

“CHANGING GEARS” A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MALE AND FEMALE PREFERENCE FOR TWO-WHEELER IN PALGHAR DISTRICT OF MAHARASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

Women play a significant role in driving the economy of the world. Companies that sell to both men and women have always had larger market share. In India the number of female Two-wheeler users is rising very rapidly and the overall demographic profile of the Two-wheeler users has undergone a drastic change. The Two-wheeler is considered to be the most convenient and economical mode of transportation. The COVID crisis has further helped in giving a boost to the sales of Two-wheeler as people would now reduce their dependency on the public means of transportation. This has created a huge opportunity for the Two-wheeler companies. In India Two-wheeler manufacturing companies indulge in aggressive marketing techniques and launch new models with latest technology to impress the customer. Internet now is considered as a vital medium of communication with the customers as more and more people; especially the young are hooked to

the internet. The study tries to analyse the influence of internet on the users of the Two-wheeler and the impact of celebrity endorsement on the buying decisions. The research undertaken makes an attempt to understand the preferences of male and female Two-wheeler users and the important factors that motivate buyers to choose a particular brand of Two-wheeler. The study explains certain factors, which the consumers consider more significant as compared to other factors. It hopes to shed light on the role of family members and friends on the buying decisions. An attempt is made to analyse the changing consumer behaviour with reference to buying a Two-wheeler. The research aims to find the most preferred Two-wheeler brand in Palghar district. The study undertaken will provide new insights into the aspects that are considered most significant by Two-wheeler users irrespective of the gender thereby helping managers making better decisions that will lead to attracting more customers. The implementation of the suggestion proposed at the end of the study

will hopefully result in higher levels of customer satisfaction. The research is significant as it hopes to lay a foundation for further studies on similar lines which can be replicated in other parts of the country. It will also provide new insights and help look at things from the perspective of the buyer.

Keywords: Two-wheeler, respondents, district, male, female.

INTRODUCTION

India is the world's biggest Two-wheeler market, in the last couple of years it has raced ahead of China. The sheer huge number of Two-wheeler users in the country makes it one of the most attractive Two-wheeler markets in the world. The Two-wheeler in India is the most common means of transportation as it is economical and low in maintenance cost. The Indian Two-wheeler industry has a significant contribution to the economy of the country by means of employment, exports, GST revenues and its overall contribution to the GDP of the country. The Two-wheeler market in India is very competitive in nature, with nearly a dozen companies of Indian and foreign origin striving for a significant / decent market share. The Two-wheeler markets are not only limited to the big cities and towns but have made deep inroads into the hinterland. The customer is the king, due to the severe nature of the competition in the market; the customer has many options to choose and make his final decision. A few decades ago, the picture was very different. A few companies had absolute control over the Two-wheeler market. Terms and conditions were dictated by the company, few models were available, the buyers had limited choices and they had to endure long waiting period

to get the Two-wheeler. However times have completely changed. The buyers now dictate what they need and desire and compel the companies to design and manufacture their products accordingly. Companies strive to go that extra mile to win over the customer. The increased competition has only increased the significance of the customer. The aspirations of the new age consumer are on the rise, they are more demanding and so companies indulge in a lot of research, as they have realized that knowing customer needs and wants is half the battle won. The money, time and efforts invested in research helps companies manufacture the most attractive models with latest's technology for its valued customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Prabhakar and Arati Biradar (2019), in their research titled "Customer Satisfaction towards Bajaj Two Wheeler Bikes at Sindol Bajaj, Bidar" state that all the respondents surveyed had visited the Sindol Bajaj showroom of the company in Bidar and that Pulsar is the most liked brand of Bajaj. The main source of information was family and friends. The researchers put forward the opinion that when purchasing a Two-wheeler buyer give a lot of significance to the aspects of mileage and brand image. Style and price were significant aspects, but not the most important aspects. Majority of the respondents agreed that spare parts are available at the service center they visit, while quite a few said they were not easily available. A high number of respondents said they are likely or somewhat likely to recommend the bike to their acquaintance. The study concludes that Bajaj is one of the leading Two-wheeler companies in the country and the sales

of Bajaj have a bright future. The researchers in their study have suggested that a company needs to improve on the aspect of distribution to compete with Hero and the other competitors. P. Tamilmozhi and Dr.L. Satheeskumar (2013) in their study titled “Consumers Behaviour towards Two-wheeler Motor Bikes” explain that consumer behaviour is affected mainly by four factors that are cultural factors, social factors, personal factors and psychological factors. They further state that a combination of multiple factors leads to the final decision making. The level of satisfaction is highest for Yamaha bikes and lowest for TVS bikes. The aspects of design, style and model appealed the most for buyers of Yamaha, followed by buyers of Hero Honda. The aspect of Mileage is found to be the main strength for Hero Honda, while Yamaha and TVS were found to be way behind. Most of the buyers of Hero Honda were students, while buyers of TVS were generally employees and the buyers of Yamaha were business owners. The study concludes that Hero Honda should improve its distribution so as to meet the heavy demand. Yamaha and TVS should work on improving the mileage. Hero Honda should try focusing on the middle aged segment, instead of only the youth. Yamaha should try reducing price to attract more customers. TVS company should focus on upgrading the technology of its Two-wheeler.

Indumathi M, Magdalene Peter, A.Kamal (2019) in their research “Customer Satisfaction of Mahindra Two Wheelers in Chennai City explain that brands which command strong loyalty generate word of mouth publicity for the company. The results of their study revealed that fuel efficiency is considered the most important

attribute in a Two-wheeler. Also aspects like driving comfort, pick-up and resale value are also considered somewhat significant. Approximately 40% of the respondents had brought the vehicle on self-finance while the remaining had got it on loan obtained from financial institutions or banks. The electronic media was the main source of information; friends were also an important source of information. Scale of economies was the most important factor to be considered when designing a new model. The study concludes that respondents consider general perception before buying Mahindra Two-wheeler. The awareness level for geared vehicles is very high, and only a small sample did not know about the geared Two-wheelers.

Dr.T.Palanisamy, Dr. G.Sasikaladevi (2018) in their study “A Study on Consumer Satisfaction towards Hero Super Splendor with special reference to Erode City, express their views that due to inadequate and inefficient public transport, many people generally prefer a Two-wheeler. The researchers state that Hero Super Splendor model is a fast moving model of the company due to aspects like mileage, style, superior quality and availability of spare parts. An interpretation of the data revealed that high numbers of users are below 25 years of age and an almost equally high number between 25 to 50 years of age. The users were of different occupational category i.e. student, salaried and business owners. Advertisements, friends and neighbors were the main source of information. The study concludes that the aspect of pricing needs to be improved and company needs to work on improving distribution. Sales can be improved by decreasing the price and introducing more colour options.

Dr. J. Anitha & Dr. K. Gomathi (2018). In their research “A Study on Customer Satisfaction of Royal Enfield Motor in Thiruthuraipoondi Town” reveals that customer satisfaction is the key to success of the business. The analysis of the data revealed that majority of the users belonged to the rural area. A high number of users were below 30 years of age. Relatives were the main source of information. Majority of the users were employees of private companies and most users had income levels below 1, 00,000 per annum. Most of the respondents are satisfied with services provided by Royal Enfield Company. The researchers have suggested that quality and style needs to be improved to attract more customers. Introducing installment payment schemes will help in improving sales. Most of the customers are dissatisfied on the aspect of mileage, so the company needs to work on improving the mileage and cost of maintenance of the bikes. The study concludes that customers are attracted to Royal Enfield due to its modern outlook and improved version.

R.Jaganath (2018) in his research study “A Comparative Study on Bajaj Pulsar 150 CC and TVS Apache 150 CC in Coimbatore City” the researcher proposes that market is very competitive and the customers have many options to select the brand of their choice. It is therefore very important for a company to do a better job of satisfying customer needs. Exaggeration of benefits will only lead to disappointment of customers. The researcher explains that satisfied customers stay for a longer duration with the company, talk good about the company, buys more and takes less interest in competing brands. The

analysis of the data reveals that there is no significance between gender and fulfilment of expectations. The analysis also reveals that there is relationship between type of wheels and kilometer travelled. The researcher suggests that company should pay closer attention to customer defection rate, and customer complaints need to be addressed. The employees need to be trained to improve quality of service and companies should always deliver to meet expectations of customer.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the socio-economic profile of the male and female users.
2. To know the factors which are considered most significant when buying a Two-wheeler?
3. To identify the common and unique aspects of a Two-wheeler that appeal to male and female Two-wheeler user.
4. To suggest suitable measures for increasing the level of consumer satisfaction

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The respondents were not prompt in filing up the questionnaire and some required frequent reminders.
2. Some of the respondents were not familiar with technology and needed guidance in filling up google forms.
3. As the respondents comprised of both genders, only questions which were applicable to both male and female Two-wheeler users were framed in the questionnaire.
4. The study was limited only to Two-wheeler users who resided in Palghar district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted by using both the primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected using questionnaires from 200 respondents residing in Palghar District. The data comprised of an equal number of 100 male and female respondents, who were Two-wheeler users. The random sampling method was adopted for collection of primary data. The primary data was collected through the interview method by personally meeting the respondents and by floating the questionnaire through google docs. The sample comprised of respondents of all demographic variables. The data collected had a sizable representation of respondents from all age groups and occupation. The number of married and unmarried respondents was in an almost equal proportion. The secondary data was collected from reliable sources such as company websites, journals, review of related research articles and recently published news reports.

Profile of Respondents

Variables	Characteristics	Number of Respondents	
		Male	Female
Total Respondents		100	100
Age			
	Less than 20	28	12
	20-30	18	37
	30-40	14	22
	40-50	28	25
	Above 50	12	4

DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected from the respondents was tabulated and analysed using the simple percentage method and the hypothesis was tested using the t-Test (Paired Two Sample for Means) so as to derive accurate and appropriate results that will support the findings of the study. Microsoft excel was used to making tables, charts and for graphical representation of facts and figures.

HYPOTHESIS

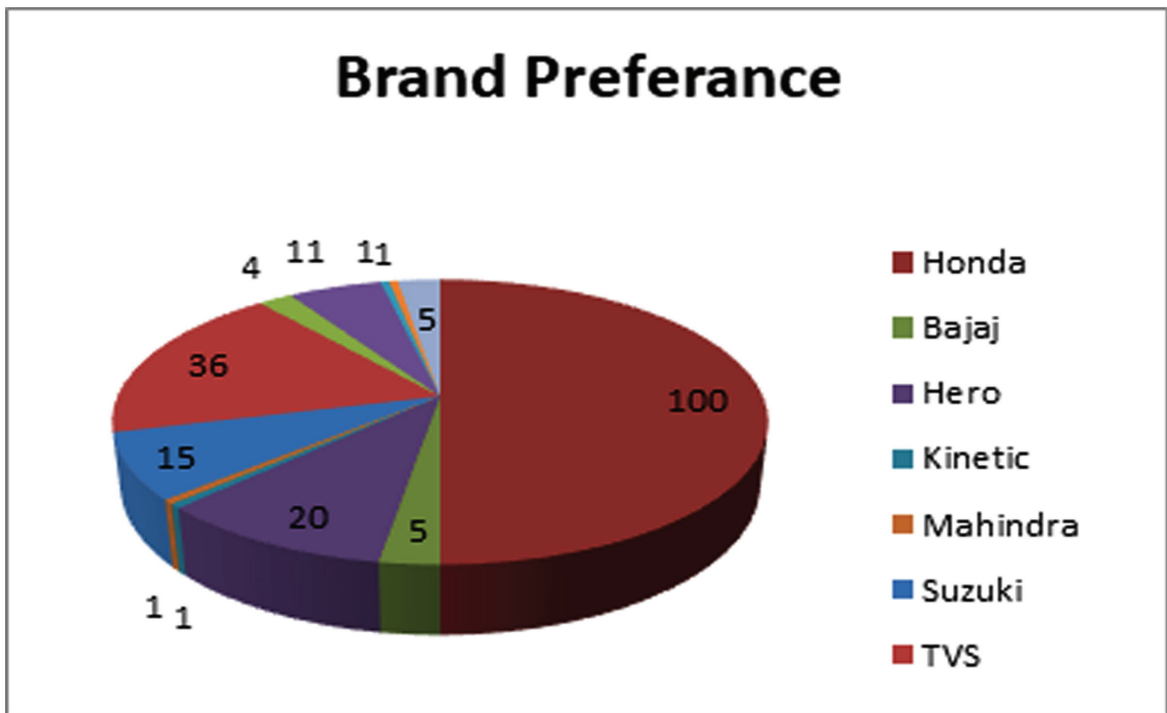
1. Ho: There is no impact of gender on the level of customer satisfaction.
2. Ha: There is an impact of gender on the level of customer satisfaction.
3. Ho: There is no impact of gender on the use of internet for decision making.
4. Ha: There is an impact of gender on the use of internet for decision making.

Marital Status			
	Married	55	51
	Unmarried	45	49
Education			
	Undergraduate	51	23
	Graduate	29	43
	Post graduate	9	23
	Professional Qualification	11	11
Occupation			
	Student	32	28
	Employee	38	32
	Business	20	3
	Professional	10	14
	Home Maker	0	23
Family Monthly Income			
	Less than 30000	26	17
	30 000 to 45000	22	20
	45000 to 60000	14	18
	60000 to 75000	15	14
	75000 to 100000	9	19
	Above 100000	14	12

Brand Owned by Respondents

Brand Owned	Male	Female	Total
Honda	58	42	100
Bajaj	4	1	5
Hero	9	11	20
Kinetic	0	1	1
Mahindra	0	1	1
Suzuki	9	6	15
TVS	9	27	36
Vespa	1	3	4
Yamaha	3	8	11

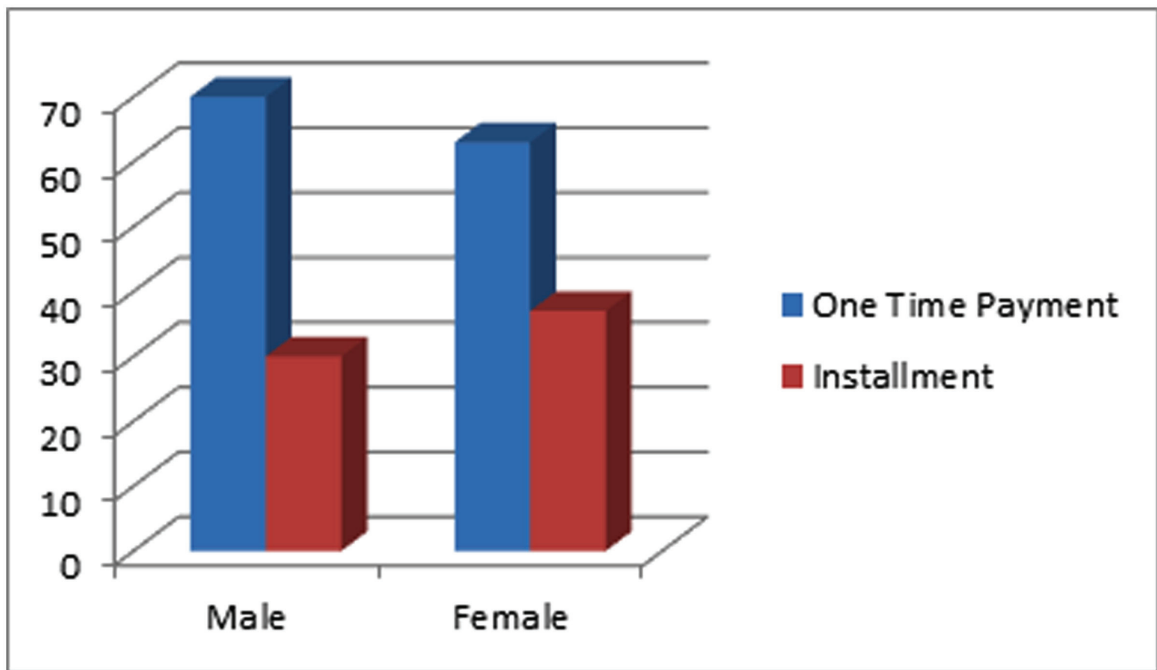
Aprilica	1	0	1
Java	1	0	1
Royal Enfield	5	0	5
Total	100	100	200



Honda continues to be the most preferred brand by male and female Two-wheeler users in Palghar district. Honda manufacturers both geared and non-geared vehicles and hence it could be one of the reasons for having a larger market share.

Mode of Buying

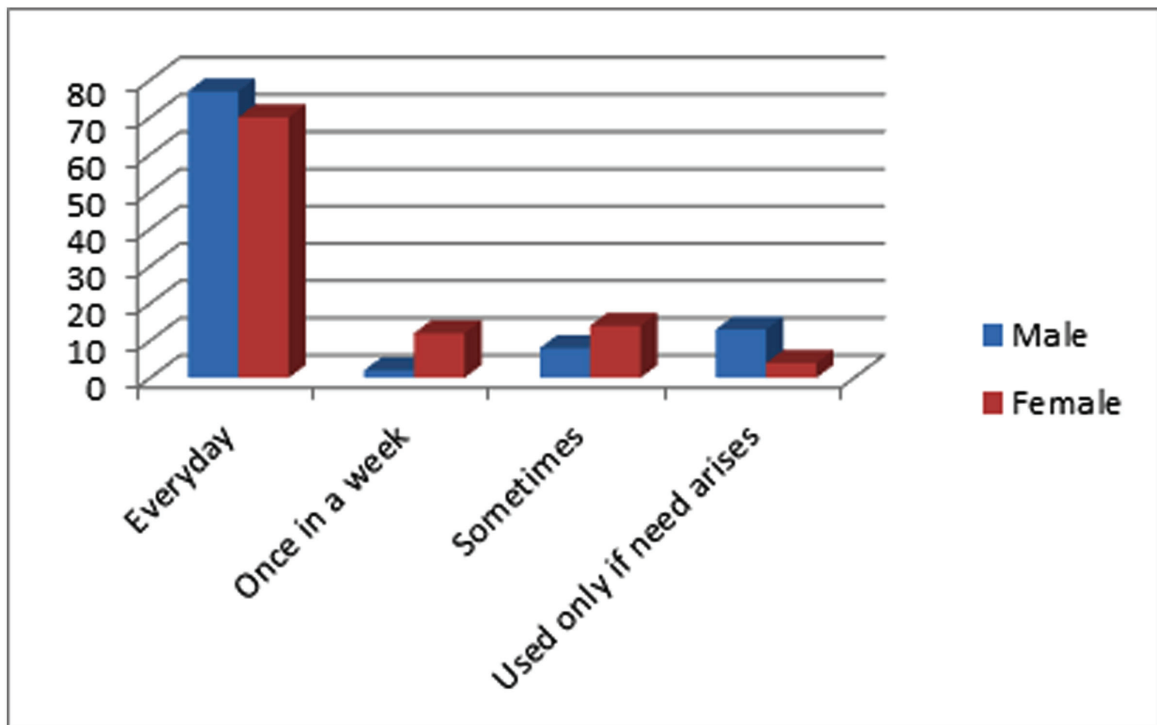
Mode of Buying	Male	Female	Total
One Time Payment	70	63	133
Installment	30	37	67
Total	100	100	200



There is not much difference in mode of buying of male and female respondents. The number of male respondents buying on down payment is slightly higher than female respondents.

Frequency of Use

Frequency of Use	Male	Female	Total
Everyday	77	70	147
Once in a week	2	12	14
Sometimes	8	14	22
Used only if need arises	13	4	17
Total	100	100	200



The number of male respondents using the vehicle daily is slightly higher as compared to female respondents.

Average Distance Covered Daily

Distance Covered everyday	Male	Female	Total
Less than 5	19	29	48
5 to 10 KMS	31	33	64
10 to 15 KMS	20	16	36
More than 15	30	22	52
Total	100	100	200

There is a significant difference in the number of male and female respondents who travel less than 5 kilometers and more than 15 kilometers every day by Two-wheeler. The number of male respondents who travel more than 15 kilometers every day is relatively high as compared to female respondents.

Level of Satisfaction with Brand Owned (Hypothesis: 01)

Satisfaction with the performance of Vehicle	Male Respondent			Female Respondent		
Excellent	50	5	250	44	5	220
Very Good	30	4	120	37	4	148
Good	11	3	33	19	3	57
Average	8	2	16		2	0
Poor	1	1	1		1	0
Total			420			425
Average			84			85

t-TEST: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Male	Female
Mean	84	85
Variance	10741.5	9357
Observations	5	5
Pearson Correlation	0.971060587	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	4	
t Stat	-0.089228826	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.466594576	
t Critical one-tail	2.131846786	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.933189152	
t Critical two-tail	2.776445105	

The p value is significantly high at 0.934. In the test carried out $P > 0.05$ ($0.934 > 0.05$) so we accept the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis is rejected i.e. there is no impact of gender on level of satisfaction.

Use of Internet (Hypothesis: 2):

Use of Internet	Male		Female	
Not Used	47 X 0	0	37 X 0	0
Used Moderately	41 X 1	41	46 X 1	46
Used Extensively	12 X 2	24	17 X 2	34
Total	0	65		80
		Mean = 21. 66		Mean =26.66

Note : “0” value has been assigned to the respondent who did not used Internet, “1” & “2” value was assigned to respondents who used Internet to a moderate extent & Excessive use of Internet for their information search respectively

t-TEST: Paired Two Sample for Means

	Male	Female
Mean	21.66666667	26.66666667
Variance	424.3333333	569.3333333
Observations	3	3
Pearson Correlation	0.985388477	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
Df	2	
	-	
t Stat	1.732050808	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.112701665	
t Critical one-tail	2.91998558	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.225403331	
t Critical two-tail	4.30265273	

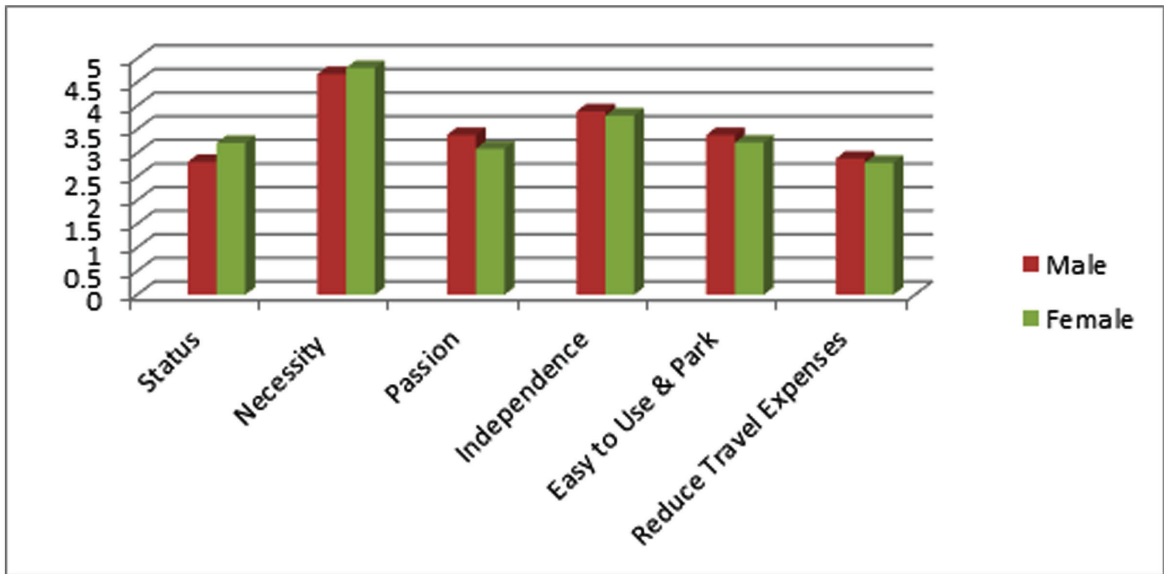
The p value is significantly high at 0.22. In the test carried out $P > 0.05$ ($0.22 > 0.05$) so we accept the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis is rejected i.e. there is no impact of gender on the use of internet.

Reasons for Buying a Two-wheeler

What are the reasons for buying (Male)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Mean Score
Status	21	6	12	4	8	49	100	2.81
	126	30	48	12	16	49	281	
Necessity	42	25	10	8	11	4	100	4.67
	252	125	40	24	22	4	467	
Passion	10	13	25	17	27	8	100	3.38
	60	65	100	51	54	8	338	
Independence	9	29	18	31	11	2	100	3.88
	54	145	72	93	22	2	388	
Easy to Use & Park	10	13	23	21	25	8	100	3.38
	60	65	92	63	50	8	338	
Reduce Travel Expenses	8	14	12	19	18	29	100	2.88
	48	70	48	57	36	29	288	

What are the reasons for buying (Female)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Mean Score
Status	26	9	8	10	11	36	100	3.21
	156	45	32	30	22	36	321	
Necessity	43	29	11	5	6	6	100	4.8
	258	145	44	15	12	6	480	
Passion	2	13	28	20	23	14	100	3.09
	12	65	112	60	46	14	309	
Independence	12	22	21	28	12	5	100	3.79
	72	110	84	84	24	5	379	
Easy to Use & Park	10	16	20	15	28	11	100	3.32
	60	80	80	45	56	11	332	
Reduce Travel Expenses	7	11	12	22	20	28	100	2.79
	42	55	48	66	40	28	279	

Gender / Reasons	Status	Necessity	Passion	Independence	Easy to Use & Park	Reduce Travel Expenses
Male	2.81	4.67	3.38	3.88	3.38	2.88
Female	3.21	4.8	3.09	3.79	3.22	2.79



The above Figures / graph indicate that the gender does not have a significant impact for the reasons of buying a Two-wheeler.

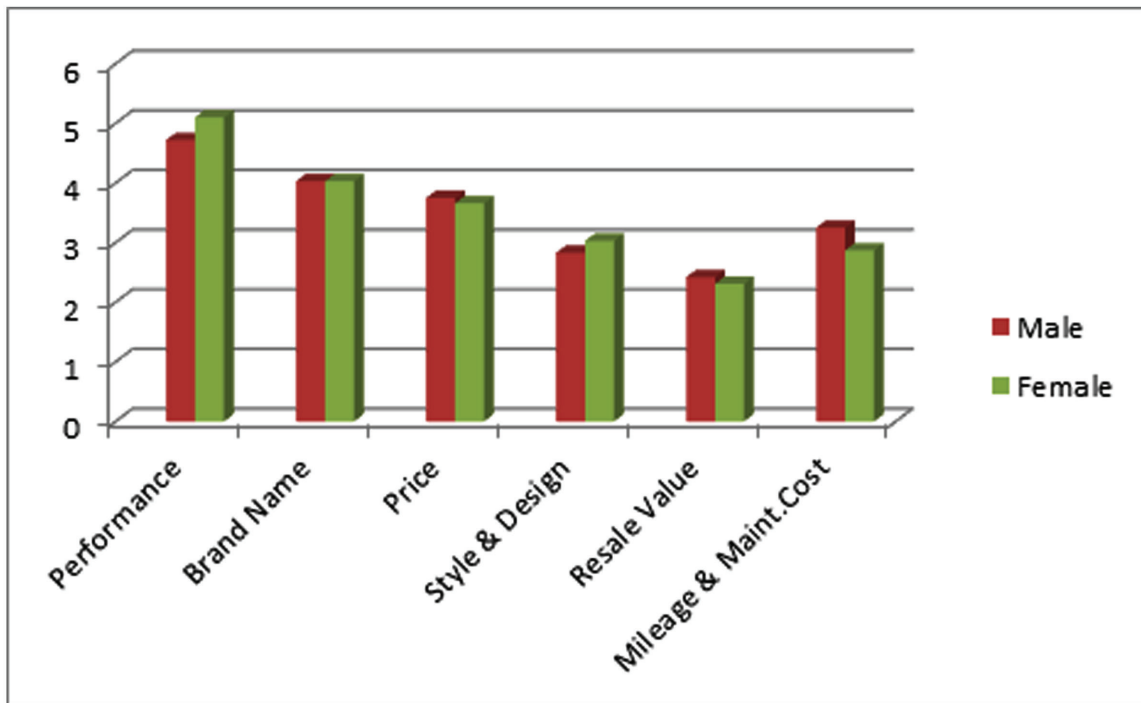
Quality Factors considered while Buying a Two-Wheeler

Factors consider about 2 Wheeler Quality (Male)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Mean Score
Performance	46	24	9	8	3	10	100	4.72
	276	120	36	24	6	10	472	
Brand Name	14	34	20	11	15	6	100	4.03
	84	170	80	33	30	6	403	
Price	14	13	31	24	12	6	100	3.75
	84	65	124	72	24	6	375	

Style & Design	2	10	18	28	23	19	100	2.83
	12	50	72	84	46	19	283	
Resale Value	6	6	10	11	36	31	100	2.42
	36	30	40	33	72	31	242	
Mileage & Maintenance cost	18	13	12	18	11	28	100	3.25
		65	48	54	22	28	325	

Factors consider about 2 Wheeler Quality (Female)	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Mean Score
Performance	61	18	7	5	2	7	100	5.1
	366	90	28	15	4	7	510	
Brand Name	8	42	22	9	11	8	100	4.03
	48	210	88	27	22	8	403	
Price	4	17	42	20	12	5	100	3.66
	24	85	168	60	24	5	366	
Style & Design	4	8	14	46	17	11	100	3.03
	24	40	56	138	34	11	303	
Resale Value	5	6	4	14	42	29	100	2.31
	30	30	16	42	84	29	231	
Mileage & Maint. cost	18	9	11	6	16	40	100	2.87
	108	45	44	18	32	40	287	

Gender / Factors	Performance	Brand Name	Price	Style & Design	Resale Value	Mileage & Maint. Cost
Male	4.72	4.03	3.75	2.83	2.42	3.25
Female	5.1	4.03	3.66	3.03	2.31	2.87



The factors considered significant for buying a Two-wheeler are more or less the same for male & female riders. Performance is the most important factor followed by Brand name. The male users give little more significance to the aspect of mileage & maintenance cost as compared to female user.

FINDINGS:

- 50% of the user's i.e. 100 respondents owned a Honda Two-wheeler. TVS and Hero were ranked a distant second and third respectively.
- Performance and brand name are the important aspects that are considered when buying a Two-wheeler.
- Necessity and independence are the main reasons for buying a Two-wheeler.
- Resale value and Mileage & maintenance cost are not considered to be much significant aspects.
- A very high number of users (male 77) and (female 70) use the vehicle on a daily basis.
- Awareness level about celebrity endorsement was found to be extremely poor among the users.
- An extremely high number of respondents (74% approximately) said that family members were the main source of influence, followed by friends and relatives.
- More than 50% of the respondents claimed that the Two-wheeler is used by them and other member of the family.
- Most of the users rated the price of their vehicle as excellent or very good.
- Majority of the users brought the Two-wheeler by down payment.
- More than 50% of the users travel less than 10 kilometers every day using the vehicle.

SUGGESTIONS

Using celebrities for endorsement was found to be a waste of money as most respondents did not even know the celebrity who endorsed the vehicle. Company could instead use the money for giving some freebies to the buyers. Aggressive marketing strategies like road shows, dealer promotions need to be undertaken by other companies to penetrate the market aggressively in Palghar district which at present is controlled by Honda. A high number of people did not use internet for searching information related to the Two-wheeler, specific digital marketing strategies need to be designed to attract to target the youth using the internet. Gen Y is the main customer base for Two-wheeler companies; therefore specific models to attract them need to be designed by the manufactures. Electric vehicles have a good scope due rising fuel cost and most users in Palghar district use the bike for less than 10 kilometers every day.

CONCLUSION

There is not much difference in consumer behaviour for Two-wheelers with respect to gender. Honda is the most popular brand in Palghar district due to its wide range of geared and non-geared bikes. The Two-wheeler users in India are commuters and not bikers; therefore the vehicle is generally used for work related purposes and daily commutes. The Two-wheeler is generally used by other family members also. The Two-wheeler market of Palghar district comprised mainly of motorcycles and scooters, with little or no scope for the mopeds. An electric Two-wheeler will appeal more to the female Two-wheeler users as women tend to

drive at less speed and the average distance travelled on a daily basis as compare to the male users is significantly less. The passion for Two-wheeler was found to be significantly high among men as compared to women. Women used gearless vehicle, so the use of the vehicle by other members of the family was more as gearless vehicles are easy and convenient to ride. Vespa and Mahindra are yet to make their presence felt in the Palghar region. The number of female Two-wheeler riders is more in the age group of 20 to 30 years. Women tend to use the vehicle for daily errands like shopping, buying vegetables dropping kids to school etc. and hence the number of house wives using a Two-wheeler was very high. Geared and heavy Two-wheeler like Royal Enfield and Java were used only by the men in Palghar district of Maharashtra. The Covid crises and social distancing norms are further expected to push up sales of Two-wheelers. The pandemic will also result in more dependency on Two-wheeler among the existing users as the public transport system is completely disrupted. Men were equally inclined towards both geared and non-geared vehicles and were equally comfortable with motorcycles and scooters. Family members are an integral part of the decision making process when buying a Two-wheeler. The use of internet for information search is more among the young and educated irrespective of the gender, when buying a Two-wheeler. Companies that positioned their vehicle for both genders will have a competitive advantage as Two-wheelers are generally used by other members of the family. Celebrity endorsement had little or no impact on the consumer decision making.

SCOPE RELATED TO FURTHER STUDIES

Further studies can be carried out in different districts / states of the country. The research considered all demographic variables; more specific studies related to select demographic variables can be carried out for obtaining

accurate results. The research had a sample size of 200 respondents, considering the huge number of Two-wheeler users; a study with bigger sample size could give new insights for Two-wheeler manufacturing companies. The research also leaves scope for studies which are company specific.

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