

CONSUMER'S BRAND CHOICE BEHAVIOR FOR CAR

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ABSTRACT

The Main objective of the study is to identify attributes that affect the brand choice behavior of car and to identify why consumers give special emphasis to some particular tributes. The study reveals that Toyota is the most favourite brand followed by FORD, BMW, HONDA, MERCEDES -BENZ AND VOLVO. Availability of spare parts, brand image and durability has emerged as the most potent factors for preferring a specific brand motor car. Consumer also considers design, colour, resale value, less fuel consumption spend and driving method as the impotent ones. Consumer belonging to different educational, occupational, income and age categories reveal more or less similar pattern in rating different factors considered for brand choice. For the purpose of the study consumers were asked how important each factor was to the respondents in making a car purchase. Safety was the top consideration followed by quality, value performance, design, technology and environment. They could be used as an index for improving their product and formulating marketing strategy accordingly.

INTRODUCTION

The production of cars and its trade in global market have impact on employment, the balance of payments, economic growth and valuable inward foreign direct investment. The car in the twentieth Century has been described "The machine that changed the world" (Womac, et al., 1990).

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR OF CARS

From the fields of psychology and sociology provide the greatest insights into consumer behaviour it involves important areas such as learning and remembering, perception, attitudes, beliefs, motivation and emotion (Britt, 1970). This is perhaps why psychology has formed the mainstay of marketing thought and practice and formed the basis of academic writing on consumer behaviour since 1950s (Krech et al., 1962).

Cognitive Perspective: The cognitive perspective developed during 1950s and 1960s (Ehrlich et al., 1957; Brehm and Cohen; 1962; Straits; 1964) focuses on cognitive learning that involves mental processes. Many consumer behaviour studies focused on individual cognitive processes have shown over group influence on buying behaviour (Ascii, 1965;

Tybout and artz, 1994). However group decision making, information exchange could also influence buyer decision. So cognition might not be solely responsible for decision making.

REVIEW OF CAR CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR STUDIES

In the last two decades, the major car consumer behaviour studies were mainly focused on mass production, car choice attitudes, loyalty and brand switching etc (Rao and Rokeach; 1981; McFadden, 1986; McCarthy et al., 1992; Haubi, 1996). The main conclusion of these studies is that technical attributes are more important than non -technical attributes to car purchase.

The main objectives of the study are –

- (i) To identify the factors that affect the brand choice behavior of motor car and to examine whether income, education, age and occupation have may impact on brand choice. and
- (2) To examine why consumers give more emphasis to some particular factors such as safety, value, quality, performance, design, environment and technology.

METHODOLOGY

The study is empirical in nature. To have the ideas and views of the respondents, sample survey method was used. It was decided to use simple random sampling technique to select 100 respondents in North Wales, UK. One set of structured questionnaire was used to obtain of the respondents. Close ended and multiple choice types of questions with sealing provision were used to obtain information.

There are number of variables which can influence the brand choice behavior. . Marken (2003) outlined that choice process is influenced by two broad categories (i) Socio-cultural and (ii) Individual.

- (i) While socio cultural determinants include mass culture, sub culture, reference group, social class and family unit.
- (ii) Individuals effects upon choice behavior are viewed in terms of learning, perception, attitude and personality.

Kotler and Armstrong (2007) identified that consumer behavior is also influenced by four major factors.

- (i) Social (reference groups, family and roles and statues)
- (ii) Personal (age, life style, occupation, economic circumstances and personality and self concept)
- (iii) Culture (culture, subculture, and social class)
- (iv) Psychological (motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes)

Research argued that all of these provide clues as how reach and serve the buyer more effectively. Walter mentioned that individual and environmental influence is determination of consumer behavior.

However the study has considered income, occupation, age and education only assuming that there may be some different among the users regarding choice behavior. These factors enable marketers to interpret market information and make decision. These factors

also offer consumer profile which is very necessary to understand the bases of market segmentation and target market.

To determine the degree of importance given to attribute (s) by different educational, occupational, age and income categories in the choice of brand. The weighted average scores were computed by assigning weight as 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 to most important, important, neither important nor unimportant, unimportant and most unimportant in that order.

The study covers selected aspects of consumer's brand choice behavior for motor car. Given the scope of the study, broad treatment of very aspects of brand choice behavior is impossible rather the treatment has been selective. The result of the study must be viewed more in a quantitative focus than absolute qualitative terms.

FINDINGS

With the view to examine the market standing of the different brands of motor car, respondents are asked to mention their most favourite brand for motor car which they have owned. Table-1 shows the opinion of the respondents in this regard.

Table-1: Overall Brand perception

Brand	%
TOYOTA	43%
FORD	15%
BMW	17%
HONDA	7%
MERCEDES-BENZES	10%
VOLVO	4%
OTHERS	4%

Source: Field Survey

It appears from the above table that TOYOTA is the most favourite brand as 43% of the total respondents prefer it. It chose by consumer because they are stronger and save fuel, available of spare parts, more durability and also the resale value is good. Several other brands such as Ford, BMW shown their popularity among consumers.

The survey result reflects how consumers perceive each brand in seven categories: safety, quality, value, performance, environmentally friendly, design and technology. Combining all those factors used for total brand perception score. The scores reflects a brand's image on consumers mind not actual qualities of any brand's vehicles.

Table 2: Factors for buying a new car

Factor	2012 (%)	2011 (%)
Safety	67%	66%
Quality	55%	55%
Value	57%	57%
Performance	51%	55%
Environmentally Friendly	19%	17%
Design	35%	27%
Technology	21%	20%

Source: Field Survey

Table -2 shows the seven factors by how important they are to consumers when buying a new car. The percentage is based on the number of respondents who said the factors were among their top the three priorities.

It has been revealed from the table –3 that out of the respondents who preferred motor car 60 percent were in the age A3 followed by A2 (30%) and A1 (10%). This indicates that motor car is mostly preferred by high age people. Toyota is the most preferred brand among all age categories followed by FORD, BMW, HONDA, MERCEDES -BENZ AND VOLVO.

On the other hand out of the respondents who, preferred motor car 45% had E3 followed by 35% having E2 and 20% having E1 (Table –3). This indicates that consumer brand choice behavior for motor car is influenced to some extent by education level.

Occupation is also considered to be of significant influence affecting consumer’s brand choice behavior, Table –3 depicted. It showed that out of the respondents who preferred motor car 60% Business man, it followed by 30% service indicates that Toyota is the most important brand among all occupational categories followed by FORD, BMW, HONDA, MERCEDES -BENZ AND VOLVO.

Consumers brand choice behavior is also strongly influenced by income. Income creates both an opportunity and restraint on the consumer an opportunity and restraint on the consumer an opportunity to purchase and restraint on what and how much can be bought. Table-3 exhibited the opinion of the respondents who proffered motor car 70% had I3 followed by 25% having I2 and 5% having I1. Toyota is the most favorite brand among all income level.

Table-3: Showing the percentage of preferred brand according to respondents’ age education, and income.

Brand	Age			Education			Occupation			Income		
	A1	A2	A3	E1	E2	E3	O1	O2	O3	I1	I2	I3
Toyota	6	18	36	12	19.25	22.5	8	18	30	3.5	20	28
Ford	1.5	4.5	9	3	5.95	11.25	-	6	13.8	-	1.25	21
BMW	1.5	4.5	9	3	6.9	9	-	4.5	15	-	1.25	21
Honda	0.20	0.60	1.20	0.40	2.45	2.25	-	1.5	1.2	-	-	-
MERCEDES-	0.05	1.50	3	1	-	-	1	-	-	0.5	2.5	-

BENZES												
Others	0.30	0.90	1.80	0.60	1.05	-	1	-	-	1	-	-
Total	10	30	60	20	35	45	10	30	60	5	25	70

A1 = Below 25 group

A2 = 25 – 35 group

A3 = 35 above group

E1 = Under graduation

E2 = Graduate

E3 = Above graduate

O1 = Student

O2 = Service holder

O3 = Businessman

I1 = Below £20,000 group

I2 = £20,000-£50,000 group

I3 = Above £1,00,000 group

Table –4: Degree of importance to various attributes for brand choice of car. (Frequency distribution of respondents in percentage)

Factor	Most Important	Important	Indifferent	Unimportant	Most Unimportant
Brand image	50	25	9.5	8.5	7
Availability of spare – parts	60	20	8.5	6.5	5
Less fuel consumption	55	28	10	4	3
Low price	38.86	10.38	17.90	20.58	12.28
Driving method	10.86	20.30	40.28	18.20	10.30
Design	60	20.75	15.25	3	1
Color	55.56	18.95	12.75	9.38	3.36
Durability	30.50	20.25	20.75	17.45	11.05
After sales service	10.50	20.35	30.15	30.25	8.75
Speed	20.29	43.43	24.29	9.43	2.57
Resale value	48.00	29.73	16.95	4.38	0.94
Guarantee	10.36	20.18	40.23	17.95	11.28
Sound	21.14	27.71	21.72	16.29	13.14
Advertisement	3.72	14.86	21.14	25.15	35.14
Others	6.57	21.72	24.57	17.57	17.71

CONCLUSION

The survey results indicate that Toyota was the most favorite brand among the motor car. However, higher education and higher income are likely to be of lesser sophistication in purchasing motor car. Availability of spare parts, brand image and durability has emerged as the important reasons for preferring a specific brand of motor car. However, consumers differ in their opinion while choosing a particular brand of motor car. They consider design, colour, resale value, less fuel consumption, speed, sound and driving method and the important ones. Consumer belonging to different educational occupational, income and age categories reveal more or less a similar pattern in rating / ranking different factors considered for brand choice. With consumers are more aware of fuel consumption. For the study consumers are asked how important each factor was to the respondents in making a car purchase. Safety was the top consideration followed by quality, value performance, design, technology and environment. Study also found that the perceptions for the individual factors for car brand reveal significant changes.

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