

RETAILERS' PERSPECTIVE ON CUSTOMER OPINION TOWARDS BRANDED NURSING BOTTLES

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Abstract

The main objective of this research is to identify the factors that influence the attitude of customers towards baby care products (BCP), especially nursing bottle in retailer perspective. The method of data collection used in this study is survey method. The retailers are surveyed and primary data is collected from them. Convenience sampling method is used for data collection. The population was unknown and the sample size is taken 201. Structured questionnaire has been designed and used to collect the needed primary data. Data collected through questionnaire are analyzed using weighted average and simple linear regression. From the analysis it is found that retailers tend to stock BCPs from manufacturers or stockists who offer timely delivery of products, resolve complaints in timely fashion and offer the best credit policy. This study shows the willingness level of the retailers to deal with branded BCP apart from currently they are dealing. For customers, product attributes and personal factor influence the attitude of customer towards nursing bottle in retailer perception. Rural and urban customers have the same preference for baby care products.

Keywords:

Nursing Bottle, Retailers Perspective, Customer Opinion, Regression

1. INTRODUCTION

Baby bottles are widely used throughout the world to provide new born babies and toddlers with water, drinks, and readymade formula supplements. The global baby bottle market is predicted to be driven by an increase in the female working population and their hectic work schedules, as well as greater awareness of baby care goods. The demand for baby bottles is expanding due to the growing preference of women for ready-to-drink infant food products such as readymade milk formula. Furthermore, rising demand of nurseries and kindergartens encourages the usage of baby water bottles, which expands the market [1].

The market for baby feeding bottles was worth \$2.8 billion in 2018 and is predicted to grow to \$4.2 billion by 2026, with a CAGR of 5.10 percent from 2019 to 2026.

In 2018, the global market for infant items was assessed at \$12.2 billion. Consumers' rising disposable income, together with increased urbanisation, has been two main factors driving the market in terms of value sales [2].

The global market for baby feeding bottles is divided into three sections: material, distribution channel, and geography. Material is classified into four categories: plastic, stainless steel, silicone, and glass. Distribution channel is separated into three: hypermarkets/supermarkets, specialised stores, and online businesses. The market is segmented by region into North America (the United States, Canada, and Mexico), Europe (Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Italy, France, and the rest of Europe), Asia-Pacific (China, India, Japan, Australia, South Korea, and the rest of Asia-Pacific), and LAMEA (Latin America, the Middle East and Africa) [11].

The plastic nursing bottle accounts for a larger market share of high-value infant feeding bottles. This is because plastic baby feeding bottles are readily accessible at reasonable prices. However, due to some adverse effects connected with plastic bottles, the company's product offers have been revised. Baby bottle makers in the United States have discontinued producing bottles containing BPA (Bisphenol A) because the chemical has been shown to be dangerous to children's health. As a result, the vast majority of plastic baby feeding bottles are BPA-free. Avent, Medela, Pigeon, and Tommee Tippee are some of the leading brands in Indian nursing bottle market [2].

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The objectives, purchase intention and buying behaviour of consumers of Baby care products (BCP) market was studied by Gokila and Ramachandran [3]. Problems encountered by consumers in the BCP market and expected attributes from the BCP market in near future were also observed. According to the findings of this study, employed people have a higher buying intention in the BCP market than housewives. Baby care interest and perceived quality are the key influencing variables for them. In the BCP market, their peer group, parents, friends, and personal factors all play a vital part in their purchase decision. Advertisements and friends are their primary sources of information regarding BCPs and the most important qualities of BCPs are the company's reputation and the pleasant experience of BCP users. Convenience and access, as well as specialty stores, are major variables in their store selection in the BCP market.

The quantum of satisfaction with baby care products among mothers and the factors that influence baby care product buying decisions were studied by Palanisamy [4]. Findings of this study is that, most the customers of BCP are influenced by the quality of product, brand of baby care products and are then influenced by offers and discount presented. Easy availability and packing of baby care products are considered important by most of the customers. Price is a dissatisfier for majority of respondents.

Ganeshan and Durgamani [5] studied the customers' priority in selecting the baby care products. They also studied the reasons behind selecting particular brand of products and the factors influencing their satisfaction. The authors found that 40 percentage of customers of BCP buy only branded products, 0.7 percentage have never used a branded product due to unawareness, 2 percentage due to fear, and 3.3 percentage use BCP as per a doctor's recommendation. In this study it was also found that 46 percentage of respondents prefer to buy BCP from a medical store, 1.3 percentage prefer a grocery store, 23.3 percentage buy BCP from department stores, and 22.7 percentage from anywhere it is accessible.

The role of brand trust in the consumer-brand relationship for BCP in global and national brands was investigated by Gulnil

Aydin [6]. The study reveals that the effect of the brand trust on repurchasing intention is greater than its effect on relational commitment, and that this effect is observed particularly in the case of national brands.

Daniels [7] found that consumers appeared to be more impacted by traditional parts of marketing strategies that emphasised on the marketing mix, differentiation, and market emphasis. Even though consumers appeared to be persuaded more by the logical and traditional parts of marketing tactics, some consumers were impacted by the emotional elements of those same methods.

A study on Thai millennial parents' purchasing behaviour when it comes to baby bottle cleanser products was done by Phothapaeree [8]. The study also aimed at identifying the segments of Thai millennial parents for BCP, and to determine the key attributes that each segment considers when selecting a baby bottle cleanser brand. The research found that product features such as product performance, safety, and natural components are the most influential elements among Value for Money Searcher, High-price Product Lover, and Natural Product Lovers. For the Celebrity Endorsement Believer, celebrity endorsement is the single element that influences their purchasing decisions. According to the findings, the internet has become an important part of millennial moms' daily lives.

Singh [9] studied the Consumer buying preferences for BCPs in Faridabad region of India. This research tried to find out the customers perception, customers awareness and also tried to measure the awareness level towards baby care products. In comparison to other baby care product firms, the study's findings show that, customers prefer branded and popular baby products because of their brand image, fair costs, and availability anywhere online or offline.

3. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This research gets the opinion of customers towards BCP, especially baby feeding bottles from the retailers of BCP. The rationale behind getting the customers' opinion from retailers is that, the retailers are the ones who are in direct contact with the customers and any issues the customers have with the product, whether satisfaction or dissatisfaction is communicated and reflected to the retailers [10]. Thus retailers are the vital link between the manufacturers and customers and are also in a position to influence consumer decision making. The model proposed for measuring the purchase intention of BCP by the consumers in perspective of retailers is presented in Fig.1.

The Factors structure for Purchase intention attributes are:

- a) Marketing factors
 - Quality attributes
 - Company reputation
 - Ambience of outlet
 - Price
 - Attractiveness
- b) Social factors
 - Family members opinion
 - Shop keeper opinion

- Social media opinion
- c) Personal factors
 - Social class of the customers
 - Perception of Safety of BCPs
- d) Product attributes
 - Easy to hold
 - Light weight
 - Breakage resistance
 - Leakage proof
 - Convenience
- e) Attitude to purchase
 - Expectation
 - Belief
- f) Purchase intention
 - Interest
 - Past experience

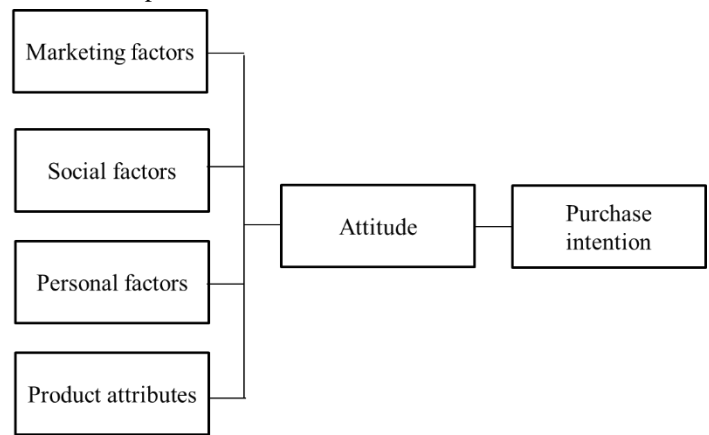


Fig.1. Proposed research model

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The primary data was gathered in the research area through a field survey. A total of 201 retailers were chosen for the survey adopting convenient sampling to determine customers' attitudes regarding branded nursing bottles. The study used both primary data and secondary data. The focus of the study is to analyse the opinion of the customers in retailers' perspective. The data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Regression and Weighted average were used to analyse data in the research.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research considers two objectives relevant to the study. The objectives considered for the study are:

- Determining the factors that influence retailer to stock branded BCPs, especially nursing bottles.
- Identifying the factors that influence the perception and attitude of customers in retailers' perception towards branded BCPs, especially nursing bottles.

- Comparing the rural and urban customers' opinion for patronising BCPs on various factors from retailers' perspective

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic spread of the retailers is presented in the Table.1.

Table.1. Demographic distribution of retailers

Variables	Categories	Count
Area	Urban	164
	Rural	37
Type of outlet	Medical shop	118
	Supermarket	28
	Fancy store	22
	General store	19
	Departmental store	9
	Exclusive baby showroom	3
	Grocery shop	2
Year of existence	Upto 5 years	57
	5 to 10 years	28
	10 to 20 years	36
	More than 20 years	80
Years of dealing with BCPs	Upto 1 year	25
	1 to 3 years	35
	3 to 5 years	10
	More than 5 years	131
Frequency of Ordering	Once in a month	78
	Twice in a month	58
	Once in two months	19
	Once in three months	17
	Rarely	29

As illustrated in the above table, the retailers from whom data was collected were situated mostly in the urban area. Also, most of the sample was represented by medical shops since most of the BCPs, especially baby nursing bottles are bought by the customers from medical shops. Out of the 201 retail outlets, 80 retail outlets are operating in the market for more than 20 years. Out of all the retailers dealing with BCPs, 65% of retailers deal with nursing bottle for more than 5 years. Also, a huge number of retailers (131 retailers) are dealing with BCPs for a long period of time. Further, 78 retailers place order for nursing bottle for their outlet once in a month.

6.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE RETAILERS TO PURCHASE NURSING BOTTLE

The factors that influence retailers to patronize a particular brand of BCP along with the importance attached for those factors by the retailers are compiled in Table.2. The factors considered were taken from the various literatures. The opinion of the retailers was taken in a 5-point scale. Thus, the mean (\bar{x}) values

closer to 5 indicate higher importance and \bar{x} nearer to 1 indicates lower importance to that factor. The factors and their respective \bar{x} values are presented in descending order in Table 2.

Table.2. Factors influencing the retailers to stock nursing bottle

Factors	\bar{x} Values
Timely delivery	4.92
Compliant solving	4.90
Credit policy	4.88
Frequent visit of sales representative	4.75
Offers and discount	3.67
Profitability	3.63

Timely delivery is the most influencing factor that influences the retailer to purchase the branded nursing bottle to their retail outlet. This is because, when the customers demand for the product and it is not available in the outlet, then the customers may never return for the product and the retailers are at the risk of losing their potential profits. The next most important factor considered by the retailers is the compliant solving by the BCP companies. Here, the retailers expect the manufacturers to immediately address any issues arising regarding product complaints from the customers and themselves. The third most influencing factor is the credit policy offered by the manufacturers or stockists of BCPs. The next factor influencing the retailers' preference for stocking BCPs is the frequent visit of sales representative to the retail outlet. Apart from the above factors, offers and discount and profitability from the BCPs have a medium level of influence on the retailers to stock the branded nursing bottle to their retail outlet. Strangely, in the case of BCPs (nursing bottles), retailers do not attach very high importance to profitability. This is because most of the brands of nursing bottles offer a very decent profitability already. Thus factors other than profitability become more important to retailers.

6.2 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL RETAILERS PERSPECTIVE REGARDING CONSUMER OPINION TOWARDS NURSING BOTTLES

The difference in the urban and rural customers' opinion on the various factors namely Marketing factors, Social factors, Personal factors and Product attributes and the Attitude to purchase and Purchase intention of BCPs in the retailers' perspective on nursing bottles is compared in this section. The mean value of the opinion of the retailers' perspective is computed and the comparison is made and the results are presented in Table.3. As before, the mean (\bar{x}) values closer to 5 indicate higher importance and \bar{x} nearer to 1 indicates lower importance to that factor.

Table.3. Comparison of rural and urban retailers' perspective regarding consumer opinion towards nursing bottles

Factors	Rural	Urban
Marketing factors	3.70	3.78
Social factors	3.91	3.79
Personal factors	3.29	3.23

Product attributes	4.73	4.71
Cognitive factors	Rural	Urban
Attitude to purchase	3.59	3.66
Purchase intention	3.89	3.74

While comparing the means in a nominal fashion, it is seen that there is very minimum difference in the opinion of the customers in retailers' perspective. However to check if there is no statistically significant difference in the opinion, a chi square test is done. The outcome of the chi square test is presented in Table 4. Further, it can also be seen from Table 3 that product attributes are good with BCPs, followed by Social factors.

Table.4. Outcome of chi square test comparing rural and urban customers

Metrics	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.224
Likelihood Ratio	.664
Linear-by-Linear Association	.028

The p value in the chi square test shows that there is no statistically significant difference between the opinion of rural and urban customers from retailers' perspective. This indicates that customers of BCP in both rural and urban areas give almost the same importance all the factors while purchasing BCPs.

6.3 IMPACT OF VARIOUS ANTECEDENTS ON PURCHASE ATTITUDE OF CUSTOMERS (RETAILERS' OPINION)

In this section, the impact of various factors such as Marketing factors, Social factors, Personal factors, and Product attributes on the Customers purchase attitude is analysed. To analyse the impact, simple linear regression analysis is used. The outcome of the regression is presented as $Y = a + b x$, where Y is the dependent variable, a is the constant, b is the regression coefficient, x is the independent variable. The hypothesis considered is presented below.

Null Hypothesis: There is no relationship between purchase attitude of the customers and related factors.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a relationship between purchase attitude of the customers and related factors.

The results of the individual simple linear regressions are compiled and presented in Table.5.

Table.5. Results of regression between customers' purchase Attitude and its antecedents

Independent variable	R	R ²	F	t	Sig.	b	a
Marketing factors	0.302	0.091	19.912	4.462	.000	0.394	2.172
Social factors	0.302	0.091	20.034	4.476	.000	0.436	1.991
Personal factors	0.161	0.026	5.318	2.306	.022	0.297	2.688
Product attributes	0.178	0.032	6.536	2.557	.011	0.301	2.236
Dependent variable: Customer purchase Attitude							

Observing the outcome of the regressions, all the aforementioned factors are significant at $p \leq 0.05$. As a result, the null hypotheses in all the cases are rejected and the alternative hypotheses are accepted. It is found that there is significant relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The regression equations thus formed from the results of the regressions are presented below.

$$Y = 2.172 + 0.394 x_1 \tag{1}$$

$$Y = 1.991 + 0.436 x_2 \tag{2}$$

$$Y = 2.688 + 0.297 x_3 \tag{3}$$

$$Y = 2.236 + 0.301 x_4 \tag{4}$$

where,

Y is the Customer purchase Attitude

x_1 is the Marketing factors

x_2 is the Social factors

x_3 is the Personal factors

x_4 is the Product attributes

From the values in Table.5 and the regression equation presented above it can be inferred that all the factors such as Marketing factors, Social factors, Personal factors and Product attributes all have positive impact on the customer's purchase attitude and intention for BCPs i.e. nursing bottles in this case. Of all the factors, Social factors have the highest impact on the customers' purchase intention and attitude according to retailers view. When the influence from social factors such as Family members opinion, Shop keeper opinion and Social media opinion increases, the customer's purchase attitude and intention also increases. Followed by this, marketing factors exert the next best influence on the customer's purchase attitude and intention. This means that, when the Quality attributes, Company reputation, Ambience of outlet, Price and Attractiveness of BCPs increases, customer's purchase attitude and intention increases. Similarly, Product attributes and personal factors exert impact on customer's purchase attitude and intention.

7. CONCLUSION

Today's market is heavily focused on customers. The customer of today is the market's king. In the sense that all business operations are centred on meeting the requirements and desires of customers through efficient service. Purchase of BCPs become a high involvement decision and the customers of BCP spend a lot of time and energy in this purchase since parents or grandparents or gifters want to give the best to the recipient, which are the babies. In this study the researcher found that most of the customers prefer brands of nursing bottle that are very popular among other customers and top selling nursing bottle in retail outlets as indicated by the retailers. This may be because the customers of BCPs, especially nursing bottles get confidence in their purchase when knowing that other customers also trust a particular brand.

The objectives of this research were to determine the factors that influence retailer to stock branded BCPs, especially nursing bottles, identify the factors that influence the perception and attitude of customers in retailers' perception towards branded BCPs, especially nursing bottles, and compare the rural and urban

customers' opinion for patronising BCPs on various factors from retailers' perspective.

As far as the retailers of BCP are concerned, they tend to stock BCPs from manufacturers or stockists who offer that timely delivery of products, resolve any complaints regarding products or marketing process in timely fashion, offer the best credit policy. The retailers also expect frequent visit of sales representatives so that any issues can be sorted out immediately. The retailers also expect decent offers and discount from the manufacturers/stockists. Profitability from BCPs is given the least priority by retailers to stock BCPs.

To address the second objective, the means of customers' perspective from rural and urban areas in retailers' opinion on factors such as Marketing factors, social factors, Personal factors and Product attributes were compared. Here, it is seen that there is no significant difference between the customers from rural and urban areas. The same is confirmed from the outcome of a chi square test carried out. In this observation, it is seen that that product attributes are preferred for buying with BCPs, followed by social factors.

The impact of factors such as Marketing factors, social factors, Personal factors, and Product attributes on the Customers purchase attitude was analysed using simple linear regression. All the factors have positive impact on the customer's purchase attitude and intension for BCPs.

This managerial implications of the outcome of this research is that strategists can identify the factors that impact the retailers decision to stock BCPs the most and also to identify the factors that consumers of BCPs use to evaluate BCP before purchase.

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