

# Graphics of Spice Packaging on Sri Lankan Supermarket Shelves

**SEWWANDI A.I.<sup>1\*</sup>, SAMARAWICKRAMA S.<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1,2</sup>Department of Integrated Design, Faculty of Architecture, University of Moratuwa, Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

<sup>1</sup>imalkasewwandi1805@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>sumanthris@uom.lk

---

**Abstract** – This study investigates how graphic design elements in spice packaging—specifically color, typography, and imagery—enhance product visibility and differentiation in Sri Lankan supermarkets. With over 20 competing brands and 40 spice varieties sharing limited shelf space, the study addresses a gap in packaging design literature by examining local visual strategies in a densely saturated retail context. This study employed a two-phase qualitative approach: a deductive phase that applied design criteria from existing literature to guide analysis, and an inductive phase involving field observations in Moratuwa supermarkets to identify context-specific packaging patterns. Using a coded visual analysis of 30 packaging samples, the study identifies how high-saturation colors, legible typography, and product-focused imagery improve visibility across consumer shelf zones (recognition, buy, curiosity). Findings reveal that high-saturation colors, clear multilingual typography, and selective imagery enhance product visibility across supermarket shelf zones. Local spice packaging predominantly uses analogous color schemes—reds, yellows, and browns—with some incorporating green accents for contrast. Most employ white or black text on red or yellow backgrounds to ensure legibility. Imagery is inconsistently applied: 54% include product photographs, while 40% use none. Transparent PET packaging further supports brand differentiation by showcasing authenticity. The study underscores graphic design's strategic role in FMCG environments and calls for further research into how localized design influences consumer perception in South Asian markets.

**Keywords:** Packaging Design; Spice Branding; Visual Communication; Shelf Visibility; Consumer Behavior

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

## I. Introduction

Packaging plays a pivotal role in how products are perceived, selected, and consumed in today's retail environments. In particular, sales packaging—also known as primary or consumer packaging—is the layer that consumers interact with directly on supermarket shelves and ultimately take home (Jönson, 2000). During a typical supermarket visit, shoppers are confronted with over 40,000 products, all competing for attention within an extremely limited decision-making window of just three seconds—underscoring the intense pressure and challenge of navigating choice overload (Reutskaja et al., 2011). In this saturated environment, the visual elements of packaging—its color, typography, imagery, and layout—becomes a critical determinant of consumer engagement (Liu et al., 2025; Riswanto et al., 2025).

Retailers further shape visual competition through structured shelf strategies, often informed by shopper behavior. Concepts such as visual shelf zones (recognition, buy, curiosity) and shelf height levels (eye, touch, stoop) influence how packaging performs spatially in real-world retail contexts (Roose & Vermeir, 2022; Hendrickson & Ailawadi, 2014; Drexler & Souček, 2017). In response, designers must craft packaging that captures attention from a distance, provides clarity at mid-range, and communicates trust and quality up close.

In Sri Lanka—a country globally recognized for its spice heritage—these challenges are heightened. Spices are not only a culinary staple but also a cultural and economic emblem, cultivated largely by smallholder farmers and sold in both local and export markets. As retail chains such as Keells, Cargills Food City, and Laugfs expand across the island, spice products now compete on supermarket shelves where visual appeal strongly influences consumer choice. With many spice brands and nearly spice (product) varieties coexist on these shelves, each relying on design elements to attract attention and express uniqueness.

Despite the competitive intensity and cultural value of spice products, there is a notable lack of research on how packaging graphics function in this specific context. Most packaging design literature focuses on Western markets, with limited attention to South Asian consumer behavior or design aesthetics shaped by local language, visual culture, and shelf systems.

This study addresses that gap by asking: How do the graphic design elements of color, typography, and imagery contribute to the visibility and differentiation of spice packaging within Sri Lankan supermarkets? To explore this question, the study adopts a two-phase qualitative approach: a deductive phase based on literature-informed visual criteria, and an inductive phase involving observational fieldwork in three supermarkets in Moratuwa. The analysis focuses on two spice categories—chilli powder and curry powder—and explores their front-facing packaging. The objectives of this study are twofold:

- (1) to identify and categorize the graphic design elements—color, typography, and imagery—used in spice packaging on Sri Lankan supermarket shelves;

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

(2) to examine how these visual elements influence product visibility and brand differentiation within the spatial realities of retail display.

By investigating this culturally specific setting, it expands the current discourse on regional packaging practices and offers practical insights for designers, marketers, and researchers navigating visual competition in fast-moving consumer goods.

## **II. Packaging and the Retail Environment**

Packaging—particularly sales packaging is widely recognized in design and marketing literature for its role in shaping consumer attention and influencing behavior at the point of sale. This review outlines key research around supermarket shelf strategies and the graphic design elements most influential in shaping packaging visibility and differentiation.

### **A. Supermarket Shelves and Visual Zones**

In supermarket environments, product placement is rarely random. Merchandising strategies—often led by marketing and sales teams—prioritize visibility, category segmentation, and profitability. As a result, packaging effectiveness is closely tied to where a product is positioned on the shelf. A widely referenced model in packaging and consumer behavior research is the three-tier visual zone framework (Roose & Vermeir, 2022; Hendrickson & Ailawadi, 2014; Drexler & Souček, 2017; Cisternas et al., 2020), which illustrates how consumer interaction evolves as they move closer to a product. The Recognition Zone represents the initial point of visual contact from a distance, where bold colors, strong contrasts, and unique shapes are essential to capturing attention. As consumers draw nearer, they enter the Buy Zone, where they begin to engage more closely with elements such as product layout, typography, and label organization. Finally, in the Curiosity Zone—when the product is within easy reach—consumers tend to examine details like ingredient lists, certifications, and brand storytelling to inform their purchase decision. These zones highlight the need for packaging that moves the consumer from visual attraction to informed selection.

Shelf height levels—commonly categorized as eye-level, touch-level, and stoop-level—also play a vital role in product visibility. Eye-level shelves can increase product attention by up to 35% (Hendrickson & Ailawadi, 2014). According to Ebster & Garaus, 2011, top shelves (touch level) typically carry premium or niche products, middle shelves (eye-level) are prime placement zones for high-margin or established brands, and lower shelves (stoop-level) are often reserved for budget or value products, catering to price-sensitive consumers and frequently featuring less prominent visual branding. (Drexler & Souček, 2017).

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

These configurations are often biased toward marketing and sales team decisions, prioritizing brands with higher turnover, placement contracts, or promotional relevance—rather than design performance or consumer comprehension.

Additionally, habitual scanning behaviors influence how consumers visually navigate the shelf. Studies show a left-to-right and top-to-bottom scanning pattern dominates (Ebster & Garaus, 2011), reinforcing the need for visual hierarchy that aligns with these natural viewing rhythms. Products that are not aligned with these scanning flows—or placed at awkward shelf levels—risk being overlooked, regardless of packaging quality.

In this study, the concepts of visual zones and shelf levels were integrated into the observational analysis of spice packaging in Sri Lankan supermarkets. These frameworks offered a structured approach to examining how packaging graphics function within constrained and competitive shelf environments. By drawing on established research in merchandising, consumer behavior, and visual hierarchy, the study situates packaging visibility and differentiation within the broader spatial and behavioral dynamics of the retail environment.

### ***B. Graphic Design Elements in Packaging: Visibility and Differentiation***

Graphic design elements—particularly color, typography, and imagery—are consistently identified in the literature as key contributors to consumer attention and brand recognition (Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2006; Silayoi & Speece, 2007). These visual elements serve as the primary interface between product and shopper, especially within the structured shelf environments described in the previous section. This literature review segment focuses on how each of these three elements contributes to packaging visibility and brand differentiation, and why they form the basis of the coded visual analysis in this study.

#### ***1. Colour***

In supermarket environments—particularly within the Recognition and Buy Zones—color acts as a decisive tool for breaking through visual clutter. It enables packaging to stand out on crowded shelves, attract the eye, and trigger recognition and emotional engagement. In sales packaging, where every second of consumer attention counts, color not only defines the visual tone of the package but also conveys the core identity of the brand. Most packaging compositions are built around color—whether in the form of logos, product visuals, or background treatments—making it a foundational element in both visibility and brand communication (Labrecque et al., 2013; Klimchuk & Krasovec, 2006).

Brightness and foreground-background contrast improve legibility and visual salience, particularly under varied lighting and from a distance (Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014). The emotional and perceptual effects of structured color schemes—monochromatic, analogous, or complementary—further contribute to shelf impact by either creating visual harmony or drawing sharp contrast, depending on the intended consumer experience (Meyers & Gerstman, 2004; Aslam, 2005). Consistent use of brand-level colors across product ranges enhances recognition,

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

reinforces identity, and aids shopper recall across retail contexts (Underwood & Klein, 2002; Spence & Velasco, 2018).

Chevreul's theory of simultaneous contrast (1855) also remains relevant in packaging design, demonstrating how the perceived brightness or intensity of a color is affected by its surrounding hues. Pairing vibrant brand colors with neutral or muted backgrounds amplifies visual contrast and helps focal elements stand out (Labrecque, 2020). Additionally, converting packaging designs into grayscale offers a method to assess how effectively layout, shape, and visual hierarchy function in the absence of hue—an important measure of graphic integrity (Nancarrow et al., 1998).

Taken together, these strategies demonstrate that color is not merely decorative but operates as a core communicative tool—guiding attention, evoking emotion, and shaping brand meaning at the critical moment of purchase.

## **2. Typography**

Typography plays a crucial dual role in sales packaging: it must be visible from a distance and readable up close. Unlike color, which often serves to attract attention, typography is responsible for delivering the critical information needed for consumer decision-making—such as product type, brand name, and key selling points. Its effectiveness depends on a well-structured hierarchy that guides the shopper's eye from the most prominent message to supporting details (Roth & Wybenga, 2005; White, 2011).

In supermarket contexts—particularly within the Buy and Curiosity Zones—larger, high-contrast fonts enhance visibility and recognition, while secondary and tertiary typographic elements communicate product features, health information, or origin narratives (Silayoi & Speece, 2004; Rettie & Brewer, 2000). Poor contrast, cluttered layouts, or inconsistent font usage can impede legibility and reduce trust, particularly in high-involvement categories such as food (van der Lans et al., 2009).

In Sri Lanka, multilingual labeling adds further complexity to typographic design. Spice packages often feature Sinhala, Tamil, and English text simultaneously, requiring a clear visual hierarchy and balanced typographic treatment to avoid confusion while maintaining brand consistency across scripts (Sebba, 2023b; Keller, 2009). Typeface selection also plays a symbolic role—sans-serif fonts often suggest modernity and clarity, while serif or handwritten styles evoke tradition, craftsmanship, or authenticity.

As with color, typographic consistency across a brand's product range enhances recognition and supports consumer navigation. Visual balance in font weights, sizes, and placements allows shoppers to quickly identify brand and product information, especially in crowded shelf contexts where speed and clarity are vital (Henderson et al., 2004; Chandon et al., 2009).

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

Typography thus functions as both informational and symbolic infrastructure in packaging design—shaping how consumers interpret, trust, and remember the product.

### **3. Imagery**

Imagery is a central component of sales packaging, particularly in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sectors such as food and spices, where visual cues often substitute for physical inspection. Unlike typography, which conveys explicit information, imagery functions as a non-verbal visual shorthand, instantly signaling product type, quality, taste, or cultural relevance (Silayoi & Speece, 2007). In visually dense supermarket environments, compelling imagery can differentiate a product within seconds, guiding consumer attention through both emotional resonance and functional clarity.

Research emphasizes that the type of imagery—photographic, illustrative, or digitally rendered—plays a role in shaping consumer perceptions. Photographic images often communicate freshness and realism, while hand-drawn or ethnographic illustrations may evoke artisanal quality, heritage, or authenticity (Underwood & Ozanne, 1998b; Ampuero & Vila, 2006). Strategic placement of imagery—either as a central focus or as part of a supporting graphic system—affects how quickly it is registered and whether it supports or competes with other design elements (Bloch, 1995).

In the context of Sri Lankan spice packaging, imagery serves both functional and cultural purposes. It often depicts plated dishes, raw spices, or culturally resonant objects such as traditional cookware or rural landscapes. These visuals not only inform consumers about product use but also build emotional associations rooted in culinary familiarity and local identity (Peiris, 2023; Spence & Velasco, 2018b).

Visual clarity is essential. Images must be distinguishable from the background and not overwhelm the overall design. High-resolution visuals, well-defined edges, and balanced composition are critical for successful integration into the packaging layout. When combined with transparent packaging materials—common in the spice category—imagery must complement rather than obscure the product itself, enabling a harmonious interplay between actual contents and printed representations (Simmonds & Spence, 2018).

Imagery in packaging operates as both a navigational and emotive tool, helping consumers quickly recognize product type while reinforcing brand narrative and perceived quality. Its success lies in its ability to balance cultural familiarity, product relevance, and visual clarity within the constrained visual field of supermarket shelves.

### **III. Methodology**

This study adopted a two-phase qualitative methodology to investigate how graphic design elements—specifically color, typography, and imagery—enhance the visibility and brand

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

differentiation of spice packaging in supermarket contexts. The research combined a deductive phase, grounded in existing design literature to construct an analytical framework, with an inductive phase that involved applying this framework during in-store field observations conducted in Sri Lanka.

### A. Site Selection

Fieldwork was conducted in three major supermarket chains in Sri Lanka—Cargills Food City, Keells, and Laugfs—all located within the Moratuwa region. These chains were selected due to their national distribution, standardized shelf management practices, and wide consumer reach, which ensured consistency in merchandising across locations. Moratuwa was chosen for its high population density, demographic diversity, and proximity to Colombo, offering both representativeness and logistical convenience. In addition, Moratuwa’s rapid urban development, the presence of educational institutions, and the socioeconomic diversity of its consumer base provided a relevant setting for observing packaging design behavior within a competitive retail environment.

### B. Sample Selection

Across the three supermarkets, nineteen spice brands were identified. However, variations in stock availability and shelf placement made direct comparisons across all brands unfeasible. To ensure analytical consistency, the study focused on products that were available in all outlets and presented in comparable formats. Spices were sold in whole, ground, and value-added forms; however, ground chilli and curry powders were the only two categories offered by 15 of the 19 brands across all three locations. These two product types were selected for analysis due to their cross-brand uniformity and consistent presence in the retail environment. A purposive sample of 30 packaging units—15 ground chilli and 15 curry powder packs—was drawn from these brands. Each unit was examined based on its front-facing design as visible on supermarket shelves. The selected samples are shown in Figure 01.

**Figure 01**

Selected packaging samples of chilli and curry powder from 15 Sri Lankan spice brands used for graphic analysis.



\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

### **C. Deductive Phase: Visual Design Criteria**

The first phase of the research involved developing a literature-informed framework for analyzing three key graphic design elements. Color was evaluated based on its brightness and foreground-background contrast (Kauppinen-Räsänen, 2014b), palette harmony (Meyers & Gerstman, 2004), brand-level consistency (Underwood & Klein, 2002), and legibility when viewed in grayscale (Nancarrow et al., 1998). The communicative and emotive dimensions of color were central to its assessment. Typography was analyzed for legibility, visual hierarchy, and consistency in style across multilingual packaging formats, with references to studies on consumer interpretation and branding (Silayoi & Speece, 2004; van der Lans et al., 2009; Henderson et al., 2004). Imagery was assessed in terms of its presence, visual type (photographic or illustrative), placement, integration with the overall layout, and its ability to convey product-specific and cultural cues (Underwood & Ozanne, 1998; Bloch, 1995). These criteria provided a structured framework for evaluating packaging surfaces systematically and consistently.

### **E. Inductive Phase – Field Observations**

The second phase consisted of in-store field observations, conducted during midday hours (12:00–1:00 p.m.) to avoid disruption caused by shelf restocking and to ensure a stable retail setting. Each of the 30 packaging samples was photographed in both color and grayscale formats, enabling analysis of their visual structure under varied viewing conditions. Observational analysis applied the deductively derived criteria to the real-world context of shelf presentation. Additional data were recorded regarding shelf layout, including vertical positioning, product adjacency, and brand clustering. This information was used to interpret how graphic elements operated across recognized visual zones—namely the recognition zone (long-range visibility), buy zone (mid-range decision-making), and curiosity zone (close-range inspection)—as well as shelf height levels categorized as eye-level, touch-level, and stoop-level. This inductive component grounded the study’s visual analysis in actual consumer-facing contexts, offering insight into how packaging graphics function within constrained and competitive shelf environments.

## **IV. Analysis and Discussion**

All analyzed packaging samples were made of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a transparent polymer widely used in food packaging for its durability, chemical stability, and—most notably—its visual clarity. This transparency introduces a crucial visual variable: while some packages use it to highlight the actual product (e.g., spice color or granularity), others mask this feature entirely and rely on surface graphics to represent content. This bifurcation forms the foundation for the study’s primary visual categorization: Sample B: Packages that rely entirely on graphic elements for visual communication. Sample C: Packages that integrate transparent windows with graphic elements to reveal the product directly. *Figure 2* illustrates the selected packaging samples used for this analysis.

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

## **A. Colour**

The deductive criteria guided a close analysis of color in both structural and communicative functions. Sixty percent of the packages used analogous color schemes, dominated by red, yellow, and brown—shades that evoke traditional spice associations. An additional 20% incorporated complementary color schemes, notably green accents against red/yellow bases, and the remaining 20% used monochromatic palettes primarily based on red and yellow hues. In Sample B, where product visibility is absent, color becomes the dominant representational tool. These packages often allocate larger surface areas to rich, saturated colors that simulate spice tones. Conversely, Sample C packages leverage the PET material's transparency, which allows the actual spice to be visible. As a result, their graphic color use is more restrained, with only three of the twenty-two packages using product-mimicking backgrounds.

Within Sample C, further sub-grouping revealed differences between packages with direct-on-PET printing (Sample D) and those with internal paper labels (Sample E). Sample D typically featured larger transparent windows with minimal surrounding graphics, while Sample E offered more standardized, controlled color applications confined to label shapes—either square or arched forms. Among label-based packages, two variants emerged: E1 :maintained a consistent brand color across the product range. E2: varied product colors while retaining one or two brand-defining tones.

## **B. Typography**

Typography was examined for its contribution to legibility, brand identity, and information hierarchy. All Sri Lankan packages employed multilingual labeling—Sinhala, Tamil, and English—except for two that used English only. Most used white or black text on red or yellow backgrounds, maintaining high contrast for readability. Typography hierarchy followed two main patterns: either English was positioned first, followed by Sinhala and Tamil, or Sinhala was listed first, with English and Tamil following. Typically, the first language in the sequence was given typographic priority through larger font size and weight.

In Sample B, where transparency was not utilized, typography played a visually dominant role. Product names and brand logos were often bold, large, and allowed to vary in layout, enhancing product differentiation. Sample C, in contrast, used more standardized, minimal typographic structures due to reduced space availability and the prominent role of product visibility. Within Sample D, variations in product name placement created some visual dynamism, while Sample E consistently centered product names within the label, reinforcing a unified, structured brand image.

---

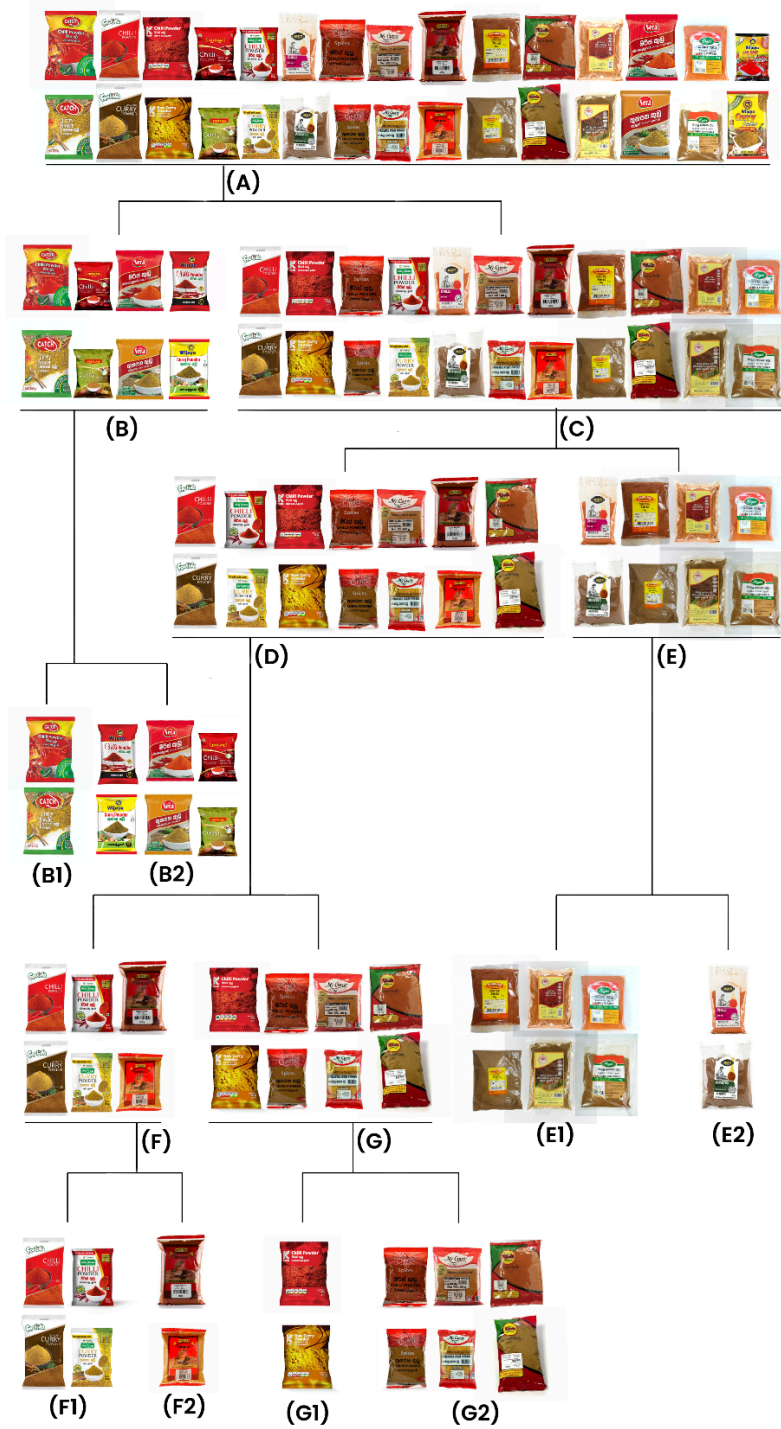
\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

**Figure 02**

Selected packaging samples of chilli and curry powder from 15 Sri Lankan spice brands used for graphic analysis



\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

### **C. Imagery**

Imagery was less consistently applied across the sample. Fifty-four percent of packages included photographs of the product—almost always presented in a white bowl to enhance visual contrast—while 6% used non-product-related images. The remaining 40% did not include any imagery. Among those that used product images, Sample B packages placed these prominently on the front panel to compensate for the absence of visible contents. In contrast, only eight of the twenty-two Sample C packages featured imagery, as the product itself was partially visible.

Within Sample B, further differentiation revealed two subgroups: B1 featured prominent photographic imagery on neutral backgrounds. B2 replaced imagery with large areas of background color derived from the product itself, often reinforcing visual identity through repetition.

Sample F and G, as subcategories of Sample D, further highlighted differences in the balance between transparency and graphic emphasis. Sample F prioritized graphic design elements (including imagery), while Sample G reduced graphic components to favor transparency. Notably, Sample F included product images on all packages; Sample G featured none. Overall, only 20% of the total sample incorporated both a transparent window and a product image, suggesting that brands tend to choose one dominant visual strategy.

### **D. Shelf Configuration and Brand Distribution**

Field observations revealed that the visual effectiveness of packaging is influenced not only by design elements but also by shelf configuration and placement decisions. Across the three supermarkets, spice sections occupied prominent aisle space and spanned approximately five to seven feet in height. However, arrangement strategies varied by retailer. Cargills and Keells arranged products by brand, while Laugfs grouped products by type, regardless of brand. In all three locations, value-added products were placed on the top shelves, whereas eye-level positions differed: Cargills and Laugfs positioned grounded products at eye level, while Keells prioritized whole spices.

These placements have implications for design visibility. Packages with bold graphic elements (e.g., those in Sample B) were better suited to eye-level and stoop-level zones where transparency is less effective due to distance or angle. In contrast, transparent packaging (Sample C and its subgroups) demonstrated stronger performance at arm's reach, where the consumer could inspect texture, color, and granularity closely. Thus, visibility is a function of both design execution and shelf context.

### **E. Synthesis of Findings**

The findings underscore the strategic role of graphic design in enhancing packaging performance under varying retail conditions. The interplay between transparency and surface graphics emerges

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka

as a critical design decision, shaped by both material properties and shelf dynamics. Color is used not only to attract attention but also to simulate product attributes when visibility is obstructed. Typography reinforces brand identity and information accessibility, particularly in multilingual contexts. Imagery, when used, supports either realism (through photographs) or abstraction (through consistent icons and layout structures), depending on the packaging strategy.

By integrating these findings within observed spatial constraints, the study reinforces that packaging design should not be assessed in isolation but as part of an interdependent visual and merchandising system. Design effectiveness is shaped not only by what is on the package but also by where and how it appears in the retail environment.

## V. Conclusion

This study provides a focused examination of Sri Lankan spice packaging, highlighting how color, typography, and imagery work as core communicative components rather than mere decorative features. Color emerges as a dynamic tool that guides visual attention, evokes sensory associations, and establishes brand meaning—especially critical in contexts where the product is not directly visible. Typography serves not only as a medium for delivering information but also as a symbolic infrastructure that influences how consumers perceive, trust, and remember the product. Imagery functions as both an emotive and navigational element, assisting in rapid product identification while reinforcing cultural familiarity and perceived quality.

Across the analyzed samples, Sri Lankan spice packaging demonstrates a thoughtful—albeit varied—approach to integrating design with material and shelf context. However, opportunities for improvement remain. These include greater consistency in multilingual typographic hierarchy, optimized color contrast for increased legibility, and more deliberate pairing of transparent packaging with supporting imagery or graphic cues. Future design strategies would benefit from deeper alignment between visual communication and spatial merchandising systems, particularly in competitive FMCG environments where seconds of consumer attention can determine purchasing decisions.

## References

- Ampuero, O., & Vila, N. (2006). Consumer perceptions of product packaging. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 23(2), 100–112. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760610655032>
- Aslam, M. M. (2005). Are you selling the right colour? A Cross-cultural review of colour as a marketing cue. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 12(1), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260500247827>
- Bloch, P. H. (1995). Seeking the ideal form: product design and consumer response. *Journal of Marketing*, 59(3), 16. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1252116>
- Chandon, P., Hutchinson, J. W., Young, S. H., & Bradlow, E. (2009). Does In-Store marketing work? Effects of the number and position of shelf facings on brand attention and evaluation at the point of purchase. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1406506>
- Cisternas, F., Chaimanowong, W., & Montgomery, A. (2020). Influencing competition through shelf design. *arXiv (Cornell University)*. <https://doi.org/10.48550/arxiv.2010.09227>

---

\*Contact: Phone +94-774769283

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2\(1\).2025.5](https://doi.org/10.31705/IDR.v2(1).2025.5)

Copyright © 2025, *Integrated Design Research, Department of Integrated Design, University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka*

- Drexler, D., & Souček, M. (2017). The level of shelves and space solution as one of the key factors for consumer attention. *Acta Universitatis Agriculturae Et Silviculturae Mendelianae Brunensis*, 65(5), 1679–1686.  
<https://doi.org/10.11118/actaun201765051679>
- Ebster, C., & Garaus, M. (2011). Store design and visual Merchandising: Creating store space that encourages buying.  
<https://doi.org/10.4128/9781606490952>
- Henderson, P. W., Giese, J. L., & Cote, J. A. (2004). Impression Management using Typeface Design. *Journal of Marketing*, 68(4), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.68.4.60.42736>
- Hendrickson, K., & Ailawadi, K. L. (2014). Six Lessons for In-Store Marketing from Six Years of Mobile Eye-Tracking Research. In *Review of marketing research* (pp. 57–74). <https://doi.org/10.1108/s1548-643520140000011002>
- Jönson, G. (2000). *Packaging Technology for the Logistician*, 3rd edition. <https://lup.lub.lu.se/record/541322>
- Kauppinen-Räsänen, H. (2014). Strategic use of colour in brand packaging. *Packaging Technology and Science*, 27(8), 663–676. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pts.2061>
- Kauppinen-Räsänen, H. (2014b). Strategic use of colour in brand packaging. *Packaging Technology and Science*, 27(8), 663–676. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pts.2061>
- Keller, K. L. (2009). Building strong brands in a modern marketing communications environment. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 15(2–3), 139–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260902757530>
- Klimchuk, M. R., & Krasovec, S. A. (2006). *Packaging Design: Successful Product Branding from Concept to Shelf*.  
[https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7620577M/Packaging\\_Design](https://openlibrary.org/books/OL7620577M/Packaging_Design)
- Labrecque, L. I. (2020). Color research in marketing: Theoretical and technical considerations for conducting rigorous and impactful color research. *Psychology and Marketing*, 37(7), 855–863. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21359>
- Labrecque, L. I., Patrick, V. M., & Milne, G. R. (2013). The marketers' prismatic palette: a review of color research and future directions. *Psychology and Marketing*, 30(2), 187–202. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.20597>
- Liu, C., Samsudin, M. R., & Zou, Y. (2025). The impact of visual elements of packaging design on purchase intention: Brand experience as a mediator in the tea bag product category. *Behavioral Sciences*, 15(2), 181.  
<https://doi.org/10.3390/bs15020181>
- Meyers, H. M., & Gerstman, R. (2004). *The visionary package*. Springer.
- Nancarrow, C., Wright, L. T., & Brace, I. (1998). Gaining competitive advantage from packaging and labelling in marketing communications. *British Food Journal*, 100(2), 110–118. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00070709810204101>
- Peiris, R. (2023). Enhancing food quality: comprehensive packaging solution for authentic ceylonese cuisine. *Bolgoda Plains*, 3(2), 62–64. [https://doi.org/10.31705/bprm.v3\(2\).2023.14](https://doi.org/10.31705/bprm.v3(2).2023.14)
- Rettie, R., & Brewer, C. (2000). The verbal and visual components of package design. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 9(1), 56–70. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10610420010316339>
- Reutskaja, E., Nagel, R., Camerer, C. F., & Rangel, A. (2011). Search Dynamics in Consumer Choice under Time Pressure: An Eye-Tracking Study. *American Economic Review*, 101(2), 900–926. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.101.2.900>
- Riswanto, A. L., Kim, S., Williady, A., Ha, Y., & Kim, H. (2025b). How visual design in dairy packaging affects consumer attention and Decision-Making. *Dairy*, 6(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/dairy6010004>
- Roose, G., & Vermeir, I. (2022). Putting spatial product presentation cues on the map: Review and research directions. *Journal of Business Research*, 155, 113400. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.113400>
- Roth, L., & Wybenga, G. L. (2005). *The packaging designer's book of patterns* (Third Edition).  
<http://ci.nii.ac.jp/ncid/BA12892775>
- Sebba, M. (2023b). Multimodal, multidimensional, multilingual. In *Routledge eBooks* (pp. 227–255).  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003166634-12>
- Silayoi, P., & Speece, M. (2004). Packaging and purchase decisions. *British Food Journal*, 106(8), 607–628.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/00070700410553602>
- Silayoi, P., & Speece, M. (2007). The importance of packaging attributes: a conjoint analysis approach. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(11/12), 1495–1517. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03090560710821279>
- Simmonds, G., & Spence, C. (2018). Food imagery and transparency in product packaging. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 49–77).  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94977-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94977-2_3)

- Spence, C., & Velasco, C. (2018). On the multiple effects of packaging colour on consumer behaviour and product experience in the 'food and beverage' and 'home and personal care' categories. *Food Quality and Preference*, 68, 226–237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2018.03.008>
- Spence, C., & Velasco, C. (2018b). On the multiple effects of packaging colour on consumer behaviour and product experience in the 'food and beverage' and 'home and personal care' categories. *Food Quality and Preference*, 68, 226–237. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2018.03.008>
- Underwood, R. L., & Klein, N. M. (2002). Packaging as brand communication: Effects of product pictures on consumer responses to the package and brand. *The Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, 10(4), 58–68. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10696679.2002.11501926>
- Underwood, R. L., & Ozanne, J. L. (1998b). Is your package an effective communicator? A normative framework for increasing the communicative competence of packaging. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 4(4), 207–220. <https://doi.org/10.1080/135272698345762>
- Van Der Lans, R., Cote, J. A., Cole, C. A., Leong, S. M., Smidts, A., Henderson, P. W., Bluemelhuber, C., Bottomley, P. A., Doyle, J. R., Fedorikhin, A., Moorthy, J., Ramaseshan, B., & Schmitt, B. H. (2009). Cross-National Logo Evaluation Analysis: An Individual-Level approach. *Marketing Science*, 28(5), 968–985. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1080.0462>
- White, A. W. (2011). *The elements of graphic design: Space, Unity, Page Architecture, and Type*. Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.