Study of factors influencing parent’s purchase decision in Ireland while purchasing private label's baby care items

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Declaration

Declaration: I, Vaibhav Tyagi, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 13-08-2018
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Abstract

This dissertation studies the factors influencing parent’s purchase decision while purchasing private label's baby care items in Ireland. Baby products are gaining importance among businesses and consumers alike due to increasing wages and competition between private labels and brands. Considering (Nielsen, 2013) study as baseline, this study has explored further and provided insights on factors that may influence parents positively or negatively for buying baby products of private label. For exploring and analysing these factors, qualitative research technique has helped author to study subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed by the participants of this research through in-depth semi-structured interviews. Most researches in past in the area of baby care products and private label had focused on general concepts and theories of factors that influence a consumer’s purchase decision. However in past very little was explored in the area where non-consumers like parents make purchase decision for their child. This research has explored factors influencing purchase decision of non-consumers i.e. parents for purchasing private label baby product. Similarly, to finding of extant literature of frozen food products, low prices of private label products are found to plays a major role in influencing purchase decision in non-consumable baby products as well. Most importantly, this research found that loyalty towards specific private-label retailer, availability of organic option in private-label baby food products and positive recommendation from family and friends may positively impact parent’s purchase decision and alleviate any risk associated with private label baby product. Environmental concerns like overpackaging of products are not found to be a factor that positively or negatively impacts parent’s purchase decision, rather some parents believe reduction in packaging as reduction in quality. Research also indicates that consumers do not consider private label baby products more, or less risky compared to branded ones. To generalize these finding into strong theory for Irish FMCG market, further research is recommended by author of this research.
# Table of Contents

Declaration ........................................................................................................................................... 1
Acknowledgement .................................................................................................................................. 2
Abstract .................................................................................................................................................. 3
List of Tables/Figures ............................................................................................................................ 6
  List of Tables: ........................................................................................................................................ 6
  List of Figures: ....................................................................................................................................... 6
  List of Graphs: ...................................................................................................................................... 6
  List of Charts: ....................................................................................................................................... 6
1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 7
2. Literature Review ............................................................................................................................... 13
   2.1 Literature Introduction .................................................................................................................. 13
   2.2 Private label brands/stores and their product’s perception among consumers .................... 13
   2.3 How private label can affect the nature and level of market competition in an industry? .......................................................... 18
   2.4 Role of factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups and environmental concerns that may influence customer’s purchase decision in general .................................................. 21
3. Methodology ....................................................................................................................................... 32
   3.1 Methodology Introduction ........................................................................................................... 32
   3.2 Research Design ............................................................................................................................ 32
      3.2.1 Research Philosophy ............................................................................................................. 33
      3.2.2 Research Approach ............................................................................................................. 34
      3.2.3 Research Strategy ................................................................................................................. 35
   3.3 Sampling ....................................................................................................................................... 35
   3.4 Data Collection ............................................................................................................................. 36
   3.5 Data Analysis ............................................................................................................................... 36
   3.6 Research Ethics ............................................................................................................................. 37
   3.7 Limitations of Methodology ....................................................................................................... 38
4. Data Analysis/Findings ...................................................................................................................... 39
Findings: Addressing aims/objective of the research.................................................................62
5. Discussion ................................................................................................................................65
6. Conclusion/Recommendations.................................................................................................70
7. Reflection on Learning ...........................................................................................................72
Bibliography ...............................................................................................................................75
Appendix 1- Primary Research Material ..................................................................................79
   Semi-structured interview questions: ......................................................................................79
   Intention to purchase store brands bought in previous 12 months: .......................................81
List of Tables/Figures

List of Tables:

Table 1: Respondent details

Table 2: Colour codes/themes.

Table 3: Condensed responses and colour codes for respondent 1

Table 4: Condensed responses and colour codes for respondent 2

Table 5: Condensed responses and colour codes for respondent 3

Table 6: Condensed responses and colour codes for respondent 4

Table 7: Categorised data sorted by question number

Table 8: Most occurring colour codes

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Layered diagram of Research philosophy (research onion)

List of Graphs:

Graph 1: Live births and deaths in EU member states.

Graph 2: Year on year worldwide revenue for baby products.

Graph 3: Discounter growth in western markets

Graph 4: 2013 private label share of countries by dollar share

List of Charts:

Chart 1: Nielsen’s 2013 baby food consumer opinion for private label

Chart 2: Share of six most common themes among all respondents
1. Introduction

Ireland is among the countries with highest birth rates in the European Union. In 2016, Ireland saw highest number of birth as percent of its population as depicted in the graph below: (European Commission, 2017).

![Live births and deaths in EU Member States, 2016](image)

**Graph 1:** (European Commission, 2017)

Baby care products are one of the attractive businesses in Ireland among the other European nations, as Ireland is experiencing highest birth rates in Europe (European Commission, 2017).

According to a study, on average €5,648 are spent on a baby in Ireland in first year. 1 in 10 child cost parents between €10,000 to €15,000 during first 12 months, with little 4% of babies having more than €15000 lavished on them, while some had only €1000 spent over them (Wayman, 2015).
Baby care items especially, baby food industry is getting popular all over the world due to increasing awareness, rising wages and shift in consumer behaviour (V. & P., 2016). Worldwide revenue for baby products is rising each year and is projected to touch USD 13.3 billion by 2021 (statista, 2014).

Graph 2: (statista, 2014)

Irish ‘Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)’ market has experienced drastic shift in past decade. A 2013 study by Nielsen found that as the lacklustre economic condition put pressure on consumer pockets, consumers have started to focus more on value, price, promotions and especially private label items (Nielsen, 2013). Also, according to (Mukherji, 2017) it has been observed over the years that at the time of economic contractions the share of private label products has gone up, however during good economic times the switch back to branded items was low. (Mukherji, 2017) also argues that the lack of confidence among consumers promotes money saving behaviours such as using coupons to get price cuts. Since the quality consciousness plays a negative role, hence coupons are often used as a tool to reduce price and consequently moderate the negative role.
In Ireland, the sales of private label item in 2012-13 stood at €2.3 billion, growing at 7.8%. This accounts for 22% of total Nielsen basket sales. Over the same period branded goods accounted for sales of €8.2 billion registering decline of 1% from previous year (Nielsen, 2013).

Johnson & Johnson (Ireland) Ltd is leading the Irish market in baby and child specific products with holding retail value share of 43% in 2016. Big players like Johnson & Johnson are under pressure in this category from private label players, particularly in stealing market share (Euromonitor, 2017).

Nielsen’s 2013 research only considered consumer perception regarding ‘baby food’ and did not considered other sub-categories within baby products range under private label (Nielsen, 2013).

A joint research conducted in 2001 by Adelina Broadbridge, senior lecturer for Department of Marketing, University of Stirling and Henry P. Morgan head of Semi-Chem Retail, studied consumer perception and buying behaviour of retail versus manufacturer brand baby care toiletry products for Northern Ireland (Broadbridge & Morgan, 2001). This research was done 18 years back for Norther Ireland region and since then a lot has changed in the private label industry as suggested by Nielsen’s 2013 study.

As per Nielsen’s 2013 report and (Óscar & Mercedes, 2014), traditionally, buying private label was all about paying low price for a limited range of grocery items with a cost quality trade off where consumer had to compromise on quality. This is no longer the case as consumers acceptance of the private label item has grown rapidly and continues to grow as the comparable or even higher quality product ranges become available. Private label also leads the way by innovation to serve its customer better (Nielsen, 2013).

In the initial period of 90’s, the discounter stores typically performed better when consumer’s income was down. Therefore, mainstream retailer could afford to ignore 10% to 20% of market share churned by private labels (Jacobsen, et al., 2017).
Graph 3: (Jacobsen, et al., 2017)

Above analysis by Boston Consulting Group shows that discounters grew at a rapid clip from 2000 to 2015. Their growth does not seem to be slowing down even after the increase in household incomes ten years down the economic recession, which clearly indicates that brand manufacturers could no longer afford to ignore competition from private label (Jacobsen, et al., 2017). As we could see in graph above, from 2000 to 2015, Ireland has experienced largest rise in market share of private label items (+25%) only second to Turkey (+46%) (Jacobsen, et al., 2017).

German discounter store Aldi and Lidl are leading this private label growth in Ireland with most of their grocery sales going through private label items. Discounter stores are strengthening in Ireland, as per Kantar Worldpanel figures, private label sales now account for 54% of total grocery spend, an increase of 6% from 2013 (John McGee, 2017).

In past, private label researches have shown that private labels are beneficial for both retailers and consumers. For retailers it can result in higher profit margins, high bargaining power from suppliers and brand manufacturers. For consumers, private label often offers lower prices with good quality (Koschate-Fischer, et al., 2014).
Consumers are at the centre of any production or business process as they drive the demand. Consumer performs numerous deliberations, evaluations of products and services for finally making the purchase decision. This research study the factors that may influence parent’s purchase decision of baby products under private label in Irish FMCG market.

Research Question: What are the factors influencing parent’s purchase decision in Ireland while purchasing private label’s baby care items?

Below are the objectives of this research which aims to add significantly to the existing knowledge and literature in area of private label baby care products in Ireland:

- To study whether there is any change in consumer buying trend of high inherent risk baby food products under private/store labels, five years after the Nielsen’s study of Irish private label market.
- To identifying the role of critical factors such as brand trust and brand loyalty that may influence customers to buy baby care products under private label or go for a branded product.
- To study the role of perceived risk and reference groups in high inherent risk products such as baby care products.
- To study how environmental concerns can influence consumer’s purchase decision.
- To explore and analyse any other factor/factors that might emerge from the research which may influence parent’s purchase decision of private label baby products.

Previous researches have mainly focused on the impact of factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk on one another in either general marketing context or in private label context. No research has been done so far which focuses on factors that influence purchase decision particularly in the context of baby care products under private label. Also, the researches in the areas of baby care products have focused heavily on generating knowledge from organizations perspective and strategies, focusing less on factors influencing consumer’s purchase intension from consumer’s perspective for baby care products. Instead the previous researches have focused more on marketing communication for influencing parent’s purchase decisions. These communication strategies cannot be made in exclusion without knowing the
factors that influence parent’s purchase decision. Hence, this research aims to capture consumer sentiments that influence their purchase decision of baby care private label products in Ireland.

**Benefits of this research:**

This research will study the role of critical factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups & environmental concerns which may influence customers to buy baby care products under private label or go for a branded product. Knowledge of these factors could be utilized by branded manufacturers and private label retailers towards designing their product and marketing strategies for baby care products in Irish consumer market. This research will also add useful information to the existing literature, which could be used by researchers to investigate further in this domain.

**Dissertation Roadmap:**

This research is organized into several chapters consisting of the literature themes which covers the extant literature researches which contextualizes this research idea, methodology adopted while conducting this research, Data analysis/findings, Discussion chapter in which the research work has been reviewed and the research question would be answered based on the research findings, Conclusion/Recommendations chapter will draw general conclusion and summarize author’s findings to point out direction the findings have explored.

**Scope & Limitations of Research:**

The scope of this research is related to the consumer preferences, perception and factors influencing parent’s purchasing decision of baby care products under private label. This research will not be attempting to reach out to full population due to resource and time constraints. This research will only be focused on baby products under private label instead of other items under private label. Research will study the impact of factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups that influence customers to buy baby care products under private label or go for a branded product.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Literature Introduction

This section will touch upon the extant literature, discussing the private label brands/stores and their product’s perception among consumers, effects that private label product offering can pose to the competitive market landscape and discussing the role of factors like brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups and environmental concerns that may influence customers while making purchase decisions in general.

2.2 Private label brands/stores and their product’s perception among consumers

Below chart shows the penetration of private label brands all over the world till the year 2013:

Graph 4: (RANGA, 2017)

In the last three decades private label has come a long way and now dominate most of the western markets especially European markets. Outsourcing of manufacturing capabilities have given these private label brands the ability to drive down the prices for consumers and capture
market share. Private label not only bring value for private label retailer but also creates value for consumer who avail the benefit of low prices due to their high bargaining power among suppliers (RANGA, 2017). The research by (RANGA, 2017) also found that although the demand for private label is high but the value share is very unequally distributed around the world. Study also found that share of private label is high among most developed countries while in Middle East and Asian countries, private label is struggling to achieve consumer confidence (RANGA, 2017).

(Cheng, et al., 2007) studied the consumer perception between national brands, international private labels and domestic or local private labels based on product quality, brand leadership, price and brand personality among consumers in Taiwan. The findings suggest that consumers perceive national brand significantly superior than international private label. However, interestingly, international private labels are perceived as being superior than local private label brands in terms of all factors except price. (Cheng, et al., 2007) also inferred from the research that across national brand, International private labels and local private labels, the product categories moderate the brand personality and price perception. And no difference with respect to price perception was found between national brands and international private labels.

As per (Nielsen, 2013), the market share of private label products in Ireland is highest in frozen, canned, grocery & household categories and weakest in categories like alcohol, baby food and health & beauty in Ireland.

In the study conducted in Ireland by Nielsen on sample of 975 respondents on how likely are consumers to purchase private label items bought in previous 12 months showed that consumers are least interested to purchase baby food item under private label in comparison to the items in other categories as shown below:
Generally private labels are associated with low cost. Consumers are switching to private label products as a belt tightening strategy and are experiencing that it is not necessarily the step down in quality that they were anticipating depending on the initial perception of private label items. Due to this the retailers are investing heavily in their own private label brands and paying high importance to the quality of the products (Nielsen, 2013) (Dimitrieska, et al., 2017).

According to (Dimitrieska, et al., 2017), reasons for such an outstanding growth of private label sales especially across US and Europe and reason for the occurrence of such private or store label brands in the first place are:

- Desire for creating low price products and services
- Desire of creating loyal customers
- Effort towards making greater profit for retailers
- Transforming shopping habits of consumers
- Addressing the unfulfilled needs of the customers

For results in other categories, refer Intention to purchase store brands bought in previous 12 months in appendix.
However, another research points to the fact that there is no positive correlation between the lower price and market share of private label products across different categories. For example, among 38 countries, the aggregated market share of private label was 32 percent in frozen food, 5 percent in personal care products and only 2 percent in baby food. On the contrary, on average the private label items were priced 31 percent lower than branded items. The argument becomes valid as the category specific price differential ranged from 46 percent in personal care items to just 16 percent in frozen category and 24 percent in baby food (Stephane, 2017).

Moreover, the research by (Stephane, 2017) also found that in few cases the price of private label product was even higher than its branded counterpart. Many hypermarkets have now started to introduce premium products which are often priced above the branded items. Tesco is one such retailer which has presence of its premium quality brand ‘Tesco Finest’ in most product categories (Stephane, 2017). Most private label stores have included options for organic food in their stores. Market researchers have found out that consumer inclination towards organic food is mainly motivated by personal well-being rather than social or environmental concerns and consumers are willing to pay the price premium for such products (Viola, et al., 2015).

Due to the increasing consumer confidence in private labels, some private labels have even crossed the FMCG and have registered their presence in diverse areas such as telecommunications, financial services, insurance, clothing and household goods. Hence some experts argue that these can no longer be considered as private label but store owned ‘brand’ (Nielsen, 2013).

Many retailers often try to align themselves with top quality brands. Retailers follow this strategy to cash on the name of brand and manufacturers, expecting that the consumer perception towards the brand may have a positive impact on consumer attitude towards the retailer. Some have even lamented that the importance of brands is declining due to the facts that markets are now being dominated by giant retailers in most categories. Research by (Zboja & Voorhees, 2006) studied the spill-over effect of customer perception of trust and satisfaction with a brand to consumer evaluation of a retailer selling that brand and ultimately the repurchase decision. The research found that the brand perceptions are transferred to the retailers, however for
customers to return, retailers must earn their trust by satisfying them as the effects of brand are indirect (Zboja & Voorhees, 2006). (Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016) argues that store image has a direct positive impact on consumer evaluation of the private label brand and being considered by the consumers.

Many previous researches have pointed out that there is a direct relationship between private label share and store loyalty. Research by (Koschate-Fischer, et al., 2014) found that for the customers who demonstrate price-oriented behaviour, there exist a strong relationship between share of private label and store loyalty. Secondly, the link between the private label share and store loyalty is strong in product categories with less degree of commoditization and involvement of high product category. Study also suggest that private label brand share drives store loyalty significantly for the retailers with low price positioning (Koschate-Fischer, et al., 2014).

A research conducted by (Jones, 2016) tried to find out whether a curvilinear relationship exist between income and private label purchase decision. After analysing the response from wide group of consumers, the research found that the results of their result do not support any curvilinear relationship between income and private label share. Also, across all the product categories, lower in come consumer are found to be more inclined towards purchasing private label as compared to moderate and high-income consumers (Jones, 2016).

Research by (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2009) studied an important concept regarding pertaining consumer perception regarding private label and national or manufacturer brand. Research found that the perceptual categorization between private label and brands start to differ only once the private label items are purchased by individuals. Moreover, study also found that the users of private label products do not perceive or see them as any less trustworthy than the branded ones. However, non-users of private label tend to discriminate between private label and manufacturer brands on basis of trust (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2009).

On the other hand, the study also found that irrespective of the experience the private label items form a sub-group or sub-category in subconscious mind of the consumers with low price and low quality as main driver of this categorization of brands. This is usual as when two brand possesses similar characteristic or specification that differs from other brands in the main
category, then different brand creates a sub-category in user’s mind, for example diet soft drinks can be categorized as a sub-group within larger soft drinks category as they contain less calories compared to the other products in the group. Similarly, since private labels historically have qualities which distinguish them from manufacturer brand, hence private label forms a sub-group in consumer’s mind (Nenycz-Thiel & Romaniuk, 2009).

To analyse and determine what triggers consumer purchase decision of private label product (Thanasuta, 2015) studied factors such as price consciousness, value consciousness, brand consciousness, quality consciousness and risk perception. As per (Thanasuta, 2015), price consciousness and value consciousness have similarity in consumers purchase characteristic as both are focused on price. But the distinction between price consciousness and value consciousness is often misunderstood. Undeniably the focus of both the consumers is on price but the price conscious consumer exclusively focuses on price, whereas the aim of value conscious consumer is to attain lower price in relation to the quality. Different consumers have different level of price consciousness. By focusing on exclusively on low prices and forgoing other product feature, the highly price conscious consumers are more likely to get attracted to private label brands with competitive pricing (Thanasuta, 2015). According to the study (Thanasuta, 2015) based on Thai consumers, pricing remains a major factor for consumers to private label products in developing markets and branded items position their products of premium quality.

2.3 How private label can affect the nature and level of market competition in an industry?

Private label products are characterized as being branded by the retailers rather than the suppliers. They have achieved high market penetration in numerous world markets and product ranges in recent years (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011).

Retailers can source their private label items in two ways, either by their self-owned upstream production facility or by outsourcing manufacturing to existing entity. The main feature that defines private label is not who produces the products, but who holds the intellectual property of the product. In case of branded products, generally the IP rights remains with the
manufacturer whereas in case of private label the retailer is the owner of intellectual property rights of the product. Implication of this distinction is that branded products are stocked by multiple retailers whereas private label products are generally not stocked by other competing retailers (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011) (BRAZAUSKAITĖ, et al., 2014).

The competition enhancing role of private label are generally expected to be strong in the product ranges where there is lack of pre-existing competition. The argument holds appeal due to number of reasons. In this relation, at an enquiry of European Commission, one of the big retailer argued that they in fact introduce private label in the category with less choice, price competition and innovation (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011). However, another research indicates that retailers generally follows copycat approach by imitating branded products, thereby weakening positioning of national brands (BRAZAUSKAITĖ, et al., 2014).

Below are the factors pointing towards ways in which private label affects the competitive market landscape:

- **Strong position of private retailers in terms of capturing market sentiments:**
  Since retailers are in a strong position to control the final sale of all products including branded, private label alike, to the consumers, they have ability to influence the competition between branded and private label sale. They have, the ability to distort one offering to encourage consumer to buy one product over another. Retailers can change the level playing field by giving private label products preferred shelf space, increased in-store promotion, raising selling price of branded products or ultimately destocking branded products. Initially, private labels drag down the prices to wholesale levels and after gaining a stable market share the retail prices revert to profit maximizing (Meza & K., 2010).

  However, in some markets where manufacturers invest heavily in market studies and may be equally or better placed in understanding consumer needs, behaviour and purchasing patterns (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011).
• **Less risky for Private retailer to launch a new product:**

Launching a new product into the market involves certain degree of risk. It is less risky to launch a new product for a retailer under private label compared to a manufacturer to launch a branded product (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011).

• **Retailer’s incentive to disrupt competitive landscape through private label**

When retailers introduce their private label offering in a category with existing competition, the retailer offering directly compete with the branded options under that category. Major incentive that retailers have in distorting the competition is the price margins associated with private label products, as retailer earns both the upstream as well as downstream margins on the sales (Meza & K., 2010).

• **Competition of introducing new product categories**

It might be the case that retailers are in a better position to identify the gaps for new product categories, since they can closely interact with the consumers and can do extensive analysis on consumer’s purchasing pattern across different product ranges, based on the data available through scanners and loyalty card schemes (Dimitrieska, et al., 2017) (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011). This act as a competitive advantage for private label players compared to their branded counterparts.

On the other hand, research (Gielens, 2012) has shown that launches of new product act as a competitive advantage for branded manufacturers to counter the growing competition from private labels. Even in this context the launch of new branded product hurt competitor branded products more than private labels share (Gielens, 2012).

• **Intention to grow profitability for whole category as separate business unit**

As per the study (Pepe S., et al., 2012) the retailers use a process model of Category Management to manage private labels and overall business effectively. Study also point out that while introducing a private label item, retailers focuses on increasing revenues and profit in whole category including sales generated from branded item, unlike the branded manufacturers who introduces product to maximize profit from their own brand. As per the researchers and analysts, this can help retailers to achieve cost savings of up to 2% and sales rise by 11% (Pepe S., et al., 2012).
• **Impact of competition on product innovation**

The European Commission’s decision to allow takeover of Avent by Philips which posed competition issues in the market for supply of baby bottle warmers, EC acknowledged the positive impact of private label on the level of innovation in this market. In U.K. and Spain market, it was acknowledged that the stronger position of private labels imposed a positive constraint on other branded players, particularly in pricing and innovation sphere. However, above holds true only in certain circumstances and growth of private label is not always synonymous to increase in level of innovation. (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011).

As mentioned above that growth in private label cannot always be considered as positive competition resulting in increased innovation. For example, increase in private label market share might lead to decrease in profit of branded manufacturers and prompt them to reduce resources spent on research and innovation. But this holds true only for limited circumstances (Doyle & Murgatroyd, 2011).

2.4 Role of factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups and environmental concerns that may influence customer’s purchase decision in general

Children are most important resource for any country as healthy children gives rise to a healthy nation. Any child below the age of 8 need highly nutritious diet for infant’s physical and mental development. Hence, they need utmost care in their initial phase of life. Parents are more conscious about the quality of baby products more than ever before, mainly due to rising wages and increased number of options to choose from. A study of mother’s perception towards the quality of baby food products in India indicates that the quality perception is influenced significantly by the different amount spent on the baby products by the parents (V. & P., 2016).

In this research, the author studies the aspects of brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups & environmental concerns, specifically in area of baby care products.
Role of brand trust on consumer’s purchase decision in general context

Brand trust is the one of the most important factor that buyer considers while making a purchase decision. Brand trust is defined as “the willingness of an average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function” (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Trust is embraced by the consumer when a company promises certain quality products and successfully meets the promises (Ahmad, et al., 2017). Most of the studies on brand trust have concentrated on the impact of brand trust on consumers of the items. But very little research has been conducted regarding the brand trust where non-consumers buy the item not for their own use or consumption but for others, such as baby care products. The study by (Srivastava, et al., 2016), explored to some extend the area of brand trust in high inherent risk products categories.

Gaining or changing brand trust in such product categories is complex to achieve due to high inherent risk associated with these products. Moreover, it is difficult for parents to judge the quality or results of such products as they are consumed by babies or toddlers who cannot express their opinion about the product (Srivastava, et al., 2016). Making purchase decision on behalf of child could be very stressful for the parents as they need to anticipate child’s needs (Way & Meyers, 2013).

Such high inherent risk products not only need to be credible but also innovative and intimate to capture the brand trust of parents, due to purchaser’s lack of consumption experience. Brand trust has evolved over time and establishing brand trust is not only dependent on product performance alone but also on the emotional factor (Srivastava, et al., 2016).

In recent years companies across the globe are trying to position themselves as ethical in all respects. Ethical consumerism has emerged as an important influence on most businesses. Research by (Singh, et al., 2012) has analysed the relationship between perceived ethicality at corporate level and brand affect, brand trust, brand loyalty at product level. The result of the research indicates that there is a positive relationship between perceived ethicality of a brand with brand trust, brand affect. Further brand trust and brand affect both have positive relationship with brand loyalty. The research argues that the trust between brand and its consumer not only depends on perception of fair practices & lack of opportunistic behaviour.
towards the partner, but also on perception of fair, accountable and responsible behaviour towards a wider audience or stakeholders (Singh, et al., 2012).

As discussed above in the text by author, there could be multiple factors which could directly or indirectly influence brand affect, brand trust and brand loyalty. Research by (Matzler, et al., 2006) indicates the same and explores the relationship between consumer’s personality traits (extraversion and openness), hedonic value, brand affect & loyalty. The research suggested that differences among individuals result in different values sought by them and in formation of brand trust and loyalty. The research findings indicate that individuals who score high on openness are more responsive to affective responses to brands compared to the closed individuals, hence a product’s hedonic value and brand affect are positively related to personality trait of openness (Matzler, et al., 2006).

Contrary to some extent with the above findings, the research by (Im, et al., 2003) exploring the relationship between innate consumer innovativeness, personal or individual characteristics and new product adoption behaviour found that personal characteristic such as age and income are stronger influencer and predictor of new product ownership as compared to the individual characteristic of the consumer. However, in previous discussion the findings of (Matzler, et al., 2006) were generalized and not specific to any particular class of product whereas in case (Im, et al., 2003) study considered only electronic products. Also, latter is more specific about the new-product adoption behaviour.

Another aspect of retail stores that is playing a significant role in creating brand trust and enhancing consumer experience is the shopping assistance provided by the stores. Many manufacturers have opened their own stores to help their customer enjoy unique brand experience (Chiu-chi & Kukar-Kinney, 2011). Research by (Chiu-chi & Kukar-Kinney, 2011) has compared two types of shopping aids, research-supporting and solution-oriented shopping aid to find out how the assistance with shopping aid affect the likelihood of consumer purchase, consumer satisfaction and confidence under influence of time pressure and product knowledge.

After taking into consideration the effectiveness of these shopping aids and situation of different consumers the study found that less time pressured and knowledgeable consumers are more
likely to benefit from research-supporting shopping aid whereas time-pressed consumers are likely to benefit from solution oriented shopping aids. Here solution oriented shopping aid refers to the personalized product recommendations and product evaluations which can help to simplify consumer decision making by narrowing down possible options and many other benefits (Chiu-chi & Kukar-Kinney, 2011).

The research by (Kim, et al., 2015) has examined the impact on brand trust and brand loyalty by four dimensions of brand experience i.e. sensory, affective, behavioural and intellectual. The study found that consumer’s brand trust and satisfaction is influenced by different aspects of brand experience. Also, all four dimensions of consumer experience proved to be having considerable direct effect on brand loyalty. The study also found that brand trust has more positive impact on consumer’s brand loyalty as compared to brand satisfaction (Kim, et al., 2015).

Brand credibility plays a vital role on brand choice and consideration of the brand or product. According to (Erdem & Swait, 2004), probability of inclusion of a brand into consideration increases significantly by brand credibility. Brand credibility not only increases probability of inclusion of brand into consideration set but also increases the probability of it being chosen from the consideration set. The research finds that it is trustworthiness and not expertise that affects brand consideration and consumer choices more. Credibility of a brand may be an important factor when there is uncertainty regarding the brand and information about the product is costly or difficult to obtain. This results in addition of the brand in consideration set for the consumer (Erdem & Swait, 2004).

There are several studies in past which tried to analyse relationship between consumer awareness about the brand or product and consumer loyalty. Research conducted by (CHAKRABORTY, 2017), analysed the impact of brand personality on consumer buying behaviour as the research argues that brand personality plays a major role in brand loyalty in turn improving brand equity. As per the research, an individual will be more attracted towards a brand if he/she is more aware of a brand, its price, features, quality etc. Another interesting finding for the research is that the loyalty levels are found to increase with age and family is sound to have most influential reference group (CHAKRABORTY, 2017).
Cognitive and emotional dimensions of brand trust and brand loyalty in high inherent risk products

Generally, in research as well as practice, marketers adopt single dimension or two-dimensional approach to audit brand loyalty. Loyalty was earlier sub-categorized as attitudinal or behavioural. But since attitudinal loyalty could not effectively predict behavioural brand loyalty, hence the research by (Worthington, et al., 2009) has reduced attitudinal loyalty to sub-components, emotional and cognitive loyalty. Human behaviour consists of cognitive response (I think), emotional response (I feel) and action that a person makes, as part of the behavioural response (Worthington, et al., 2009).

Cognitive commitment to a brand comprise of the consumer’s decision to stay with the brand driven by brand attributes and consideration of switching costs (Worthington, et al., 2009). As per (Oliver, 1999), cognitive loyalty is defined as loyalty based and price and features. Affective commitment is driven by positive feeling experienced while buying a brand and a sense of emotional connection with a brand (Worthington, et al., 2009).

Similar findings were also reported by Srivastava and team (Srivastava, et al., 2016), researchers have agreed on the fact that cognition-based trust and affect-based trust impact or influence the customer brand relationship in different ways, hence they should be treated as separate constructs. Cognitive brand trust is defined as the knowledge driven trust for a product brand where the faith in the brand is developed by performance instead of emotions. On the other hand, affective trust is driven by the emotions where trust is generated by level of care and concern demonstrated by a partner (Srivastava, et al., 2016).

Due to lack of any consumption experience in case of high inherent risk products such as baby care products, emotional reliance is the main source of brand-trust. Hence parents may rely upon affective signals to develop positive or negative perception of the brand (Srivastava, et al., 2015).

Further on this, as per the study by (Srivastava, et al., 2015), the knowledge driven cognitive brand trust is generated first and followed by emotions led affect based components. The reason for this is the fact that a baseline expectation of brand performance is important for parents to
invest further in the brand. Due to the high risk involved in consumption of baby care items, certain level of information searching, risk assessment and rational thinking is always a requirement to reduce the risk and vulnerabilities (Srivastava, et al., 2015).

The uncertainty in terms of product quality makes customer to utilize the consumer experience of other customers. Hence word of mouth plays an important role in influencing customers in making purchase decisions. Companies view word of mouth as most persuasive, highly credible and relevant option to influence consumers (Karimi Alavijeh, et al., 2018).

**Uncertainty among adopting parent**

Generally expectant parents have time of nine months when they can prepare themselves for new kind of purchase decisions. This buffer period of nine months helps to alleviate this feeling of uncertainty. However, parents who go for adoption do not have this buffer period and results in increased level of uncertainty. By understanding the perception of these buyers, marketers can communicate in certain specific way to alleviate these uncertainties (Way & Meyers, 2013).

Results of the research conducted by (Way & Meyers, 2013) found that in case of adopting parents, there is lack of attention paid by family, friends and marketers on the life changing event of adding a new member in family. Hence, on part of adoptive parents, there is a clear sign of discontent. The study also showed that there is a desire among adoptive parents to be acknowledged as expectant parents to strengthen confidence in their purchase decisions (Way & Meyers, 2013).

**Role of environmental concerns on influencing consumer purchase decision**

Another aspect that is gaining attention in recent years is related to consumer awareness about the environmental implications of overpackaging (Monnot, et al., 2015). In the recent years, a drastic change in consumer preferences and life styles could be seen across the globe. In most of the countries consumers are becoming more active and willing to act on environmental concerns (LEWANDOWSKA, et al., 2017).
Because of growing environmental awareness and sustainable development mindset, many big retailers have adopted the initiative of reduced packaging as a part sustainable development (Monnot, et al., 2015). The demand for sustainable development and waste reduction is coming from the corners of public and consumers across the Europe. UK’s voluntary Courtauld Commitment has encouraged the grocery retailers across UK to weight the carbon impact of household food waste. These initiatives are taking place amid the large quantities of packaging waste being thrown away every year. In France alone 4.7 million tons of packaging waste is thrown every year with recycling rate of just 67 percent (Monnot, et al., 2015).

Most efforts in past were made to reduce environmental impacts in the post consumption phase by recycling and waste management. The study by (Elgaaïed-Gambier, 2016) has explored the aspect of waste prevention and reduction at source by consumers and their perception regarding the same. According to the research, working on reduced packaging gives very little room to the private label retailers, who often rely on packaging to differentiate their product and competing with branded ones. There are generally two-layer packaging on products which are often referred as primary layer (or inner layer) and secondary layer (or outer layer). Despite the fact, that it is second layer that is avoided in effort to reduce the packaging, the study suggest that retailers should work on improving primary packaging. Since there is little room for manoeuvring in this layer, hence one possible approach by retailers could be to add a statement informing the consumer that all unnecessary packaging has been deliberately removed. But this does not always work due to consumer’s growing scepticism regarding environmental claims in advertisements (Elgaaïed-Gambier, 2016).

On part of retailers, imitating packaging style of branded products is one of the most important tool with which retailers try to create a positive perception in minds of the consumer by trying to induce feeling of similarity between private label and branded products (Monnot, et al., 2015) (BRAZAUSKAÏTÊ, et al., 2014).

A 2012 research conducted on 25,000 European citizens, show that a trust crisis exists among European citizens with respect to the environmental initiatives and claims of companies. As per the study, approximately half of the Europeans do not trust the claims by various manufacturers
and producers concerning the environmental impact of their products. 11 percent of citizens do not trust such claims at all and one third of the participants claims to have experienced misleading sustainable and environmental statements. This has led many countries like USA to regulate and monitor green marketing claims (LEWANDOWSKA, et al., 2017).

**Impact of reference groups on influencing consumer’s purchase decision**

Another important factor that may influence the consumer’s purchasing decision depends on influence of dissociative reference group. As per the research conducted by (White & Dahl, 2006) there are numerous examples of consumers avoiding products which are associated with particular reference groups, for example: the teenager who avoid wearing dad’s clothes, the baby boomers who do not want to buy products that are associated with being “elderly” and college going student who avoid dressing “geeky”. Such examples show that groups can be considered as point of reference with respect to how consumer think and behave (White & Dahl, 2006).

Reference groups can be of three types, membership group, to which the individual currently belongs, positive group i.e. groups with which individuals wish to be associated with, these are sometimes also known as aspirational groups and negative/ dissociative groups with which individual do not want to be related with (White & Dahl, 2006). The desire to avoid certain reference group can influence consumer preferences and choices. As per the existing research, membership reference group have greater influence on individuals purchasing decision when product is consumed publicly rather than privately. The research by (White & Dahl, 2006) also indicates that people use products symbolically to convey who they are to other people. The study also strongly propose that dissociative influence is highly motivated by self-presentation concerns of individuals (White & Dahl, 2006).

According to another research on consumer psychology by (Weiner, 2000), rationale theory indicates that product selection to some extend determined by anticipated satisfaction from that product. Consumer wonder whether they will be “satisfied” or “dissatisfied”, the purchase decision would turn out to be “good” or “bad”, the product will “work” or not. It is extremely implausible to argue that this conjecture is not a determinant of product selection/choice in virtually all instances where consumer make decision (Weiner, 2000).
What determine whether the decision will result in success or subjective likelihood of personal satisfaction for alternative choices made? There are numerous antecedents of expected satisfaction prior to initial choice. For example, an individual may purchase a product as it is first in Consumer Report list, because his/her friend speaks highly of it, because he/she is convinced by an advertisement and so on. These are not completely non-attributional in that the individual may discard friend’s opinion because he/she knows that the friend like everything. In this case the individual put down the liking to friend’s disposition rather than characteristics of that product. According to (Weiner, 2000) attribution play their role post-initial decision-making outcome and prior to making next choice. Attribution arises when an individual evaluates the performance of the initial product and compares it with individual’s level of aspirations. It has been recorded in researches that the attribution search result in failure (dissatisfaction) instead of success (satisfaction) as we do not ask why a product has worked, but why it has not performed the intended function (Weiner, 2000).

Study by (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013) researched the impact or relationship that brand trust and brand identification have on brand evangelism. Brand evangelists are the consumer who embrace the brand and become the brand advocates for their peer group. They actively recruit people to experience the brand and discourage them to purchase rival brands. The study considers brand evangelism more powerful than simple word of mouth to influence brand equity or promoting a product. Hence the study argues that evangelism is triggered by consumer-brand relationship rather than individual characteristics like personality, age, gender and usage experience (Becerra & Badrinarayanan, 2013).

**Role of ‘perceived risk’ in influencing consumer purchase decision**

Consumer evaluation, choices and buying behaviour could be influenced and as a result understood by perceived risk as consumer’s determined expectation of loss. According to (Ho, et al., 2011) “objective risks” with products are decreasing whereas the perceived risks and fear is growing phenomenon in certain spheres of consumption. Consumers risk perception increases as a result of any incidents such as mad cow disease in Europe or melamine in milk from China. The information and knowledge of consumer about the products and perceived risk enhanced by
media and other organizations is one of the reason for such phenomenon. Such instances have caused significant decline in consumption of affected product. The study by (Ho, et al., 2011) research about how perceived risk, objective knowledge and certainty influence brand loyalty and interact with consumer satisfaction. The research finds that influence of satisfaction on loyalty decreases when perceived risk increases but is enhanced or moderated with increase in certainty and objective knowledge of consumers (Ho, et al., 2011).

Risk perception is generally measured by five parameters namely health loss, money loss, time loss, change in lifestyle of the consumer. Generally, in food related situations, consumer’s risk perception is driven by various individual factors such as personal preferences, past experiences, social values, beliefs, health conditions or allergies etc. (Yeung, et al., 2010).

The uncertainty among consumers due to the perceived risks discussed above could be moderated with the PDO’s (Protected Denomination of Origin) especially in food related items. When consumers make purchase decisions they evaluate multiple product attributes. To some extent this evaluation is influenced by consumer’s familiarity or knowledge about the product category. As per (Carmina & Carlos, 2011), consumers who poses greater experience and familiarity with PDO’s, the effects of trust on satisfaction is higher and in-turn higher consumer loyalty. (Carmina & Carlos, 2011) also argues regarding perceived risk that consumers tend to be concerned more by magnitude of the consequences and most consumer do not take probability of occurrence of that risk into account while making purchase decisions. The research also found/that most European consumers are not aware of PDO’s names even when they are unknowingly buying PDO certified food products. Some consumers even confuse PDO’s with brand names (Carmina & Carlos, 2011).

Generally, in the category of food items, for consumers it is difficult to assess the quality which leads to subjective perception of risk, which has intensified in recent years as discussed above. Precisely in case of purchase of private label products, the study by (Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016) found that consumers purchase intension for private label products does not depend on the consumer trust. According to the research, the affordable prices of private label products have previously influenced the purchase of private label products positively. The research by
(Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016) has focused on competence trust, i.e. the ability of the partner brand to perform according to the intentions and expectation of the relationship. Trust plays a crucial role in determining perceived risk of the product or a brand. Familiarity is treated as an important factor in determining the purchase intention especially for private label items. According to (Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016) familiarity plays one of the most important role in influencing the consumer’s purchase decision which is a result of eventual consumer learning through consumption experience or marketing communications.

A unique area of interest in relation to the consumer perceived risk studied by (Yeung, et al., 2010) is ‘consumer risk management strategies’ respond to the risk management strategies followed by food industry. By focusing specifically on poultry industry, this research tried to explore consumer risk-reducing strategies and in turn its impact on risk related to food security. It is understandable that consumer would form risk-management strategies amid unanticipated outcomes. In association with greater risk perception, it is expected that consumer will take greater action as a response to the risk perception. Consumer can potentially employ several risk reduction strategies such as buying branded products only, seeking advice from legitimate and trusted sources. Consumer’s strategy depends on their own individual tolerance of perceived risk. Consumers are often willing to pay price premium in the periods of uncertainty in relation to the food safety, these price premium is generally for branded products which provide consumers certain reassurance in terms of quality. In-line with the previous researches, the second highest moderating effect on consumer risk perception is of ‘information’, it can reduce consumer perception of food safety risk to a large extent. As per (Yeung, et al., 2010) famous brand and brand loyalty has the highest moderating effect on consumer risk perception as a result of which it’s the most effective risk reducing strategy that consumer adopts in case of perceived risk.

(Yeung, et al., 2010) found that to some extent consumers underestimate the possibility of food contamination post purchase, which can affect food safety risk, though past researchers have found that approximately sixty percent of food contamination incidents occur at home. Also,
price does not find to have a significant effect on risk perception of consumers as in certain circumstances consumers are ready to pay price premium.

3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

Research methodology refers to the approach adopted by the researcher in achieving the intended knowledge and answering the research question. By conducting research, researcher works towards developing new knowledge. Sometimes author’s own beliefs and values can influence the research and result in biased approach (Saunders, et al., 2015). Hence to make the research authentic, valuable and to avoid any bias throughout the research, author has outline the research philosophy, approach and strategy that is being adopted. In the below section author would be making assumption, with reference to the methodology that was adopted while conducting primary research. This section will include research philosophy, research approach and research strategy.

3.2 Research Design

Below is the diagram used by (Saunders, et al., 2015) to depict the issues related to the choice of underlying data collection techniques and data analysis procedures. Data collection and analysis technique is at the centre of this diagram, often referred to as “research onion”.
3.2.1 Research Philosophy

All the way through research, authors make certain assumptions. Research philosophy could be defined as author’s assumption on how author views the world. Since we have a significant impact on not only what we do while conducting the research but also on how we understand the aspects of ongoing research (Saunders, et al., 2015).

This research involves social elements into consideration involving human perceptions and behaviour, hence the answer to the research question might not be known completely but we can gain reasonable understanding from the research. This research study the business and marketing aspects which are too complex to be defined by definite laws or numbers in contrast with the scientific researches.
Positivism and Realism tradition takes scientific approach towards the research. The above real-world complexities related to human perceptions and feelings are lost if such complexities are generalized into definite law like scientific theories. On the contrast, Interpretivism approach emphasis on conducting research among social actors instead of objects. Interpretivism will allow author to enter the social world of the consumer to understand the world from their perspective (Saunders, et al., 2015). Hence Interpretivism philosophical approach is followed for conducting this research, considering the fact, that the research question is not strictly objective and different participants can behave differently in different situations.

3.2.2 Research Approach

The extent to which we are clear about the theory gives rise to another aspect of research design i.e. research approach. Deduction approach involves development of a theory at the beginning of the research which is then rigorously tested. This approach is often followed in natural sciences, involving test of pre-assumed propositions (Saunders, et al., 2015).

On the other hand, in inductive approach the data is collected to get an idea of the existing situation after which the interview data is analysed. This analyses then either results in formulation of a theory or help in understanding the problem better. In Inductive approach data is followed by theory unlike the deductive approach.

Approach that is followed in this research is the inductive one as the research begins with the research question rather than a theory. Researcher is not expected to take an objective stance due to the nature of this research which includes analyzing subject’s emotions and perceptions first and then analyzing the data to generate insights. A rigid methodology could be too constraining for this research.

Recognizing that methodology could be molded to understand the situation better. Induced information will be gathered as part of primary research through qualitative data gathered from sampling population.
3.2.3 Research Strategy

Since this research involves researcher to immerse in participants world to view the situation from their perspective, hence qualitative research strategy is adopted. Qualitative research is generally associated with interpretive approach. Qualitative research has helped author to study subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed by the participants of this research. It studies participants responses and relationships between them with the help of various data analysis techniques and procedures (Saunders, et al., 2015).

On the other hand quantative research is mostly associated with positivism phylosophy and deductive approach which intend on testing theory from the collected data. Qualitative approach is used to measure variables numerically. Hence qualitative method is most appropriate to operate within the natural setting of this research and in order to establish trust, participation and in-depth understanding of participant’s perceptions.

Researcher has to put himself in participants shoes to explore their perception, hence Ethnography technique will be used to stress on the subjectivity rather than objectivity.

3.3 Sampling

In this research, the target population would be the parents of children below the age of 4 years in Republic of Ireland.

Since it is not possible to reach whole target population due to the timing, access and budgeting constraints, hence sampling is used to analyze perception of the small sub-set of population, to infer what the perception of population might be.

Non-probability sampling technique will be employed as practically it is not possible to identify and list or census all the members of the population due to above constraints. Therefore, we cannot guarantee that each member of the population is equally likely to be included in the research.

Within non-probability sampling, snowball sampling technique is used as it is not feasible to identify all members of the population and with the help of snowball sampling technique author
had established contact with one or two cases in the population and ask these cases to lead to further cases and so on.

3.4 Data Collection

Secondary data has been used and analyzed to produce literature review from credible sources. Up to date information has been used from credible sources such as academic journals and authentic websites.

As mentioned in Research Strategy section, qualitative research strategy was adopted to collect primary data. One to one, in-depth interviews were conducted with parents. In-depth interview is a qualitative research technique which involves intensive interviews with the participants to explore their perspective on specific idea, programme or situation. This technique is appropriate when we need in-depth or detailed information or want to explore new issues and ideas in-depth (Boyce & Neale, 2006).

All interviews were audio recorded to deeply analyze them later. Face to face or telephonic medium was used for the same as it enabled author to establish personal contact with the respondent and the respondent might lead discussion in direction that author has not considered before, which was crucial in answering research question. Hence open, concise and purposeful questions were asked from the participants to explore these further.

To achieve above objective, semi-structured interviews were conducted, consisting of list of pre-determined questions and some open ended questions which might vary depending on the respondents answers to explore further. Semi-structured questions can be found in appendix.

3.5 Data Analysis

This section touches upon the data analysis techniques that were used to create knowledge from the gathered qualitative data as mentioned in previous section. Qualitative data referes to all non-numeric data that have not been quantified (Saunders, et al., 2015).
For data to be useful, it needs to be analyzed and its meaning understood. To analyze the qualitative data gathered from the semi-structured audio recorded interviews with parents, data was subsequently processed by transcribing the interview in word document for further analyses.

For processing the data further, data transcripts were read in detail and user responses were converted into condensed form for further categorization of data. General constructs such as summarising (condensation) of meanings, categorisation (grouping) of meanings, structuring (ordering) of meanings (Saunders, et al., 2015) was used to integrate related data from different transcripts to find patterns. Colour codes were developed to categorise data into different colour codes and draw connection between discrete pieces of data. To find the highest occurring code or theme among respondent’s responses, the colour coded responses were sorted by question numbers for all respondents in one table to compare the responses of each theme.

During data analysis and all subsequent sections, respondent’s identity has been kept anonymous and respondents are referred as Respondent 1, Respondent 2 and so on depending on the sequence of interview dates on which particular interview was conducted. Interim summaries were written to see the direction of the progress and to figure out how further interviews could be improvised in terms of necessary information needed.

3.6 Research Ethics

Ethical concerns are expected to emerge in several phases of contact with the participants. “In the context of “Research Ethics”, ethics refer to the ethical standard of behavior that guide author’s conduct in relation to the rights of those who become the subject of the research directly or indirectly” (Saunders, et al., 2015).

To uphold high standard of ethical conduct ‘codes of ethics’ listed below were followed to guide the research conduct. However, author agreed to the fact that a situation of ethical delimma may arise, which is not covered in below codes of ethics, during the course of research. In such situations, decision choices were made in such a way that it avoid any conflict or harm to any stakeholder in the research.
• Participants were be informed verbally as well as in written regarding the motive behind this research.
• ‘Participant Consent Form’ and ‘Information sheet’ were provided to the respondents before the interview. Interviews were conducted only after receiving written and verbal consent from the participants.
• Collected data has only been used in rightful permission from the participating individual and my Research Supervisor.
• Participants privacy has been protected in best possible manner and their identity is kept anonymous.
• This research does not involve participation of minors, still utmost care was taken while dealing with miners during the course of research.

3.7 Limitations of Methodology

Some of the participants who have committed to be part of this research might had backed out at a later stage when the dissertation was going on. To deal with such situations, snowball sampling technique was adopted so that respondents could lead the author to other similar respondents. Also author had contacted backup respondents in advance to avoid any issues at the later stage of the research.

Some respondents might be reluctant in sharing personal details. To avoid such situation, they were thoroughly informed regarding their rights and the efforts that author will make to keep their identity anonymous.

Since snowball sampling was used, it was inevitable that the respondents knew each other closely. Hence some respondents might had moulded their answer, keeping in mind that author might disclose their thoughts and perception to other respondents. To avoid such perceptions of the participants, they were informed thoroughly regarding their rights and privacy standards that will be followed throughout the research and written documents were shared as mentioned in Research Ethics section.
4. Data Analysis/Findings

This chapter will illustrate the analysis of the primary data, collected by the author from in depth semi-structured interviews. As part of the qualitative analysis, collected audio data is transcribed into word files, consisting of exact user responses and questions. Transcripts were read and converted into condensed responses before categorizing the data in tables for data analysis.

Table 1 consist of respondent names, interview dates along with respondentIds. Throughout data analysis chapter, respondents will be identified with these respondent ids.

Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent ID #</th>
<th>Respondent Name</th>
<th>Interview Date (dd/mm/yyyy)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Respondent 1</td>
<td>08/07/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Respondent 2</td>
<td>14/07/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Respondent 3</td>
<td>14/07/2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Respondent 4</td>
<td>21/07/2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 defines the colour coding for different research themes or category. The colour coding will help in drawing connections between discrete pieces of data.

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme/Category</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to buy any baby product of private label in all categories.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to buy baby products in less inherent risk categories but reluctance in buying high inherent risk baby food products showing lack of brand trust towards private labels.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty exist among parents in relation to the high inherent risk associated with baby products not only under private labels but brands as well which</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
influence the purchasing decision. Private labels are not considered as more or less risky in the context of baby products.

Consider product features or attributes while purchasing baby products of private label.

Purchase decision is driven by emotions towards a brand.

More loyalty towards a specific private label retailer driven by product quality and shopping experience provided by them which plays a significant role in influencing purchase decision of parents.

Perceive all private labels alike and willing to switch retailers frequently.

Purchase decision of private label baby products is influenced by its lower price and wide product range compared to branded products.

Consider private label to be of inferior quality than brands and premium private labels in baby products category.

Consider branded products to be same as Private label or Premium private label.

Sometimes consumer get confused and perceive private label as a ‘brand’.

‘Organic option’ in private label plays an important role towards alleviating risk perception or uncertainties related to high inherent risk baby care products.

Consider over packaging as sign of good quality. This also affects negatively the purchase decision of baby products which have less packaging.

Despite being sensitive towards environmental concerns, no negative impact on purchase decision just because the product is overpackaged.

Avoid buying over packaged products due to environmental concerns.

Perception of private label products as being less heavily packaged in general. This sometimes influence the purchase decision positively towards private label baby products.

Overpackaging is considered as a sign of good quality, however less packaging is not considered cheap quality either.

Online product information and reviews, in addition to family’s and friend’s advice play an important role in positively impacting purchase decision of private label baby products.

Family and friend’s advice is main factor influencing purchase decision of baby products.
Table 3 consists of categorised condensed responses with colour coded themes for Respondent-1.

**ID#: Respondent id**

**Q#: Question number**

**Response:** Participant’s response in condensed form

**Code:** Colour code defined in Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Q#</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age of my child is 3 years 7 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we do purchase few items for our baby from private label stores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We mostly buy non-consumable items like diaper, baby tissues, toys and toiletry products. We do not buy eatables under baby care private label.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Private label products are always cheaper than other branded products. Still we prefer to buy milk powder and other consumable baby products from high brands like boots Since we are sceptical about quality of private label products, hence we avoid buying consumable items.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, diaper, accessory and toys. Moderately likely to buy: baby food products Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>With no prior experience and being parent to the first child, there were lot of uncertainties. We used to pay more attention to advertisements while shopping. We also search online before buying items for which we do not have prior knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Initially our parents were the main source of information but after moving away, our friend’s advice became the main source of information related to buying baby care items.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|   | 8  | Family and friend’s advice is useful, despite that we find online reviews more trustworthy as that provides us latest information and is the result of experience of hundreds of consumers.  
Another advantage of online product search is that it helps us to see all product details whereas while shopping there is not enough time to see those details. |
|   | 9  | In general, private label products are really good quality in frozen category. We buy lot of products from Lidl and usually buy premium category option whenever available. |
|   | 10 | I feel private label baby care products are of good quality and value for money. We perceive private label of better quality than branded ones in frozen vegies and dairy products category. We are loyal to some manufacturer brands which are available only on specific store (These are private label items under different brand name).  
Premium private labels are of good quality, we often buy body wash from Tesco and we find them of good quality and value for money. We also buy baby food products from Tesco but those are mostly ‘Hipp baby food products’, we are not sure if we can buy them outside Tesco, but we generally find them in Tesco. |
<p>|   | 11 | Premium category private label products are costly so, why not but branded ones. We do not buy baby care items like food or milk products from private labels as we always prefer brands while buying consumable products for my child. |
|   | 12 | In true sense, trust we have is for branded products like Johnson &amp; Johnson which is built over the years. We avoid changing products for our baby as we are not sure how is the new product will impact our child. We do not switch between products until there is something wrong with the product we are currently using. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Lot of risk is associated not only with private label products but also with branded baby care products. For example: We often buy Hipp organic baby rice but once we had a bad experience with it as the rice was more sticky than usual and something was wrong with it, so we returned it got it replaced. By chance we never had such experience with private label. So, this can happen with any product.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>I would rate it 2 as we consume huge amount of frozen private label items every day. They are very cheap and still of good quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I never thought about it but I agree that it is better not to generate large amount of waste. But I generally don’t buy products which are packaged cheaply. It is a trend that most high branded items from watches to sunglasses are highly packaged and are of good quality as well. Low price products are not packaged well and are of low quality. This is the reason I avoid buying low or cheap packaging products. I understand that it is waste, but how would you differentiate good products with cheap ones. For private label, I would avoid item which have low packaging as it is tough to trust such products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Absolutely reduction in packaging is an indication of reduction in quality. I agree that this not ideal but how would you differentiate between quality?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes, the confidence towards private label has come from the performance of other products. Number of product option is very huge in private labels with several price options, so you can buy as per your pocket. But I think it is both online reviews and suggestions from our known people which alleviates uncertainties related to private label.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yes, we do differentiate between private stores on factors like behaviour of the staff, accessibility to complain or return product. Compared to branded ones, this is not so easily available with big brands. Private label stores are easy to approach in case of issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 consists of categorised condensed responses with colour coded themes for Respondent-2.

Table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Q#</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around 4 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we buy lot of products from private label and some baby care products as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do not remember all the baby or other products we buy under private label, but I generally look for low price for buying groceries, clothes and a lot of other products. We do not buy low quality products, but we generally look for low prices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I prefer Tesco as it is beside my office and my wife buy from Lidl. Tesco, Lidl and SuperValue all are good. It doesn’t matter, the product should be of good quality and right price.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby care toiletry, food, cosmetics, diapers, accessories, toys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>My nephew is 8 years old and since my brother’s family stays nearby and they know a lot so initially we use to take their help/suggestions before buying baby products. My brother is a fan of private label products and that made me to trust them as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Family and friends are main source of advice with respect to buying baby products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Family and friends have the highest influence followed by online reviews, but I think many online reviews are fake or paid as well. So, you need to know how to spot the right ones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Private label products are grand. We do not even know if any other brands exist for frozen products other than private label stores. We don’t buy some products of private label like tea and coffee, we always buy them from our favourite brands, but still we buy a lot of products of private label. My perception of private label products is that they are so reasonably priced and of good quality as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Most products are of good quality but few products are not very good in quality, but that is fine as we are paying so less for these items. It is great to save money on everyday purchases which makes a big difference on your finances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Premium class baby products are expected to be of better quality, but I don’t think normal private label products are of low quality either. Sometimes when we want to buy something great and ready to spend more money then, we buy premium ones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Premium category baby care products are not bad as some of them are quite costly like branded products. If there is an option of premium private label, we would like to give it a chance.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>My trust for private label products are driven by product features, offers. If some retailer or brand is giving more with little more price then we go for that offering.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Risk exist in buying all products. There was a recent incident of some bacteria in frozen vegetables last week. It was there in all media and many private label stores recalled their products to replace. But these are rare incident. I believe there is very low risk in private label products, whether you are buying baby products or some other brand category products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>I rate risk level as 1 as I don’t find them risky.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I do not like overpackaging. Some products have too much of plastic and paper waste. Restaurants and other businesses are generating humungous amount of waste and very few people are concerned about it. I don’t intentionally avoid something because of packaging but we should consider this while buying anything. If there is some product for which manufacturer has deliberately reduced the packaging to save environment, I would be interested in buying such products.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>No, I do not believe that reduction in packaging is an indication of reduction in quality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Yes, I think so. Since we purchase many products of private label, this may have been a factor which made us comfortable in buying baby products of private label. Generally, we buy everything from there and it saves us a lot of money.

I find Tesco better than others because its price is lowest for most of the items and the products are fresh as well. But if I find any product cheaper in some other store, I will buy it from the cheaper one. It doesn’t matter if the product is branded or private label of Tesco, Lidl or any other store, I’ll buy it if the product is good and available in less price than other stores.

Table 5 consists of categorised condensed responses with colour coded themes for Respondent-3.

Table 5:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Q#</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around 3 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We bought nappies, cotton wool from boots. We buy nappies of Dunnes private label but pampers is so famous that people often refer nappies with the name “pampers”. Pampers are usually pretty-expensive than private label counterpart and they are not necessarily any better.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 4 Instead of loyalty it is distrust, I wouldn’t pay more just because it is a brand as I know that some of these brands manufacture the private label products and rebrand them as private label. For example: Dunnes nappy is manufactured by Pampers and then rebranded and sold as Dunnes private label at lower cost. I know you have to pay more for brand which is not necessarily better. It’s not that I am loyal to Dunnes or any other private label, It is just that I don’t trust the companies. I don’t believe that their products are any better just because they are more expensive. They are expensive because of their branding and people are persuaded to trust them. On principle I’ll avoid pamper because it’s a big brand and its expensive.

3 5 Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, accessories, toys and diaper, baby food (if Organic or good option is available)
Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics, baby food(non-organic)

3 6 No, we didn’t do any preparation, since my wife breast fed, we didn’t purchase any formulae milk. For nappy rashes we bought creams from local shop or my wife also use to make cream at home as we like natural stuff for our child. Making products at home saves you from chemicals as well as money.

3 7 My friends.

3 8 Online source and many recommendations from friends or friends of friends.

3 9 With respect to frozen food perception of private label, I think frozen vegetables are really good quality. But when it comes to milk, I would prefer some local producer. In private label, I find Dunnes products of good quality. For fast food like frozen chips I would have no interest whatever brand or non-brand it is.

3 10 It depends on what product it is. If it is milk, I would say medium to low quality but cheese in Dunnes is very good
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>quality. In my perception private label is not necessarily better or worse than a brand. It may have been manufactured by a brand and just rebranded as private label.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>We consider Tesco finest is the same as Dunnes. Baby products under premium private label are suddenly better than middle of the range products. We want the product that is good for our son, so we try to make most of the baby products at home. We sometimes buy fruit pyure, mashed veg pouches which you could boil and children can squeeze them to eat.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>I would prefer premium private label over branded product because as I mentioned earlier, by principle I don’t want to buy branded ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Features and quality matters the most but if there is emotion then there is mistrust of brands. This mistrust or blind trust can be with private label as well. Hence, I would buy the cheaper one if the products in question are same.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>I would not say that they are more, or less risky than brands. I won’t trust a brand more in terms of safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I would rate 1 as I don’t think they are risky.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>My perception is that the private labels generally have less packaging than brands as big brand overpackage because overpackaging reassures to their customers that the product they are buying is best protected from outside contamination. If its baby, baby biscuits of fancy brand then there will be one outer packaging and then each biscuit or bunch of few biscuits inside the main pack would be individually packaged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes, I think so, for example my past experiences of buying cheese, crisp or yoghurt under private label were good and I knew they were cheaper. Another example is that whenever I went to boots to buy sun cream or cotton wool, I would buy boots label and I wouldn’t buy Johnson and Johnson or any brand because I believe that if you are getting the same thing, then why should you pay more for same product.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No, private labels are more or less the same quality like branded ones and are cheaper. I feel less cheated when I buy private label products. I find Dunnes has better selection range compared to Tesco. My trust or choice of retailer is driven by quality and safety.

Table 6 consists of categorised condensed responses with colour coded themes for Respondent-4.

Table 6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Q#</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around one and a half years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we do purchase baby products of private label</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We often buy body wash, nappy and lot of toys as you get very good toys in almost half the price compared to Smyths toys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I trust Lidl and I do not trust other retailers much. In some private label stores amid low prices the quality of products is not good. there is no point in buying stuff in low price if the quality is not good enough.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, accessories, toys and diaper. Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics, baby food.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>My parent’s advice was very helpful, so we never had to worry about anything in this aspect. But when we moved to this country our friend’s advice was very valuable.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Mostly family and friends.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>First family members as you can trust them, and then friend’s advice. But I believe sometimes it’s hard to believe your friends completely as they often suggest high end expensive items to flaunt and I personally do not like it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quality of private label products is good enough. These products are cheaper than branded ones and I buy lot of products of private label. I particularly like Lidl.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>I am not sure about others stores but in terms of quality Lidl is very good. My experience was not good with Aldi. I think private label products are not good everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Of course, they are good. Normally I don’t buy food items for my baby from private store brands but I buy anything of private label if it is under premium category or organic, they are almost the same price as that of the branded ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Both are good but still I would go for branded products if given a choice between premium private label and branded one as they are better than the private label. If you are paying more price then why not go for better quality and brand. There is some security for things that we buy from brands as they are proved good before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Quality is very important factor for me and I never compromise with quality especially with my child. This is the reason I mostly shop from Lidl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>There is little bit of risk for some products and less risk for others but for food items, I think they might have more artificial ingredients as it is cheaper in cost. Natural products are always expensive. I believe organic products are less risky, I often buy them from Lidl and I am comfortable in buying organic products from private label. I prefer organic products from private label over brands as organic products are very expensive in brands whereas private label organic option is affordable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>It depends on product category. I would rate normal private label products as 4 and Organic private label as 1. I rated organic better as it is less risky and good for health.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>I do not think overpackaging is good in any sense. Even kids are taught in schools about environmental concerns but people do not care much about it. I would prefer something made of paper covering. But there are disadvantages of less</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
packaging as well, for example it becomes inconvenient to carry paper bags, there is more strength in plastic ones.

4 17 I don’t think that reduction in packaging is reduction in quality but good brands have more packaging but it has become a social obligation which force you to buy big brands which have fancy packaging. It is like a symbol of high brands. I know it is not good.

If a product has too much over packaging then I might consider it of good quality but it is not that the ones with less packaging are bad either.

4 18 I never noticed this but believe if I buy anything organic in any category whether baby product or others, it is because I had really good experience with Lidl. So, yes previous experience helps.

4 19 Yes, I differentiate. I trust one retailer more than other retailers based on their credibility with respect to food safety and food quality.

I understand that mistake can happen by anyone but it should never be repeated and the attitude of store and its employees should be corrective in that case.

In Table 7 below, refined primary data is sorted by question numbers. This table will help in visualizing the comparison between responses of respondents on semi structured questions asked during the in-depth interview. Colour coding will further assist in visualizing the trends in the consumer perceptions and study themes defined in Table 2.

Table 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID#</th>
<th>Q#</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Age of my child is 3 years 7 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around 4 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around 3 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Around one and a half years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we do purchase few items for our baby from private label stores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we buy lot of products from private label and some baby care products as well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes, we do purchase baby products of private label</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We mostly buy non-consumable items like diaper, baby tissues, toys and toiletry products. We do not buy eatables under baby care private label.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>I do not remember all the baby or other products we buy under private label, but I generally look for low price for buying groceries, clothes and a lot of other products. We do not buy low quality products, but we generally look for low prices.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We bought nappies, cotton wool from boots. We buy nappies of Dunnes private label but pampers is so famous that people often refer nappies with the name “pampers”. Pampers are usually pretty expensive than private label counterpart and they are not necessarily any better.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>We often buy body wash, nappy and lot of toys as you get very good toys in almost half the price compared to Smyths toys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Private label products are always cheaper than other branded products. Still we prefer to buy milk powder and other consumable baby products from high brands like boots Since we are sceptical about quality of private label products, hence we avoid buying consumable items.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>I prefer Tesco as it is beside my office and my wife buy from Lidl. Tesco, Lidl and SuperValue all are good. It doesn’t matter, the product should be of good quality and right price.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Instead of loyalty it is distrust, I wouldn’t pay more just because it is a brand as I know that some of these brands manufacture the private label products and rebrand them as private label. For example: Dunnes nappy is manufactured by Pampers and then rebranded and sold as Dunnes private label at lower cost. I know, you have to pay more for brand which is not necessarily better. It’s not that I am loyal to Dunnes or any other private label, It is just that I don’t trust the companies. I don’t believe that their products are any better just because they are more expensive. They are expensive because of their branding and people are persuaded to trust them. On principal I’ll avoid pamper because it’s a big brand and its expensive.

I trust Lidl and I do not trust other retailers much. In some private label stores amid low prices the quality of products is not good. there is no point in buying stuff in low price if the quality is not good enough.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, diaper, accessory and toys.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately likely to buy: baby food products</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby care toiletry, food, cosmetics, diapers, accessories, toys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, accessories, toys and diaper, baby food (if Organic or good option is available)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics, baby food(non-organic)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highly Likely to buy: baby toiletry, accessories, toys and diaper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less likely to buy: Baby cosmetics, baby food.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With no prior experience being parent to the first child, there were lot of uncertainties. We used to pay more attention to advertisements and while shopping. We also search online before buying items for which we do not have prior knowledge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Line</td>
<td>Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My nephew is 8 years old and since my brother’s family stays nearby and they know a lot so initially we use to take their help/suggestions before buying baby products. My brother is a fan of private label products and that made me to trust them as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No, we didn’t do any preparation, since my wife breast fed, we didn’t purchase any formulae milk. For nappy rashes we bought creams from local shop or my wife also use to make cream at home as we like natural stuff for our child. Making products at home saves you from chemicals as well as money.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My parent’s advice was very helpful, so we never had to worry about anything in this aspect. But when we moved to this country our friend’s advice was very valuable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Initially our parents were the main source of information but after moving away, our friend’s advice became the main source of information related to buying baby care items.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family and friends are main source of advice with respect to buying baby products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mostly family and friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Family and friend’s advice is useful, despite that we find online reviews more trustworthy as that provides us latest information and is the result of experience of hundreds of consumers. Another advantage of online product search is that it helps us to see all product details whereas while shopping there is not enough time to see those details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Family and friends have the highest influence followed by online reviews, but I think many online reviews are fake or paid as well. So, you need to know how to spot the right ones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Online source and many recommendations from friends or friends of friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First family members as you can trust them, and then friend’s advice. But I believe sometimes it’s hard to believe your friends completely as they often suggest high end expensive items to flaunt and I personally do not like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Score</td>
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<td>12</td>
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1. In true sense, trust we have is for branded products like Johnson & Johnson which is built over the years. We avoid changing products for our baby as we are not sure how is the new product will impact our child. We do not switch between products until there is something wrong with the product we are currently using.

2. My trust for private label products are driven by product features, offers. If some retailer or brand is giving more with little more price then we go for that offering.

3. Features and quality matters the most but if there is emotion then there is mistrust of brands. This mistrust or blind trust can be with private label as well. Hence, I would buy the cheaper one if the products in question are same.

4. Quality is very important factor for me and I never compromise with quality especially with my child. This is the reason I mostly shop from Lidl.

1. Lot of risk is associated not only with private label products but also with branded baby care products. For example: We often buy Hipp organic baby rice but once we had a bad experience with it as the rice was more sticky than usual and something was wrong with it, so we returned it got it replaced. By chance we never had such experience with private label. So, this can happen with any product.

2. Risk exist in buying all products. There was a recent incident of some bacteria in frozen vegetables last week. It was there in all media and many private label stores recalled their products to replace. But these are rare incident. I believe there is very low risk in private label products, whether you are buying baby products or some other brand category products.

3. I would not say that they are more or less risky than brands. I won’t trust a brand more in terms of safety.
Definitely, there is little bit of risk for some products and less risk for others but for food items, I think they might have more artificial ingredients as it is cheaper in cost. Natural products are always expensive. I believe organic products are less risky, I often buy them from Lidl and I am comfortable in buying organic products from private label.

I prefer organic products from private label over brands as organic products are very expensive in brands whereas private label organic option is affordable.

I would rate it 2 as we consume huge amount of frozen private label items every day. They are very cheap and still of good quality.

I rate risk level as 1 as I don’t find them risky.

I would rate 1 as I don’t think they are risky.

It depends on product category. I would rate normal private label products as 4 and Organic private label as 1.

I rated organic better as it is less risky and good for health.

I never thought about it but I agree that it is better not to generate large amount of waste. But I generally don’t buy products which are packaged cheaply. It is a trend that most high branded items from watches to sunglasses are highly packaged and are of good quality as well. Low price products are not packaged well and are of low quality. This is the reason I avoid buying low or cheap packaging products. I understand that it is waste, but how would you differentiate good products with cheap ones. For private label, I would avoid item which have low packaging as it is tough to trust such products.

I do not like overpackaging. Some products have too much of plastic and paper waste. Restaurants and other businesses are generating humungous amount of waste and very few people are concerned about it.
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<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Absolutely reduction in packaging is an indication of reduction in quality. I agree that this not ideal but how would you differentiate between quality?</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>No, I do not believe that reduction in packaging is an indication of reduction in quality.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>I don’t think that reduction in packaging is reduction in quality but good brands have more packaging but it has become a social obligation which force you to buy big brands which have fancy packaging. It is like a symbol of high brands. I know it is not good. If a product has too much over packaging then I might consider it of good quality but it is not that the ones with less packaging are bad either.</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes, the confidence towards private label has come from the performance of other products. Number of product option is very huge in private labels with several price options, so you can buy as per your pocket. But I think it is both online reviews and suggestions from our known people which elevates uncertainties related to private label.</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>Yes, I think so. Since we purchase many products of private label, this may have been a factor which made us comfortable in buying baby products of private label. Generally, we buy everything from there and it saves us a lot of money.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Yes, I think so, for example my past experiences of buying cheese, crisp or yoghurt under private label were good and I knew they were cheaper. Another example is that whenever I went to boots to buy sun cream or cotton wool, I would buy boots label and I wouldn’t buy Johnson and Johnson or any brand because I believe that if you are getting the same thing, then why should you pay more for same product.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>I never noticed this but believe if I buy anything organic in any category whether baby product or others, it is because I had really good experience with Lidl. So, yes previous experience helps.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Yes, we do differentiate between private stores on factors like behaviour of the staff, accessibility to complain or return product. Compared to branded ones, this is not so easily available with big brands. Private label stores are easy to approach in case of issues.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>I find Tesco better than others because its price is lowest for most of the items and the products are fresh as well. But if I find any product cheaper in some other store, I will buy it from the cheaper one. It doesn’t matter if the product is branded or private label of Tesco, Lidl or any other store, I’ll buy it if the product is good and available in less price than other stores.</td>
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</table>
No, private labels are more or less the same quality like branded ones and are cheaper. I feel less cheated when I buy private label products. I find Dunnes has better selection range compared to Tesco. My trust or choice of retailer is driven by quality and safety.

Yes, I differentiate. I trust one retailer more than other retailers based on their credibility with respect to food safety and food quality.

I understand that mistake can happen by anyone but it should never be repeated and the attitude of store and its employees should be corrective in that case.

Six Most common themes among all respondents:

Chart 2: Six Most common themes among all respondents
Colour codes corresponding to the graph above:

**Table 8:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Colour Code</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>More loyalty towards a specific private label retailer driven by product quality and shopping experience provided by them plays a significant role in influencing purchase decision parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple</td>
<td>Purchase decision of private label baby products is influenced by its lower price and wide product range compared to branded products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow</td>
<td>Willing to buy baby products in less inherent risk categories but reluctance in buying high inherent risk baby food products showing lack of brand trust towards private labels.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Family and friend’s advice is main factor influencing purchase decision of baby products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pink</td>
<td>Consider branded products to be same as Private label or Premium private label.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green</td>
<td>‘Organic option’ in private label plays an important role towards alleviating risk perception or uncertainties related to high inherent risk baby care products.</td>
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**Findings: Addressing aims/objective of the research**

This section will use above data analysis and insights to address research objectives defined in Introduction chapter.

Re-iterating research question: **What are the factors influencing parent’s purchase decision in Ireland while purchasing private label’s baby care items?**

As defined in “Introduction chapter”, below are the objectives of this research:

**Research Objective 1:**

*To study whether there is any change in consumer buying trend of high inherent risk baby food products under private/store labels, five years after the Nielsen’s study of Irish private label market.*

From the primary data collected, it is found that the notion of not buying high inherent risk baby food products persist among parents. Colour code: 

was among top 6 occurrences and this code represent the consumer reluctance in buying high inherent baby food products from
private labels. However, 3 out of 4 respondents have shown great interest in buying baby food products of private label if organic option is available. This interest in organic option is also captured in code:  which indicates ‘Organic option’ in private label plays an important role towards alleviating risk perception or uncertainties related to high inherent risk baby products like baby food.

Another interesting thing worth noticing is that 3/4 respondents have more trust in one retailer than other due to various reasons. 2/4 respondents also indicate that they would buy an organic baby food product of private label because they trust their favourite retail store due to their past experiences.

**Research Objective 2:**

To identifying the impact or role of critical factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty that may influence customers to buy baby care products under private label or go for a branded product.

In terms of brand trust and loyalty, 3/4 respondent said that they are more inclined towards buying baby products or any other products because of one major factor i.e. low price of private label. This is understandable from the highest occurrence of code:  which defines low price of private label products as the main reason to influence purchase decision compared to branded products.

In terms of brand loyalty and brand trust, code:  which is defined for parent’s loyalty towards a specific private label retailer driven by product quality and shopping experience provided by them plays a significant role in influencing purchase decision of private label baby products.

Important thing to notice here is that parents like Respondent 1, sometimes gets confused in differentiating between brands and private label products. Code:  captures this theme in-particular. This theme appeared twice in Respondent 1’s responses which indicates that consumer often develops brand loyalty and trust of a particular private label, ‘Boots’ in this case, without realizing that it is a private label and not a brand.
Research Objective 3:

To study the role of perceived risk and reference groups in high inherent risk products such as baby care products.

In defined colour codes, code: \textcolor{gray}{\textbullet} points to the theme/category that private labels are not more or less risky than branded products but this colour code also recognizes that risk is associated with high inherent risk baby products especially baby food. 3/4 respondent’s sentiments are in-line with the view that private label and not more or less risky than brands and risk is associated with all these products. However, respondent-4 believes that “some products are more-risky than others, private label products might have more artificial ingredients as it is cheaper in cost” and hence believes that private label products are more risky than branded ones.

Although respondent-4 also believes that organic private label products help in alleviating risk and are affordable compared to branded organic products.

Influence of family and friends is found to be of considerable importance for parents and same can be interpreted from the number of occurrences of code: \textcolor{orange}{\textbullet} which categorizes family and friend’s advice as a factor in influencing parent’s purchase decision of baby care products of private label. This theme is among the six most occurred themes.

For most respondents, in addition to family and friend’s advice, online information and reviews also play an important role in influencing parent’s purchase decision of baby products of private label. Same is categorized in code: \textcolor{green}{\textbullet} for respondent 1 and 4 it is one of the medium to gather information when they move away from family and friends.

As per respondent 1 and 2, since online information & reviews about products and latest and is result of large number of consumers, they help in alleviating risk associated with private label baby products. Respondent 2 also points out that sometimes online reviews are not fair and might be biased, in that case family and friend’s opinion should also be seen in conjunction with online information.

Research Objective 4:

To study how environmental concerns can influence consumer’s purchase decision.
With respect to environmental concerns, responses of participants vary on few aspects and have same consensus on others. All participants agree that environmental concern is a factor that consumers should take into account, while buying any product.

Respondent 2 and respondent 4 do not like overpackaged products as it has environmental implications, however they do not leave a product just because it is overpackaged. On the other hand, respondent 1 and respondent 3 takes extreme stance where respondent 1 believes that overpackaging is a symbol of good quality and considers reduction in packaging as reduction in quality. On the other hand, respondent 3 is most concerned about environmental implications of any product that he buys and by principal leaves a product that has more packaging.

**Research Objective 5:**

*To explore analyse any other factor/factors that might emerge from the research which may influence parent’s purchase decision of private label baby products.*

With the help of primary data, author has found some new factors that may influence consumer’s to buy baby products of private label. One such factor is role of organic option in private label baby products. All respondents mentioned their trust for organic private label products, same can be noticed from the code: [ ] which indicates that ‘Organic option’ in private label plays an important role towards alleviating risk perception or uncertainties related to high inherent risk baby food products.

Low prices of private label products denoted by code: [ ] persist as one of the most influencing factor with regards to parent’s purchase decision of private label baby products as this code records one of the highest occurrences in the responses.

**5. Discussion**

This chapter discuss the findings and analysis presented in data analysis section in relation to the research question. This chapter also discusses the implication of the findings of this research by referring to the relevant literature in literature review chapter.
Reiterating the research question: **What are the factors influencing parent’s purchase decision in Ireland while purchasing private label’s baby care items?**

Author’s aim by this research was to find the factors that may influence parent’s purchase decision while buying baby products of private label. For this purpose, since there is no existing research conducted which touches the area of parent’s purchasing decision of private label baby products, author explored the extant literature to study and understand factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty, perceived risk, reference groups and environmental concerns that influence consumer’s purchase decision in general context.

This chapter will compare the extant literature with the findings analysed in data analysis section to answer the research question.

**Research Objective 1:**

*To study whether there is any change in consumer buying trend of high inherent risk baby food products under private/store labels, five years after the Nielsen’s study of Irish private label market.*

As depicted in data analysis chapter, respondents are still reluctant to buy high inherent risk products of private label such as baby food in Ireland. This finding indicates that after 5 years there seems to be no considerable change compared to the research conducted by (Nielsen, 2013) in Ireland which found that consumers are least likely to purchase baby food and alcohol under private label, however are comfortable in buying private label products in other categories.

According to data analysis findings, amid the risk perception associated with consumable private label baby products, organic option if present in baby food category may help in alleviating parent’s risk perceptions and uncertainties associated with consumable baby food item. This perception among parents is understandable as studied in extant literature, according to (Viola, et al., 2015), consumer inclination towards organic food is mainly motivated by personal well-being rather than social or environmental concerns and consumers are willing to pay the price premium for such products. Further exploration in area of organic baby food product of private label can help in establishing the theory that organic option alleviates the risk associated with private label baby product.
Data analysis also points to another finding that parent’s trust and brand loyalty towards a particular-private label store can also play an important role in alleviate risk perception of baby food products. Sometimes this trust is so high that consumer is willing to purchase organic baby food products of private label because of the trust on particular-private label retailer. This notion is visible from one of the responses of Respondent 4: “I never noticed this but believe if I buy anything organic in any category whether baby product or others, it is because I had really good experience with Lidl. So, yes previous experience helps.”. This shows how past experiences can positively impact brand loyalty and trust to in turn positively influence parent’s purchase decision of baby food products.

**Research Objective 2:**

*To identifying the impact or role of critical factors such as brand trust, brand loyalty that may influence parents to buy baby care products under private label or go for a branded product*

As discussed earlier, brand trust is one of the most important factor that consumer considers before making purchase decision. Past studies on brand trust have concentrated on the impact of brand trust on consumers of the items. But very little research has been conducted regarding the brand trust where non-consumers like parents make purchase decision for their child.

As argued by (Srivastava, et al., 2016), it’s not easy to generate brand trust in high inherent risk products, same is indicated by response of Respondent 1 “We avoid changing products for our baby as we are not sure how the new product will impact our child. We do not switch between products until there is something wrong with the product we are currently using”.

One of the new insight emerging with respect to ‘brand loyalty and trust’ from analysis of primary data is that all the respondents did mentioned regarding their trust and loyalty towards a particular-private label retailer. In most cases this trust is established through consumer’s past experiences of buying other products.

From the analysis it can be argued that parents go for private label baby product options due to low prices offered by private label retailers and hence this brand loyalty towards private retailers as opposed to brands is driven by low prices of private label. However, this study has also found
that among private label retailers parents are more loyal towards one particular retailer due to the factors such as better quality, poor past experiences with other retailers, product range and price. To some extent this finding is pointing to the theory proved by (Chiu-chi & Kukar-Kinney, 2011) that private label stores are developing brand trust and enhancing consumer experience by providing shopping assistance and better consumer experience.

Previous researches have pointed out that there is a direct relationship between private label share and store loyalty. Research by (Koschate-Fischer, et al., 2014) found that for the customers who demonstrate price-oriented behaviour, there exist a strong relationship between share of private label and store loyalty. Same relationship is visible between store loyalty and purchase decision of parents for private label baby products.

However, our research points that it is not only shopping experience but also good product quality and past experiences with private label retailers that play a significant role in increasing or reducing brand loyalty and trust. This research also found that in some cases, when parents are reluctant in buying high inherent risk baby food product of private label, then the brand trust and loyalty of a particular retailer has the potential to convince them to buy baby food products as well, but this theory cannot be generalized without further analysing this factor on a large part of population, however the results of (Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016) further solidify this theory as according to (Calvo Porral & Levy-Mangin, 2016), familiarity plays one of the most important role in influencing the consumer’s purchase decision which is a result of eventual consumer learning through consumption experience or marketing communications. Same can also be generalized in context of baby food category after further research. Hence there is a lot of scope to explore this aspect.

**Research Objective 3:**

*To study the role of perceived risk and reference groups in high inherent risk products such as baby care products.*

As indicated in data analysis section, majority of respondents believe that they do not think that private label baby products are more, or less risky than the branded ones and risk persists in all baby care products due to high inherent risk nature of baby products.
As studied in extant literature, according to (Ho, et al., 2011) “objective risks” with products are decreasing whereas the perceived risks and fear is growing phenomenon in certain spheres of consumption. (Ho, et al., 2011) argues that consumers risk perception increases as a result of any incidents such as mad cow disease in Europe which negatively impact purchasing decision. However, respondent in this research indicated that in case of private label retailers and products, even if there is a rare incident with food security they are ready to trust private label retailer. This is an indication of reduced perceived risk of private label baby products due to the unparalleled performance in past in other categories. This reduced risk perception emerged when 3 respondents mentioned regarding different food related incidents happened with their private label purchases, but they also accepted that these incidents had happened rarely with their private label retailers.

Another theory emerging from perceived risk and parent’s loyalty aspect is that some consumer take into account the corrective measure by the retailer in the event of any product defect incident. This was visible from Respondent 4’s response in which she mentioned that “I understand that mistake can happen by anyone but it should never be repeated and the attitude of store and its employees should be corrective in that case”. She also mentioned that if the response from the retailer is not corrective or if the incident was a result of mistake done intentionally for unethical gains, she prefers to never visit that retailer again.

Research Objective 4:

To study how environmental concerns can influence consumer’s purchase decision.

As found during data analysis that all respondents are concerned about environmental impact of overpackaging, however this does not stop them from buying a product only because it is overpackaged, this doesn’t fall in-line with the findings of (LEWANDOWSKA, et al., 2017) which found in their research that most consumer across the globe are willing to act on environmental concerns, however the responses of this research doesn’t indicate the same except for respondent 3 who would avoid buying a product if it is overpackaged.

Further in contrast to (LEWANDOWSKA, et al., 2017), this research also found that some consumers consider reduction in packaging as reduction in quality and points it as one of the
reason for not avoiding overpackaged products. However, surprisingly most parents do not believe less packaged products are low in quality either.

Another new aspect emerging from primary data is the perception of parents of private label products as being less packaged which influence countryside parents to purchase private label over a branded product.

**Research Objective 5:**

*To explore any other factor/factors that might emerge from the research which may influence parent’s purchase decision of private label baby products.*

Several researches in past like (Nielsen, 2013) (RANGA, 2017) (Óscar & Mercedes, 2014) (Koschate-Fischer, et al., 2014) and many more have found that despite excelling in product innovation and quality sphere, it is low price of private label products that acts as main driver of purchase decision. Same could be inferred with this research as well. Author could sense from the parent’s responses and sentiments that low prices of private label plays a major role in influencing the purchase decision along with improved quality and vast product range.

Organic private label option in baby food category is found to be one of the most important factor that influence parent’s purchase decision by alleviating the risk associated with high inherent risk baby food products as argued by (Srivastava, et al., 2016).

6. **Conclusion/Recommendations**

Aim of this research was to find the factors that plays a major role in influencing parent’s purchase decision in Ireland while purchasing private label's baby care items. To explore and identify these factors, the study of extant literature was conducted in areas such as factors influencing consumer purchase decision in general context, consumer behaviour and risk perceptions of private label products, parent’s uncertainties and dilemma related to purchase of baby care products due to the high risk associated with such products.

Five years after (Nielsen, 2013)'s study, there seems to be no considerable change in parent’s buying behaviour for baby food items of private label, they still appear to be reluctant in buying...
consumable baby products of private label. As a result, of this research, further to (Nielsen, 2013)’s study, it has been explored that despite the risk perception associated with consumable private label baby products, organic option if present in baby food category may help in alleviating parent’s risk perceptions and uncertainties associated with consumable baby food item. Also, risk is not only associated with private label baby products but with all baby food products including the branded ones. Further research is highly recommended in the area finding “till what extent does the organic option alleviates the risk associated with private label baby food products”.

This research also indicates that there is positive impact of the brand loyalty of private label retailers on reducing perceived risk of private label baby food products, however there is not very strong evidence of this theory as this behaviour was reflected in only two respondent’s responses, hence further research is needed to build a strong theory on this but another sentiment indicated strongly in support of this aspect is that all the respondents agreed that their trust is established through their past experiences of buying other products from private label. It should also be noted that as per authors awareness and knowledge, there are no or very less research done with respect to the brand loyalty of private label baby food products and its impact on alleviating perceived risk. There is immense scope of research in this area. Insights from research in this area could help private label retailers to focus more on organic options in private label baby products as per the results and feasibility.

Further exploring from the knowledge gained from secondary research on consumer’s brand loyalty of private label retailers, our research points that it is not only shopping experience but also good product quality and past experiences with private label retailers that play a significant role in increasing or reducing brand loyalty and trust and to further alleviate risk associated with private label baby products.

Another useful insight that is gained through this research is in area of perceived risk of baby products of private label. This research indicates that parents do not find private label baby products to be more, or less risky than branded ones. However, to generalize this theory, large sample size needs to be surveyed to support this finding.
theory can help private label retailers to reduce their reluctance in introducing more baby products under their own label as existing literature argues that consumers perceive private label products as more risky than branded ones. However, this research’s findings indicate that consumer’s risk perception is alike for private labels and brands and quality or food related incidents are considered as rare incident which can happen with brands as well.

In area of consumer willingness to act on environmental concerns, finding of this research does not support the theory in extant literature which argues that most consumers are willing to act on environmental concerns. On the contrary, this research indicates that, consumers will not leave a product just because it is overpackaged and overpackaging further enforces the perception of good quality.

7. Reflection on Learning

This section will shed some light on my journey throughout this master’s program. The decision to pause my 3.5 years IT career and enrol in a full-time MBA program was one of the most crucial decision in my life. When I completed my bachelors in computer science engineering, I use to wonder why do people go for business degree like MBA after doing technical courses or jobs. When I spent more than three years in a multinational company, I realized that how many diverse skills and human resources are required to run a company. I learned the importance of “culture” and “ethics” in an organization, as the company I worked for is famous worldwide for their culture, principles and values, yes, I am talking about TATA group. Apart from technical domain, I started developing interest in business side of the organization which made me realize that If I have technical skills as well as business management knowledge, then this blend of skillset can boost my career towards another league altogether. I wanted to get into roles such as Technical Business Analyst, Scrum Master in near future and Technical Manager later in my career.

Since I was from technical background, I choose MBA Finance as it would have given me opportunity to learn business management as well as knowledge of corporate finance. I always wanted to learn about corporate finance and financial markets but never got the opportunity for the same. Initially I was bit concerned due to my lack of accounting and business background and
hence worked hard to get basics clear before even starting the course as almost all my batchmates were from accounting or business backgrounds. Initial self-work and exceptional faculty in my college lead to a lifetime learning experience for me. Andrew Quinn and Enda Murphy’s contribution in the program is commendable from the learning point of view. I believe Andrew is one of the best lecturer in the world of corporate finance.

Half way through the course I found myself with decent knowledge of corporate finance, financial analysis, corporate culture and business strategy. If we look at abstract level, the only unexplored domain for me was product based business knowledge in the field of marketing, consumer behaviour, consumer perceptions and marketing strategy. I always take challenges head on and want to push myself to limits when it comes to learning. So, I decided to do my dissertation in this area. My marketing lecturer John Staunton’s experience and knowledge in area of marketing also played a major role in my choice of this dissertation topic. After coming in touch with John and attending his lectures, I realized that marketing is that unique domain which everyone thinks they know everything about, but most of those people understand it wrong.

In continuation to the above, while searching for my dissertation topic in product and consumer related domain, I thought of doing research in digital marketing space where I could utilize my technical competence to solve a product based or marketing based business problem. So initially I thought of first finding some business problem for a particular-grocery store and then solving it through use of data analytics by using store data. I also thought of using this type of data to fill shelf space for different products to produce optimal results for that store. I discussed this topic with my research method lecturer and after my lecturer’s knowledgeable insight on this topic I realized that in master’s dissertation we need to explore something new in an area and not just practically solve a business problem. So, I started to explore further by reading numerous academic journals in market research and marketing space.

After reading considerable number of academic papers and journals, I found that the influence of private label products is dominating the Irish FMCG market in all categories except liquor and baby food products. By this point I realized that my research will be in this area and I started digging further into private label baby products. I read several academic journals which helped
me to create a baseline for myself to take a snapshot of existing academic knowledge of Irish baby products especially under private label. Further reading the extant literature I found that there is no research done on factors which influence parent’s purchase decision while purchasing baby products of private. Contribution to this area will not only help researchers to get further insights but will also help private label industry to gain some pieces in connected chain of information which will help them to re-calibrate their strategies and products according to consumer needs and help creating more value for parents by alleviating risk associated with high inherent risk products. It will add more value to parents as if they start buying more baby products from private label due to their less cost compared to most brands.

Apart from the knowledge that I have gained in this particular-area of research, I have also attained the skill of reading academic journals and doing academic research. Executing this real-life research has given an impeccable experience to carry on market research or academic research. This will have enormous positive impact on my future career in business field where it will act as a stepping stone for future work. This MBA program has helped me attain the competence in business and management field which has given me diverse skillset and will plays an important role in serving key positions in any organization. My ultimate career aim is to get into key strategic positions of a big organization where I can drive change and business through my actions and strategies. Reaching such role in the career will take a lot of time and experience, however my MBA degree is a right step in this direction which has provided me the ability to see the big picture. My prior experience has played a major role in my outstanding performance during the course as I was able to relate the corporate culture and issues which one can learn only through experience.
Bibliography


Appendix 1- Primary Research Material

Semi-structured interview questions:

Q1. How old is your child?

Q2. Have you ever purchased any item for your child under private label?

Q3. What baby care items do you frequently purchase under private label? And Why?

Q4. Is your purchase of baby care products under private label influenced by the trust towards private label brands in general or loyalty towards a particular-retailer?

Q5. How likely are you to purchase items under private label in below categories and Why?

- Baby care toiletry products
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never
- Baby food category
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never
- Baby cosmetics
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never
- Baby diapers
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never
- Baby accessories
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never
- Baby toys
  - Highly Likely
  - Moderately Likely
  - Less Likely
  - Never

Q6. Before your baby was born, had you prepared anything to increase your knowledge about new kind of purchasing decision that you were expected to make in future.

Q7. Whom did you take advice from on such matters?

Q8. Which one among below have more influence or source of information for you? And Why?

  a) Family members
  b) Friends
  c) Online or other forms of advertisements

Q9. What is your perception of private label products in general? For example: in dairy and frozen food category?
Q10. What is your perception of private label baby products in terms of quality of the products, do you think they are high or low in quality?

Q11. What is your opinion or views on premium class products from private labels such as ‘Tesco Finest’? Do you think that baby products under such premium brand category would be of good quality?

Q12. Which one would you prefer between the branded product and premium category private label products in baby care product categories? And why?

Q13. Does your trust for private label baby care products is driven by product features, quality, attributes etc. or it is driven by emotional connect with the retailer brand?

Q14. What are your views with respect to the risk perception or risk associated with baby care products under private label?

Q15. How would you rate your risk perception for private label frozen food items on a scale of 10, with 10 being highly risky and 1 being least risky? And why?

Q16. What are your views about environmental concerns such as over packaging of the products? Is it a factor that influence you while making a purchase decision, especially in purchase of private label items?

Q17. Do you think that reduction in packaging is an indication of reduction in quality?

Q18. Does your purchase decision for baby care items gets influenced by your past experiences with private label products in other categories? Can you share an example?

Q19. Do you differentiate between different private label retailers or perceive all private retailer in the same way? If you differentiate, then what are the factors on which you find one retailer more trusted than other retailers and manufacturer brands?
Intention to purchase store brands bought in previous 12 months:

(Nielsen, 2013)