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CUSTOMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN ASHOK LEYLAND, CHENNAI

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ABSTRACT

The automotive industry has emerged as a developing industry in the Indian economy. Ashok Leyland (AL) is India's first leader in the technology commercial vehicle industry. It is the first Indian automobile manufacturer. The level of competition keeps on increasing in the automobile market. It is essential for every automobile manufacturing company to understand customers' insight in order to further increase their number of customers. Thus, they need to understand the factors that might influence their customer's assessment of buying a commercial vehicle. The objective of this study is to analyze the customer perceived satisfaction regarding product quality, sales after service and price fairness of customers buying behaviour towards commercial vehicles of Ashok Leyland. Simple random sampling was followed to collect data from customers of Ashok Leyland, Ponnammallee, Chennai. Questionnaires were distributed to 124 respondents and the data were analyzed using percentage analysis, ANOVA single factor and Regression with the help of SPSS package. Rising income has enhanced the purchasing power and more and more people are able to afford commercial vehicles. Friends, family and relatives reference has been found to have significant source of information and influences in commercial vehicles buying. Customers are purchasing the commercial vehicles not only as a means of transport but also as a status brand.

KEYWORDS

buying behavior, perception, product quality, after sales service, price fairness, repeated purchases and customer satisfaction.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour consists of all human behaviour that goes in making purchase decisions. An understanding of the consumer behaviour enables a marketer to take marketing decisions which are compatible with its consumer needs. Rising income has enhanced the purchasing power and more and more people are able to afford commercial vehicles. Customer demands are dynamic, but its consideration is necessary for every company to make existence in to the market. Customers are purchasing the commercial vehicles not only as a means of transport but as a status brand also. The significance of the perception of products and services grows during periods of economic recession. In such conditions, customers are more sensitive to deal with quality and money. It is well known that it is unreasonable for marketers to increase the perceived value of their offerings by lowering prices, while increasing the benefits of offerings for customers can be more effective. From this perspective, the quality and image of offerings are among the most significant stuff in which marketers can invest. It is worth noting that consumer buying behavior is considered as a part of the marketing and its major objective is to find out the advance how the individuals and organizations choose, purchase, use and arrange the product and the factors such as their taste, previous experience, branding and price on which the consumers base their buying decisions.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Subramanian (2010) in his study has analysed customer expectations from an auto industry. It has created a competitive pressure and enriched the industry with attitude, knowledge, flexibility and speed for new challenges and changes. Purohit, (2009) has revealed that the name of the company, durability, driving comfort, brand popularity, spare parts availability, travel convenience and overall look are the major factors that led the customers to prefer the products. Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991) have said that product quality is the collection of characteristics that contribute to ability to meet the necessities. It is referred as the value for money that influences not only the customers' choice and but also affect their satisfaction and return behaviour at the post purchases. Chidambaram and Alfred (2007) have recommended fuel efficiency, brand name, good quality reasonable price and durability as the factors that help to affect the preference of customers. Aaker (1991-1988) has found perceived product quality as the customer's perception and their judgment about overall excellence of product. Hamza, khraim et al, (2014) have studied about that the effect of perceived value with customer satisfaction on price fairness of airline travelers in new development context which is in Jordan. Maruti product to others. Akbar and Ashok, (2012) have said that the factors like sources of information need for fuel economy and necessity, cost and durability, warranty and prestige, comfort, and value are the motivating factors for the purchase intention of car owners in Vellore District of Tamilnadu. Balakrishnan and Jagathy (2012) have revealed that the price of the car, advanced technology, market re-sale value of the brand and model, security features, safety features and driving comfort were the prominent factors which influenced the consumers' purchasing behaviour of passenger cars in the State of Kerala. Ramita Verma, Shubhkamana Rathore (2013) has studied the luxury car segment of India. Change in attitude of the customer in India automobile market, as the emphasis has been shifted from price consideration and affordability to design, quality and pleasure. Heskett et al. (1994) have said loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. It largely influenced from the value of service provided to customers. Bitner (2000) has found that service quality affects customer satisfaction and its recollected perceptions service quality. Petrick (2002) has produced a multidimensional scale (SER-PERVAL) for measuring the perceived value of services, based on the Zeithmal (1998) model. There are five dimensions that have been constructed to measure this scale which are quality, monetary price, behavior price, reputation and emotional responses.

3. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to analyze the customer perceived satisfaction regarding product quality, sales after service and price fairness of customers buying behaviour towards commercial vehicles of Ashok Leyland. Simple random sampling was followed to collect data from customers of Ashok Leyland, Ponnammallee, Chennai. Questionnaires were distributed to 124 respondents and the primary data collected were analyzed using percentage analysis, ANOVA single factor and Regression with the help of SPSS package. The value of cronbach alpha is 0.9 which is considered excellent and reveals the internal consistency of questionnaire.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

ANOVA single factor has been used to determine the association between socio economic factors and their level of buying intention. Regression has been used to study the relationship between product quality, after sales service and price fairness with the general perception of AL. Hypotheses were set to study the association of the factors influencing buyer behaviour namely, product quality, after sales service and price fairness.

TABLE NO. 1: SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Age (years)	No of Respondents	Percentage to total	Annual income (Rs in lakh)	No of Respondents	Percentage to total
Below 35	69	55.6	Below 3	29	23.4
36-45	18	14.5	3-6	41	33.1
Above 45	37	29.9	Above 6	54	43.5
Total	124	100.0	Total	124	100.0
Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage to total	Employment Status	No of Respondents	Percentage to total
Male	119	96.0	Self-Employed	47	37.9
Female	5	4.0	Private	77	62.1
Total	124	100.0	Total	124	100.0
Area of living	No of Respondents	Percentage to total	Area of business	No of Respondents	Percentage to total
Rural	37	29.8	Rural	28	22.6
Urban	58	46.8	Urban	54	43.5
Semi-Urban	29	23.4	Semi-Urban	42	33.9
Total	124	100.0	Total	124	100.0

Source: primary data

From the above table, it is inferred that 56% of the respondents are below the age 35 years and 30% of them are in the age of above 45 years. From the above table indicates 44% of the respondents are earning more than 6 lakhs 33% are earning between 3-6 lakhs and 23% are earning below 3 lakhs. 96% of the respondents are male and the rest of them are female. 62% of the respondents are employed privately and 38% of the respondents are Self-employed. 47% of the respondents are living in urban area, 30% of the respondents are living in rural area and 23% of the respondents are living in semi-urban areas. 44% of the respondents carries on business in urban area, 34% in semi-urban, and 23% of the customers in rural area.

The following hypotheses were framed to study the relationship of gender with product quality, after sales service and price fairness.

Null Hypothesis (Ho)- Gender has no influence on product quality.

TABLE NO. 2: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND PRODUCT QUALITY – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived regarding product quality	P Value	Result
General Perception about AL	0.567	Accepted
Safety and control	0.713	Accepted
Fuel consumption	0.736	Accepted
Satisfied with the structural design	0.793	Accepted
Loading space available in vehicle	0.01	Rejected
Maintenance cost of vehicle	0.477	Accepted
Suitability of AL product to meet needs	0.329	Accepted
Rate the quality of the product	0.362	Accepted
Exterior clean and un damage	0.574	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore gender has no influence on product quality such as general perception about AL, safety and control, fuel consumption, satisfaction about the structural design, maintenance cost, product suitability, quality rating, and exterior clean and un damage. The gender influences loading space availability factor as customers are highly satisfied with product quality because AL has provided their vehicle with more loading space availability.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Gender has no significant influence on after sales service.

TABLE NO. 3: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND AFTER SALES SERVICE – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction after sales service	P Value	Result
Answering of queries at the time of delivery	0.139	Accepted
Pleasant experience at the time of delivery	0.039	Rejected
Delivered with all the features promised	0.207	Accepted
Explanation of vehicle's maintenance schedule	0.948	Accepted
Explanation of all operating controls	0.717	Accepted
Explanation of all terms of the warranty	0.814	Accepted
Professional and timely response by AL officials	0.412	Accepted
Explanation of owner's Manual	0.400	Accepted
Timely response of official towards complaints	0.410	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and therefore gender has no influence on customers perceived satisfaction regarding sales after service such as time of delivery, explanations, maintenance schedule, operating control, terms and warranty, response time, owner's manual and timely response for customers' complaints. Irrespective of the gender, the AL customers are satisfied with the after sales service of AL.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Gender has no significant influence on price fairness.

TABLE NO. 4: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND PRICE FAIRNESS – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction regarding price fairness	P Value	Result
Satisfaction about the price of the vehicles	0.074	Accepted
Satisfaction about the incidental charges	0.628	Accepted
Satisfaction about terms of pricing	0.789	Accepted
Satisfaction about the money paid for the value received	0.463	Accepted
Satisfaction about the value received for the money paid	0.878	Accepted
Satisfaction about the competitive price paid	0.143	Accepted
Repeated repurchase intention of AL products	0.289	Accepted
As a loyal customer, recommendation made to a friends and colleagues	0.795	Accepted
Right choice of AL product	0.838	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and gender has no influence on customers perceived satisfaction regarding price fairness and repeated purchases, satisfaction about the price, incidental charges, terms of pricing, money paid for value received, value received for the money paid, repeated repurchases intention of Ashok Leyland products, recommendation made to friends and right choice of Ashok Leyland products.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Employment/Status has no significant influence on product quality.

TABLE NO. 5: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT/STATUS AND PRODUCT QUALITY – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction regarding product quality	P Value	Result
General Perception about AL	0.631	Accepted
Safety and control	0.987	Accepted
Fuel consumption	0.179	Accepted
Loading space available in vehicle	0.402	Accepted
Maintenance cost of vehicle	0.820	Accepted
Suitability of AL product to meet needs	0.011	Rejected
Rate the quality of the product	0.045	Rejected
Exterior clean and un damage	0.394	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and employment/status has no influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding product quality such as general perception about AL, safety and comfort, fuel consumption, satisfaction about the structural design, maintenance cost and exterior clean and un damage. Employment/status has an influence on customers perceived product quality such as suitability of Ashok Leyland product and quality rating as the company treats all the customers equally. The respondents feel that they should be treated according to their seniority in dealing with AL products.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Employment/Status has no significant influence on after sales service.

TABLE NO. 6: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT/STATUS AND AFTER SALES SERVICE – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction after sales service	P Value	Result
Answering of queries at the time of delivery	0.003	Rejected
Pleasant experience at the time of delivery	0.126	Accepted
Delivered with all the features promised	0.226	Accepted
Explanation of vehicle’s maintenance schedule	0.127	Accepted
Explanation of all operating controls	0.977	Accepted
Explanation of all terms of the warranty	0.971	Accepted
Professional and timely response by AL officials	0.391	Accepted
Explanation of owner’s manual	0.447	Accepted
Timely response of official towards complaints	0.215	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and employment/status has no influence on customers perceived satisfaction regarding sales after service, time of delivery, pleasant experience, features, maintenance schedule, operating control, terms and warranty, response time, owner’s manual and timely response for customers complains as the company has to be more responsible for their after sales service to customers. Employment/status has influence on answering of queries at the time of delivery. They feel that the queries are answered according to the status of employment.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Employment/Status has no significant influence on Price Fairness and Repeated Purchases.

TABLE NO. 7: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT/STATUS AND PRICE FAIRNESS AND REPEATED PURCHASES – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction regarding Price Fairness and repeated purchases	P Value	Result
Satisfaction about the price of the vehicles	0.204	Accepted
Satisfaction about the incidental charges	0.338	Accepted
Satisfaction about terms of pricing	0.427	Accepted
Satisfaction about the money paid for the value received	0.021	Rejected
Satisfaction about the value received for the money paid	0.448	Accepted
Satisfaction about the competitive price paid	0.199	Accepted
Repeated repurchase intention of AL products	0.112	Accepted
As a loyal customer, recommendation made to a friends and colleagues	0.520	Accepted
Right choice of AL product	0.072	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and employment/status has no influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding price fairness and repeated purchases, satisfaction about the price, incidental charges, terms of pricing, money paid for value received, value received for the money paid, repeated repurchases intention of Ashok Leyland products, recommendation made to friends and right choice of Ashok Leyland product. Employment/status has an influence on customers perceived product quality on satisfaction about the money paid for the value received as customers are satisfied with Ashok Leyland prices. They are also loyal to the company and repurchase the vehicle.

Null Hypothesis (Ho) Annual income has no significant influence on Product Quality.

TABLE NO. 8: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INCOME AND PRODUCT QUALITY- ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction regarding Product Quality	P Value	Result
General Perception about AL	0.021	Rejected
Safety and control	0.529	Accepted
Fuel consumption	0.000	Rejected
Satisfied with the structural design	0.000	Rejected
Loading space available in vehicle	0.004	Rejected
Maintenance cost of vehicle	0.012	Rejected
Suitability of AL product to meet needs	0.002	Rejected
Rate the quality of the product	0.008	Rejected
Exterior clean and un damage	0.357	Accepted

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and annual income has no influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding safety and control and exterior clean and un damages. Income level has an influence on customers perceived product quality such as general perception about AL, fuel consumption, satisfaction about the structural design, loading space available in vehicle, maintenance cost, product suitability and quality rating. The product quality is very high so customers are satisfied with the vehicle structural design and fuel consumption. As AL gives coupons for fuel/diesel and the customers save their income. Null Hypothesis (Ho) Annual income has no significant influence on after sales service.

TABLE NO. 9: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANNUAL INCOME AND AFTER SALES SERVICE – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction after sales service	P Value	Result
Answering of queries at the time of delivery	0.281	Accepted
Pleasant experience at the time of delivery	0.000	Rejected
Delivered with all the features promised	0.666	Accepted
Explanation of vehicle's maintenance schedule	0.171	Accepted
Explanation of all operating controls	0.071	Accepted
Explanation of all terms of the warranty	0.005	Rejected
Professional and timely response by AL officials	0.000	Rejected
Explanation of owner's manual	0.017	Rejected
Timely response of official towards complaints	0.000	Rejected

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and annual income has no influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding answering of queries at the time of delivery, promised features, maintenance schedule and operating control. Annual income has influence on pleasant experience, terms and warranty, response time, owner’s manual and timely response for customers’ complaints as the company officials have satisfied and clarified the doubts after sales. All the AL executives explain all the terms and condition to their loyal customers so that customers they reduce their expenditures from terms and conditions. Null Hypothesis (Ho) Annual income has no significant influence on Price Fairness.

TABLE NO. 10: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANNUAL INCOME AND PRICE FAIRNESS – ANOVA SINGLE FACTOR

Customers perceived satisfaction regarding Price Fairness and repeated purchases	P Value	Result
Satisfaction about the price of the vehicles	.000	Rejected
Satisfaction about the incidental charges	.517	Accepted
Satisfaction about terms of pricing	.017	Rejected
Satisfaction about the money paid for the value received	.000	Rejected
Satisfaction about the value received for the money paid	.068	Accepted
Satisfaction about the competitive price paid	.998	Accepted
Repeated repurchase intention of AL products	.129	Accepted
As a loyal customer, recommendation made to a friends and colleagues	.238	Accepted
Right choice of AL product	.007	Rejected

Source: primary data (at 5% level of significance)

The above table shows that the null hypothesis is accepted and annual income has no influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding price fairness such as satisfaction about the incidental charges, value received for the money paid, competitive prices, repeated repurchases intention of Ashok Leyland products and recommendation made to friends. Annual income has an influence on customers’ perceived satisfaction regarding price fairness such as satisfaction about the price of the vehicles, the terms of pricing, money paid for the value received and right choice of the AL product. Customers are satisfied with Ashok Leyland prices and also customers are loyal to repurchase the vehicles. Customers’ choice of AL product is right because, AL vehicle will make profit to customer’s business and also it will increase customer’s annual income.

TABLE NO. 11: UNSTANDARDIZED COEFFICIENTS OF REGRESSION MODEL – INDEPENDENT FACTORS AND GENERAL PERCEPTION OF CUSTOMERS BUYING BEHAVIOUR IN ASHOK LEYLAND VEHICLES

S. No	Predictors	Unstandardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	
	(Constant)	.117	.884	.895
1	Average Product Quality	.710	.169	.000*
2	Average After Sales Service	-.014	.179	.937
3	Average Price fairness and Repeated purchases	.314	.270	.247
R=.576 R Square=.332				

Dependent Variable: General Perception about AL

* = significance at 5% level

The above result of regression shows that the independent factors viz., after sales service and price fairness (p<0.05) are statistically significant towards buying behaviour. The regression results also show that the variable is product quality (p>0.05), since the p value is greater than 0.05. The R value represents the simple correlation and is 0.576, which indicated a moderate degree of correlation between the independent factors and price fairness and repeated purchases. The R² value indicated that 33.2 % (0.332) of variance in dependent variable “general perception about Ashok Leyland”, is explained by the independent factors.

5. CONCLUSION

Friends, family and relatives reference has been found to have significant source of information and influencers in commercial vehicles buying. Price-off amongst the promotional offers and fuel efficiency in the heavy commercial vehicles are found to be the foremost reasons for the preference by the customers. The Indian economy is set to grow rapidly through improved transport and intensified competition and the rural and urban people are graduating to higher income. These will be benefiting consumers and has an impact on the commercial vehicles segment rather than the passengers' vehicles segment groups at a faster rate. Rising income has enhanced the purchasing power and more and more people are able to afford a heavy commercial vehicle on their business. Improved transport is likely to impact the commercial vehicles segment rather than the passengers' vehicles segment. The economy is set to enter a higher growth path, leading to people graduating to higher income groups at a faster rate.

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