Integrated Marketing Mix Framework for Baby Care Retailing in India

H. R. Ganesha[1], P. S. Aithal[2], & P. Kirubadevi[3]

[1]Chief Executive Officer – Consulting Division, Gramss Retail Trading Private Limited, Bengaluru - 560078, India and Post-Doctoral Research Fellow, College of Management& Commerce, Srinivas University, Mangalore – 575001, India. OrcidID: 0000-0002-5878-8844; E-mail: hrganesha@yahoo.co.in

[2]Vice Chancellor, Srinivas University, Mangalore – 575001, India. OrcidID: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: psaithal@gmail.com

[3]Head of Category Management and Sourcing, Actoserba Active Wholesale Private Limited (Zivame), Bengaluru – 560038, India. OrcidID: 0000-0003-2291-8448; E-mail: spkirubadevi@yahoo.com

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E-mail: hrganesha@yahoo.co.in

[2]Vice Chancellor, Srinivas University, Mangalore – 575001, India.
OrcidID: 0000-0002-4691-8736; E-mail: psaithal@gmail.com

[3]Head of Category Management and Sourcing, Actoserba Active Wholesale Private Limited (Zivame),
Bengaluru – 560038, India. OrcidID: 0000-0003-2291-8448; E-mail: spkirubadevi@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The complex nature of baby care retailing both from supply side and demand side owing to sheer vast number of unique products / brands / categories the retailer mandatorily need to offer in their stores as part of the product assortment, added with limitation in terms of opportunity available for the store to hold on consumers for a longer period of time just because the window is very small, makes it furthermore important for any baby care brick-and-mortar retailer to be more careful and efficient in ensuring adaptation of right Marketing Mix. It is observed that the majority of baby care retailers in India believe that they have adopted the right Marketing Mix and is yielding the best possible store profits. This belief / assumption always distracts them from working on their existing Marketing Mix and they spend most of their time in finding elements which are new or latent in nature to be added to the existing Marketing Mix. In this twelve months long research work we have analysed a select baby care brick-and-mortar retailer's existing Marketing Mix designed a new Marketing Mix by just rationalizing and re-prioritizing all the elements of basic "4P's", applied it on a select group of experimental stores to derive insights from the experimentation. Results have demonstrated that rather working on identifying new "P's", "C's", "S's" and "W's" if one works on rationalizing the basic "4P's" of existing Marketing Mix, more than 70 percent of the store profitability could be determined, most importantly in addition to few stores turning profitable for the first time all the stores in the experimental group have witnessed their highest ever revenue, store profit and repeat visit frequency of consumers.

Keywords: Brick-and-Mortar Store, India Retail, Baby Care, Baby Care Retailing, Marketing Mix, Retailing Mix.

1. INTRODUCTION :

Based on India's 2011 census, the United Nation's (UN) Department of Statistics and Programme Implementation estimates 8.47 percent contribution from age group 0 to 4 years (116.88 Million) to the overall Indian population by the year 2020 [1]. In addition to this humongous population in the age group, which is relevant for any baby care retailers, exponential growth in a number of working women, double income families, middle-class consumer segment, urbanization, overall size of Indian retail industry and most importantly organized retailing could possibly attract many investors towards organized brick-and-mortar baby care retailing in India.

1.1 Global Baby Care Retailers in India: Owing to the sheer market size and potential, India is able to attract many Global brands in the baby care retailing segment. Few Global brands have attempted to offer their product assortment as being a shop-in-shop at select large retail format stores viz., Babyshop in Lifestyle stores, Mothercare in Shoppers Stop stores and Carter's in First Cry stores. Few have also

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

offered their product assortment through having stand-alone stores, Viz., Mother Care, Chicco, Carter's, GAP Baby, The Children's Place, Hamleys and BabiesRus. Negative part of the story is that, except UK's Mother Care, none of the Global brands are offering complete product assortment which would cover all life-stage needs of a new mom and baby. In addition, few Global brands have either exited from the Indian market or have significantly altered their store image, Viz., UAE based Landmark Group's Babyshop has withdrawn all the Non-Apparel products from the assortment; Italian based brand Chicco has withdrawn all the Apparel products from the assortment; Mother Care has changed Indian partners of operation. Other Global brands mentioned earlier have recently entered the Indian baby care retail market.

1.2 Indian Baby Care Retailers: In comparison to Indian organized retailers focussing on Men, Women and Kids of above 4 years age group, India has witnessed only a few retailers focussing on baby care retailing owing to; (a) complex product assortment, (b) store becoming irrelevant for the consumer after three to four years of patronage, (c) multiple retailing formats offering baby's personal care products, (d) lower awareness and penetration level of baby's hardlines products in India and most importantly,(e) no positive organized baby care retailing story or case being available in India yet. 'Lilliput' was the first organized baby care retailer in India which began its journey in the year 2003, opened more than 100 exclusive stores all over India, but it failed to run its stores successfully and finally the brand ceased its operations. 'Me N Moms' was originally a baby care product brand in the name of 'Mee-Mee' who was manufacturing and distributing Non-Apparel baby care products across the country. Now 'Me N Moms' operate close to 50 exclusive baby care stores all over India. Future Group's large format store by the name 'Central' and K. Raheja Group's large format store by the name of Shoppers Stop have exclusive sections earmarked to offer baby care product assortment in their large format stores all over India. 'Mom & Me' was another baby care retailer who was operating more than 100 stores all over India. Post acquiring 'Baby Oye' all the Mom & Me stores were renamed as Baby Oye and post consolidation with 'First Cry' all the stores were renamed as 'Firstcry.Com – A Firstcry-Mahindra Venture' and now Firstcry operates over 380 exclusive baby care stores all over India. 'Toonz' is another Indian baby care retailer who operates over 100 stores all over India. First Steps Babywear who is an exporter of baby apparel has also launched its baby care brand in India in the name of 'Mini Klub' and now operates close to 20 stores all over India. There are many more organized brick-and-mortar baby care retailers in India, but their presence is not yet felt all over India.

1.3 Typical Baby Care Store: Figure 1 depicts category assortment and target consumer groups for a typical baby care retail store which is considered to be a holistic approach to a complete baby care retail store. Any retailers or stores who are not offering all the categories depicted in Figure 1 are not considered as baby care retailers for the purpose of our research work and the attempt to design an integrated Marketing Mix framework for baby care brick-and-mortar retailing in India.
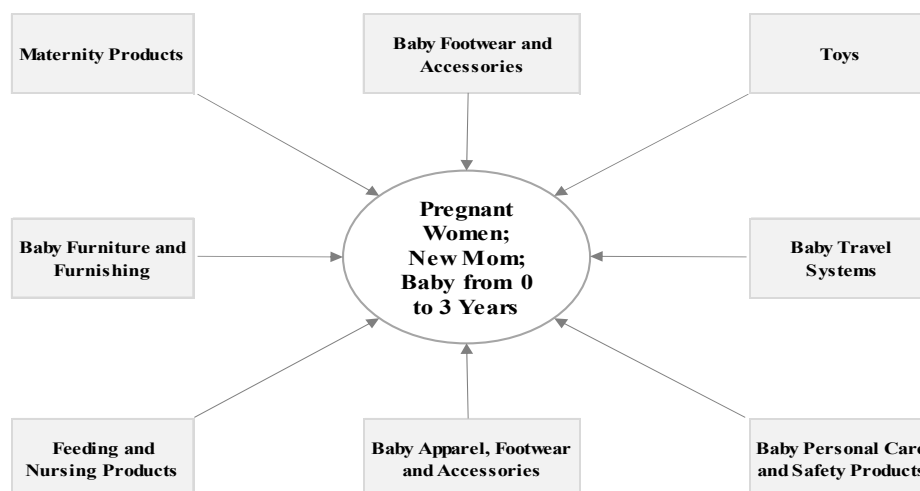

Fig. 1: Category assortment and target consumer group in a typical organized brick-and-mortar baby care retail store.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW :

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

Marketing Mix concept in literature can be traced back to 1940's and can be attributed to Borden, N.H. [2] as the first one to mention such a concept in general. Later in 1960's Edmund Jerome McCarthy gave a framework to basic elements of Marketing Mix which is globally known as "4P's" of Marketing Mix of which, the first one being 'Product', second one being 'Price', third one being 'Promotion' and the fourth one being 'Place'. Many researchers through their studies have criticized the "4P's" Marketing Mix concept arguing that the framework has shortcomings and only suitable for traditional marketing strategies [3 to 6]. However, many studies have provided their consensus that "4P's" framework of Marketing Mix is a powerful tool in marketing till today and they have been used by the majority of management practitioners and researchers [7]. Many researchers across domains such as Marketing Theory, Relationship Marketing, Services Marketing, Retail Marketing, and Industrial Marketing, whether or not agreeing to the "4P's" framework have continuously suggested many additional elements to be added to the original "4P's" framework and proposition of Marketing Mix of which few key elements are; Political Power and Public Opinion Formulation [8]; Customers, Competitors and Corporation [9]; Capabilities [10]; Mapping of Marketing Mix Elements [11]; Services and Staff [12]; Value, Viability, Variety, Volume and Virtue [13]; Performance, Penalty, Perceptions and Process [14]; Marketing Triad Marketer, Employee and Customer [15]; Customer Orientation, Customer Needs, Convenience, Customer's Cost and Communication [16]; Product Extras, Reinforcing Promotions, Sales-Force Connections, Specialized Distribution and Post-Purchase Communication [17]; Relationships, Network, and Interaction [18]; Relationship Marketing [19]; Personalisation, Personnel, Physical Assets and Procedures [20]; Communication, Customisation, Collaboration and Clairvoyance [21]; Relationships, Neo-Relationship and Networking [22]; Participants, Physical Evidence and Process [23 to 24]; Concept Mix, Cost Mix, Channels Mix, Communication Mix [25]; Intangibility, Inseparability, Perishability and Variability of Services [26]; Differentiation, Customer Contact and Unique Vision on Quality Parameter [27]; Personnel [28]; Communication and Distribution [29]; Publications [30]; Relevance, Response, Relationships and Results [31]; Actors, Audience, Setting and Performance [32]; Brand, Packaging and Relationships [33]; Logistic Concept and Commercial Concept [34]; Assortment, Shop Presentation, Price Policy, Personnel [35]; Store Location, Store Positioning, Store Image, Physical Environment and Retail Service [36]; Data Base, Interaction and Network [37]; Target Market, Product Assortment cum Procurement, Services cum Store Atmosphere, Price Decision and Place Decision [38]; Quality and Degree of interdependence among business to business organisations [39]; International Elements [40]; Customer Service, Teamwork, Service Quality and Service Excellence [41]; Relationships and Networks Management [42]; Co-Design cum Production, Transparent Pricing, Direct Contacts with Customers, Control of the Customer Interaction [43].

Brick-and-mortar retailing format in general has been one of the key interest areas of study for many researchers around the world for many years. It is strongly argued that the profitability is significantly derived from consumer loyalty which is strongly linked to a) internal service quality and b) satisfied and productive service employee. The service-profit chain model created in their work holds true even after globalization, liberalization, and digitization of the retail market [44]. Studies have also listed the key components of store image construct. Based on past studies Lindquist listed eight component of store image construct viz., (i) merchandise, (ii) clientele, (iii) physical facilities, (iv) convenience, (v) promotion, (vi) store atmosphere, (vii) institutional factors and (viii) post-transactional satisfaction [45]. Later studies were also able to add a few more attributes to store image constructs such as (ix) customer service, (x) personal selling and (xi) sales incentive programs [46]. Various indicators which can determine a retail sale in relation to quality and level of sales personnel involvement have been studied and analysed by many researchers of which, most important indicators were (a) the amount and quality of time spent by the sales personnel with the consumer [47]; (b) variety of products/SKUs/models being showcased by the sales personnel to consumer [48]; (c) level of information being collected by the sales personnel on consumer needs directly from the consumer [49]; (d) sales person's efforts to understand the consumer brand preference and showcasing products/SKUs/models in relation to the preference [50]; (e) sales personnel's capability to explain the features of products showcased to consumers and their confidence level while explaining the differentiation among a variety of products showcased [51] and (f) the range of products/SKUs/models showcased by the sales personnel in relation to price and utility expected by the consumer [52]. Another important aspect of sales personnel behaviour in a brick-and-mortar retailing which has a significant impact on consumer repeat visit intention and loyalty for a retail

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

store is the sales personnel's perception and predisposition about a consumer who he/she is attending to. The majority of sales personnel develop their mindsets to segment consumers into preferred consumers and non-preferred consumers and this mindset play an important role in the way the consumer will get treated by the sales personnel [53 to 55]. Few studies believe that the way in which sales personnel interact with consumers needs to be customized to each consumer and this could possibly be able to determine their success. The customer orientation is said to happen when the sales personnel and consumer together practice the marketing concept. They have clearly stated that just the interaction between sales personnel and consumer does not yield to this orientation, it needs to encompass most of the marketing concepts driven centrally by the company [56 to 57]. Later, this definition of consumer orientation was further narrowed down by coming up with two key constructs, the first one being sales personnel's tendency to ensure consumer needs are met and the second one being the level of sales personnel's enjoyment in doing so [58]. It is also believed that what can lead to sales personnel to enjoy the process of interaction with consumers and ultimately selling a product is their strong orientation to learning [57]. It also important to note, various studies have shown that 70% of the purchase decisions are made in-store by most of the customers [60]. Researchers have also defined price image as "buyer attitude towards a price on the assortment level" [61]. Studies find that the zone-level pricing among stores at a different location belonging to the same retailer is mainly motivated by price discrimination [62], overall store price image is developed in consumers mind by combining general price perceptions in relation to individual product/brand available in a retail store [63] and multi-location retailers can continue to have differential pricing strategies for different locations and geographies but at the same time, they need to clearly understand that this differential pricing strategy has an impact on both overall store profitability and consumer welfare [64]. It is true that store location plays an influential role in consumer store choice decisions, at the same time store location being a long-term capital lock-in decision plays an important role for retailer's overall strategic planning. Any location which has inherent properties of attracting consumers is the best location for any retailer and having a store in such locations brings both strategic and competitive advantages to the retailer, whereas, it will take longer time and huge store losses for any retailer to come out of a bad store location. Good store location could also be analysed by; (a) the amount of relevant consumer traffic flow be it, pedestrian traffic or vehicular traffic; (b) parking facilities; (c) store composition; (d) specific site; (e) terms of occupancy, (f) accessibility, (g) travelling time, (h) location convenience, (i) other complimentary stores present in the catchment [65]. Researchers have argued that it is no more just merchandising, which is important for successful retailing, what is becoming more and more important now a days is other aspects of store operations which include various other aspects including inventory management [66]. All these studies relating to brick-and-mortar retailing are affirmative to the fact that there are many more elements which are important to be part of the overall Marketing Mix whether are not part of original "4P's" framework or proposition.

We determinedly believe that all the new elements suggested by various researchers were inherent elements within "4P's" proposition which was originally framed by McCarthy sixty years ago and therefore through this research study we intend to customize the original "4P's Marketing Mix framework to suit brick-and-mortar baby care retailing in India which could help organized baby care retailers possibly overcome all the challenges occurred owing to liberalization, globalization, digitalization, urbanization and most importantly the significant change in Indian consumers' attitude towards modern retailing formats.

Retailing in India has gone through many stages of evolution such as liberalization, organized retailing, globalization, digitalization, and urbanization. Retailing in India was and is heavily driven by unorganized retailers and the same is evident by the sheer market share it owns even today in spite of Indian retailing have had gone through various stages of evolution. Various studies report a favourable and improving market share for organized retailers. Organized retailing in India is expected to have approximately 25 percent of market share by the year 2021 which was at 12 percent in the year 2017 [67]. We believe that the unorganized retailers also have evolved over a period of time in modifying their Marketing Mix to adopt changing consumer mindset and growing competition from organized retailers, thus one can attribute the slow penetration of organized retailing in India to this open mindset of unorganized retailers to constantly work on their Marketing Mix. In turn, this becomes a classic example of considerable magnitude to confirm that the "4P's" framework of McCarthy which was conceptualized sixty years ago holds true even today in India. One could argue that, if unorganized retailers begin to turn in to even semi-

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

organized retailers, then it really poses significant challenges to organized retailers in India to cope up with unorganized retailers in India. It becomes inevitable for organized retailers to keenly focus on their Marketing Mix strategies and strive to create differentiation across various elements of Marketing Mix.

Baby Care retailing could be considered as one of the speciality retailing categories which need to account 'perceived risk' that was theorised by Cox, D.F. in the year 1967 [68] as one of the important elements within Marketing Mix. This is purely owing to a huge number of baby personal care products that are part of basic product assortment and mix of a baby care retail store. It is evident that most of the baby care products/brands are being promoted through Hospitals and Medical practitioners' endorsement which in turn confirms, it is less likely that consumers accept an alternate product/brand which is intended to be used by the baby [69]. The perceived risk dimension adds on to existing complexity in baby care retailing. In a study to investigate the role of the child in Mother's decision making it was found that the mother's purchasing decision for the consumption of her child is inversely proportional to her 'child-centeredness'. For example, if a mother is concerned about her child's health, she would rather purchase a Cereal which has high nutritional values compared to other mothers [70]. In another study the researchers have confirmed that mothers who are conservative and traditional the child has little influence on her purchase decisions [71]. Several studies have been carried out by many researchers to understand the influence of a child's age in mother's purchase decision making and most of them have found that lower the age of the child lowers the influence of child in mother's purchase decisions [72 to 75]. All these studies demonstrate that Marketing Mix for a baby care store cannot be similar to other generalist retail stores. One must be cognizant of the fact that Marketing Mix which is generally followed by logics (both human and artificial), beliefs, myths, and practices of retailing might not suit the baby care retailing owing to complexity in identifying, mapping, and tracking the consumer to a particular baby. For instance, as we all are aware the key end user of the majority of products in a baby care retail store is the 'baby', but this end user has no or little role to play as far as final purchase decision is concerned which could possibly be made by mother, father, grandparents, guardians, relatives, family friends or even gifting people, therefore, one cannot deny that purchases made in a particular baby store for a particular baby could have been made either by one of these or in some case from all of them thereby making it near to impossible for a baby care retailer to identify the real consumer and get accurate consumer retention rate. One could argue that, retailer must record 'baby' as the unique consumer and map all the transactional data to the baby irrespective of who has made the purchase on baby's behalf, but unfortunately this task is significantly complex and practically not viable to implement in the field on a long term basis.

Need for this research indeed was originated due to various gaps found in the theoretical, descriptive, empirical literature available in the domain such as; (a) majority of studies have focussed only on baby personal care category which represents approximately30 percent of overall baby care store revenue; (b) majority of Marketing Mix studies have focussed on retailing in general and not specific to baby care retailing; (c) absence of Marketing Mix framework or proposition for baby care retailing both in Global and Indian context; (d) majority of baby care retailers in India follow and practice the Marketing Mix incorporated by other generalist retailers;(e) the window available for consumers to buy baby care products is less than three years and most importantly;(f) baby care retailing is one such segment in which the end user of the products has very little or no contribution in purchase decisions made by others on behalf of the baby. Thus, we decided to (i) understand the existing Marketing Mix of an Indian organized National brick-and-mortar retailer;(ii) designed a new Marketing Mix framework cum proposition; (iii) implemented the new framework on few select stores thereby (iv) drawing insights from the experimentation; (v) recommending ideal Marketing Mix for Indian brick-and-mortar baby care retailers to gain a competitive and strategic advantage over organized and unorganized baby care retailers.

3. OBJECTIVES :

Key objectives of this research were to(i) understand baby care retailing India; (ii) understand evolution and performance of baby care retailers in India; (iii) understand existing Marketing Mix of baby care retailers in India; (iv) analyse recommendations from previous research relevant for baby care retailing; (v) design and propose an integrated Marketing Mix framework for Indian baby care retailers; (vi) apply the proposed framework on a select Indian baby care retailer, and (vii) draw insights from the real-time experiment with recommendations.

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

4. METHODOLOGY :

To ensure a holistic approach to find answers to the key research questions, we have adopted a mix of various research methodologies available in the research methods and designs literature as detailed below.
4.1 Secondary Research: Intense and in-depth analysis of data available in the public domain was carried to collect data relating to various aspects of baby care retailers in India through company websites, company annual financial reports, Government database, trade, and business journals. Research works relating to Indian baby care retailing was surveyed extensively to collect insights, recommendations, and frameworks.
4.2 Quantitative Primary Research: In the first stage, one of the organized baby care brick-and-mortar retailers in India was selected who is having stores all over India across (a) high street stores;(b) mall stores;(c) institutional stores;(d) tier 1, 2 and 3 cities; offering multiple-categories and multiple-brands serving different consumer life-stage needs at mid to high price positioning and catering to pregnant women; new moms; babies; infants and kids up to 8 years. In the second stage, 35 percent of the stores were selected through systematic random sampling to undergo experimentation wherein the proposed Marketing Mix was applied for a period of twelve months. In the third stage, all the data was collected prior to experimentation from all the stores belonging to control and experimental group. Fourth stage was to collect post-test data from control and experimental group of stores and in the last stage the collected data from pre and post-tests periods were subjected to various statistical analyses using SPSS software tool and inferences were drawn.
4.3 Qualitative Primary Research: An open-ended direct interview was conducted with employees selected through convenience sampling representing different departments/function viz., strategy management, category management, marketing management, communication management, warehousing management, finance management, information technology management, sales management, stores operation along with store sales personnel to understand their perspective and attitude towards existing Marketing Mix and its implications on the overall retailing performance.

5. PROPOSED MARKETING MIX :

Before we theoretically design a new Marketing Mix framework or proposition, we thought, it would be ideal to first understand the existing Marketing Mix of the select retailer and evaluate if the same is efficient in delivering (a) consistent growth; (b) sustainable profit; (c) differentiation among competitors and most importantly;(d) highest level of consumer orientation. Along with taking clues from the direct interviews of employees representing all the departments and functions, we have analysed the existing sales data, consumer data, terminologies, categorization, key performance indicators, data hierarchy, organizational hierarchy, and key business objectives through which we have assessed the attitudes of the entire organization towards existing Marketing Mix in relation to data available.
5.1 Existing Marketing Mix: Figure 2 depicts the existing Marketing Mix of the baby care retailer selected for the research study. One can observe that this shows a classical and traditional Marketing Mix wherein, standard "4P's" have been utilized to strategically position the retail store image. It is perfectly fine not to invent new "P's" but at the same time, the framework seriously ignores the rationalization of each of these "P's" in accordance with consumer life-stage needs. Majority of sub elements of the framework have been derived from standard and general way of categorization which are followed by competitor and could possibly lead all the personnel in the organization also deliver results which are just average or below average thereby seriously failing to deliver consistent growth and sustainable profit.

Majority of the employee roles were defined based on general classification and categorization of products and they were all significantly skewed in favour of supply side. For instance; (i) category management team had category managers for specific product categories wherein each of these category managers were concerned about their category profitability level irrespective of its positive or negative impact on the consumer's overall life-time value and satisfaction towards the store; (ii) retail planning team had planners for specific product categories wherein each of these planners were only concerned about the inventory levels and turns of their product categories rather than the overall inventory mix of the store and its impact on consumers; (iii) marketing team had managers for specific category grouped together and majority of the promotions were designed and communicated to consumers in isolation; (iv)

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

sales personnel in the store were allocated specific product categories owing to which the sales pitch to consumers was in silos and the store as a whole could never focus on consumers' life-time value, consumers' complete needs across different product categories and most importantly the stores failed to create positive perceptions in consumer's mind about the store as one-stop-solution for all her baby needs.

Product Category Specific Central and Store Personnel			
Product	**Price**	**Promotion**	**Place**
Maternity Apparel Maternity Personal Care Apparel Footwear Fashion Accessories Personal Care Feeding and Nursing Travel Systems Health and Safety Furniture Furnishing Toys and Games Gifting Store Brands National Brand International Brands	Mid to High	End-of-Season Sale; Occasional Sale; Flash Sale; Clearance Sale; Cash Back: Coupons; Referral Schemes; Loyalty Programmes; Social Media Campaigns; Catchment Campaigns; TV Commercials; Banners and Hoardings; Special Events.	High Street; Malls; Institutional; Tier-1 Cities; Tier-2 Cities; Tier-3 Cities; 3,000 to 5,000 Square Feet Stores; 2,000 to 2,999 Square Feet Stores; 1,000 to 1,999 Square Feet Stores; 500 to 999 Square Feet Stores; 200 to 499 Square Feet Stores.
Pregnant Women; New Mom; Babies, Infants and Kids from 0 to 8 Years Age			

Fig. 2: Existing Marketing Mix of the select baby care retailer.

The most important pillars of "4P's" framework the 'consumer' was completely ignored in the existing Marketing Mix of the select retailer. Most of the employees, employee roles, products, processes, performance indicators, promotions, product display layouts, control systems, planning cycles were tuned with the supply side of the business rather than the demand side of the business. As a result, the select retailer (a) was unable to retain the majority of consumers; (b) could not witness consistent growth in revenue; (c) never seen the majority of stores delivering profits; (d) was unable to manage cash flow in efficient manner; (e) had inventory turns much lower than the industry average; (f) was carrying a higher level of inventory cover; (g) was unable to derive optimal organizational structure, number of sales personnel in a store, store size, store location, city type, discount level, category mix and most importantly (h) was failing to gain any strategic and competitive advantage over other organized and unorganized baby care retailers.

5.2 Proposed Marketing Mix - Conceptual: We would like to define key concepts of the proposed Marketing Mix before we head to explain the proposition of the framework.

Product (P1): First and foremost, important aspects of Marketing Mix are 'Product'. Considering both supply side and demand side attributes we have classified products into various categoriesin the proposed Marketing Mix. This classification is based on numerous empirical and experimental research we have previously carried and are relevant to baby care brick-and-mortar retailing format along with being helpful in getting all the stakeholders of the retail organization to focus on products / categories / brands which are already proven to be capable of driving consumer repeat store visit frequency and thereby enhancing consumer retention rate[76 to 80].*Personal Care / FMCG (P1A)*: All the SKUs which are non-durable required by pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants for frequent personal usage, for example, Anti Stretch Mark Creams, Nipple Creams, Baby Shampoo, etc. *Personal Care / FMCG Essential (P1A1)*: All the SKUs under the Personal Care / FMCG category which are absolutely necessary, extremely important, and indispensable to complete a particular life-stage need of pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants, for example, Anti Stretch Mark Creams, Disposable Breast Pads, Diapers, etc. *Personal Care / FMCG Non-Essential (P1A2)*: All the SKUs under Personal Care / FMCG category which are absolutely not necessary, extremely not important, and it is possible for majority of

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants to complete a particular life-stage without these products, for example, Face Creams, Breast Shields, Baby Sunscreen Lotions, etc. *Softline (P1B)*: All the SKUs which are predominantly made up of textile materials required by pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants, for example, Apparels, Booties, Furnishings, etc. *Softline Essential (P1B1)*: All the SKUs under the Softline category which are absolutely necessary, extremely important, and indispensable to complete a particular life-stage need of pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants, for example, Maternity Fold-Over Panties, Feeding Pillows, Front-Open T-Shirts, etc. *Softline Non-Essential (P1B2)*: All the SKUs under Softline category which are absolutely not necessary, extremely not important, and it is possible for majority of pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants to complete a particular life-stage without these products, for example, Maternity Tops, Nursing Tops, Baby Room Decorative Furnishings etc. *Softline Occasional (P1B3)*: All the SKUs under Softline category which are required by majority of pregnant women, baby, and infants for one-time usage, for example, Maternity Dresses for Baby Shower, Party Frocks, etc. *Hardlines (P1C)*: All the SKUs which are predominantly not made up of textile materials required by pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants, for example, Pregnancy Books, Breast Pumps, Cradles, Toys, etc. *Hardlines Essential (P1C1)*: All the SKUs under the Hardlines category which are absolutely necessary, extremely important, and indispensable to complete a particular life-stage need of nursing women, baby, and infants, for example, Nipper Pullers, Play Gyms, etc. *Hardlines Non-Essential (P1C2)*: All the SKUs under Hardlines category which are absolutely not necessary, extremely not important, and it is possible for majority of pregnant women, nursing women, baby, and infants to complete a particular life-stage without these products, for example, Pregnancy Planner Book, Vaccination Planer Books, Baby Monitor, etc. *Hardlines One-Time Buy (P1C3)*: All the SKUs under Hardlines category which are bought by majority of nursing women, baby, and infants just once in a particular life-stage, for example, Breast Pumps, Strollers, etc. *Store Brands (B1):* All SKUs which are designed, developed, and produced by the retailer and are available exclusively at the stores operated by the retailer and the average pricing of these brands is expected to be equivalent to the overall price positioning of the store. Sometimes these are also known as Private Labels / Brands. *National Brands (B2):* All SKUs which are designed, developed, and produced by organizations other than the retailer and are available to consumers across various retail stores and retailing formats and limited to a specific country and the average pricing of these brands is expected to be at least 30 percent higher than that of Store Brands. *Global Brands (B3):* All SKUs which are designed, developed, and produced by organizations other than the retailer and National Brands and are available to consumers across various retail stores and retailing formats all over the world and the average pricing of these brands is expected to be at least 30 percent higher than that of National Brands in the store.

Price (P2): Irrespective of the overall price positioning of the retail store, it is imperative to follow the price lining strategy. As much as possible majority of product line offered to consumers in the retail store must encompass price lining [65]. Based on this concept we have classified the 'price' aspect of the proposed Marketing Mix as low, mid, and high price points. *Low-Price Points(M1):* All the SKUs which are offered by the retailer in the store belonging to a particular product line bearing an average MRP (maximum retail price / objective price / original price) at least 50 percent lesser than the retailer's overall price positioning for product line. *Mid-Price Points (M2):* All the SKUs which are offered by the retailer in the store belonging to a particular product line bearing an average MRP (maximum retail price / objective price / original price) equivalent to retailer's overall price positioning for product line. *High-Price Points (M3):* All the SKUs which are offered by the retailer in the store belonging to a particular product line bearing an average MRP (maximum retail price / objective price / original price) at least 50 percent higher than the retailer's overall price positioning for product line. For example, if the overall price positioning of the retailer for Baby T-Shirt product line is INR 399.00 then the low-price points SKUs in the line must be priced at INR 199.00 on an average and high-price point SKUs to be priced at INR 599.00 on an average.

Promotion (P3): Promotion is one of the important aspects of bricks-and-mortar retailing and discounts have become even more important post emergence of online store format in India as consumer perspective towards discount has changed [81]. We have classified promotions by discount type, discount method, discount level and scope of discount applicability in the proposed Marketing Mix. These classifications are based on numerous empirical and experimental research we have previously carried and are relevant to baby care brick-and-mortar retailing format [82 to 85]. *Centralized Promotions:* All the offers,

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

discounts, promotions designed, developed, and controlled by the central head office. *Decentralized Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions

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Equal and High Weightage to Overall Store Performance Related KPIs for all the Employees Irrespective of their Department/Function;
Systematic Empowerment of Store Team;
Systematic Decentralization of Control Systems.

Product (P1) *(descending order of priority)*	**Price (P2)** *(descending order of priority)*	**Promotion (P3)** *(descending order of priority)*	**Place (P4)** *(descending order of priority)*
P1A. Personal Care / FMCG: *P1A1) Essential;* P1A1B3 - Global Brands P1A1B2 - National Brands P1A1B1 - Store Brands *P1A2) Non-Essential* P1A2B3 - Global Brands P1A2B2 - National Brands P1A2B1 - Store Brands	**P2A. Personal Care / FMCG:** *P2A1) Essential;* P2A1M1 - Mid-Price Points P2A1M2 - High-Price Points P2A1M3 - Low-Price Points *P2A2) Non-Essential* P2A2M1 - Mid-Price Points P2A2M2 - High-Price Points P2A2M3 - Low-Price Points	**P3A. Personal Care / FMCG:** P3AD1 - Decentralized; High Customization; Long Term; All Stocks P3AD2 - Centralized; High Customization; Short Term; Old Stocks P3AD3 - Centralized; High Customization; Short Term; Specific Product Line	**P4A. High Street Stores:** P4AL1 - All Tier Cities; 1500 to 2000 Square Feet; All Product Categories P4AL2 - Tier-1 Cities; 1000 to 1499 Square Feet; High FMCG; Medium Softline; Low Hardlines P4AL3 - All Tier Cities; 1000 to 3000 Square Feet Area; High FMCG; Medium Softline; Essential Hardlines
P1B. Softline: *P1B1) Essential* P1B1B1 - Store Brands P1B1B3 - Global Brands P1B1B2 - National Brands *P1B2) Non-Essential* P1B2B2 - National Brands P1B2B3 - Global Brands P1B2B1 - Store Brands *P1B3) Occasional* P1B3B1 - Store Brands P1B3B2 - National Brands P1B3B3 - Global Brands	**P2B. Softline:** *P2B1) Essential* P2B1M1 - Mid-Price Points P2B1M2 - Low-Price Points P2B1M3 - High-Price Points *P2B2) Non-Essential* P2B2M1 - Low-Price Points P2B2M2 - Mid-Price Points P2B2M3 - High-Price Points *P2B3) Occasional* P2B3M1 - High-Price Points P2B3M2 - Mid-Price Points P2B3M3 - Low-Price Points	**P3B. Softline:** P3BD1 - Centralized; High Customization; Long Term; Old Stocks P3BD2 - Centralized; High Customization; Short Term; Old Stocks P3BD3 - Decentralized; High Customization; Short Term; Specific SKU	**P4B. Institutional Stores:** P4BL1 - Tier-1, Tier-2 Cities; 200 to 500 Square Feet; Essential FMCG; Essential Softline; Essential Hardlines P4BL2 - Tier-2 Cities; 200 to 800 Square Feet; FMCG; Essentia Softline; Essential Hardlines P4BL3 - Tier-3 Cities; 500 to 1000 Square Feet Area; FMCG; Medium Softline; Essential Hardlines
P1C. Hardlines: *P1C1) Essentials* P1C1B3 - Store Brands P1C1B2 - Global Brands P1C1B1 - National Brands *P1C2) Non-Essential* P1C2B2 - National Brands P1C2B3 - Global Brands P1C2B1 - Store Brands *P1C3) One-Time Buy* P1C3B3 - Global Brands P1C3B2 - National Brands P1C3B1 - Store Brands	**P2C. Hardlines:** *P2C1) Essentials* P2C1M1 - Mid-Price Points P2C1M2 - Low-Price Points P2C1M3 - High-Price Points *P2C2) Non-Essential* P2C2M1 - Mid-Price Points P2C2M2 - High-Price Points P2C2M3 - Low-Price Points *P2C3) One-Time Need* P2C3M1 - High-Price Points P2C3M2 - Mid-Price Points P2C3M3 - Low-Price Points	**P3C. Hardlines:** P3CD1 - Centralized; High Customization; Short Term; Specific Product Line P3CD2 - Centralized; High Customization; Short Term; Old Stocks P3CD3 - Decentralized; High Customization; Short Term; Specific SKU	**P4C. Mall Stores:** P4CL1 - Tier-1 Cities; 1500 to 2000 Square Feet; Essential FMCG; Softline; Hardlines P4CL2 - Tier-2 Cities; 2000 to 2500 Square Feet; All Product Categories P4CL3 - Tier-3 Cities; 2000 to 3000 Square Feet Area; All Product Categories

Pregnant Women;
Nursing Women;
0-12 Months Baby;
12-24 Months Baby;
24-36 Months Infant.

Fig. 3: Proposed Marketing Mix for baby care retailing.

designed, developed, and controlled by the store management team who have been administered by the central head office team through standard and well-defined upper limits. *Customised Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions specifically designed and communicated to relevant group or individual consumers. *Short-Term Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions run for a period of one to seven days. *Long-Term Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions run for a minimum period of one month. *All Stocks Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions when applied on all the SKUs available in the store. *Old Stocks Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions when applied on select SKUs which are aged beyond 180 days in the system. *Specific Product Line Promotions:* All the offers, discounts, promotions when applied on all the SKUs belonging to a specific product line or category in the store.

Place (P4): One of the key identities of a Bricks-and-mortar retailing format is the 'place and it plays an

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

important role in differentiating brick-and-mortar retailing with other retailing formats. We have classified place into different types in the proposed Marketing Mix. These classifications are based on various empirical and experimental research we have previously carried and are relevant to baby care brick-and-mortar retailing format [86 to 89]. *High Street Stores (P4A):* All the stores which are located in a central or residential market areas. *Institutional Stores (P4B):* All the stores which are located in a designated shopping area at larger campuses, tech parks, resorts, hospitals, and apartments. *Mall Stores (P4C):* All the stores which are located inside a large commercial complex or shopping mall.

5.3 Proposed Marketing Mix- Mathematical: After key concepts being defined in relation to proposed Marketing Mix for brick-and-mortar baby care retailing, we would now head to elaborate the proposition. In the proposed Marketing Mix framework as shown in Figure 3, one can observe that all the "4P's" have been allocated with a vast list of sub elements along with recommended priorities which is expected to be the overall revenue mix of the store. Let us understand the mathematical structure of deriving the overall store profitability as detailed below in the order of starting point to ending point.

Quantity Sold in Personal Care / FMCG – Essentials (P1A1) $= \sum$ {(P1A1B3), (P1A1B2), (P1A1B1)}

Quantity Sold in Personal Care / FMCG – Non-Essentials (P1A2)$= \sum$ {(P1A2B3), (P1A2B2), (P1A2B1)}

Quantity Sold in Softline – Essentials (P1B1) $= \sum$ {(P1B1B1), (P1B1B3), (P1B1B2)}

Total Quantity Sold in Personal Care / FMCG (Q1) $= \sum$ {(P1A1), (P1A2)}

Quantity Sold in Softline – Non-Essentials (P1B2) $= \sum$ {(P1B2B2), (P1B2B3), (P1B2B1)}

Quantity Sold in Softline – Occasional (P1B3) $= \sum$ {(P1B3B1), (P1B3B2), (P1B3B3)}

Total Quantity Sold in Softline (Q2) $= \sum$ {(P1B1), (P1B2), (P1B3)}

Quantity Sold in Hardlines – Essentials (P1C1) $= \sum$ {(P1C1B3), (P1C1B2), (P1C1B1)}

Quantity Sold in Hardlines – Non-Essentials (P1C2) $= \sum$ {(P1C2B2), (P1C2B3), (P1C2B1)}

Quantity Sold in Hardlines – One-Time Buy (P1C3) $= \sum$ {(P1C3B3), (P1C3B2), (P1C3B1)}

Total Quantity Sold in Hardlines (Q3) $= \sum${(P1C1), (P1C2), (P1C3)}

Total Quantity Sold (Q) $= \sum(Q1, Q2, Q3)$

MRP Sale Valueof Personal Care / FMCG (S1) $= \sum$ {(P1A1 X P2A1), (P1A2 X P2A2)}

MRP Sales Value of Softline (S2) $= \sum$ {(P1B1 X P2B1), (P1B2 X P2B2), (P1B3 X P2B3)}

MRP Sales Valueof Hardlines (S3) $= \sum$ {(P1C1 X P2C1), (P1C2 X P2C2), (P1C3 X P2C3)}

Total MRP Sales Value (S) $= \sum (S1, S2, S3)$

Gross Sale Value of Personal Care / FMCG (G1) = (S1 – P3A)

Gross Sales Value of Softline (G2) = (S2 – P3B)

Gross Sales Value of Hardlines (G3) = (S3 – P3C)

Total Gross Sales Value (G) $= \sum (G1, G2, G3)$

Earning Value of Personal Care / FMCG (E1) = (G1 – COGS*)

Earning Value of Softline (E2) = (G2 – COGS*)

Earning Value of Hardlines (E3) = (G3 – COGS*)

Total Gross Sales Value (E) $= \sum (E1, E2, E3)$

*Cost of Goods Sold

Expenses of High Street Stores (L1) = (P4A Rent + Other Store Expenses**)

Expenses of Institutional Stores (L2) = (P4B Rent + Other Store Expenses**)

Expenses of Mall Stores (L3) = (P4C Rent + P4C CAM* + Other Store Expenses**)

Total Store Expenses (L) $= \sum (L1, L2, L3)$

* Common Area Maintenance Cost

** Direct Store Costs such as, Logistic Cost; Employee Cost; Employee Incentives; Central Sales Organization Employees Allocated Cost; House Keeping Expenses; Security Personnel Cost; Power and Fuel Cost; Credit Card Charges; Debit Card Charges; Home Delivery Expenses; Repair Cost; Store Consumables Cost; Uniform Expenses; Clothing Alteration Expenses; Legal Fee; Professional Fee; Inventory Insurance Cost; Store Employees Welfare Expenses; Back-Store Office Maintenance Cost; Mother/Feeder Warehouse Cost Allocated to Store; Inventory Carrying Cost and Promotional Expenses Allocated to Store.

Overall Store Profit/Loss (SP) ***= (E - L)***

The above mathematical structure clearly demonstrates that the product category mix, brand mix, price lining mix, promotion mix and the type of place a store is located is directly proportional to the overall store profitability. The road to store profitability in fact is full of mathematically derived numbers which are 'output' in nature, the only one number that influence all these output numbers is the total number of invoices / bills being generated by the store and most importantly the product / category / brand / price

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

composition of majority of these invoices/bills. If majority of bills are composed of products / categories / brands / price which have capability to drive consumers' repeat purchase behaviour, repeat store visit frequency and in turn the retention rate. Hence the priority definition in the mix within and among "4P's" which have been designed as part of the proposed Marketing Mix plays an important role in deriving the strength of the proposed model. The prioritization is the key rationalization being proposed to the existing Marketing Mix.
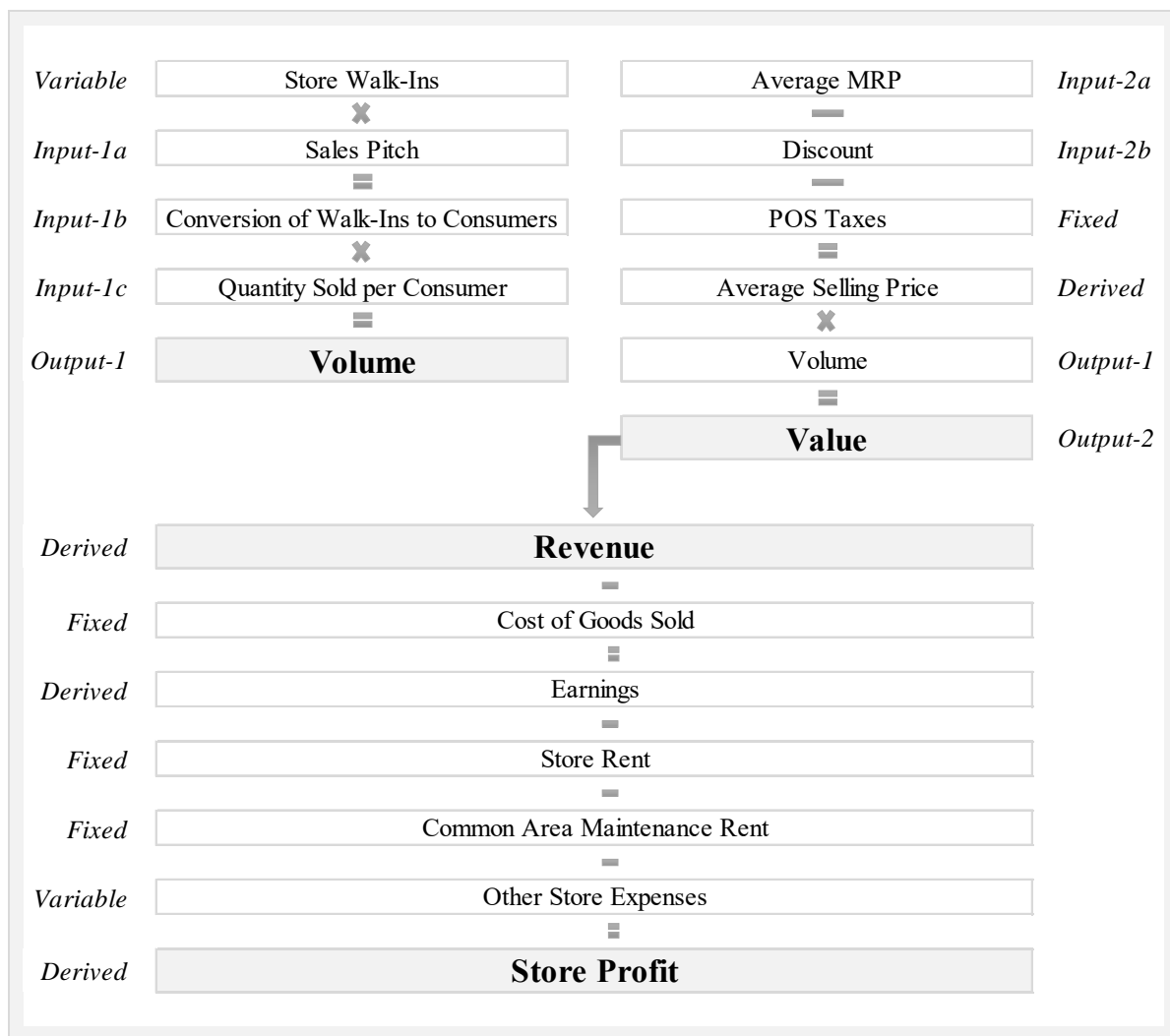

Fig. 4: Schematic presentation of road to store profit.

The Schematic representation of road to final store profit is presented in Figure 4. One can clearly see that every milestone in the journey to final store profit is important, but at the same time, it is imperative for retailers to understand the difference among input, output, fixed, variable and derived components of this journey. Our proposed Marketing Mix has deliberately considered the role of each of these components while designing the proposition.

6. TESTING OF PROPOSED MARKETING MIX :

We were firm in our approach that, the proposed Marketing Mix has to be tested in a retail set up before we recommend the same to brick-and-mortar baby care retailers. But it was not that easy merely because of the vast scope of the experiment. Unlike other experiments wherein the treatment is limited to few concepts, components or variables this experiment in fact required us to cover practically almost all the elements of the Marketing Mix which do require longer duration for preparations prior to testing, longer

**International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management
Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.**

**SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION**

duration prior to the beginning of extracting the results and longer period of time for the experimentation itself to ensure findings and insights are derived holistically. The biggest challenge of testing the new Marketing Mix was the time taken to make attitudinal changes in the employees of the select retailer across all departments and functions. Their attitude towards the Marketing Mix was significantly negative towards basic principles, concepts, proposition, and the overall theory of the new Marketing Mix which is skewed to the demand side. To list a few key beliefs that they had been.

Product: (a) existing category mix is ideal for their stores; (b) any modification in the existing category mix could possibly lead to loss of sale of an existing category; (c) it is preferred to have categories generating higher average transaction values; (d) categories with lower average selling price products and generating lower average transaction values negatively impact store's revenue; (e) allocating larger space to Hardlines and Softline categories generate higher overall store revenue; (f) FMCG category generates lowest average transaction values; (g) consumers buy FMCG products belonging to trusted brands and they are also being sold in many other retailing formats; (h) Softline category generates highest revenue for the store; (i) Hardlines category generates larger average transaction values per bills; (j) consumers clearly know their life-stage, products needed for the life-stage and when and how much to purchase.

Price: (a) consumers in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities cannot afford to purchase high-priced products / brands; (b) it is easier to sell high-priced products / brands to consumers in tier1 cities; (c) consumer awareness with respect to premium brands / products is poor in Tier-3 cities; (d) selling high-price point product range increases the average transaction value thereby enhancing the overall store revenue. **Promotion:** (a) post emergence of online stores in India, majority of consumers expect larger discounts; (b) conversion of walk-ins is significantly dependent on the discount offered; (c) discount is becoming the most important component of selling proposition; (d) discounting is required throughout the year; (e) consumers compare discounts in the online stores and expect the same to be matched; (f) key objective of offering discounts is to reduce shifting of consumers to online stores; (g) majority of FMCG products have lower earnings and hence we cannot afford to offer discounts on them; (h) majority of the losses in the stores are purely on account of continuous and heavy discounts being offered to consumers. **Place:** (a) existing store size is ideal to their retailing format; (b) inventory display density per square foot is optimal; (c) larger the store size higher the consumer walk-ins; (d) more premium the store location more premium the perceived retail store brand positioning in consumers mind, (e) larger the store size higher the store revenue and most importantly; (f) store revenue reduces in proportion to reduction in store size; (g) stores located in Tier-1 cities generate the highest revenue; (h) stores in locations where there is higher consumer walk-ins/traffic generate higher revenue and profit; (i) consumers spend is higher in premium locations; (j) it is easier to attract consumers if the store is located in malls; (k) stores in premium locations helps in building premium perceptions about the retail brand in consumers and competitors mind; (l) it is difficult to attract and acquire consumers for high street stores; (m) institutional stores are not long-term and most importantly; (n) magnitude of revenue that would be generated by a store is important while considering a location.

We were cognizant and it was inevitable that such significantly negative beliefs are addressed to ensure the testing of proposed Marketing Mix has buy-in from majority of the employees across departments and functions. Thus, we decided to undertake series of training and started applying new Marketing Mix to stores under experimental group in phases applying treatment element by element one after the other over a period of six months be it changing the store layout, be it resizing of the store, be it modifying the brand mix, be it changing the inventory levels by category, be it modifying the promotions, be it changing the sales personnel who were not ready for the change and be it change in the overall organizational structure before heading to record results of the experiment. Once we have completed treatment across all the elements recommended on the proposed Marketing Mix, we took the final reading of resultant data to further analyse, evaluate and derive insights.

7. KEY FINDINGS AND INSIGHTS :

We have recorded results of data analysis independently for empirical, statistical, and qualitative as detailed below to ensure that we take an unbiased look at each of these findings before we consolidate all the results to draw conclusion.

7.1 Empirical Analysis: As part of the empirical analysis we have looked at the data from pre-test and post-test across control and experimental group of stores to understand the role of input variables in

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

changing the repeatability of consumers and the overall store profitability.

Table 1: Pre-test post-test real treatment effect across key factors in experimental group as percentage change over their pre-test period with respect to contribution of Personal Care / FMCG category to overall stores volume generated.

Factors - Personal Care / FMCG	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1A1B3	17.03%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B2	34.51%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B1	-33.28%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B3	21.92%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B2	286.15%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B1	0.00%
Volume Contribution of P1A	17.36%

The proposed Marketing Mix has allocated utmost importance to Personal Care / FMCG category as far as product prioritization is concerned. Table 1 depicts that the stores in the experimental group have focussed on pitching products belonging to Personal Care / FMCG category in their sales pitch to consumers. A real treatment effect indicates that an improvement of 17.36 percent was seen in the experimental group of stores over their pre-test period.

Table 2: Pre-test post-test real treatment effect across key factors in experimental group as percentage change over their pre-test period with respect to contribution of Softline category to overall stores volume generated.

Factors - Softline	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1B1B3	-32.17%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B2	-37.02%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B1	81.04%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B3	-9.92%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B2	-33.76%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B1	51.29%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B3	-64.05%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B2	0.82%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B1	11.62%
Volume Contribution of P1B	-10.91%

The proposed Marketing Mix has allocated the utmost importance to Store Brands in Softline category as far as brand prioritization is concerned. Table 2 depicts that the stores in the experimental group have focussed on stocking up and pitching products belonging to Store Brands in the Softline category in their sales pitch to consumers. A real treatment effect indicates that an improvement of 81.04 percent in Softline Essential Store Brands was seen in the experimental group of stores over their pre-test period. With respect to prioritization of category itself, the Softline was given the next level of importance after Personal Care / FMCG category and the same is witnessed in the experimental group of stores wherein the overall volume contribution of Softline category shows a deterioration by 10.91 percent in comparison to pre-test period.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

Table 3: Pre-test post-test real treatment effect across key factors in experimental group as percentage change over their pre-test period with respect to contribution of Hardlines category to overall stores volume generated.

Factors – Hardlines	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1C1B3	571.83%
Volume Contribution of P1C1B2	31.34%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B3	-7.40%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B2	-2.58%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B1	-26.75%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B3	0.38%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B2	-6.41%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B1	32.88%
Volume Contribution of P1C	-3.40%

The proposed Marketing Mix has allocated utmost importance to Global Brands in Essential Hardlines category as far as the brand prioritization is concerned. Table 3 indicates that the stores in the experimental group have focussed on stocking up and pitching products belonging to Global Brands in the Hardlines category in their sales pitch to consumers. A real treatment effect indicates that an improvement of 571.83 percent in Hardlines Essential Global Brands was seen in the experimental group of stores over their pre-test period. With respect to prioritization of category itself, the Hardlines was given the lowest level of importance in the proposed Marketing Mix and the same is witnessed in the experimental group of stores wherein the overall volume contribution of Hardlines category shows a deterioration by 3.40 percent in comparison to pre-test period.

Table 4: Pre-test post-test real treatment effect across key factors in experimental group as percentage change over their pre-test period.

Factors – Overall Store	Post-Test Experimental Group
New Consumer Mix	-13.21%
Repeat Consumer Mix	32.23%
Number of New Consumers	22.96%
Number of Repeat Consumers	**96.17%**
Discount	34.74%
Area	12.98%
Average MRP	-2.04%
Average Selling Price	-6.85%
Average Transaction Volume	-5.09%
Average Transaction Value	-11.29%
Volume per Square Foot	34.43%
Revenue per Square Foot	24.52%
Overall Store Expenses per Square Foot	22.00%
Overall Store Profit Per Square Foot	**410.13%**
Monthly Revenue per Store	13.52%
Monthly Profit per Store	**242.49%**

Using pre-test post-test real treatment effect formula, we have found that the real treatment effect has shown a 410.13 percent improvement in the overall store profitability measured on the basis of per square foot and a 242.49 percent improvement in overall store profitability measured in absolute profit value per month of the experimental group as shown in table 4. Majority of misconceptions that the employees across the departments and function were carrying are also proven wrong as one can see that Average MRP, Average Selling Price, Average Transaction Volume and Value have shown deterioration in the real treatment effects and in spite of this deterioration experimental group stores have shown significant improvement in the overall store profitability. Though the key objective of the experimentation was to understand the impact of proposed Marketing Mix on the overall store profitability what is imperative is

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION

to understand the role of key factors which are purely input in nature in the overall gamut of Marketing Mix with respect to the final output factor which is overall store profitability. Table 4 clearly indicates a significant positive change in (a) mix of repeat consumers; (b) the absolute number of repeat consumers; (c) store size rationalization and most importantly;(d) the discounting methodology.

Table 5: Percentage variance between experimental and control groups during pre and post-test periods across key factors.

Factors - Personal Care / FMCG	Pre-Test Experimental Group	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1A1B3	-18.44%	-4.31%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B2	-2.60%	26.16%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B1	6.56%	-31.74%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B3	-23.29%	-11.49%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B2	-76.33%	-24.58%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B1	0.00%	-100.00%
Volume Contribution of P1A	-11.56%	3.53%

Table 6: Percentage variance between experimental and control groups during pre and post-test periods across key factors.

Factors - Softline	Pre-Test Experimental Group	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1B1B3	34.85%	-11.41%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B2	21.96%	-24.99%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B1	-16.15%	50.22%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B3	-5.36%	-18.21%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B2	13.24%	-19.62%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B1	-26.06%	20.24%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B3	1.01%	-50.55%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B2	19.73%	46.83%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B1	12.06%	31.84%
Volume Contribution of P1B	3.48%	-8.62%

One can observe that table 5, 6, 7 and 8 show the variance between control and experimental groups across various factors considered in the proposed Marketing Mix. Experimental group of stores in comparison to control group of stores had a significantly poor performance in the pre-test period, whereas after implementing the proposed Marketing Mix the overall performance of the experimental group of stores has shown significant improvement in the overall store profitability.

Table 9, 10, 11 and 12 demonstrate the change in key factors of the experimental over the pre-test period. One can observe that none of the factors have been impacted so significantly due to the proposed Marketing Mix except a significant positive change if repeat consumers and overall store profitability which in turn strongly support the proposed Marketing Mix. Modifying an existing Marketing Mix is a long journey and one has to have patience and allocate enough time to implement the new Marketing Mix. All the positive results being observed post-test have been achieved through incorporating as many as possible principles of the proposed Marketing Mix but at the same time, we would like to admit that not all of them were incorporated and not all the stores in the experimental group were able to incorporate to the full extent.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

Table 7: Percentage variance between experimental and control groups during pre and post-test periods across key factors.

Factors - Hardlines	Pre-Test Experimental Group	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1C1B3	-79.10%	30.80%
Volume Contribution of P1C1B2	-40.41%	-24.61%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B3	50.15%	34.44%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B2	75.95%	44.57%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B1	38.36%	1.41%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B3	-8.41%	-6.45%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B2	-1.47%	-7.47%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B1	-6.35%	22.65%
Volume Contribution of P1C	38.17%	26.88%

Table 8: Percentage variance between experimental and control groups during pre and post-test periods across key factors.

Factors - Overall Store	Pre-Test Experimental Group	Post-Test Experimental Group
New Consumer Mix	18.83%	3.23%
Repeat Consumer Mix	-27.87%	-4.41%
Number of New Consumers	-27.83%	-12.98%
Number of Repeat Consumers	**-61.32%**	**-27.01%**
Discount	-15.17%	18.22%
Area	-41.73%	-41.52%
Average MRP	-0.06%	-2.11%
Average Selling Price	2.99%	-3.83%
Average Transaction Volume	-3.82%	-8.60%
Average Transaction Value	-2.03%	-12.26%
Volume per Square Foot	-18.12%	9.13%
Revenue per Square Foot	-12.01%	8.04%
Overall Store Expenses per Square Foot	-21.99%	-4.36%
Overall Store Profit Per Square Foot	**-83%**	**203%**
Monthly Revenue per Store	10.30%	24.10%
Monthly Profit per Store	**-62%**	**261%**

Table 9: Post-test percentage change over pre-test across key factors in the experimental group.

Factors - Personal Care / FMCG	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1A1B3	23.61%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B2	53.56%
Volume Contribution of P1A1B1	-41.66%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B3	-35.03%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B2	11.56%
Volume Contribution of P1A2B1	0.00%
Volume Contribution of P1A	25.88%

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION

Table 10: Post-test percentage change over pre-test across key factors in the experimental group.

Factors - Softline	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1B1B3	-50.87%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B2	-42.92%
Volume Contribution of P1B1B1	84.80%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B3	-30.01%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B2	-9.59%
Volume Contribution of P1B2B1	-4.70%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B3	-38.32%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B2	-45.76%
Volume Contribution of P1B3B1	-7.33%
Volume Contribution of P1B	-20.01%

Table 11: Post-test percentage change over pre-test across key factors in the experimental group.

Factors - Hardlines	Post-Test Experimental Group
Volume Contribution of P1C1B3	721.08%
Volume Contribution of P1C1B2	11.76%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B3	1.49%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B2	31.66%
Volume Contribution of P1C2B1	-29.73%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B3	27.49%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B2	-2.22%
Volume Contribution of P1C3B1	41.32%
Volume Contribution of P1C	14.33%

Table 12: Post-test percentage change over pre-test across key factors in the experimental group.

Factors - Overall Store	Post-Test Experimental Group
New Consumer Mix	-16.05%
Repeat Consumer Mix	39.13%
Number of New Consumers	4.54%
Number of Repeat Consumers	**68.60%**
Discount	9.42%
Area	-17.43%
Average MRP	-2.33%
Average Selling Price	-0.85%
Average Transaction Volume	-3.70%
Average Transaction Value	-4.44%
Volume per Square Foot	47.06%
Revenue per Square Foot	45.93%
Overall Store Expenses per Square Foot	35.63%
Overall Store Profit Per Square Foot	**534%**
Monthly Revenue per Store	17.69%
Monthly Profit per Store	**371%**

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

7.2 Statistical Analysis: As part of statistical analysis we have looked at the data from pre-test and post-test across control and experimental group of stores to understand the role of input variables in changing the overall store profitability moderated by consumer repeatability.

Table 13 indicate a strong and significant positive association between Essential products belonging to Personal Care / FMCG category, and the consumer repeatability across control and experimental group of stores. Whereas, though there is a positive association between Non-Essential products belonging to Personal Care/ FMCG category and consumer repeatability it is found to be insignificant. The table also confirms that the significance of this relationship in control group is by chance unlike in the experimental group of stores. This association strengthens the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 13: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Personal Care / FMCG category and Consumer repeatability.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A1 to Total	Consumer	0.425	0.120	3.007	0.041
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.416	0.143	5.778	0.001
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A2 to Total	Consumer	0.280	0.034	1.784	0.181
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.329	0.076	3.363	0.023
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A to Total	Consumer	0.317	0.079	4.787	0.034
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.044	-0.010	0.164	0.687

Table 14 indicate a moderate and significant positive association between Essential products belonging to Softline category, and the consumer repeatability across control and experimental group of stores. Whereas it shows a strong and significant positive association between overall Softline category and the consumer repeatability across experimental and control group of stores, the same is by chance in the control group of stores. This association strengthens the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 14: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Softline category and Consumer repeatability.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B1 to Total	Consumer	0.389	0.089	2.441	0.008
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.447	0.171	6.922	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B2 to Total	Consumer	0.244	-0.009	0.864	0.468
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.568	0.299	13.204	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B3 to Total	Consumer	0.143	-0.051	0.285	0.836
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.448	0.172	6.965	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B to Total	Consumer	0.319	0.081	4.888	0.032
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.197	0.028	3.436	0.067

Table 15 indicate a positive association between Essential products belonging to Hardlines category, and the consumer repeatability across control and experimental group of stores it is merely by chance in the experimental group of stores. This association strengthens the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 16 indicates a significantly positive association between Essential products belonging to Personal Care / FMCG category, and the overall volume generated by the store across control and experimental group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 17 indicate a positive and moderate association between Softline category, and the overall volume generated by the store across control and experimental group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION

Table 15: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Hardlines category and Consumer repeatability.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C1 to Total	Consumer	0.166	-0.019	0.595	0.556
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.364	0.112	6.427	0.003
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C2 to Total	Consumer	0.192	-0.034	0.522	0.670
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.524	0.248	10.469	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C3 to Total	Consumer	0.385	0.086	2.379	0.084
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.388	0.120	4.918	0.003
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C to Total	Consumer	0.052	-0.021	0.115	0.737
Control		Volume Generated by the	Repeatability	0.311	0.086	9.086	0.003

Table 16: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Personal Care / FMCG category and Volume generated by the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A1 to Total	Store's	0.600	0.314	7.698	0.000
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.528	0.253	10.703	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A2 to Total	Store's	0.424	0.141	4.607	0.016
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.459	0.182	7.365	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A to Total	Store's	0.545	0.281	18.173	0.000
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.385	0.138	14.765	0.000

Table 17: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Softline category and Volume generated by the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B1 to Total	Store's	0.362	0.067	2.056	0.121
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.466	0.189	7.680	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B2 to Total	Store's	0.566	0.271	6.444	0.001
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.472	0.194	7.916	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B3 to Total	Store's	0.490	0.185	4.323	0.010
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.483	0.205	8.396	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B to Total	Store's	0.366	0.113	6.633	0.014
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.316	0.089	9.438	0.003

Table 18 indicate a positive and moderate association between Hardlines category, and the overall volume generated by the store across control and experimental group of stores but at the same time showing that this association is merely by chance in the control group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 19 indicates a significantly positive association between Essential products belonging to Personal Care / FMCG category, and the average MRP value of the store across control and experimental group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

Table 20 indicates a significantly positive association between Essential products belonging to Softline category, and the average MRP value of the store across control and experimental group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

Table 18: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Hardlines category and Volume generated by the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C1 to Total	Store's	0.333	0.068	2.616	0.085
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.307	0.073	4.362	0.016
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C2 to Total	Store's	0.417	0.114	2.878	0.047
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.389	0.120	4.925	0.003
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C3 to Total	Store's	0.410	0.107	2.763	0.054
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.366	0.102	4.267	0.007
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C to Total	Store's	0.371	0.117	6.847	0.012
Control		Volume Generated by the	Overall	0.203	0.030	3.645	0.060

Table 19: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Personal Care / FMCG category and Average Pricing of the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A1 to Total	Store's	0.596	0.308	7.515	0.000
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.522	0.246	10.343	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A2 to Total	Store's	0.158	-0.021	0.539	0.588
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.413	0.141	5.687	0.001
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1A to Total	Store's	0.415	0.153	8.945	0.005
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.435	0.180	19.884	0.000

Table 20: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Softline category and Average Pricing of the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B1 to Total	Store's	0.657	0.389	10.353	0.000
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.461	0.184	7.483	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B2 to Total	Store's	0.520	0.217	5.057	0.005
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.641	0.389	19.282	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B3 to Total	Store's	0.683	0.427	11.948	0.000
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.685	0.451	24.517	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1B to Total	Store's	0.350	0.102	6.003	0.018
Control		Volume Generated by the	Average	0.256	0.055	5.966	0.017

Table 21 indicate a weakly positive association between Hardlines category, and the average MRP value of the store in the experimental group of stores which is too by chance and a moderately positive association for control group of stores thereby strengthening the proposed Marketing Mix.

Finally, the model proposed in the new Marketing Mix which basically gives utmost importance to input variables across all the "4P's" such as a) P1-Sales Pitch; b) P2-Product's Original Price (MRP); c) P3-Discount Methodology; d) P4-Store Location /City / Size / Rent demonstrates a significantly positive association between prioritization level of key input variables and the overall store profitability moderated by the overall consumer repeatability in the experimental group of stores as shown in table 22. Whereas the determination is 26.15 percent weaker in the control group of stores in when compared with the experimental group of stores as shown in table 22.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS
PUBLICATION

Table 21: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between Hardlines category and Average Pricing of the Store.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C1 to Total Volume Generated by the	Store's	0.337	0.071	2.688	0.080
Control			Average	0.340	0.095	5.488	0.006
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C2 to Total Volume Generated by the	Store's	0.297	0.022	1.323	0.280
Control			Average	0.537	0.263	11.218	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C3 to Total Volume Generated by the	Store's	0.731	0.501	15.702	0.000
Control			Average	0.655	0.408	20.769	0.000
Experimental	1	Contribution of P1C to Total Volume Generated by the	Store's	0.106	-0.012	0.485	0.490
Control			Average	0.440	0.184	20.449	0.000

Table 22: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between key Input Variables and the resultant overall Store Profitability for the experimental group of stores.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Experimental	1	Store Location Type (P4) Store City Type (P4) Store Size (P4) Store Rent (P4) Sales Pitch (P1) Consumer Repeatability Store's Overall Volume Store's Average MRP (P2) Discount (P3)	Store Profitability	0.910	0.729	8.407	0.000

Table 23: Correlation, determinations, regression, and significance level between key Input Variables and the resultant overall Store Profitability for control group of stores.

Group	Model	Predictors	Dependent Variable	R	Adjusted R²	F Change	ANOVA Sig.
Control	1	Store Location Type (P4) Store City Type (P4) Store Size (P4) Store Rent (P4) Sales Pitch (P1) Consumer Repeatability Store's Overall Volume Store's Average MRP (P2) Discount (P3)	Store Profitability	0.790	0.539	7.273	0.000

7.3 Qualitative Analysis: As far as qualitative findings are concerned an open-ended interview was conducted with select (convenience) employees across all the departments, functions of the central team, and employees of the experimental group of stores. Majority of these employees have agreed that though it was very hard to believe and incorporate the basic principles of new Marketing Mix the significantly favourable results are undeniable. The post-test results are encouraging, and they have eroded all the misconceptions and beliefs they had prior to experimenting with the proposed Marketing Mix.

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

8. CONCLUSION :

Baby care retailing is complex in nature owing to sheer vast number of unique products the retailer needs to offer in their brick-and-mortar stores as part of the product assortment added with limitation in terms of opportunity available for the store to hold on consumers for a longer period of time just because the window is very small. The complex nature of baby care retailing both from supply side and demand side, in fact, attracts lesser investors. Through this intensive research work, we have noticed that it is not just about identifying the ideal product, brand, category, price level, discount level, store location, store size, supply partners and sales personnel. It is all about the right mixture of all these elements in relation to target consumers and the overall business goal of the retailer. It is also not about achieving the ideal mixture for a few of these elements in silos, what is imperative is the overall mixture of all these elements and not just one or two. Another important fact that we have found in this research is that, retailers need to relook at some of the strong beliefs they and their employees carry and test them with real-time facts, data and continuous unbiased observations otherwise it would furthermore add on to the existing complexity of baby care retailing. Marketing Mix is the most important and basic pillar of retailing entity irrespective of retailing format and unless one has this mixture in the right proportion across all the "4P's" it is impossible to build a sustainable retailing business model. When we analysed the existing Marketing Mix of a select retailer in the study, we have noticed that the same has been built on beliefs, misconceptions, and additional complexities. The new Marketing Mix proposed by us takes into consideration the complexity of the baby care retailing format and we have attempted to reduce this complexity level to the best possible level. When we applied the proposed Marketing Mix for over a period of twelve month sat over 35 percent stores of a select retailer, results demonstrate that these stores which have gone through the treatment in addition to few of them turning profitable for the first time all the stores delivered the highest ever revenue, profit and most importantly have witnessed the highest number of consumers visiting these stores more often thereby providing validity and reliability of the proposes new Marketing Mix for brick-and-mortar retailing in the field.

9. SUGGESTIONS TO BABY CARE RETAILERS :

Brick-and-mortar baby care retailers need to identify every other baby care retailers key business goal and their target consumers which could have compelled them to have a particular Marketing Mix whether they are organized, semi-organized, or unorganized. Few may be trying to capture the bigger market share; few may be trying to show exponential growth in their revenue to attract more investors; few may be assuming that consumers acquired based on discount as one of their key components of selling proposition are going to be loyal to their store forever; few may be trying to create a perception in consumers mind over their brand image, few may be opening stores in premium locations with the larger size to tag them as experiential, anchor or destination stores; few may be opening brick-and-mortar baby care stores to promote their retail brand to attract investors, franchisees and licensees; few online retailers may be trying to show their presence in the offline space; few conglomerates may be trying to show their presence in the baby care retailing sector; few may be selling premium / Global brands in their stores to position themselves as premium retailers and so on. What is very important is the key business goal of your retailing format, your target consumer group and target consumer group's attitude towards your Marketing Mix. Retailers need to know that the perspective towards the existing Marketing Mix might not be same between yourselves and your consumers, with few consumers it may be same and in others it may not be the case. Finally, we would like to bring to retailers attention that, any modifications whether small or big to existing Marketing Mix shall not be a short term exercise and shall not yield favourable results without allowing the modifications in the Marketing Mix to settle over a period of time and in addition what is of utmost importance is the level of acceptance and adaptation among all the stakeholders of the retailing organization. To ensure a higher level of acceptance and adaptation across the retailing organization, retailers along with modifying Marketing Mix must also always modify the key responsibility areas (KRA) and key performance indicators (KPI) of all the stakeholders in relation to expected outcomes of the modifications in the Marketing Mix.

10. LIMITATIONS OF RESEARCH :

The main limitation of this research work is the coverage of various stakeholders viz., locations,

International Journal of Applied Engineering and Management Letters (IJAEML), ISSN: 2581-7000, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2020.

SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

consumers, retail employees, price positioning, product mix, brand mix and retailer in experimenting with the new framework. This might limit the generalizability of the research findings to other sets of baby care retailers, consumers, and stakeholders. The second limitation would be the empirical validation is restricted to one retail format i.e., multi brand and multi category organized bricks-and-mortar baby care stores in India and hence the generalizability of the findings and suggestions to other baby care retailing formats. The third limitation would be our ability to carry out true experimental design, at best we were able to carry out a pre-test post-test control group experimental design. However, it provides significant input regarding the ways to utilise these findings as all the findings have been derived from an experiment spread over twelve months.

11. SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH :

We strongly recommended that the proposed Marketing Mix is experimented by researchers and finetune the Marketing Mix if required for different baby care retailing formats and verticals. Based on the key business objectives and their target consumer group, brick-and-mortar organized baby care retailers can implement the proposed Marketing Mix at their select stores and fine tune the same based on real-time findings which can then be implemented across the entire chain of their stores.

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SRINIVAS PUBLICATION

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