

Consumer Purchase Intention: A Case of Automobile Industry

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Abstract

Buying a car involves various factors such as personal preferences, financial aspects, lifestyle choices, and brand perceptions however, consumer income is a crucial to determine car purchases. This study identifies the variables such as; price, product, after-sale service, brand product quality, and brand loyalty and develops a research framework to test the hypotheses. The population of 300 is randomly selected from District Multan and Khanewal for analytical results. The study used Likert Scale to know the customers' point of view on different aspects of car purchase intentions. The study identifies that there are numerous aspects involved in a decision behind a car purchase. The policymakers and consumer in auto sector of Pakistan are suggested to have understanding of the relationship between product, price, after-sales service, product quality, brand loyalty, and selling tactics of the company for better purchase decision.

Keywords: *Consumer Car Purchase Intentions, District Multan, Khanewal, Likert Scale*

Introduction

Background of the Study

In recent years, numerous ranges of passenger cars are introduced. The revolution in automobile industry is useful for the economic growth. The technically advanced automobiles are contributing into the GDP growth of industrialized nations. In Pakistan, Pakistan Automotive Manufacturers Association (PAMA) published the production of passenger cars of 157 thousand units by 2023 compared to 188 thousand units by 2022. Therefore, the decline in vehicles production is recorded to be 16.48 percent. However, this down trend is being seen as temporary. The projected figures are quite encouraging. According to PAMA, the revenue of automobile industry is being out looked to be US\$ 3756M by 2028 with the passenger cars to reach at the new all-time high figure of 149.9 thousand vehicles by 2028.

China being a largest automobile manufacturer has 415 million vehicles with their owners. In case of Asia alone, j statistic is varied at 543 million car users. In Europe and North America, the figure

is stayed at 413 and 358 million, respectively. The sum of 84 million and 50 million cars are attributed with South America and Middle East. In Africa, it is 26 million¹.

The global population is 8.1 billion have only 17 percent of the world population which keeps a car. But this statistic does not explain the state of those who keep multiple cars and those who abstain from driving. Because of awareness, consumers worry to buy best car available in their budget. The features which consumers look for are after sale service, price, quality of car, and their brand loyalty towards the car assembler. The demand for the automobiles is strongly affected by the price. According to CEIC data, motor vehicles in Pakistan have significantly declined by November 2023. The recorded fall is about 55.4 percent (Month on Month). The economic swings cause to upset the industrial growth rate and consumers' disposable income which results in evacuating the consumers' car purchase intentions. However, apart from the figures of ill industrial growth, it is noted that 6499 units of automobiles were on the roads in Pakistan by November 2023. Therefore, the novelty of the study is rested upon locating the ingredients which propagate the purchasing decisions of the consumers. The present study seeks to examine the crucial factors which post significant impact on the consumers' intentions towards car purchase in the District of Multan and Khanewal.

Problem Statement

Among the determinants of consumers' car purchase, income is an important component. The customers with varying income level have different purchasing power. Facing different financial constraints, the priorities towards the car purchase tilt. The consumers with high income have prestigious and luxury car as a motivation to buy that is embed with advantageous accessories over the other cheap substitutes available in market. However, the customers with low purchasing power target the fuel efficiency as top priority coupled with financing options and affordability. Thus, the car purchase intentions move around the status symbol, necessity, and convenience to purchase. Therefore, the motivation towards car purchase is grouped into multifaceted components that finalize the consumer behavior towards deciding about purchase of a car.

Multiple factors come into existence when the matter is to choose among the available wide range of automobiles from the home market. For particular, looking onto the practical aspects, the price, reliability, fuel efficiency, safety, and performance are the important determinants of car purchase decision of a rational consumer. Financial capacity, lifestyle priorities, and transportation needs are the basic factor to mold consumers' intentions towards the purchase of car. In this regard, it is seen that rich and mediocre type consumers have varied choices. The former ones go for luxury and style while the choice of later is to go for affordability and economy.

Similarly, emotional and psychological attachments do matter too. Most of the customers are seen buying car on the bases of brand image, design, preferences of majority, trends. Likewise, social factors such as family endorsements and car purchase trends matter a lot to a certain class of customers since the car purchase is a matter of concern.

¹ The information is retried from: <https://www.statista.com/outlook/mmo/passenger-cars/pakistan>

Research Questions

The possible research questions of the study are framed as follows:

1. Does engine type affect car purchase intention of customer?
2. Can brand loyalty, after-sale, fuel efficiency, attitude, price, and social image have an impact over the customers' car purchase?
3. Do the prices and taxes on locally assembled cars, compared with imported cars, are to cause effect on customers' car purchase intention?
4. What if the after-sale service of a car is better which a consumer intends to buy?
5. How do customers evaluate the drive experience, workmanship, durability, market-suited, and quality facts of locally assembled cars?
6. Are the social intentions mean a lot towards customers' car purchase?
7. Should the car purchase intentions of the customers are moldable through the selling tactics of the company?

The study looks forward to contributing into the existing body of literature by providing the insight about the distinct components which affect the consumers' car purchase intentions of multiple income group. Also, the study is found to be useful for the marketers, car manufacturers, and the policy makers to have a better understanding about the needs, motivations, and preferences of consumers towards variety of cars available in local market thus lead to consider effective marketing strategies to materialize the customers' car purchase decision. Therefore, the novelty of the study is rested upon locating the ingredients which propagate the purchasing decisions of the consumers. The present study seeks to examine the crucial factors which post significant impact on the consumers' intentions towards car purchase in the District of Multan and Khanewal.

Literature Review

In recent years, several studies are conducted to analyze the factors that are involved in consumers' car purchase intentions. Most studies locate fuel and environmental to effect 45 percent of consumers' car purchase. Likewise, reliability and value of revenue account for 36 percent. Whilst power of the engine, security, and external appearance contribute to 29 percent, 28 percent, and 25 percent, respectively (Khan, 2019; Khan, 2019; Lee & Govindan, 2014).

Review of literature on the topic of consumers' car purchase proves to be authentic because to numerous numbers of cars seen moving on the road. The auto assemblers who offer service and quality gain attention of customers towards their product (Sadiq & Gokhan, 2010; Chang et al., 2017; Tulipa et al., 2014; Bhumi & Shah, 2023; Le & Liaw, 2017). The components which persuade consumers towards finalizing car purchase are not foreign to after sale services, brand quality, brand loyalty, income of the purchaser, and brand's market reputation (Madani et al., 2023; Chen & Hung, 2016; Ekasari et al., 2023; Altaf et al., 2016).

Fuel consumption, the environmental factor, horse power, market related brand image, appearance, interior design, comfort, and cost of maintenance are identified as core variables to trigger consumers' purchase of a specific make-model-variant of a car (Khan, 2019; Lee & Govindan, 2014). The findings of Khan (2019); Khan (2019), and Lee and Govindan (2014) suggest that various factor affect consumers' car purchase decision which are of social, cultural, psychological, economical, and demographic nature.

The study by Nguyen et al. (2020) based upon different income group. The study concluded that quality, brand image, and price are the essential determinants of consumers' car purchase. Later, Khan (2022) pointed out speculate societal influence like of behavior and attitude to matte while car purchase is an intention. Exploring empirical study of Mou et al. (2020) and of Khan and Karim (2021), groups of people where by a potential car purchaser lives, motives, attitude and perceptions are the factors which are relied upon while the target is to purchase a car for the domestic use. Meanwhile, findings of Hanif et al. (2023) insights upon value of vehicle, purchase intention of different ag group, and trust of consumer. The significant findings, however, belonged to high income class of customers.

The consumer behavior matters a lot when the concern is of purchasing a durable good such as car (Marina et al., 2023). Consumer behavior, according to Purnomo et al. (2019) and Aini et al. (2019) is related with the consuming of the product of one's own interest. Consumer behavior is a motivation that assists a consumer to make final decision about a product together with the feelings and thoughts of a customer as well as the actions taken at the time of products' purchase (Sutisna & Handra, 2022; Hendriyati et al., 2022).

While determinants of consumers' car purchase are under the question, Kato et al. (2023), Apple, (2020), Kirby et al. (2006), and Baptista et al. (2021) pointed out; color, material, and finish as area(s) where a specific industry has to have an edge over the rivals. Therefore, Kato et al. (2023) recommended that industries must change their way of thinking that quality of a product is less influential in deciding purchase of a specific product by a customer.

Nonetheless, religious aspects also mean a lot to a customer at the time of purchase of a certain commodity. According to Ratnasari et al. (2022), brand association is positive in relationship with attitude of a Muslim customer, particularly in case of luxury cars. Moreover, the deep religious knowledge is significant and negative in relation with purchase of luxury cars. Thus, findings of Ratnasari et al. (2022) identify religious aspects to sway the customers away from spending money on luxury cars. It is because Islam speaks of worrying about the dire needs rather than luxurious life style that is nothing but a show-off (De Run et al., 2010; Wilson & Grant, 2013; Naseri & Tamam, 2012; Tjahjono, 2014).

Theoretical Literature

This section indicates the relevant theories which identify the dynamics that trigger the customers towards the car purchase decision. In this regard, Social Influence theory of Herber Kelman was presented in 1958. This theory explained that the social factors such as friends, family, colleagues, and reference groups post a significant effect over the customers towards finalizing their car purchase decision. Moving on to the Consumer Value Theory of Philip Kotler which came into being in 1998 indicated that utilitarian aspects influence consumers' car purchase intentions. These factors are referred towards the performance, reliability, and fuel efficiency, for particular. However, depending upon different income groups such factors vary from customer to customer. One of the most relevant theories in this regard is of Xiao et al. (2014). It is Consumer Financial Capability Theory. This theory suggests that customers' financial capacity influences their purchasing decisions. The variables of interest are income, debt level, and savings. However, such

financial constraints are faced in a different manner when customers of diverse income groups are in a question.

Research Design and Sampling Technique

The objective of the study is to find out the determinants of consumers’ car purchase. For this purpose, the collection of data, analyses, and the interpretation of the results are the decisive tasks to handle. This study relies upon the primary source of data. The data is gathered by the mean of Likert Scale based 300 questionnaires which are filled by the car users from District Multan and Khanewal through simple random sampling technique which is widely used technique of deducing the results based upon the survey instruments (Noor et al., 2022)

Results of Study

The descriptive analytics on gender, education, occupation, and income of the respondents are given in Table 1. The results show the diverse range of respondents on the said attributes.

Table 1
Gender, Education, and Occupation of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
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Male	215	28.3
Female	85	71.7
Education		
Illiterate	2	0.70
Middle	5	1.70
Intermediate	72	24.0
Bachelor and Above	221	73.70
Occupation		
Govt. Officials	89	29.70
Farmers	45	15.0
Private Officials	132	44.0
Self-Employed	15	5.0
Others	19	6.30
Income (Per Month)		
1.5 lac and above	61	20.3
Between 1 to 1.49 lac	195	65.0
Between 50k to 99k	44	14.7

The Table 2 gives the information about type of vehicle such as sedan and hatch back, the factors like of design and shape, features, resale value, and trend that are the common characteristics to affect the consumers’ car purchase decisions. The findings show less diversity among the respondents towards sedan type and hatch back type cars. Car purchase intentions are nothing to do with gender, education, age, and occupation (Nerurkar et al., 2023). However, much of the respondents are convinced that the features embedded in a car is a significant determinant of car purchase. In case of design and shape, resale value, and trend towards specific car (make-model-variant), the findings are ranging between 13.30 to 15.70 percent of the responses.

Table 2: Type of Vehicles and Consumers’ Decision to Purchase a Car

Type of Vehicle	Frequency	Percentage
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Sedan	134	44.70
Hatch Back	166	55.30
Market Related Factors		
Features	170	56.70
Design & Shape	47	15.70
Resale Value	40	13.30
Trend	43	14.30

Furthermore, Table 3 highlights the findings based on Likert Scale. The variable of interest is to explore the responses of the respondents using parallel hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and series hybrids cars. The results confirm that 55.3 and 27.3 percent of the respondents are falling in satisfied category towards plug-in hybrid cars. The respondents showing dissatisfaction towards plug-in hybrid cars is very low in percentage. Similarly, the respondents’ satisfaction towards parallel hybrid cars is also of significant percentage of 46.3 and 36.7 percent, respectively.

Table 3: Engine Type and Consumers’ Car Purchase Decisions

Feature	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parallel Hybrid	13	4.30	11	3.70	27	9.0	110	36.70	139	46.30
Plug-in Hybrid	19	6.30	15	5.0	17	5.70	82	27.30	167	55.30
Series Hybrid	16	5.30	22	7.30	40	13.30	170	56.70	52	17.30

The determinants such as brand loyalty, after sale service, fuel efficiency, attitude and perception, pricing, and social image are also enquired about from the respondents, akin to Femina and Santhi (2024). The findings are given in Table 4. The findings show that 51.7 and 22.3 percent of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the brand loyalty. However, 16.3 percent of the responses are not clear about the brand loyalty. Likewise, fuel efficiency, attitude and perception, social image, pricing, and after-sale service are also found to be the well conversant determinants of car purchase decisions of the customers. Findings go similar with Sofwan and Sukaris (2023)

Table 4: Brand Loyalty, After Sale, Fuel Efficiency, Attitude, Price, and Social Image

Feature	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fuel Efficiency	11	3.70	23	7.70	45	15.0	104	34.70	117	39.0
Brand Loyalty	9	3.0	20	6.70	49	16.30	155	51.70	67	22.30

After Sale Service	5	1.70	24	8.0	52	17.30	105	35.0	114	38.0
Social Image	10	3.30	30	10.0	56	18.70	149	49.70	55	18.30
Attitude & Perception	8	2.70	30	10.0	57	19.0	161	53.70	44	14.70
Pricing	9	3.0	21	7.0	53	17.70	99	33.0	118	39.30

In line with the objectives of the study, the questionnaire contained the questions about the price intentions. The empirics in recent also went with the similar pattern (Sofwan & Sukaris, 2023). The findings are given in Table 5. The results indicate 17.3 percent of the respondents who strongly agree with the fact that the prices of locally manufactured cars are compatible with those of imported cars. Majority of the respondents, say 51 percent, are found to be strongly agreed on the point of compatible prices of locally and imported cars in the market. Very few disagreed and insignificant number of respondents go with strong disagreement on the point of price compatibility.

Table 5: Price compatibilities and Customers’ Purchase Intentions

Price compatibilities	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Price compatibility of local and imported cars	17	5.70	20	6.70	58	19.30	153	51.0	52	17.30
Engine capacity	9	3.0	22	7.30	69	23.0	172	57.30	28	9.30
Reasonable tax & custom duty	33	11.0	18	6.0	62	20.70	111	37.0	18	6.0
price & satisfaction	19	6.30	23	7.70	63	21.0	155	51.70	40	13.30
Local assembly- value to money	15	5.0	25	8.30	69	23.0	165	55.0	26	8.70

Vast number of respondents go with the neutrality when they are asked about the taxes and custom duties imposed by the government are reasonable. Similarly, engine capacity and heavy tax imposition is also supported by the respondents. At latest, the respondents are also found to be satisfied with their purchase of locally assembled car as of being a good value of invested money referred to the price which they have paid.

Moreover, results on after-sale service and customers’ purchase intentions are published in Table 6. Spare parts are also analysed as an essential factor in car purchase decision (Sofwan & Sukaris, 2023). The results show that the respondents opinioned that spare parts of locally assembled cars are easy to be founded in market and are of low price. Similarly, the technical support availability and cost of technical facilitation is also strongly supported by the respondents, akin to the warranty of maintenance promised by the locally cars assemblers.

Table 6: After-Sale Service and Customers’ Purchase Intentions

After-sale service for locally assembled cars	Strongly Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Not Sure	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
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	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Low price of spare parts	25	8.30	19	6.30	63	21.0	130	43.30	63	21.0
Spare parts' availability	25	8.30	15	5.0	59	19.70	126	42.0	75	25.0
Cost of technical facilitation is low	10	3.30	20	6.70	72	24.0	141	47.0	57	19.0
Availability of technical facility	22	7.30	19	6.30	69	23.0	122	40.70	68	22.70
Sufficient warranty is offered by the company	18	6.0	20	6.70	69	23.0	153	51.0	40	13.30
Company warranty—essential factor	11	3.70	37	12.30	79	26.30	137	45.70	36	12.0

Moving on to the product intentions and customers' purchase intentions, Table 7 gives a confidence to explain that most of the car owners are indifferent on the point that whether the car which they keep is suitable for the driving on the local roads. The findings are not different in case of car user's argument on suitability of the cars for the local markets. However, car users are found to be satisfied with the reasonable workmanship. The durability concerns are there among the locally assembled car users when they are compared with the imported cars. It is a myth of using locally manufactured cars where else the respondents show dissatisfaction in case of quality and appropriate make-model-variant of locally manufactured cars.

Table 7: Product Intention and Customers' Purchase Intentions

Product Intention of locally assembled cars	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Suitable for driving	25	8.30	36	12.0	67	22.30	142	47.30	30	10.0
Suitable for local market	26	8.70	40	13.30	59	19.70	148	49.30	27	9.0
Reasonable workmanship	14	4.70	40	13.30	60	20.0	166	55.30	20	6.70
Durable than imported cars	24	8.0	74	24.70	66	22.0	121	40.30	15	5.0
Appropriate makers-models-variants	21	7.0	86	28.70	58	19.30	117	39.0	18	6.0
Acceptable quality	18	6.0	73	24.30	77	25.70	116	38.70	16	5.30

Social intentions are discussed in Table 8. However, 74 percent of the respondent are unsure about the fact that people notice them on a car which they keep. It means that majority is of the point that car purchase decision is self-centred decision and is nothing to do with the other people whom we live nearby. Therefore, car is not a social status. Moreover, 72 percent and 74 percent respondents are not sure about whether car is a social status or a source to commute and whether car brand is a source to gain social status or no.

Table 8: Social Intention and Customers’ Car Purchase

Social Intentions	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
People’s notice	12	4.0	34	11.30	74	24.70	126	42.0	54	18.0
Social status & car	21	7.0	31	10.30	70	23.30	133	44.30	45	15.0
New car & social status	13	4.30	21	7.0	75	25.0	133	44.30	58	19.30
Social status but not a source to commute	15	5.0	45	15.0	72	24.0	116	38.70	52	17.30
Brand image – social status	19	6.30	16	5.30	74	24.70	148	49.30	43	14.30

Finally, the selling facets of the company are explored to identify the impact on customers’ car purchase intentions. In this regard, findings are given in Table 9. To start with, it is found that significant number of car customers are found to be satisfied with the extra benefits provided to them by the car company. However, there is a need to work on the presentation of sales representatives. Majority of the respondents are found dissatisfied with the point that the presentation of the sales representative was appealing for them to initiate their decision towards car purchase. Which means that the car customers in District Multan and Khanewal are less conversant to the sales representatives rather pre-decide for a car and go for that. Similarly, the car promotional vibes are also replied in a mixed mode. One third of the customers have replied that they are dissatisfied with the seasonal car promotions and other one 3rd of the other group of customers are located to be satisfied by the seasonal car promotions offered by the company.

Table 9: Company Selling Tactics and Customers’ Purchase Intentions

Company selling tactics	Strongly Dissatisfied		Dissatisfied		Not Sure		Satisfied		Very Satisfied	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Extra benefits such as extended warranty by company	12	4.0	92	30.70	80	26.70	103	34.30	13	4.30
Sales representative’s presentation appeals towards car purchase	29	9.70	124	41.30	69	23.0	67	22.30	11	3.70
Seasonal car promotions appeal to purchase a car	15	5.0	93	31.0	82	27.30	100	33.30	10	3.30

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

Car purchase decision involve several factors such as financial aspects, brand perception, customers’ income, after-sale service, brand product quality, brand loyalty, company promotional offers, social and status symbol and much more. This study was initiated to locate the responses of the car users living in District Multan and Khanewal of province Punjab. The results based upon the Likert Scale that is developed in line with the empirical literature which highlights the said determinants of customers’ car purchase intentions. The study concluded satisfaction of the

customers with hybrid cars, fuel efficacy, attitude and perception, pricing and after-sale service, price and value to money on buying local car, availability of spare parts, technical support's cost and availability, and company's extra benefits such as extended warranty since being the key components which trigger the customers towards a car purchase. However, the customers are found to be not sure of social image to cause either of the influence on their car purchase decision. Likewise, the dissatisfaction, at large, is found in some of the aspects such as; quality and appropriate make-model-variant of locally manufactured cars, quality comparisons with imported cars, and sales personal's presentation since are found to be least influential towards the car customers. It shows that up to some extent the customers' car purchase intentions are pre-determined.

As a policy recommendation, the need of time is to focus on engine type because the customers are more inclined towards hybrid cars. Similarly, availability and price of spare parts are the key determinants of customers' car liking. Therefore, the car companies need to focus on that. Similarly, the areas which require efforts are identified to be of quality of cars and presentation of sales personals to be according to the desires of the customers so that maximum number of customers are possibly attracted towards a specific car. The government is also suggested to allow the local car manufacturers to import necessary equipment which help to improve the quality of car. Also, the taxes must be reasonably levied on the auto industry so that the burden is not passed on to the customers in shape of high price of car.

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