RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONSUMERS ATTITUDE TOWARDS MULTI UTILITY VEHICLES – A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE IN CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to consumer attitude towards multi utility vehicles – a comparative analysis with particular special reference Chennai Cities. The investigator personally distributed the questionnaires to each member of the randomly selected sample size is 200. They were requested to answer the items in the booklet as per the instructions provided at the beginning of each questionnaire. Confidentiality of response was assured. The respondents were co-operative and took one hour to fill the information in all the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected by the investigator from the respondents. The responses were scored as per the scoring key of the respective questionnaire. The hypotheses were tested by using standard statistical tools such as Path analysis, Factor analysis and Regression analysis. Then the results were tabulated, analysed and discussed. So the result shows that majority of respondents satisfied about multi utility vehicles.

INTRODUCTION

Automobile Industry has a unique process and various levels of operations. The term Multi -Utility Vehicles owes its origin to the 'General Purpose vehicles" used by American armies during the World War II. India's first Multi - Utility Vehicle was launched by Mahindra and Mahindra in 1944. Multi - Utility Vehicles was a much overlooked segment till a few decades back. The languishing segment received a much needed hope when Tata launched Sumo. Multi-Utility Vehicles are now seen as ideal for the rural roads, and are highly favored in hilly regions of the country where the terrains tend to be the rougher side.

Multi Utility Vehicle (MUV) plays a different roles for different people in this world and has muscular look complemented by roomy interiors. It is known as multi purpose vehicles and used as commercial passenger vehicles. It is not only newly designed cockpit and multiple feature options which offer more comfort and convenience but also multi usage capabilities with its dynamic features like high quality, raggedness, durability, stability, reliability, easy maintenance and operational economy. It will be affordable in gaining much more potential buyers and that can be attributed to the sport in the sale of the same.

The Multi Vehicle, abbreviated as MUV, is also known as Minivan or Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV),. In technical terms, MUVs are kind of automobiles which are taller than a sedan and hatchback and provide larger interior space through their removable seats. Dur to their characteristics of ample seating for 07-10 passengers, big boot space, the MUVs are preferred most by large families and corporate house. Multi Utility Vehicles are classified into three different variants of large, compact and mini. In the Indian automobile market the mini version of MUVs are more popular & leading auto makers like Tata Motors, Chevrolet, Mahindra Xylo and Toyota are the key players of this field.

Some of the companies that have stakes in Multi-Utility Vehicles segment are -Mahindra & Mahindra and it holds over 55% of the market shares in the Multi-Utility Vehicles segment. The Multi-Utility Vehicles of Mahindra & Mahindra are known for their reliability, strength and excellent return for money.

Tata Motors provide most of the competition to Mahindra & Mahindra. It enjoyed immense success after the launch of Sumo in 1995. Since then its presence has been paled by the plethora of extremely successful launches by Mahindra & Mahindra.

As the name suggests, Multi Utility Vehicle is jack of all traits. And these MUVs pose differently in different aspects. With the go-getter features, vigor, Elevated quality, persistency, toughness, credibility, stylish appearance, easy carrying, and supervision economy, MUVs complete their profile. These vehicles are used for public and private interest as well Many MUVs dealers like General Motors Tavera Chevrolet. Mahindra Xylo, Toyota Innova and Tata Sumo are good performers in this field. Some Multi Vehicle Models are described below

> ➢ Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd. - They provide prime collection of Xylo with spacious interiors and gorgeous and looking accessories.
> ➢ Toyota - It introduced Innova which is a car of long drive. Its height and comfy seats are appreciable for a long distance tours. Innova had 8+1 seating arrangement with the safety of beams and ELR belts being used at the door.
> ➢ Chevrolet - This Company introduced Tavera as MUV which is compatible with long tours.

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➢ TATA - This Company introduced Sumo as MUV which is Very Comfy for all users.

Need For The Present Study

The relevance and importance of understanding consumer behaviour is rooted in the modern marketing concept of multi utility vehicle. In order to operationalise this concept, management attempts to solve some consumption problems of consumers. However no businessman possibly helps consumers solve their consumption problems unless he understands them and unless he makes an attempt to comprehend the buying processes and the factors influencing it.

Consumer behaviour is always dynamic. Therefore, it is necessary to study, analyze, and understand, and monitor this understanding to the marketing management so that effective decisions can be taken in respect of products, price, promotion and physical distribution. The profit position of a product hinges on the kind of predisposition -positive/negative - that a consumer has developed such a predisposition.

Besides, the Indian marketing conditions, in particular, the role of the Government and the steadily emerging consumer movement necessitates that marketers in India must understand consumer behaviour-their needs, aspirations, expectations and problems. It will be extremely useful in exploiting marketing opportunities and in meeting the challenges that the Indian market offers. Thus, in substance, it may be said that in the interest of effective marketing, marketers must develop and understand their consumers' behaviour, the buying motives, the buying processes, and the factors influencing the process of multi utility vehicle.

Statement Of The Problem

As Consumers, we benefit from insights into our own consumption - related decisions; what we buy, why we buy, how we buy, and the promotional influences that persuade us to buy. The study of consumer behaviour enables us to become better - that is, wiser consumers.

Change in Government policies coupled with aggressive capacity additions and up gradation of models by MUV in the early nineties, led to increase in supply, and subsequently reduced the waiting period for MUV cars.

The dominance of economy segment will continue in the future as it will provide large volume to MUV.

MUV is quite price sensitive and the Indian consumer wants the best for the price.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A study of related literature is a very important step, not only in finding a problem but also in the formation of hypothesis and in the selection of methods and tools to be employed in the interpretation of results. A familiarity with the literature in any problem area helps the student to discover what is already known, what others have attempted to find out and what problems remain to be solved. Moreover, a brief analysis of related literature is also helpful for the investigator in giving future suggestion for avoiding duplication. So the study of related literature plays a vital role in the field of research in consumer behaviour.

The importance of reviewing studies made earlier in one's field of investigation need not be overemphasized. At this juncture, the following observation made by Best (1959) is worth recording. "Practically all human knowledge can be found in books and libraries. Unlike other animals that must start new with each generation, man builds upon the accumulated and recorded knowledge of the past". Therefore, the investigator went through the earlier studies made in her field of research and they are presented in the succeeding paragraphs. The review of the related literature is of immense help to the investigator to find out the significance of the research problem in relation to the connected area of research.

Need And Importance Of Related Studies

A survey of related literature immensely helps the investigator to acquaint of equip with what had been done in the past. According to Best John [1977], ''a brief summary of the previous research and the writings of the experts on the field provides the known and what is still unknown. Since, the effective research must be based on past knowledge, this helps to eliminate the duplication of what has been done and provides useful hypothesis and helpful suggestions for significant investigation''.

Arvind Muhkerjee and Triochansastry (2008) from Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta and Ahmedabad respectively, presented on "Study of passenger multi utility vehicle dealers in India', they analysed the characteristics of an efficient dealer, they identified the best practices in dealer management in the Indian automobile industry. They linked dealer strategies to dealer performance, using Data Envelopment Analysis as a technique. Three patterns or configurations of efficient dealers emerged, the laissez faire, market leader and agiledealers. These factors were investment in sales and after sales facilities, dealer training, dealer expenditure on advertising and promotions, and dealer participation in decision making.

Nick Maling (2008) analysed in detail the company Saatchi & Saatchi Co Phc., in the subject terms of advertising agencies, advertising accounts. Saatchi & Saatchi UK had beaten the 5 other agencies to an estimated L 70 million Pan - European launch campaign for Toyota's new multi utility vehicle, the Yaris. It had developed an idea that it can be used in 17 countries.

George Parker (2008), picturised the subject of high tech industries, information technology and the problems associated with it. It is found that there is a difference between tech advertising and consumer advertising and the problem is with the exception of few companies like Intel and Microsoft, most people in tech do not have patience to stick with the program.

Leena Thomas (2009) discussed her view about the upswing of automobile industry. In the first quarter of the year 1999 is reported to be the best of the automotive industry in the recent years. It witnessed an upswing of 51.18 per cent in the passenger multi utility vehicle segment compared to last year. Banks and private financiers, competed for a share in the loan market. The entry of new players has expanded the market. It was found there is a considerable increase in corporate buying.

Nick Maling (2009) analysed the product lines, market strategy, market entry with respect to Volkswagen group. Volkswagen attempted to stretch beyond its traditional position, into the lucrative echelons of the executive and luxury market. V6 is expected to be the first in a new range of upmarket multi utility

vehicle. VW a marque usually associated with small multi utility vehicle like Golf or Beetle.

Lijee Philip (2009) pointed out the latest Pet rolls on road. He says that petrol multi utility vehicle are back in vogue. It is found that internationally too petrol multi utility vehicle are more in demand than diesel multi utility vehicle. In US market, nearly 99 percent of vehicles sold are petrol models. Petrol models are more refined and user friendly. Diesel multi utility vehicle have obvious disadvantages like sluggish back up and higher spare costs and these disadvantages are overcome in petrol multi utility vehicle.

Sooraj Bhatiu and Puneet Dhamija (2009), analysed the Indian Passenger multi utility vehicle industry. They discussed about the 2 trends that were emerging in the market. The first trend discussed was `capacity will outstrip demand'. They supported this fact by the `Asian Automotive Industry forecast report, June 2008'. The next trend discussed was about the fragmentation of the Indian market. The datas relating to these facts were sorted out from the Ex-Delhi showroom price, it was found that fragmentation is particularly severe in the multi utility vehicle segment where the number of variants offered in the market has increased to fourteen.

Jean Halliday (2009) discussed his view about the Daimler Chrysler. He said that chryslers Neon was positioned as a cute, friendly multi utility vehicle. The ads are more sophisticated in keeping with the changes in the multi utility vehicle.

Ameeta Agnihotri (2009) discussed about `loving multi utility vehicle taken for the vehicle'. She said that as much one has spent so much on a vehicle, the same multi utility vehicle to be spent for maintaining the vehicle. She guided them from where they can begin. She presented few do it yourself suggestions about multi utility vehicle parts, which are listed alphabetically from `A' right up to `W'. They are airfilter, battery, belts, brakefluid, coolant, Engine oil, exhaust, lights, power steering fluid, shock absorbers, tyres, transmission fluid, washerfluid, and wiper blades.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The investigator personally distributed the questionnaires to each member of the randomly selected sample. They were requested to answer the items in the booklet as per the instructions provided at the beginning of each questionnaire. Confidentiality of response was assured. The respondents were co-operative and took one hour to fill the information in all the questionnaires. The questionnaires were collected by the investigator from the respondents. The responses were scored as per the scoring key of the respective questionnaire. Then the results were tabulated, analysed and discussed.

Objectives Of The Study

- To analyse the consumer attitude towards about multi utility vehicles – a comparative analysis with particular special reference to Chennai cities.
- To find out the factors that influence the buyers for the purchase of multi utility vehicles.
- To suggest some remedial measure to improve the present existing system.

Method of Data Collection

The term "survey" suggests gathering of evidence relating to current conditions. Surely research is the method for collecting and analyzing data obtained from larger number of respondents of a specific population collected through highly structured and detailed questionnaire or interviews. It helps to collect descriptive data which people can provide from their own expenses. Primary data were collected by conducting direct structured interview using questionnaire. This is an empirical study and primary data were collected from a random sample of 200 respondents in Chennai cities.

Statistics used

Statistical measures such as Path analysis, Factor analysis and Regression analysis were used to interpret the obtained data.

Analysis of the data

The data collected through questionnaires have been tabulated. By using the above mentioned statistical tools, the data have been analysed. Interpretations have been drawn based on the analysis. The findings and observations are the result and outcome of the interpretations made during the course of analysis.

Limitations of the study

1. The responses from the respondents could be casual in nature. This may be due to lack of interest or time on their part.
2. The correctness of information provided by the respondents in the personal data could not be established.
3. Some of the information provided by the respondents might not be correct.
4. Getting timely responses from the respondents was a difficult task.
5. The reason for this may be attributed to their busy schedules.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Path Analysis

A key idea in path analysis is that path effect coefficients can be used to estimate the empirical correlation among variables in the system. The figure shows path diagram representing the causal relationship presumed to underline the calculations reported in Table 1 and 2. The path analysis model shows the effect of Important factors, Expectations and Satisfied about MUV vehicle (Table 1 and Table 2). The decomposition of the association of the independent variables with consumer attitude towards multi vehicles given in Table 1 reveals the direct and indirect effect among the Important factors, Expectations and Satisfied about MUV vehicle.

Table 1 shows that among the three groups, consumer expectations is highly correlated (0.576) with consumer attitude when compared with other. Because they interact more with the customers. It is revealed that the consumers more aware about the multi utility vehicle and expected prefer important factors.

Regarding the network relationship the path direction and path co-efficient are clearly shown. X_2 → X_1 shows negative. But X_2 → X_3 → X_1 shows positive and X_3 → X_1 also positive both are significant. So important factors and expectations are directly related to consumer attitude towards multi vehicle. Path diagram indicates that important factors is directly related to consumers attitude. As per the output path diagram, important factors and expectations are more pertinent to

consumer attitude. In this analysis, $r_2 = 0.451$ significantly indicates positive and appears with the similar result that exists.

the results of the factor analysis. Name of all the 21 variables and their respective loadings in all the four factors are given in the table. An arbitrary value of 0.3 and above is considered

Table 1 Decomposition of association between dependent and independent variables

Consumer Attitude	Type of Effect		
	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Important factors	-0.069	0.443	-0.1025
Expectations	0.458	-0.278	0.5768
Satisfied about MUV vehicle	0.226	0.343	0.1435

Source: Primary data

Table 2 The network relationship of X_2, X_3, and X_4 with X_1

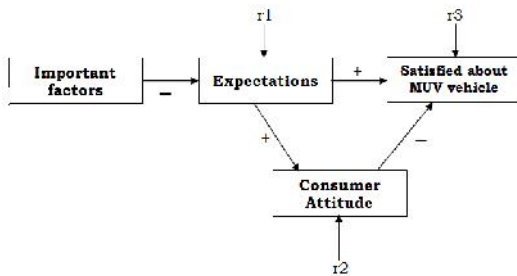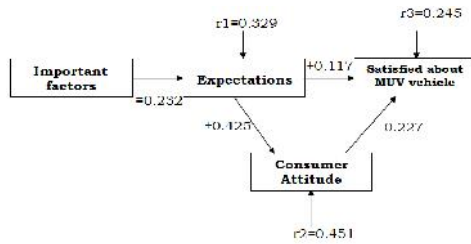| Path direction	Path co-efficient
X_2 X_1	-0.078
X_2 X_3 X_1	0.437
X_3 X_1	0.463
X_3 X_4 X_1	-0.289
X_4 X_1	0.247

Diagram Input Path Diagram representing a Proposed Causal Model

Output Path Diagram representing a Proposed Causal Model

significant loading. A positive loading indicates that greater the value of the variable greater is the contribution to the factor. On the other hand, a negative loading implies that greater the value, lesser its contribution to the factor or vice versa.

Keeping these in mind, a study of the loadings indicates the presence of some significant pattern. Effort is made to fix the size of correlation that is meaningful, club together the variables with loadings in excess of the criteria and search for a concept that unifies them, with greater attention to variables having higher loadings. Variables have been ordered and grouped by the size of loadings to facilitate interpretation and shown in table 3.

Factor analysis was done among 21 variables used in the study. The principal component analysis with varimax rotation was used to find out the percentage of variance of each factor, which can be grouped together from the total pool of 21 variables considered in the study.

The results are given in Table 3 and column 1 shows the serial number, '2' shows the name given for each factor, '3' shows variables loaded in each factor, '4' gives the loadings, '5' gives the communality for each variables, '6' gives the Eigen value for each factor and '7' gives the percentage of variance found out through the analysis. The factor, variance percentage for each factor is 12.7, 9.7, 8.3 and 4.14 (total 35 percentage)

Table 3 Factor analysis: showing factor loading, communality, Eigen value and percentage of variance of the emerging factors

Sl. (1)	Factors (2)	Significant variables (3)		Factor loading (4)	Communality (5)	Eigen Value (6)	% of variance (7)
1.	Important factors	a)	Price	0.750	0.683	4.688	12.669
		b)	Less Maintenance Cost	0.708	0.659		
		c)	Resale value	0.703	0.646		
		d)	Size	0.651	0.510		
		e)	Spares Availability	0.641	0.642		
		f)	Guarantee	0.629	0.679		
		g)	Durability	0.617	0.624		
		h)	Speed	0.568	0.646		
2.	Expectations	a)	Brand Image	0.835	0.751	3.576	9.664
		b)	After Sales Service	0.829	0.720		
		c)	Color	0.807	0.705		
		d)	Style	0.772	0.676		
		e)	Fuel Efficiency	0.737	0.620		
		f)	Corporate Image	0.590	0.596		
3.	Capability of MUV	a)	Breaking Power	0.818	0.736	3.069	8.296
		b)	Passenger Comfort	0.790	0.694		
		c)	Driver Safety	0.723	0.661		
		d)	Power Steering	0.592	0.492		
4.	Personal factors	a)	Monthly Income	0.765	0.659	1.532	4.141
		b)	Status	0.670	0.681		
		c)	Age	0.633	0.695		

Factor analysis was done with the main objectives Table 3 to find out the underlying common factors among 21 variables included in this study. Principal component factoring method with variance rotation was used for factor extraction. An four factors solution was derived using a score test. Table shows

The factors are arranged based on the Eigen value viz

F1	(Eigen value 4.69)
F2	(Eigen value 3.58)
F3	(Eigen value 3.07)

F4   (Eigen value 1.53)

These four factors are described as "organisational factors". This model has a strong statistical support and the Kaiser-Maya-Olkin (KMO) test of sampling adequacy concurs that the sample taken to process the factor analysis is statistically sufficient (KMO value = 0.97523)

F1 This is the first factor (Important factors) identified through factor analysis and this factor includes four factors – Price, Less Maintenance Cost, Resale value, Size, Spares Availability, Guarantee, Durability and Speed. This factor causes the variance for about 13 percent.

F2 The second factor (Expectations) primarily includes Brand Image, After Sales Service, Color, Style, Fuel Efficiency and Corporate Image. This factor causes the variance for about 10 percent.

F3 In this factor (Capability of MUV), the variables included are Breaking Power, Passenger Comfort, Driver Safety and Power Steering. This factor shows about 8 percent variance.

F4 This factor includes (Personal factors), Monthly Income, Status and Age are contributors in this factor. These variables causes about 4 percent variance.

Table 4 Showing the Stepwise regression analysis predicting Important factors

Sl.No	Step/Source	Cumulative R^2	UR^2	Step t	P
1.	Income	0.019	0.016*	2.626	0.01
2.	Religion	0.034	0.028*	2.246	0.01

* P < 0.01

Constant value = 22.005

The variables namely income and religion have contributed significantly predicting Important factors. The R^2 value for income is 0.019, which is statistically significant. The second variable religion when added to income increases the R^2 value to the extend of 0.034. The t-ratio for the increases in R^2 is statistically significant.

Table 5 Showing the Stepwise regression analysis predicting Expectations

Sl.No	Step/Source	Cumulative R^2	UR^2	Step t	P
1.	Birth-order	0.040	0.037*	3.075	0.01
2.	Occupation	0.085	0.073*	2.401	0.01
3.	Marital status	0.100	0.086*	2.332	0.01

* P < 0.01

Constant value = 16.587

Three variables viz birth-order, occupation and marital status have significantly contributed for predicting the Expectations. The variable birth-order's predictive value of Expectations seems to be 0.040, when paired with the variable occupation 0.085 and with marital status 0.100 the predictive value of these variables separately is 0.01.

Table 6 Showing the Stepwise regression analysis predicting Satisfied about MUV vehicle

Sl.No	Step/Source	Cumulative R^2	UR^2	Step t	P
1.	Marital status	0.022	0.019*	-2.652	0.01

* P < 0.01

Constant value = 30.126

Marital status is the only variable that has contributed significantly for predicting Satisfied about MUV vehicle. The R^2 value is 0.019. This R^2 value is statistically significant.

Suggestions

From the analysis and findings of the study on consumer attitude, some suggestions are made which are essential for promoting the product. From the researcher observation and experience with the survey conducted, the researcher would suggest that all the consumers give important to all factors relating to buying a multi utility vehicle. They consider every possible aspects before decision making. Majority of the customers of rank their multi utility vehicle as best only on the basis of brand image, safety and so the company has to give more concentration on improving there factors.

The multi utility vehicle manufacturing companies have to evince keen concentration on colour, road grip, horn and safety of the multi utility vehicle. Majority of the customers expect credit facilities. So the company try to provide this facility. Above all advertisement is a major factor in purchase of the particular brand of the multi utility vehicle. In order to promote the sales the manufacturing companies also have to allocate more funds for advertisement.

It is also suggested that the consumers expect courteous and friendly behaviour. When the companies implement the suggestions made, the company may lead as an example for others to follow

1. Establish service station in all urban area
2. Encourage exchange offer, give more discount other brand holder, it induce in the minds of customer to buy multi utility vehicles.
3. To improve the market sales promotion like festival offer, Discount offer, etc. It help increasing the sales.
4. To give a financial loan arrangement to customers. For the purpose the company tieup with other financial institution.
5. To encourage to the customers give complementary accessories, five go buy for ever travel in tour trip. Free gift etc.
6. Open spare part all the are in Tamilnadu availability spare parts is one of the important aspects customers services.

CONCLUSION

This study was carried out by researcher to study on consumers attitude towards multi utility vehicle – a comparative analysis with particular special reference Chennai cities. The researcher concluded some of the points here. The researcher collects the data from the respondents by using questionnaire method. The sample was collected randomly. After collecting the samples, they are coded certain objectives and hypotheses were formulated. The hypotheses were tested by using standard statistical tools such as Path analysis, Factor analysis and Regression analysis. From the analysis and from the research survey the researcher identified that all the respondents are favourable attitude about the multi utility vehicle.

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