



Customers Preference towards Four Wheelers

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Abstract

Car industry in India faces stiff competition. In order to survive in the competitive scenario manufacturers have understand the features considered by the customers before purchasing a car. Thus, an earnest attempt has been made in this study to understand the customer preference before purchasing a car. The result of the study disclose that customers give due importance for look and style, transmission, availability of spares and mileage.

Keywords: Customer Preference; Four Wheeler; Car Industry.

Introduction

Human beings, in general, are complex creatures who often do not seem even to know their own minds. It is seldom easy, and sometimes impossible, to generalize about human behaviour. Each individual is a unique product of heredity, environment and experience. Predicting such a strange behaviour of people is a difficult and complicated task, filled with uncertainties, risks, and surprises. Accurate predictions can yield vast fortunes and inaccurate predictions can result in the loss of millions of rupees. Today, business around the world recognizes that the customer is the king. Knowing why and how people consume products helps marketers to understand how to improve existing products, what types of products are needed in the market place, or how to attract customers to buy their products. Marketers can justify their existence only when they are able to understand customer's wants and satisfy them. The modern marketing concept for successful management of a firm requires marketers to consider the customer as the focal point of their business activity. Although it is important for the firm to understand the buyer and accordingly evolve its marketing strategy, the buyer or customer continues to be an enigma - sometimes responding the way the marketer wants and on other occasions just refusing to buy the product from the same marketer. For this reason, the buyer's mind has been termed as a black box, which should be opened by the seller to be a successful marketer. Thus the present study has been carried out to identify the factors considered by a customer before purchasing a car. By understanding the customer preference manufacturers may design cars as per the customers' expectations, which assist them to increase their sales.

Review of Literature

Vishwa Karthikeyan (1998) in his study ascertains that low maintenance cost and fuel efficiency are the reasons to prefer Hero Honda vehicle. **Murugantham (2000)** in his study identified that price, design, features and availability of more service stations induces the customers to prefer Maruti cars. **Kokta Thomas (2002)** in his study finds that customer prefer to purchase car based on price, advertising and reputation possessed by the car. **Renuka Devi(2005)** in her study finds that family members play a vital role in choosing particular brand of car. **Gomathi (2006)** in her article observes that majority of consumers prefer diesel cars due to its better mileage and high power of the car. **Mandeep Kaur and Sandhu (2006)** in their finds that customer give much importance to safety, comfort and luxuriousness, while they prefer to purchase four wheelers. **Mohinder Singh (2007)** in his article finds that consumers prefers car due to superior performance, flexibility in travel, punctual in attending the assignments, privacy, easy mode of carrying parcels and carriages and act as a status symbol.

Statement of the Problem

Customer prefer towards four wheelers depends on safety and style, (Katiravan, 1997) product quality of a car influences a customer to own a car, (Peer Mohammed, 1998) competitive pricing and service quality influences a customer to purchase a car, (Bhuvana Ramalingam, 1999) customer will give importance to price, while purchasing the car,

(Dharama Raj, 2000) opinion that design, fuel efficiency and after sales service influence a customer to prefer a car. These studies raises the following questions (1) What are the important factors considered by a customer while preferring a car? (2) What are the factors influencing a customer to purchase a car?

Objective

- ❖ To examine the reason for preferring a four wheeler by the customers

Research Methodology

Data: The data required for the study is collected by making use of questionnaires.

Sampling: By adopting convenience sample method, 260 respondents residing in Coimbatore District have been selected for the study.

Framework of Analysis: The collected data have been analyzed by making use of Friedman Rank Test.

Limitations of the Study

The data required for the study is collected through Questionnaire. Thus, all sorts of limitations applicable to the primary data are applicable to the present study too. Further, study is confined to Coimbatore district. Hence, utmost care to be exercised while generalizing the result.

Findings and Interpretation

Preference among customers has been measured by assigning scores to questions relating to Preference. Nineteen such questions are included in the questionnaire. Answers to the questions have been rated on a five-point scale. The scores allotted to the answers range from one to five. The following table illustrates the factors considered by a customer before preferring a car.

TABLE 1
PREFERENCE-FRIEDMAN RANK TEST

Preferences	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rank value	Rank
Look and style	166 (63.80)	65 (25.00)	29 (11.20)	0.00	0.00	12.27	1
Fuel consumption	135 (51.90)	80 (30.80)	37 (14.20)	8 (3.10)	0.00	11.05	5
Pulling Power (bhp)	127 (48.90)	80 (30.80)	32 (12.30)	17 (6.50)	4 (1.50)	10.62	8
Seating Capacity	118 (45.40)	74 (28.50)	43 (16.50)	15 (5.80)	10 (3.80)	9.98	11
Riding Comfort	79 (30.40)	65 (25.00)	48 (18.40)	34 (13.10)	34 (13.10)	7.69	18
Safety Features	75 (28.80)	78 (30.00)	47 (18.10)	31 (11.90)	29 (11.20)	7.86	17
Suitable to Indian Roads	121 (46.50)	101 (38.80)	34 (13.10)	4 (1.60)	0.00	10.83	6
Speed	114 (43.90)	89 (34.20)	41 (15.80)	11 (4.20)	5 (1.90)	10.13	10
Shock Absorber	120 (46.20)	95 (36.50)	27 (10.40)	14 (5.40)	4 (1.50)	10.53	9

Preferences	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Rank value	Rank
Transmission	165 (63.50)	43 (16.50)	23 (8.80)	19 (7.40)	10 (3.80)	11.61	2
Tyre mileage	124 (47.70)	88 (33.80)	30 (11.50)	14 (5.50)	4 (1.50)	10.63	7
Braking efficiency	98 (37.70)	82 (31.50)	48 (18.50)	22 (8.50)	10 (3.80)	9.34	13
Availability of Spares	138 (53.10)	96 (36.90)	26 (10.00)	0.00	0.00	11.53	3
Low Smoke Emission	109 (41.90)	84 (32.30)	40 (15.40)	21 (8.10)	6 (2.30)	9.76	12
More number of Service Stations	93 (35.80)	79 (30.40)	57 (21.90)	23 (8.80)	8 (3.10)	8.95	16
Low Maintenance Cost	139 (53.50)	91 (35.00)	20 (7.70)	9 (3.50)	1 (0.30)	11.36	4
Cost Of Spares	101 (38.80)	80 (30.80)	39 (15.00)	25 (9.60)	15 (5.80)	9.20	14
Warranty period	76 (29.20)	68 (26.20)	49 (18.80)	38 (14.60)	29 (11.20)	7.65	19
High Resale Value	98 (37.70)	76 (29.20)	43 (16.50)	24 (9.20)	19 (7.40)	9.02	15

Look and Style

One hundred and sixty six (63.80) customers have strongly agree that look and style is the reason considered while preferring a car. Sixty five (25.00) customers have agree that look and style is the reason considered while preferring a car and 29 (11.20) customers have neither agree nor disagree that look and style is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agreed that look and style is the reason considered while preferring a car.

Fuel Consumption

One hundred and thirty five (51.90) customers have strongly agree that fuel consumption is the reason considered while preferring a car. Eighty (30.80) customers have agree that fuel consumption is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thirty seven (14.20) customers have neither agree nor disagree that fuel consumption is the reason considered while preferring a car and eight (3.10) customers have disagree that fuel consumption is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that fuel consumption is the feature consider while preferring a car.

Pulling Power

One hundred and twenty seven (48.90) customers have strongly agree that pulling Power is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eighty (30.80) customers have agree that pulling Power is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thirty two (12.30) customers have neither agree nor disagree that pulling Power is the feature considered while preferring a car. Seventeen (6.50) customers have disagree that pulling power is the feature considered while preferring a car and four (1.50) customers have disagree that pulling Power is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agreed that they prefer car based on its pulling capacity.

Seating Capacity

One hundred and eighteen (45.40) customers have strongly agree that Seating capacity is the feature considered while preferring a car. Seventy four (28.50) customers have agree that seating capacity is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty three (16.50) customers have neither agree nor disagree that seating capacity is the feature considered while preferring a car. Fifteen (5.80) customers have disagree that seating capacity is the feature considered while preferring a car and 10 (3.80) customers have disagree that seating capacity is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agreed that they may prefer car based on seating capacity.

Riding Comfort

Seventy nine (30.40) customers have strongly agree that riding comfort is the feature considered while preferring a car. Sixty five (25.00) customers have agree that riding comfort is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty eight (18.40) customers have neither agree nor disagree that riding comfort is the feature considered while a preferring car. Thirty four (13.10) customers have disagree that riding comfort is the feature considered while preferring a car and thirty four (13.10) customers have disagree that riding comfort is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agreed that they prefer Car based on riding comfort.

Safety Features

Seventy five (28.80) customers have strongly agree that safety features is the reason considered while preferring a car. Seventy eight (30.00) customers have agree that safety features is the reason considered while preferring a car. Forty seven (18.10) customers have neither agree nor disagree that safety features is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thirty one (11.90) customers have disagree that safety features is the reason considered while preferring a car and twenty nine (11.20) customers have disagree that safety features is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers agreed that they prefer Car based on the safety features.

Suitable to Indian Roads

One hundred twenty one (46.50) customers have strongly agree that suitable to Indian roads is the reason considered while preferring a car. One hundred one (38.80) customers have agree that suitable to Indian roads is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thirty four (13.10) customers have neither agree nor disagree that suitable to Indian roads is the reason considered while preferring a car and four (1.50) customers have disagree that suitable to Indian roads is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agreed that suitability to Indian roads is the reason considered while a preferring Car.

Speed

One hundred and fourteen (43.90) customers have strongly agree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eighty nine (34.20) customers have agree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty one (15.80) customers have neither agree nor disagree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eleven (4.20) customers have disagree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car and five (1.90) customers have disagree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that speed is the feature considered while preferring a car.

Shock Absorber

One hundred and twenty (46.20) customers have strongly agree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car. Ninety five (36.50) customers have agree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car. Twenty seven (10.40) customers have neither agree nor disagree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car. Fourteen (5.40) customers have disagree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car and four (1.50) customers have disagree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that shock absorber is the feature considered while preferring a car.

Transmission

One hundred and sixty five (63.50) customers have strongly agree that transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty three (16.50) customers have agree that transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Twenty three (8.80) customers have neither agree nor disagree that transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Nineteen (7.40) customers have disagree that transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car and ten (3.80) customers have disagree that transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree transmission is the feature considered while preferring a car.

Tyre Mileage

One hundred and twenty four (47.70) customers have strongly agree that tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eighty eight (33.80) customers have agree that tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thirty (11.50) customers have neither agree nor disagree that tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car. Fourteen (5.50) customers have disagree that tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car and four (1.50) customers have disagree that tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree tyre mileage is the feature considered while preferring a car.

Braking Efficiency

Ninety eight (37.70) customers have strongly agree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eighty two (31.50) customers have agree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty eight (18.50) customers have neither agree nor disagree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car. Twenty two (8.50) customers have disagree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car and ten (3.80) customers have disagree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that braking efficiency is the feature considered while preferring a car.

Availability of Spares

One hundred and thirty eight (53.10) customers have strongly agree that availability of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Ninety six (36.90) customers have agree that availability of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car and twenty six (18.50) customers have neither agree nor disagree that availability of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that availability of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car.

Low Smoke Emission

One hundred and nine (41.90) customers have strongly agree that low smoke emission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Eighty four (32.30) customers have agree that low smoke emission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Forty (15.40) customers have neither agree nor disagree that low smoke emission is the feature considered while a preferring car. Twenty one (8.10) customers have disagree that low smoke emission is the feature considered while preferring a car and six (2.30) customers have disagree that low smoke emission is the feature considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that low smoke Emission is the feature considered while preferring a car.

More Number of Service Stations

Ninety three (35.80) customers have strongly agree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car. Seventy nine (30.40) customers have agree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car. Fifty seven (21.90) customers have neither agree nor disagree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car. Twenty three (8.80) customers have disagree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car and eight (3.10) customers have disagree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that more number of service stations is the reason considered while preferring a car.

Low Maintenance Cost

One hundred and thirty nine (53.50) customers have strongly agree that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car. Ninety one (35.00) customers have agree that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car. Twenty (7.70) customers have neither agree nor disagree that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car. Nine (3.50) customers have disagree that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car and one (0.30) customer has disagreed that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that low maintenance cost is the reason considered while preferring a car.

Cost of Spares

One hundred and one (38.80) customers have strongly agree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Eighty (30.80) customers have agree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thirty nine (15.00) customers have neither agree nor disagree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Twenty five (9.60) customers have disagree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car and 15 (5.80) customer have disagree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that cost of spares is the reason considered while preferring a car.

Warranty Period

Seventy six (29.20) customers have strongly agree that warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car. Sixty eight (26.20) customers have agree that warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car. Forty nine (18.80) customers have neither agree nor disagree that warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thirty eight (14.60) customers have disagree that warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car and 29 (11.20) customers have disagree that warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree warranty period is the reason considered while preferring a car.

High Resale Value

Ninety eight (37.70) customers have strongly agree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car. Seventy six (29.20) customers have agree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car. Forty three (16.50) customers have neither agree nor disagree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car. Twenty four (9.20) customers have disagree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car and 19 (7.40) customers have disagree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car. Thus, it is inferred that majority of the customers strongly agree that high resale value is the reason considered while preferring a car.

From the Friedman rank test it is ascertained, Majority of customers are prefer four wheeler considering look and style, transmission, availability of spares etc.

Suggestions

- ❖ The demand for small car segment is increasing because of the growing number of nuclear families as well as parking problems. Hence the manufacturers should find out the needs, wants, tastes and preferences of the consumers in order to design the products.
- ❖ The respondents perceive that driving comfort and fuel economy are the most important features of the passenger car followed by availability of spare parts and price of the car, thus the manufacturers should design the product giving maximum weight age to these factors.
- ❖ As the cost of fuel is high, the car manufacturing companies should achieve the fuel efficiency. So the manufacturers of car should involve such production design and system to withstand and avoid more fuel consumption. This will help consumers to stick on to the specific brand without more utilization about the products.
- ❖ Mileage level may be improved in order to attract lower middle income group customers to prefer a car.
- ❖ Experts believe the main driver of the Indian car market is the availability of car finance on easy installments and reasonable interest rates. Hence, the car dealers should have tie-up arrangements with the authorized financial institutions to boost sales.
- ❖ Frequently dealers have to organize service campaigns at subsidized rate, which will act as an inducement for low income customers to prefer a car.

Conclusion

Customer's preference towards depends on look and style, transmission, availability of spares. Hence, manufacturers should introduce new model cars in accordance with anticipation of customers. Further, manufacturers are advised to introduce cars which offers more mileage and of eco friendly, thereby the manufacturers can withstand in the market for the longer period of time.

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