

Wrap them up wisely, go green, go cloth!



Nappies are essential for the first few years of a baby's life. However, once a disposable nappy has served its purpose, it is thrown away and a new one takes its place. Not much thought is given to what happens to the discarded nappy thereafter. Disposable nappies end up in the already overflowing landfills in South Africa, contributing to environmental pollution. This practice is in stark contrast to the use of cloth nappies. Often referred to as reusable nappies, they get washed after use and are reused. The sustainable consumption movement stimulates pro-environment behaviours and advocates the use of environmentally friendly products, such as reusable cloth nappies. However, little is known about South African consumer intentions regarding reusable products.

A research study was conducted by Tayla Jonker, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#). It investigated the factors that influence pro-environmental behavioural intentions towards using cloth nappies (a reusable product) in South Africa. The study was underpinned by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) and aimed to examine the attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control of nappy users, and how these influence the intention to use cloth nappies. Additionally, pro-environmental world views of the respondents were examined, as well as demographic factors.

A sample of 358 respondents, comprising of adults (18 years or older) who have a certain frame of mind towards baby products completed the online survey. This means they either have had a baby, are expecting one or intend on having one within the next one to three years. The findings revealed that consumers' perceived behavioural control and attitudes had positive relationships with their intentions to use cloth nappies. Additionally, consumers had very favourable pro-environmental world views.

The demographic factor, level of education, played a small to moderate role in their intentions to use cloth nappies.

Managers must consider the consumers' perceived behavioural control over product use in their efforts to promote pro- environmental behaviours and environmentally friendly (reusable) products. The perceived convenience of disposable nappies appeal to consumers. Therefore, information regarding other benefits to using cloth nappies must be highlighted. Additionally, demographic factors such levels of education may be incorporated in how the information is framed. Lastly, pro-environmental world views can be incorporated into the marketing and other strategies for cloth nappies. Pro-environmentally oriented consumers will react positively to these appeals, as they align with their values.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2021 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Tayla Jonker under the supervision of [Prof Tania Maree](#).