

IDENTIFICATION OF MATERIALS IN COFFEE PACKAGING: VISUAL SYMBOLS OF SUSTAINABILITY AND CONSUMER CO-RESPONSIBILITY

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1. INTRODUCTION

The variety of materials used without proper identification, along with the presence of visual elements that imply sustainability in coffee packaging that cannot be recycled, prompted the proposal of alternatives to enhance consumer choice (UNEP, 2017) by considering processes with positive impacts for producers, consumers, and the environment.

As a product of economic, historical, and cultural significance, coffee is embedded in Brazilian daily life and is reflected in various design projects, whether in packaging, preparation and consumption products, brand identity, or the interiors of coffee shops. As a result of various territorial factors, coffee is also a symbolic product, whose study can resonate in other markets, making it a suitable focus for analysis.

2. METHODOLOGY

The main objective of this work was to propose consumer empowerment processes that make consumers an integral and active part of selecting materials for coffee packaging.

The development began with the contextualization of the Brazilian coffee market, establishing the research problem and hypothesis, objectives, justification, and methodological aspects.

The theoretical foundation drew upon concepts of design and packaging design (SOUSA; CARVALHO; PEREIRA, 2020); visual symbols and sustainability (FORMIGA, 2011); materials (TEIXEIRA; ITO, 2017) and consumer perception (VELASCO; SPENCE, 2018); economic, social, and environmental factors (RØPKE, 2015); information and consumption; as well as laws and regulations.

The coffee production and consumption chains were delineated, allowing the identification of quantitative and qualitative factors in material management that influence the selection of materials used in packaging. Packaging

analysis was conducted, and a questionnaire was administered to consumers, professionals, and researchers in the Brazilian coffee market.

3. RESULTS

Along with the case study on consumer co-responsibility initiatives, the work was able to propose consumer empowerment processes such as: expanding the perception of consumer rights regarding packaging information; proposing guidelines on information about the materials used; predicting visual solutions that correctly communicate material information; developing technological solutions for sustainability evaluation; reviewing standards and creating specific legislation on material indication; and adopting sustainability verifiers that account for the packaging.

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