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RESEARCH ARTICLE

BUS OWNERS SURVEY IN PCMC AREA OF PUNE DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Many surveys are conducted by many people for Passengers and Drivers. Feedback is available on various web sites. But very less data is available on the most important link in the chain is bus owner who take the decision on bus purchase and invest his hard earned money. Bus owners are primary owners but passengers and drivers are influencers. PCMC is a newly developing smart city, it is also called as Detroit of India or Auto hub of India. Thousands of small scale, medium scale and large scale companies are located here. Millions of employees live here and infrastructure is developed for them-like hospitals schools and Government offices. Naturally lot of staff, school buses are required for public and private transportation. Manufacturers need to study the purchase motivators, customer experience, and usage pattern.

INTRODUCTION

Objective of Study: Tata Motors, Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Swaraj Mazda and Eicher make buses in India. Every bus manufacturer has buses which are satisfying customer needs as per their abilities. Nobody can satisfy all the customers all the time. Owner study was done to understand what customer like and unlike and the purchase process, customer experience and usage pattern.

Research Methodology: Rating scale method is used for study. Feature list, price list and specification were displayed at the location of interaction. These studies are very quick and easy to conclude. Very less time is given to customer and first thought is captured.

Scope of study: Study was limited to PCMC area, 32 seater buses of 7 tonne GVW and only owners who are in business for minimum 3 years were covered.

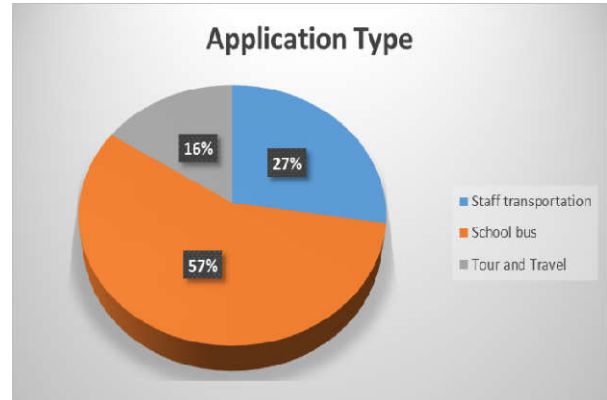
Data Analysis: 50# Bus owners from sub parts of PCMC like Nigdi, Moshi, Chakan, Bhosari, Waked, Akurdi, Chinchwad and Ravet were met and interviewed, who were having all well-known brands of buses or either of them. The feedback shared by them was investigated and analysis is done. These buses are mostly driven by drivers and only 10% owners who are drivers also. In school as well as staff bus, drivers are engaged at the start and at the end of company/office shifts and

school start/school off. But they need to wait for the entire period between start and end of the shift. So some bus owners can operate buses for school and staff and work in the period between shift start and shift end but the only drivers cannot do this and their time get wasted. Owners who are driver can work in this idle period as a stage carrier and earn some extra money. Majority of private buses are in school application, then come staff transportation and last is tour and travels in PCMC. Tour and travel is a seasonal business where as school buses operate for entire year like staff bus so many bus operators chose school and staff bus operation. To find out motivators for bus purchase, questions were asked to bus owners and summary is as below. Bus owners want comfortable seats, more seating capacity, styling, good appearance and good mileage which are differentiator. As per owners, on maintenance, body building, spare part availability and service network, all competitors are at par. When all owners were asked independently what they miss in their buses, their answer was more or less, common. We had thought that owners will ask for music system or mobile charger in buses but every owner said it is not required because travel time is short and it's a short haul operation. They also fear of cost increase and battery drain issue. Many joints to wire may cause fire incident. School bus, Staff bus travel less than 100km every day and income is fixed. So almost nobody stressed hard on price, EMI and maintenance cost while discussion on dislikes. As operation is start-stop type, everybody knows they will get less kmpl and questions were not prompted.

RESULTS

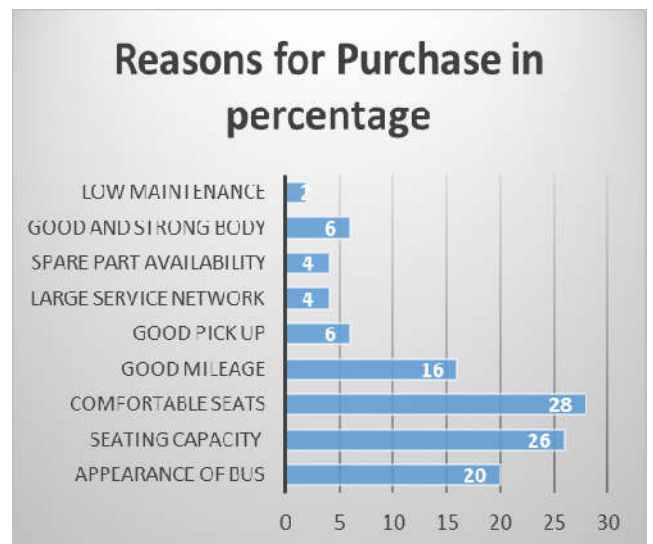
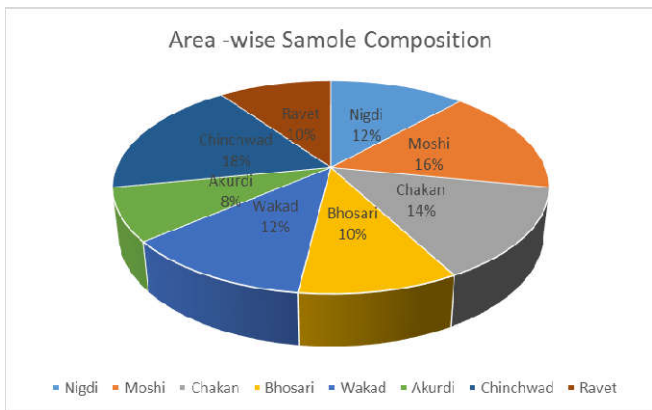
- 90% buses are driven by drivers and only 10% are driven by owner himself. Owners can do other work between the period gap of dropping and bringing back staff from offices or kids from schools.
- In private bus segment, 58% buses are used for school application, 28% for staff and remaining are for tour and travels. All tour and travel owners said they want comfortable reclining seats and more leg space, luggage space so that people will hire their buses. They also prefer better look inside and outside.
- Owners have clear preference for comfort features as they will get surety that their bus will get hired, seating capacity will give income per seat in staff carrier and tour and travel application.
- In dislikes, leg and luggage space, floor height are major concern. Old people find difficulty in climbing 3-4 steps. As staff bus do not have luggage space, same bus cannot be used for tour and travel on holidays.

Type of Application	Mentioned by number of bus owners	Percentage
Staff transportation	14	28
School bus	29	58
Tour and Travel	8	16

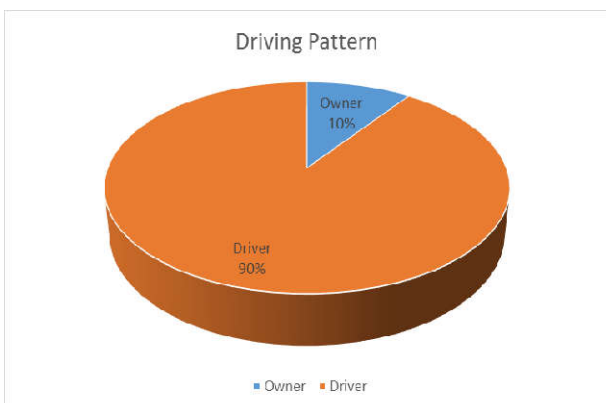


Area -wise Sample Composition		
Area	No of Buses	Percentage
Nigdi	6	12
Moshi	8	16
Chakan	7	14
Bhosari	5	10
Wakad	6	12
Akurdi	4	8
Chinchwad	9	18
Ravet	5	10

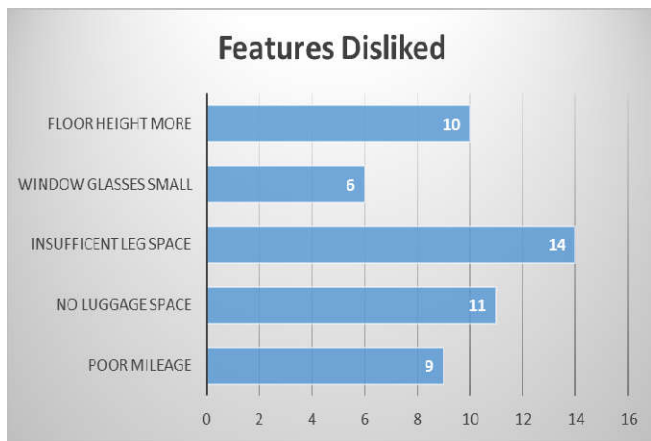
Reason for Purchase	Mentioned by so many owners	Percentage
Appearance of Bus	10	20
Seating capacity	13	26
Comfortable seats	14	28
Good mileage	8	16
Good pick up	3	6
Large service network	2	4
Spare part availability	2	4
Good and strong body	3	6
Low maintenance	1	2



Driving Pattern	
Owner	10%
Driver	90%



Features Disliked	No of owners told
Poor mileage	9
No luggage space	11
Insufficient leg space	14
Window glasses small	6
Floor height more	10



Conclusion

Owners want low floor bus for staff, school and travel tour business for easy ingress.

They want to use staff bus for tours and travel purpose on holidays but as luggage space is not there, passengers do not prefer to hire their buses for picnics, marriage travels. Comfortable seats and big windows are attraction and need in tour and travel bus segment. So manufacturers need to make low floor buses with comfortable and adjustable seats with luggage space and bigger windows with good leg space with maximum number of seats in respective tonnage point-so these buses can be used as staff as well as tour and travel-both. Stage carrier application is almost absent in PCMC. Public transportation is done by Municipal Corporation.

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