



The Battle of Dominance of OLA vs UBER in Kolkata

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Abstract: The transportation industry has witnessed a transformative shift with the advent of ride-sharing platforms, revolutionizing urban mobility and challenging traditional taxi services. This research delves into the dynamic battle for market dominance between two leading ride-sharing giants, OLA and Uber, within the unique urban landscape of Kolkata. The study employs a multifaceted approach, combining quantitative data analysis, user feedback, and stakeholder interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the success and competition between these platforms. Through this research, we aim to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on the urban mobility landscape, with a focus on the specific nuances of the OLA versus Uber competition in Kolkata. This analysis not only addresses the current market dynamics but also serves as a foundation for future studies on the evolving nature of ride-sharing services and their impact on urban economies.

INTRODUCTION

A metropolitan city's efficient passenger transportation services are critical. Individual mobility needs cannot be met by using public transportation systems since they follow fixed routes and schedules. The lack of needed public transportation services leaves individuals with little choice except to rely on private motor vehicles, and the desire for a private vehicle eventually becomes related with social class determination. Traffic congestion is a serious issue that has been growing in recent years. Taxis and other for-hire vehicles have always played an important role in meeting individualized requirements and desires. However, urban dwellers' mobility requirements are becoming more dynamic and diversified.

The 'Taxis,' which are used by lakhs of Indians every day to go to work, go shopping with their families, visit friends, and go to the airport, is one of the most important sources of public transportation services. Until a few years ago, concentrating on hiring taxis for short distances within a city or for departing to the airport or from the airport to a specific location was poorly organized. This radio taxi industry has grown so rapidly that the number of radio taxis has far outpaced the number of open taxi cabs until today.

Uber and Ola have entered the market and have fixed all the early problems. The growing digitalization and use of smartphones in India may be the most significant factor in these cab services. Taxis can be requested or rented from taxi stands, depending on the city or state. In a few cities, such as Kolkata, taxis should be hired at taxi stands or called on the street. Extra charges for gear, late-night transportation, and cost charges are the responsibility of the traveler. Clients can now hire a taxi by simply touching their gadget with their finger. Because of accessibility, the cab will arrive in a few moments.

Another reason for the cab industry's rapid growth is the rapid development of IT and IT-enabled industries. The firms began providing cabs for their employees to assist mobility between home and work, as well as for their welfare and security.

Indian taxi market: India's taxi market is extremely fragmented. The structured and unorganized taxi markets in India are separated into two broad categories. The unorganized market is valued at \$8.5 billion, whereas the organized market is valued at over \$500 million. During the period 2017-2023, the Indian taxi market is expected to increase at a CAGR of 13.7 percent. In the current market situation, the organized sector is a relatively new segment. It is further divided into three categories: owners, affiliates, and aggregators.

OBJECTIVES

- To Determine consumers' satisfaction & dissatisfaction with specific cab services.
- To determine which cab service has the upper hand in the minds of customers.
- To investigate the general analysis of OLA/UBER services and what people in Kolkata think about them.

- To investigate the motivational elements that lead people in Kolkata to use OLA/UBER cab services.
- To Determine drivers' satisfaction & dissatisfaction with specific cab services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

(Ashish Avinash Khade, Dr. Vaibhav Patil 2016) Study of customer satisfaction level of OLA& UBER paid Taxi services in Pune City. According to this study, Ola has seen a tremendous growth in the taxi market sector, market share of OLA in Pune city is 50% followed by UBER 38%. Maximum no. of respondents is satisfied with the fare/price charged by OLA/UBER. They are also satisfied with the App and the comfort level provided by the paid taxi services i.e., OLA and UBER.

(Dr. Rupali Rajesh, Snehal Chincholkar, 2018) A comparative study of OLA & UBER customers in Mumbai City. This study tried to identify the difference between consumers of two major organized taxi service players in India. This study may help the taxi service industry to design their marketing strategies and their customer relationship plans. As well as they can also improve where they are lacking such as in case of customer's perception about safety Uber services showed a gap. Similarly, a study suggested female consumers prefer Uber over Ola, Ola cab service may work on strategies to increase female customers.

(Himanshu Sekhar 2020) A comparative study of Ola & Uber customers in Delhi-NCR. The study reveals the centennials satisfaction about the call taxi services, the factors they give importance in selection of the service provider, tariff, comfort, convenience, service quality and customer care rendered. This will help the service providers as an important input to understand about the customer satisfaction about their service, and to what extent they are with us by utilizing their services. The finding depicts the exact replica of the customer's mindset and level of satisfaction towards the service providers operating the call taxi in the DELHI-NCR market.

The expansion of the call taxi system in India has experienced significant magnification, propelled by factors such as burgeoning infrastructure, the ascent of the middle class, escalating disposable incomes, and a growing GDP. Importantly, the propagation of the BPO industry, with its unconventional working hours, has further ignited this growth, particularly in metropolitan areas (Rahman, 2014). The escalated rivalry among industry players, including Ola, Uber, Radio cabs, yellow cabs, and Meru, necessitates a nuanced comprehension of user preferences to prosper in this fiercely competitive market. Myriad studies have endeavored to unravel the pivotal factors influencing consumers' choices in the domain of rental cab services.

The emergence of the call taxi app (CTA) has played an important role in increasing perceived usefulness, ease of use, playfulness, and psychological acceptance (Peng et al., 2014). Moreover, it made it easier to manage users and service providers, as highlighted by Chen (2014). Mobile technologies, such as Lu et al. (2015), empowers travelers to exert greater control, and enables them to easily access more information. In the case of Ghana, Horsu and Yeboah (2015) found a negative relationship between driver behavior and customer satisfaction, highlighting the impact of variables such as service consistency, convenience, reliability and affordability on customers satisfaction in a minicab taxi highlight. Paronda and so on. (2016) identified key performance indicators for conventional taxis, including reliability, travel speed, passenger costs and service quality. A comparative study that tested Uber and Grabcar against traditional taxis concluded that the former provided better service (Paronda et al., 2016).

Hanif and Sagar's (2016) study on the Indian market highlighted the significant growth in cab usage in Mumbai, especially among the middle and affluent segments. The study found that customers use taxis not only for transportation but also for social activities, reflecting high levels of customer satisfaction and showing positive signs of future business expansion. To enhance the riding experience, aggregator taxi companies have partnered with mobile wallet providers such as Free-Charge, Paytm and Mobikwik, to offer hassle-free payment options to customers with discounts and attractive supply chains (Kavita and Rajeshwari, 2016). With the shift towards online transactions, Uber has invested in taxi service gateways and implemented various marketing strategies and IT infrastructure.

The study of Ruchi et al. (2017) participated in various dynamics of the Indian taxi market by analyzing pricing, revenue model and market share. Utsav Pandya and others. (2017) identified the main factors affecting the public taxi market, including technological advancement, safety, price, timeliness, convenience, payment options the importance of criteria such as convenience, service quality, transparency and safety in pre-booked taxi selection Sarit-Pravadas et al Published (2017). Another study conducted by Kumar and Kumar (2016) specifically related to customer interest in accepting coupons through mobile apps in booking, Ruchika Malik's study (2017) highlighted the importance of driver retention through services such as finance rewards to influence consumer decisions.

In the competitive environment of ride-hailing services, Ola and Uber use different strategies to retain and motivate drivers. Ola uses rewards programs to motivate and engage drivers to address customer complaints, which drives driver loyalty. In contrast, Uber's Uber CLUB program offers rewards and discounts to drivers and their families, categorized as Silver, Gold, and Diamond based on performance (Ruchi et al., 2017; Kumar and Kumar., 2016). Allamdas Rohit H. (2017) and the comparative study by Shukla et al. (2017) highlighted the importance of adopting new customer-centric strategies to attract and retain customers in the Indian market of price sensitivity and low brand loyalty. To navigate this challenging environment, both Ola and Uber need to focus on customers, innovation, value-oriented strategies and adapting to regulatory pressures lead and continue to satisfy their customers and maintain a competitive edge.

After conducting extensive research on previously published reports comparing OLA and UBER in India, we discovered that numerous studies have been conducted in cities such as Mumbai, Pune, Delhi-NCR, and others to determine the reasons and elements for customers' satisfaction and dissatisfaction with these specific cab services, as well as which of the two is preferred by consumers and why. However, we believe that one should evaluate not just client happiness and comfort, but also the benefits and drawbacks that drivers in India face with these cab firms, as they are claimed "partners" by these organizations. These aspects have not been considered in these reports.

To bridge these gaps, we conducted this project research to determine which cab services have the upper hand in the minds of consumers and what problems drivers face specifically in the city of Kolkata, West Bengal, as we noticed that no previous research had been conducted with all these considerations in Kolkata.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The idea about this project was generated based on exploratory research carried out using secondary data. Extensive literature and article review was done to understand the various aspects of Ola and Uber, especially to determine consumers' and drivers' satisfaction with these specific cab services in Kolkata as well as other related details. Several reports from Business Standards have provided quite useful data.

SAMPLING METHOD

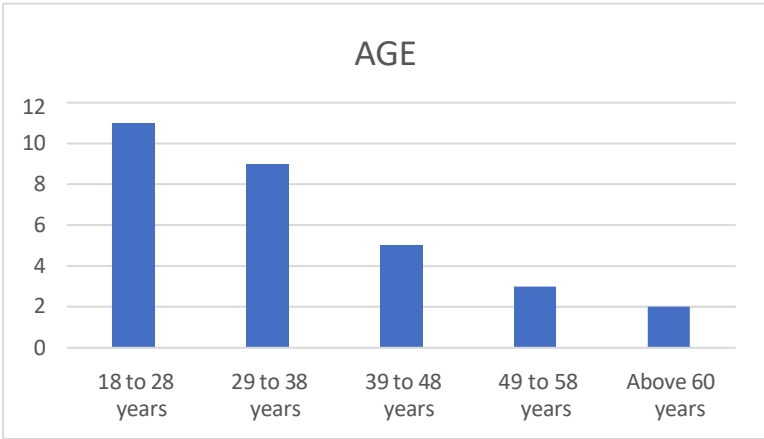
The respondents were customers of OLA & UBER, and they were selected by stratified sampling and convenient sampling i.e., only those respondents who were willing to respond to the questionnaire were selected and the respondents were divided into categories: Students, Serviceman, Businessman, Professional, Housewives, and others.

SOURCE OF DATA

The survey approach was used to acquire primary raw data from the field for the study. A survey was conducted among the Howrah station., Seal-dah station., and Netaji Subhash Chandra International airport region in Kolkata, West Bengal, for the aim of the research. The survey took place in the months of April and May 2023. We spoke with 30 drivers from the mentioned locations and have taken feedback through physical mode as well as used Google forms to obtain key input from consumers. The sample was completed with actual input

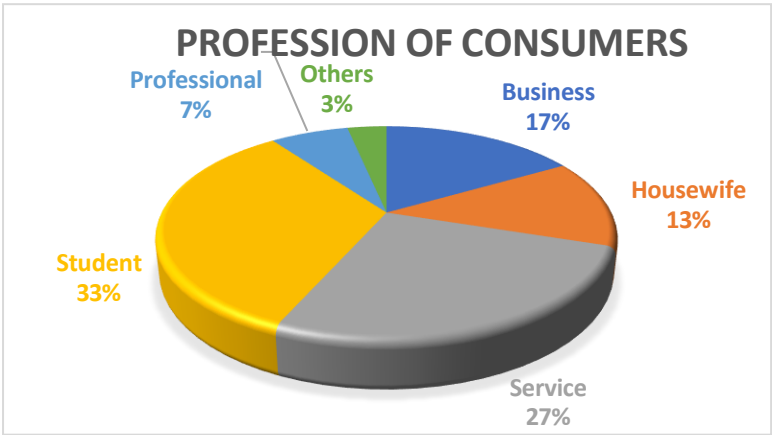
DATA ANALYSIS ON CONSUMER PERCEPTION

1. AGE



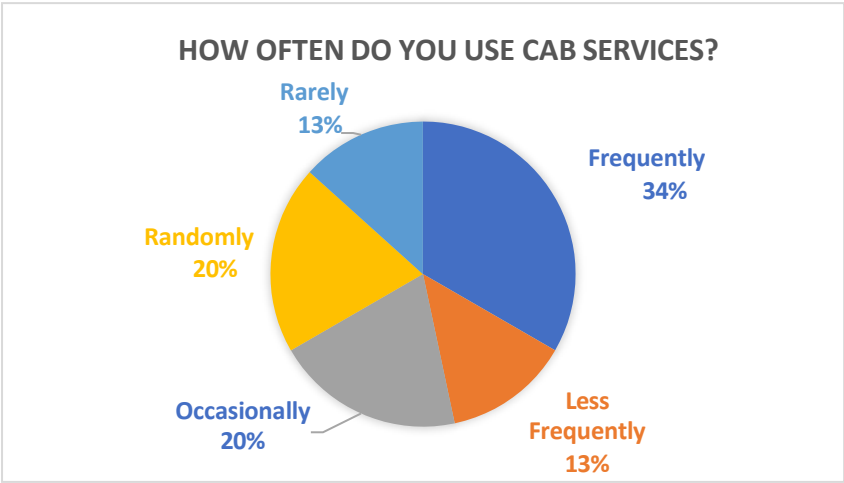
Data interpretation: The above data shows that out of 30 respondents, 37% belonged to the group of 18- 28 years, 30% belonged to the age group of 29-38 years, 17% belonged to the age group of 39-48 years, 10% belonged to the age group of 49-58 years, and 6% belonged to the age group of above 60 years.

2. PROFESSION



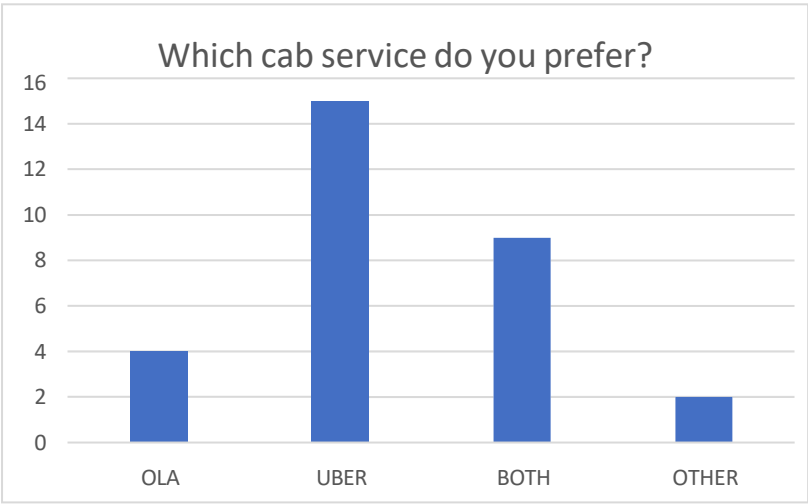
Data interpretation: The above diagram shows that out of 30 respondents, 33% are Students, 27% are doing Service, 17% are doing Business, 13% are Housewives, 7% are Professionals and 3% chose Others as their professions.

3. HOW OFTEN DO THEY USE UBER & OLA?



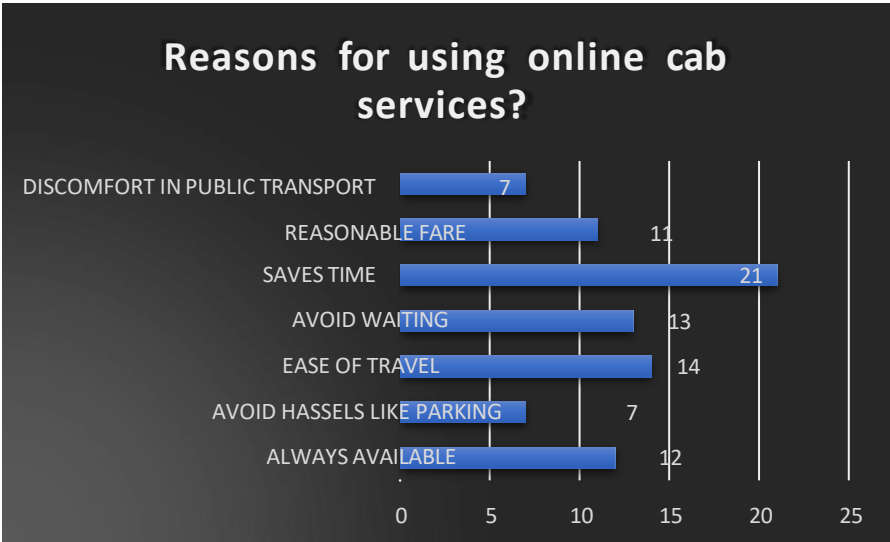
Data interpretation: The above diagram shows that 20% of 30 respondents use UBER or OLA Occasionally, 20% use Randomly, followed by 13% use Rarely, 34% use Frequently, and the remaining 13% use Less frequently. Hence 10 out of 30 i.e., majority of the respondents use UBER or OLA Frequently.

4. WHICH ONLINE CAB SERVICES DO THEY PREFER:



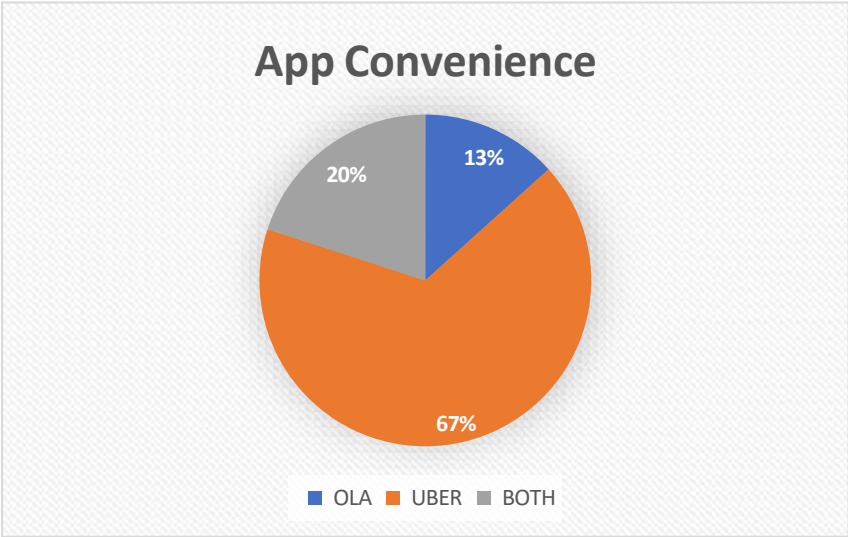
Data interpretation: The above diagram shows that out of 30 total respondents, 13% use OLA, followed by 50% use UBER, 30% use Both OLA and UBER and the remaining 7% chose other cab services. Hence UBER is most preferred by the online cab service users in Kolkata.

5. REASONS FOR USING ONLINE CAB SERVICES:



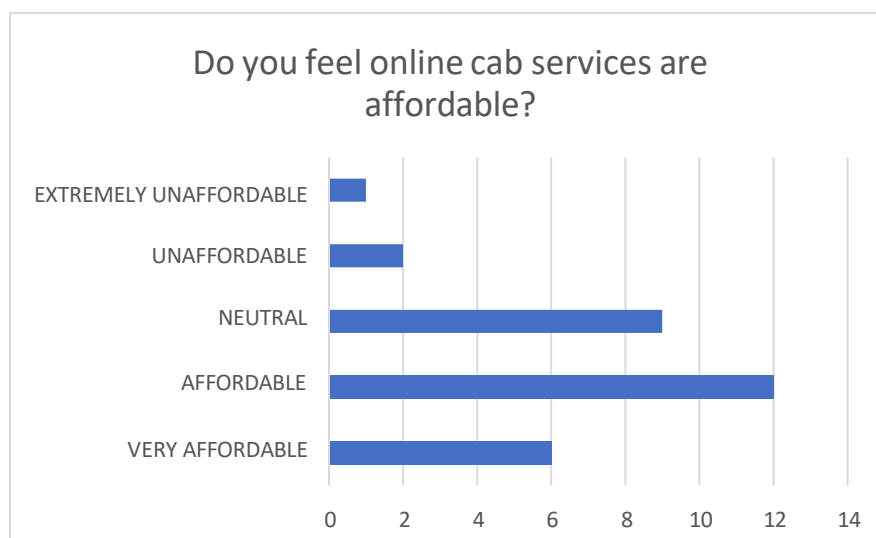
Data interpretation: The above graph shows the reasons why consumers choose online cab services like UBER and OLA. It can be concluded from the graph that the majority of the respondents consider saves time as the major factor or reason for choosing UBER or OLA.

6. WHICH APP IS MORE CONVENIENT?



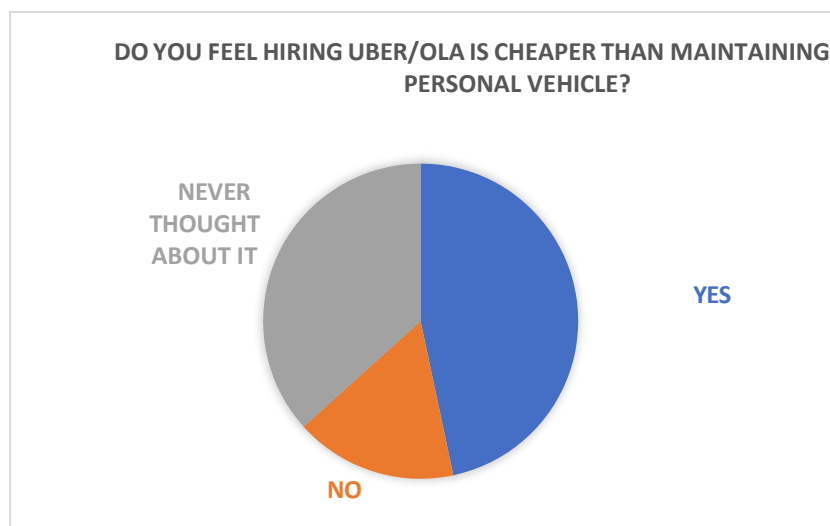
Data interpretation: Out of 30 total respondents, 67% consider the UBER app more convenient whereas 20% prefer the OLA app more. The remaining 13% consider Both the app convenient. Hence, we can conclude that majority of respondents consider the UBER app more convenient and user-friendly.

7. DO THEY FEEL UBER / OLA ARE AFFORDABLE?



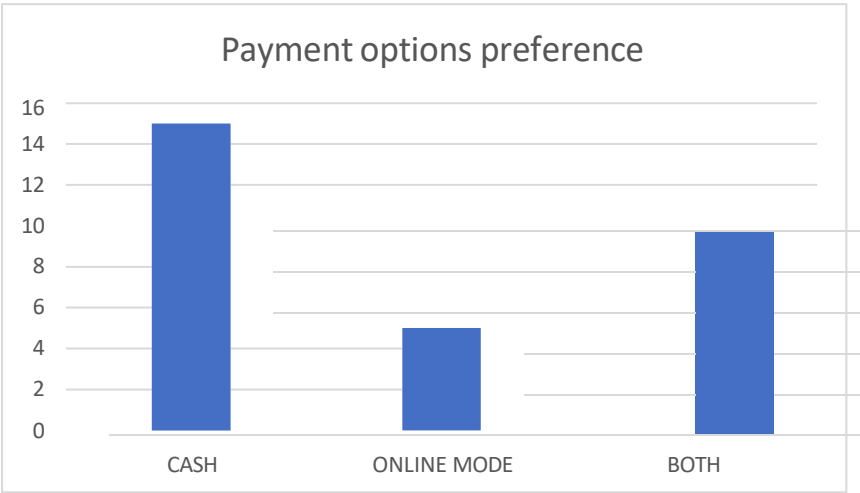
Data interpretation: Out of 30 respondents, 20% feel these online cab services are Very affordable, 40% feel they are Affordable, followed by 30% who feel Neutral, 7% feel Unaffordable, and 3% feel Extremely unaffordable. Hence majority consider these cab services are affordable.

8. PREFERENCE OF UBER / OLA OVER PERSONAL VEHICLE:



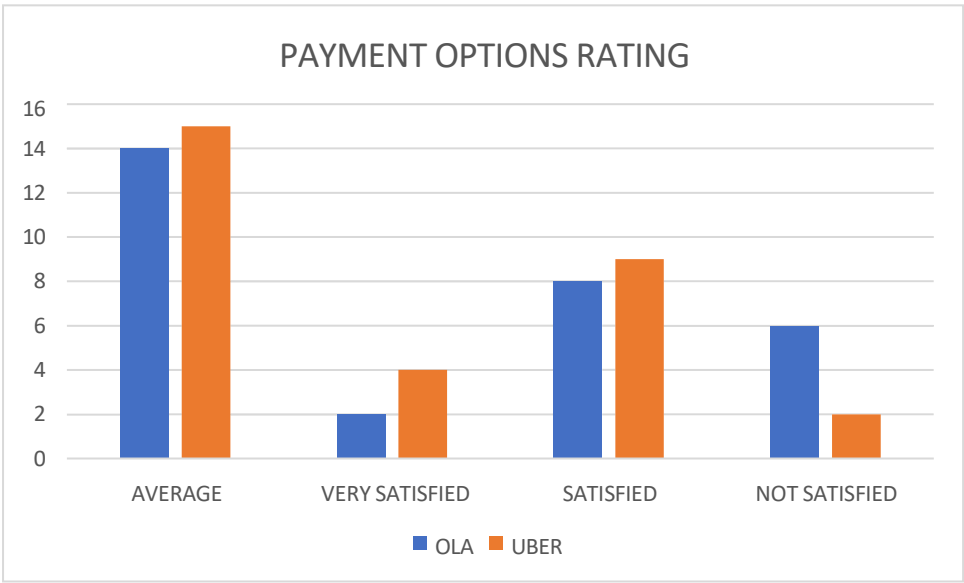
Data interpretation: The above graph shows that 46% of 30 respondents feel that hiring an UBER or OLA is cheaper than maintaining personal vehicle, followed by 17% of respondents feel the opposite whereas 36% have Never thought about it.

9. WHICH PAYMENT MODE DO THEY PREFER:



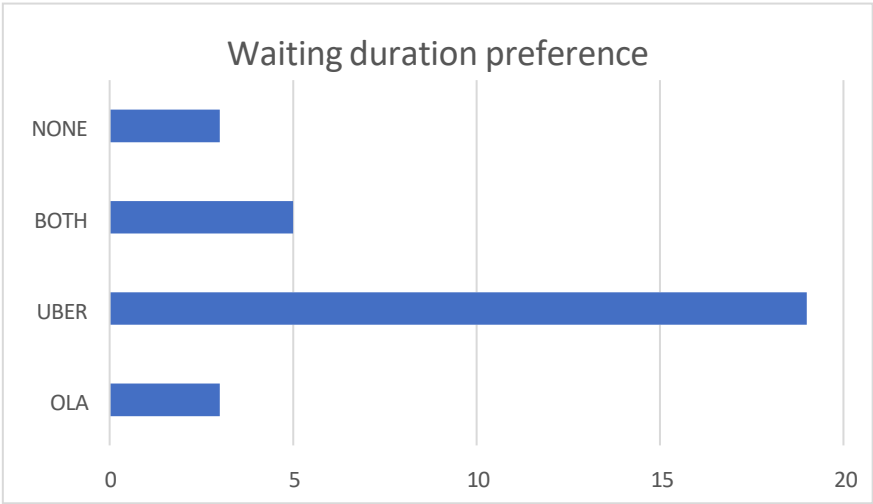
Data interpretation: 50% out of 30 total respondents prefer the Cash as the payment mode, followed by 17% prefer the Online mode of payment whereas the remaining 33% prefer Both modes as payment options. Hence the majority of respondents prefer the Cash mode of payment while travelling.

10. PAYMENT OPTION SATISFACTION RATING:



Data interpretation: The above graph shows the payment option satisfaction ratings of the consumers.

11.PREFERENCE REGARDING WAITING DURATION:

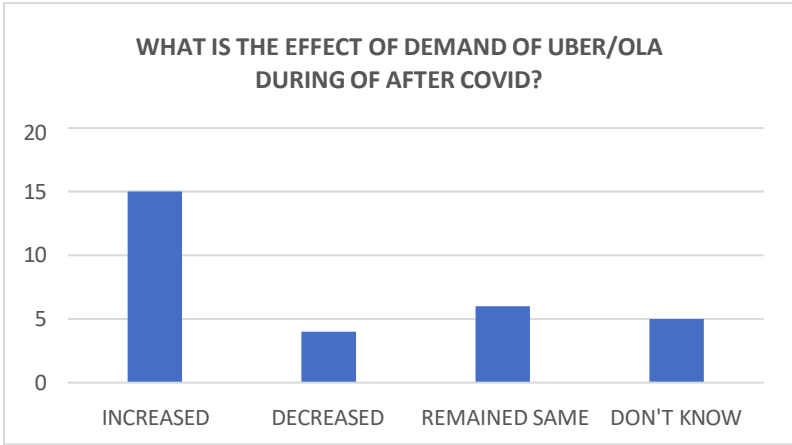


Data interpretation: In terms of waiting duration, the above graph shows that 10% of 30respondents prefer OLA, followed by 63% prefer UBER, 17% prefer Both, and the remaining 10% chose None as the option.

12.ISSUES FACED FROM UBER / OLA:

Data interpretation: The above graph shows the issues or problems faced by the consumers from UBER and OLA cab services. Majority of the respondents faced problems with the Price and Refusal factor from OLA whereas Knowledge of area/route and Assistance from driver are the problems faced by majority respondents from UBER.

13.EFFECT ON DEMAND DURING / COVID:



Data interpretation: According to 50% of 30 respondents, demand for UBER/OLA has Increased during and after COVID, 13% feels the opposite (Decreased), 20% thinks it has Remained the same & 17% chose Don't know option. Hence majority thinks that the demand has Increased.

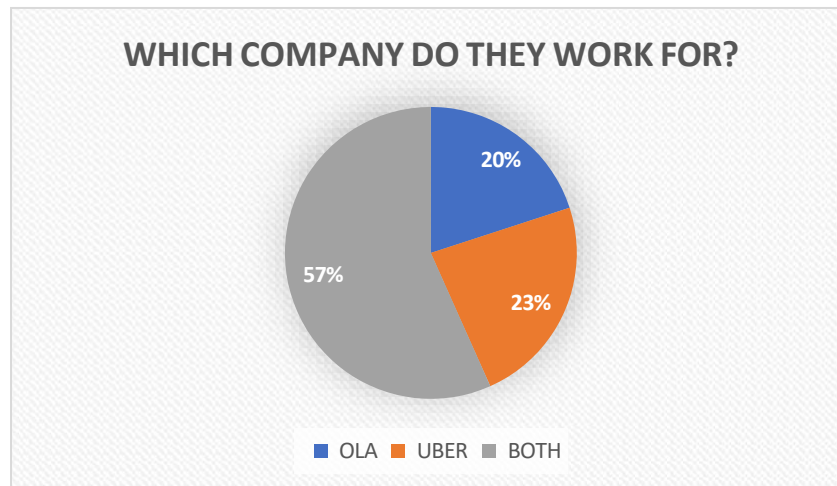
14.EFFECT ON FARE AFTER HIKE IN FUEL PRICE:

Data interpretation: In the above graph, 83% out of 30 respondents feel that the fare has Increased after the hike in fuel price, no one feels that the fare has decreased, and the remaining 10% chose option Don’t know. Hence most of the respondents feel that the fare has Increased after the hike in fuel price.

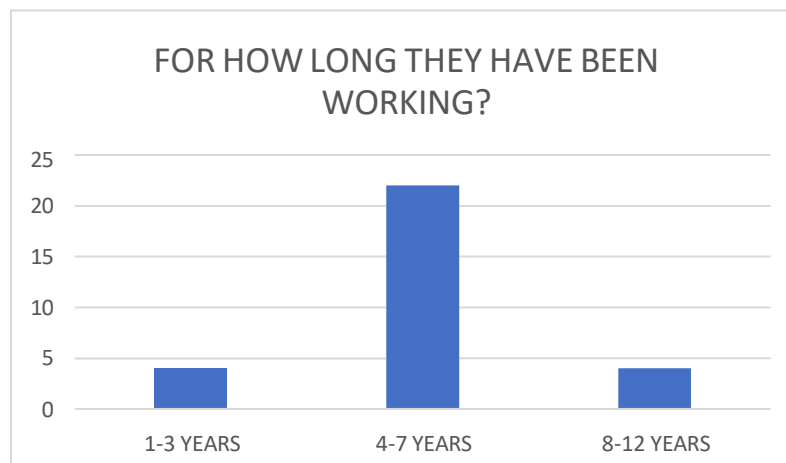
COMPLAINTS REPORTED BY THE CONSUMERS

OLA	UBER
Extreme high fares during peak hours.	Very arrogant drivers and sometimes they cancel the ride if the destination is far.
It takes a lot of time to get booked and once it is booked OLA drivers cancel the ride.	During bad weather, they charge extra money.
Drivers are not polite.	They charge extra money during office hours.
OLA cabs are not always available during peak hours.	If drivers cannot reach the pick-up point, he forces the customers to cancel the ride.
After the fuel price hike, OLA charges extra money for A.C.	The cab’s cleanliness and quality are not as before.

DATA ANALYSIS ON DRIVERS' PERCEPTION

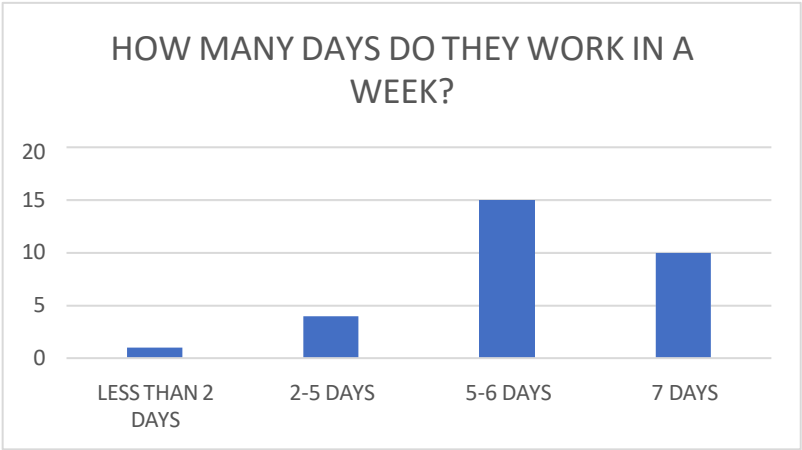
1. WHICH COMPANY DO THEY WORK IN?

Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, 23% work in UBER, followed by 20% who work in OLA, and the remaining 57% work in Both companies. Hence most of the respondents work in Both companies OLA and UBER.

2. FOR HOW LONG DO THEY WORK:

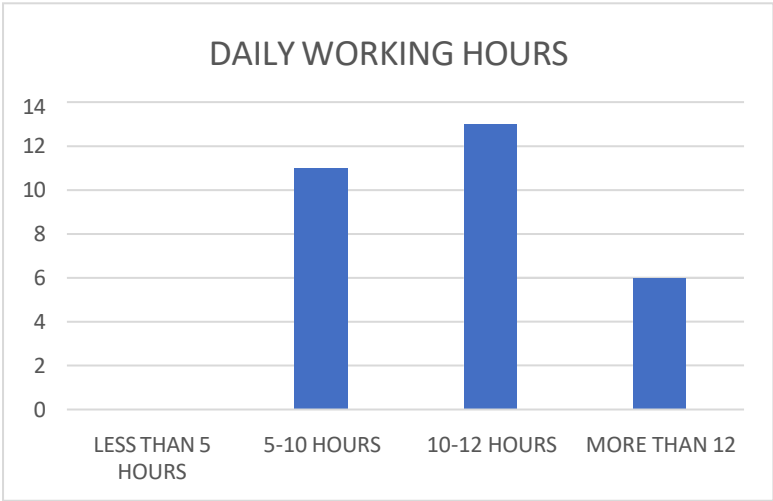
Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, 14% are working for 1-3 years, followed by 73% who are working for 4-7 years, and the remaining 13% are working for 5-12 years. Hence most of the respondents are working for 4-7 years.

3. HOW MANY DAYS DO THEY WORK IN A WEEK?



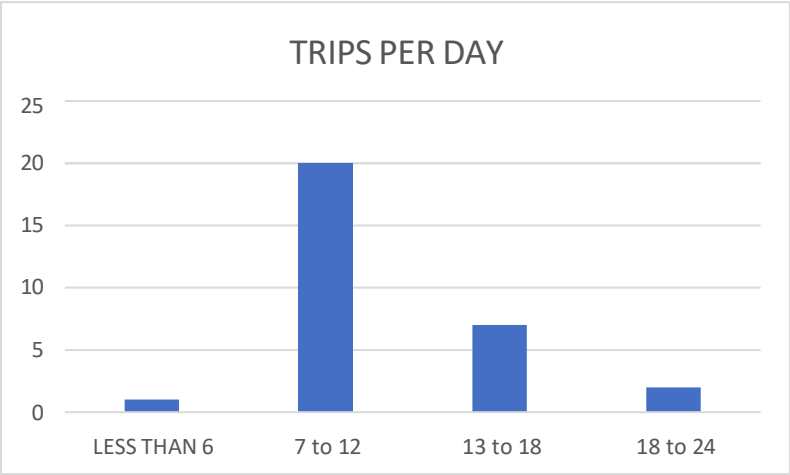
Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, 3% are working less than 2 days, followed by 13% who are working 2-5 days, 50% are working 5-6 days, and the remaining 34% are working all 7 days. Hence most of the respondents are working 5-6 days a week.

4. DAILY WORKING HOURS:



Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, no one is working Less than 5 hours, followed by 37% who are working 5-10 hours, 43% are working10-12 hours, and the remaining 20% are working more than 12 hours. Hence most of the respondents work 10-12 hours per day.

5. TRIPS PER DAY:



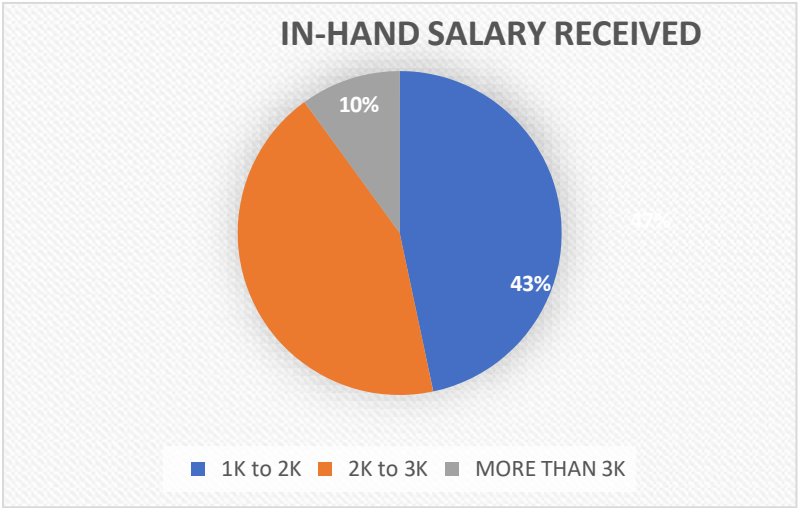
Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, 3% make Less than 6 trips per day, followed by 67% who make 7-12 trips per day, 23% make 13-18 trips per day, and the remaining 7% make 18-24 trips per day. Hence most of the respondents make 7-12 trips per day.

6. IN WHAT BASIS THEY ARE GIVEN SALARY:



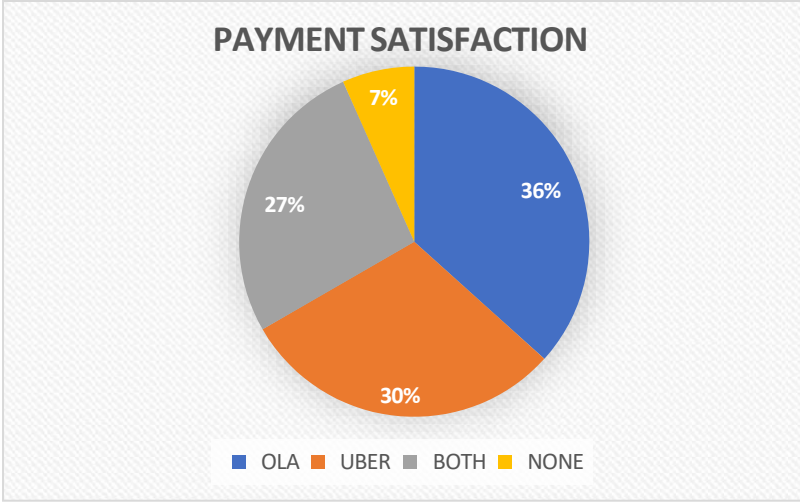
Data interpretation: The above graph shows that out of 30 respondents, 74% get their payment daily, followed by 23% who get their payment on a weekly basis, and the remaining 3% get their payment on a Monthly basis. Hence most of the respondents get their payments on a Daily basis.

7. IN-HAND SALARY:



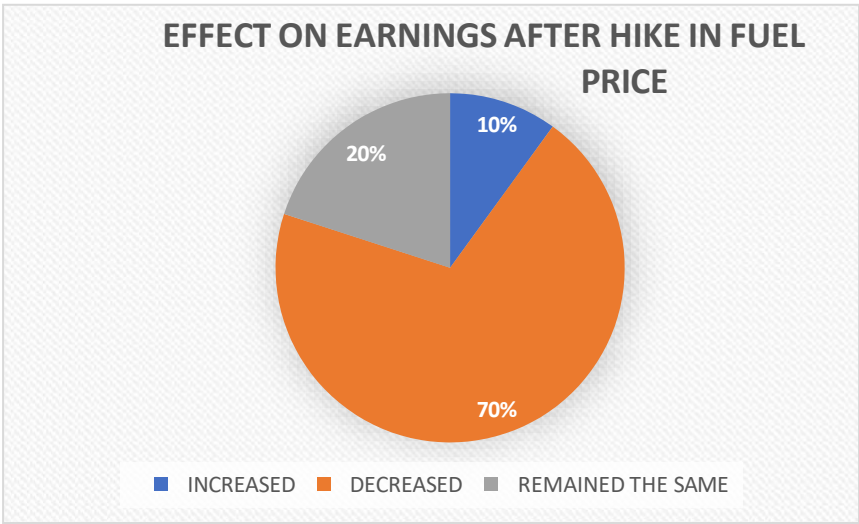
Data interpretation: According to the above graph, 47% out of 30 respondents, receive approximately More than Rs 1 to 2 thousand, followed by 43% who receive approximately Rs 2 to 3 thousand, and the remaining 10% receive approximately More than Rs 3 thousand. Hence most of the respondents receive Rs 1 to 2 thousand as their in- hand salary.

8. PAYMENT SATISFACTION:



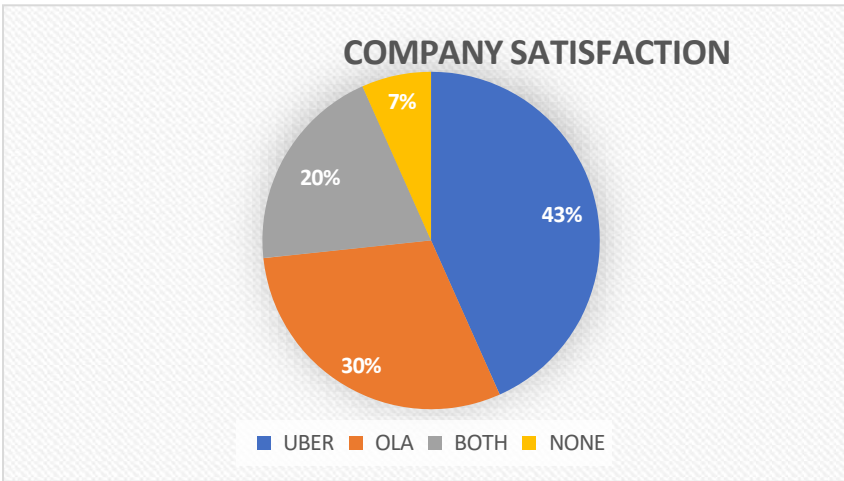
Data interpretation: In the above graph, 36% out of 30 respondents feels OLA pays them faster, 30% feels that UBER pays them faster, followed by 27% who feels Both pays them timely, and 7% feels neither of the companies pays them timely. Hence majority prefers OLA in terms of payment satisfaction.

9. EFFECT ON EARNINGS AFTER FUEL PRICE HIKE:



Data interpretation: In the above graph, out of 30 respondents, 10% feel that their earnings have Increased after the fuel price hike, followed by 70% feel that their earnings have Decreased, whereas the remaining 20% feel it has Remained the same. Hence the majority feel that their earnings have decreased after the rise in fuel price.

10.COMPANY SATISFACTION:



Data interpretation: In the above graph, out of 30 respondents, 43% are satisfied with working in UBER, 30% are satisfied with working in OLA, followed by 20% who are satisfied with working with Both the companies and 7% are not satisfied working with either the companies. Hence majority are satisfied working with UBER.

COMPLAINTS REPORTED BY THE CAB DRIVERS

- Reduced Earnings: The drivers are unable to make as much business in terms of the number of daily trips and earnings as before.
- Reduced Savings: after deducting a commission of 20% and other additional taxes from a journey fare, the driver cashes the remaining amount which is not enough to meet their daily expenses.
- Unhealthy Professional life: which includes working hours of over 18 hours a day to earn incentives.
- Blacklisting of Drivers: slashing their income on the basis of customer complaints without any verification.
- Even after the rise in fuel price, the fares of OLA and UBER has not increased therefore the drivers are facing a huge loss.
- There are many beneficial schemes given by the companies to the passengers but there are no such schemes for the drivers.
- During COVID situation, the drivers had to do the sanitization of the cars from their own pocket.

COMPARISON BETWEEN OLA & UBER

CATEGORY	OLA	UBER
Application	OLA app crashes at times and requires high-speed internet connection.	UBER has user-friendly interface and also has UBER Lite which works in poor network connectivity.
Availability	OLA runs in interior or small cities.	UBER runs only in metro cities.
Maintenance	In Uber regular quality checks are made.	OLA doesn't have such strict rules on maintenance policy.
Base fare	OLA's base fare is Rs 100.	UBER's base fare is Rs 45.
Cost per km	OLA's cost per km is Rs 11	UBER's cost per km is Rs 8.
Promotional offers	OLA doesn't provide many offers or discounts.	UBER provides good offers and discounts.
Cancellation charges	OLA gives the direct waiver to the users.	In case of Uber, cancellation charges for the users are returned in the way of uber credit which they can use in their next ride.
Customer support	Not that responsive and takes a lot of time in resolving the issue.	UBER resolves the issue within the stipulated time. The resolution to the issue is provided much faster than OLA.
Strict policies	OLA does not have such strict measures regarding the documentation of drivers.	UBER is very strict regarding the documentation of drivers. If a document gets expired, the driver is not allowed to drive.
Free vaccination drive	OLA had not taken any initiative to vaccinate their drivers during COVID.	UBER had arranged free vaccination drives to vaccinate their drivers during COVID.
App interface of Drivers	OLA does not specify the high-demand areas in the app.	UBER has the feature to show the areas of high demand.

FINDINGS

From the consumers:

- The pie charts, graphs and the analysis show that there were 30 respondents out of which the maximum age group recorded was 18-28 years and the majority were students.
- In the study, the majority of the respondents use online cab services frequently.
- The majority of the respondents i.e., 50% prefer UBER services to OLA in the city of Kolkata.
- The major reason for using online cab services told by the respondents was Less time consumption as it saves time.
- 67% of 30 total respondents feel that UBER has a more convenient and user-friendly app.
- From the study, we found that the majority of the respondents i.e., think that online cab services are affordable.
- 46% out of 30 total response prefers UBER and OLA over maintaining a personal vehicle.
- 50% of the total 30 respondents prefer Cash as the mode of payment and majority have given Average as the payment option satisfaction rating.
- 63% of respondents prefer UBER in terms of waiting duration.
- Majority of the respondents faced problem with the Price and Refusal factor from OLA where-as Knowledge of area/route and Assistance from drivers are the problems faced from UBER.
- Majority of the respondents i.e., 50% thinks that the demand for online cab services have increased during or after COVID.
- The majority of the respondents i.e., the fare has increased after the hike in fuel price.

From the Drivers:

- The pie charts, graphs and the analysis show that there were 30 respondents out of which the majority of drivers work with both the companies.
- Majority of drivers i.e., 73% are working for 4-7 years.
- The majority of the respondents i.e., 50% are working 5-6 days a week.
- Majority of the respondents i.e., 43% are working 10-12 hours per day.
- 67% of the total 30 respondents make 7-12 trips per day.
- 74% of the total 30 respondents get their payments on a daily basis.
- The majority of the respondents i.e., 47% receive approximately Rs 1 to 2thousand as their in-hand salary.
- 36% of the total respondents i.e., the majority prefer OLA in terms of payment satisfaction.
- 70% of the total respondents i.e., the majority feel that their earnings have decreased after fuel price hike.
- Lastly, 43% of the total respondents i.e., the majority of the drivers are satisfied working with UBER.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is confined to very few people in the large city of Kolkata.
- Expanding the research and reaching more people would cost more money and time.
- Many respondents were not feeling free to express their views.
- As many consumers do not use cab services so their preference is not affected.
- The data received is dynamic in nature.

CONCLUSION

The market for Ola and Uber Cabs depends on the customer preference, customer satisfaction.

The factors like convenient, brand, low cost, quick and safe, easy to book and timely pick and drop facility etc. which influence the customer decision to opt for these cabs.

To conclude, Ola and Uber cabs have positioned its brand and has created a good brand image in the minds of customers. The finding depicts a replica of the consumer's and driver's mindset and level of satisfaction and dissatisfaction towards the cab services. UBER has seen a tremendous growth in the taxi market sector than OLA. Maximum no. of respondents thinks that price charged by UBER/OLA are affordable and reasonable. Majority people feel that UBER App is more convenient and user-friendly and OLA / UBER rides are comfortable. Maximum no. of respondents will surely recommend OLA/UBER to their friends. It has seen that maximum no. of respondents have rated "Satisfied" for OLA/UBER in Kolkata and they feel it is better and more convenient compared to Auto/Buses. Maximum respondents prefer "Safety" as the most important factor while choosing OLA/UBER. Almost majority respondents are satisfied with the payment options provided by the OLA/UBER cab services. From the above study the most important conclusion is that they feel OLA / UBER is secure and safe for women.

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