

A STUDY ON WOMEN'S DECISION MAKING TOWARDS THE PURCHASE OF BABY PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to focus on women's decision towards the purchase of Baby Care Products' Segment and its influential factors in Chennai region. The basic purpose of this it is to find out how such factors are behind the success of purchasing decision making process. This Research paper also investigated the decision of Women towards the purchase behavior of baby products in the society such as the social, economic, political and professional attitudes.

Keywords: Baby products; consumer perception; brand position; willingness to purchase.

INTRODUCTION

Perception varies from person to person. Different people perceive different thing about the same situation. But more than that, we assign different meaning to what we perceive. And the meaning might change for a certain person. One might change one's perceptive or simply make things mean something else. Baby, a child under two years of age. From birth to two week, the baby is called new born infant. During the two weeks of infancy the new born adjusts to the environment outside the mother's body and its growth comes almost to a standard still. During the two years of babyhood, however, the baby grows rapidly and as it learns to control its muscles it becomes more and more independent. Consumers of baby formula always expose to the advertisement that showing how babies become genius after consuming baby milk formula from certain brands. Baby formula companies use a variety of traditional and online media to advertise their products to capture wide target audience. Economy recession forced on parents' to select lower priced baby products, and identifying their buying behavior. Information about the perceptions of parents on high-price baby products was gathered. The effectiveness of advertisement and sales promotion on creating awareness and increase turnover were also examined.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

In this study, focuses on changing preference of customers because in today's time there are so many best products are available in market. It attempts to find whether the products are reaching up to the expectation of customer or not. In this context, a study on consumer behavior was deemed to be important to understand the buying behavior and preference of difference consumers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Adys Sharma (2009) in his study entitled "Rote and Influence of Children in Buying Children's Apparel" has revealed that the size of the family or the gender of children in family affect the buying behaviour in any way.

Debra Harker, Bishnu Sharma, Michael Harker and Karin Reinhard (2009) in their study "Leaving Home: Food Choice Behaviour of Young German Adults" reported that health consciousness, weight concern and attitude towards healthy eating are the significant predictors of fruit consumption, however natural content, weight concern are the significant predictors of vegetable consumption.

P.K. Khicha in 2012, studied that Baby accessory products are selected through the brand perception and Brand Equity. He studied

the brand theory, Brand Equity and Brand perception. The study explored how to create brand perception and brand equity by using different marketing communication tools.

Brand Position: When companies design the product position, they will plan and design them as value proposition to offer to its consumer. According to Moorman (1996) in order to gain greatest advantage in market, marketer must (1) Plan the product positioning in selected target market and (2) Crafting marketing mixed to execute the plan according to desire. Fournier (1998) define trust by consumers' is the "willingness to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function". The commitment to certain brand is the result of trust and belief on one product. Trust toward a brand will directly affects favorable attitudes and behavior (Hans et al., 2011). The authors identify specific types of brand positioning that increase brand equity and category price sensitivity; those are health and benefit claim and price, this brand positioning purpose to effect the perception of mother towards baby formula.

Brand Positioning on Health and Benefit Claims: One way to increase purchase intention for food consumer are by labeled food with health claims in purport that the consumer will get health benefit by consuming them. Generally, health claims deal with the concern of trust, ease of interpretation and clearness of the health claims Levy (1995). Even though consumer frequently doubt of such claims, they found health claims are helpful in making decision. Research by Calfee, and Pappalardo (1991) also support the statement that health claims on food label give favorable behavior on consumer even though they skeptic to the genuinely of the claims. Burton et al. (1994) found that additional nutrition information exaggerated nutrition attitudes, perceptions, and increase purchase likelihood. Individual difference variables, such as nutrition consciousness, motivation to process nutrition information, and nutrition knowledge, may affect consumers' perceptions, processing, and evaluations of nutrition information offered on product packages. When faced with a complex decision environment, peripheral cues or heuristics can reduce the effort needed in processing nutrition information and allow the consumer to make judgments and evaluations

based on the simplified cue or heuristic. As shopping aids, food labels add to consumers' information base and help guide buying decisions (Eagly and Chaiken, 1993, p. 330).

Nutrition claim in the label has an important role in communicating what the manufacturer want to promote to its consumer. Producer use traditional mass media such us articles, radio, newspaper and television are widely used to communicate the nutritional message to wide target of consumer. They also employed health practitioners (including doctors, nurse, and healthcare workers), books, and teaching materials and through food packaging to campaign, the distinction of their product through the health claims (Caswell et al., 2003; Roe and Sheldon, 2007). In addition, for claims for baby formula products, based on the finding of our qualitative study, the respondent thought that baby formula with health claim is safer compare with those without health claim. Though they even do not fully understand the meaning of each health claim but they trust them, some respondent thought that health claim is marketing trick but somehow sophisticated claims in the label attract them to purchase.

Positioning strategies on consumer price sensitivity: Price is one of the most important elements affecting to products and services. Price consciousness is related to the price acceptance level as well as to the width of latitude of product acceptability (Lichtenstein et al., 1988). Producers and marketer must be aware of the consumer perceived of value of one product. Consumer values refer to their product attributes view versus other product attributes. Consumer experience about product and service will formed the consumer price perception. According to Laroche and Howard (1980) price merely as the symbol of financial value, that consumer agrees to give to the vendor during the purchasing process. Consumer price perception- more or less- is a result of their perception of quality, benefit, value and personal beliefs. Although individuals who are price conscious are generally not willing to pay higher for the product they consider not worth their value, as mother want to give the best product for their baby we want to test if perceive price will affect the attitude and willingness to pay toward baby

formula. Income was found directly related with consumer willingness to pay for a products or service. Higher income indicates the person to be positively willing to pay for an extra price and to pay for superior quality of product. (Misra et al., 1991; Van, Ravenswaay and Hoehn, 1991; Underhill and Figueroa, 1996; Angulo et al., 2005; Govindasamy et al., 2005; Posri et al., 2007). The positive effect of income indicates that consumers with a higher income are willing to pay an extra price and buy these types of food products (Tsakiridou et al., 2006). From the qualitative study, mothers perceived baby formula as expensive product and only buy the affordable brand for the babies. Low price baby formula is preferable as long as the baby likes.

Perceived Quality: The understanding of quality is depending on the users. Quality expression is very ambiguous depend on the background of the person using this expression (Becker and Tilman, 2000). According to The total quality management literature: quality defines as conformance to requirements", fitness for purpose". This definition related to the definition of German Association for Quality: "Quality is the entirety of features and characteristics of a product, which refers to the fitness to fulfill given needs" (Juran, 1979). It is important to define quality from consumer orientation; the perspective of quality on baby formula can be very different from other type of milk powder. According to Fournier (1998) the context of quality is delicate because rely on consumer judgment on the product performance, which it will superior or excellent. Perceived quality is form from the individual judgment of the quality cues and attribute of the product. From the finding of qualitative study, the mothers perceived that high quality baby formula is those imported brand and expensive whereas low quality baby formula are those manufactured locally and lower price.

Baby Formula Benefit: It is every mother natural default instinct to breastfeeding their infants. Every time a baby breastfeed they will get numerous benefit from the milk for the growth and development of baby, such us active enzymes, antibodies. Not only as the source of energy for their first six month of life but also provide active immunity for protection from disease. Breast milk also contains

hormones, live cells that will never provide by cow based baby formula (Gartner et al., 2005). However, some mother found it is impossible to exclusively feed their baby with breast milk, one of the reason is she produce little breast milk, death, sickness, disease, separation, physiological problems. Baby formula industries captured this reason and provide the substitution of breast milk with cow-based milk formula (Anne, 2011). The phenomena of global economy integration that lead to modernization in Indonesia, women are moving into the paid workforce. For this reason baby formula are needs as substitute for breast milk. Scientist of baby formula industry applied the known substance of breast milk as their general reference to develop infant formulas. In general, baby formula contains this following raw material: vitamins, minerals, proteins, diluents, fats, emulsifiers, carbohydrates and stabilizers. Understanding the highly complex nature of the biological needs of an infant, the design of baby formula also crafted as similar as possible to the physical and benefit properties of breast milk. According to Gartner et al. (2005), baby formula can derive from three categories of milk-based formula they are vegetable-based formula, animal-based formula and non-milk based. Furthermore, iron, potassium, calcium, chloride, phosphate, magnesium, sodium, Sulphur, iodine, zinc and copper was added as essential components to baby formula. Iron is one of the most important components since all babies need a source of iron in their diet. Additionally, vitamins are added to increase the nutritional value of formula. It contains of many vitamins A, B12, C, D, and E as well as thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, pyridoxine, Pantothenate, and Folicin (Ball and Wright, 1999; Picciano, 2001).

Baby Preference: When baby do not like to milk, they will refuse to take them. After the children stop breastfeeding, they will need to consume milk. Many types of refusal for milk for instance if they have an allergy to cow's milk or simply do not like it. Focus group discussion was held to qualitative explore mothers' perception and understanding about the major interest of milk powder. From the finding of preliminary qualitative research, we predict that baby preference was the effect the willingness to purchase certain brand of baby formula. The author expects the validation of this finding by spreading questionnaires to

respondent. Based on the gap it is important to do research on this field.

The above studies concentrated on baby products. The study rarely highlighted women's perceptions towards baby products with special reference to Chennai region. There was no comprehensive study to realize the perception of baby product. This study failed to measure:

1. What was the decision of women's towards the purchase of baby products with special reference to Chennai region?

2. What was the factors determining the satisfaction and measure their level of satisfaction?

These issues have not yet been addressed by the earlier studies in women's decision towards baby products. The research has made attempt to address the above said issues in the study area, hence the present study.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY:

The present study has been confined to Baby products. Mainly it focuses on women perception in Chennai region.

OBJECTIVES:

The objectives duly formulated for the study are as follows:

1. To determine the customers' priority in selecting the baby care products.
2. To identify the reasons for selecting the particular brand products.
3. To identify the factors influencing the satisfaction.
4. To measure the level of satisfaction of respondents.

HYPOTHESIS

- There is no significant association between demographic factors

(age, family income, area of residence) and level of satisfaction.

- There is no significant association between demographic factors (age, family income, area of residence) and unbranded products.

SOURCES OF DATA:

The study is based both primary and secondary sources. the primary has been collected through survey method with help of structured questionnaire. The secondary data will be collected from the books, journals, web portals.

SAMPLE SIZE:

Sample size is 240 customers in universe population.

SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

Sample is the process of learning about the population on the basis of a sample. Sample is the part of the universe, which the researcher selects for the purposes of investigation. "Convenient sampling Method" has been adapted to collect the data from the respondents.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS:

The data collected from the respondents were coded and tabulated to suit requirement of the study. The statistical tools such as:

- Percentage Analysis
- One Way ANOVA
- Chi- square test

LIMITATIONS:

- The area of study is restricted to Chennai region.
- The number of respondents in the study is limited to 140.
- The accuracy of the study depends on the data provided by the respondents.

	Percent	No. of Respondents
Baby's age		
Less than 4 months	6	4.0
4 to 8 months	24	16.0
8 months to 12 months	69	46.0
Above 12 months	51	34.0
Total	240	100.0
Family income		
	52	34.7

Below 10000		
10000 to 20000	33	22.0
20000 to 30000	50	33.3
Above 30000	15	10.0
Total	140	100.0
Area of residence		
Urban	46	30.7
Semi-Urban	63	42.0
Rural	41	27.3
Total	240	100.0

Source: Primary Data

- The respondent's views and opinions may vary in future.
- This study was based on primary data collected from sample consumers by survey method.

Demographic profile of the respondents
Table No.1.1

When the age of the respondents were analysed, 46 percent are falls under the age group of 8 months to 12 months, and 34 percent of the respondents are belongs to the age group of above 12 months.

Table No: 2 Skin care

To know the level of satisfaction of women perception towards baby product

Particular	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Chi-Square	Df	Sig
Baby powder	4.3333	1.29877	5.11	105.812	5	0.000
Baby soap	4.1467	1.28693	4.84			
Baby lotion	1.2867	1.14889	2.11			
Baby massage oil	2.2267	1.17666	3.49			
Diaper	3.0000	1.97976	3.68			
Wipes	0.9333	0.25028	1.79			

Next 16 percent of the respondents are belongs to the age group of 4 to 8 months. Next 4 percent of the respondents are belongs to the age group of less than 4 months. When the monthly income of the respondents 34.7 percent of them are below Rs. 10000, 22 percent of them are earn Rs.10000 to Rs. 20000, 33.3 percent of them earn Rs.20000 to Rs.30000 income, and 10 percent of them earn were above Rs. 30000 income group. When the area of residence of the respondents 30.7percentofthemarelivingintheurban, 4 2 percent of them are living in the semi-urban and 0. Percent are rural.

in various parameters non-parametric Friedman's test has been employed.

Table No: 3 Hair care

Particular	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean Rank	Chi- Square	Df	Sig
Baby shampoo	4.1933	1.38882	1.90	103.365	1	.000
Hair oil	1.7267	1.01596	1.10			

Source: Primary Data

The result of Friedman's chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference in the level of satisfaction with women perception ($p < 0.05$). The mean ranks revealed the fact that the customers

are more dissatisfied with Hair oil (mean = 1.7267) the customer are more satisfied with shampoo (mean = 4.1933).

Table No: 4 Food and beverage

Particular	Mean	Std. Deviation	MeanRank	Chi- Square	Df	Sig
Lactogen	3.2733	1.56255	5.00	510.856	5	0.000
Cerelac	2.6200	1.67761	4.12			
Nan Pro	0.9333	0.25028	2.32			
Amul spray	0.9333	0.25028	2.32			
Nestum Rice	0.9333	0.25028	2.32			

Source: Primary Data

The result of Friedman's chi-square test showed that there was a significant difference in the level of satisfaction with women perception ($p < 0.05$). The mean ranks revealed the fact that the customers are more dissatisfied with Nan pro, Amulspray, Nestum rice (mean = 0.9333) the customer are more satisfied with lactogen (mean = 4.1933).

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 93.3 percent of the respondents are used in branded and 6.7 percent of the respondents are used in unbranded products.
- 14.7 percent of them have bought on a weekly bases 14 percent of them have used it every fortnight, 16.7 percent of them have used in a monthly basis and 48 percent of them have bought frequently.
- 70.7 percent purchase the one pouch, 29 percent purchase on the more than one pouches, 6.7 percent purchase only unbranded product, 3 percent purchase in branded product finally 2 percent purchase on the more than one time.
- 6.7 percent purchase only unbranded products, 36 percent purchase on better quality products for quality concern, 26 percent purchase on reasonable price for economical bases, 1.3 percent purchase on taste, 5.3 percent

purchase on availability that means availability of the market, 7.3 percent purchase on good for health for health concern and the finally 17.3 percent purchase on good will of the products.

- 47.3 percent purchase on self-decision, 28 percent purchase through advertisement, 15.3 percent purchase though the influence of friends/relatives, 6.7 percent purchase on unbranded products and 2.7 percent purchase on doctor advice.
- 7.3 percent used in unbranded products, 18.7 percent facing on lack of calcium, 26 percent facing on the dysentery, 36.7 percent facing on difficult to digest, 10.7 percent facing on vomiting sence, 0.7 percent facing on others.
- 6.7 percent prefer on unbranded products, 46 percent prefer to buy from medical store, 1.3 percent prefer to buy from provision store, 23.3 percent prefer from departmental stores and 22.7 percent prefer to buy wherever it is available.
- 70.7 percent buy due to the nearness of the shop, 13.3 percent buy an the price in standard 7.3 percent buy from the particular shop an various branch are available and 2 percent due to the timely service provided by that shop.

- Majority of the respondents are highly satisfied regarding the baby product of baby powder, baby soap and diaper and majority of the respondents are highly dissatisfied regarding the baby products are baby lotion and baby wipes.

- 140 percent purchase only branded products, 0.7 percent have not used branded product because of unawareness, 2 percent due to fear and 3.3 due to doctor's advice.

- 93.3 percent purchase only branded products, 4 percent purchase Bengal gram flour, and 2.7 percent purchase green gram flour.

- 93.3 percent purchase only branded products, 2.7 percent purchase Coconut oil and 4 percent purchase on Gingerly oil.

- 93.3 percent purchase only branded products, 0.7 percent purchase Rice flour and 6 percent purchase Cereals and pulses.

SUGGESTIONS:

- Producers have to do more research regarding product development.
- The firm may sell quality product on reasonable price for below economic.
- The government may conduct awareness program for both urban and rural area towards baby's health and baby food more.
- Effective advertisement may increase the sales.

CONCLUSION:

From the finding, the marketer in baby formula product must emphasize to advertise the importance of nutrition for the growth and development of infant. Labeling, baby formula product with complete list of information can help shopping cues to mothers. On the other hand, the government, nonprofit organizations and health practitioners, the need for nutrition, growth and development education to be included a part of the multi-pronged approach

aimed at reducing the prevalence of this preventable micro – nutrient related disorder in infant. More concentration on baby food market by the producers, can enhance the sales volume of the baby care industry.

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