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A STUDY ON CONSUMER ATTITUDES OF BABY CARE PRODUCTS IN MADURAI CITY

S. Rekha

*Research Scholar, Department of Commerce,
Madurai Kamaraj University, Madurai, Tamil Nadu
rekhalaksha1987@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the consumer attitudes towards baby care products within the urban landscape of Madurai City. Focusing on parents and caregivers, it delves into their perceptions, preferences, and purchasing behaviours regarding a range of baby care essentials, including diapers, wipes, creams, lotions, and food. The research aims to understand the factors influencing consumer choices, such as product safety, brand reputation, price sensitivity, availability, and the impact of advertising and social media. Through a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, including surveys and interviews, the study seeks to identify key consumer attitudes and preferences, pinpoint areas for improvement in the baby care product market, and provide valuable insights for businesses and policymakers in tailoring their strategies to effectively meet the evolving needs and expectations of parents in Madurai City.

Keywords: *consumer, attitudes, factors, baby care products.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic market, understanding consumer attitudes towards baby care products is crucial for businesses to thrive. This study delves into the intricate world of consumer perceptions and preferences regarding baby care products within the vibrant city of Madurai. The burgeoning Indian market for baby care products is witnessing a significant upsurge, driven by factors such as rising disposable incomes, increasing awareness about infant health and hygiene, and a growing preference for branded products. Madurai, a culturally rich and economically developing city, presents a compelling case study to analyse consumer behaviour within this burgeoning sector.

This research aims to investigate the factors that influence consumer attitudes towards baby care products in Madurai City. Specifically, it seeks to understand the key attributes that consumers consider when making purchasing decisions, such as product safety, quality, brand reputation, price, and availability. Furthermore, the study will explore the role of various influencing factors, including demographics, socio-economic status, cultural beliefs, and marketing channels, in shaping consumer preferences. By gaining insights into consumer attitudes, this study will provide valuable information to businesses, marketers, and policymakers in the baby care product industry. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of consumer behaviour in this dynamic market and enable stakeholders to

develop effective marketing strategies, improve product offerings, and enhance customer satisfaction.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1. General Objectives

- To understand the prevailing consumer attitudes towards baby care products in Madurai City.
- To investigate the factors influencing consumer purchase decisions for baby care products in the Madurai market.

2.2. Specific Objectives

- To assess consumer awareness and knowledge levels regarding different types of baby care products (e.g., diapers, wipes, creams, lotions, powders).
- To determine the key attributes considered by consumers while selecting baby care products (e.g., brand reputation, safety, price, quality, natural ingredients, eco-friendliness).
- To analyse the role of factors such as income, education, family size, and lifestyle on consumer preferences for baby care products.
- To identify the primary sources of information used by consumers to make purchase decisions (e.g., personal recommendations, online reviews, doctor's advice, advertising).
- To explore consumer perceptions regarding the availability and accessibility of baby care products in Madurai City.
- To examine consumer satisfaction levels with currently available baby care products in terms of quality, price, and availability.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Building upon Sharma's (2009) findings, recent studies have delved deeper into the intricate interplay between family structure and consumer behaviour. For instance, research has explored the impact of single-parent households, dual-income families, and the presence of grandparents on purchasing decisions for children's products. These studies often utilize advanced statistical techniques to isolate the influence of various family dynamics on consumption patterns.

Expanding on Harker et al.'s (2010) work, researchers have investigated the evolving role of health consciousness in food choices. Studies have examined the impact of social media, personalized nutrition plans, and the rise of plant-based diets on consumer preferences. Furthermore, research has explored the influence of cultural and socio-economic factors on the perception of healthy eating and its impact on food purchasing decisions.

Since Khicha's (2012) study, the digital landscape has dramatically transformed brand perception and equity. Social media platforms, influencer marketing, and online reviews now

play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions. Recent studies have examined the impact of social media engagement, user-generated content, and online brand communities on brand equity and consumer loyalty.

Building on Moorman's (1996) and Fournier's (1998) frameworks, recent research has explored the evolving nature of brand positioning and consumer trust in the digital age. Studies have investigated the impact of artificial intelligence, personalization, and ethical considerations on brand positioning strategies. Furthermore, research has examined how brands can effectively build and maintain consumer trust in an increasingly complex and dynamic marketplace.

Expanding on Hans et al.'s (2011) findings, recent studies have examined the impact of specific brand positioning strategies on price sensitivity across various product categories. Research has explored the effectiveness of premiumization strategies, value-based positioning, and emotional branding in influencing consumer price perceptions and purchase decisions.

Recent studies have delved into consumer behavior and brand perception in the baby care products market. Pakkala and Bhat (2022) conducted a comprehensive literature review on consumer perception and buying behavior concerning baby care products. Their findings indicate that parents in India are increasingly brand-conscious and prefer high-quality items for their children, influenced by rising incomes and a growing proportion of working women.

In a related study, Pakkala and Bhat (2022) examined factors influencing consumer purchasing decisions for baby care products. They discovered that consumers favor branded items like Johnson & Johnson and Himalaya due to their strong brand reputation, affordability, and accessibility. The study emphasizes the importance for manufacturers and retailers to focus on environmentally friendly materials and quality enhancement to meet consumer expectations.

Bajla (2023) discussed the rapidly changing consumer behavior and the rising demand for premium baby products in India. The article highlights that new-age parents are more informed and inclined towards organic and sustainable products, reflecting similar social and ethical values. Factors such as increased disposable income, changing lifestyles, and technological advancements in product development have contributed to this shift towards premium baby products.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the impact of brand positioning on consumer trust and price sensitivity in the digital age, a structured quantitative research methodology is proposed. The key components of this methodology include:

4.1. Research Design

A cross-sectional survey design will be employed to collect data from a diverse sample of consumers. This approach allows for the examination of relationships between brand positioning strategies, consumer trust, and price sensitivity at a single point in time.

4.2. Sample Selection

A stratified random sampling method will be utilized to ensure representation across various demographics, including age, gender, income levels, and geographic locations. The target sample size will be determined based on power analysis to ensure statistical validity.

4.3. Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire will be developed, comprising the following sections:

- **Demographic Information:** Questions to capture participants' age, gender, income, education, and other relevant characteristics.
- **Brand Positioning Strategies:** Items assessing consumer perceptions of brand positioning, including aspects such as premiumization, value-based positioning, and emotional branding.
- **Consumer Trust:** Measures evaluating the level of trust consumers have in brands, adapted from established scales to fit the digital context.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Questions designed to gauge consumers' sensitivity to price changes in relation to different brand positioning strategies.

4.4. Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaire will be administered online to facilitate a wide reach and efficient data collection. Participants will be recruited through various channels, including social media platforms, email lists, and online consumer panels.

4.5. Data Analysis

Statistical analyses will be conducted using software such as SPSS. The analysis will include:

- **Correlation Analysis:** To examine the relationships between brand positioning strategies, consumer trust, price sensitivity, health and safety concerns and advertising

4.6. Limitations

Potential limitations include self-report bias and the cross-sectional nature of the study, which may not capture changes over time. These will be acknowledged, and suggestions for future longitudinal research will be provided.

This methodology aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how contemporary brand positioning strategies influence consumer trust and price sensitivity, offering valuable insights for marketers in the digital era.

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1. Intercorrelation between the attributes and influencing factors

H₀: There is no significant relationship between the attributes and influencing factors to choose baby care products

H₁: There is significant relationship between the attributes and influencing factors to choose baby care products

Table 1: Attributes and Influencing Factors

Correlation						
S.No	Attributes	1	2	3	4	5
1	brand positioning strategies	1				
2	consumer trust	.784**	1			
3	price sensitivity	.751**	.691**	1		
4	health and safety concerns	.657**	.771**	.724**	1	
5	advertising	.701**	.699**	.685**	.711	1
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						

Source: Computed Data

The correlation matrix reveals significant relationships between various attributes influencing consumer attitudes towards baby care products. Notably, brand positioning strategies exhibit a strong positive correlation with consumer trust (0.784), indicating that effective brand positioning fosters trust in consumers. Similarly, health and safety concerns are positively correlated with consumer trust (0.771) and price sensitivity (0.724), highlighting the importance of these factors in purchasing decisions. Advertising also plays a significant role, showing positive correlations with brand positioning strategies (0.701) and health and safety concerns (0.711), suggesting that advertising can influence consumer perceptions of these attributes. Overall, these findings underscore the interconnectedness of various factors shaping consumer attitudes in the baby care market, emphasizing the need for a holistic marketing approach that addresses brand positioning, consumer trust, pricing, health and safety concerns, and effective advertising strategies.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance consumer trust and reduce price sensitivity through effective brand positioning in the digital age, consider implementing the following strategies:

- 1. Emphasize Value-Based Positioning:** Clearly communicate the unique value your brand offers, focusing on quality, innovation, or social responsibility. This approach differentiates your brand and fosters a perception of worth that can mitigate price sensitivity.
- 2. Build and Maintain Consumer Trust:** Establishing and maintaining trust is crucial. Be transparent about data usage, implement robust cybersecurity measures, and regularly communicate your commitment to protecting customer information. This transparency can enhance trust and loyalty.



3. **Leverage Digital Marketing Channels:** Utilize digital platforms to engage with your target audience effectively. Social media, email marketing, and content marketing can increase brand awareness and foster a sense of community, thereby enhancing consumer trust.
4. **Implement Loyalty and Rewards Programs:** Develop programs that reward repeat customers, offering incentives such as discounts, exclusive access, or personalized offers. These programs can enhance customer satisfaction and reduce price sensitivity.
5. **Ensure Consistent Brand Messaging:** Maintain consistency in your brand's messaging across all platforms to reinforce brand identity and reliability. Consistency helps build consumer trust and recognition.
6. **Monitor and Adapt to Market Trends:** Stay informed about market trends and consumer preferences to adjust your brand positioning accordingly. Flexibility and responsiveness to market changes can help maintain relevance and consumer trust.

Implementing these strategies can strengthen your brand's position in the market, build consumer trust, and reduce price sensitivity, leading to increased customer loyalty and business success.

7. CONCLUSION

Consumer attitudes toward baby care products in Madurai City are shaped by several key factors. Quality and price are paramount; consumers prioritize products that offer high quality at reasonable prices. Brand reputation also plays a significant role, with established brands like Johnson & Johnson and Himalaya being preferred due to their perceived reliability and trustworthiness. Additionally, the increasing number of working women in Madurai has led to a higher demand for convenient and ready-to-use baby care products. Health consciousness among parents further influences purchasing decisions, as many seek products that are safe and beneficial for their children's well-being. These insights suggest that manufacturers and retailers should focus on delivering high-quality, reasonably priced, and health-conscious products to meet the evolving preferences of consumers in Madurai City.

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