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An Empirical Analysis Of Consumer Buying Behaviour Of Baby Care Products With Special Reference To Tirunelveli District

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A study was conducted to analyse consumers' buying behaviour for baby care products in the Tirunelveli district. The researcher created a comprehensive interview schedule aligned with the study's objectives and previous research to ensure accuracy and relevance. Before /distribution, statistical experts and consumers of baby care products evaluated the survey for validity during a pre-test phase. Based on their feedback, the interview schedule was refined to improve effectiveness. The study's data collection areas were randomly selected, and the Tirunelveli district was selected for analysis. The researcher randomly selected 175 respondents from the Tirunelveli district using a structured interview schedule.

Key Words: Baby care products, consumer, buying behaviour, preferences, Tirunelveli district.

1. Introduction:

India is often portrayed as a country grappling with several issues due to its large population. However, various global economic rating agencies have recognised India for maintaining its position among the world's growing economies. One of the primary reasons for India's impressive standing is its ability to capitalise on the demographic dividend. India's population provides diverse and viable markets for domestic and foreign businesses to serve. These vast markets offer significant potential for products and services, including electronics, FMCG, medicines, insurance, mobile and telecom, among others. Many of these Indian market options are even larger than the combined aggregate of multiple foreign markets. One such extensive market is the market for baby care products.

Every living being values its young as assets to ensure the organism's longevity. This is also true for humans, as children are paramount to them. As a result, baby care products

have a significant place in human society. When purchasing these products, people are influenced by various factors. This study focuses on consumers' buying behaviour regarding baby care products in the Tirunelveli district.

2. Profile of Study Area:

Tirunelveli district, located in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is the largest district in the state in terms of area. Its headquarters are in Tirunelveli city. The district was established on September 1, 1790, by the British East India Company, acting on behalf of the British government. It originally included Tirunelveli, Thoothukudi, Tenkasi, and parts of the Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram districts. As of 2011, the undivided district (along with Tenkasi) had a population of 3,077,233.

3. Review of Literature:

Aswathy et al. (2019) investigated the role of perceived risk in the online shopping behaviour of young people. According to the findings, online shopping accounts for only 3-4% of organised retailing. This suggests that some factors are impeding the success of online marketing. One of them is the perception of risk. Due to the country's large youth population, online shopping is experiencing significant growth in India. The government is making significant investments in internet infrastructure. Organised retailing struggles to penetrate India's rural areas, whereas internet retailers find clients nationwide in tier 2 and 3 towns and villages. Consumers, particularly teenagers, perceive risks to payment security and personal privacy from e-commerce platforms in Andhra Pradesh, and these concerns are at least as strong, if not stronger, for online buying as for traditional distance channels. Retailers must understand these challenges and devise effective solutions. Consumers and organisations may be exposed to hazards when buying online. The prospect of personal and financial information, such as addresses, passwords, and credit card numbers, being hacked is a major concern for customers. The most serious threat to businesses is that their information will be utilised to make fraudulent transactions from them.

Pinakapani et al. (2019) note that in India and around the world, retailing is typically conducted through traditional brick-and-mortar physical stores located within the local community, or it is also done through online retail stores. Retail as a business has emerged due to the intentional overproduction of goods by utilising the full capacity of plants to minimise the cost of production. Manufacturers began releasing their overproduced items to retailers, who then sold them to customers. Initially, the retailing business was quite informal, but it gradually became organised, and retailers became channel partners in the manufacturers' distribution chain.

4. Statement of Problem:

Having a child is considered a blessing; in Indian culture, it is celebrated with great joy and enthusiasm. This celebration translates into the conscious desire to provide the best childcare products for the baby. The baby care products industry is extensive, encompassing a wide range of products, including skincare, healthcare, bath care, toiletries, feeding and nursing

supplies, baby beauty products, accessories, and baby gear. This study analyses customer behaviour towards baby care products, focusing on the Tirunelveli district.

5. Objectives of the study:

- → To study the importance of baby care products among the consumers of the Tirunelveli district.
- → To analyse the various factors that affect the satisfaction of consumers.

6. Null and Alternative Hypotheses:

H_0: The factors identified about the importance of baby care products do not influence the satisfaction of consumers.

H_1: The factors identified about the importance of baby care products influence the satisfaction of consumers.

7. Scope of the study:

Tirunelveli is one of Tamil Nadu's largest districts and a major city in the state. The study focuses on consumers' buying behaviour towards baby care products, specifically referring to the Tirunelveli district. The researcher analyses the importance of baby care products among consumers in the study area and the various factors that affect consumers' satisfaction.

8. Methodology:

This study focuses on consumers' buying behaviour of baby care products with special reference to the Tirunelveli district. The researcher developed a comprehensive interview schedule based on the study's objectives and previous research to ensure accuracy and relevance. The interview schedule was refined to improve effectiveness. The data collection area for the study was randomly selected in the Tirunelveli district. The interview schedule was distributed to the targeted population in this area, and the responses were collected and analysed accordingly.

9. Limitations:

- ➢ Baby care stores will not experience the same crowds as other stores. Therefore, tracking customers will take a considerable amount of time.
- ➢ The study is based solely on primary data, so the results depend on the responses from the respondents.

10. Data analysis and interpretation:

Table 1 Socio-Economic Profile of Respondents

Characteristics		**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Gender	Male	69	39.42
	Female	106	60.58

Age	< 30 Years	49	27.74
	30 – 50 Years	86	48.91
	> 50 Years	41	23.36
Marital Status	Married	132	75.18
	Widow/widower	43	24.82
Educational Qualification	Higher Secondary	23	13.14
	Graduates	120	68.61
	Post Graduates	27	15.33
	Others	5	2.92
Employment	Govt. Service	34	19.71
	Self-employed	45	25.55
	The employee of the private sector	57	32.85
	Others	38	21.90
Annual Income	< Rs.2,00,000	34	19.71
	Rs.2,00,000 – 5,00,000	87	49.64
	>Rs.5,00,000	54	30.66

(Source: Primary Data)

Table 1 displays the characteristics of the participants selected for the study. A total of 175 individuals participated, comprising 39.42% males and 60.58% females. The majority of participants (48.91%) fell within the age range of 30 to 50, followed by those under 30 (27.74%) and those over 50 (23.36%). As for education, 68.61% were graduates, 15.33% were postgraduates, and 19.71% had other qualifications. The largest employment sector represented was the private sector (32.85%), followed by self-employed individuals (25.55%) and those in the government sector (19.71%). Most respondents (49.64%) reported an annual income between Rs. 2,00,000 and Rs. 5,00,000, while 30.66% reported earning over Rs. 5,00,000 and 19.71% earned less than Rs. 2,00,000 per month.

Table 2 Ranking of identified Important factors about the baby care products

Sl. No	Identified satisfaction factors	WAS	Rank
1	Reasonable price	3.482	**III**
2	There are many options available to choose from	2.714	**IX**
3	Quality of the products	3.846	**I**
4	Brand image	3.513	**II**
5	Easy Availability	3.319	**IV**
6	Advertisements	3.069	**VII**
7	Well Packaging	3.276	**V**
8	Good Design	2.982	**VIII**

9	Suitable labelling	2.518	**X**
10	Competitive offers	3.154	**VI**

Table 2 provides a detailed ranking of the key factors that influence consumers' choices regarding baby care products. The analysis indicates that the highest priority is given to the "Quality of the products," which received an impressive weighted average score of 3.846. This suggests that consumers place significant importance on the safety and effectiveness of the products they choose for their babies. Following closely in the ranking is the "Brand image," which holds the second position, emphasising the value that customers place on reputable brands in the baby care market. In third place, tied with a weighted average score of 3.846, is the criterion of "Reasonable price," highlighting that while quality and brand trust are crucial, consumers are also mindful of affordability when selecting baby care items.

Table 3 Profile variables of Respondents and their Responses about baby care products

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Dependent Variable: Respondents' responses about baby care products.					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	552.661[a]	43	11.053	36.526	**< 0.01**
Intercept	129.568	1	129.568	428.165	**< 0.01**
Gender	30.595	6	7.649	25.275	**< 0.01**
Age	10.254	3	3.418	11.295	**< 0.01**
Marital Status	21.142	3	4.228	13.973	**< 0.01**
Ed.Qual.	11.501	5	2.875	9.502	**< 0.01**
Employment	5.992	4	1.498	4.950	**< 0.01**
Annual Income	13.676	3	2.735	9.039	**< 0.01**
Error	168.252	67	.148		**< 0.01**
Total	845.000	175			**< 0.01**
Corrected Total	720.913	174			**< 0.01**
a. R Squared = .985 (Adjusted R Squared = .984)					

Table 3 presents the results of a Two-way ANOVA analysis, which examines the relationship between the profile characteristics of the selected respondents and their opinions and preferences regarding baby care products. The analysis yields an R-squared value of 0.985, with an adjusted R-squared value of 0.984, both of which are significantly above the established threshold of 0.60. This indicates that the model is appropriately fitted to the data. Furthermore, the "F" value obtained in the analysis also surpasses the minimum threshold, and the corresponding significance value is less than 0.01. These findings suggest a strong and noteworthy association between the respondents' profile variables—such as demographics or background—and their responses concerning baby care products within the study area.

Table 4 Association between the Respondents' opinion about the importance of baby care products and their satisfaction.

Variables	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.432	.057		7.566	**< 0.01**
Reasonable price	.228	.047	.194	4.899	**< 0.01**
Many options are available to choose from	-.107	.030	.123	3.552	**< 0.01**
Quality of the products	.147	.031	.170	4.740	**< 0.01**
Brand image	.229	.043	.190	5.277	**< 0.01**
Easy Availability	.364	.035	.427	10.386	**< 0.01**
Advertisements	-.188	.048	-.174	-3.918	**< 0.01**
Well Packaging	-.127	.041	-.117	-3.088	**< 0.01**
Good Design	-.013	.031	-.014	-.421	**< 0.01**
Suitable labelling	.056	.026	.065	2.132	**< 0.01**
Competitive offers	.203	.027	.282	7.566	**< 0.01**
"R"	**.951**				
"R^2"	**.904**				
Adjusted "R^2"	**.903**				
"F" value	**59.051**		**Sig. Value: < 0.01**		

After analysing the regression coefficients presented in Table 3, it was possible to determine the relationship between the participants' opinions about the importance of baby care products and their satisfaction. The results showed that the "R" value was .951, the "R2" value was .904, and the adjusted "R2" value was .903. These values exceeded the threshold of 0.60, indicating that the model is a good fit. The "F" value was 59.051, and the corresponding significance value was less than 0.01. Moreover, the "t" value of all the independent variables was greater than the threshold of 1.96, and the relevant significance value was less than 0.01. The participants' opinions about the importance of baby care products significantly influence their satisfaction.

11. Findings:

→ A total of 175 individuals participated, with 39.42% male and 60.58% female. The majority of participants (48.91%) fell within the age range of 30 to 50, followed by those under 30 (27.74%) and those over 50 (23.36%). As for education, 68.61% were graduates, 15.33% were postgraduates, and 19.71% had other qualifications.

→ The largest employment sector represented was the private sector (32.85%), followed by self-employed individuals (25.55%) and those in the government sector (19.71%).

→ Most respondents (49.64%) reported an annual income between Rs . 2,00,000 and 5,00,000, while 30.66% reported earning over Rs . 5,00,000 and 19.71% earned less than Rs . 2,000,000 per month.

→ It is observed that the first rank is allotted to the variable "Quality of the products" with a weighted average score of 3.846, followed by the second rank assigned to the factor "Brand image" and the third rank assigned to the variable. "Reasonable price" with an average score of 3.846.

→ The participants' opinions about the importance of baby care products significantly influence their satisfaction.

12. Conclusion:

Consumerism is the backbone of the market. Tirunelveli is a rapidly growing city, the sixth-largest city in Tamil Nadu. An exclusive store for baby care products finds little scope in such cities. On the other hand, this causes the consumers to have varied perceptions towards different stores and products, and that variation in perception is the basis for this study. The study shows that consumer perception and buying behaviour are affected by factors such as the consumer's socio-economic status and the location's status, i.e., whether it is rural or urban.

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