

Mothers Price Perception on Commercial Baby Food – An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

The Indian commercial baby food market becomes a significant milestone which is responsible to maintain the health in early months which introduce babies into gastronomic world of adults. The price of Commercial infant food is another socio-economic characteristic that can have logical as well as emotional aspects. The study aims to explore the weaning patterns and price perception of mothers on commercial baby food. The study was empirical in nature and based on primary survey method. The sample of respondents were taken from Jaipur (Rajasthan). The sample size of 85 mothers were chosen who have infants between the age group of 4 months to 12 months using judgemental sampling method and data was collected from respondents using the interview questionnaire method. The statistical tools used for the study were simple percentage technique and Factor analysis. The results of the study found attributes which influence mothers, source of information, amount spend, and their perception on price of baby food. This study enables the marketers to lay attention on their prominence and attentiveness in providing quality products at nominal prices to their customers which in turn provides customer satisfaction. This study motivates Baby food companies to produce fortified food which helps to control the micronutrient deficiencies disorders and to curb maternal mortality at reasonable prices.

Keywords: *Mother, Price perception, Weaning patterns, Commercial Baby Food, Packaging, Infant feeding, Advertisements*

1.INTRODUCTION

The baby food industry has been witnessing a mammoth growth in India. India is gaining the largest population of infants, rapid urbanization, mounting population, increasing disposable income and growing number of career oriented women workforce has led to the fast-paced expansion of commercial Baby food industry. The Indian commercial baby food market becomes a significant milestone which is responsible to maintain the health in early months which introduce babies into gastronomic world of adults. The price of Commercial infant food is another socio-economic characteristic that can have logical as well as emotional aspects. This competitive commercial baby food market, laying all their prominence and attentiveness in providing quality products at reasonable prices to their customers which in turn provides customer satisfaction.

This study explores the price perception of mothers on commercial baby food. The purchase decision of mothers for commercial baby food has become partially an economic choice which influences their feeding choices. Some mothers do not mind the price of the baby food if it serve their criteria whereas price sensitive mothers consider value of the products and are not usually willing to pay more for something that they don't consider worth the value. This made it mandatory for marketers to study what mothers look for/ expect from commercial baby food products when it comes to pricing of the same to be able to survive and succeed in this industry.

II.LITERATURE REVIEW

Gritsai (2001) highlighted the problem how the geography of baby food in 12 European countries is being explained by cultural patterns, differences in healthcare systems and standards of living. The author aimed to divulge differences and similarities in gastronomic preferences and healthcare attitudes. The findings of the survey gave special attention to the adaption strategies of companies operating in different cultural environment.

Maslin et al. (2015) purposed to understand the perception of the parents with regard to contemporary commercial baby food having different taste profile and nutritional content to homemade baby food. A qualitative study was being conducted through group discussion among mothers of infants aged 4-7 months with thematic analysis method. The results showed how three peculiar groups of mothers having distinctive perception on prepared baby food, which were impacted by parity, socioeconomic status and previous experience of weaning. The findings explored that maximum mothers started the weaning practices with homemade foods, but undergoes a change to comprise commercial baby foods after 3-6 weeks.

Pradeepa and Pandurangan (2015) investigated to study the price expectation and extent of variation of mothers for baby food products. A field survey was conducted through structured interview from 900 married who have infants aged six months to two years using multi stage random sampling technique in Coimbatore district. The findings was that the stiff competition of baby food products imposes marketers to avail quality products at reasonable prices and ameliorate customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Fuentes and Brembeck (2016) proposed to find out how web mediated marketing frame adds value for commercial baby food and discussed various ideals of motherhood. The author analysed the four baby food companies' frame marketing of commercial baby food on web and weaning as "medical," "fun" or "convenience". The analysis portrays the web material which offers a range of images and ideals that could function as a solutions to mother's aspiration, worries and concerns for safer feeding practices.

III.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To exhibit the weaning pattern of the commercial Baby food.
- To find out the perception of mothers on price of commercial baby food products.
- To give valuable suggestion to marketer of commercial baby food industry.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is empirical in nature and is based on primary survey method. The sample of respondents were taken from Jaipur (Rajasthan). The sample size of 85 mothers were chosen who have infants between the age group of 4 months to 12 months using judgemental sampling method. The information relating to attributes which influence mothers, source of information, amount spend, and their perception on price of baby food was gathered through structured questionnaire. The collected data was digitalized in an SPSS spreadsheet and a simple statistical analysis which included descriptive statistical analysis, cross tabulation and frequency distribution was carried out to find out the weaning patterns of commercial baby food products. The Factor analysis was conducted to identify the underlying dimensions to assess the mother's price perception on purchase of commercial baby food.

V. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

A. Commercial Baby Food which comes at the top of mind of mother

| S.No. | Commercial Baby Food | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|--------------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. | Nestle Cerelac | 29 | 34.1 |
| 2. | Workhardt Farex | 12 | 14.1 |
| 3. | Heinz Breakfast Creamy Oat | 8 | 9.4 |
| 4. | Danone Nutrica | 4 | 4.7 |
| 5. | Pristine 1 st Bites | 1 | 1.2 |
| 6. | Abbott Nutrition | 5 | 5.9 |
| 7. | Amul | 21 | 24.7 |
| 8. | Mead Johnson | 1 | 1.2 |
| 9. | Babyvita | 3 | 3.5 |
| 10. | Manna Foods | 1 | 1.2 |
| | Total | 85 | 100.0 |

Table1

The table 1 clearly depicts that majority of the mother prefer Nestle Cerelac for their infants. About 34.1% of respondents states that Nestle Cerelac comes top of their mind for their infants. About 24.7% respondents prefer Amul as Commercial Baby Food for their infants.

B. Source of Information

| S.No. | Source | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|--|-----------|---------|
| 1. | The recommendation of a physician or other health professional | 36 | 42.4 |
| 2. | Information on the label of the packaging | 12 | 14.1 |
| 3. | Information on the baby food company's website | 11 | 12.9 |
| 4. | Information in magazine or newspaper advertisements | 15 | 17.6 |
| 5. | Information in TV commercials | 11 | 12.9 |
| | Total | 85 | 100.0 |

Table 2

Mothers can seek information from physician, label of packaging, company’s website, magazine or newspaper advertisement & T.V commercials. The table 2 depicts that out of 80 respondents only 36(42.4%) seeking information from physicians, about 15(17.6%) get information from print media, about 12(14.1%) from packaging and 11(12.9%) get information from T.V commercials and company’s commercial website.

C. Attributes which influences mother to purchase commercial baby food

| S.No. | Attributes | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. | Affordability | 4 | 4.7 |
| 2. | Interesting Packaging | 3 | 3.5 |
| 3. | My baby loves the taste | 29 | 34.1 |
| 4. | Easy accessibility | 8 | 9.4 |
| 5. | Nutritional Value | 27 | 31.8 |
| 6. | Quick to serve | 14 | 16.5 |
| | Total | 85 | 100.0 |

Table 3

Mothers easily get influenced from the attributes present in commercial baby food for their infants. The Table 3 depicts that about 29(34.1%) prefer commercial baby food because their infants loves the taste, 27 respondents (31.8%) prefer commercial baby food because it contains nutritional value, 8 respondents (9.4%) prefers because of easy accessibility, 4 respondents (4.7%) consider commercial baby food affordable and only 3

respondents (3.5 %) finds commercial baby food has interesting packaging which are the reasons that influences mother to purchase commercial baby food.

D. Expenditure on Commercial Baby Food

| S.No. | Money spent | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| 1. | Upto Rs.500 only | 29 | 34.1 |
| 2. | Between Rs.500-Rs.1000 | 39 | 45.9 |
| 3. | Above Rs.1000 | 17 | 20 |
| | Total | 85 | 100.0 |

Table 4

The table 4 depicts that 29 respondents (about 34.1%) spent 500 per month towards purchase of commercial baby food, 39 respondents (about 45.9%) spent between Rs.500-1000 and 17 respondents (about 20%) spent above Rs.1000 on commercial baby food per month on purchase of commercial baby food.

E. Factor analysis for Price Perception of Mothers on Commercial Baby food

| Code | Statements | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|------|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| P1 | Bulk packaging of baby food product makes it cheaper than smaller packaging. | 0.689 | .054 | .005 | .194 |
| P2 | Small packages of Baby food product are more preferred to avoid wastages regardless of excess price. | 0.592 | .605 | .279 | .126 |
| P3 | I believe in the statement that "you get what you pay for". | 0.227 | 0.710 | .104 | .151 |
| P4 | I would be ready to pay any price if the quality is superior | .124 | 0.755 | .010 | .481 |
| P5 | I perceive cheaper products has less nutritional value | .239 | 0.659 | -.049 | .036 |
| P6 | I perceive Baby food products with less advertisements are sold at lower prices | .022 | .092 | 0.678 | .005 |
| P7 | Advertisements effectively persuades to buy baby food product irrespective of any price | .592 | .465 | 0.664 | -.080 |
| P8 | I buy whatever brand I want, regardless of price | .372 | -.013 | .115 | .175 |
| P9 | I compare the prices of different brands to be sure I get the best value for the money. | .168 | .081 | .523 | .183 |
| P10 | I have a limited set of baby food brands I'm willing | .224 | .137 | 0.620 | .175 |

| | | | | | |
|-----|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| | to buy, and I choose the least expensive one out of that set | | | | |
| P11 | I perceive cheaper products placed with other expensive products assumed to be of better quality | .372 | 0.682 | .617 | .408 |
| P12 | I have to pay a bit more to get a better brand. | -.118 | .605 | .166 | .189 |
| P13 | Packaging represents not only the baby food product inside, but manages to communicate its value | 0.721 | .226 | .001 | .166 |
| P14 | Baby food companies create “exclusive” discounts for loyal customers | .195 | .092 | .053 | 0.735 |
| P15 | Higher discounts attracts me to switch to some other brand | .579 | .124 | .261 | 0.664 |
| | Eigen Value | 7.457 | 1.796 | 1.570 | 1.159 |
| | % of variance | 32.420 | 7.810 | 6.828 | 5.039 |
| | Cumulative % | 32.420 | 40.231 | 47.059 | 52.098 |

Table 5

The factor analysis was used to exhibit the systematic interdependence among the set of observed variables and to find out the fundamental or latent, which creates communality. Factor analysis is a dimension reduction technique which reduces the variables to a manageable level and group the highly correlated variables into a factor. A principal component analysis using varimax rotation criterion was used in the analysis. Only those factors are retained having Eigen values greater than one in which variance is explained by all the variable in a factor.

To select variables which form one factor a component loading of 0.5 and above is taken into consideration. In the first factor, the variable “Packaging represents not only the baby food product inside, but manages to communicate its value” has the maximum component loading of 0.721 followed by the variables “Bulk packaging of baby food product makes it cheaper than smaller packaging” (0.689) and “Small packages of Baby food product are more preferred to avoid wastages regardless of excess price (0.592)” has a loading of 0.5 and above and group into a factor. These variables form a factor named as “Packaging effects” on price of commercial baby food. In the second factor the variable “I would be ready to pay any price if the quality is superior” has the maximum component loading of 0.755 followed by the variables “I believe in the statement that “you get what you pay for”” (0.710), “I perceive cheaper products placed with other expensive products assumed to be of better quality” (0.682) and “I perceive cheaper products has less nutritional value” (0.659) and hence they can be grouped into a factor. This variable form a factor named as “Effects of price on quality” In the third factor the variable “I perceive Baby food products with less advertisements are sold at lower prices” has the maximum component loading of 0.678 followed by the variables “Advertisements effectively persuades to buy baby food product irrespective of any price” (0.664) and “I compare the prices of different brands to be sure

I get the best value for the money” (0.620) and hence they can be grouped into a factor. These variables form a factor named as “Deal grabbers” In the fourth factor the variable “Baby food companies create “exclusive” discounts for loyal customers” has the maximum component loading of 0.735 followed by the variable “Higher discounts attracts me to switch to some other brand” (0.664) and hence they can be grouped into a factor. These variables commonly represent “Discount deals” which affects price. Out of 15 variables only 12 variables had factor loading 0.5 or above that. The other remaining variables are not considered as relevant. In the variance explained by the 15 variables, Factor I explained 32.420 % of variation, Factor II explained 7.810% of variation, Factor III explained 6.828% of variation and Factor IV explained 5.039% of variation. The four factors together explained by the individual variables in the retained four factors

VI.FINDINGS

Majority of mothers prefer Nestle Cerelac that comes top of their mind than other brands for their infants. Majority of mothers seeking information from physician’s recommendation on whom they rely the most. The results revealed that many of the mothers get influenced from the commercial baby food because their infant loves the taste. The results about amount spent on commercial Baby food showed that majority of mothers spend about Rs.500-1000 per month on purchase of commercial baby food for their infants. The results of Factor analysis revealed that the factors such as Packaging effects, Effects of price on quality, Effects of price on quality and Discount deals which affects price contributed to perception of mothers on commercial baby food.

VII.SUGGESTIONS

This will assist companies and Government to offer optimal solutions to contemporary mother needs and anxieties in order to support various forms of mothering. The Government policies and marketers of Baby food industry shall ensure a healthy diet while at the same time a positive mother child interaction and attachment in a complex society where time is short. This research work aims to create policy guidelines for companies and Government regarding all important aspects of baby food. This shall encourage Government and marketers to provide dietary guidelines and portray commercial baby food as a way to add value by offering babies a scientifically defined and tailored nutritious meal in less time and with less effort. The consumption and consumption decisions are made strategic tasks of mothering, the Government policies and marketing material involved in these activities becomes powerful for the way mothering is understood and carried out.

This shall enable Government and Companies ability to repudiate Intensive mothering roles and embracing the new working mother needs. This research study shall provide platform for exhibiting innovative baby food products and manufacturing processes with a vision to serve. The creation of innovative commercial baby food associated with agriculture can foster an influx of city dwellers in search of rural residential lifestyle, which will indirectly stimulate employment and incomes in rural areas. In addition to the health benefits for babies there are economic benefits associated with commercial baby food that can be realised by families, employers, private & Govt. insurers and the nation as a whole. Thus creates job opportunities and investment in the nation. This

study enables the marketers to lay attention on their prominence and attentiveness in providing quality products at reasonable prices to their customers which in turn provides customer satisfaction.

VIII.CONCLUSION

This study focusses on mothers perception on price of commercial baby food in Jaipur (Rajasthan) Baby food companies are somehow indulged in specifically tailored and expanding lines of commercial baby food product according to mother's preferences for babies' health and development. This study motivates Baby food companies to produce fortified food which helps to control the micronutrient deficiencies disorders and to curb maternal mortality at reasonable prices.

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