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## Consumer behaviour towards motorcycles: A conceptual study

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### Abstract

Motorcycle is basically a two-wheeler mechanism with an engine used basically for the purpose of conveyance. It is not only the consumer itself, but there is also a lot of internal and external stimuli, including demographic factors, economic factors, sociological factors and psychological factors etc. which resemble the complete picture of consumer behaviour. Through this conceptual review based paper efforts has been made to get insight about the factors responsible for attracting consumers to buy motorcycles as well as factors resulting in consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction as well. Use of secondary data has been made. Throughout the study, it has been found out that majority of the signalled towards consumer satisfaction with the respective brand/company adopted by the users except in few cases while modernity of motorcycles is the key attracting factor with others as revealed in the paper below.

**Keywords:** Two-wheeler, brand, motorcycle, consumer, buyer

### Introduction

Early motorcycle was not popular. A push start was necessary to start the engine. There was no speed mechanism, power was so low that paddle assistance was sometimes required on hills and the belt drive slipped in the west nor was there any springing. However, since about 1907- kick starters, clutches, gearboxes, chain drive and springs were gradually introduced, turning the motorcycle into a practical low cost form of transport. Paddles were still fitted to assist the engine in the moped, a motorcycle with an engine of less than 50cc capacity.

The dynamics of the motorized two wheelers industry in India make fascinating reading. From a semi luxury product for the urban middle class in the 1980's and earlier, the two wheeler has now become not only the favourite mode of personal transport, but also the most coveted personal possession among nearly all consumer classes except the most affluent. Leading this emergent boom has been the stylish, fuel efficient and sturdy four stroke motorcycles that seems to be equally at home, on highways and rural byways.

Major Indian automobile companies in India are: - Bajaj, TVS Motors, Hindustan Motors, Tata Motors, Mahindra, Eicher, Premier, Ashok Leyland, Force Motors, Reva, Hero Motocorp, LML, Tafe.

Major multinational automobile companies in India are: - Toyota, Renault, Volvo, Mitsubishi Motors, Ford, General Motors, Audi, Honda, Nissan (cars), Land Rover, Yamaha, Fiat, Hyundai, BMW, Volkswagen, Suzuki, Skoda, Ferrari, Mercedes Benz, Peugeot, Jaguar, Piaggio.

The Indian two wheeler industry made a small beginning in the early 1950's when Automobile Product of India (API) started manufacturing scooters in the country, until 1958, API and Enfield (motorcycles) were the sole producers. The two wheeler market was opened to foreign competition in the mid 1980's, catching the then market leaders Escorts and Enfield. The entry of Indo-Japanese joint venture ushered in a new era for the Indian two wheeler industry through the 100cc motorcycles. Among motorcycles, four stroke vehicle accounts for a major chunk of sales and this is not surprising since fuel efficiency ranks the first among all parameters. Apart from these some general factors in India such as affordability, working place access, big percentages of youths etc. also contributed towards the growth of this segment.

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### Consumer Behaviour in Brief

We all are consumers and due to being human it is natural to change in our behaviour. It is not only the consumer itself, but there is also a lot of internal and external stimuli, including demographic factors, economic factors, sociological factors and psychological factors etc. which resemble the complete picture of consumer behaviour. So, the marketer has to examine all these factors also along with other variables for studying the consumer behaviour to its full extent.

### Review of Literature

In a research study accomplished by Megharaja (October 2014) <sup>[1]</sup>, entitling 'Customers' opinion towards Hero-Honda Splendor+ bike' with the objective to know the customers' expectations towards Splendor+ bike. In his findings, he stated that 84% of respondents wanted change in the features of the bike, 85% think that the price charged was high for the product, while 95% were satisfied with the current services provided by the company and most important 97% of the respondents were still expecting more mileage from the bike. He, on the basis of his findings suggested to reduce price for selling to medium income holder customers and to innovate the more mileage engine to fulfil the customers' expectations.

Keshav & Samadhan (August 2014) <sup>[2]</sup> in their combined study 'Pre-purchase behaviour amongst the youth for two-wheelers with special reference to Mumbai city' concentrated on objective to view the consumer preference while purchasing two-wheelers. It was found from the survey that most of the youngsters preferred bike that was aesthetically appealing as well as cost effective.

Tamilmozhi & Satheshkumar (September 2013) <sup>[3]</sup> in their combined work highlighted on the basis of the respondents response observed that Yamaha has superior technology, Hero-Honda 60% buyers belonged to students category as well as Hero-Honda was ruling the market as far as mileage per litre of petrol was concerned and in findings also, the same was favoured by the consumers. 50% of respondents favoured Yamaha due to its speed whereas 45% purchased due to acceptance of design/style/model. It was suggested that to meet the heavy demand for Hero-Honda motorcycles in the market so their supply has to drastically improve and the bikes recently introduced by Hero-Honda were mostly concerned about youth so it was also recommended to consider/focus middle-aged people, while for Yamaha, it was suggested to decrease the price to attract more consumer and there was also a need felt to improve the technology of TVS.

Jotwani (July 2011) <sup>[4]</sup> in his research work 'The end of an era: Dissolution of Hero-Honda Motors Ltd. (HHML)' threw light on the background of the Hero-Honda dissolution and further challenges before both companies. The word Hero-Honda was often used synonymously with 'motorcycles' in India. Apart from the challenges that the two both companies impose on each other they also face challenges from other notable challengers included Bajaj Motors, TVS Motors and new entrant Mahindra two-wheeler. Twisting challenges were: will Honda be able to challenge Hero group on Indian soil? How Hero will manage its R&D as well as marketing efforts to become a global player?

Vijaya & Jayachitra (October 2011) <sup>[5]</sup> concentrated in their study 'Customer perception with motorcycles' with the

main objective to understand about the customer perception towards Hero-Honda vs. TVS and Bajaj motorcycles as well as to analyze the reasons customers opt for a particular brand. Suggestions based upon the findings were: Hero-Honda should introduce eco friendly bikes and the company could take steps to reduce the price of genuine spare parts in order to facilitate customers to buy genuine spare parts. Bajaj should concentrate on improving the image of its two-wheelers for women and the steps should be taken by TVS to revive its brand image, the brand has to improve its mileage and rope in the latest technology to stay in the race with Bajaj and Hero-Honda.

Vickram (May 2010) <sup>[6]</sup> emphasized in 'A study on the consumer preferences and their satisfaction towards TVS motorcycles in Chennai city' on to identify the user satisfaction level on various aspects of TVS bikes. The variables influencing satisfaction level were found to be viz. road grip, tight turning, taking bumps, fuel efficiency, seat comfort, aesthetic look, clutch wires etc. It was also inferred that all the identified factors viz. cost of service, timely delivery, trained mechanics, infrastructure, ISO certification etc. highly influenced the level of satisfaction of the users on authorized service centres. It was found in the consumers' survey that they looked at 5 criteria: fuel efficiency, price, reliability, style and power. It was interpreted that satisfaction positively affects loyalty, willingness to recommend and both the amount and the tone of words of mouth. Based upon the findings it was suggested to improve the mileage, safety aspect, technology, power, aesthetic look as well as focus on building customer relationship management, concentrate on spark plug and modify the size of seat.

Saravanan *et al.* (2009) <sup>[7]</sup> concluded out through their work entitling 'Consumer behaviour towards show-room services of two-wheelers with reference to Cuddalore district' concluded from the observation and survey conducted that all the consumers gave importance to all factors relating to buying a vehicle. The majority of the respondents ranked their motor bike as best only on the basis of brand image. Therefore, it was recommended that companies needed to give more and more concentration on improving the brand image of the product.

Amudha (September 2006) <sup>[8]</sup> in her research work submitted titled as 'A study of buyer behaviour towards Hero-Honda products in Salem' concentrated as her primary objective to study the satisfaction of consumers with mileage, design, look, availability of spares, colours and the extra fittings provided by the company. She concluded in her findings that majority of the customers were satisfied with their bikes in all above mentioned aspects except only Super Splendor consumers were not satisfied except lighting and shock absorber suspension.

Sivakumar (March 2005) <sup>[9]</sup> in his study entitled 'A comparative study of performance analysis between TVS and Hero-Honda' revealed the reasons for increase or decrease in financial position of TVS and Hero-Honda motor company. The study focused the overall results of operations and performance or in other words maintain its profitability and solvency and ensuring the utilization of the resources most efficiently and effectively and hence the soundness of its financial position and he found out that the gross profit percentage of Hero-Honda was better than the TVS motor company ltd.

Rosalin (February 2003) <sup>[10]</sup> in her study 'A study of consumer behaviour on two-wheelers with special reference to Bajaj products in Salem' focused to know the level of satisfaction derived from the two-wheelers. An attempt was made by her to study the consumer preferences towards various branches of two-wheelers prevailing in the market with respect to Bajaj. It was found out that the customers were satisfied with their brands and 89% of the respondents were satisfied with regard to after sales service.

Senthil (January 2002) <sup>[11]</sup> in his study entitled as 'A study on consumer attitudes towards a model of Maruti car' make his efforts to analyze empirically the factors which affects the buyer behaviour towards a model of Maruti car. The researcher found out that considering the various factors such as price of the car, fuel consumption, more passenger capacity, product appearance, life of the tyres, availability of spare parts, cheap maintenance and resale value, the Maruti Omni was preferred by majority of the Maruti user respondents.

### Objectives

This study has been made by keeping the following objectives in mind:

1. To know the factors attracting customers to buy motorcycles.
2. To find out the most influencing sources of information in case of buying motorcycles.
3. To find out the problems responsible for dissatisfaction in case of motorcycles users.

### Research Methodology adopted for the Study

This study is completely a descriptive study aimed to study the behaviour of consumers in case of motorcycles. It is a review based study using secondary data. To get such reviews, various sources have been used including previous research papers, journals, newspapers, websites etc.

### Findings of the Study

- (1) After reviewing the previous papers it was found in context of the first objective meant to know the factors attracting consumers to buy motorcycles that the key factors capable to attract consumers attention towards the purchase of motorcycles were speed, design, mileage, price, reliability, style, brand image, look of motorcycles
- (2) In the case of our second objective it was found that some researchers finding showed that high price, low mileage, old technology, less features in exchange of high price, road grip, aesthetic look, appearance of bike, tight turning, brakes, seat comfort ability, clutch, colour, price in some cases, clutch wire, ISO certification, trained mechanics, after sale services were the factors where users showed satisfaction for the concerned brand/company.
- (3) The most resolvable problems resulting in users dissatisfaction were noticed as mileage, safety, technology, absence of aesthetic look, power, brand image, expensive spare parts, safety aspect, spark plug in case of concerned brand/company.

### Conclusion

It can be concluded from the study that consumers are attracted towards the purchase of motorcycles due to modern outlook represented through motorcycles and

advanced from the earlier two-wheelers i.e. scooters. Majority of the study showed that consumers are satisfied with their concerned brand/company except with some problems faced by them to some extent with price, safety aspect, power and costly spare parts etc.

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