

Changing Perception of Indian Women Regarding Two Wheeler: A Survey of Kolkata

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Abstract

Riding two wheelers by Indian women is still an urban phenomenon. Penetration of the vehicle is still in nascent stage. Cosmopolitan outlook, globalization are still having a weak psychological effect on Indian society. Driving two wheelers by the women is more than a compulsion rather than choice. Physical inability, traditional outlook, joint family are the conventional impediment that affect the purchase decision of two wheelers among Indian women. Initiative has been taken by few two wheeler marketing companies to break the myth of impossible task through innovative design. A large market is untapped as indicated by their survey. Little is happening. Under this backdrop this study is an initiative to convert the compulsion into choice after studying the mass opinion based on primary field survey. Three groups of women were chosen by purposive sampling namely working women, student and homemaker. It is indicating interesting result signaling choice disparity. Social value, Functional value, Epistemic value and Accessibility are the independent factors studied among the target population. The data so obtained and analysed using the software (STATA) significantly denotes the first factor effecting the decision of purchase of two wheeler by an Indian women is highly influenced by Functional value and Epistemic value of the purchase. Social value of the purchase is the third important factor that influences the motivation of purchasing a two wheeler. It is important to understand that, due to conventional practice, Indian women assume negativity towards the social value of driving two wheelers. Moreover, the interesting indication of negative effect of social value in the choice of two wheelers as opined by the female students denoting a social revolution depicting individualism. Epistemic value and accessibility is showing a co-linearity which is a matter of concern from the marketing perspective. However a psychological revolution is indicated by a group of Indian women. The effect is yet to observe and it is rather a challenge of the marketing companies to convert the chance into choice in future.

Key Words - Social value, Functional value, Epistemic value, Accessibility, Homemaker, Student, Working women

Introduction

The Indian two-wheeler (2W) industry recorded sales volumes of 13.4 million units in 2011-12, a growth of 14.0% over the previous year. In a year wherein growth in other automobile segments particularly, passenger vehicle (PV) and medium and heavy commercial vehicle (M&HCV), slowed down to single digits - marred by demand slowdown due to northward movement of inflation, fuel prices and interest rates - the 14% growth recorded by the 2W industry remained steady. Overall, ICRA expects the domestic 2W industry to report a volume growth of 8-9% in 2012-13 as base effect catches up with the industry that has demonstrated a strong volume expansion over the last three years at cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 21.8%. Over the medium term, the 2W industry is expected to report a volume CAGR of 9-11% to reach a size of 24-26 million units (domestic + exports) by 2016-17. According to ICRA irrespective of global economic meltdown two wheeler market didn't stop growing due to under developed public transport system, growing urbanization, strong replacement demand and moderate share of financed purchases remain intact in Asian

market. India is in no exception being the dominant player of the sector. Change is been observed as the sales of mopeds are showing an energetic domestic growth of sales in India for the last two financial years (more than 20%). A good part of these are purchased for the use of feminine gender of Indian urban society. But a cause of concern for the Indian urban middleclass is increasing price of fuel that creates a mounting recurring cost. Competition among the 2W marketer is absolutely focused on best mileage, speed, comfort and style targeting the age group of 18-40.

Survey of Literature

The customers or prospective users of any product are the best promoters for an organisation. Their good will and favorable word of mouth to reach other's ears making it easy for the organisation to attract and serve more people. This in turn helps an organisation to seek a favourable image among the public. Marketing scholars and practitioners equally emphasize on the issue of customer satisfaction for generating loyalty among customers, which helps in maintaining existing cash flows and guarantee stable future (Teas, 1994; Zeithaml et al., 1996). Nevertheless, the contradiction in defining customer satisfaction generates further conflicts in defining how to measure it. While the manufacturing sector is concerned with the repurchase, most of the services depend on the continuity and thus focus on customer retention (Anderson et al., 1994). Customer satisfaction constitutes a mental stage in consumer mind where expectation regarding a service or product performance is fulfilled (Goode & Moutinho, 1996; Oliver, 1989). A review of literature revealed that at least two different conceptualizing of customer satisfaction construct exist. Transaction specific conceptualize customer satisfaction as one time post purchase evaluation (Oliver, 1977). On the other hand, cumulative satisfaction refers to overall evaluation after usage for a period of time (Anderson et al., 1994; Fornell, 1992; Fornell et al., 1996). Cumulative construct of satisfaction is more relevant to service sector, especially in case of continuous service providers as is the case in telecommunication. It costs more to gain a new customer than to retain an existing one (Woodruff, 1997). Hence, brand name (Aaker, 1996), price (Cadogan & Foster, 2000), promotion (Cherniawski & Maloney, 1999), and quality stimulates brand loyalty. Even, expectations also serve as a major determinant of a customer's service quality evaluations and satisfaction (O'Connor et al, 2000). So, "Voice of the customer" should be considered during design process using advanced techniques (Pakdil, Aydin, 2007). Moreover, customer satisfaction serves as an exit barrier, helping a firm to retain its customers, directly depends on friendly / helpful /

knowledgeable/ courteous employees, quick service, service quality, good value, timeliness, clarity, accuracy of billing and competitive pricing (Fornell, 1992). Customer switching is industry specific, limits the generalization and need to adopt broader perspective (Berry and Parasuraman 1993). Customer switches brands due to pricing, inconvenience, core service failure, service encounter failure, response to service failure, competition, ethical problems, and involuntary switching (Keaveney, 1995). Risks experienced by the customer – customer collects information from personal source, market controlled sources, public sources, personal experiences. As stated by Philip Kotler and Keller (2006) that, consumer's decision to modify, postpone, or avoid a purchase decision is heavily influenced by perceived risk. Consumer may perceive many type of risk in buying & consuming a product:

1. **Functional Risk-** The product does not perform up to expectation.
2. **Physical Risk-** The product poses a threat to the physical well-being or health of the user or others.
3. **Financial Risk-** The product is not worth the price paid.
4. **Social Risk-** The product results in embarrassment from others.
5. **Psychological Risk-** The product affects the mental well-being of the user.
6. **Time Risk-** The failure of the product results in an opportunity cost of finding another satisfactory product.

The amount of perceived risk varies with the amount of money at stake, the amount of attribute uncertainty, & the amount of consumer self-confidence. Consumer develops routines for reducing the uncertainty, & negative consequences of risk, such as decision avoidance, information gathering from friends, & preference for national brand names & warranties. Marketers must understand the factors that provoke a feeling of risk in consumers & provide information

& support to reduce perceived risk. Lower income groups of Indian consumers are becoming the target of the corporate managers as they purport significantly greater materialistic value than the higher income group in the post globalization era (Gupta N., 2011).

Burden of population and complexities of public transport are becoming the prime reason of mounting demand of two wheelers among the urban middle class (Aditi Roy Ghatak, 1984). India, being the second largest manufacturer of two wheeler in the world after China, use the vehicle not for recreation purposes like developed countries but mainly for day to day utility (Rahul Bajaj, 1986; Ranjana Pendharkar, 1979). As evidenced from a pilot study at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu by Arumugasamy G. (2012) emanated that demand of two wheeler by the middle class is controlled by both economic and noneconomic factors like price, income, price of substitute, price of complementary goods and taste of consumers. The study has concluded even by saying that the marketing of two wheelers are determined by consumers.

From socio-cultural and economic perspectives women in India find themselves in subordinate positions to men. They are socially, culturally and economically dependent on men. Women are largely excluded from making decisions, have limited access to and control over resources, are restricted in their mobility, and are often under threat of violence from male relatives. Sons are perceived to have economic, social or religious utility; daughters are often felt to be an economic liability because of the dowry system. In general women is less likely to seek appropriate and early care for disease, whatever the socio-economic status of family might be. This gender discrimination becomes more obvious when the women are illiterate, unemployed, widowed or dependent on others. The combination of perceived ill health and lack of support mechanisms contribute to a poor quality of life (Gupta, 2011).

Objective of Study

“If you don’t care your customer somebody else will do”. Customer is god. In service sector Customer satisfaction directly depends on friendly employees, helpful employees, knowledgeable employees, courteous employees, quick service, service quality, good value, timeliness & clarity & accuracy of billing, competitive pricing. In today’s age every customer wants to be served according to his or her unique and individual needs. Due to this reason every industry

needs to provide customised solutions tailoring their services based on actual preferences rather than on generalised assumptions. For this reason there is regular study being conducted on customer satisfaction and their expectations. The objective of this study was,

- To know the post purchase evaluation of women in Kolkata regarding two wheeler.
- To identify the factors affecting the preference of purchase of two-wheeler among Kolkata based women.
- To examine the demographical factors and their behavioural disparity in two wheeler purchase by the women community of Kolkata.
- To test the prospective female customer’s intention of purchase of two wheeler.

Research Methodology

The present study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data used in this study was collected from 300 female respondents and out of which 240 were finally used that equally belong to working class, home maker and college students belonging to the age group between 18 to 40 years of south Kolkata (W.B., India). This selection has been made following purposive sampling procedure. Primary data has been collected during Jun’12 to Oct’12. 3 famous colleges, 15 major bus stops and 7 schools have been chosen as the source of prospective sample. The secondary data which is used in this study has been collected from books, magazines, hospital brochures, web sites, periodicals, publications, news paper clippings of national and international importance. For analyzing the data collected from both primary and secondary sources, techniques like the multiple regression framework, binary logistic regression models (logit, probit models) and other relevant tests have been applied at appropriate places using the software STATA. The relationship between the dependent & independent variable factors can be assumed as,

$$Y = a + b X(1) + c X(2) + d X(3) + e X(4) \quad \text{where,}$$

$$X(1) = \text{Functional Value}$$

$$X(2) = \text{Social Value}$$

$$X(3) = \text{Accessibility}$$

$$X(4) = \text{Epistemic Value}$$

$$Y = \text{Customer’s purchase intention.}$$

$$a = \text{constant and } b, c, d, e \text{ are said to be the coefficients.}$$

Y is the dependent variable, whereas X(1), X(2), X(3), X(4) are independent variables

Y is dichotomous qualitative variable. i.e., Y=1 if the interested and 0, otherwise.

As the dependent variable is a binary variable we cannot apply OLS method to estimate the model. A logit model is accordingly used to estimate the above

model. Thus, the dependent variable is binary taking a value of 1 for the interested respondent and 0, otherwise.

P = Probability that the customer will purchase a two wheeler.

Data Interpretation and Analysis – Result found from the study are as follows,

Table 1 : Logit Table Total Studied Population

	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t	P> t
Constant	-.9407891	.2216857	-4.24	0.000
Social	.0695824	.0172419	4.04	0.000
Functional	.0394688	.0083303	4.74	0.000
Accessibility	.0111414	.0061426	1.81	0.071
Epsistemic Value	.0047206	.0136224	0.35	0.729

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 2: Multicollinearity Between Independent and Dependent Variable

	Motivation of Purchase	Functional Value	Social Value	Accessibility
Functional Value	0.5567			
Social Value	0.4858	0.5371		
Accessibility	0.2770	0.3230	0.0742	
Epistemic Value	0.3854	0.5276	0.3608	0.5691
Age of respondents	0.7368			
Family income	0.3937			

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 3: Logit Table of Homemaker

	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t
Constant	-0.9376634	0.4396031	-2.13
Functional	0.0747826	0.0173865	4.30
Social	0.0717807	0.0429239	1.67
Accessibility	0.0125175	0.0127241	0.98
Epsistemic Value	-0.0382846	0.028276	-1.35

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 4: Logit Table for Variable and Nonvariable Factors Relationship (Student)

	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t
Constant	1.10894	0.3214599	3.45
Epistemic Value	0.0134298	0.0210527	0.64

Functional Value	0.0018798	0.0122652	0.15
Accessibility	0.0041372	0.0100508	0.41
Social Value	-.0235667	0.0287201	-0.82

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 5: Logit Table for Dependent & Independent Variable Factors Relationship (Working Women)

	Coefficient	Std. Err.	t
Constant	0.9617412	0.3929048	2.45
Epistemic Value	0.0117655	0.0249408	0.47
Social Value	0.003359	0.0393969	0.09
Fuctional Value	0.0031658	0.0157902	0.20
Accessibility	0.013325	0.0125931	1.06

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 6: Validity of the Study

	Observation	Parameters	"R-sq"
Homemaker	80	5	0.7560
Student	80	5	0.7600
Working women	80	5	0.8332

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 7: Opinion of the Respondents

	Housewife		Student		Working Women	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Two wheeler is a vehicle made for men	96%	14%	24%	76%	58%	42%
Two wheeler is an accident prone vehicle compared to four wheeler	83%	27%	17%	83%	63%	37%
Two wheeler must be a light weight vehicle for better handling	53%	47%	78%	22%	83%	17%
Training of riding two wheeler can help a women to purchase	32%	68%	69%	21%	73%	27%
It is a low investment to purchase 2W compared to 4W	98%	2%	97%	3%	99%	1%

Source: Field survey data analysis

Table 8: Differentiation of Independent Factors Affecting the Purchase Intension of Women

Type of Women	Preference of factors to purchase two wheeler			
Homemaker	Functional value	Social value,	Accessibility	- Epistemic value
Student	Epistemic value	Functional value	- Accessibility	- Social value
Working	Epistemic value	Social value	Functional value	Accessibility

Source: Field survey data analysis

The data analyzed significantly denotes that first factor to decide whether to purchase a two wheeler or not for Indian women is highly affected by Functional value and epistemic value of the purchase. Social value of the purchase is the third important factor that influences the motivation of purchasing a two wheeler. It is important to understand that, due to conventional practice, Indian women assume negativity towards the social value of riding two wheeler. One more aspect influencing the decision of such purchase for the women is the mounting cases of accidents. Moreover, the interesting indication of negative effect of social value in the choice of two wheelers as opined by the female students denoting a social revolution depicting individualism. Accessibility and epistemic value is showing a relationship. It can be said that better accessibility can increase epistemic value of the product. Family income of all the studied population is not showing a good relationship with the two wheeler purchase motivation whereas age is showing a positive strong correlation indicating more aged they are less interested to purchase a two wheeler due to reducing physical inability.

Conclusion

In our study, it is revealed that the women in Kolkata are very much advanced and they are psychologically developed, whether they are consuming the product or not. They are curious but more cautious. A change in lifestyle is also indicated in air as the students and working class are preferring two wheeler as a part of their life style.

In case of homemaker, Epistemic value is negative because they don't have any curiosity as they depend fully on their husband. Accessibility is less important to them, because they have to spend maximum time inside their house. Functional value is not the most important factor for them as they give preference to the views of their society and fear of status of their acceptance in the society to try out a new thing. Naturally, Social value is also more important factor to them. So for them promotional slogan & messages should be designed by showing its image enhancing capacity to influence purchase. Two wheeler driving training should be given to further motivate them.

In second category that is student, it is seen that, Social value & Accessibility is least important as because they don't feel any importance to maintain any social status and have a zeal to do different. But, they fully depend on their guardian so accessibility is negative. To them Epistemic value and Functional value is much more important because they have curiosity to ride

two-wheeler and they are also fun loving & interested in experimentation. Functional value is also important because they have to travel long distance for school & tuitions etc. The promotional messages must highlight with the help of a female celebrity endorser who is modern and is an icon of style.

Now the third category is working women. As they are advance in society, to them Accessibility & Functional value is less important because they are already aware of product, its features, and dealers/showrooms. For them Epistemic & social value is important because they are much more curious about two-wheeler's price, ROI (return on investment), EMI etc. as maximum of them invest of their own. And as they are modern, they don't want social acceptance from others. So the advertisement should be designed which will highlight benefit and savings of money and time to them. Physical incapability among this part of Indian women is also being identified as a concern of impediment in the path of smooth growth of two wheelers in the female category. As a traditional practice they want to be driven rather than to drive. Awareness level must be generated to enhance their confidence by the two wheeler companies to establish a new trend.

Rather, it is a challenge for the two wheeler manufacturing company to promote this as a socially acceptable and prestigious product as there is a large untapped market left to be operated in future. Promotional mix must be designed in such a way highlighting its social value so that, it will influence the women to purchase two wheelers. Epistemic value can be increased by designing the product more comfortably, colourfully, variety oriented and adding more features to it.

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