

Brand Possession of Car: Customers' Perception across Demographics in the Coimbatore District

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ABSTRACT

The brand possession is a concept ownership of a particular product, including automobile products in comparison is perceived in the context of competitive alternatives in the mind. It is needed to be clear about why it is important to brand possession. The reason is that today there are many choices in brands. That is, the brand choices are so varied and the differentiation is very narrow in terms of brand functionality. In the market, a brand communicates through buyers' experience with the product and through various communication media. This descriptive research design aims to find out the brand possession of car across various demographic factors and also to assess the respondents' experience level towards car brand. 485 valid responses were used for the final study. This study reveals that Tata, Maruti Suzuki and Honda brand of cars is familiar brand across demographics. The ownership of car brand depends on the various demographic factors namely gender, occupational status, residential area, proportion of saving.

1. Introduction

Brand as identity is about the philosophy, aims and values that present a logic of uniqueness differentiating a brand. Particularly when the organization brands its offerings with its corporate name, or the brand is strongly certified by the corporation, this involves much internal 'core searching' to understand what the firm stands for and how it can perform the corporate values across all its ranges. Communication is not directed just at consumers, but also at staff, so that they can appreciate how they must behave to be the picture of the brand. This perspective of the brand is in sharp contrast to that of the brand as a 'legal instrument' and a 'logo', since the emphasis is on the Brand as a holistic entity. The interpretation of brands as relationships enables managers to involve staff more in the branding process. Some people find the concept of brand values difficult to understand, but they feel more confident about the idea of describing relationships. Brand identity and Central to any brand is its vision, which provides a clear sense of direction about how it is going to bring about a better future. To achieve this stretching future depends on a culture with staff who believe in particular values and therefore how the brand must be developed.

1.1 Progress of Car Segment in India

In 1980s that the two firms, Hindustan Motors and Premier, were challenged by a new starter, Maruti Udyog Limited. The liberalization period, car makers that were previously not allowed to invest in Indian market due to rigorous policies arrived in the country. Post liberalization, the confederation between Maruti and Suzuki was the first joint venture between an Indian company and foreign one. The economic movement brought in the led to the commencement of major foreign companies like Hyundai and Honda, which enlarged their bases in the country. The period from 2000 to 2010, nearly every major car company enlarged its presence in India by establishing manufacturing facilities across different

environment of the country. As the manufacturing process during the early 2000 decade increased friction, exports of cars was quite slow in that period. Maruti Suzuki was the first car brands that started shipping vehicles to major European markets. The car market in India has acquired by bounce and boundary as almost all major companies are present in the country. India has now become a hub for automakers to set up their plants for manufacturing vehicles intended for domestic and international markets. The three outstanding regions in which the majority of Indian car industry is accumulated lies in the south, west and north. In the southern region, Chennai is the hub for manufacturing vehicles while Mumbai and Pune region comes in second place. For the north, the NCR holds a fair share as far as concentration of production facilities is concerned to list a few deserving achievement of the Indian car industry, it rise up as the fourth largest exporter of passenger cars behind Japan, South Korea, and Thailand in 2009. While in 2010, India simulated its previous year's performance to become the third largest exporter of cars in Asia. The large offer came for the Indian car market in 2011 as it became the sixth largest country in the world in terms of production.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

India is the largest populated country with a population of over 1.3 billion, which is approximately 18 percent of the global population. To meet the automobile needs of a growing population requires a sustainable approach that puts on thrust on increasing productivity against the background of lower production. The continued growth and ever increasing purchasing power of middle class families and rural India, fast development of road and other infrastructure factors are helping to demand for mobility of cars. In addition, the demand for car is also needed, upon various other factors such as changing lifestyle, nuclear family system, ease of availability of finance, cost of finance, vehicle density, and demographic profile of the market and the increased earning capacity of individuals, increasing double income families. As a result,

there is a huge possible market for car segment that is yet to be Strike. In order to, the current research focus on the brand possession of car across demographic were studied.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

- To find out the Brand Possession of Car across various demographics of the owners
- To assess and analyze the respondents' experience level towards preferred car brand

1.4 Hypotheses of the study

- Ho: There is no significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their brand possession of Car.
- Ho: There is no significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their experience level with preferred car brand.

2. Review of Literatures

Biranchi (2017) reported that the factors namely artistic, economic, safety and security, and comfortability has highly influenced into buying small cars. **Gopi and Angel (2017)** in their study conclude that various demographic factors namely Age groups, residential area, educational qualification, occupational status, number of members in the family, number of earning members in the family, family income and awareness have an influence in women's preference on scooters. Some of the demographic factors having strong association with selected brand, payment preference, source of information and price image of the two-wheeler among the rural youth buyers (**Kruti Shah et al., 2017**). **Vogel and Kittichai (2017)** in their study involves to evaluate brand equity, brand attitude with various dimensions, namely of brand associations, brand image, brand credibility and brand leadership. This study concluded that the consumer awareness of imitation practices is important in determining changes in brand equity, brand attitude and brand preference, regardless of luxury brand type. **Dhananjay and Jayanthi (2016)** explore the impact of two different dimensions namely emotional brand experience and cognitive brand experience on brand evaluation and brand loyalty. This study finds that both the dimensions affect brand evaluation, and brand evaluation influences brand loyalty. **Jitendra et al. (2016)** in their study reported that brand positioning depends on various functional associations, namely the symbolic

association, brand popularity among the friends, attractive name and more self confidence. **Col Tajammul (2015)** studied the youngster's perception towards the latest trend in two wheelers through the preference of bikers or scooters. This study finds that most of the Male preferred Bajaj Brand for bikes and most of the female category preferred Scooters in Honda brand. The factors namely mileage, outlook of the bike/scooter, ease of availability and self start of choosing a bike/scooter has highly influenced to two-wheeler preference among male and female. **Swati Singh and Manoj Joshi (2015)** in their empirical work identified that the attributes like corporate brand equity, aesthetics, value for money and reliability moderately associated with intent to buying of Small Car. But Personal desire, technical and financial view, psychological, after showroom variability, reference group, promotional and counselling are mainly influenced factors in buying behaviour of small cars (**Warne and Kavita Rani; 2014**). **Afsar (2014)** studied the effect of various factors namely perceived price, brand image, perceived quality and trust with consumers' evaluative judgments for attractiveness products. The results reveal that brand image has a positive and significant impact on consumer trust. Increase in perceived quality and trust represents increase in a particular brand preference. Decrease in perceived price showed a significant and positive impact on brand preference.

3. Research Methodology

- **Research Design:** Descriptive Research
- **Data and Source:** Primary data and self-designed questionnaire
- **Sample size:** 485 valid responses
- **Sampling Area:** Coimbatore District, Tamilnadu State
- **Sampling technique:** Convenience sampling technique
- **Period of study:** January to July' 2018
- **Statistical tools:** % analysis, chi-square test (χ^2), Garret's ranking technique and weighted average score

4. Analysis and Discussions

4.1 Demographic Factors of the Respondents

Distribution of the car owners (respondents) based on their selected demographic factors is given in the table below.

Table – 1
Demographic factors of the Respondents

Demographic factor	Character	Percent
Age group (in years)	Upto 25	13.20
	26 - 40	18.14
	41- 55	42.06
	Above 55	26.60
Gender	Male	75.05
	Female	24.95
Marital status	Married	78.56
	Unmarried	21.44

Educational qualification	No formal education	6.80
	School level	14.85
	Under graduation	23.30
	Post graduation	44.54
	Diploma/Technical level	10.52
Occupational status	Government employee	21.65
	Private employee	43.09
	Professional	4.74
	Self-employed	22.47
	Agriculturists	3.09
	Home maker	4.95
Family type	Joint family	6.80
	Nuclear family	93.20
Family size (No. of members)	Upto 3	76.29
	4-5	18.56
	6 and above	5.15
Family income (Rs. per month)	Upto Rs. 20,000	4.95
	Rs. 20,001 – Rs. 40,000	20.82
	Rs. 40,001 – Rs. 60,000	34.64
	Above Rs. 60,000	39.59
Residential area	Village panchayat	11.96
	Town Panchayat	17.32
	Municipality area	35.46
	Corporation area	35.26
Saving per month (in %)	Upto 10%	5.57
	11% - 20%	17.32
	20% - 30%	37.94
	Above 30%	39.18

Source: Field survey

It could be collected from the table 1 that majority (42.06%) of the respondents belong the age group of 41-55 years. This is followed by 3/4th of the respondents are male, nearly 8/10th of the respondents are married, more than 2/5th of the respondents have completed post graduation degrees, 43.09% of the respondents working in private organizations, more than 9/10th of the respondents from nuclear family, a little more than 3/4th of the respondents' family have upto 3 members, majority (34.64%) of the respondents' family income is Rs. 40,001 – Rs. 60,000 per month, 7/10th of the respondents are living in city area and nearly 2/5th of the respondents family have saving of more than 30% of their total income.

4.2 Reasons for Possession of Car - Garrett's Ranking Analysis

Garrett's Ranking technique has been used to evaluate the importance of various reasons for ownership of car. It is known fact that a respondent's choice of car possession is influenced by innumerable reasons and their reasons for car possession varies each other. Here, ten different reasons were considered for the analysis. In order to each respondent is instructed to indicate the important of the reasons for car possession by giving rank 1 to the most important reason, rank 2 to the second important reason and so on. Based on the respondents' perception the orders of importance towards reasons for car possession were identified. The orders of merit given by the respondents which have been converted into ranks according to the Henry Garrett's guideline and the results are given in the table below.

Table – 2
Reasons for Ownership of Car

Reasons	Garrett's Score	Mean Score
Necessity for personal use	29048	59.89
Necessity for business	29377	60.57
Necessity for family	29806	61.46

Time saving	28629	59.03
Convenience	22980	47.38
Lack of Public transport	25934	53.47
Easy Handling	21003	43.31
Less strain	19277	39.75
For luxury	16115	33.23
To maintain prestigious symbol	18471	38.08

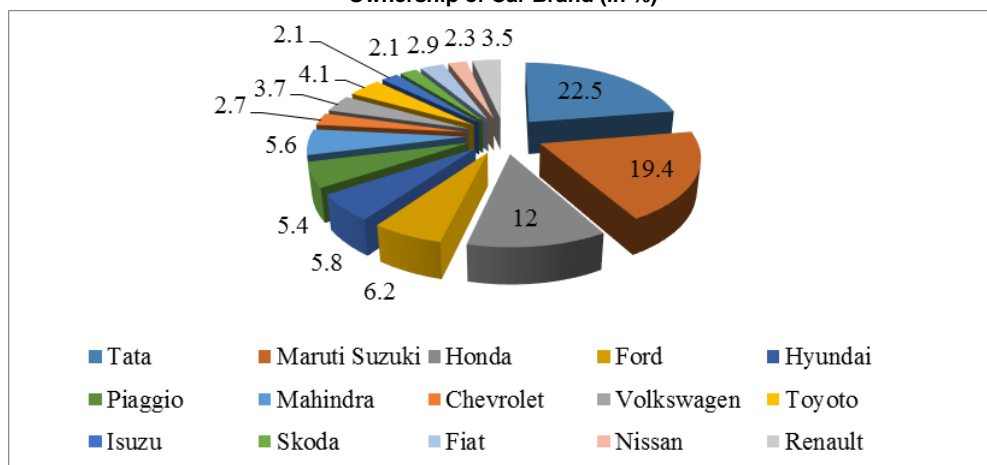
Source: Field survey

It is noticeable from the table – 2 that necessity for family (61.46), necessity for business (60.57), necessity for personal use (59.89) and time saving (59.03) are the most important reasons for car possession. On the other hand, the reasons like for luxury purpose (33.23), maintain prestigious symbol (38.08) and less strain (39.75) are the least important reasons for car possession. All other reasons namely lack of public transport (53.47), convenience (47.38) and easy handling (43.31) having moderate important among the respondents towards car possession.

4.3 Ownership of Current Brand of Car

In the car market environment, the number of brands is available and every brand facing severe competition from its competitor and every brand is fighting themselves for long term survival in the market. So, the car makers frequently observe the customers' mindsets towards which brand to buy. In the car market, around 20 brands are available. In the questionnaire, various brands are listed and the respondents were asked to select which brand of car currently owned. Here, distribution of the sample respondents based on their ownership of car brand is given in the figure below.

Figure – 1
Ownership of Car Brand (in %)



Source: Field survey

From the figure - 1, it was found that 22.5% of the respondents owned the brand of Tata, 19.4% of the respondents owned the brand of Maruti Suzuki, 12% of the respondents owned the brand of Honda and 6.2% of the respondents owned the brand of Ford. A little more 0.5 percent of the respondents owned the brand of Hyundai (5.8%), Piaggio (5.4%) and Mahindra (5.6%). 23.4% of the respondents were owned other brand of cars listed in the figure – 1.

4.4 Relationship of brand possession of car among various demographic factors

Ho: There is no significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their brand possession of Car.

Ho₁: There is a significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their brand possession of car.

Table – 3
Relationship between Demographic Factors and Brand Possession of Car

Reasons	Calculated value (χ^2)	df	Table value (χ^2)	Result
Age group & Brand Possession	44.936 [#]	42	66.21	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Gender & Brand Possession	41.498 ^{**}	14	29.14	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Marital status & Brand Possession	19.176 [#]	14	23.69	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Educational qualification & Brand Possession	57.476 [#]	56	74.47	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Occupational status & Brand Possession	147.624 ^{**}	70	100	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho

Family type & Brand Possession	11.939 [#]	14	23.69	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Family size (in members) & Brand Possession	36.493 [#]	28	41.34	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Family income (Rs. per month) & Brand Possession	25.194 [#]	42	58.12	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Residential area & Brand Possession	63.832 [*]	42	58.12	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Proportion of saving & Brand Possession	87.759 ^{**}	42	66.21	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
**Sig. at 1% level; *Sig. at 5% level; # Not Sig. at 5% level				

Source: Field survey

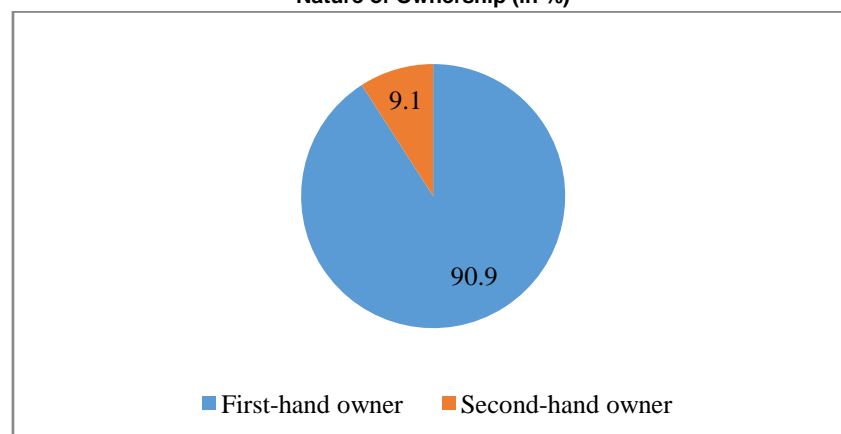
It is obvious from the Table 3 that the calculated values of χ^2 between gender, occupational status, residential area, proportion of saving of the respondents and their brand possession of car is greater than the table values of χ^2 with respective degree of freedom. Hence, Accepted Ho₁ & Rejected Ho. Finally, it concluded that brand possession of car depends on the gender, occupational status, residential area and proportion of saving of the respondents. Moreover, the demographic factors namely Age group, Marital status, Educational qualification, Family type, Family size and Family

income of the respondents do not influence to brand possession of car. Since, the calculated value of χ^2 for said demographic factors is lesser than the table value of χ^2 with respective degree of freedom. Therefore, Accept Ho & Reject Ho₁.

4.5 Nature of Car Ownership of the Respondents

Distribution of the sample respondents based on their nature of car ownership is given in the table below.

Figure – 2
Nature of Ownership (in %)



Source: Field survey

Figure -2 reveals that the majority (90.9%) of the respondents were first hand owner of the preferred brand of the car and the remaining 44 (9.1%) of the respondents were second-hand owner of the preferred brand of the car. It is concluded that a little more 9/10th of the respondents were first hand owner of the preferred brand of the car.

4.6 Influenced sources of information towards buying decision of current brand

Garrett's Ranking technique has been used to find the sources that influence to buying decision of current brand of car

they have. With this purpose responses are collected from all the respondents through the ranking form in which the respondents have to give the first rank to the most influenced sources of information and vice-versa. Based on the respondents' perception most influenced sources of information towards buying decision of car were identified. The orders of merit given by the respondents which have been converted into ranks according to the Henry Garrett's guideline and the results are given in the table below.

Table – 4
Sources of Information

Sources of Information	Garret's Score	Mean Score
Friends/ Colleagues / Relatives recommendations	30842	63.59
Dealer's recommendations	23547	48.55
Advertisement in News paper / TV/Radio/Magazines	31878	65.73
Recommended by sales personnel	14907	30.74
Family members	25903	53.41
Car exhibition	24672	50.87
Internet	17516	36.12

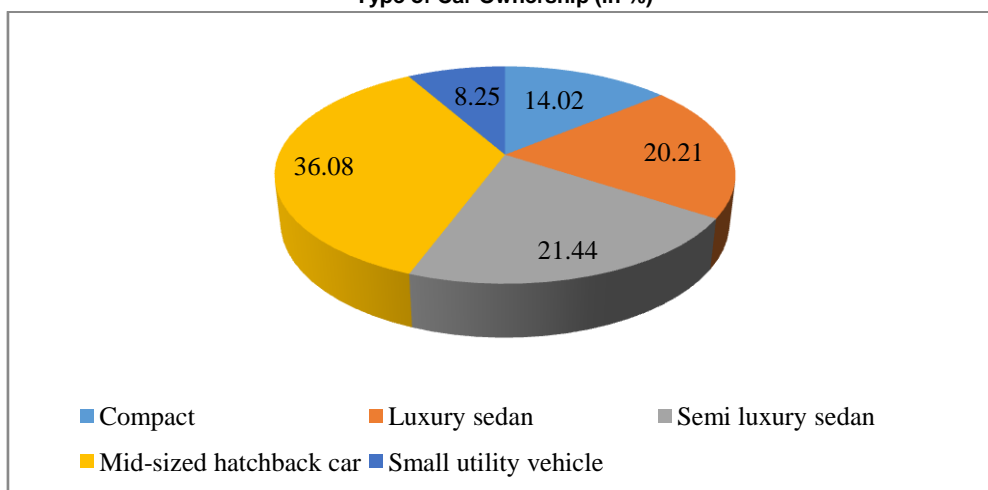
Source: Field survey

Table 4 clearly shows that advertisement in various modes (65.73), word of mouth discussion with Friends/ Colleagues / Relatives (63.59), family members (53.41) and Car exhibition (50.87) are the most important sources that influencing buying decision of preferred brand of car. Sales personnel (30.74), Internet (36.12) and dealers (48.55) are the least important sources that that influencing buying decision of preferred brand of car.

4.7 Type of car possession of the Respondents

In the car market environment, every brand marketed different type of car to attract all potential buyers. So, the car makers frequently observe the customers' mindsets towards which car model to buy. In the questionnaire, five models of car listed which are outcome of the pilot study and asked to respondents which car model they have. The results are presented in the figure 3. It concluded that more than 1/3rd of the respondents are having mid-sized hatchback car model.

Figure – 3
Type of Car Ownership (in %)



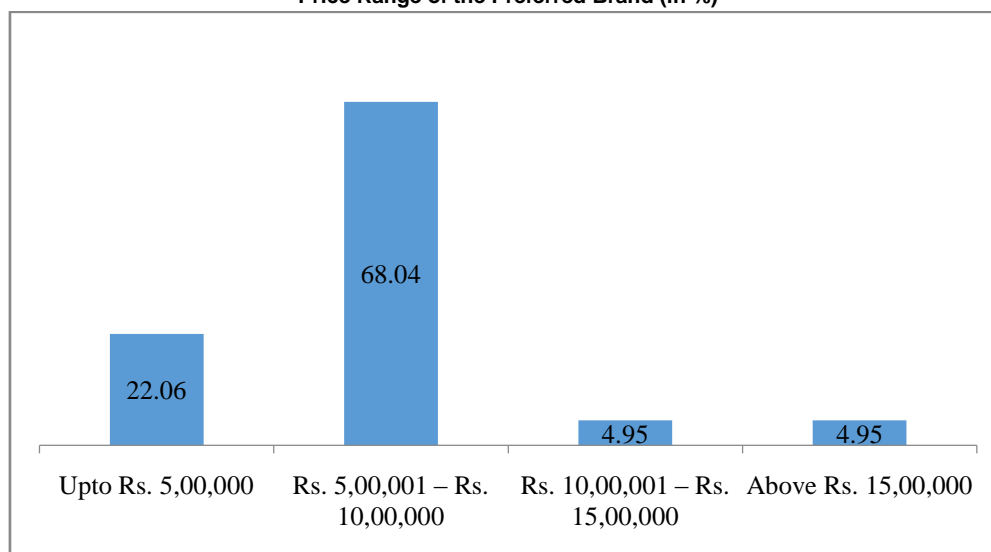
Source: Field survey

4.8 Price Range of Current Brand of the Car

Distribution of the respondents based on price range of the preferred car is given in the figure -4. It shows that nearly 7/10th

of the respondents' car price range in Rs. 500001 – Rs. 1000000.

Figure -4
Price Range of the Preferred Brand (in %)



Source: Field survey

4.9 Purchase mode of Current Brand of the Car

Distribution of the sample respondents based on their purchase mode of current brand of the car they have is given in the table -5. It shows that 43.09% of the respondents are

utilized own capital to car purchase, 32.99% of the respondents obtained bank loan and the remaining 23.92% of the respondents are obtained private loan to purchase of car.

Table -5
Purchase mode of the Car

Purchase mode	Percent
Own capital	43.09
Bank loan	32.99
Private loan	23.92
Total	100

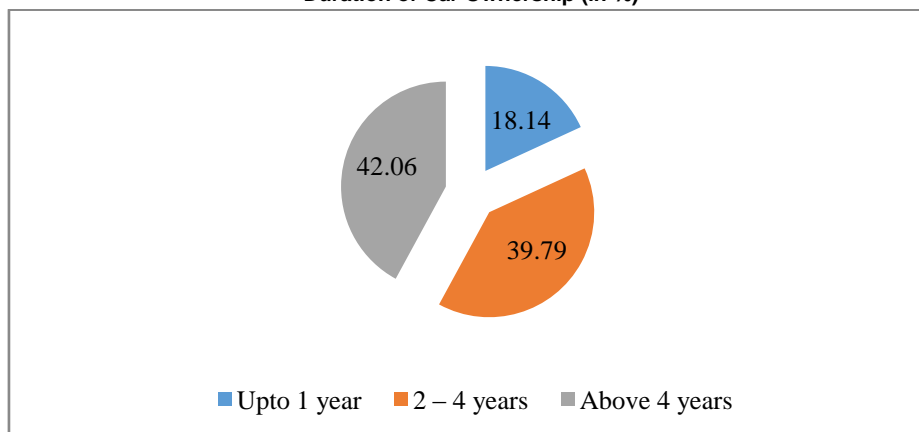
Source: Field survey

4.10 Tenure of Ownership of the Current Brand of Car

Distribution of the sample respondents based on their tenure of ownership of the current brand of car is given in the

figure - 5. It concluded that majority (42.06%) of the respondents are having ownership of preferred brand of car is above 4 years.

Figure -5
Duration of Car Ownership (in %)



4.11 Experience Level with Current Brand of Car

Weighted Average Score (WAS) analysis is used to find out the most important attributes for experience with current brand of car is given in the table below.

Table -6
Perception towards Experience level with Current Brand of Car

Statements	Experience with Current Brand of Car					WS	WAS	RANK
	SDA	DA	N	A	SA			
This brand makes me look ordinary	68	65	73	195	84	1617	3.33	IX
This brand prevents me from looking cheap	12	24	38	232	179	1997	4.12	I
This brand makes me feel good	17	29	97	236	106	1840	3.79	III
This brand increases the frequency of use	23	67	83	229	83	1737	3.58	VI
This brand helps me to better fit into my social group	9	64	98	234	80	1767	3.64	V
This brand gives me pleasure	22	50	106	187	120	1788	3.69	IV
This brand makes me feel delighted	28	62	116	197	82	1698	3.50	VIII
This brand enhances the perceptions that I have a desirable lifestyle	19	25	56	220	165	1942	4.00	II
This brand has improved my personality	12	32	55	232	154	1939	4.00	II
This brand improves my social status	32	69	109	166	109	1706	3.52	VII
I always feel impressed by using this brand	66	126	142	143	8	1356	2.80	X

Source: Field survey

It is obvious from the table 6 that respondents' agreement level towards various statement with current brand of car and it shows that the statement 'this brand prevents me from looking cheap' because it got highest mean value is 4.12. This is followed by the statement is 'this brand enhances the perceptions that I have a desirable lifestyle and this brand has improved my personality' get second highest mean score of 4.0, 'this brand makes me feel good which mean score is 3.79'.

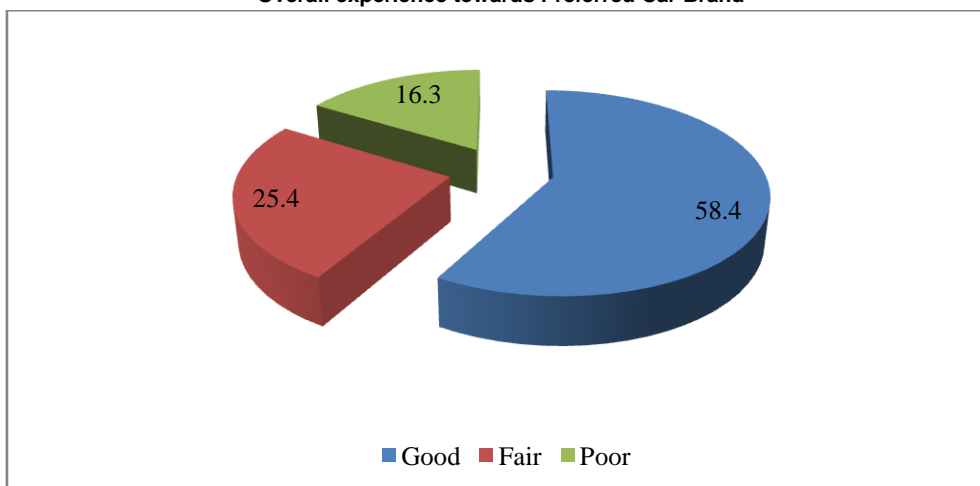
4.12 Overall Experience towards Preferred car brand

Respondents' perception towards experience with preferred car brand studied with the help of various parameters and the responses against these parameters were collected through five-point likert scaling technique. Thereafter, proper scoring technique has been used. After that, respondents' perception towards experience with preferred car brand are placed into

three categories good, fair and poor based on the average \pm standard deviation. According to the above technique, distribution of the sample respondents based on their

experience with preferred car brand is given in the figure - 6 and it is reported that majority (58.4%) of the respondents have good experience towards preferred car brand.

Figure – 6
Overall experience towards Preferred Car Brand



Source: Field survey

4.13 Relationship of Experience level towards Brand possession among various demographic factors

Ho: There is no significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their experience level with preferred car brand.

Ho₁: There is a significant association between demographic factors of the respondents and their experience level with preferred car brand.

Table – 7
Relationship between Demographic Factors and Experience level

Demographic factor	Study Variable	Calculated value (χ^2)	df	Table value (χ^2)	Result
Age group	Experience level	6.973 [#]	6	12.59	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Gender		36.769**	12	9.21	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Marital status		7.229*	2	5.99	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Educational qualification		11.345 [#]	8	15.51	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Occupational status		28.169*	10	18.31	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Family type		2.351 [#]	2	5.99	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Family size (in members)		11.510*	4	9.49	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Family income (Rs. per month)		2.047 [#]	6	12.59	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
Residential area		13.486*	6	12.59	Accept Ho ₁ & Reject Ho
Proportion of saving		4.213 [#]	6	12.59	Accept Ho & Reject Ho ₁
**Sig. at 1% level; *Sig. at 5% level; # Not Sig. at 5% level					

Source: Field survey

It is obvious from the Table 3 that the calculated values of χ^2 between gender, marital status, occupational status, family size (in members), residential area of the respondents and their experience level with preferred car brand is greater than the table values of χ^2 with respective degree of freedom. Hence, Accepted Ho₁ & Rejected Ho. Finally, it concluded that experience level with preferred brand depends on the gender, marital status, occupational status, family size (in members), and residential area. Moreover, the demographic factors namely age group, educational qualification, family type, family income (Rs. per month) and proportion of saving

5. Findings and Suggestions

5.1 Major findings about Brand Possession of Car across various Demographics

- Majority of the respondents were owned the brand of Tata (22.5%), Maruti Suzuki (19.4%) and Honda (12%).
- Nearly 3/10th of the respondents who are belong to the age group of upto 25 years owned Maruti Suzuki brand
- Little more 1/5th of the respondents who are belong to the age group 26-40 years owned Honda brand

- Most of the respondents who belongs to the age group above 41 years owned Tata brand
- Majority (21.2%) of the male are owned Tata Brand.
- Majority (27.3%) of the female are owned Maruti Suzuki brand.
- 23.4% of the married category of the respondents owned Tata brand.
- 20.2% of the unmarried category of the respondents owned Honda brand.
- Majority of the respondents are owned Maruti Suzuki brand those having no formal education (24.2%) and under graduation (24.8%)
- Majority of the respondents are owned Tata brand those having school level education (20.8%), post graduation (23.6%) and Diploma/Technical education (23.5%)
- Most of the respondents in the various occupations except Agriculturist and Home maker are owned Tata brand
- 3/10th of the joint family owned Maruti suzuki brand.
- Majority (22.1%) of the nuclear family owned Tata brand.
- Tata is mainly preferred brand among the respondents those family having upto 5 members
- Maruti Suzuki is mainly preferred brand among the respondents those family having 6 members and above
- More number of respondents are owned Maruti Suzuki brand those family income upto Rs. 40,000 per month

- More number of respondents are owned Tata brand those family income above Rs. 40,000 per month
- Tata is most preferred brand in the various residential areas except town panchayat area.
- Tata is most preferred brand in the proportions of saving except in 11% - 20%.

5.2 Suggestions of the Study

- Most of the respondent preferred Tata, followed by Maruti Suzuki and Honda brand of cars in terms of overall performance. Therefore, the other car manufacturer must be more focused on overall performance of car products so that it would enable the customer to be confident about the other brands of the car. Moreover, other manufacturers must create more reliability about their product among the customers to compete in this car market.
- Across the selected demographic profile, more number of respondents preferred Tata brand and then Maruti Suzuki. So, other manufacturers should take measures to attract various demographic profiles as its target market. In order to the companies should have directly tie-up arrangements with the authorized financial institutions, Banks to boost sales in the market.
- Advertisement in News paper / TV/Radio/Magazines is the most important sources of information that influencing buying decision of preferred brand of car. Hence, the manufacturers asked to give effective advertisement for their car models in order to create confident in the minds of the customer.

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