

A study on buying behavioral pattern of Women drivers regarding B segment cars in Bangalore

¹, Prof. Elizabeth Chacko, ², Ms. Punnya Selvaraj
¹, (Selection Grade Lecturer, Garden City College)
(²nd Year MBA, Garden City College)

-----ABSTRACT-----

In this era of modernisation, four wheelers are nowadays a necessity rather than symbol of status for every individual. Automobile Industry witnessed the boom in recent years. The present study focuses on various factors influencing buying behaviour of consumer while purchasing car. This paper has made a exploratory approach to identify the key factors that influence the women consumers (a) while selecting the appropriate four wheelers especially in B segment cars by considering the parameters such as mileage, maintenance cost, comfort and brand which are ambiguous and imprecise in nature. With regards to the selection of four wheelers like cars, the women consumers are in dilemma to identify and select an appropriate model. Earlier the four wheelers were designed only for male fraternity. The survey has been conducted in analyzing the customer's preferences in buying a car by data collected through questionnaire from 50 consumers in Bangalore. Consumer behaviour study is based on consumer buying behaviour, with the consumer playing the three distinct roles of users, payer and buyer. Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how, and where people do or do not buy products. It blends elements from psychology, sociology and economics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. The main objective of the research is to identify the preferences of women while purchasing a four wheeler. The survey will be helpful for the automobile industry and others who would like to study the buying behaviour of the women drivers.

Main key words: - behaviour pattern, consumer, consumer preferences, marketing mix, buying preferences.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Automobile Industry is growing and if compared the sales and production of four wheelers is more. Earlier there was a phase when two wheelers were more in demand. But nowadays four wheelers are essential for every family. It is not just a status symbol but a necessity and comfort what people prefer now. Also if we compare the four wheeler models like car which can be driven by females were least in market because the market was male dominant. But now there is drastic change. Earlier car which can be driven by female was only Maruti 800, all other like Tata Sumo, Bolero, Ambassador etc. In this new era we can see segment for small four wheeler car quite large.

The passenger car and motorcycle segment in the Indian auto industry is growing by 8-9 percent. The 1st woman driver was Mrs. Suzanne RD Tata. As per the survey unlike the USA, the Indian passenger vehicle market is dominated by cars (79%). Earlier it was just Maruti, Hyundai, Chevrolet and Tata who were into small car segment but now we are aware that Mahindra, Renault also has come. The dream of Tata group to manufacture the smallest car was also one way for the people to think of buying a four wheeler.

II. CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Consumer behaviour study is based on consumer buying behaviour, with the consumer playing the three distinct roles of users, payer and buyer. Consumer behaviour is the study of when, why, how, and where people do or do not buy products. It blends elements from psychology, sociology, social anthropology and economics. It attempts to understand the buyer decision making process, both individually and in groups. It studies characteristics of individual consumers such as demographics and behavioural variables in an attempt to understand people's wants. It also tries to assess influences on the consumer from groups such as family, friends, reference groups, and society in general. Consumer behaviour is dynamic emphasis that consumer behaviour is dynamic. This means individual consumers, consumer groups, and society at large are constantly changing and evolving over time. This has important implications for the study of consumer behaviour as well as for developing marketing strategies. In terms of studying consumer behaviour, one implication is that generalizations about consumer behaviour are usually limited to specific periods of time, products, and individuals or groups.

Ever wonder how you make a decision when you buy something? Do you naturally go through a process? Well, research has shown that a consumer goes through a buying decision process when purchasing something. Now, that's great, you now have a new piece of information for your next trivial pursuit game – right. Buying behaviour has been of great interest to marketers. The knowledge of consumer behaviour helps the automobile industry to understand how consumers think, feel and select from alternatives like products, brands and the like and how the consumers are influenced by their environment, the reference groups, family, and so on. A consumer's buying behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, personal and psychological factors. Pre-purchase activity might consist of the growing awareness of a need or want, and a search for and evaluation of information about the products and brands that might satisfy it. Post-purchase activities include the evaluation of the purchased item in use and the reduction of any anxiety which accompanies the purchase of expensive and infrequently-bought items. Each of these has implications for purchase and repurchase and they are amenable in differing degrees to marketer influence (Foxall 1987). Engel, et al. (1986, 5) define consumer behaviour as “those acts of individuals directly involved in obtaining, using, and disposing of economic goods and services, including the decision processes that precede and determine these acts”

CONSUMER BUYING PROCESS

The Customer Buying Process (also called a Buying Decision Process) describes the process your customer goes through before they buy your product. Understanding your customer's buying process is not only very important for your Salespeople, it will also enable you to align your sales strategy accordingly.

The process has been interpreted by many scholars over the years; however, the five stages framework remains a good way to evaluate the customer's buying process. John Dewey first introduced the following five stages in 1910:

1. Problem/Need Recognition : This is often identified as the first and most important step in the Customer's Decision Process. A purchase cannot take place without the recognition of the need. The need may have been triggered by internal stimuli (such as hunger or thirst) or external stimuli (such as advertising or word of mouth).

2. Information Search : Having recognised a problem or need, the next step a customer may take is the Information Search stage, in order to find out what they feel is the best solution. This is the buyer's effort to search internal and external business environments, in order to identify and evaluate information sources related to the central buying decision. Your customer may rely on print, visual, online media or word of mouth for obtaining information.

3. Evaluation of Alternatives: As you might expect, consumers will evaluate different products or brands at this stage on the basis of alternative product attributes – those which have the ability to deliver the benefits the customer is seeking. A factor that heavily influences this stage is the customer's attitude. Involvement is another factor that influences the evaluation process. For example, if the customer's attitude is positive and involvement is high, then they will evaluate a number of companies or brands; but if it is low, only one company or brand will be evaluated.

4. Purchase Decision: The penultimate stage is where the purchase takes place. Philip Kotler (2009) states that the final purchase decision may be ‘disrupted’ by two factors: negative feedback from other customers and the level of motivation to accept the feedback. For example, having gone through the previous three stages, a customer chooses to buy a new telescope. Furthermore, the decision may be disrupted due to unforeseen situations such as a sudden job loss or relocation. A consumer is processing the information from the information search and deciding on the products, store, payment options. More importantly, they are making the decision to move forward with the purchase or not.

5. Purchase: This is the stage that the transaction is completed. The actual problem that was recognized is solved.

6. Post-Purchase Behavior: In brief, customers will compare products with their previous expectations and will be either satisfied or dissatisfied. Therefore, these stages are critical in retaining customers. This can greatly affect the decision process for similar purchases from the same company in the future, having a knock-on effect at the Information Search stage and Evaluation of Alternatives stage. If your customer is satisfied, this will result in brand loyalty, and the Information Search and Evaluation of Alternative stages will often be fast-tracked or skipped altogether.

Four Major Factors Influence Consumers in Buying Process

1. **Cultural Factor**: Cultural Factor includes a consumer's belonging to Social class. This one major factor in influencing consumer in way of buying four wheelers.

2. **Social Factor:** It includes which group he comes from. Family background of a person will also be a part in decision process. Especially for woman driver's they have to see for what purpose is she buying a car. Is it for Profession or is it for personal purpose.
3. **Personal factor:** It includes who is buying a car the age too matters a lot in buying a car. The female of 25 years of age can go for Swift, Ertiga power steering cars. The aged ladies will prefer car having less auto controls. The next is where they are going to drive. The place again matters a lot in buying behavior of four wheelers. Preferences change as "situation" changes.
4. **Psychological Factor:** It affects the purchase decision of a potential buyer. The need and requirement also plays an important role in buying a car. A family consisting of 3 members planning to buy Maruti Ecco or Duster will be a wrong decision as it will not be used in regular run.

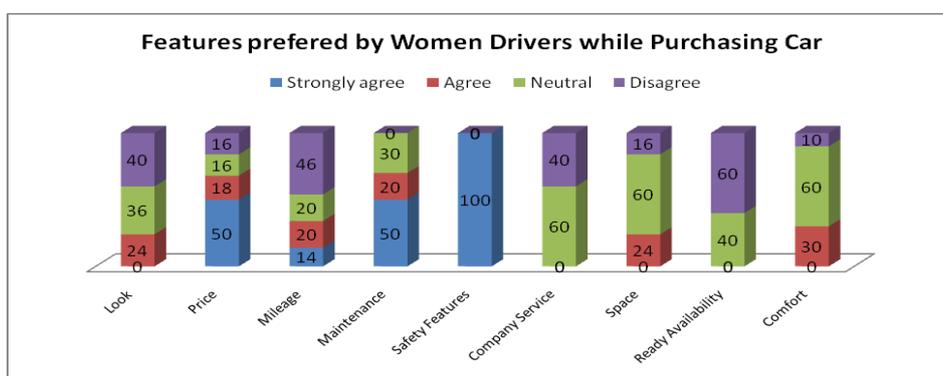
BUYING PERCEPTIONS OF WOMEN CONSUMER REGARDING FOUR WHEELER

As now days the women prefer to drive as earlier they used to ride two wheelers. The various factors that can be the reason in change of women perception towards four wheelers can be the following:

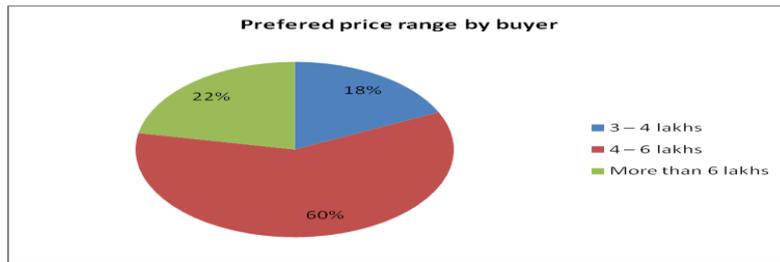
1. **Spacious:** This one perception which the female drivers prefer as they think in broader sense or else the more utility purpose of the vehicle. Shopping being in built character of females they prefer to have spacious vehicle.
2. **Less complexity:** Ease of using a vehicle will be more comfortable for the females to drive. The built of the car must be friendly that the consumer can learn easily and use comfortably. If it's more complex the car might give some health issues like more strain.
3. **Color:** As per the survey, women have a stronger preference for silver cars than do men by 9.2%, brown cars by 9.1% and gold cars by 7.3%. They also prefer white cars. Men have a stronger preference for red cars than do women by 12.3%, for orange cars by 11.8% and for black cars by 9.6%.
4. **Less maintenance:** The maintenance preferably must be less. The women always are the financer in their homes, so they prefer to have less expenditure.
5. **Safety:** Last but not the least the women now a day's give top priority to the safety of their own. As more crimes are getting registered, it can be said that two wheelers are not that safe. The four wheelers have safety lock or else it can be said auto lock which is more desired by female drivers of any age.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

According to survey various features the Women driver's prefer one is the safety as 100% respondent have opted for safety being the first priority. The next is the brand image which has been opted by them as they believe that brand has a connection with the quality of production and after sale service. For various features like company service, comfort and availability the over all response in between 50 % to 60%. The mileage and look of the vehicle were ranked between 20 % to 30% which depicts that the look and Mileage are not that counted by women drivers when buying four wheeler. For feature like spacious the 24% have agreed that it a needed but rest have given least importance to the space. Price is the next feature which they have considered in priority while purchasing a four wheeler. So with the below graph we can analyze that safety, maintenance and price are more taken into consideration in comparison to other features.



According to the below graph it can be interpreted that the price range the 60 % of the women drivers prefer is between 4 to 6 lakhs. Also if we see the car that they are using now or would like to have for second purchase lies with in the said price range. The pricing of the car has to be kept in mind by the automobile companies when manufacturing for small segment.



The resale value of the car is also taken into priority by the women driver's while buying four wheeler. It is bit natural that the once the car purchased it is an movable asset which a person owns. The asset which depreciates. But while going for next car every one tries to push out the present one for better value. Value of a car again depends upon the model, brand and year of manufacture and the condition of the car.

The financing of purchase of car 64% prefer to have employee loan, which is of lesser interest than bank rate. It can also help for tax saving of the income of the employee. 20% of them prefer to pay cash and purchase the vehicle.

On the basis of Company preference 46% of the respondents prefer to have car from Maruti Suzuki, 20% of the respondents prefer to have Hyundai or Tata cars. Only 4% of the respondent prefer to have car from Honda or Nissan. With this data we can interpret that the buyers prefer Maruti Suzuki as it provides after sale service better and has many service stations, which is also shown in advertisements too.

55% of the respondent said that now it's a need of life to have a four wheeler which automatically gives comfort. 30% of them agreed that the opt for car for comfort journey. Rest of them concluded that it's a status symbol to have four wheeler.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded on the basis of the above study that there may be number of factors which are responsible for the changing purchase preference of the consumer in four wheelers. Among those variables – Safety, Maintenance, Mileage, Easy mode of financing and easy driving are found to be pointed influencing buying preference of consumers. With the rapid and consistent growth in the price of the fuel consumers are more conscious about mileage. So they highly prefer mileage while buying a car. This study found that consumers also prefer easy mode of financing a car. With the growing competition in automobile sector, companies are providing easy financing facility to grab maximum of consumers. This allows consumers from a middle income group to conveniently own a car by giving easy instalments which is also forcing consumers to buy a car. Lastly, it was found that consumers also prefer model while purchasing a car. As we know there is a drastic change in the life style of the consumers, people are more conscious about the looks, style and amenities of a car which varies according to the model of the car.

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