



## A STUDY ON CONSUMER PREFERENCE AND PERCEPTION IN CHOOSING A BRANDED CAR IN TIRUNELVELI DISTRICT

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### Abstract

It is widely acclaimed that India is one of largest consumer markets in the world. But the consumers in India show wide variations in the size and potential of the various consumers market segments. This differences may be in terms of geographical area, life style and income level etc. Added to this with availability of products, customers have also become more demanding and choosy. Passenger car segment is no exemption to this general trend. Marketers are trying to determine the underlying preferences and perception of consumers as well as the various factors which influence the formation of these needs and the satisfaction of these. Simultaneously, marketers have to understand 'learning' process adopted by consumers and buyers. Knowing the impact of buying behaviour, which will help marketers in the generation of new product ideas. All these learning is done with the intention to add to customer delight.

**Key Words:** Consumer, Market segment, Preference, Perception, Learning.

### Introduction

Man's life is becoming faster now-a-days. Automobiles play an important role in human life. According to Encyclopaedia - Automobile means, "Self – propelling passenger vehicle usually powered by internal combustion engine. wheels driven via gear box". Generally Automobile means a vehicle used for transportation. The advent of automobiles brought about unprecedented changes in human's life.

With the growth of population and change of life style as a result of urbanisation, there has been a rapid in demand for automobiles. Automobile is not only the means of transportation and facilitates our travelling but also a symbol of elegance, dignity and power. Today, business around the world recognizes that studying consumer behaviour is an essential part of doing business. To successfully market to consumers with different personal characteristics, the marketer must accordingly modify his marketing strategies.

### Statement of the Problem

" A Study of Consumer preference and perception in choosing a branded car in Tirunelveli district" is taken as a research area. Consumers brand preferences represent fundamental steps in understanding consumer choices. A deeper understanding of such preference dynamics can help marketing managers' better designed marketing program and build a long term relationship with consumers. Consumer choice process is a complex phenomenon. Making a decision to buy a product or services involves many processes. The literature on brand preference studies reveals that for the selection of durable products, especially, passenger cars, the customer has to spend much time in selection of his favourite brand depending upon the various choices provided by the seller.

### Review of Literature

**Subhojit Banerjee, Rajesh K.Pillania (2009)** discussed in their study that India is one of the fastest emerging markets. This paper is a multi- attribute study of car purchase behaviour in the Indian context. Eleven attributes , including resale value of the car, were considered for the study.. The study has important implications for car manufacturers and retailers alike, who would like to explore new consumer segments for positioning their products.

**Alamgir et al. (2010)** suggested that when consumer purchases a car, brand names do influence his/her choice. They also suggests that branded cars have a great place in consumer mind, when customers go for purchasing a car, they prefer to purchase a well known branded car. Customers do not want to try new or unknown branded cars because they have not much information about the lesser known brand.

### Objectives

1. To ascertain the demographic information of the consumer towards cars.
2. To know the consumer preference towards various brands of cars in Tirunelveli District.
3. To analyze the significant association between gender and preference of consumer towards various brands of car.



### Scope of the Study

Automobiles are a symbol of personal growth and development. Cars are a worthwhile instrument. Cars have become more prevalent and important because it is an easy mode of transport. The cars has become the biggest purchase an ordinary consumer is likely to have. The attitude of consumer while purchasing is more conscious about the branded one and should also according to their preference. Therefore, there is a significant scope to examine the preferences and perception of consumers towards various brands of cars. Marketing success greatly depends on the ability of the manufacturers to forecast the buying behaviour of the consumers. This study tries to analyze the influence of perception in the consumers' mind and how this information can be used successfully by the marketers to gain entry into the minds of consumers.

### Methodology

As the study is descriptive research, non-probability technique is used. In which snow ball method is used to collect data. A survey was conducted, as Tirunelveli district has 15 Taluks. 400 interview schedules were prepared and out of this only 385 interview schedules were filled up and collected.

### Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The result of the analysis of the collected data is presented below:

**Table 1, Demographic Profile of Sample Respondents**

Demographic of the Respondents		Distribution of the Respondents	
		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	354	91.9
	Female	31	8.1
	Total	385	100
Age	30 and below	14	3.6
	31 – 40	130	33.8
	41 – 50	232	60.3
	51 – 60	7	1.8
	Above 60	2	0.5
	Total	385	100
Literacy Level	School Level	39	10.1
	UG Level	227	59.0
	P G Level	61	15.8
	Professionals	58	15.1
	Total	385	100
Social Status	Forward Community	45	11.7
	Backward Community	176	45.7
	Most Backward Community	64	16.6
	SC/ST Community	100	26.0
	Total	385	100
Religion	Hindu	197	51.2
	Christian	122	31.7
	Muslin	43	11.2
	Others	23	6.0
	Total	385	100
Marital Status	Unmarried	29	7.5
	Married	289	75.1
	Widow/Widower	50	13.0
	Divorced	17	4.4
	Separated	0	0
	Total	385	100
Size of the Family	Small (1 – 2 members)	11	2.9
	Medium ( 3 – 4 members)	317	82.3
	Large (5 – 6 members)	16	4.2
	Very Large (Above 6 members)	41	10.6
	Total	385	100.0



Current Occupation	Government Employee	106	27.5
	Private Employee	54	14.0
	Entrepreneur	190	49.4
	Professional	35	9.1
	Total	385	100.0
Monthly Income	20,000 and Below	21	5.5
	20,001– 30,000	57	14.8
	30,001– 40,000	90	23.4
	40,001– 50,000	74	19.2
	Above 50,000	143	37.1
	Total	385	100.0
Presently having the brand of Car	Chevrolet	29	7.5
	Ford	26	6.8
	Honda	28	7.3
	Hyundai	75	19.5
	Mahindra	8	2.1
	Maruti Suzuki	120	31.2
	Renault	10	2.6
	Tata	14	3.6
	Toyota	56	14.5
	Volkswagen	13	3.4
	Others	6	1.6
	Total	385	100.0

Source: Primary data

**Table 2, Consistency of Consumer Buying Preference**

Brands of Car	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	C V %
Chevrolet	385	3.75	0.60	16.00
Ford	385	3.17	0.55	17.35
Honda	385	3.48	0.65	18.68
Hyundai	385	3.35	1.08	32.24
Mahindra	385	2.41	0.99	41.08
Maruti Suzuki	385	3.95	0.45	11.39
Renault	385	3.40	1.20	35.29
Tata	385	3.23	1.25	38.70
Toyota	385	3.73	0.62	16.62
Volkswagen	385	1.50	0.98	65.33

Source: Primary Data

**Table 3, Chi-Square Test: Gender and Various Brands of Car Preference**

Various Brand of Car	Pearson Chi-Square <sub>2</sub>	N	df	p value	Cramer's V
Chevrolet	2.73	385	2	.255	.084
Ford	1.14	385	1	.285	.055
Honda	1.46	385	2	.482	.062
Hyundai	1.08	385	2	.582	.053
Mahindra	.020	385	3	.871	.007
Maruti Suzuki	1.25	385	2	.535	.057
Renault	4.92	385	3	.177	.113
Tata	7.45	385	4	.114	.139
Toyota	0.51	385	2	.774	.036
Volkswagen	3.94	385	3	.101	.268

\*\*Significant at 0.05 level



### **Findings**

From table1, it has been inferred that out of 385 sample respondents, a maximum of 120 (31.2 per cent) respondents are presently having a Maruti Suzuki car followed by 75 (19.5 per cent) respondents are presently having a Hyundai car and 56 (14.5 per cent) respondents are presently having Toyota car. 29 (7.5 per cent) respondents are presently having Chevrolet car. 28 (7.3 per cent) respondents are presently having Honda car. 26 (6.8 per cent) respondents are presently having Ford car. 14 (3.6 per cent) respondents are presently having a Tata car. 13 (3.4 per cent) respondents are presently having Volkswagen car. 10 (2.6 per cent) respondents are presently having Renault car. 8 (2.1 per cent) respondents are presently having Mahindra car. 6 (1.6 per cent) respondents are presently having other brand of car. It is confirmed that most of the respondents are presently having a Maruti Suzuki car.

From table2. it can see that the consumers have more consistency of buying preference towards the brand of Maruti Suzuki car followed by Chevrolet car, Toyota car, Ford car and Honda car. In this order the consumers have consistency of buying preference towards the brand of Hyundai car, Renault car, Tata car, Mahindra car and Volkswagen car. This order of consistency of buying preference of consumers towards the brands of car may reflect when a consumer purchasing a brand of car.

From table 3, it has been inferred that there is no significant association between gender and their preference towards various brand of cars.

### **Suggestions**

From the findings the researcher suggests that the low budget branded cars are preferred by most of the car owners. Since their maintenance cost is also very low. The researcher also finds that there is no significant association between gender and preference of various brand cars. ie., the manufacturer need not focus more on gender when he advertises his branded cars.

### **Conclusion**

The automobile industry has made huge impact on different segment of society. The present study analyzes the factors which influence the brand choice of customers and their brand preferences which yield customer satisfaction. This study focuses that the manufacturer should have better understanding of the buying behaviour of their customers as well as consumers. This study concludes that consumer behaviour place an important role in marketing cars.

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