

# Confidence and Life Style: A Study of Consumer Attitude towards the Use of Sanitary Napkins

**M.P.Singh**

Associate Prof., Faculty of Management, VNS Group of Institutes, Bhopal

**Lavina Singh**

Assistant Prof., School of Management Sciences, Lucknow

---

## Abstract

*The objective of present study was to investigate consumer attitude towards use of sanitary napkins and whether it helps to build confidence and associate with life style. Questionnaires were circulated among young college going girls and was found that every girl uses sanitary napkins of various companies for confident attitude.*

**Key Words:** Lifestyle, confidence, comfort, attitude, sanitary napkins

## I. Introduction

Today, women lead more active lifestyles. The change in lifestyle has created a great need for convenience in the feminine hygiene industry. In response to the trend for convenience, manufacturers are creating smaller, compact products that come in more discrete packages.

## Indian Scenario

In India, the biggest barrier to using a sanitary napkin is affordability. Around 70 per cent of women in India cannot afford to buy them and consequently resort to soaking alternatives like un-sanitized cloth, even reusing these. Incidents of reproductive tract infection are more common among these women. India claims the lowest usage of

feminine hygiene products in the world of 496.4 million women in India. Only 6% i.e. around 30 million women use some sort of hygienic sanitary napkin during their monthly menstruation. Compare this to the 96% rate seen in developed countries, like the United States and then Indian statistics are obviously pitiful.

According to a recent AC Nielsen survey conducted in major metropolitan areas of India – Aurangabad, Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, Gorakhpur, Hyderabad, Lucknow and Vijayawada – inadequate menstrual protection is a serious hindrance to everyday life. Indian women resort to methods of feminine hygiene that have been practiced for generations. Old strips of cloth or napkins fashioned out of natural fiber husk are reused. Disposable sanitary napkins are expensive for poor consumers and a lack of awareness also limits women's comprehension of how sanitary napkins should be used and why they promote good health of hygiene. There are no satisfactory alternative methods of maintaining feminine hygiene for the average Indian women; as a result, women face extreme embarrassment, infection and loss of work days due to which they face negative social stigma and discomfort. Reproductive tract infections are 70% greater among women who lack access to hygienic supplies. As many as 31% of adult women in India note a drop in their productivity levies when they menstruate, resulting in missing an average of 2.2 days of work each month (Karthikeyan, G.B. and Sangeetha, R. 201311 ).

## **II. Literature Review**

Adika et al. (2011) conducted a study on perception of adolescent school girls towards use of sanitary pads. Girls were selected by cross-sectional population survey of educational institutions, 56 from primary school and 84 from junior secondary school within the age group of 10-20 years were given questionnaires to gather data for analysis. The results show that of the 140 girls studied, 64.3% of the girls used sanitary pads, 62.3

% had positive self perception on use of sanitary pads for hygiene purposes while 67.1% felt satisfied as well as good and nice as it boosted their self-confidence, although 66.4% perceived it as expensive. However, there seems to be a behavioural change on use of sanitary pads with 66.4% as well as being positive; enabling a majority (52.1%) to attend classes normally at school. The conclusion from this study is that 66.3% of the adolescent girls of Niger Delta area, Bayelsa state, Nigeria had positive perception on use of sanitary pads; 67.1% have perception that was satisfying, good, and nice on use of sanitary pads, boosting self-confidence though expensive for 64.4% , thus leading to a behavioural change that is positive. Their study therefore recommends the use of sanitary pads among adolescent school girls to be monitored and taught at schools to prevent infectious diseases as well as to bridge the gap with the training at home by mothers and other sources of information.

Consumer voice<sup>2</sup> (2013) conducted a survey in five metro cities of India to assess the availability and popularity of the brands of sanitary napkin available in retail markets. All the tested brands have been evaluated and graded as per their overall performance based on comprehensive lab-test reports. Key findings of the survey were as below:

1. In overall test performance, Caremate is on top (90) followed by Kotex (86) and Carefree (85).
2. All brands clear the absorbency test, being able to absorb the liquid flow.
3. In the disposability test of absorbent materials, brands Don't Worry, Sofy, She (extra large) and Whisper do not disperse in water within five minutes, as required by Indian Standards. Lumps were formed in the stirred water.
4. Carefree is found to have the thickest pad (102.88mm) and Don't Worry the thinnest (26.2mm).

5. In the sensory tests, Whisper is rated on top followed by Caremate and She (extra large).

Karthikeyan and Sangeetha 21(2013) conducted a study to analyze the perception of females on use of sanitary napkins and behavioral intentions of females while using sanitary napkins. The primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire. The sample size was 50 women respondents in Tirupur city. Convenient sampling technique was applied to select the respondents for the collection of questionnaires. Simple Percentage Analysis and Friedman Analysis were used as tools for analysis. From the analysis it was found that, various factors influence the selection and use of sanitary napkins. Among those factors quantity plays a vital role in the selection process of sanitary napkins, Price and quality influence the satisfaction level of consumers.

Kao Commercial (Thailand) Co. Ltd. and Kao Industrial (Thailand) Co.Ltd.<sup>10</sup> have publicized research results on Thai women attitudes and behavior towards sanitary napkin products (2004), and they also created understanding concerning menstruation for Thai women together with indicated present situation in sanitary napkin market. The study was conducted on 800 Thai women nationwide at the age in the range of 15-39 years. Research results conducted by "Kao" concerning sanitary napkin found out that, Thai women need the product that can provide them confidence and comfort, then they give their favor on slim and soft-surface types. Modern Thai women need sanitary napkin that can absorb perfectly and suit their body figure in order to be confident in using and receive comfort. That's why slim and soft-surface sanitary napkins have grasped the highest market share at this time. Research results on consumer's behavior on buying sanitary napkin products found out that most Thai women give their favor on slim type,

while maxi and ultra slim types are their favorite respectively. Most of them gave reasons of their favorite by the factor that the product can provide them comfort and tightness which makes them active and confident.

### III. Objectives of Study

Main objective of the study was to find out the attitude of college going girls towards the sanitary napkins. Another objective was to investigate whether use of sanitary napkins gives them comfort and confidence. Today, women lead more active lifestyle. The change in lifestyle has created a great need for convenience in the Feminine Hygiene industry. So another objective of research was to find out the association of lifestyle with sanitary napkins.

### IV. Research Methodology

The research has been conducted on young college girls of Bhopal city, M.P. Sample size was 50. Primary data was collected with the help of structured questionnaire. Convenient sampling technique was applied. Simple Percentage analysis has been used as a tool for data analysis.

### V. Results and Discussions

#### Q.1 Do you use sanitary napkins?

**Table 1:** Frequency Distribution on Acceptability of Sanitary Napkins

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	100
No	0	0

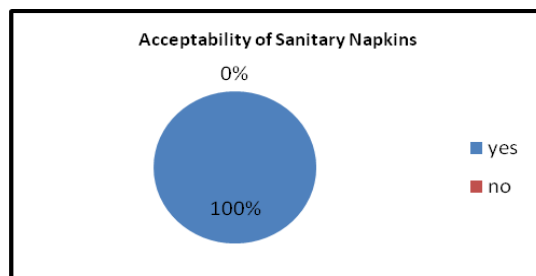


Figure 1

**Interpretation:** The figure 1 shows the pie chart for acceptability of sanitary napkins. It has been found that 100% girls said that they use sanitary napkins. This shows that all the college going girls in urban areas are aware and use sanitary napkins.

## Q.2 What drives you to use sanitary napkins?

**Table 2:** Frequency Distribution on Pre-Purchase Behaviour

Variable	Frequency(n)	Percentage (%)
Feel Grown Up	4	8
It Is Clean	15	30
It's Protective	31	62
Don't Know	0	

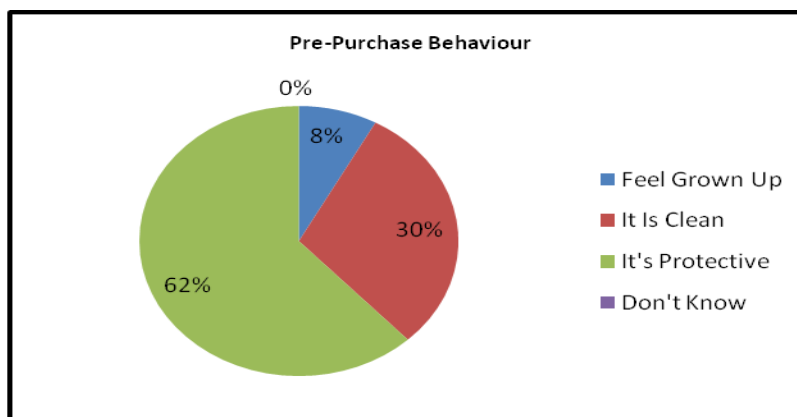


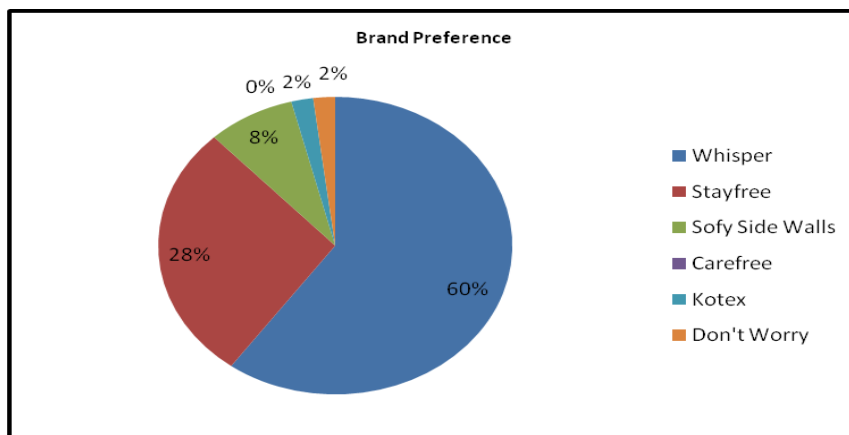
Figure 2

**Interpretation:** Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of motive behind the purchase of sanitary napkin. If we talk in terms of percentage then 62% girls said, that they use sanitary napkins because its protective while 30% said that they use because it is clean. As we know that there are many psychological factors which affect the buying decision process like motives, perception, personality etc . and motive of most of the girls, to use sanitary napkins is to fulfill their safety needs while very less percentage of girls used it to fulfill their esteem need.

### Q.3 Which brand you prefer to use?

**Table 3:** Frequency Distribution on Brand preference

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Whisper	30	60
Stayfree	14	28
Sofy Side Walls	4	8
Carefree	0	
Kotex	1	2
Don't Worry	1	2



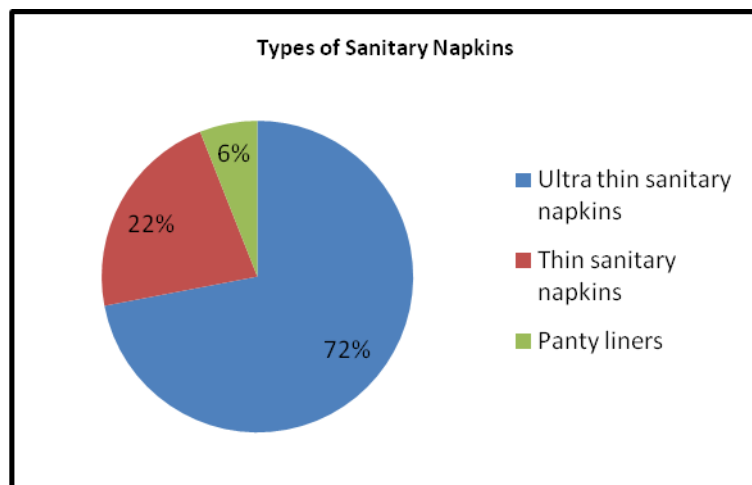
**Figure:3**

**Interpretation:** Figure 3 shows the brand preference of girls for sanitary napkins. 60% of girls said that they use whisper while 28% used stayfree. For rest of the brands the percentage is very low.

#### Q.4 Which type of sanitary napkins you use?

**Table 4:** Frequency Distribution on Type of sanitary napkins used

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Ultra thin sanitary napkins	36	72
Thin sanitary napkins	11	22
Panty liners	3	6



**Figure: 4**

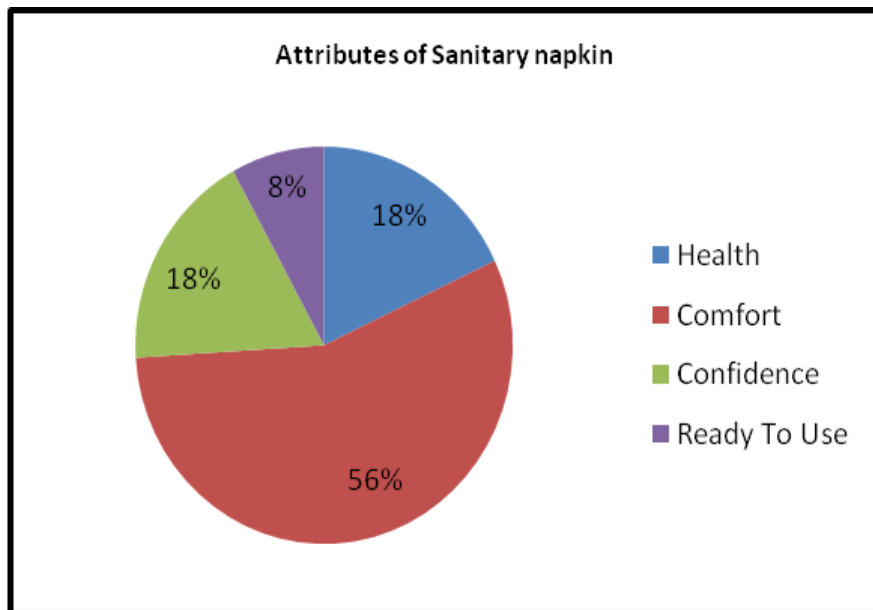
**Interpretation:** Figure 4 shows the detail of type of sanitary napkins which is mostly used by girls. 72% of girls said, that they use ultra thin sanitary napkins while 22% said that they use thin sanitary napkin. As the data was collected from college going girls, so it

is clear most of the girls use ultrathin sanitary napkins because they spend whole day out of the house and ultra thin pads protect for a longer time.

### Q.5 What features motivate you to buy a particular sanitary napkin?

**Table 5:** Frequency Distribution on Attribute of Product that Motivate to buy Sanitary Napkins

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Health	9	18
Comfort	28	56
Confidence	9	18
Ready To Use	4	8



**Figure: 5**

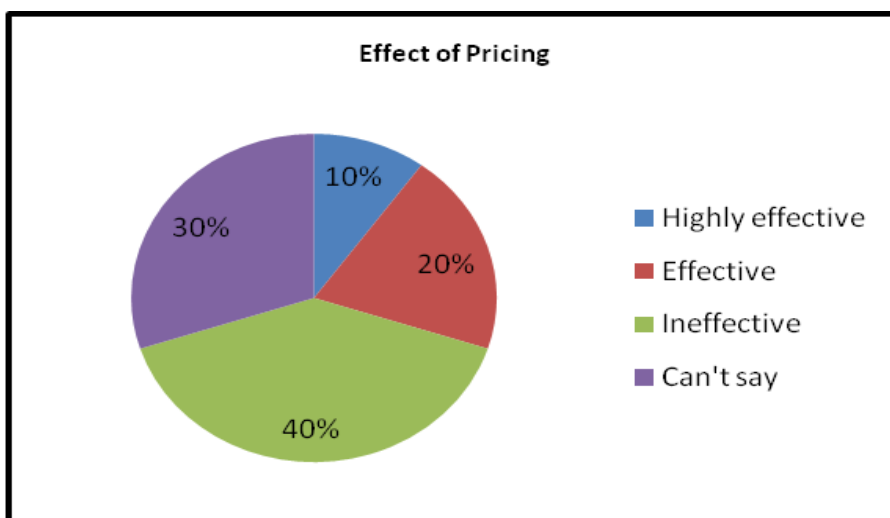
**Interpretation:** Figure 5 shows the details of product attributes that motivate the purchase of sanitary napkins. 56% of the girls were of the opinion that they buy sanitary napkins because it is comfortable. While, 18% of the girls said that they buy sanitary

napkins as it gives confidence and 18% said that it is good from health point of view. Product attributes again affect the consumer buying decision process. And it is clear from above diagram that most of the girls use sanitary napkin because it is comfortable to use.

#### Q.6 Does price affect in buying sanitary napkins?

**Table 6:** Frequency Distribution on Effect of Price on Purchase of Sanitary Napkin

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High effect	5	10
Effect	10	20
Ineffect	20	40
Can't say	15	30



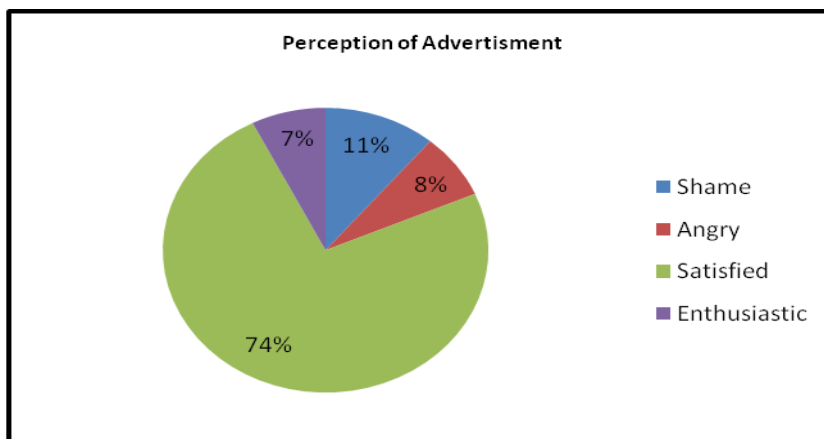
**Figure: 6**

**Interpretation:** Figure 6 shows the effect of price on buying decision of sanitary napkins. It shows that 40% of girls were of the opinion that price does not affect their purchase decision while for 30% girls price is highly effective in deciding which napkin to purchase. While for 20% girls price is effective. This shows variety of reactions coming from sample and the reason may be income of their family, number of members in family etc.

### Q.7 How do you feel when you watch the ads of sanitary napkins on television?

**Table 7:** Frequency Distribution on Perception of Television Advertisement about Sanitary Napkins

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Shame	6	12
Angry	4	4
Satisfied	40	80
Enthusiastic	4	4



**Figure: 7**

**Interpretation:** Figure 7 shows the perception of advertisement about sanitary napkins. 74% of girls said that they feel satisfied while watching advertisement on television while 11% said that they feel shame.

## VI. Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that college going girls of urban area are very well aware of the use of sanitary napkins. The main motive behind purchase of sanitary napkins is that it makes the girls feel protected and few of them felt that it helps in

maintaining cleanliness. And this may be the reason for opting ultra thin sanitary napkins. Girls prefer to use sanitary napkins for comfort during menstruation days. Further research needs to be conducted to find out behavioral changes and what make them confident while using any kind of sanitary napkin. Mixed reaction came for price effectiveness on purchase of sanitary napkins. Hence, it can be concluded that Bhopal urban college going girls still are in process of building confidence and it is a long way to make it a lifestyle product especially in the city like Bhopal.

## **VII. Limitations of Study**

1. The sample design could have been more proper and systematic. The study was conducted in only few selected colleges or in general data has been collected.
2. The Convenience sampling technique was used for data collection which has its own limitations.
3. The questionnaire used in the study need to further improvise and check reliability and validity.

## **References**

- [1] Currie, M.(eHow contributor). Definition of Consumer Attitude. Available online at [http://www.ehow.com/about\\_6536655\\_definition-consumer-attitude.html](http://www.ehow.com/about_6536655_definition-consumer-attitude.html). Accessed on date 11 Nov. 2013.
- [2] Comparative Test: Sanitary Napkins: Creature Comforts and Something More, Consumer Voice, June 2013. Available online at <http://consumeraffairs.nic.in/consumer/writereaddata/Sanitary%20Napkins.pdf> Accessed on 5 Nov. 2013.

- [3] Connell, E. B (1999) Contraception in the Prepill Era. Elsevier Science Inc, Contraception 1999; 59:7S–10S
- [4] Douglas, M.T. and Isherwood, B.C. (1979). The World of Goods. New York: Basic Books.
- [5] Delaney, J., Lupton, M., & Toth, E (1988) The Curse: A cultural History of Menstruation. University of Illinois Press
- [6] Erickson, G.M., Johansson, J.K., Chao, P. (1984). Image Variables in Multi-Attribute Product Evaluations: Country of origin effects, Journal of Consumer Research, 11, Sep., Pp. 694-699.
- [7] Gray, A.L.(1998). Lifestyle: The Next Big Thing. Catalog Age, Nov., Pp. 105.
- [8] Hsee, C.K.; Leclerc, F. (1998). Will Products Look More Attractive When Presented Separately or Together?. Journal of Consumer Research, 25, Sep., Pp. 175-186.
- [9] Kaite, B. (1981). The Intimacy of Commodities: Social Control, Subjectivity and Feminine Hygiene, p37-38. Open Access Dissertations and Theses. Paper 2865.
- [10] Kao Commercial (Thailand) Co.Ltd. and Kao Industrial (Thailand) Co.Ltd.(2004). Women's inner thoughts toward menstruation, Consumer Insight Report Vol.9 in Business Press Releases Tuesday July 13, 2004 16:07 Bangkok-13 Jul--Hakuhodo (Bangkok). Retrieved from <http://www.thailand4.com/.biz/2004-07-13/t4-56051/> on dated 18 Nov. 2013.
- [11] Karthikeyan, G.B. and Sangeetha, R. ( 2013 ). Women's attitude towards perception and derived satisfaction towards branded sanitary napkin. Retrieved from [www.indianmba.com/Faculty\\_Column/FC1537/fc1537.html](http://www.indianmba.com/Faculty_Column/FC1537/fc1537.html) . Accessed on 12 Nov. 2013.
12. Krugman, H. (1965). The Impact of Television Advertising: Learning without Involvement, Public Opinion Quarterly, 29, Pp. 349-356.

- [12] Lavidge, R. and Steiner, G. (1961). A Model for Predictive Measurements of Advertising Effectiveness, *Journal of Marketing*, 25, Oct. Pp. 59-62.
- [13] Peterson, R.A. (1979). Revitalizing the Culture Concept, *Annual Review of Sociology*, 5, Pp. 137-166.
- [14] Ray, M. (1973). Marketing Communications and the Hierarchy of Effects. In Clarke, P. *New Models for Mass Communications*, Ed., Beverly Hills, Calif: Sage.
- [15] Schiffman, L.G. and Kanuk, L.L., *Consumer Behavior*, Eight Edition, 2004, Prentice Hall, India. Retrieved from Sahney, S. Module - 6 CONSUMER BEHAVIOR , Vinod Gupta School of Management, Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur, India. Available online. Accessed on date 10 Nov. 2013.
- [16] S Kline, Leiss, W., Jhally, S. (1986). *Social Communication in Advertising*, Toronto: Methuen.
- [17] Solomon, M.R. (2002). *Consumer Behaviour*, 5th edition, pp. 201, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.
- [18] Stanley, A., (1993) Mothers and daughters of invention: notes for a revised history of technology. p215-216. The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
- [19] USC Marshall, University of South California, Consumer Attitude Retrieved from [http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb\\_Attitudes.html](http://www.consumerpsychologist.com/cb_Attitudes.html) Accessed on 12 Nov. 2013
- [20] Zablocki, B.D. and Kanter, R.M. (1976). The Differentiation of Life-Styles, *Annual Review of Sociology*, Pp. 269-297.
- [21] <http://consumeraffairs.nic.in/consumer/writereaddata/Sanitary%20Napkins.pdf>
- [22] [www. women's hygiene.com](http://www.women'shygiene.com)
- [23] [www.sanitarynapkin.com](http://www.sanitarynapkin.com)