



The influencing factors in the purchase process of the breakfast cereals *Os fatores influenciadores do processo de compra dos cereais matinais*

[10.29073/naus.v7i1.918](#)

Recebido: 5 de junho de 2024.

Aprovado: 10 de junho de 2024.

Publicado: 27 de junho de 2024.

Autor/a 1: Adriana Simões, Escola Superior de Comunicação Social, Portugal, 11349@alunos.escs.ipl.pt.

Autor/a 2: João Rosário , Escola Superior de Comunicação Social, Portugal, jrosario@escs.ipl.pt.

Autor/a 3: Cláudia Silvestre , Escola Superior de Comunicação Social, Portugal, csilvestre@escs.ipl.pt.

Abstract

This research aims to enhance understanding of the factors influencing breakfast cereal purchasing decisions among Portuguese consumers, particularly focusing on packaging relevance and sustainability. A field study was conducted using quantitative, descriptive methods, involving breakfast cereal consumers in Portugal. Data were collected through an electronic questionnaire, yielding 335 responses.

The findings provide insights into the factors that brands should consider in their marketing strategies regarding breakfast cereal purchase decisions. The study confirmed five out of thirteen research hypotheses, with three others partially confirmed. Key factors identified by consumers include flavor, experience, taste, packaging, food label, price, promotional strategy, communication, and sustainable packaging.

This research contributes to existing literature by focusing on breakfast cereals, a product familiar to consumers across various age groups, and highlights the continuous updates in recipes, packaging, sustainability, and communication strategies. It offers a comprehensive analysis of the factors driving consumer decisions in a product category that has significantly evolved, shedding light on what motivates consumers to prefer one product over another. This study also provides valuable insights for brands looking to optimize their marketing strategies in the breakfast cereal market.

Keywords: Breakfast Cereals; Consumer; Purchasing Decision Process; Sustainable Packaging.

Resumo

Esta investigação tem como objetivo melhorar a compreensão dos factores que influenciam as decisões de compra de cereais matinais entre os consumidores portugueses, com especial incidência na relevância e sustentabilidade das embalagens. Foi realizado um estudo de campo, com recurso a métodos quantitativos e descritivos, envolvendo consumidores destes cereais em Portugal. Os dados foram recolhidos através de um questionário electrónico, tendo sido obtidas 335 respostas.

Os resultados fornecem informações sobre os factores que as marcas devem considerar nas suas estratégias de marketing relativamente às decisões de compra destes cereais. O estudo confirmou cinco das treze hipóteses de investigação, tendo outras três sido parcialmente confirmadas. Os principais factores identificados pelos consumidores incluem o sabor, a experiência, o gosto, a embalagem, o rótulo alimentar, o preço, a estratégia promocional, a comunicação e a embalagem sustentável.

Esta investigação contribui para a literatura existente ao centrar-se nestes cereais, um produto familiar para os consumidores de várias faixas etárias, e destaca as actualizações contínuas nas receitas, embalagens, sustentabilidade e estratégias de comunicação. Oferece uma análise abrangente dos factores que impulsionam as decisões dos consumidores numa categoria de produtos que evoluiu significativamente, lançando luz sobre o que motiva os consumidores a preferirem um produto a outro. Este estudo também fornece informações valiosas para as marcas que procuram otimizar as suas estratégias de marketing no mercado dos cereais matinais.



Palavras-Chave: Cereais Matinais; Consumidor; Embalagem Sustentável; Processo de Decisão de Compra.

1. Introduction

Breakfast cereals are a processed food, usually served with milk (hot or cold), commonly consumed as the first meal of the day. Breakfast is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, which can bring nutritional, psychological, and even social benefits (Smith, 1998; Mielgo-Ayuso et al., 2017; Williams, 2014). Mainly made from corn, wheat, oats, or rice with a wide variety of flavors and textures available on the market, new segments of breakfast cereals have been added in recent years: “muesli” or granola.

In this research, the ready-to-eat cereals, which do not require cooking and are ready-to-eat (Kapoor et al., 2020) will be addressed. As the name implies, breakfast cereals are a common choice for the first meal of the day in many countries because they are adapted to the routines of today’s consumers, as it does not require prior preparation and are considered as practical and functional breakfast cereals option regardless of age group (Krejčová et al., 2012). The convenience and practicality in the preparation of breakfast cereals was the great driver of this product in the routine of all consumers.

Although this is a product aimed at all age groups, the breakfast cereal aisle has shelf space mostly occupied by cereals for children, pre-teens, and teenagers, between 5 and 19 years old. It is for this reason that this area of the supermarket has most of its packaging with cartoon-like characters and other visually appealing features for younger consumers (Form, 2009; Page et al., 2008).

On the supply side there is a reinvention of markets: the intensification of competition, with new products, pressured brands to adopt new strategies improving the distinctive characteristics of their offer in order to captivate the consumer’s attention and win their purchase decision, including focus such as packaging improvements (Benachenhou et al., 2018). Once with the sole function of protecting the product, the packaging currently has the key role of communicating the content — through the food label — and the brand, with key messages about it, guaranteeing the safety of the product, but at the same time the consumer’s attention (Asri et al., 2020). Thus, this research is based on the following starting question What are the factors that influence the consumer in the decision to purchase breakfast cereals?, where the aim is to access whether attributes such as brand trust, opinion of family and friends, brand, communication, price, and promotional strategy, flavor, convenience, packaging, label, and sustainability influence the purchase decision for this product.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Consumer Behavior

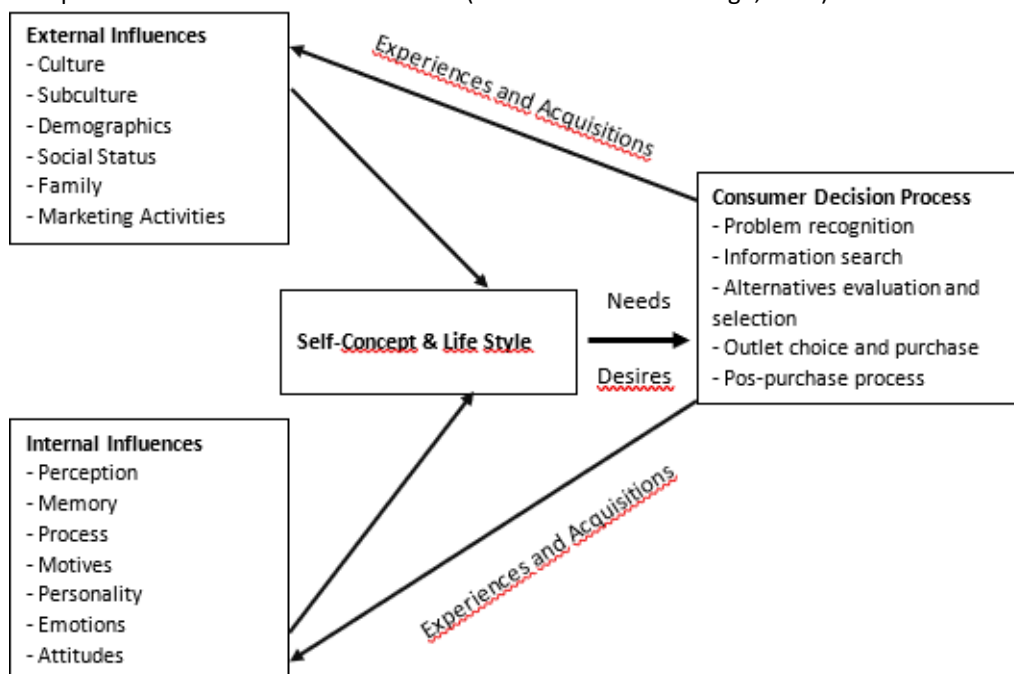
Between the initial purchase intentions to the final choice, an entire purchase decision process can be more or less automatic, being always dependent on some variables that can culminate in the choice of one product over another. Asri et al. (2020), concluded that intention refers to the consumer’s preference to purchase a product or service, while the purchase decision results from a phased process, which results in a final choice. This process requires cognitive and emotional involvement between product and consumer and consists, at first, of attracting a product through attention (conscious or unconscious), followed by collecting information about the various alternatives available (Krishna, 2017). Currently, the consumer has different options, physical and online, that can make the actual moment of purchase more convenient. There is still a last stage, which consists of reflecting on the advantages and disadvantages of the purchase made, and which can result in a repeat purchase (Alsswey et al., 2020). This last moment corresponds to an introspection and evaluation of the expectation/response regarding the purchased product.

The model in Figure 1 is one of the many examples of modeling the purchase decision process from the stimuli (internal or external) to the purchase decisions of the consumer. In this approach to the purchase decision process, it is crucial to consider attention, which occurs when the stimulus activates the consumer’s sensations. The stimuli can result from physical characteristics of the product or service itself, or price and promotion, induced by the environment (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2016).



The present research aims to evaluate the factors that influence the decision to purchase breakfast cereals, considering aspects like advice of friends and family or previous experience with the brand, but also packaging where the sustainability is winning relevance in the recent years and several other aspects like the product marketing-mix and the impact of Covid-19 in the food buying decisions.

Figure 1: Adapted from Purchase Decision Process (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2016).



Source: Hawkins & Mothersbaugh (2016).

2.2. The Breakfast Cereals Marketing-Mix

Marketing tries to predict consumer needs, identify target markets, and determine optimal solutions to serve each need. In this sense, the “marketing-mix” is the term that describes the choices of brands in the process of introducing a product or service to the consumer and encompasses product, price, promotion, and placement, the 4 P’s of Marketing (McCarthy, 1964).

2.2.1. (P)roduct — Product Characteristics

Currently, there is a wide variety of ready-to-eat breakfast cereals available on the market, from various manufacturers and marketed by different distributors that can be grouped as chocolate cereals, bran cereals, rice flakes and whole wheat, honey cereal, fiber flakes, corn flakes, corn flakes with no added sugar, sugar-filled breakfast cereals. Over the last few years, new options have appeared, such as “muesli” oatmeal, also intended for the first meal of the day and ready-to-eat (Fayet-Moore et al., 2017). Made with several kinds of cereals that contain fiber, calcium, vitamins, and minerals essential for health. The daily dose of breakfast cereals recommended by manufacturers and validated by doctors and nutritionists is 30 grams (six tablespoons) per meal. However, the high sugar content present in some of the options can compromise the classification of this product as a healthy food choice. Of the 50 cereals analyzed in the National Institute of Health report, the sugar content was the responsible component for only nine of the breakfast cereal options classified as healthy (Matias et al., 2020). Because the vast majority of the knowledge we acquire throughout life is obtained through the senses, which are also the link with memory, brands must take advantage of the consumer’s sensitivity to the flavor as a very important influencer of purchase choices. At the same time, flavor is one of the most important aspects for defining the quality of a food product (Lindstrom, 2013).

Based on the literature review the first research hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Flavor influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.



2.2.2. (P) product — Convenience (Easy to Prepare)

The actual consumer wants to reduce the time of purchase and consumption, being willing to pay more for products that meet these requirements. Consumers are looking for convenience in consumption, through small and transportable formats, and preparation, with quick preparation products (Deloitte, 2017). This trend gains increasing relevance as the population ages and as “digital” generations ascend to consumer markets. Brands have been adapting to this reality, with the launch of formats that are easy to transport, products that are quick to prepare, among other ways of providing comfort and convenience to the consumer. When buying breakfast ready-to-eat food, one of the main reasons that leads the consumer to purchase is the ease of preparation. For breakfast cereal consumption, the consumer only has to add milk to a cup, so consumers value the speed of preparation of this meal (Chaudhury, 2010).

Based on the literature review, the second research hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Convenience of use influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

2.2.3. (P) product — Brand

The brand is much more than a name and a logo, and therefore it should be considered one of the influencing factors for the purchase decision and entirely related to the product. Brands are powerful as they are the core of the customer relationship. Unique brands are created from the differentiation of product attributes, but also from the name, packaging, distribution strategies, communication, and advertising of the product or brand. The strength of brands leads to consumer loyalty, sales success, and their resilience over time, with frequent adaptations to the market (Aaker, 2014). A brand is the result of the relationship between the consumer and the product, from which value derives. When the consumer purchases a certain product and the brand is automatically associated, it means that the consumer has a strong connection with the brand and expects something from it (Shahid et al., 2017). Based on this assumption, the power of the brand is pointed out as one of the factors that influence consumer choice, transversal to all products (Mirabi et al., 2015). Brand loyalty symbolizes the consumer’s connection to the brand and the number of times the consumer repeats the purchase of a particular brand; on the other hand, the quality of the brand reflects the expectation that the brand causes in the consumer, as an unreal perception created in the mind of the same (Shahid et al., 2017).

Based on the literature review, the third research hypothesis is formulated:

H3: Brand recognition influences the breakfast cereal purchase decision.

2.2.4. (P) product — Packaging

Breakfast cereals have two primary packaging: the bag that contains the cereal — traditionally made of plastic — whose function is to protect and preserve the product, and the printed cardboard box, which informs the consumer with key messages about the product brand, the food label, certifications, and environmental claims, among other elements (Ankan, 2011). There are still brands that opt for plastic-only packaging, such as the most recent granola options (a variety of breakfast cereals). The growth of distributor brands with similar packages and products reduces the differentiation and forces manufacturer brands to develop new ways of attracting consumers (Koutra et al., 2015). Sarkar and Aparna (2020) list all the functions that packaging must respond to protect, resist, and facilitate while being the art of presenting a product, using appearance, color, design, and shape to attract the consumer and lead him to purchase. Nowadays packaging is a mechanism of emotional and physical attraction for the consumer, a promotional toll for adults and children that encourages them to choose one certain product over another, the first true moment in the purchase decision (Stewart, 1995 and Allswey et al., 2020), playing an extremely important role at the point of sale to alleviate the pressure and confusion that consumers are subjected to, clarifying the choice of the brand (Olalekan & Adewale, 2017; Waheed et al., 2018). Some authors concluded that colors could evoke brands in the consumer mind (Silayoi & Speece, 2004; Singh, 2006; Ranjbarian et al., 2010). The successful use of the attractiveness, safety, and practicality of packaging results in consumer attraction (Hurley et al., 2016). As a marketing strategy, packaging uses design elements to reflect product quality and characteristics (Form, 2009; Chind & Sahachaisaeree, 2012) with research concluding



that consumers with a healthier lifestyle relating the color green with nutritionally more interesting products (Benachenhou et al., 2018; Lamb et al., 2011). Sarkar and Aparna (2020) considered the functions that packaging must respond, to protect, resist and facilitate while Zhang (2013) considered that packaging must have visibility, marketing communication, differentiation, messages, consumption and sustainability. Brands choose to build differentiating packaging, which is easily identified on the shelf using the most relevant design elements to make it attractive and easy to use (Waheed et al., 2018; Asri et al., 2020). In general, packaging visuals such as graphics and colors play a key role in choosing a product (Hurley et al., 2016).

In breakfast cereals, packaging takes on an even more relevant role were packaging positions itself as a “seller on the shelf” (Silayoi & Speece, 2004; Hawkes, 2010), considering the obligations that must be complied with by CEEREAL member companies regarding the responsible packaging practice, applied to breakfast cereals packed in boxes (CEEREAL, 2016).

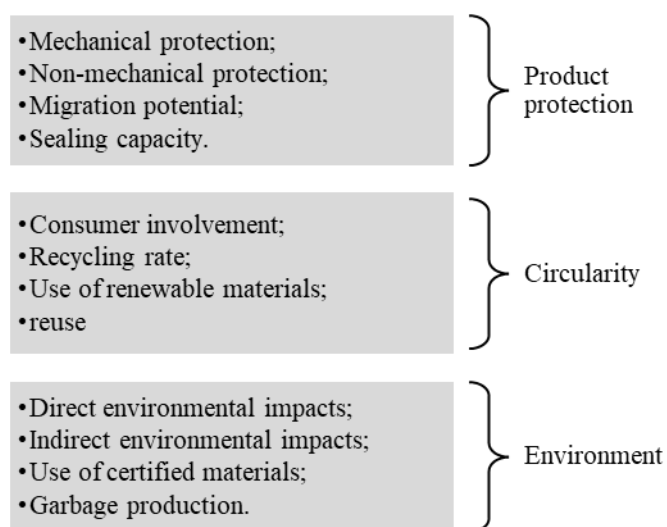
Based on the literature review presented above, the fourth research hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: The packaging and its elements influence the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

i. Packaging sustainability

The packaging materials traditionally used are paper, cardboard, glass, metals, and plastic, with many variants available to brands (Billeter et al., 2012; Raheem and Sarkar & Aparna, 2020) with some brands using their packaging materials choices to reach environmentally concerned market segments (Lamb et al., 2011). Eco-design emerged in the early 1990s and consisted of building more conscious packaging with the consumption of sustainable materials offering a positive feeling to the consumer (Boks & Stevels, 2007). Whether through its materials or label, packaging can influence consumer attitude and behavior, such as packaging recycling or reuse without compromising the environment and human health, with circularity as a fundamental element to guarantee the sustainability of the packaging (Jerzyk, 2016 and Pauer et al., 2019). Gürlich et al. (2020) developed a model with the three essential points (Figure 2) for packaging sustainability: protection of the product, circularity, and environment.

Figure 2: Model for holistic packaging sustainability assessments (Gürlich et al., 2020).



Source: Gürlich et al. (2020).

Based on the literature review, the fifth research hypothesis is formulated:

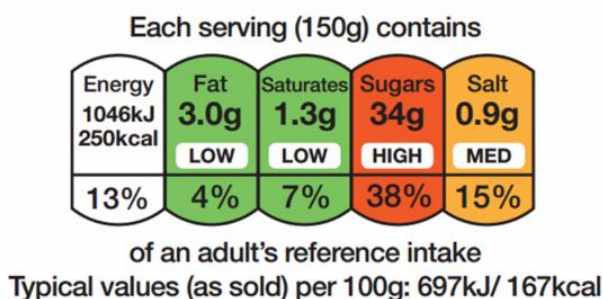
H5: Sustainable packaging influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.



ii. Label

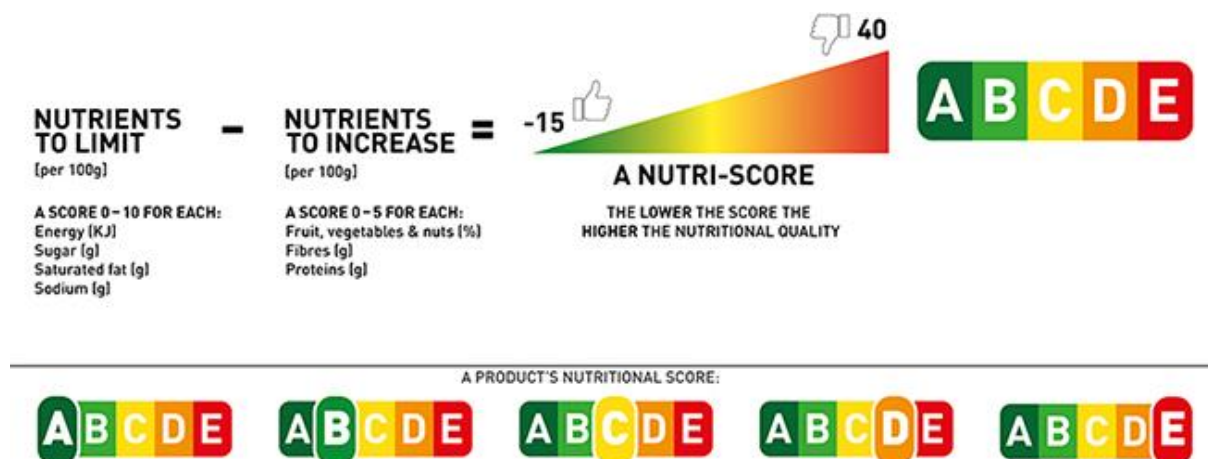
The label can be presented in two different ways: persuasive, when it focuses on a promotional theme, or informative when the objective is only to inform the consumer about the content of the product or how to use it. “New Formula” or “New” are some of the labeling strategies used by brands when the goal is to persuade (Lamb et al., 2011). Recently labels tried to deconstruct the nutritional information on the label and promote healthier and more conscious choices, through the provision of more intuitive icons to account for the minutes required to practice physical exercise to burn the calories corresponding to the product. This type of labeling is called PACE — Physical Activity Calorie Equivalent — and it is considered more efficient than any other since it is more easily interpreted by the consumer when selecting and purchasing the product (Daley et al., 2019). The food label is demanding and obeys specific rules, as a way of informing the consumer although there is no specific regulation on the model to be used. Some manufacturers opt for the Nutritional Traffic Light system¹, developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA) (Figure 3), others opt for the Nutri-Score² (Figure 4), that has been recommended by the European Commission and the World Health Organization.

Figure 3: Nutrition labeling system adopted by FSA.



Source: Food Standards Agency (<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/check-the-label>).

Figure 4: Nutrition labeling systems adopted in EU countries.



Source: Tate&Lyle (<https://www.tateandlyle.com/news/what-nutri-score-and-why-should-food-and-drink-manufacturers-work-towards-better-ratings>)

¹ Nutritional Traffic Light System consists of analyzing the four nutrients (lipids, saturated fatty acids, sugars and salt), by comparing them with the nutritional criteria established by this system, by assigning one of the three traffic lights colors (green, yellow and red) to each of the nutrients.

² Used on a voluntary basis in France, Belgium, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands, the Nutri-Score assesses the nutritional quality of foods (with the exception of alcoholic beverages), using the scoring scale defined by the FSA, and classifying the feed in one of five categories, each associated with a color and a letter (Matias et al., 2020).



The two classification and labeling systems make it possible to assess the nutritional quality of food in a quick and accessible way, facilitating consumer understanding at the point of sale (Matias et al., 2020).

Considering the effective importance that the label assumes in the choice of a product, some authors agree that the information present on the label is very important for the consumer (Lamb et al., 2011), while others argue that in low-involvement products (food, for example), the choice and final purchase is made without carefully examining the information on the label (Ranjbarian et al., 2010).

Based on the literature review, the sixth research hypotheses can be formulated:

H6: The food label influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

2.2.5. (P) Price

In the food category or in products for routine and consecutive consumption, consumers consider reference prices for certain products and brands, so they are easily perceived as cheap or expensive. Consumer reactions to price are profoundly heterogeneous, may function as an indicator of quality or corresponding to the financial sacrifice necessary to purchase the product (Jaeger, 2006). Chiang and Jang (2007) and Putra et al. (2017) concluded that the price of the product positively affects the perception of quality and value that the consumer has about a particular product or service so that, for the consumer, it is not relevant to pay more for a product, if it presents greater performance, durability, among other qualitative characteristics. In food products, consumers aware of the importance of food for health are less sensitive to price, choosing to purchase more expensive food if the value justifies the quality of it (Ares et al., 2010).

Based on the literature review, the seventh research hypothesis is formulated:

H7: Price influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

- i. Promotional strategy: price promotion

Entirely related to price is the promotional strategy with sales promotions as a trigger for attracting customers and, consequently, notoriety and advantage over competitors, even if some research showed that there is little evidence on the real impact of promotions on increasing sales and traffic in stores (Gauri et al., 2017). Bhatti (2018) describes promotion as a way to obtain the same product at a lower price with the aim of increasing sales, but according to its analysis, the promotional strategy has a negligible effect on the consumer's purchase decision. Promotional strategies can be perceived by consumers as a less qualitative product, when they realize the discrepancy between the reference price and the promotional price and tend to adjust the reference price of the product being promoted, decreasing it. This mechanism leads to greater price sensitivity and lower willingness to pay (Bambauer-Sachse & Massera, 2016).

Based on the literature review mentioned above, the eighth research hypothesis is formulated:

H8: Promotional strategies influence the breakfast cereal purchase decision.

- ii. Promotional strategy: giveaways, offers, and sweepstakes

According to Brito (2012), there are four sets of promotional techniques, namely: sales promotions associated with price (mentioned above), promotional events, the addition of a free product (e.g.: "x% of free product) and customer loyalty programs. Can take different formats, with different objectives. The gifts consist of the offer of a prize resulting from the purchase of a certain product, which may be inside (in pack offer) or outside (on pack) of the packaging, with the aim of encouraging the purchase. The offer of free samples allows introducing a new product in the market and generating experimentation, being normally associated with new products (Lindon et al., 2004). Finally, contests, games, and sweepstakes, in turn, are presented as incentives for repeated purchases since participation implies the product purchase by the consumer (Belch & Belch, 2014). Samples offer the consumer the opportunity to try the product for free and increase the probability that the consumer will become



a customer of the brand. Sweepstakes/contests is a sales promotion that involves the acquisition of a brand or product combined with the expectation of receiving a prize that is randomly drawn after purchase (Brito, 2012).

Based on the bibliographic review presented, the ninth research hypothesis is formulated:

H9: Gifts, offers, and contests influence the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

2.3. Communication and Experience

2.3.1. Communication

The perception of a brand depends on its communication with consumers, with this communication nowadays made through traditional media advertising (press, radio, outdoors, TV), social networks, influencer marketing, website, among others (Koutra et al., 2015; Mirabi et al., 2015; Shahid et al., 2017). The “Word of Mouth” become the e-word of mouth, crucial for consumers to be able to collect and share information about a particular product (Voramontri & Klieb, 2019).

Influencers have also started to have great influence in the consumer’s purchase decision being crucial that digital influencers establish a strong and close relationship with their community (Folkvord et al., 2020).

When addressing the communication of food products, the food industry uses different platforms to promote its products and essentially uses television to do so, considering the target audience, adapting the techniques, leading to seduction and consumption (Ribeiro & Mesquita, 2019). When products are aimed at children, brands opt for advertising with songs and the presentation of a utopian world mainly through cartoons and for adults, through association with public figures, with both kinds of advertising as an effective way to gain consumer loyalty (Chaudhury, 2010; Ribeiro & Mesquita, 2019).

Based on the literature review, the tenth research hypothesis is formulated:

H10: Communication influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals, in its different aspects: advertising, social networks, and influencer marketing.

2.3.2. Previous Consumption Experience of the Product

Trust in the brand or product is one of the determining factors for the purchase decision because a consumer who believes and trusts the brand is willing to remain loyal, to pay a higher price for the brand, according to the expectations it can provide (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Gagić et al. (2013) concluded that consumer expectations in a brand can also play a dangerous role when not met, since negative feelings can be created about the entire experience while a trustworthy brand is one that keeps its promises of value to the consumer even in less favorable or crisis times. Salleh et al. (2013) argue that consumer behavior is tested through the path between satisfaction and loyalty, and satisfaction directly influences brand loyalty and trust. Yang (2017) considered that consumer satisfaction only happens when the expectations are matched by product performance.

Some authors suggest that the choice of breakfast cereals when consumers have a positive first experience with a particular product, they pass to consider that option as viable, disregarding the remaining options available on the market (Chaudhury, 2010). Mowen & Minor (2005) in their research about coffee in capsules, they concluded that individuals who have already tried coffee in capsules have a positive or negative attitude (emotions) towards the machine, influencing their next purchase.

Based on the literature review, the eleventh research hypothesis is formulated:

H11: Confidence in the product through the evaluation of earlier consumption experience influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.



2.3.2. Advice from Family and Friends and Other Consumers' Feedback

Word of Mouth (WoM) is an oral, interpersonal communication between a communicator and a receiver, where information is an unpaid opinion about a particular product, service, or brand, an informal communication between consumers, with a strong influence on consumer decisions (Arndt, 1967; Litvin et al., 2008). Nowadays social networks play a leading role in bringing consumers together, sharing and collecting information, thus also facilitating the approximation and commitment between brands and consumers making the relationship between communicator and receiver, once familiar, as a social relationship were is possible for the communicator to influence the behavior of their peers (Daugherty & Hoffman, 2014). Although with an important and influential role for consumers, the trust placed in online information and e-WoM is different from what they had in the traditional WoM since the opinion is often anonymous, except in situation were there exists trust in other opinions, like if they came from family and friends (Reimer & Benkenstein, 2016).

Based on the literature review, the twelfth research hypothesis is formulated:

H12: Opinions from family and friends and other consumers' feedback influences the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

2.4. Covid-19 Pandemic

With the Covid-19 pandemic, as social distancing and the duty of home collection were imposed, the consumer installed new purchasing and consumption habits. One of the most striking has to do with the use of digital platforms for daily tasks, but also for shopping (Gregory, 2021). The consumer himself has changed, the result of a routine that was changed and habits that were broken with the emergence of the pandemic, which disturbed the consumption habits of consumers. Some consumers believe this change will have a post-COVID-19 impact (Ling, 2020; Kumar & Abdin, 2020). Puttaiah et al. (2020) presented some of the main changes registered with consumer buying behavior as prioritizing obtaining the maximum value for the money spent on a particular good; the loss of loyalty to already known brands, through experimentation with new brands; local support, with the appreciation of locally produced products and also through proximity channels, such as grocery stores.

Based on the literature review, the thirteenth research hypothesis is formulated:

H13: The Covid-19 pandemic influenced the decision process in breakfast cereals purchase.

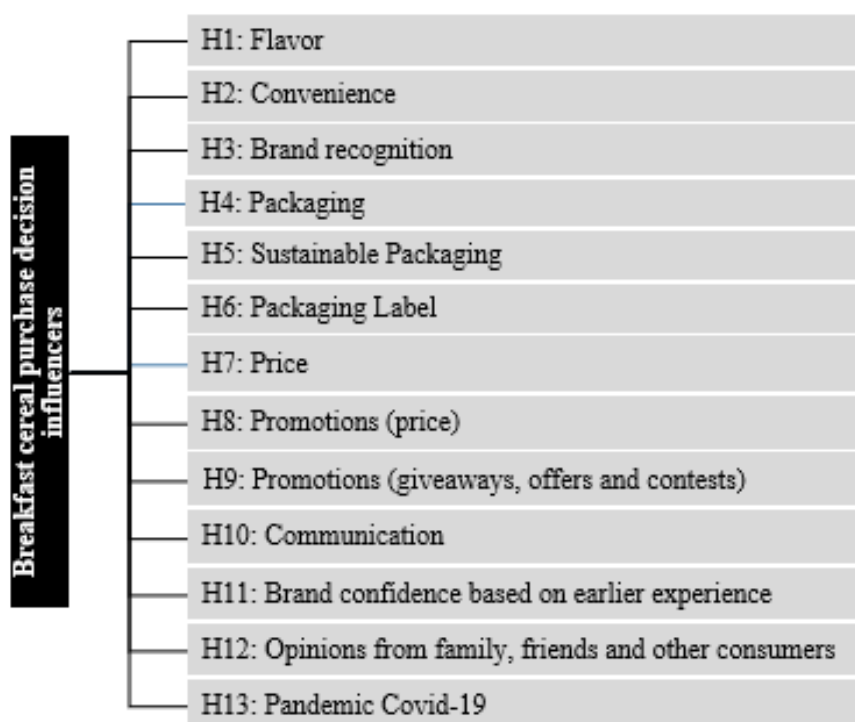
2.5. Theoretical Model of Analysis

The literature review presents the different approaches on a given topic, identifying gaps in some of them, still little explored by authors and researchers. The theoretical or conceptual framework is the design created based on the bibliography collected, which allows the contextualization of the variables that constitute the hypotheses formulated for the research (Oliveira & Ferreira, 2014).

The initial question guiding this research is: What factors influence consumers' decisions to purchase breakfast cereals? The theoretical framework outlined in this study enabled us to formulate several hypotheses. Figure 5 below lists the thirteen hypotheses that will be tested in section 4.



Figure 5: Research hypotheses. Source: Adapted from the authors mentioned in the literature review.



Source: Developed by authors.

3. Research Methodology

In this research we aim to find out the impact of the factors that influence the consumer in the purchase decision of breakfast cereals. The factors we will analyze are those previously identified. Thus, we defined three main research objectives,

- Describe the profile of the breakfast cereal consumer;
- Identify the determining factors in the purchase of breakfast cereals;
- Check how sociodemographic factors such as age, gender, household income, and educational attainment influence breakfast cereal purchase behavior.

Considering these defined objectives, this research used a quantitative methodology that allows measuring and quantifying data, organizing and understanding large volumes of information, testing hypotheses and generalizing, guaranteeing the reliability and precision of the results (Malhotra, 2006 and Kahneman, 2011).

3.1. Data Collection Instrument

Considering the hypotheses presented above, an online questionnaire survey was carried out. The questionnaire was organized into seven parts, as follows:

- I. Breakfast cereal consumption: this first section defines the profile of the consumer and purchaser of breakfast cereals, frequency of consumption and purchase, and the mode of consumption.
- II. Choice of breakfast cereals: the second part of the questionnaire assesses the possible changes in breakfast cereal consumption in the last two years, as well as the factors that influence the decision to purchase breakfast cereals, taking into account the variables described in the literature review: Previous experience; Opinion of family and friends; Brand recognition; Flavor; Convenience; Packaging; Food label; Price; Price promotion; Gifts, offers, and contests for children and adults; Packaging sustainability; Communication.



- III. Packaging and labeling: this section assesses the power of packaging and its elements, as well as the food label, and the importance given to them when choosing and purchasing breakfast cereals.
- IV. Price, Brand, and Flavor: this set of questions addresses the Price, Brand, and Flavor factors in detail, determining their impact when purchasing breakfast cereals;
- V. Sustainability and Communication: assesses the importance of sustainable elements, as well as the importance of Communication and its privileged channels for collecting information on breakfast cereals.
- VI. Pandemic: given the current scenario, a section was dedicated to the pandemic factor, assessing the impact of COVID-19 on consumption habits and purchase of breakfast cereals.
- VII. Sociodemographic data: at the end of the questionnaire, sociodemographic information is requested from respondents in order to describe the sample surveyed.

The responses were expressed on a nominal and ordinal scale. To evaluate the opinions of the respondents and their level of agreement/disagreement regarding a specific statement, a 5-point Likert scale was used (1. Strongly disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neither agree nor disagree, 4. Agree, and 5. Strongly agree).

A pre-test was carried out with a sample of 10 individuals, both male, and female, aged between 21 and 30 years, in order to verify the validity of the questions and the general understanding of the questionnaire. Based on the feedback obtained, a change was made to the question “How do you usually consume breakfast cereals?” by adding the option “Other”.

Table 1: Sample sociodemographic characterization.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Female	292	87.2
Male	43	12.8
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Between 21 and 30 years old	155	46.3
Between 31 and 40 years	61	18.2
Between 41 and 50 years old	59	17.6
51 years or older	41	12.2
up to 20 years	19	5.7
Academic Studies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Graduation	174	51.9
High School	85	25.4
Master’s degree	66	19.7
Middle School	9	2.7
Doctorate	1	0.3

Source: Developed by authors.

The questionnaire was made on google forms and shared on the authors’ social networks such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. A non-random sampling method, more specifically a convenience sample, was used since the people who make up the sample were not selected through a statistical criterion, but by criteria defined by the researchers (Oliveira & Ferreira, 2014). Having used a convenience sample, it is easier to motivate people to respond, which is an advantage. The sample consists of 335 responses, is mostly female and almost half are up to 30 years old. The sociodemographic characterization of the sample is presented in Table 1.



3.2. Data Analysis Procedure

Data were processed using the statistical software SPSS (version 27). To identify whether there is a normal distribution, the Shapiro-Wilk test was conducted. If the assumption of normality was not verified, the non-parametric Wilcoxon test was used to test if the median is equal to 3 (the value 3 represents the median of the 5-point Likert scale). Additionally, Spearman’s correlation coefficient was also applied to check if there is a (linear) relationship between the ordinal variables. The significance level of 0.05 was used in all tests.

4. Results

Analyzing the regularity of breakfast cereal consumption, 33.1% of respondents rarely consume breakfast cereals and 4.5% said “Never,” 21.5% of respondents consume cereals 2 to 3 times a week, followed by consumption once a week (13.7%) and once a day or more (13.1%). It is important to mention that the answer “Never” was considered since the respondents could not be consumers of breakfast cereals and only buyers.

The majority, 56.4%, consume cereals for breakfast, although there are also those who eat them as a snack or both, 18.2% and 19.1% respectively. The supper and other moments mentioned by respondents show values below 3.9%. When asked about the cereal brand, 42.7% reported consuming more than one brand of breakfast cereal. Distributor label was the second most answered brand (26.6%), followed by Nestlé (15.5%), and Kellogg’s (6.9%). The flavors that attract more people are chocolate (35.8%) or plain (33.1%). Honey and fruit flavors are preferred by 16.1% and 9.3%, respectively. Other flavors were mentioned, but in total, they correspond to 5.3% of the answers.

4.1. Influencing Factors When Purchasing Breakfast Cereals

Analyzing the factors which could influence the purchase of breakfast cereals (Table 2), note that the results of the Shapiro-Wilk test always registered a p-value less than 0.05, revealing a non-normal distribution for all factors. Thus, the Wilcoxon non-parametric test was performed, we conclude that only brand recognition (p-value=0.55) and convenience (p-value=0.11) are indifferent as to which cereals to buy.

Table 2: Factors influencing the purchase of breakfast cereals.

	N	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p-value	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Flavor H1 supported	335	4.12	4	1.13	0.75	0.00	40344	0.00
Convenience H2 unsupported	335	3.17	4	1.34	0.87	0.00	22706	0.11
Brand recognition H3 unsupported	335	2.99	3	1.29	0.89	0.00	17284	0.55
Packaging H4 unsupported	335	2.55	3	1.26	0.88	0.00	9261	0.00
Packaging sustainability H5 unsupported	335	2.79	3	1.24	0.91	0.00	11433	0.00
Food label H6 supported	335	3.45	4	1.41	0.85	0.00	28959	0.00
Price H7 supported	335	3.65	4	1.30	0.83	0.00	34319	0.00
Price promotion H8 supported	335	3.73	4	1.30	0.80	0.00	37642	0.00
Gifts, offers, or contests for adults or children	335	1.78	1	1.03	0.75	0.00	2945	0.00



H9 unsupported								
Communication H10 unsupported	335	2.22	2	1.20	0.85	0.00	10678	0.00
Previous experience H11 supported	335	3.87	4	1.19	0.80	0.00	39814	0.00
Opinion of family, friends, and acquaintances H12 unsupported	335	2.56	2	1.27	0.87	0.00	10491	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.

However, on the one hand, previous experience, price, price promotion, food label and flavor are the five most valued factors when purchasing this food option. On the other hand, in this first analysis, for the factors: opinion of family, friends, and acquaintances, packaging, packaging sustainability, gifts, offers and contests, convenience, communication, and brand recognition, do not contribute to the purchase of breakfast cereals. Among these, the one with the lowest value (median = 1) was gifts, offers, and contests.

4.1.1. Packaging

In order to deepen the relationship between consumers and breakfast cereal packaging, we analyze the question: “I value these factors in breakfast cereal packaging: packaging design; promotional formats; colors used; recreational elements of packaging for children” (Table 3, the null hypothesis is always rejected, since p-value less than 0.05).

Among all the packaging elements, the promotional formats are the aspect most valued by the respondents, which is in line with the analysis carried out above, in Table 3, whose results demonstrate that price promotion is one of the most valued aspects when making a decision to buy breakfast cereals.

Table 3: Elements valued in breakfast cereal packaging.

	N	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p-value	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Packaging design	335	2.72	3	1.18	0.91	0.00	9737	0.00
Promotional formats	335	3.62	4	1.17	0.83	0.00	31214	0.00
Packaging colors	335	2.57	3	1.16	0.90	0.00	7387	0.00
Recreational packaging elements	335	2.41	2	1.15	0.88	0.00	5483	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.

Assess the influence of age on packaging valuation through the statistical analysis, Spearman correlation coefficient, it is possible to verify that there is an association between them (p-value < 0.05; Rs= -0.21). So, young people value packaging as a purchase decision factor, while older people tend not to.

4.1.2. Food Label

Regarding breakfast cereal, label information is important. Analyzing Table 4 we can thus conclude that respondents use some of their time to evaluate these aspects of the breakfast cereal, food label (Wilcoxon test: p-value less than 0.05 and all medians are greater than 3).

As we have already seen in Table 3, food label is one of the most important factors for respondents when deciding which cereals to buy. But is the importance of the label similar for people of different ages? According to Table 5, consumers’ opinions about the “ingredients” and the “nutritional traffic light” do not vary by age (the p-value



greater than 0.05). Only the “nutrition information” is associated with age (p -value < 0.05; R_s = 0.17). Young people tend to place slightly less importance on nutritional information.

Table 4: Elements valued on the food label of breakfast cereals.

	N	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p -value	Wilcoxon test	p -value
Nutritional information	335	3.70	4	1.27	0.83	0.00	35125	0.00
Ingredients	335	3.56	4	1.24	0.85	0.00	31042	0.00
Nutritional traffic light	335	3.47	4	1.24	0.87	0.00	27515	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.

Table 5: Spearman Correlation between the variables “age” and “food label (nutritional information, ingredients, nutritional traffic light).”

Age	N	Correlation coefficient	p -value
Nutritional information	335	0.17	0.01
Ingredients	335	0.10	0.06
Nutritional traffic light	335	0.11	0.06

Source: Developed by authors.

It has also been found that people with higher incomes are sometimes willing to pay more for cereals that they consider healthier, for example, organic ingredients, no added sugar, no colorings or preservatives, among others (p -value < 0.05; R_s = 0.17).

4.2. Sustainability

In the face of pressing environmental challenges, sustainable consumption is more relevant than ever (McCarthy & Wang 2022). By adopting sustainable consumption, we can reduce waste, conserve resources, and support industries that prioritize ethical and environmentally friendly practices (Trudel, 2019). Thus, sustainable consumption is very important as it promotes a healthier planet and a more equitable future for all (Riva et al., 2022).

The sustainability of breakfast cereal packaging is important for all respondents (see Table 6: p -value is always less than 0.05). With emphasis on “ingredients from organic farming” being the one that registers the highest percentage of agreement (72,5%). And the importance given to this aspect does not vary with age (Table 8: p -value =0.26), nor do “recycling information” (Table 8: p -value =0.06).

Table 6: Elements considered when assessing the sustainability of breakfast cereal packaging.

	N	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p -value	Wilcoxon test	p -value
Material	335	3.68	4	0.98	0.86	0.00	25731	0.00
Claims and certifications	335	3.67	4	1.05	0.86	0.00	26837	0.00
Recycling information	335	3.72	4	1	0.85	0.00	30003	0.00
Ingredients from organic farming	335	3.82	4	1.02	0.83	0.00	33425	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.



However, “material” and “claims and certifications” show a weak relationship with age (Table 7: p-value=0.03, less than 0.05), with a slight tendency for younger people to value material and packaging claims as sustainable elements of breakfast cereals more highly.

Table 7: Spearman Correlation between the variables “age” and “sustainability (claims and certifications, recycling information, ingredients from organic farming)”.

Age	N	Correlation coefficient	p-value
Material	335	-0.12	0.03
Claims and certifications	335	-0.12	0.03
Recycling information	335	0.11	0.06
Ingredients from organic farming	335	-0.06	0.26

Source: Developed by authors.

Sustainability is a concern for all, regardless of the consumer’s income (Rs=0.00; p-value =0.98). It should be noted that the sample is composed mostly of people with a high level of education, relatively young, so it is natural that this is a widespread concern.

4.3. Communication Channels

All the channels mentioned in Table 8 (Wilcoxon: p-value is less than 0.05), only television advertisements are the preferred channel for respondents in relation to the communication of breakfast cereals (median=4). On the opposite side are the press, radio, and influencers (median=2). They do not contribute to the communication of information about breakfast cereals. The remaining channels, namely social networks and the Internet, were not identified as privileged communication channels for this product either.

Table 8: Privileged communication channels for breakfast cereals.

	No	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p-value	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Social media	335	2.63	3	1.30	0.88	0.00	11055	0.00
Internet	335	2.61	3	1.24	0.88	0.00	10630	0.00
Influencers	335	2.49	2	1.27	0.87	0.00	8710	0.00
TV advertisement	335	3.38	4	1.28	0.84	0.00	26893	0.00
Outdoor advertising	335	2.52	3	1.20	0.88	0.00	7532	0.00
Press (online and in print)	335	2.38	2	1.15	0.87	0.00	5501	0.00
Radio	335	2.09	2	1.02	0.85	0.00	2534	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.

4.4. The Pandemic

Considering the atypical moment experienced worldwide that has changed many habits, we wanted to assess whether the pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus had an impact on the decision to purchase breakfast cereals. Analyzing the factors mentioned in Table 9, we can conclude that they did not change during the pandemic (p-value < 0.05 and median is not 4 or 5). So, H13 is unsupported.



Table 9: Impact of the Pandemic on influencing factors when purchasing breakfast cereals.

	N	Average	Median	SD	Shapiro-Wilk Test	p-value	Wilcoxon test	p-value
Price	335	2.81	3	1.33	0.89	0.00	13932	0.00
Packaging	335	2.28	2	1.08	0.86	0.00	4112.50	0.00
Advertising	335	2.20	2	1.05	0.86	0.00	3350	0.00
Gifts, offers, contests for adults or children	335	1.98	2	0.97	0.83	0.00	1495	0.00
Food label	335	2.63	3	1.28	0.89	0.00	9753	0.00
Packaging sustainability	335	2.51	3	1.18	0.89	0.00	6691	0.00

Source: Developed by authors.

To further assess consumers’ perception of the convenience of products in a pandemic context, the following question was considered “During confinement, I tried to buy more convenient food options (easy to prepare)”. Its median is 2, and it can be concluded that convenience was not a factor valued during confinement (W=7620; p-value <0.05).

5. Discussion and Conclusions

Understanding consumer behavior in the marketing domain is of paramount importance (Auf et al., 2018). In this context, breakfast cereals hold significant relevance due to their widespread consumption and their benefits for physical and mental well-being (Santos et al., 2022). The primary aim of this research was to analyze consumer behavior and identify the factors influencing the purchase of breakfast cereals, with a particular focus on the role of packaging and its elements in the purchase decision.

As the theoretical framework suggests, trust in the product, based on previous experiences, plays a crucial role in maintaining consumer loyalty to a brand (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Mowen & Minor, 2005; Chaudhury, 2010; Şahin et al., 2011; Salleh et al., 2013; Yang, 2017). The present research corroborates this by concluding that trust in the product is indeed one of the most significant factors influencing the decision to purchase breakfast cereals.

Contrary to some expectations, the influence of family opinions or social media was not found to be significant in the context of breakfast cereal purchases. Additionally, brand recognition did not substantially impact the purchase decision. However, brands should leverage consumers’ sensitivity to sensory experiences (Lindstrom, 2013), particularly taste, which was identified as a key factor. The preferred flavors among respondents were chocolate (35.8%) and plain (33.1%).

While breakfast cereal packaging is generally not highly valued, specific packaging elements, such as promotional formats, are significantly appreciated. This poses a challenge for marketing professionals who aim to develop packaging that aligns with the product’s sales strategy (Waheed et al., 2018; Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Consumers are increasingly concerned with the sustainability of packaging, a trend more pronounced among younger consumers who place a higher value on packaging elements. This suggests that younger consumers consider packaging and its components as crucial differentiators, highlighting the potential for developing targeted packaging strategies, particularly in promotional formats, to cater to their preferences and enhance brand differentiation.

As noted in the literature, food labels should provide information that enables consumers to make informed choices (Brito, 2012). The study revealed that food labels, including nutritional information, ingredients, and nutritional traffic lights, are important factors for consumers when purchasing breakfast cereals. This concern is especially relevant for older individuals.



Given that breakfast cereals are routine, regularly consumed products, price is a highly significant factor influencing their purchase. This may justify the preference for promotional packaging (Jaeger, 2006; Chiang & Jang, 2007; Ares et al., 2010; Sungpo et al., 2018). Although some authors view promotions as a means to attract customers and gain market notoriety (Gauri et al., 2017), others have identified the opposite effect (Bambauer-Sachse & Massera, 2016; Bhatti, 2018). Our research indicates that consumers are motivated by price reductions, typically through promotional offers, while other promotional strategies, such as gifts and competitions, do not significantly attract respondents. This insight could prompt brands to reconsider or eliminate such strategies. Initially, respondents did not consider communication a significant factor in their decision to buy breakfast cereals. However, a more detailed analysis revealed that consumers are influenced by television advertisements.

The atypical context of the pandemic has impacted society and consumption habits (Kumar & Abdin, 2020; Ling, 2020; Mamede et al., 2020; Puttaiah et al., 2020; Gregory, 2021). However, these changes were not observed in the purchase patterns of breakfast cereals.

This research outlines the consumption profile of breakfast cereals in Portugal and identifies the factors influencing purchase decisions. The findings provide valuable insights for marketers in this product category and similar ones, enabling them to tailor their strategies to these factors. By recognizing these factors as potential threats or opportunities, marketers can effectively adapt their products. For instance, the importance of packaging characteristics and food labeling to consumers are aspects worth considering in future personalized strategies.

References

- Aaker, D. A. (2014) *Aaker on branding: 20 principles that drive success*. Morgan James Publishing
- Allswey, A. H., Al-Samarraie, H., El-Qirem, F. A., Alzahrani, A. I., & Alfarraj, O. (2020). Culture in the design of mHealth UI: An effort to increase acceptance among culturally specific groups. *Electronic Library*, 38(2), 257–272.
- Ampuero, O., & Vila, N. (2006). Consumer perception of product packaging. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 23, 100–112.
- Ares, G., Giménez, A., & Deliza, R., (2010) Influence of three non-sensory factors on consumer choice of functional yogurts over regular ones. *Food Quality and Preference*, 21, 361–367.
- Arndt, J., (1967) *Word of mouth advertising: A review of the literature*. Advertising Research Foundation.
- Asri, A.F., Chik, C.T, Rais, M.H.M., & Othman, N. (2020). SME Product Packaging: How to Attract Consumers? *International Journal of Business Society*, 4(7), 102–109.
- Auf, M. A. A., Meddour, H., Saoula, O., & Majid, A. H. A. (2018). Consumer buying behaviour: The roles of price, motivation, perceived culture importance, and religious orientation. *Journal of Business and Retail Management Research*, 12(4).
- Bambauer-Sachse, S. & Massera, L. (2016) Effects of Price Promotions on Consumers' Reference Prices: The Role of Contextual Factors and Price Claims. In L. Petruzzellis & R. S. Winer (Eds.), *Rediscovering the Essentiality of Marketing*, 557–562.
- Belch, G., & Belch, M. (2008). *Propaganda e Promoção — Uma Perspectiva da Comunicação Integrada de Marketing* (7th ed.). McGraw Hill Brasil
- Benachenhou, S.M., Guerrich, B., & Moussaoui, Z. (2018). The effect of packaging elements on purchase intention: case study of Algerian customers. *Management Science Letters*, 8, 217–224.
- Bhatti, A. (2018) Sales Promotion and Price Discount Effect on Consumer Purchase Intention with the Moderating Role of Social Media in Pakistan. *International Journal of Business Management*, 3(4), 50–58.



- Billeter, D., Zhu, M., & Inman, J. J. (2012). *Transparent packaging and consumer purchase decisions*. ACR North American Advances.
- Boks, C. & Stevels, A. (2007). Essential Perspectives for Design for Environment - Experiences from the Electronics Industry. *International Journal of Production Research*, 45, 4021–4039.
- Brito, P. (2012), *Promoção de Vendas e Comunicação de Preços*, Edições Almedina, Coimbra.
- CEEREAL. Breakfasts in Europe (2016). <http://www.ceereal.eu/resources/publications>
- Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. (2001) The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: the role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing*, 65, 81–93.
- Chaudhury, R. (2010) Determinants of Consumer Behavior in Buying RTE Foods. *A Journal of The Academy of Business and Retail Management*, 5(1).
- Chiang, C. F. & Jang, S. S. (2007) The effects of perceived price and brand image on value and purchase intention: Leisure travelers' attitudes toward online hotel booking. *Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing*, 15(3), 49–69.
- Chind, K., & Sahachaisaeree, N. (2012). Purchasers' perception on packaging formal design: A comparative case study on luxury goods merchandising. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 42, 436–442.
- Daley, A., McGee, E., Bayliss, S., Coombe, A., & Parretti, H. (2017). Effects of physical activity calorie equivalent food labelling to reduce food selection and consumption: Systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled studies. *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. <https://jech.bmj.com/content/74/3/269>
- Daugherty, T., & Hoffman, E. (2014). eWOM and the importance of capturing consumer attention within social media. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 20, 82–102.
- Deloitte. (2017). Have you met the new consumer? Study. <https://www2.deloitte.com/pt/pt/pages/consumer-industrial-products/articles/consumo-2017.html>
- Fayet-Moore, F., McConnell, A., Tuck, K., & Petocz, P. (2017). Breakfast, and breakfast cereal choice and its impact on nutrient and sugar intakes and anthropometric measures among a nationally representative sample of Australian children and adolescents. *Nutrients*, 9(10), 1045.
- Folkvord, F., Roes, E., & Bevelander, K. (2020). Promoting healthy foods in the new digital era on Instagram: An experimental study on the effect of a popular real versus fictitious fit influencer on brand attitude and purchase intentions. *BMC Public Health*.
- Form, V. (2009). Efficient use of resources in breakfast cereal packaging design. *Material Changes for a Better Environment*. Waste & Resources Action Programme.
- Gagić, S., Tešanović, D., & Jovičić, A. (2013). The vital components of restaurant quality that affect guest satisfaction. *TURIZAM*, 17(4), 166–176.
- Gauri, D. K., Ratchford, B., Pancras, J., & Talukdar, D. (2017). An empirical analysis of the impact of promotional discounts on store performance. *Journal of Retailing*, 93(3), 283–303.
- Gregory, J. G. (2021). The ultimate disruption. <https://www.epsilon.com/us/insights/core-content/how-covid-19-affects-consumer-behavior-and-marketing-trends>
- Gürlich, U., Hummelberger, D., Kladnik, V., & Tacker, M. (2020). Circular packaging design guideline: Design recommendations for recyclable packaging.
- Hawkes, C. (2010). Food packaging: The medium is the message. *Public Health Nutrition*, 13(2), 297–299.



- Hawkins, D. I., & Mothersbaugh, D. L. (2016). *Consumer behavior: Building marketing strategy* (14th ed.).
- Hurley, R. A., Randall, R., O'Hara, L., Tonkin, C., & Rice, J. C. (2016). Color harmonies in packaging. *Wiley Periodicals*.
- Jaeger, S. (2006). Non-sensory factors in sensory science research. *Food Quality and Preference*, 17, 132–144.
- Jerzyk, E. (2016). Design and communication of ecological content on sustainable packaging in young consumers' opinions. *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 22(6), 707–716.
- Koutra, C., Thespol, M., & Ngugi, I. K. (2015). The role of branding, promotion and sub-culture in the consumption of breakfast cereals in Thailand. *Hotel & Business Management*, 4(1).
- Krejčová, A., Ludvíková, I., Černohorský, T., & Pouzar, M. (2012). Elemental analysis of nutritional preparations by inductively coupled plasma mass and optical emission spectrometry. *Food Chemistry*, 132(1), 588–596.
- Krishna, A., Cian, L., & Aydınoglu, N. Z. (2017). Sensory aspects of package design. *Journal of Retailing*, 93, 43–54.
- Kumar, R., & Abdin, S. (2020). Impact of epidemics and pandemics on consumption pattern: Evidence from Covid-19 pandemic in rural-urban India. *Asian Journal of Economics and Banking*.
- Lamb, C. H., Hair, J. F., & McDaniel, C. (2011). *Marketing* (11th ed.). South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Lindon, D., Lendrevie, J., Lévy, J., Dionísio, P., & Rodrigues, J. (2004). *Mercator XXI: Teoria e prática do marketing*. Don Quixote.
- Lindstrom, M. (2013). *Brand sense: The sensory secrets that drive us to buy* (1st ed.). GestãoPlus Editions.
- Ling, C. (2020). How the pandemic is affecting consumer behavior? <https://www.degroote.mcmaster.ca/articles/how-the-pandemic-is-affecting-consumer-behaviour/>
- Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E., & Pan, B. (2008). Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management*, 29(3), 458–468.
- Malhotra, N. (2006). *Pesquisa de marketing: Uma orientação aplicada* (4th ed.). Bookman.
- Matias, F., Santos, M., Assunção, R., & Castanheira, I. (2020). A rotulagem nutricional simplificada na avaliação de cereais de pequeno-almoço. *Instituto Nacional de Saúde*.
- McCarthy, B., & Wang, P. (2022). Shades of sustainability: Who are the buyers and non-buyers of sustainable packaging? *Journal of Food Products Marketing*, 28(4), 153–178.
- McCarthy, E. J. (1964). *Basic marketing: A managerial approach* (2nd ed.). Irwin.
- Mielgo-Ayuso, J., Valtueña, J., Cuenca-García, M., Gottrand, F., Breidenassel, C., Ferrari, M., & Gonzalez-Gross, M. (2017). Regular breakfast consumption is associated with higher blood vitamin status in adolescents: The HELENA (Healthy Lifestyle in Europe by Nutrition in Adolescence) Study. *Public Health Nutrition*, 20(8), 1393–1404.
- Mirabi, V., Akbariyeh, H., & Tahmasebifard, H. (2015). A study of factors affecting on customers purchase intention: Case study: The agencies of Bono brand tile in Tehran. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Science and Technology*, 2(1).
- Mowen, J., & Minor, M. (2005). *Comportamento do consumidor*. Pearson Prentice-Hall.
- Olalekan, S. O., & Adewale, A. G. (2017). Effects of packaging on consumers' purchasing decisions. *International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development*, 1(6).



- Oliveira, E., & Ferreira, P. (2014). *Métodos de investigação: Da interrogação à descoberta científica*. Grupo Editorial Vida Económica.
- Page, R., Montgomery, A., & Richard, A. (2008). Targeting children in the cereal aisle: Promotional techniques and content features on ready-to-eat cereal product packaging. *American Journal of Health Education, 39*(5).
- Pauer, E., Wohner, B., Heinrich, V., & Tacker, M. (2019). Assessing the environmental sustainability of food packaging: An extended life cycle assessment including packaging-related food losses and waste and circularity assessment. *Sustainability, 11*, 925.
- Putra, A. H. P. K., Said, S., & Hasan, S. (2017). Implications of external and internal factors of mall consumers in Indonesia to impulsive buying behavior. *International Journal of Business Accounting and Management, 2*(4).
- Puttaiah, M. H., Raverkar, A. K., & Avramakis, E. (2020). All change: How COVID-19 is transforming consumer behavior. <https://www.swissre.com/institute/research/topics-and-risk-dialogues/health-and-longevity/covid-19-and-consumer-behaviour.html>
- Ranjbarian, B., Mahmoodi, S., & Shahin, A. (2010). Packaging elements and consumer buying decisions. *International Journal of Business Innovation and Research, 4*(4).
- Reimer, T., & Benkenstein, M. (2016). When good WOM hurts and bad WOM gains: The effect of untrustworthy online reviews. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(12), 5993–6001.
- Ribeiro, C., & Mesquita, C. (2019). Influência dos media nas escolhas alimentares dos alunos. *Da Investigação às Práticas, 9*(1), 81–89. <https://doi.org/10.25757/invep.v9i1.169>
- Riva, F., Magrizos, S., Rubel, M. R. B., & Rizomyliotis, I. (2022). Green consumerism, green perceived value, and restaurant revisit intention: Millennials' sustainable consumption with moderating effect of green perceived quality. *Business Strategy and the Environment, 31*(7), 2807–2819.
- Şahin, A., Zehir, C., & Kitapçı, H. (2011). The effects of brand experiences, trust, and satisfaction on building brand loyalty: An empirical research on global brands. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 24*, 1288–1301.
- Salleh, S., Hussin, Z., Pangil, F., Hasan, H., Mokhtar, S. S., & Shaari, H. (2013). An empirical investigation of brand loyalty behavior among hotel employees in Northern Malaysia. *International Journal of Business and Social Science, 4*(2).
- Santos, D., Silva, J. A., Pinto, E., & Pintado, M. (2022). Breakfast cereal products consumption and consumer preferences: A study on dietary fibre content awareness. *Journal of Food Processing & Beverages, 9*(1), 1–9.
- Sarkar, S., & Aparna, K. (2020). Food packaging and storage. *Research Trends in Home Science and Extension, 3*.
- Shahid, Z., Zafar, F., & Hussain, T. (2017). The impact of brand awareness on the consumers' purchase intention. *Journal of Marketing and Consumer Research, 33*.
- Silayoi, P., & Speece, M. (2004). Packaging and purchase decisions: An exploratory study on the impact of involvement level and time pressure. *British Food Journal, 10*(8), 607–628.
- Singh, S. (2006). Impact of color on marketing. *Management Decision, 44*(6), 783–789.
- Smith, A. P. (1998). Breakfast and mental health. *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition, 49*(5), 397–402.
- Stewart, B. (1995). Packaging as an effective marketing tool. *Pira International*.
- Sungpo, Y., Zhao, J., & Joung, H. (2018). Influence of price and brand image on restaurant customers' restaurant selection attribute. *Journal of Foodservice Business Research, 21*(2), 200–217.



Trudel, R. (2019). Sustainable consumer behavior. *Consumer Psychology Review*, 2(1), 85–96.

Voramontri, D., & Klieb, L. (2019). Impact of social media on consumer behavior. *International Journal of Information and Decision Sciences*, 11(3).

Waheed, S., Khan, M. M., & Ahmad, N. (2018). Product packaging and consumer purchase intentions. *Market Forces College of Management Sciences*, 13(2).

Williams, P. G. (2014). The benefits of breakfast cereal consumption: A systematic review of the evidence base. *Advances in Nutrition*, 5(5), 636S–673S.

Yang, F. X. (2017). Effects of restaurant satisfaction and knowledge sharing motivation on eWOM intentions: The moderating role of technology acceptance factors. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 41(1), 93–127.

Zhang, L. (2013). Creating a better product experience in organic cereal packaging design.

Declaração Ética

Conflito de Interesse: Nada a declarar. **Financiamento:** Nada a declarar. **Revisão por Pares:** Dupla revisão anónima por pares.



Todo o conteúdo da **NAUS — Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais e Comunicacionais** é licenciado sob [Creative Commons](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), a menos que especificado de outra forma e em conteúdo recuperado de outras fontes bibliográficas.