

A Comparative Study of First-Time Vs Repeat Buyers in the NonCommercial Four-Wheeler Market

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the automobile industry has changed significantly due to new technology, shifting lifestyles, and easier access to vehicle financing. As a result, it is important for manufacturers and marketers to understand how consumers make buying decisions. This study looks at the differences between first-time and repeat buyers in the non-commercial four-wheeler market, focusing on their satisfaction after purchase and the challenges they face during the buying process. The research uses a descriptive and comparative approach and focuses on consumers in Ayodhya district, Uttar Pradesh, India.

In this study, primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire given to automobile owners, resulting in 149 responses through convenience sampling. The study uses statistical methods like regression analysis, ANOVA, and independent sample t-tests to explore the link between buyer type and purchase experience. The results show a strong connection between buyer category and purchasing behavior. The regression model explains much of the variation, ANOVA confirms the model is statistically significant, and t-tests show a clear difference between first-time and repeat buyers in the challenges they face during the purchase process.

The results show that first-time buyers have more trouble with information search, comparing models, making financing decisions, and negotiating with dealers. In contrast, repeat buyers benefit from their previous experience and knowledge of the automobile market. The study highlights the need to understand these differences to improve marketing strategies, increase customer satisfaction, and build long-term relationships in the competitive automobile industry.

Keywords: Consumer buying behaviour, automobile market, first-time buyers, repeat buyers, post-purchase satisfaction, non-commercial four-wheeler market

INTRODUCTION

Over the past years, the automobile industry has changed significantly due to new technologies, changing lifestyles, more people living in cities, and shifting consumer expectations. Today, buying a non-commercial four-wheeler is not just a practical choice but also reflects a person's lifestyle, need for convenience, and social status. As incomes rise and financing becomes easier, passenger cars have become a key part of modern life. Because of this, understanding how consumers buy cars is now more important for marketers and manufacturers.

Consumer buying behaviour is the process people go through to identify their needs, gather information, compare options, and make a purchase. In the car market, this process is complex because buying a car involves a major financial decision, a long-term commitment, and many factors, such as price, brand reputation, safety, fuel efficiency, technology, and after-sales service. Digital tools have changed how people gather information. Today, buyers check online reviews, social media, comparison websites, and customer feedback before deciding. This has made the process more informed and dynamic. In the passenger vehicle market, buyers are usually either

first-time buyers or repeat buyers. First-time buyers are purchasing a car for the first time, often motivated by the desire for personal mobility, convenience, and a better quality of life. They rely on information from family, friends, online reviews, and marketing, and because they lack experience, they spend more time searching for information and comparing brands .

A Repeat buyer already has a car and they are looking to buy another, either to replace their current vehicle or to upgrade. Their decisions are shaped by their experience, satisfaction with a brand, and views on reliability and performance. Compared to first-time buyers, repeat buyers are usually more confident and often show stronger loyalty to certain brands. They also tend to focus more on advanced features, new technology, and the overall driving experience, rather than just the price.

In the current competitive automobile market, manufacturers and marketers need to understand how first-time and repeat buyers differ. Each group has its own expectations, motivations, and ways of evaluating cars, so they need different marketing and product strategies. By studying these differences, companies can create more effective marketing plans, improve customer satisfaction, and build stronger long-term relationships with customers.

A comparative study of first-time and repeat buyers in the non-commercial four-wheeler market is needed to see how experience, information searching, and motivations affect buying decisions today. This kind of research helps us better understand consumer behaviour and offers useful insights for both academic research and realworld marketing.

Objectives

1. To study the post-purchase satisfaction levels between first-time and repeat buyers.
2. To identify the key challenges faced during the purchase process between first-time and repeat buyers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Jagtap (2024) investigated the elements that influence automotive purchasing behaviour of the consumer, and the study concluded that the economic, social, cultural, and psychological aspects all have a role. According to this study, consumer lifestyle, peer influence, and technological progress all have a substantial impact on purchasing decisions. Further, the study found that after-sales services and brand loyalty strongly contribute to long-term customer satisfaction and repeat purchase behaviour in the automotive industry.

Zhang (2024) the study examined consumer behaviour in the used automobile market and identified key factors influencing purchasing decisions, including price, mileage, brand reputation, and online reviews. According to the research, purchasers frequently depend on both economic and informational cues when evaluating vehicles. Online platforms and digital reviews play an essential role in increasing consumer trust and eliminating uncertainty in the purchasing process. The findings indicate that openness in pricing and product information has a major impact on buyer trust and decision-making in the automotive market.

Mittal and Kumar (2021) discovered that income growth, the availability of simple financing, and advertising methods all had a substantial impact on customer purchasing behaviour in the four-wheeler market. Their research also found that repeat consumers are frequently influenced by prior product experience and brand loyalty, but first-time purchasers depend more on external information sources such as marketing and recommendations.

Borthakur (2023) investigated automobile purchasing behaviour in India and discovered that modern consumers consider a variety of variables, including fuel efficiency, safety features, brand reputation, and technical features, before making a purchase decision. The survey also reveals that consumer expectations have changed over time, making it critical for businesses to constantly improve product quality and service offerings.

Vaidya et al. (2021) reported that car purchase decisions are often influenced by factors such as comfort, mileage, safety features, advertisements, and brand familiarity. Their study indicates that automobiles are increasingly viewed as a necessity rather than a luxury, thereby increasing demand for passenger cars in India.

Rajendran and Jayakrishnan (2018) identified that consumers evaluate several uncertainties, such as product performance, financial cost, and long-term reliability, before making a purchase decision. Their research indicates that reducing perceived risk through better product information, warranties, and brand reputation can significantly increase purchase intention.

Sakthivel and Senthil Kumar (2017) studied consumer behaviour in the automobile passenger car market and found that value for money, safety features, and driving comfort are among the most important factors influencing customer preference. Their study further reveals that consumers evaluate automobile products based on multiple behavioural parameters such as lifestyle, perception, and personal needs. The research emphasizes that understanding these behavioural patterns is essential for automobile companies to identify customer expectations and maintain competitiveness in the rapidly evolving automobile industry.

Javed, Gupta, and Saxena (2015), satisfaction with service quality, maintenance, and product performance plays a major role in determining whether customers will continue purchasing from the same brand. When consumers experience high service quality and reliable after-sales service, they are more likely to develop brand loyalty and become repeat buyers.

Vikram Shende (2014), research reveals that purchasing a car is one of the most significant financial decisions for consumers after buying a house. The study indicates that factors such as income level, financing options, safety features, brand image, and value for money play a crucial role in influencing consumer decisions. The research further suggests that understanding customer expectations and preferences can help automobile companies design effective marketing strategies. **Balakrishnan Menon and Jagathy Raj (2013)** examined the variables influencing passenger car purchase behaviour and found that security features, comfort, convenience, and external influences such as family and social groups significantly affect buying decisions. The study also highlights that technological advancements and increased competition in the automobile industry have transformed the market from a seller-driven to a buyer-driven environment.

De Haan, Peters, and Scholz (2007) conducted study on hybrid car adoption and discovered that environmental awareness and technology innovation impact consumer decisions in the automotive market. According to the study, government policies, tax breaks, and energy-efficient technologies can all have a considerable impact on consumer car purchasing preferences. Their findings imply that external environmental and policy issues, as well as individual consumer incentives, influence automotive purchasing behavior.

Tapas and Dangre (2013) investigated consumer preferences in the passenger car category and concluded that to understanding consumer preferences is critical for automotive manufacturers to it remain competitive. The findings indicate that pricing, brand reputation, product qualities, and technological improvement all have a significant impact on consumer purchasing decisions. The study found that as disposable incomes and market competition increased, buyers were pickier and more aware when purchasing vehicles. This study implies that understanding these preference patterns can assist automotive manufacturers in better meeting the expectations of both new and existing customers.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive and comparative research design to examine the differences between first-time and repeat buyers in the non-commercial four-wheeler market. The descriptive part explains the characteristics, satisfaction, and challenges faced by buyers, while the comparative part shows how their behaviours differ.

Study of Area

The study taken place in the Ayodhya district of Uttar Pradesh, India.

Data Sources

- **Primary Data:** Primary data were collected through a questionnaire administered to both customers who are first-time car buyers and those who are repeat buyers.
- **Secondary Data:** Secondary data were collected from journals and research papers to understand prior research and provide theoretical support for the study.

Sampling Design

The study used convenience sampling to gather responses from car owners in the Ayodhya district. The survey included 149 participants, including both first-time and repeat buyers of non-commercial four-wheelers.

Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations. It only covers the Ayodhya district, so the results may not apply to other areas. The research relies on self-reported data, which may be biased. Also, using convenience sampling means the sample might not represent all automobile buyers.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant difference in post-purchase satisfaction levels between first-time buyers and repeat buyers of non-commercial vehicles.

H₁: There is a significant difference in post-purchase satisfaction levels between first-time buyers and repeat buyers of non-commercial vehicles.

H₀: There is no significant difference in the challenges faced during the purchase process between first-time buyers and repeat buyers of non-commercial vehicles.

H₁: There is a significant difference in the challenges faced during the purchase process between first-time buyers and repeat buyers of non-commercial vehicles.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Regression Statistics	
Multiple R	0.97
R Square	0.94
Adjusted R-Square	0.94
Standard Error	0.20
Observations	149

Table 1: Regression Statistics

The regression statistics in Table 1 show how strongly the type of buyer (first-time or repeat) is linked to their purchasing experience and satisfaction in the non-commercial four-wheeler market. A Multiple R value of 0.97 indicates a very strong positive correlation. The R Square value of 0.94 indicates that 94% of the variation in satisfaction and experience is explained by whether the buyer is first-time or repeat. The Adjusted R-Square is also 0.94, confirming that the equation is reliable even after accounting for the number of predictors. A standard error of 0.20 indicates that the predicted values are close to the actual values, indicating the equation is accurate. The analysis is based on 149 observations, which is enough for reliable results. Overall, the regression results

show that the model clearly explains the differences between first-time and repeat buyers in their purchasing experience and satisfaction in the non-commercial four-wheeler market.

ANOVA					
	df	SS	MS	F	Significance F
Regression	1	92.9	92.9	2232.5	9.1E-91
Residual	147	6.12	0.04		
Total	148	99.0			

Table 2: ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)

The ANOVA results in Table 2 test the significance of the regression model. The F value of 2232.5 is very high, showing the model is statistically significant, and that buyer type explains much of the variation in purchasing experience. The Significance F-value (9.1E-91) is much lower than 0.05, confirming that the results are not due to chance. So, the ANOVA results confirm a significant difference between first-time and repeat buyers in the non-commercial four-wheeler market, especially in their purchasing experience and satisfaction after purchase.

Table 3: Regression Coefficient Analysis

	Coefficients	Standard Error	t Stat	Pvalue	Lower 95%	Upper 95%	Lower 95.0%	Upper 95.0%
Intercept	1.38	0.05	26.1	4.9E-57	1.28	1.49	1.28	1.49
1	1.58	0.03	47.2	9.1E-91	1.51	1.65	1.51	1.65

Table 3 shows the coefficient values that measure how buyer type affects the purchase experience. The intercept value is 1.38, representing the baseline when the buyer type is 0. The t-statistic for the intercept is 26.1, and the p-value (4.9E-57) is much less than 0.05, so it is statistically significant. The coefficient on buyer type is 1.58, indicating a positive association between buyer type and purchase experience. This means the buyer category has a big impact on the buying process and satisfaction. The t-statistic of 47.2 and the very small p-value (9.1E91) confirm this relationship is highly significant. The confidence interval (1.51 to 1.65) shows the estimate is reliable.

These results suggest that whether someone is a first-time or repeat buyer strongly affects how they view the purchase process and their satisfaction with the vehicle. Repeat buyers may judge vehicles differently based on past experience, while first-time buyers rely more on external information.

	first-time buyers	Repeated buyers
Mean	3.38	2.79
Variance	0.07	0.03
Observations	75	74
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	124	
t Stat	16.8	
P(T<=t) one-tail	6E-34	

t Critical one-tail	1.66	
P(T<=t) two-tail	1E-33	
t Critical two-tail	1.98	

Table 4: Independent Sample t-Test (Comparison of Means)

Table 4 shows the results of an independent sample t-test comparing first-time and repeat buyers. This test checks if there is a real difference between the two groups. First-time buyers had a mean score of 3.38, while repeat buyers had 2.79, indicating that first-time buyers faced more challenges or held different views during the buying process. The t-statistic (16.8) is much higher than the critical value (1.98), and the p-value (1E-33) is far below 0.05, proving the difference is significant. First-time buyers usually have more trouble with information search, comparing brands, financing, and negotiating, while repeat buyers benefit from their experience and knowledge of the market.

These findings support the study's goals by showing that buyer experience is important in shaping both the challenges faced during the purchase process and satisfaction after purchase.

CONCLUSION

This study gives useful insights into how first-time and repeat buyers behave in the non-commercial four-wheeler market. The results show that buyer experience has a significant impact on both the buying process and postpurchase satisfaction. The analysis confirms a clear difference between the two groups in satisfaction levels and the challenges they face. First-time buyers usually search for more information and rely on advice from family, friends, online reviews, and dealers. Because they have less experience, they often find it harder to choose a vehicle, get financing, and negotiate with dealers. Repeat buyers are more confident and better acquainted with the market, so they can judge products more easily and often have stronger brand preferences. The statistical tests show that buyer type matters for the overall buying experience. These findings suggest that car makers and marketers should use different strategies for first-time and repeat buyers. For example, first-time buyers may need more information, clear pricing, and easier buying steps, while repeat buyers may respond better to product upgrades, new features, and loyalty programs.

Overall, this study adds to our understanding of consumer buying behaviour in the automotive sector by highlighting differences between new and experienced buyers. The study can help car companies to develop more effective marketing strategies, for improve customer satisfaction, and build stronger long-term relationships towards the customers.

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