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**Market Research for Baby Shoes Product Development Strategy: A Case Study of Vinsky Baby**

**Johan Hendri Prasetyo<sup>1\*</sup>, Vinska Devianti<sup>2</sup>, Fildzah Nurdima<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Nusa Mandiri, Jakarta, Indonesia

*\*Corresponding:* [johan.jnp@nusamandiri.ac.id](mailto:johan.jnp@nusamandiri.ac.id)

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**Abstract**

The baby product market has experienced significant growth in recent years, creating opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to develop innovative and competitive products. However, increasing competition requires businesses to better understand consumer preferences and market dynamics in order to design products that meet customer needs. This study aims to analyze consumer preferences and identify market opportunities to support the product development strategy of baby shoes for the Vinsky Baby business. The research employed a market research approach using a descriptive qualitative design, combining survey data and focus group discussions (FGD) to obtain insights into consumer perceptions, product expectations, and purchasing considerations. The findings indicate that consumer purchasing decisions for baby shoes are strongly influenced by comfort, safety, practicality, and design simplicity. Parents tend to prefer baby shoes made from soft and breathable materials that support baby foot development and provide comfort during daily activities. In addition, minimalist designs and neutral colors are considered attractive because they are versatile and suitable for various baby clothing styles. Practical product features, such as Velcro fastening systems, are also preferred due to their convenience for parents. The results further suggest that businesses must strengthen product differentiation and improve digital marketing strategies to increase competitiveness in the baby footwear market. Overall, the study demonstrates that market research plays an important role in generating consumer insights that guide product attribute selection and product development strategies. These insights can support SMEs in designing products that better align with consumer needs and market trends, thereby enhancing their ability to compete in the growing baby product industry.

## INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of the baby product industry has created significant opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to develop innovative products that meet consumer needs. In Indonesia, demographic trends show a consistently high birth rate each year, which directly contributes to the increasing demand for baby products, including baby shoes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, several reports indicated an increase in birth rates due to decreased participation in family planning programs, which resulted in a higher number of births than usual (Fuadi & Irdalisa, 2020; Pusparisa, 2020). This phenomenon indirectly created additional market opportunities for businesses operating in the baby product sector, including the baby footwear industry (Warta Ekonomi, 2020).

The baby footwear market has become increasingly competitive, with many brands offering various designs, materials, and price ranges to attract consumers. In such competitive conditions, understanding consumer preferences and purchasing behavior becomes essential for businesses seeking to maintain and expand their market share. Market research plays a critical role in identifying consumer needs, evaluating market potential, and supporting strategic decision-making in business management (Taan, 2016). Through systematic data collection and analysis, companies can better understand the market environment and reduce uncertainty in business decisions (Malhotra, 2019).

Market research is generally defined as a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information about consumers, competitors, and the market environment to support marketing strategies and business decisions (Pasaribu et al., 2022). By understanding the characteristics and preferences of target consumers, businesses are able to design products that align with customer expectations and improve their competitiveness in the marketplace. Previous studies also emphasize that consumer behavior analysis is essential for identifying customer needs, predicting purchasing patterns, and developing effective marketing strategies (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

For small and medium enterprises, market research is particularly important because SMEs often operate with limited resources and face intense competition from larger firms. Understanding consumer insights enables SMEs to innovate products, improve product quality, and develop targeted marketing strategies that enhance business sustainability (Homburg et al., 2017). Furthermore, consumer-oriented strategies allow businesses to create superior value propositions and strengthen customer relationships, which ultimately contribute to long-term competitive advantage (Verhoef et al., 2015).

Vinsky Baby is a family-based micro business that produces baby shoes and baby clothing using locally crafted production processes. Prior to the pandemic, the business mainly relied on offline sales channels and operated under a simple family management system without a formal organizational structure. Although the business has attempted to innovate its products periodically, sales growth has remained relatively stagnant. One of the key challenges faced by the business is the limited implementation of systematic

market research to understand consumer preferences, competitor positioning, and potential market opportunities.

In highly competitive markets, businesses that lack sufficient market information may struggle to design effective product development and marketing strategies. The absence of structured market analysis can lead to inefficiencies in product innovation, pricing strategies, and distribution channels. Therefore, conducting a comprehensive market research analysis becomes essential to identify consumer needs, measure market demand, and determine competitive positioning.

This study addresses these issues by conducting market research on the Vinsky Baby brand through a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data were collected through market surveys and focus group discussions to gain insights into consumer characteristics, purchasing behavior, and product preferences related to baby shoes. In addition, industry competitiveness and business positioning are examined using strategic analysis tools.

Therefore, the objective of this study is to analyze consumer needs and preferences, identify market opportunities and demand for baby shoes, and formulate strategic recommendations for product development and marketing strategies for the Vinsky Baby business.

## **RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

Market research is an important tool for understanding consumer needs, market characteristics, and competitive dynamics. According to Malhotra (2019), market research involves the systematic collection and analysis of information related to consumers and market conditions in order to support marketing decision-making. Through market research, businesses are able to identify customer preferences, evaluate market opportunities, and develop more effective product strategies.

Consumer behavior theory explains that purchasing decisions are influenced by several factors, including product attributes, perceived value, and consumer preferences (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In the context of baby products, parents tend to prioritize safety, comfort, product quality, and design when selecting products for their children. These considerations play a critical role in shaping purchasing decisions and brand preferences.

For small and medium enterprises (SMEs), understanding consumer insights is particularly important because SMEs often operate with limited resources and face intense competition. Previous studies suggest that SMEs that utilize market research are more capable of identifying market opportunities and developing products that align with consumer needs (Pasaribu et al., 2022). Furthermore, market-oriented strategies enable firms to deliver better customer value and improve their competitiveness in the marketplace (Homburg et al., 2017).

Based on these theoretical perspectives, this study focuses on analyzing three key aspects: consumer characteristics, consumer preferences toward baby shoe products, and market opportunities for product development. The insights obtained from market surveys and focus group discussions are used to formulate strategic recommendations for the Vinsky Baby business.

The conceptual framework of this research therefore emphasizes the role of market research in identifying consumer preferences and market opportunities, which subsequently serve as the basis for developing product and marketing strategies for SMEs.

## **METHODS**

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to obtain comprehensive insights into consumer preferences and market opportunities for baby shoe products. The mixed-methods design was selected because it allows researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative data to gain a more complete understanding of research problems (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Takona, 2024). According to (Sugiyono, 2018), a mixed-method approach integrates quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study to provide more comprehensive findings than using only one method. This approach is considered appropriate for market research because it enables researchers to analyze consumer behavior through numerical data while also exploring deeper insights through qualitative discussions (Creswell & Inoue, 2025).

### **Research Participants**

The participants involved in this study consisted of individuals aged between 20 and 45 years who had experience purchasing baby shoes or baby sandals, either for their own children, as gifts, or individuals who had not purchased but were interested in baby footwear products. A total of 43 participants were involved in this research.

To better understand the target market characteristics, the study also developed buyer personas representing typical potential consumers of baby shoe products. These personas include working adults who prefer trendy designs and affordable prices, as well as parents who prioritize product comfort, durability, and suitability for baby foot development. The use of buyer personas helps businesses better understand customer profiles and purchasing motivations in the market (Homburg et al., 2017).

### **Data Collection Methods**

The data used in this study were collected through primary market research using two main techniques: market surveys and focus group discussions (FGD) (Alam et al., 2025; Htun et al., 2023).

First, a market survey was conducted using structured questionnaires distributed both offline and online. The questionnaires were shared through social media platforms such as Twitter and WhatsApp in order to reach potential consumers efficiently. A total of 34 respondents participated in the survey. The survey questions included demographic information, purchasing behavior, product preferences, brand awareness, competitor evaluation, and price perception. Surveys are commonly used in market research because they allow businesses to collect structured feedback from existing and potential customers efficiently (Htun et al., 2023; Malhotra, 2019).

Second, focus group discussions were conducted to obtain deeper insights into consumer perceptions and opinions regarding baby shoe products (Alam et al., 2025). A

focus group is a moderated group interview designed to explore participants' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences toward a specific topic. This method is useful for identifying consumer motivations, preferences, and expectations that may not be captured through structured surveys (Alam et al., 2025)..

### **Data Analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data obtained from the market survey were analyzed descriptively using numerical summaries to identify patterns in consumer characteristics, purchasing behavior, and product preferences. Quantitative analysis helps researchers interpret statistical patterns and identify potential market trends (Bohara, 2025).

Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from focus group discussions were analyzed using interpretative analysis to identify common themes related to consumer expectations, product attributes, and purchasing considerations (Anninou & Foxall, 2017; Chung et al., 2011). Qualitative analysis enables researchers to gain deeper insights into consumer attitudes and behavior toward baby shoe products.

By integrating the findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of consumer needs and market opportunities. The results of the analysis are used as the basis for formulating product development strategies and marketing recommendations for the Vinsky Baby business.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Industry Competitiveness Analysis**

The analysis of industry competitiveness was conducted using the framework developed by Michael E. Porter, commonly known as the Five Forces model (Pangarkar & Prabhudesai, 2024). This framework helps evaluate the competitive structure of an industry by examining competitive rivalry, threat of substitutes, threat of new entrants, bargaining power of suppliers, and bargaining power of buyers (Pangarkar & Prabhudesai, 2024).

The results indicate that competitive rivalry in the baby footwear market is relatively high. Several established brands already possess stronger brand recognition, wider distribution networks, and more active digital marketing strategies. Many competitors utilize e-commerce platforms and social media channels to increase product visibility and attract customers. These conditions require small businesses such as Vinsky Baby to strengthen brand positioning and expand digital marketing channels in order to remain competitive.

Regarding substitute products, the market demonstrates a moderate to high substitution risk. Alternatives such as baby socks, baby sandals, or anti-slip socks may replace baby shoes, especially for newborn babies who are not yet actively walking. This finding suggests that product differentiation, comfort, and safety features are critical for maintaining the relevance of baby shoe products in the market.

The threat of new entrants is considered relatively low due to several barriers to entry, including production costs, minimum order quantities required by suppliers, and

the need to build reliable distribution channels. These barriers create opportunities for existing businesses to maintain their market presence if they can successfully develop strong product differentiation and brand identity.

### **Consumer Preferences Toward Baby Shoes**

The market survey results reveal several important insights into consumer preferences for baby shoe products. The findings show that comfort is the most important factor influencing consumer purchasing decisions. Respondents generally prioritize baby shoes that are lightweight, comfortable, and safe for baby foot development. This finding is consistent with consumer behavior theory, which suggests that consumers evaluate product attributes such as functionality, quality, and perceived value before making purchasing decisions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

In terms of design, simple and minimalist designs are the most preferred among respondents. The majority of consumers prefer baby shoes without excessive accessories because such designs are considered more comfortable and practical for everyday use.

Color preferences also play an important role in product selection. The survey results indicate that neutral colors such as white, grey, beige, navy, and brown are the most preferred, followed by pastel colors. Neutral colors are perceived as versatile because they can match various baby clothing styles. Additionally, many respondents expressed interest in unisex designs that can be used for both male and female babies.

Material selection is another important factor influencing consumer preferences. The results indicate that canvas materials are the most preferred, followed by synthetic leather and suede or velvet materials. In addition, Velcro closures are strongly preferred compared to shoelaces or zippers because they are easier for parents to use when putting on or removing baby shoes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that consumers prioritize comfort, practicality, and simplicity when selecting baby shoes. These insights provide valuable guidance for product design and development strategies.

### **Consumer Insights from Focus Group Discussion**

The focus group discussion provided deeper insights into consumer perceptions and expectations regarding baby shoe products. Three key themes emerged from the discussion.

First, product safety and comfort are critical considerations for parents. Participants emphasized that baby shoes should use soft and breathable materials to avoid irritation and excessive sweating. Breathable materials are considered particularly important because babies are often active and sensitive to uncomfortable materials.

Second, ease of use is highly valued by consumers. Parents prefer baby shoes that are easy to wear and remove, especially when dealing with active babies. This explains the strong preference for Velcro closures observed in the survey results.

Third, product durability and price perception influence purchasing decisions. Consumers expect baby shoes to be durable enough for daily activities while still being

reasonably priced. This finding suggests that businesses should balance product quality and affordability to maintain consumer trust.

These findings support previous studies suggesting that consumer-oriented product design is essential for delivering value and improving customer satisfaction (Homburg et al., 2017)

### **Implications for Product Development Strategy**

The findings from the market survey, focus group discussions, and industry competitiveness analysis provide several important implications for product development strategies in the Vinsky Baby business. Market research results indicate that consumer preferences are strongly influenced by product comfort, material quality, practicality, and design simplicity. These findings suggest that product development strategies should prioritize functional value and user convenience rather than focusing solely on aesthetic aspects.

First, product development should emphasize comfort-oriented design. Consumers, particularly parents, prefer baby shoes that are lightweight, breathable, and safe for baby foot development. Therefore, the selection of materials such as soft canvas or breathable fabrics can enhance product comfort and usability. Comfortable materials can also reduce the risk of irritation or discomfort for babies, which is a key concern among parents. Second, the results indicate a strong preference for minimalist and practical designs. Most respondents prefer baby shoes without excessive accessories, suggesting that simple designs are perceived as more practical and suitable for everyday use. Simple designs also enable businesses to maintain production efficiency while ensuring product durability.

Third, color selection should focus on neutral tones such as white, beige, navy, grey, and brown. These colors are perceived as versatile because they can easily match different baby clothing styles. In addition, neutral colors allow products to be marketed as unisex items, which can expand the potential market segment.

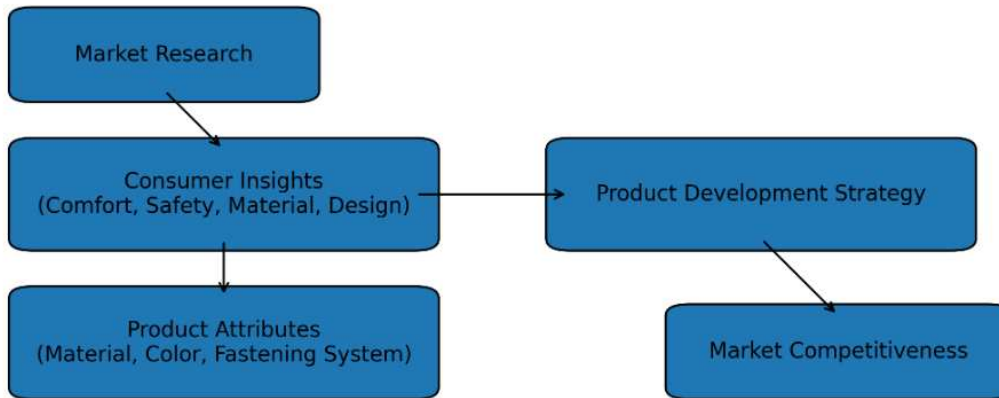
Fourth, the research highlights the importance of product functionality and ease of use. Consumers show a strong preference for Velcro fastening systems because they allow parents to easily wear and remove baby shoes. This practical feature can improve product convenience and enhance customer satisfaction.

Finally, the competitive analysis suggests that Vinsky Baby should not only focus on product improvements but also strengthen branding and digital marketing strategies. The increasing use of e-commerce platforms and social media marketing by competitors indicates that digital presence is essential for improving brand visibility and market reach. By combining product innovation with effective digital marketing strategies, the Vinsky Baby business can better capture market opportunities within the growing baby product industry.

These implications highlight the importance of integrating consumer insights into product development decisions. Businesses that successfully align product attributes with consumer preferences are more likely to deliver superior customer value and achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Stonehouse & Snowdon, 2007).

### Market Insight Framework

Based on the results of the survey, focus group discussion, and industry competitiveness analysis, this study proposes a Market Insight Framework that explains how market research findings can be translated into product development strategies.



**Figure 1.** Market Insight Framework for Product Development

This framework highlights that consumer insights obtained from market research serve as the foundation for designing product attributes that match consumer expectations. Businesses that effectively transform consumer insights into product innovations are more likely to achieve competitive advantage in the marketplace. This perspective aligns with the market-oriented approach, which emphasizes the importance of understanding customer needs in order to create superior value (Homburg et al., 2020).

### Strategic Recommendation for Product Development

Based on the research findings, several strategic recommendations can be formulated to support the product development and marketing strategy of the Vinsky Baby business.

**Table 1.** Market Research Findings and Strategic Recommendations for Baby Shoes Product Development

Strategy Aspect	Key Findings	Strategic Recommendation
Product Design	Consumers prefer simple and minimalist designs	Develop baby shoes with clean and simple designs
Product Material	Canvas material is highly preferred	Use breathable and lightweight materials
Product Color	Neutral colors dominate consumer preferences	Prioritize neutral color palettes with optional pastel variants
Product Functionality	Velcro closures are preferred for convenience	Implement Velcro fastening systems
Product Comfort	Comfort is the main purchasing factor	Focus on ergonomic design and soft inner lining
Pricing Strategy	Consumers expect balanced price-quality value	Maintain affordable pricing with good durability



Marketing Strategy	Strong competition in the market	Strengthen digital marketing through social media and e-commerce
Product Design	Consumers prefer simple and minimalist designs	Develop baby shoes with clean and simple designs
Product Material	Canvas material is highly preferred	Use breathable and lightweight materials
Product Color	Neutral colors dominate consumer preferences	Prioritize neutral color palettes with optional pastel variants

The strategic recommendations above highlight the importance of aligning product development decisions with consumer preferences and market conditions. According to Philip Kotler, companies that successfully understand and respond to customer needs are more likely to achieve sustainable competitive advantages in their markets (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Stonehouse & Snowdon, 2007).

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

### Conclusions

This study aimed to analyze consumer preferences, identify market opportunities, and formulate product development strategies for the Vinsky Baby business through market research. The results indicate that the baby footwear market offers promising opportunities but is characterized by strong competition among existing brands. The industry analysis suggests that businesses must develop clear product differentiation and strengthen their market positioning in order to remain competitive in the market.

The findings from the survey and focus group discussion reveal that consumer purchasing decisions for baby shoes are primarily influenced by product comfort, safety, and practicality. Parents tend to prefer baby shoes made from soft and breathable materials that support baby foot development and provide comfort during daily activities. In addition, minimalist designs and neutral colors are highly preferred because they are considered versatile and suitable for various baby clothing styles. These findings highlight the importance of focusing on functional value and user convenience when developing baby footwear products.

Overall, the results demonstrate that market research provides valuable insights for understanding consumer needs and guiding product development strategies. By aligning product attributes such as materials, design simplicity, color selection, and fastening systems with consumer preferences, businesses like Vinsky Baby can improve product competitiveness and enhance their ability to capture market opportunities in the growing baby product industry.

### Recommendations

Based on the research findings, several recommendations can be proposed to support the development of the Vinsky Baby business. First, product development should prioritize comfort-oriented design by using lightweight and breathable materials that are

safe for babies. Comfortable materials and ergonomic designs can improve product usability and ensure that baby shoes support healthy foot development.

Second, businesses should focus on simple and minimalist product designs with neutral color variations that appeal to a wider consumer segment. The use of unisex designs can also increase product flexibility and allow products to be used by both male and female babies. In addition, incorporating practical features such as Velcro fastening systems can improve convenience for parents when putting on and removing baby shoes.

Third, Vinsky Baby is encouraged to strengthen its marketing strategies by utilizing digital platforms such as social media and e-commerce marketplaces. Digital marketing can increase brand visibility, expand customer reach, and improve communication with potential consumers. By combining product innovation with effective digital marketing strategies, the business can improve its competitiveness in the baby footwear market.

### **Limitations**

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the number of respondents involved in the survey was relatively limited, which may restrict the generalization of the results to broader consumer populations. A larger sample size in future studies could provide more comprehensive insights into consumer preferences and purchasing behavior in the baby footwear market.

Second, the data collected in this study were primarily based on self-reported responses obtained through surveys and focus group discussions. Such data may be influenced by respondents' subjective perceptions and experiences, which could introduce potential bias in the results. Future research may consider combining survey data with observational or behavioral data to obtain more objective insights.

Third, this study focused mainly on consumer insights and market preferences without conducting detailed analyses related to financial feasibility, production capacity, or supply chain management. Future studies could expand the scope of analysis by examining cost structures, pricing strategies, and the effectiveness of digital marketing initiatives in order to provide more comprehensive strategic recommendations for small businesses in the baby product industry.

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