



Consumers' Information Search and Purchase Behaviour for Small Passenger Cars: An empirical Study

Dr. Prakash M.

Associate Professor of Commerce,

Government Ramnarayan Chellaram College of Commerce and Management,

Racecourse Road, Bengaluru -560001, Karnataka.

Introduction:

A behaviour which might be considered as considerate under a certain mindset may be rated as awkward under a different one. The action mindset of a consumer who wishes to make a purchase is considerably linked to externally oriented emotions. A feeling of more excitement than calmness in a matching situation and tense frustration than being tensed in the case of contrasting situation was experienced by the action mindset subjects. It is observed that consumers get frustrated when a salesperson upsets their purchase decision and get excited on receiving support from the salesperson. The current research predicted that internally oriented emotions are linked with an assessment mindset. Moreover, consumers' wish to materialize an intended purchase is governed by the actualization strategy which is extensively correlated to positive/external emotions like eagerness, excitement etc. However, the same positive / external emotions also negatively influence a consumers' tendency to avoid any interaction, thereby creating a scenario wherein consumers' feel excited about an expected purchase and are unlikely to leave the store without making a purchase. Routine examination of the content that a visitor likes to see in web pages. This can be done by randomly picking up large amounts of data from various sites. The research methodology adopted in this paper revolves around the above-mentioned practice along with minute analysis of smaller, experimentally derived data sets. An exciting consumer behavioral pattern while visiting web sites is being derived from the micro-level analysis of this experiment. People put less effort into dealing with later items as compared to the middle items even though they consume more time in clicking on later items. Such an uncharacteristic result can be attributed to the shortcomings of human short term memory store. Marketers, to improve their online efforts, can use this feedback backed by highly valid designed experiments. Development of online measurement constructs will be a part of upcoming research projects that will help to produce new refined models and presumptions on online consumer behaviour with respect to diverse markets and global background while considering specific consumer personality. One of the most integral parts of consumer buying behavior is

the pre purchase information search behavior. In the case of online shopping behavior of customers, there was paucity of adequate research on various media. This research has contributed immensely to the field of research of consumer behavior. In the case of online purchase, the customer's pre purchase information seeking behavior is important. The potential antecedents were selected as they aptly represented two determinants of the search behavior of the consumer, that is product type and individual differences (Banerjee, 2010).

Figure 1 incorporates some of the important aspects of the consumer purchase behaviour:

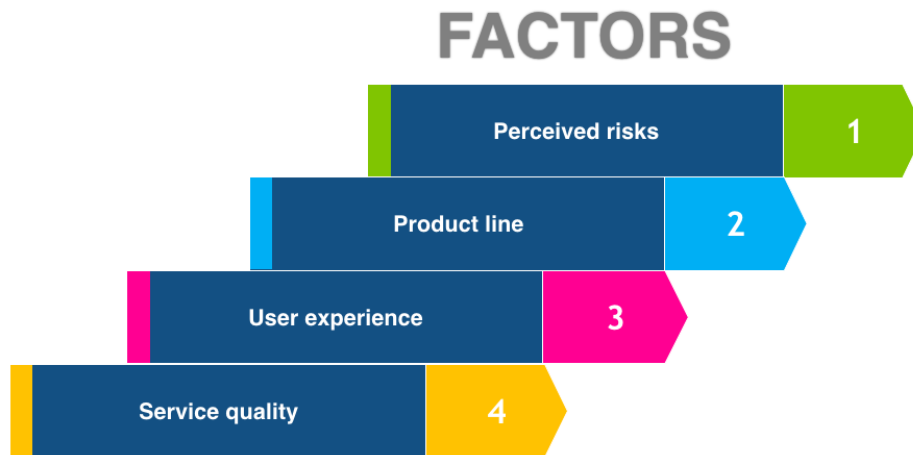


Figure 1 Factors Determining Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Source: Project Guru

Review of Existing Literature:

Ohri & Shamra, (2018) examined that for the Indian automobile industry two stages can be identified, viz., 1983 onwards, the Maruti era and 1992 onwards the post liberalization era. At the global level empirical research on Indian automobile industry is very little. The study is beneficial for all the stakeholders- manufacturers, dealers, financing agents, as it helps to develop effective marketing strategy. Authors put conceptualized model was put to test by extensive research as well as quantitative analysis. After establishing the acceptability of the model, the model assisted car manufacturers and distributors in formulating the marketing strategy.

Lakshmi & Maran. (2021) studied the role of self-image congruence (SIC) of electric vehicle owners. Product knowledge of electric vehicles and environmental concerns were identified as the antecedents of SIC of product users and the stereotype. The exception of mini compact and subcompact categories that noted higher mean losses, the purchasers' decisions. This is not surprising because Japanese cars are well known for being good quality at affordable prices. Nevertheless, it is expected that soon there will be changes in the efficiency of choice of cars as the gap between US and Japanese models with respect to the quality ratings made by the independent sources and consumer perception of quality is narrowing.

Monga & Chaudhary. (2012) examined that the exploration of a consumer's rich interpersonal experiences while having interactive sales encounter experience has not been done by the researchers. Authors explored the mechanisms working during a sales encounter experience that gives a better understanding of the dynamics prevailing during an interaction between sales personnel and a consumer is one of the key objectives of this research.

The correlation between efficacies of advertisement on consumer buying behaviour in automobile industry. The research study concludes that a consumer's buying behaviour is positively influenced by advertisements containing specific dimensions for automobile sector. The outcome of the research work, which eventually accepts the hypothesis, emphasizes the fact that the advertising agencies and marketing managers should remain focused and strategically select appropriate advertisement effectiveness dimensions while designing any product - specific advertisement. One can foresee a more profitable and sustainable automobile business in the future, provided the current research outcomes are strategically implemented, as the measures are expected to positively persuade a consumer's buying behaviour.

Vidyavathi. (2012) studied that customers' prefer diesel cars as thirty-three per cent of the car owners own diesel vehicles. The important sources for collection of information on car models during the initial phase of enquiry by a customer includes information gathered from office colleagues, friends and relatives, visits to showrooms, and interacting with dealer sales staff. The prime factor that have a bearing while short listing the preferred model from the available options is 'inclination based on personal needs', a decision which usually is influenced by issues like 'the need to suit social status', 'peer pressure from other family members owning a car' and 'social pressure from friends/ neighbors/ family members'. Personal satisfaction determinants pondered upon while evaluating 'customer satisfaction' variable. The study concluded that 'make and brand name', does not play any significant role in case of low-end car purchase. The verified model not only made manufacturers launch new models and brands but also supported the marketers and dealers. It is expected that the passenger car industry would benefit from the study and its conclusions as it would improve the understanding and information base of the prospective customers.

Joseph and Kamble (2011) found that Customers' interest to go for online purchase increases due to the perceived benefits of time saving and convenience. On the contrary, the various risk factors such as product reliability, uncertainty regarding delivery and refund act as detrimental factors for online purchase. It was established by Sung and Kang that online buying makes consumers anxious about personal information abuse and credit card security. This research concluded that consumers are more likely to go for offline purchases even after collecting information regarding the product online, since they find multilayered risk associated with product quality, purchase method, payment, and service. The objective of this research calls for prominent factors like the relevance of product type, and pros and cons of internet transactions to be accounted for while preparing and providing an inclusive logical framework regarding influencing factors of consumers' internet usage. It has been discussed earlier that consumers' can be pushed to make online purchase from just online search if they are made

aware about the product and the benefits and risks involved during online purchase. At the same time, online purchase can be directly influenced in the sense that a positive mind-set about the product and internet channel can be formed by the consumers when they seek online information after considering the product type and risk and benefits of online purchase and finally may lead buying through the internet. On the other hand, online purchase may also be a result of the consumers' perception during the initial stage of decision making that online channel holds an advantageous position as compared to offline channel Monga. Et al. (2012).

Kaur and Sandhu. (2014) studied and found that firstly, even though browsing is common, there has been no systematic study of it in the context of marketing and very little research work has investigated consumer browsing experience. Study conducted on functional and recreational browsing, and it was found that consumers' browsing experiences differ as their browsing preference varies for functional and recreational purposes. Shifting browsing patterns and experiences are observed, which are outcome of demographic changes. The retail environment not only influences consumers' shopping behaviors, but also shapes browsing experiences. However, a few environmental factors such as colour, odour sensations and background music were not taken into consideration as variables since they have negligible influence on consumers' behaviors. However, all these elements in combination act as store stimulation. Studies conclude that as compared to reluctant browsers. The characteristics of the consumers visiting the store may be analyzed by retail stores to determine consumer needs. It is beneficial for grocery and food stores, where repeat and loyal customers visit more, to have a stable layout, whereas stores inviting new and infrequent customers may require a fancy layout along with products to provide a high level of reality. The negative effect can be lessened if the retail stores carefully monitor the store traffic and act accordingly, for example deploying additional employees during busy hours, which is likely to reduce needless functional browsing. On the contrary, recreational stores may periodically come up with new displays that entice the customers to explore more. This research helps us to understand that browsing is a fundamental aspect of consumer information acquisition. Consumers make realistically good decisions even without searching for sizeable information. However, such an inference is based on suggestions that research work may have been able to identify and study only a portion of consumers' information collection activities. Browsing is more of an informal activity than a controlled one but still has a significant effect on purchase decisions.

Sheik & Ali. (2013) revealed that the third issue links browsing with consumer purchases. Studies suggest that direct purchasing, whether spontaneous or unplanned, can be affected by browsing. On the other hand, it can also result in data compilation from an organized information search, which again indirectly influences purchases. Thus, in the times to come, retailers and consumers can both be benefitted by actions that encourage browsing. This study is focused only on browsing for products in the retail business, although there is a scope for future research to expand its ambition of browsing services. However, research on service browsing is expected to be more demanding. Browsing behavior in this case is different from the behavior of online shopping.

Malothra. Et al. (2012) investigated and found that Volatility in prices have a negative impact on the internal reference price of the consumers whereas only price comparison influences positively. Such a viewpoint agrees

with suggestions put forward by existing literature that “price knowledge in reference prices may often not be accessible to recall but shows up in price recognition and deal recognition”. “Price information not consciously remembered can still influence internal reference price and product evaluation”. These suggestions and beliefs are justification for the fact that there is very little significance in the relationship between knowledge of price and internal reference price. The negative effect of price volatility is attributed towards decline in consumers’ confidence level in IRP due to frequent price fluctuations.

Chaturvedi & Reddy. (2019) studied that with respect to external reference price, consumers are easily able to set their reference mark by checking the external price, which happens due to the opportunity they get and their tendency to compare prices. Clarification for these relationships may be provided by similar points of views presented previously. The lack of the consumers’ capability to compare prices makes them lazy and doubtful towards their own knowledge base, which creates confusion and delay in decision making.

Bade. (2011) studied that Multiple creative ideas contribute for product innovation. More and more new customers are attracted towards new and innovative products or services. This expands the customer base and in turn ensures the survival and growth of the organization. Innovative ideas from within the organization are the outcome of creative thinking at enterprise level throughout the supply chain network. Participation of intellectually rich employees through management Kaizen is a key to tossing up innovative ideas. To successfully implement Kaizen, significant employee involvement is essential. Therefore, it is suggested by the researchers that creativity and innovation can only be implemented successfully if it is preceded by sound human resource management practice of creating an organizational culture that encourages and nurtures creative thinking and focuses on process and business excellence. The top management’s job is to formulate a structure for talent and knowledge management in the organization. This would help the organization to raise the satisfaction level of its customers with a wide range of products without any additional human and other resources by reducing the skill and talent wastage of its employees.

Prasanna. Et al. (2013) revealed paradigm shifts from petrol to the diesel power train, of which Europe has been a mute spectator over the last two decades. The authors think that while this action was a necessity keeping in mind the climate change, the path followed by the political and industry stakeholders through this shift has not only pushed towards reducing CO₂ emissions and black carbon. Moreover, it has continually aggravated pollution issues. The authors investigated how the European political and industrial lobby’s’ positioning of the diesel paradigm. While producing fuel-efficient cars, companies consider the tax implications, and embracing diesel has resulted in reduced driving costs in Europe. The car drivers are the most benefitted lot as this shift has resulted in a reduction in travel expenses as diesel-driven cars are more cost and energy efficient. One is waiting to see whether the world's fuel market imbalances and more aggressive strategies of manufacturers.

Objective

1. To ascertain how purchase behavior for small passenger cars is influenced by consumer’s information search.

2. To measure importance of the factors of consumer's information search on purchase behavior for small passenger cars.

Methodology

The researcher surveyed 216 consumers to find out how their purchase behavior for small passenger cars is influenced by consumer information search. The survey was conducted with the help of a structured questionnaire. The researcher had collected the primary data through convenient sampling method. Data was analyzed and evaluated by means and t-test.

Findings

The table below shares general details of the respondents. The researcher had considered 193 people for their study in which 68.9% are male and 31.1% are female. 29.0% of them are below 40 years of age, 38.9% are between 40-46 years and the rest 32.1% are above 46 years of age. 21.2% are salaried, 30.6% of the respondents are from the business sector, 29.5% are professionals and rest 18.6% are in some other occupational sector.

Table 1 General Details

Variables	Respondents	Percentage
Gender		
Male	133	68.9
Female	60	31.1
Total	193	100
Age (yrs)		
Below 40	56	29.0
40-46	75	38.9
Above 46	62	32.1
Total	193	100
Occupation		
Salaried	41	21.2
Business	59	30.6
Professional	57	29.5
Others	36	18.6
Total	193	100

Table 2 Impact of consumer's information search on purchase behavior

S. No.	Statements	Mean Value	t value	Sig.
1.	Internet surfing influence consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars	3.19	2.686	0.004
2.	Detailed information available on internet have an impact on consumer's purchase behavior	3.16	2.276	0.012
3.	Sites available on internet help the consumer to compare their choices	3.15	2.168	0.016
4.	Demographic differences affect the consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars	3.12	1.699	0.045
5.	Advertisements and digital marketing influence consumer's purchase behavior	3.18	2.591	0.005
6.	Environmental consciousness affects the consumer purchase behavior to incline towards electric cars	3.11	1.557	0.061
7.	Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars changes as per their personal needs	3.14	2.000	0.023
8.	Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars fluctuates on visiting the showroom	3.20	2.870	0.002
9.	Consumer's purchase behavior is influenced by interacting with dealer sales staff	3.13	1.843	0.033
10.	Peer pressure from other family members owning a car affects Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars	3.17	2.452	0.008

The table above is showing how purchase behavior for small passenger cars is influenced by consumer's information search. The respondent says that Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars fluctuates on visiting the showroom with mean value 3.20, Internet surfing influence consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars with mean value 3.19 and Advertisements and digital marketing influence consumer's purchase behavior with mean value 3.18. Respondent shares that Peer pressure from other family members owning a car affects Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars with mean value 3.17, Detailed information available on internet have an impact on consumer's purchase behavior with mean value 3.16, Sites available on internet help the consumer to compare their choices with mean value 3.15. The respondent also says that Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars changes as per their personal needs with mean value 3.14, Consumer's purchase behavior is influenced by interacting with dealer sales staff with mean value 3.13, Demographic differences affect the consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars with mean value 3.12 and Environmental consciousness affects the consumer purchase behavior to incline towards electric cars with mean value 3.11. Further t-test shows that all the statements are significant (with the value below 0.05) except

Environmental consciousness affects the consumer purchase behavior to incline towards electric cars (significance value 0.061).

Conclusion

The study was conducted to know how purchase behavior for small passenger cars is influenced by consumer's information search and found that Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars fluctuates on visiting the showroom, Internet surfing influence consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars, Advertisements, and digital marketing influence consumer's purchase behavior. Peer pressure from other family members owning a car affects Consumer's purchase behavior for small passenger cars and Detailed information available on internet have an impact on consumer's purchase behavior. The study concludes that there is a significant impact of consumer's information search on purchase behavior for small passenger cars.

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