeed, there is no significant relation between perfume choice and the two factors related to perception from packaging and differentiation and positioning from packaging as both were excluded from the model in the factor analysis. Moreover, the regression analysis indicates a positive correlation between hedonic value from packaging and customer choice of perfume with a notable R squared equal to 0.021. This means that 2.1% of the variance of the perfume buying decision is accounted for by H2 which is a good percentage taking into consideration the complexity of factors playing a role in social science subjects and especially in customer choice which theories and concepts were mentioned in chapter one related to literature review. Therefore, there is enough evidence to support H2. As a result, table 24 illustrates the discussion of hypotheses and mentions the authors who previously supported the stated relationships. Figure 27 highlights the hypothesized relationships and the actual correlations obtained from the questionnaire results.

**Table 24: Hypotheses testing**

Hypothesis	Authors Examples	Analysis
H1: Differentiation and positioning from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice	Rundh (2016) Ampuero and Vila (2006) Mohebbi (2014)	Not Supported
H2: Hedonic value from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice	Rundh (2016) Mundel (2018) Ahmed et al. (2014) Salem (2018)	Supported
H3: Perception from packaging is positively correlated to perfume choice	Al-Samarraie et al. (2019) Cottrell (2016) Theerathamakorn et al. (2018)	Not Supported

Source: Own author elaboration, 2021

**Figure 21: Additions to conceptual model**



Source: Own author elaboration, 2021



## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

### Main results analysis and summary of findings

Concerning the demographics of the sample of Lebanese perfume buyers presented, the majority of the 307 respondents were females, and the dominant age group was respondents 18 to 34 years old. Almost half of the respondents had a significant other and most of them were employed or self-employed. This mix of relationship statuses enriches the data as perfume can be used as an item for personal satisfaction or as an attention grabber and peer pleaser. Also, having a majority of respondents from the workforce proves their ability to earn their own money and spend disposable income on the products they choose. When compared with the most recent BrandPuls survey results obtained in 2019 in Lebanon, we notice a difference in gender repartition as perfume users are equally split between males (51.6 %) and females (48.4%). In addition, according to BrandPuls (2019), the majority of perfume buyers are divided between the age of 15 to 34 with 44.1% and a notable 47% share of buyers being 45 or older. The latter age group was not granted importance in the sample studied since they only represented 6.2% of total answers. Concerning marital status, similarities can be found between BrandPuls data and our questionnaire having a homogeneous split between people having a significant other and single people. Finally focusing on occupation, we can also find resemblances when comparing both data with BrandPuls showing 59.4% of employed perfume buyers, 11.53 % of students and 3.84% of unemployed. Having similarities to the actual Lebanese perfume buyers' data, the sample studied can be considered as being somewhat representative of the actual population.

Moreover, concerning perfume buying habits, the majority of people seems to effectuate this purchase every three to six month (BrandPuls, 2019), a percentage that matches the data obtained in our questionnaire having 49.6% respondents considered as medium users (purchase every three to six month). In addition, online purchasing habits uncovered are in line with the global perfume market share in 2018 with 70% of the market share for retail shops and 30% of the share for online shops (Grand View Research, 2019).

Focusing on perfume packaging, the majority of questionnaire respondents judged this aspect as being important when choosing to buy a perfume whether online or offline. The latter enforces the views considering perfumes as an important marketing tool. Indeed, numerous researchers such as Keller (2012), Mahdavi et al. (2019), Foti (2015), Jackie White (2000), Al-Samarraie et al. (2019) and Cottrell (2016) consider perfume packaging as being an undeniable strategic marketing element capable of influencing perfume choice and consequently boosting a firm's market performance.

Furthermore, the research model presented focused on three independent variables encompassing differentiation and positioning from packaging, hedonic value from packaging as well as perception from packaging and the effect they have on the dependent variable defined as the consumer decision making process and in particular the choice of perfume. As a general conclusion, it can be stated that perfume packaging plays a positive role in fragrance choice. To be more precise, the study detailed the concepts through which packaging influences consumer decision. Two independent variables, differentiation and positioning from packaging as well as perception from packaging were excluded from the model since they were identified as non-statistically significant. Therefore, previously stated theories emphasizing the correlation between buying choice and perfume packaging

elements differentiation, perception and position cannot be supported by this model. Indeed, various authors such as Reimann et al. (2010), Rundh (2016), Ampuero and Vila (2006), Mohebbi (2014) highlighted the important role that packaging elements play in differentiation and positioning which consequently affects the purchase decision. Also, Al-Samarraie et al. (2019), Cottrell (2016), Boldbaatar (2018) and Theerathamakorn et al., (2018) discussed the relationships governing the role of packaging in product perception and resulting in product choice. The results obtained by the questionnaire' data analysis for this study and that excluded the mentioned variable from the model are not an indicator that refutes the already published theories. In contrast, it points to the need for further studies to be effectuated on this subject in order to uncover additional insights about the determinant of Lebanese perfume buyer's choice. Following the SPSS results obtained, hedonic value from packaging was found to be positively correlated with the choice of perfume. This relationship supports previously published theories by Rundh (2016), Butkeviciene et al. (2008), Mundel (2018), Ahmed et al. (2014), and Salem (2018). Indeed, we can support the hypothesis stating that hedonic value from packaging and perfume choice move in the same direction, as 2.1% of the variance in the perfume buying decision is accounted for by this independent variable. The result obtained highlights the role of packaging in providing hedonic value and therefore becoming a determinant of consumer's choice. The percentage of 2.1% presented can be viewed as low, however it is a good and acceptable indicator considering that this study is tackling a subject related to social sciences. Indeed, consumer decision making process is influenced by a multitude of internal factors combining consumer psychology and consumer personality, as well as external factors such as the social environment and the

situational influences (Babin & Harris, 2015). Also, Theerathamkorn et al. (2018), based on theories of Kotler et al. (2012), mention the stimulus response model, encompassing the stimuli as external factor, the black box as internal factor and the response as the buying decision, as basis of consumer purchase decision. Understanding the relationships between all the mentioned factors would be the ultimate key to achieve market success and create the best possible product. The scope of this research focused on studying some particular aspects of the variety of factors mentioned since it focuses on perfume packaging and its effect on consumer purchase choice especially related to the factors of hedonic value, differentiation and positioning as well as perception.

### Limitation of the research and suggestions for future studies

Although this study followed a quantitative methodology using a questionnaire distributed to a relatively large random sample, it still bears some limitations. Indeed, the sample size obtained through random sampling was based on social media users. Thus it is important to take into consideration that people not having access to social media platforms during the time of questionnaire distribution were excluded from being questioned. Also, disposable income and geographical location were not taken into consideration within the questionnaire which could have led to some data bias. In addition, the effect of how different demographics are influenced by the packaging of perfume and the repercussion on their buying habits was not tackled within the scope of this research. It would be interesting to study in deeper details those effects in parallel with demographic elements in order to draw target population avatars that could be targeted by different packaging elements and strategies.

On another hand, time and situational limitations could also have affected the collected data. Indeed, the questionnaire's answers were collected over a short period of time. Furthermore, the time frame in which the study was conducted in Lebanon paralleled with an economic crisis, political turmoil and the rise of a pandemic. All those factors could have caused stress and worries for respondents which might have had a repercussion on their answers as the mentioned circumstances could have modified the usual buying and consumption habits.

Moreover, the methodology used to conduct this study followed the deductive quantitative approach and used ANOVA, factor analysis and regression in SPSS for data examination. To gain deeper insights, other methods can be adopted such as focus groups in a controlled environment which might lead to more precise outcomes concerning perfume packaging elements by trying to eliminate present external factors affecting consumer purchase choice.

In addition, as previously mentioned, the primary data of this study focused on the effect of hedonic value from packaging, differentiation and positioning from packaging as well as perception from packaging and their correlation with consumer behavior and the choice of perfume. The survey was therefore dedicated to some variables influencing consumer behavior among a variety of other factors mentioned in the literature review. Consequently, a suggestion for future studies would be to investigate and give details about additional elements triggering changes in consumer behavior and analyze the present correlation in the Lebanese context.

### Managerial implication

The research conducted took its root from previous studies detailing the effect of packaging elements on different concepts of consumer behavior such as perception, hedonic value, positioning and the purchase decision. Packaging, and in particular perfume packaging, was found to be a notable variant in influencing consumer choice. The latter concept was supported by both the literature review and the questionnaire data analysis. Accordingly, this research adds to the present literature and managerial knowledge by highlighting the positive correlation between hedonic value from packaging and consumer perfume choice in Lebanon. As a result, various managerial implications can be drawn to perfect perfume's brand marketing strategies and achieve success.

Indeed, packaging goes beyond its functional role as a protective layer for the actual product, to become a real marketing tool capable of influencing consumer purchase choice. Packaging is considered to be a value booster by impacting consumers' emotions and satisfaction with the product. Accordingly, the results obtained urge managers in the perfume industry to consider packaging as an undeniable part of their marketing strategy decision. Packaging is therefore the last way of communication between a brand and its potential consumer and can have a meaningful effect on how the perfume is valued which will play a role at the moment of buying decision.

In addition, the verdicts of this study can give managers the confidence to allocate resources for product packaging development and enhancement. Packaging is shown to be indeed a notable variant impacting perfume choice by combining elements that enhance in particular customer value and therefore that will have a great effect on return on investment

and market performance if used right. Managers should be assured in developing packaging that stands out and reflects quality in order to boost the perceived value and consequently increase market share.

Moreover, a growing portion of buyers are focusing on online purchasing considering the major lifestyle changes that they are facing following lockdowns as well as Covid-19 pandemic. It is therefore important for managers to perfect their online marketing techniques and focus on non-olfactory cues such as perfume packaging to help customer in their decision. Indeed, having respondents consider perfume packaging as important during their purchase, it is essential for marketers to study its combination of elements as well as the best way to present it to the consumer.

Finally, in addition to the managerial implications gained, this study adds to the marketing literature by shedding the light on Lebanese consumer behavior concerning luxury products and in particular perfume. The results obtained are not only beneficial to marketing managers but also to the average consumer as it helps understand the underlying factors behind purchase choice and its determining elements. The latter will guide the consumer in making more aware choices to satisfy best his/her needs and wants.

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## Appendices

### *Appendix 1 : Questionnaire*

Dear participant,

Thank you for taking part in this study conducted for the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science in business strategy at Notre Dame University. The purpose of this survey is to uncover the effect of packaging on decision making in particular concerning the choice of perfume by Lebanese consumers. The results will provide the marketing literature and industry with wider insights about consumer behavior, choice and packaging. Your personal opinions and attitudes are of great input to this study and will be kept confidential. The survey completion will take around ten minutes and your cooperation is much appreciated.

Please keep in mind that throughout the questionnaire, **perfume packaging** encompasses color, shape and size, pictures and graphics as well as product information and language. All mentioned elements are found on the bottles in direct contact with the perfume and its exterior box.

### **SECTION A: Consumer buying behavior of fragrances in Lebanon**

#### **I- How often do you buy perfumes?**

- Once a month or more
- Once every 1-2 months
- Once every 3-6 months



- Once per year
- Never

**II- What does perfume represent in your opinion? (check all that applies)**

- Perfume is just a nice smell
- Perfume is the last touch to my outfit
- Perfume reflects my personality
- Perfume is a sign of status
- Perfume is an attention grabber
- Other

**III- What factors do you consider for your choice of perfume other than its smell? (check all that applies)**

- Celebrity endorsement
- Price
- Packaging/ Perfume bottle
- Peers opinion
- Advertising activities
- Other

**IV- Do you buy perfume online?**

- Yes
- No

**V- How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance in a retail store?**

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- Not applicable

**VI- How important to you is perfume packaging when choosing to buy a fragrance online?**

- Very important
- Important
- Somewhat important
- Not important
- Not applicable

**SECTION B: Effect of packaging on perfume choice:**

In the following section, please check the box that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree with the listed statements noting that: 1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neither agree nor disagree, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

**VII- Influence of perfume packaging on the decision making process:**

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Packaging shifts my attention towards a certain perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Packaging helps me remember a perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Packaging encourages me to try the perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. I compare perfumes based on their packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I consider packaging among the reasons that pushes me to choose a perfume over another	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Perfume packaging affects my purchase decision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Good packaging enhances my post purchase experience as I enjoy using a perfume with great packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**VIII- Influence of perfume packaging on differentiation and positioning:**

8. Perfume packaging helps me identify and recognize a brand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Attractive perfume packaging draws my attention to the product among its competitors	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I find a perfume unique based on its packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Good packaging makes the perfume product stand out	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. Perfume packaging elements convey a clear brand image	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. I can match the packaging to a perfume personality and smell	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**IX- Influence of perfume packaging on product hedonic value:**

14. Appealing packaging leads to positive feelings toward the perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. I like or dislike a perfume based on its packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Good packaging enhances my experience and satisfaction with the perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. I choose the perfume that reflects my personality through its packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
18. Appealing packaging implicates pleasure for product use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
19. I am ready to pay a higher price for a perfume which packaging I like	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
20. Quality packaging reflects a better perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**X- Influence of perfume packaging on Perception:**

21. Packaging influences how I perceive the quality of a perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
22. Packaging influences how I perceive the smell of a perfume	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
23. Packaging elements stimulate my feelings toward a product	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
24. I notice clearly the differences between packaging options when looking at perfumes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
25. I remember a perfume based on its packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
26. I create a positive or negative image about a perfume based on its packaging	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**SECTION C: General questions****XI- Gender:**

- Male
- Female

**XII- Age:**

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45+

**XIII- Marital Status:**

- Single
- In a relationship
- Married
- Other

**XIV- Occupational status:**

- Employed/self-employed
- Unemployed
- Student
- Other

***THANK YOU!***

## Appendix 2: IRB Approval Email

03/05/2021

Mail - TINA T. HAYEK - Outlook

 Reply all
  Delete
  Junk
  Block
 ...

### Fw: Mrs Tina Hayek - IRB request for approval

---

**From:** Pauline Aad <paad@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 14, 2020 12:29 PM  
**To:** Marwan Azouri <mazouri@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Cc:** Atef Harb <aharb@ndu.edu.lb>; George Harb <gharb@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Subject:** RE: Mrs Tina Hayek - IRB request for approval

Dear Maroun,  
 Your reviews are well received and fit our requirements  
 Regards  
 Pauline

---


**From:** Marwan Azouri <mazouri@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 30, 2020 2:22 AM  
**To:** Pauline Aad <paad@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Cc:** Atef Harb <aharb@ndu.edu.lb>; George Harb <gharb@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Subject:** Re: Mrs Tina Hayek - IRB request for approval

Dear Dr. Aad,

I hope that this email finds you well,

Attached is the updated Questionnaire of Mrs. Hayek, for your kind approval.

Best regards,

 [cid:26270A7F-A698-4041-BC0D-5C82C9DF9339](#)

**Marwan Azouri, PhD**  
**Assistant Professor of Marketing**  
**Department of Marketing and Management**  
 Faculty of Business Administration & Economics

 [cid:3461564935\\_512329](#)  
 T: +961 9 218 950 Ext: 2437  
 D: +961 9 208311  
 M: +961 79 191575  
 W: [www.ndu.edu.lb](http://www.ndu.edu.lb)

---

**From:** Pauline Aad <paad@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Sent:** Saturday, November 28, 2020 8:56 AM  
**To:** Marwan Azouri <mazouri@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Cc:** Atef Harb <aharb@ndu.edu.lb>; George Harb <gharb@ndu.edu.lb>  
**Subject:** Re: Mrs Tina Hayek - IRB request for approval

<https://outlook.office365.com/mail/deeplink?popoutv2=1&version=20210405005.04>

1/1