



УДК 7.05:658.62:659.126.8

MEANS OF EDUCATIONAL AND RESPONSIBLE IMPACT ON THE YOUTH CONSUMER AUDIENCE IN THE DESIGN OF BLIND BOX PACKAGING

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This study investigates the relationship between blind-box packaging design and young consumers' rational cognition within the context of social media communication. Drawing on principles of visual communication and information design, the research examines how integrating information hierarchy with instructional cues can enhance the readability of rules while maintaining playfulness, thereby improving the effectiveness of blind-box packaging in information delivery, in setting age-appropriateness boundary cues, and in cultivating consumer literacy.

Key words: *Blind Box Packaging, Youth Consumers, Responsible Design, Visual Communication, Rule Disclosure.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, shaped by the pervasive influence of social media, visual content circulates rapidly, and young audiences' attention is continually fragmented. Packaging is no longer viewed only on physical shelves; it is also disseminated through electronic screens. Blind-box products targeting youth, in particular, are highly dependent on these media conditions: they are repeatedly filmed, edited, and reposted on short-video feeds, typically as «unboxing» content. This paper argues for a responsible and educative orientation in blind-box packaging design – one that preserves the sense of mystery intrinsic to the unboxing experience while rendering the rules of uncertainty legible and shareable and maintaining ethical coherence within youth-oriented consumption contexts.

PURPOSE

This study aims to examine how blind-box packaging design, which is popular among young consumer groups, can communicate clear rule-related information while preserving a sense of surprise. By investigating the alignment between packaging visual hierarchy and the presentation strategies of rule information, the study elucidates how designers can construct blind-box packaging that is clearer and more responsible without undermining its playfulness.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Within the social-media «unboxing» dissemination context, blind-box packaging design for young consumers embodies both opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, packaging must enable instant recognition – «what it is» and «which series it belongs to» – under thumbnail viewing and rapid scrolling. On the other hand, the blind-box mechanism relies on randomness and surprise; yet randomness can more readily combine with outcome chasing, time pressure, and information concealment, producing asymmetric communication. Prior research has noted that blind boxes can be understood as tangible random products with gambling-like characteristics, and that their marketing practices and information disclosure raise controversies and regulatory risk points [1]. Accordingly, packaging is not only a vehicle for visual appeal but also bears a public communication responsibility to convey boundary and rule-related information to young consumers.

From the standpoint of communication outcomes, this study identifies three categories of high-risk expressions in unboxing scenarios that are particularly prone to misinterpretation. First, strong «outcome-oriented» insinuations – such as victory-laden vocabularies and visual symbols built around «winning» or «prize pools» – can shift attention away from series information and boundary cues toward outcome chasing. Second, pseudo-urgency, which leverages exaggerated scarcity claims, countdown-style prompts, and highly arousing type sizes and color blocks, is more likely to be amplified by titles and on-screen comments in short-video environments. Third, the low legibility of rule information, where details such as series scale, duplication probability, tier explanations, and age-appropriateness boundaries are placed in dense fine print or low-contrast areas, increases the likelihood that viewers – under rapid viewing conditions – will miss governing rules or warning information.

This mechanism, whereby information organization and prompting strategies shape decision-making, resonates with the educative concerns raised in interaction research on manipulative design. Gray et al. summarize these practical dilemmas under the rubric of «dark patterns», where design may shift from serving users to unreasonable persuasion and control [2]. Mathur et al., through large-scale investigation, further define «dark patterns» as practices that use coercion, steering, or deception to induce users to make unintended and potentially harmful decisions, and propose typologies and identification frameworks [3]. These studies offer a useful analytical lens for examining “pressure cues and information concealment” in blind-box packaging.

Taking POP MART's MEGA COLLECTION 100% SPACE MOLLY (Series 01) as an example (Fig. 1), the package front rapidly establishes series identification through an oversized «100%» set in large type and bold block-like titling, while «Series 01» specifies the blind-box series/model. The back and side panels feature a high-contrast warning-information module, including a 0–3 prohibition icon, a 15+ recommended age, and relevant compliance marks, ensuring that age-appropriateness and risk boundaries enter the primary reading path. Notably, aside from the warning module, most remaining information is



compressed into dense fine-print blocks with weak hierarchical cues, which is not conducive to rapid comprehension and recall under unboxing conditions.



Fig. 1. Blind Box Packaging Design for «MEGA COLLECTION 100% SPACE MOLLY» by POP MART (Source: author's photos): a – Front Design; b – Back Design with Warning Information; c – Side Design

This case suggests that boundary information can be strengthened through modular emphasis; however, to further enhance its educative function, key rule-related content still needs to be translated from «compliance-style dense text» into more structured, quickly scannable expressions, thereby reducing misreading risks associated with information asymmetry.

Overall, the foregoing discussion indicates that, without diminishing the playfulness of blind-box packaging, downplaying cues associated with outcome orientation and time pressure while enhancing the visibility and legibility of rule and boundary information can help shift unboxing dissemination from an emotion-driven viewing experience toward clearer and more responsible information communication. Moreover, research on dark patterns offers actionable frameworks for identifying and avoiding manipulative prompts and information concealment and can serve as a theoretical reference for responsibility-oriented expressions in blind-box packaging.

CONCLUSIONS

This study emphasizes that, within social-media unboxing contexts, blind-box packaging should be treated as a responsibility-oriented visual interface that is readable and verifiable for young consumers. Through a clear visual hierarchy and well-organized boundary information, packaging can maintain playfulness while improving legibility and communicative effectiveness. Responsibility-oriented packaging requires stylistic coherence, readable key information, and adaptation to camera-mediated viewing conditions. Visibility should be continuously tested under



thumbnail cropping, low-light filming, and rapid browsing scenarios. Future work may compare different configurations of information zones and hierarchical strategies and explore how rule-related information can be structured without «spoiling» the blind-box experience. In sum, making boundary information legible and presenting it in a structured manner offers a feasible pathway for youth-oriented blind-box packaging to reduce misreading risks and enhance its educative value.

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ХУАН Ш.

ЗАСОБИ ОСВІТНЬОГО ТА ВІДПОВІДАЛЬНОГО ВПЛИВУ НА МОЛОДІЖНУ СПОЖИВАЦЬКУ АУДИТОРІЮ ПРИ ДИЗАЙНІ УПАКОВКИ BLIND BOX

Це дослідження вивчає взаємозв'язок між дизайном упаковки «сліпої коробки» та раціональним пізнанням молодих споживачів у контексті комунікації в соціальних мережах. Спираючись на принципи візуальної комунікації та інформаційного дизайну, дослідження розглядає, як інтеграція інформаційної ієрархії з інструкційними підказками може покращити читабельність правил, зберігаючи при цьому ігровий характер, тим самим підвищуючи ефективність упаковки «сліпої коробки» у донесенні інформації, встановленні вікових меж та розвитку споживчої грамотності.

Ключові слова: упаковка «сліпої коробки», молоді споживачі, відповідальний дизайн, візуальна комунікація, розкриття правил