

Chinese Toy Market in views of Indian Consumers: An Analytical Study of UP, Delhi and Haryana

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Toys play an instrumental role in building one's personal identity from being an infant to a grown individual. Like other products, China made toys can be seen almost in the hands of all kids as well as their parents in India. These Chinese toys are very attractive, low priced and easily available in Indian market. There have also been issues of toy safety regarding Toys may be considered as the most required play-item by kids, children, teenagers and sometimes young persons. Toys also pretence several hazards such as Chemical, Physical and Mechanical, Electrical, Flammability, Hygiene and Radioactivity, which can not be overlooked.

Children have not yet learned to judge what is safe and what is dangerous, and parents do not always think of all possible situations, so warnings and regulations are important on toys. For toy safety, every country has its own regulations. But since the globalization and opening of markets, most of them try to harmonize their regulations. Most of the parents sometimes ignore safty regulation and focused only over attraction and price of the toys. This motivates them to move towards Chinese toys as these are low priced and quite attractive. Keeping this in views and to analyze the impact of Chinese toys available in Indian Market on Indian Toy consumers, the present study titled “Chinese Toy Market in views of Indian Consumers: An Analytical Study of UP, Delhi and Haryana” is an attempt to highlight the various issues of availability of chienes toys in Indian Market in views of parents in India.

Keywords: Toy Consumers, Chinese Toys, Parents, U.P., Delhi, Haryana, Indian Government Poiclies

Introduction

Childhood days are always reminiscid by the toys one frolicked with, whether it's a soft toy, a remote control car, a mechanical robot, board games, crayons, paints or lego blocks. All these and many more toys play an instrumental role in building one's personal identity from being an infant to a grown individual. Toys also pretence several hazards such as Chemical, Physical and Mechanical, Electrical, Flammability, Hygiene and Radioactivity, which can not be overlooked. For example, if toys are not manufactured carefully and accurately, they risk to release toxic substances (chemical hazard), they can break into smaller pieces that can be accidentally swallowed by the kids (physical and mechanical hazard), or they can easily burn (flammability hazard), or have little holes where a child's finger could fit in, just to make some examples. Rattlers, Pull Carts, Dolls, Stackers, Building Blocks, Stuffed Toys, Train Sets and various toys are the child's best friend during the long, hot and dreary summer break. Interestingly these products have varied range of traditional Indian toys that are slowly coming back into vogue, courtesy a makeover.

Indian Toy Consumers

- The largest group of consumers in the Indian toy industry are the pre-teenagers in the age between 7 and 12.
- They are generating 44 % of value sales. In this age they are major decision influencers and through their media consumption get aware of the product variety.
- In India there are hardly any toys for the target group adults.
- Indian consumers are really price-sensitive and tend to buy impulse-driven. Because of that, toys with a low price point up to 199 INR (3.30 USD*) account for the majority of sales with 46 % share. This fits with the focus on unbranded toys many Indian manufacturers have.
- Independent small neighborhood retail stores are among the favourite stores for Indians to shop.
- The major shopping period of toys is in the time of Diwali (every year in autumn), the traditional Hindu festival of lights where it is common to buy presents for family and close friends, and Raksha Bandhan, a festival where presents are exchanged between brothers and sisters.
- If someone receives a gift in India, traditionally this person gives also a gift back to him, which of course boosts sales.
- Key trends of the Indian toy market
- Growing demand of licensing toys driven by manufacturers which have access to and knowledge of toys and games in the US and Europe are adapting this to India.
- Internet retailing is gaining more and more value share due to increasing internet penetration and the better merchandise in terms of variety and new launches.

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- Changing demographic situation is resulting in parents spending more on toys and games and focusing more on qualitative and premium products.
- Foreign players will continue to lead branded toys and games driven by multinational corporations and their huge efforts to increase their presence in India.

Toys with small parts, such as these Lego elements are required by law to have warnings about choking hazards in some countries. Many countries have passed safety standards limiting the types of toys that can be sold. Most of these seek to limit potential hazards, such as choking or fire hazards that could cause injury. Children, especially very small ones, often put toys into their mouths, so the materials used to make a toy are regulated to prevent poisoning. Materials are also regulated to prevent fire hazards. Children have not yet learned to judge what is safe and what is dangerous, and parents do not always think of all possible situations, so such warnings and regulations are important on toys. For toy safety, every country has its own regulations. But since the globalization and opening of markets, most of them try to harmonize their regulations. The most current action for children is to put toys in their mouths. This is why it is of utmost importance to regulate chemicals which are contained in the paintings and other materials children's products are made of. Countries or trade zones such as the European Union regularly publish lists to regulate the quantities or ban chemicals from toys and juvenile products.

Some toy factories, when projects become too large for them to handle, outsource production to other less known factories, often in other countries. Recently, there were some in China that America had to send back. The subcontractors may not be watched as closely and sometimes use improper manufacturing methods. The U.S. government, along with mass market stores, is now moving towards requiring companies to submit their products to testing before they end up on shelves.

Review of the Literature

The research paper “Comparing Competitiveness of India and China: Are They Competing or Cooperating”, International Journal of Global Business and Competitiveness, 2008 by Moon Hwy-Chang, Parc Jimmyn”, showed that India and China have a more cooperative rather than competitive relationship with each other. This study opened new horizon for both the nation as the inter trade in between the nations are helping both in increasing their economy. This also provides the further scope of research to analyze competitiveness for specific products.

Another research based on India china bilateral trade titled “Doing business in China and India: a comparative approach, Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration, 2009 By Diego Quer, Enrique Claver, Laura Rienda” identified that in recent years, China and India have been experiencing a process of economic and social transformation that is unprecedented in recent human history. The paper highlighted the points of convergence and divergence in the developmental patterns of China and India, the key factors for success in each country, the entry modes that could be used and the business opportunities they offer.

The book titled “Understanding China's Growth: Forces that Drive China's Economic Future, published in Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2007 by Chi Lo” highlighted that China is a very complicated country with an intriguing development pattern. The issues discussed in this book are long-term events of great public and political interest which highlighted the prime forces of china's growth. These forces and their importance may be analyzed critically for the India's growth under further research.

Another research titled “Revealed Comparative Advantage: An Analysis for India and China, Working Paper No. 168, AUGUST 2005, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, By Amita Batra and Zeba Khan” examined the structure of comparative advantage enjoyed by India and China in the global market. Despite the similarity in structure of comparative advantage, the analysis of the degree of competition reveals that there is no correlation between the manufacturing sectors of India and China in the global economy. It is competitive as well as complementary for different goods and services.

The export performances and specialization patterns of China and India were explored in the research titled “Trade Expansion of China and India: Threat or Opportunity by Mahvash Saeed Qureshi and Guanghua Wan, Working Paper No. 2008/08, UNU-WIDER project”. The research identified that India appeared to be a competitor mainly for its neighboring South Asian countries and focused on all types of goods and commodities rather specific one. This study suggested that challenges created by China in traditional labour-intensive products might reduce in the long run.

The White Paper by Daniel Park on “The Growth Debate – China & India”, B2B International in 2007, compared and contrast the high growth rates in the two countries. It discussed that China and India are putting their major investment in education that is turning out many thousands of top-class engineers and scientists annually. It seems that so many of Indian manufactured goods carry a “Made in China” label and that our call centre services are increasingly located in India.

The paper No. 80 under the occasional paper series of European Central Bank, Germany 2008 titled “China's And India's Roles In Global Trade And Finance Twin Titans For The New Millennium?” by M. Bussière and A. Mehl, analyzed the integration of China and India into the global economy. The paper's main finding was that in trade of goods, the overall degree of China's trade intensity is found to be higher which was opposite in case of India. The study put a key question for further research whether India can bypass manufacturing and rely predominantly on services for its development.

The research study titled “Development Path of China and India and the Challenges for their Sustainable Growth, Paper No. 2008/37, UNU-WIDER project by Y. Li and B. Zhang” revealed that the imbalance between industry and services can also affect consumption and investment efficiency and Manufacturing & Services have been the growth engines of the Indian and China. The study identified that China needs to boost the service sector, while India needs to focus the manufacturing sector to stimulate economic growth.

The paper titled “Segmenting The Toy Industry: A Study Of Pre-Teen Millennials, Journal of Consumer Marketing, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, By A. Patino, V. D. Kaltcheva, D. Lingelbach, D. A. Pitta” investigate the preferences of young Millennials for toys and possible within-group differences that have relevance for marketers. The study focused on segmentation of the toys as per market demand which provide scope for further research as Chinese toys are paying sincere attention on all types of related products in Indian market.

The main problem was highlighted in the research paper “Face to Face with Toy Safety: Understanding an Unexpected Threat, Environ Health Prospect, 2008 By Charles W. Schmidt” in regard of environmental hazards caused lead-contaminated toys. The purpose of this research was to review environmental hazards produced by toxic toys mostly made in China and the toxic contents of toys. Safety measures and control techniques were investigated as the research focused on safety measures like ban against such toys.

The research paper titled “Selecting the Right Toys for your child is Not a Child's Play, Indian Journal of Community Medicine, 2010, By Harshal T Pandve” has shown that very small plastic toys could be poisoning the babies every single time they put it into their mouth. Hence quality measures are required to set and check on regular basis. The paper provided the review of existing data and by compiling them presents the need of present time for toys industry.

The paper “Changing Trade Costs between People's Republic of China and India”, by Douglas H. Brooks and Benno Ferrarini, calculated the decline in costs involving merchandise trade between the People's Republic of China (PRC) and India during the period 1980–2008. Drawing from the recent literature, a comprehensive measure of trade costs is derived from a theory-founded gravity model of international trade, which can be computed on the basis of observed bilateral trade flows and gross domestic product data. In this paper, trade costs for merchandise trade between the PRC and India were derived based on bilateral trade flows and GDP data. Trade costs were found to be declining, with the decline accounting for a large and increasing portion of bilateral trade growth over the 1980–2008 period, and about three fourths of the trade expansion since the early 1990s when bilateral trade flows were liberalized. While the PRC tariffs on imports from India have fallen, and Indian tariffs on imports from the PRC have dropped sharply, overall trade costs for the two countries have declined and bilateral trade has increased almost exponentially. So far, the PRC has accounted for the bulk of the trade cost reduction. Considerable room remains for lowering trade costs further, particularly in India, where infrastructure investment appears to have tremendous potential. As Asia's two giants continue to increase their importance in the global economy and expand their trade, benefits are likely to spread throughout Asia and the world.

The above literature assisted in reviewing availability of Chinese toys in Indian market and India-China bilateral trade relation for toys. Feeling the importance of present research based on threats and opportunities generated in Indian market due to availability of Chinese toys, the present research titled “Chinese Toy Market in views of Indian Consumers: An Analytical Study of UP, Delhi and Haryana” took place.

Objectives

The aims / objectives of this research projects are as follows:

- To identify, analyze and correlate the environmental hazards, social cost and benefits generated by Chinese toys in Indian market and society.
- The roles of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) towards Chinese toys are to be analyzed.

- To identify the means of protecting Children in India from hazardous toys.
- To spread awareness among the parents against hazardous toys available in Indian Market.

Hypothesis

The analysis will be done on the basis of following hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis (H₀): The null hypothesis is set by assuming that the Chinese Toy Market in India may provide effective toys in India.

Alternative Hypothesis (H₁): The alternative Hypothesis is set by assuming that the Chinese Toy Market in India may affect India adversely as generating environmental hazards and carrying high social cost.

Research Methodology

The entire research project was divided into the following three parts:

Coverage: The study primarily focused over the availability of Chinese toys in Indian market and the views of Indian consumers regarding this. For this, the coverage of the study was as follows:

Universe: The study is focusing Chinese products (Toys) in India, the universe for this study area was selected as three major states of India viz. Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The parents (Toy buyers) of these states were targeted.

Sampling: The research was concentrated on the Consumers of Chinese Toys available in India with in the states said above. The toys were classified based on specifications, nature and liked by specific age group children. Ten (10) specific types of toys were selected as Soft Toys, Educational Toys, Electronic Toys; Wooden based toys, Metal Toys, Plastic Toys, Dolls,

Activity toys, toys for infants, Ride on Toys. Thirty (30) customers from each category of toy were selected for intensive study. Thus, the total sample was 300.

Data collection: Both primary as well as secondary source of data was used in this study. Primary data was collected with the help of the scheduled questionnaire which was constituted with the help of the variables like for buyers: Age of the kids / child playing with toys, Level of Living of Parents, Level of Income of parents, Locality, Education, Preferences etc. and for sellers: Income, Sales turnover, Customer' choices, Impact of locality, Advertisement and product choices available etc. Personal Interview Technique was used to collect the primary data. On the basis of sampling 300 parents whose kids/children play with toys were targeted to collect data from, however the information could be collected from 317 parents all together from Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh through structured questionnaire.

The secondary data was collected from various published sources like session report, annual report of councils, institutions and associations, research journals, periodicals, Government documents and research reports. The secondary data supplemented the primary data.

Desk Research: To obtain an overview, comprehensive Desk research was carried out from various published sources (reports, magazines etc) and by visiting websites of Industry Associations, organizations connected with toys manufacturing in India & China, BIS, Ministry of Commerce (Indian Government), various research reports available on the internet, etc to accumulate the above information and the list of the same has been provided.

Analysis of Data Collected from Parents

The data and response collected from Parents are analyzed as follows:

- 1) This constitute 34% male child in the study, 33% female and 33% are having both males and females in their family.
- 2) It is seen that maximum people find Rs. 500 to 1000 feasible to spend on children toys monthly
- 3) There is a mixed behaviour seen in purchasing buying behaviour of the people weekly, monthly or on special occasion.
- 4) Modern toys are preferred more by children now a days, there is less focus on traditional toys.

- 5) Parents expect at least toy should last from 6 months to 1 year
- 6) Children choice and preference are major influence while the purchase of the product.
- 7) Cartoon characters are major reason for influence for the purchase of toys.
- 8) Generally parents expect their children to play with toys for 1 to 3 hours a day
- 9) Brands are not that big reason for influence in decision making because maximum people are not aware of the brands available in the market.
- 10) Parents are aware about few brands like Barbie, Leo, Lego, Hippo Toys, Funskool, Hauck Toys, Playskool, Toys "R" Us, Disney, Combat, Fisher-price, VTech, Hot-wheels, EuroTrike, Chicco, Lalaloopsy, Peg-Perego, LaaDeeDa.
- 11) Toys store retailer and online stores are the major place from where children prefer to buy toys from, some low income group people have purchasing behaviour from road side market.
- 12) Majority of people do not bother about the manufacturing dates and details while purchasing the product and some toys don't come in market with all such dates.
- 13) Though people prefer made in India toys but when it come to preference maximum people do not bother about the country, made or company.
- 14) People are aware of the toxics but in this study it is identified that for parents 'toxics in toys' is not the concerned area.
- 15) Toxics availability in toys, are focused by people now a days.
- 16) People are having knowledge that excessive playing with toys can harm their children.
- 17) Respondants think that Indian toys are better than Chinese toys but parents do not have much of concern for the country producing the toy.

Data Analysis (Tools and Techniques)

The collected data was analyzed and processed with the help of the computer by using SPSS packages. In order to frame inference of the study, various statistical tools like Mean, t-test, correlation and regression etc. were used and an attempt was made to achieve the objectives and test the hypothesis.

Test of Coorelation (Interpretation): The information collected from parents (whose kids play with toys) thorough structured questionnaire have been analysed with the help of Correlation. Firstly, the correlations were applied over the information collected from parents (table 6.1) with five possible combinations:

- (i) Correlation between variables named often buy children toy and style of toy prefer is positive with +0.053, which means both are slightly correlated, mainly purchasing interest of toys based on the variety and styles available in the market.
- (ii) Correlation between variables named toy prefer purchase and aspect influence more purchase toy is +0.101, which means purchase of toys are influenced by various aspects like TV, advertisements, internet along with availability of toys made in China as these are excessively available in market.
- (iii) Correlation between variables named which cartoon character and aspect influence more purchase toy is again positive +0.165, which means purchase of toys are influenced by various aspects like TV, advertisements, internet along with various cartoon character shown in TV etc.
- (iv) Correlation between variables named want toy to last and hours day child play with toys is negative with - 0.061, which means whatever the time duration kids play with toys, parents generally are not interested in the durability of such toys.
- (v) Correlation between variables named toys prefer and toys better asper knowledge is positive with +0.199, which means there is an impact of toys made in India or China as parents generally focus on attractive and low cost toys rather durable.

Application of F-Test (Interpretation) :

Between often buy children toy and spend on children toy : The Sig. value of F is 0.472. This value is more than 0.05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean number of variables 'often buy children toy' and 'spend on children_toy'. The -0.056 B value is exactly the difference between the two means, so that adding it to the constant produces the mean for the buying children toys. Since we are considering the entire population of states, the significance level is not necessary of particular interest, though if we were to conceptualize the current situation as resulting from a sampling from some hypothetical populations, the p-value of .472 would indicate that so large a coefficient is unlikely to result from chance were random samples of this size drawn from hypothetical populations with equal means.

Between purchase decision influence by toy brands and aware about various brands: The Sig. value of F is 0.000. This value is less than 0.05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is statistically significant difference between the mean numbers of variables 'purchase decision influence by toy brands and aware about various brands'. The 0.497 B value is exactly the difference between the two means, so that adding it to the constant produces the mean for the purchase decision influence by toy brands. Since we are considering the entire population of states, the significance level is not necessary of particular interest, though if we were to conceptualize the current situation as resulting from a sampling from some hypothetical populations, the p-value of .000 would indicate that so large a coefficient is unlikely to result from chance were random samples of this size drawn from hypothetical populations with equal means.

Between buy toys from and aware about various brands: The Sig. value of F is 0.872. This value is more than 0.05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is no statistically significant difference between the mean number of variables 'for buy toys from and aware about various brands'. The -0.050 B value is exactly the difference between the two means, so that adding it to the constant produces the mean for the buy toys. Since we are considering the entire population of states, the significance level is not necessary of particular interest, though if we were to conceptualize the current situation as resulting from a sampling from some hypothetical populations, the p-value of .872 would indicate that so large a coefficient is unlikely to result from chance were random samples of this size drawn from hypothetical populations with equal means.

Between bother about toxics and carefully see manufacturing details: The Sig. value of F is 0.001. This value is less than 0.05. Because of this, we can conclude that there is statistically significant difference between the mean numbers of variables 'bother about toxics and carefully see manufacturing details'. The 0.163 B value is exactly the difference between the two means, so that adding it to the constant produces the mean for bother about toxics. Since we are considering the entire population of states, the significance level is not necessary of particular interest, though if we were to conceptualize the current situation as resulting from a sampling from some hypothetical populations, the p-value of 0.001 would indicate that so large a coefficient is unlikely to result from chance were random samples of this size drawn from hypothetical populations with equal means.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis is tested as below :

The alternative Hypothesis was set by assuming that the Chinese Toy Market in India may affect India adversely by generating environmental hazards and carrying high social cost.

Result: Accepted, as availability of Chinese toys in Indian market is a cost for Indian Toy Industry.

Findings and Conclusion

Parents and children are increasingly becoming environment conscious and green tags increase the feel good factor while making a purchase. Green toys not only make a difference to the environment but are also completely safe. They are made with recyclable, renewable, natural materials rather than synthetics like plastic. Materials like bamboo, rubber wood (quick-growing, sustainable wood), recycled plastic and recycled paper are used. Soft toys, dolls and dolls-clothes are made from organic fabrics. Minimal packaging made from recycled cardboard/paper is used. For the toy company, there might be some extra effort to initially locate the right sources of materials. Sometimes, the extra effort to use organic materials can push up the cost. But in the long run, eco-friendly materials are often cheaper (recycled materials, bamboo, etc) and are locally available (reducing transport costs). The study has the following findings:

- Indian parents have very less awareness about toys and brands.
- It is difficult to differentiate among Indian & Chinese toys for buyers.
- Buyers are also ignorant when it comes to toys.
- Need of awareness & counselling to explain them the real situation.

- People are having awareness that Chinese toys in India are growing at a high pace.
- More preference of toys are generally put by the child as per the needs.
- Money is not playing the major factor, choice of parent and child matters more.
- Some parents are having perception that there are no varieties of Indian toy products in market.
- Children choice matters for toys, more in urban areas.
- For places like rural, it is seriously difficult because they are not even aware of what is toxic and what is brand.
- Very less people were concerned about the toxics.
- People are having very less awareness about toxics.
- Some respondents feel that China provides both cheap quality at low price as well as the expensive with good quality, as it depends on the buyer which quality is demanded.
- The Indian toys manufacturers are unable to provide a wide variety of toys on a regular basis & launch new products due to lower scale of operations, high investments in moulds and small size of the Domestic market.
- The toys manufacturers are in a great need of outside professional design support for designing new types of toys.
- Specific R&D for development of innovative & novelty toys and games are required to offer new products as per fast changing needs/requirements of the domestic as well as export markets for toys.

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