
PURCHASE DECISION OF INDIAN CONSUMERS: THE FACTORS OF ATTRACTION WHILE PURCHASING CAR

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Abstract:

The aim of the paper is to study factors affecting the purchase behaviour of the automobile consumer. At present, the automobile sector is facing stiff competition due to availability of local & foreign brands and increasing pre-sales and post-sales expectation of the customers. The study has been conducted in northern states comprising Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh. The total 250 customers who have purchased (Volkswagen, Hyundai, Maruti and Honda cars) were contacted for purpose of study. The study is based on primary and secondary data. Kruskal-Wallis test has been applied to know the significant differences among the respondents relating to different factors of purchase. The test has been applied at assumed p -value =0.05. The statements with less than 0.05 p -value are considered significant and those with p -value more than the assumed value are considered to be insignificant. It has been found that safety, looks, shape, features and interior image and pre-sales and post sales policies have compelled the customer to select and buy the car. Hyundai and Volkswagen are emerging as very strong brand in the area in comparison to other manufacturers.

Key words: buying decisions, automobile sector, competition, interiors, shape and brand

1. Introduction

Modern market is driven by the consumers as it is decided by them whether to select or to reject the product. Consumer is king in the market and company cannot force them to buy the product. The need is to understand what is more relevant for consumers and how these consumers spend time for searching their preferences and tastes. Hence, it is also important for the organization to be careful at the product launching and other stages of the product development. In the globalized era marketing is becoming sensory marketing which engages the consumers senses and affects their perception, judgement and behaviour. Subconscious triggers which appeal to the basic senses may be a more efficient way to engage consumers. Also, these sensory triggers may result in consumers' self-generation of (desirable) brand attributes, rather than those verbally provided by the advertiser. The understanding of these sensory triggers implies an understanding of sensation and perception as it applies to consumer behaviour—this is the research perspective of sensory marketing

(Aradhana,2012). Buying resistance at any stage by the consumer may result to rejection of product and could create worrisome position for the company (Ilona and Domen, 2013). Stuart et al (2013) observed that consumers construct an ostensibly distinct and stable version of luxury brands expressing its subjective, experiential, moral and artistic constructs. Luxury brand discourse operates strategic juxtapositions between normatively positive (ideal) and normatively negative (problematic) categories, which are paradoxically interdependent. Cultural drivers and trust outcomes of consumer perceptions on issues pertaining to the unethical marketing behaviour of firms. It specifically investigates: the role of cultural orientation in forming consumer ethical ideology; the link between the consumer's ethical ideology and his/her perceptions regarding the unethical marketing behaviour of firms; the effect of perceived unethical marketing behaviour on trust in firms; and the moderating role of gender, age, and education of the consumers (Leonidas et al 2013). Marylyn and Ahmed,(2001) viewed that Marketing ethics and social responsibility are inherently controversial, and years of research continue to present conflicts and challenges for marketers on the value of a socially responsible approach to marketing activities. Consumers care about ethical behaviour. The marketers might encourage consumers to engage in positive purchase behaviour by way of ethical marketing. Ethical marketing leads to consumer empowerment and companies with such policies will operate for longer time in the market (Deirde et al, 2006). Chris and Matthew (2013) observed that different organizational culture is needed to drive the number of new services from that required for a higher success rate i.e learning culture. A new service development (NSD) capability has an important role supporting both of these aspects of new service development performance. The quantity and quality of NSD go on to affect the financial contribution made by NSD. NSD performance is further enabled by the appropriate alignment of culture, capability and strategic orientation. Companies having environment responsibility have an edge over competition (Scott and David, 2000). Consumers also values ecological lifestyle and are environmentally conscious (Elena and Eva, 2006). Another significant aspect is corporate social responsibility which contributes to building consumer identification and also correlated to consumer satisfaction (Andrea et al, 2013).

Cova (1996) expressed that in the era of post-modern marketing, functional difference between products or services are shrinking, and consumers make their buying decisions according to the image of these products. Image appears as a non-technological source of advantage and product is becoming its predominant function in a society saturated with goods. The job of post-modern marketing is to identify the cultural meanings and images that are intended for the product. Image marketing and branding or brand management are closely related. Branding is of critical importance in post-modern marketing. In post-modernity, the consumers are not a passive target for image marketing but an active link in the continual production of meanings. This may be called experience based marketing that emphasizes interactivity, connectivity and creativity. If the market can no longer be cut up into homogeneous and stable segments, the only alternative is to pin down the consumers individually with the help

of computerized information systems. Stephen et al (2009) highlighted the notion of fit between individual characteristics, task demands and the contextual environment. When the fit is high, older consumers use their considerable knowledge and experience to compensate for the impact of any age-related changes in abilities and resources. When the fit is relatively low, older consumers feel increased need to adapt their decision making processes. We discuss these consumer adaptations and propose a number of research questions related to the processes underlying them in order to contribute to a better understanding of how they can lead to more effective consumer decision making for older adults. Consumers desire to participate in a relationship influence their level of motivation, degree of confidence and these, in turn, impacts on the consumers' sense of affiliation with the service provider. A consumer's sense of affiliation subsequently influences the strength of their relationship and their level of satisfaction with the relationship. Consumers' desire indirectly impacts on retention intentions; hence service managers should be careful not to assume that consumers' deliberate choice to participate in a relationship will routinely result in loyalty (Maria et al, 2013).

1.1 Indian Automobile Sector at a Glance

At present, Indian automobile industry presents variety of models in various price range and meeting the expectation of customers of all the segments and producing vehicles as per international standards. Prior to liberalization Indian automobile industry was dependent on foreign technology but after 1991 scenario in the industry changed and Indian automobile manufacturers started manufacturing of vehicles with latest technology. This gave big boost to the industry which became globally competitive. After 1991 foreign automobile brands also entered the market and increased the competition in the industry. The performance of the sector is given below during 2011-2012.

Production: The cumulative production data for April-March 2012 shows production growth of 13.83 percent over same period last year. In March 2012 as compared to March 2011, production grew at a single digit rate of 6.83 percent. In 2011-12, the industry produced 20,366,432 vehicles of which share of two wheelers, passenger vehicles, three wheelers and commercial vehicles were 76 percent, 15 percent, 4 percent and 4 percent respectively (Siam,2013).

Domestic Sales: The growth rate for overall domestic sales for 2011-12 was 12.24 percent amounting to 17,376,624 vehicles. In the month of only March 2012, domestic sales grew at a rate of 10.11 percent as compared to March 2011. Passenger Vehicles segment grew at 4.66 percent during April-March 2012 over same period last year. Passenger Cars grew by 2.19 percent, period. In March 2012, domestic sales of Passenger Cars grew by 19.66 percent over the same month last year. Also, sales growth of total passenger vehicle in the month of March 2012 was at 20.59 percent (as

compared to March 2011). For the first time in history car sales crossed two million in a financial year. The overall Commercial Vehicles segment registered growth of 18.20 percent during April-March 2012 as compared to the same period last year (Siam,2013).

Exports: During April-March 2012, the industry exported 2,910,055 automobiles registering a growth of 25.44 percent. Passenger Vehicles registered growth at 14.18 percent in this period. Commercial Vehicles, Three Wheelers and Two Wheelers segments recorded growth of 25.15 percent, 34.41 percent and 27.13 percent respectively during April-March 2012. Car exports crossed half a million in a financial year. In March 2012 compared to March 2011, overall automobile exports registered a growth of 17.81 percent. (Siam,2013).

2. Review of Literature

Stephen (2009) reviewed existing knowledge about older consumers and decision making. They developed conceptual framework that incorporates the notion of fit between individual characteristics, task demands and the contextual environment. When the fit is high, older consumers use their considerable knowledge and experience to compensate for the impact of any age-related changes in abilities and resources. When the fit is relatively low, older consumers feel increased need to adapt their decision making processes.

Alexander and Assaf (2010) examined the three-way interaction among product-country image, product-origin congruency and product involvement on consumers' product-related evaluations and purchase intentions. They found that product-country image, product-origin congruency and product involvement interact on product evaluations plays a differentiating role for consumers in a low involvement situation, but a neutral role for consumers in a high involvement situation. Therefore, when a company deals with less-involved customers, the country of origin image and the congruency of the product origins are particularly important issues. Conversely, when a company deals with more product-involved customers, product-origin congruency has no differential influence on their product evaluations and behavioural intentions to purchase.

Aradhna (2012) highlighted the sensory marketing as "*marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their perception, judgment and behaviour.*" From a managerial perspective, sensory marketing can be used to create subconscious triggers that characterize consumer perceptions of abstract notions of the product. Also, these sensory triggers may result in consumers' self-generation of (desirable) brand attributes, rather than those verbally provided by the advertiser. The understanding of these sensory triggers implies an understanding of sensation and perception as it applies to consumer behaviour—this is the research perspective of sensory marketing.

Ilona and Domen (2012) examined the consumer resistance literature, and found that consumer parodic resistance – a resistant form of play that critically refunctions dominant consumption discourses and marketplace ideologies. Their contribution is threefold: (i) demonstrate the role of parody in consumer resistance; (ii) outline the subversively playful nature of parodic consumer resistance; and (iii) demonstrate how parodic holiday celebration unsettles dominant discourses and conventions.

Pavlos (2012) in his study found that corporate social responsibility including environmental protection, treatment of employees, and charitable giving impacts the sales performance of the company. The results of the study indicate that CSP influences consumer-firm emotional attachment and that this attachment constitutes an unrecognized meditational pathway in the CSP-loyalty link. The results identify the moderating and strengthening role of altruism, need-for-activity, and esteem-enhancement on the CSP-emotional attachment link. Finally, the study reveals that attributions are likely to moderate the influence of consumer altruism.

Jha and Krishnana (2013) in their round table discussions focused on how multinational companies from developed countries are operating in emerging markets, facing challenges and introducing new techniques in their operations with innovation. These companies are developing close relationships with other similar organizations, co-creating with customers, empowering the staff and taking clean slate approach to new product development. This has given them edge not only in the local market but also in the global market.

Kumar and Pradhna (2013) advocated the need of software as a service because the physical contact between the service provider and the customer is minimizing. The service level agreements are the only means of a confidence building between the service provider and customers. The service level agreements are increasing day by day and these service level agreements are becoming complex and challenging. The study highlights that current service level agreement must focus on security, control and performance issues. In the current scenario more focus is required on trust management, integration of regional languages and quality of service.

Seethamraju and Sunder (2013) described that Enterprise Resource Planning(ERP) in the past have contributed to simplification, standardization, integration and automation of processes but their influence on the company's ability to build agility is ambiguous. The study suggests that integration of processes and information across functional boundaries contributes to the improvement in the speed of execution and enhances the ability to re-configure process components. This further leads to improved visibility, centralization of control and improved decision making process..

3. Objectives and Importance of Study

The study has been conducted keeping in mind the consumer buying process with the following objectives:

- ✓ To identify the reason of purchasing car.
- ✓ To know customer process of information search of product.
- ✓ To examine the basis of evaluation of product.
- ✓ To find out the factors of attraction for purchase of car.
- ✓ To know their post purchase experience.

In the present time competition in the market is increasing day by day among all industries and in all the areas of business operation. Marketing in the 21st century derecognize the concept of national boundaries and throw open competition among national and foreign brands. The automobile sector is one of the major contributors for revenue generation for the central and state governments. The number of cars is increasing on day to day basis as more and more people are buying or want to buy car.

Hence, keeping this in mind the study became important to have insight about the consumer buying decision process in the northern states. The study adds to knowledge to the manufacturers of the cars in the region and also helpful to understand the buying decisions process and factors of attraction for purchase of car. The analysis part highlights the various factors of attraction for purchase and significant buying variation among the owners of different brands.

4. Research Methodology

The study has been conducted in northern states comprising Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh. The total 250 customers who have purchased (Volkswagen, Hyundai, Maruti and Honda cars) were contacted for purpose of study .However the responses of the 30 respondents were discarded due to incomplete information filled by them in the questionnaire. Hence total 220 customers were selected for data analysis purpose. Thus the study comprising 220 customers (state-wise) includes 44 from Punjab, 41 belonging to Haryana, 45 in Himachal Pradesh, 43 from Delhi and 47 in Chandigarh. The company-wise sample includes 56 customers of Volkswagen, 55 from Hyundai, 54 having Honda cars and 55 owning Maruti brands.

The study is based on primary and secondary data. Kruskal-Wallis test has been applied to know the significant differences among the respondents relating to different factors of purchase. The test has been applied at assumed p-value =0.05. The statements with less than 0.05 p-value are considered significant and those with p-value more than the assumed value are considered to be insignificant.

5. Discussion and Results

The data collected has been analyzed to identify the main reasons, process and method of information search, basis of evaluation of product, buying decisions: factors of attraction and post purchase experience of the customers in the tables from 1 to 5. In table 1 and 2, the percentage have been calculated while Kruskal-Wallis test

has been applied in the table 3 to 5 to know the significant differences among the respondents relating to different factors of purchase. The test has been applied at assumed p-value =0.05. The statements with less than 0.05 p-value are considered significant and those with p-value more than the assumed value are considered to be insignificant.

5.1. Reason of buying Car

The existing customers were enquired about the reasons of buying the car. The responses in this regard are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Reasons	PB	HY	HP	CHD	DL	Total
a) Need of car	30(68.1)	36(87.8)	39(86.6)	32(68)	37(86)	174(79)
b) New product in market	37(84)	22(53.6)	19(42.2)	34(72.3)	31(72)	143(65)
c) Family Pressure/peer group pressure	38(86.3)	34(82.9)	29(64.4)	39(82.9)	29(67.4)	169(76.8)
d) For status in the society	40(90.9)	37(90.2)	38(84.4)	37(78.7)	42(97.6)	194(88.1)
e) Craze for the product	29(65.9)	22(53.6)	24(53.3)	31(65.9)	27(62.7)	133(60.4)
f) Surplus finances	31(70.4)	21(51.2)	23(51.1)	37(78.7)	34(79)	146(66.3)
g) Availability of car	10(22.7)	9(21.9)	12(26.6)	8(17)	6 (13.9)	45(20.4)
h) Sales person influence	7(15.9)	6(14.6)	4(8.8)	3 (6.3)	2 (4.6)	22(10)
i) Follow up by the company	5(11.3)	3(7.3)	2(4.4)	1(2.1)	2 (4.6)	13(5.9)
N =	44	41	45	47	43	220

Source: own

Note: Abbreviations) PB-Punjab, Hy-Haryana, HP-Himachal Pradesh, CHD-Chandigarh, DL-Delhi. ii) Figures in brackets denotes %age of the respondents

Table 1 reveals that 88.1 per cent of the respondents purchased car to have 'status in the society, which has emerged as the main reason of buying. This is followed by 'need of car' (79%) and 'Family Pressure/peer group pressure' (76.8%). State- wise analysis shows that 97.6 per cent customers from Delhi and 90.9 per cent respondents from Punjab have purchased vehicle to have status in the society.

In Haryana 87.8 per cent followed by Himachal Pradesh (86.6%) admitted that the purchase of car is need based. 'Family pressure and peer group pressure' have been stated another important reason of buying the vehicle by 86.3 per cent

respondents from Punjab, followed by 82.9 per cent from Haryana. 'Craze for the product' have been listed important reason of purchase by the customers of Punjab and Chandigarh (65.9%) in both the states. Further, 'surplus finances' have also emerged as one of the reason of purchase in the state of Delhi (79%), followed by Punjab (70.4%). The other factors such as 'availability of car', 'sales person influence', and 'follow up by the company' have not been rated as the important reasons of the purchase.

5.2. Information Search of the Product

The respondents were further asked to highlight the sources of collection of information relating to the product. Table 2 shows their responses in this regard.

Table 2

Sources of information	PB	HY	HP	CHD	DL	Total
(a) Through market Survey	12(27.2)	14(34.1)	8(17.7)	11(23.4)	6(13.9)	51(23.1)
(b) Search on the websites	24(54.5)	28(68.2)	29(64.4)	41(87.2)	37(86)	159(72.2)
(c) Visiting company showrooms	44(100)	41(100)	45(100)	47(100)	43(100)	220(100)
(d) Test Drives	41(93.1)	38(92.6)	39(86.6)	42(89.3)	41(95.3)	201(91.3)
(e) Feedback of the existing customers	27(61.3)	31(75.6)	38(84.4)	34(72.3)	36(83.7)	166(75.4)
(f) Information brochures of the company	22(50)	19(46.3)	27(60)	38(80.8)	34(79)	140(63.6)
(g) Advertising in the Electronic/print media	11(25)	9(21.9)	12(26.6)	11(23.4)	14(32.5)	57(25.9)
(h) Trade fairs	8 (18.1)	10(24.3)	6(13.3)	6(12.7)	4(9.3)	34(15.4)

Source: own

Note: Abbreviations: PB-Punjab, Hy-Haryana, HP-Himachal Pradesh, CHD-Chandigarh, DL-Delhi. ii) Figures in brackets denotes %age of the respondents

It is quite evident from Table 2 that all customers in all five states have purchased car after visiting the company showroom only, followed and 91.3 per cent customers have also taken the 'test drive' before purchase. Area-wise analysis indicates that 87.2 per cent from Chandigarh and 86 per cent respondents from Delhi have also 'searched web-sites' of the companies to collect product information. The analysis further shows that 84.4 per cent customers in Himachal Pradesh followed by 83.7 per cent customers in Delhi have taken 'feedback from the existing customer'. Whereas the other sources like 'Information brochures of the company', advertising in

the Electronic/print media', and 'trade fair' have not been rated as an important source of information by majority of the customers.

5.3.Basis of Evaluation of Car

The respondents were further asked to indicate the importance given to the various factors for evaluation of the car on a five point scale. Mean scores have been calculated and Kruskal-Wallis test has been applied to identify the significant differences among the respondents owning different cars. Their responses are shown in the Table 3.

Table: 3

Basis	Vol	Hyn	Hon	Mau	Average mean Score	P-value
(a) Product Features	4.38	4.74	4.26	4.12	4.38	.074
(b) Financial issues	4.19	4.13	3.74	3.56	3.91	.000
(c) Brand image in market	4.66	4.61	4.41	4.72	4.60	.038
(d) Pre-sales and post sales services promised	4.37	4.62	4.29	4.35	4.41	.763
(e) Environmental friendly concerns	4.45	4.34	4.26	4.32	4.34	.006
(f) Guarantee/warrantee or other schemes	4.69	4.85	3.37	2.95	3.97	.000
(g) Financing facilities	4.31	4.34	4.62	4.29	4.39	.764
(h) Purchasing power	2.12	2.19	2.38	2.42	2.28	.661

Source: own **Abbreviations:** Vol-Volkswagen, Hyn-Hyundai, Hon-Honda, Mau-Maruti

Table 3 indicates that most of the customer considered 'Product Features', 'Brand image in market', 'pre-sales and post sales services promised', 'environmental friendly concerns' and 'financing facilities (mean score being more than 4 in all) as the most important factors for evaluation of the car. Company-wise analysis shows that customers of Volkswagen and Hyundai stated 'product features', 'financial issues', 'pre-sales and post sales services promised', 'environmental friendly concerns', 'guarantee/warrantee or other schemes', (mean score being high than Honda and Maruti) as the most important factors for evaluation of the car. Whereas, 'Brand image in market' have been considered important for evaluation of car in case of Maruti and 'financing facilities' by Honda car owners (mean scores being highest).

K-W results reveals that there are significant differences among the respondents relating to different brands with respect to the factors such as 'financial issues' and 'guarantee/warrantee or other schemes' p-value being less than 0.05.

5.4. Buying Decisions: Factors of Attraction

The customers were also enquired about the degree of emphasis they give to various factors of attraction compelling them for purchase decisions. The information in this regard is shown in Table no 4.

Table: 4

Factors	Vol	Hon	Hyn	Mar	Average mean score	P-value
a) Brand Name/image of company	4.46	4.32	4.85	4.35	4.49	.076
b) Price of the car	3.73	3.52	3.48	3.61	3.59	.025
c)Product differentiate from competitor's products(looks/shape	4.52	3.68	4.63	3.95	4.19	.000
d)Interior and exterior style/design	4.58	3.83	4.81	3.72	4.23	.000
e) Safety	4.62	4.39	4.51	4.46	4.49	.001
f) Mileage of the vehicle	4.63	3.66	4.70	3.73	4.18	.000
g) Net work of the company in the area	4.14	4.42	4.28	4.84	4.42	.074
h) Availability of product	3.64	3.81	3.65	3.72	3.70	.659
i) sales team influence	3.40	3.38	3.29	3.62	3.42	.173
j)services differentiation	4.37	3.38	4.21	3.85	3.95	.000
k) Brand loyalty (repeat purchase)	4.64	3.66	4.16	3.76	4.05	.000
l) Brand ambassador and Advertising Basis	2.28	2.62	2.36	2.54	2.45	.024
m) Discounts and other schemes	3.33	3.80	3.86	4.32	3.82	.000

Source: own **Abbreviations:** Vol-Volkswagen, Hyn-Hyundai, Hon-Honda, Mau-Maruti

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents considered 'brand Name/image of company', 'product differentiate from competitor's products', 'interior and exterior style/design', 'Safety', 'net work of the company in the area', and 'brand loyalty (repeat purchase)' as the important factors of attraction while taking buying decisions(mean score being more than 4).

Company-wise analysis reveals that customers of Hyundai considered 'brand Name/image of company, 'product differentiate from competitor's products', ' Interior and exterior style/design', 'mileage of the vehicle', and 'brand loyalty (repeat purchase)', as the most important factors of attraction for purchase decisions (mean score being highest in comparison to others). Respondents of Volkswagen viewed 'price of the car', 'safety', 'services differentiation', and 'brand loyalty (repeat purchase)', as the important factors of attraction for buying the car (mean score being highest). Further, customers of Maruti have stated 'net work of the company in the area', sales team influence', and 'discounts and other schemes', as factors of attraction

to purchase the vehicle, whereas, respondents of Honda considered ‘availability of product’ as the reason to buy the car (mean score being the highest). The data also reveals that the factor brand ambassador/advertising have not been rated high by the customers.

K-W analysis shows that there are significant differences among customers with respect to factors ‘product differentiate from competitor’s products’, ‘interior and exterior style/design’, ‘mileage of the vehicle’, ‘service differentiation’ and ‘brand loyalty (repeat purchase)’ as the p-values are lower than the assumed p-value of 0.05.

5.5 Post Purchase Experience

The surveyed respondents were asked to indicate the post purchase experience with the companies. The responses given by them are presented in Table 5.

Table: 5

Experience	Vol	Hon	Hyn	Mar	Average mean score	P-value
a)Purchase regrets	1.19	1.22	1.00	1.00	1.10	.127
b) Product related experience	4.63	4.32	4.52	4.61	4.52	.072
c) non availability of spare parts	4.42	4.91	3.72	3.22	4.06	.000
d) service experience	4.48	4.69	4.72	4.57	4.61	.076
e) Guarantee/warrantee issues resolved	3.47	3.02	3.23	2.56	3.07	.004
f) Any complaint during one year	1.10	1.23	1.36	1.17	1.21	.336
g) Promptness of company to resolve issue	4.06	3.46	4.21	3.32	3.76	.000
h)More Time taken than expected to resolve issue	3.66	3.42	3.54	2.68	3.32	.000
i)Product recommendation to reference groups	4.55	4.42	4.63	3.34	4.23	.000
J) Brand switching	2.01	2.12	1.86	2.42	2.10	.000

Source: own **Abbreviations:** Vol-Volkswagen, Hyn-Hyundai, Hon-Honda, Mau-Maruti

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents replied in positive manner with respect to ‘product related experience’, and ‘service experience’ (mean score being more than 4). It has also been found that majority of the car owner do not have purchase regrets.

Company-wise analysis reveals that customers relating to Volkswagen have very positive product experience (mean score 4.63) followed by Maruti owners (mean score 4.61). The majority of the respondents from Honda have experienced difficulties due to non availability of spare parts (mean score 4.91 and highest) followed by

Volkswagen owners (mean score 4.42). Whereas the customers of Maruti do not face such problems (mean score being the lowest 3.22). It has also been observed that majority of the customers have not faced any major product problems as the average mean score about complaint is (1.21). Customers of Volkswagen appears to be satisfied with 'guarantee/warranty schemes' offered by the company (mean score 3.47 being highest). Respondents belonging to Hyundai viewed that company have 'promptness to resolve issue' (mean score being 4.21), whereas, customers of Volkswagen feels that company takes 'more time than expected to resolve the issue' (mean score 3.66) but customers of Maruti do not experience such issues (mean score 2.68 being the lowest). Further, owners of Hyundai agrees for 'product recommendation to reference groups' (mean score 4.63) followed by Volkswagen (mean score 4.55). With regard to brand switching the customers of Maruti felt that they may go for changing the brand in future (mean score 2.42).

K-W analysis shows that there is significant difference among the customers of different brands with respect to 'non availability of spare parts', 'promptness of company to resolve issue', 'more Time taken than expected to resolve issue', 'product recommendation to reference groups' and 'brand switching' as the p-values are lower than the assumed p-value of 0.05.

6. Conclusions

The conducted study shows that most of the customers have bought car to have status in the society under family pressure and peer pressure in Delhi and Punjab whereas majority of respondents belonging to Himachal Pradesh have purchased the vehicle on need based. It has also been observed that people of Punjab and Delhi had surplus finance and wanted to spend for having status in the society. Almost all the customers preferred to visit the company showroom for product evaluation purposes. Further, it has also been found that most of the customer relating to Volkswagen and Hyundai has evaluated cars on the basis of product features, financial issues, 'Pre-sales and post sales services, environmental friendly concerns 'guarantee/warranty schemes. Whereas, brand image in market have been considered important for evaluation of car by Maruti owners and financing facilities by Honda car owners. Moreover, the study also reveals that customers of Hyundai considered brand image of company, interiors and exterior style/design, mileage of the vehicle, and brand loyalty as the most important factors of attraction for purchase decisions. Customers of Volkswagen stated price, safety, services differentiation, and also brand loyalty, as the reasons of buying the car. However, customers of Maruti purchased the car due to good net work of the company, sales team influence, and discounts and other schemes, whereas, respondents of Honda considered availability of product as the reason to buy the car. Customers relating to Volkswagen have very positive product experience followed by Maruti owners and respondents from Honda have experienced difficulties due to non availability of spare parts.

It has also been observed that majority of the customers relating to Hyundai and Volkswagen appeared to more satisfied and better served than the customers of Maruti and Honda. Though, owners of all brand studied have not faced any major product complaint, even then Maruti and Honda customers needs more attention in the areas where Volkswagen and Hyundai are serving better, especially to the area such as promptness to resolve issue, better customer care services in pre-sales and post-sales because this will lead to repeat purchase and customers will be more loyal towards the product.

Hence, to survive in the market it also becomes important to have best customer relationship marketing practices and serving them to utmost levels. Adoption of modern management techniques with special emphasis on marketing practices and continuous study of consumer buying behaviour would help the organization to take lead over the competition.

The future study can be conducted by taking larger sample from other automobile manufacturers also relating to other marketing aspects such as marketing mix strategies, customer Relationship marketing, product life cycle or any other operational area relating to marketing. The study can also be conducted in the same territory or other parts of the country to have more insight knowledge about the customers. Further detailed survey on the consumer buying models would also lead to more understanding about the consumer purchase decisions process. The study has relevance to the marketing Practitioners, decision makers, academicians, research scholars and automobile manufacturers and its marketing departments to have insight of prevalent factors of attraction in car buying decisions process by the consumers of northern region.

7.References

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