# INFLUENCES ON CONSUMERS' DECISIONS TO BUY NEW CARS IN CACOAL, BRAZIL

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#### **Abstract**

Regardless of the changes in the economy of the country in recent years caused by the global financial crisis, Brazil has managed to stand positively, despite the many variations in the national and international economic scenario. In the rise of the economy, the automobile sector was a prominent contributor, making it more advantageous for a consumer to purchase a new vehicle. This article aims to study the factors in the city of Cacoal that influenced a consumer's decision to buy a new car. The methodology was descriptive research, using the deductive method, a qualitative and quantitative approach, and bibliographic research. To collect our data, we used a questionnaire containing 14 questions, some semi-open and some multiple-choice closed, sent in a link via email and Whatsapp, with the help of the Google Forms tool. In our results, it was observed that a consumer's buying behaviour receives influences from both the external environment and the social group, both of which have a direct impact on the process of deciding to buy a

new vehicle. The digital media, in the form of specialized electronic magazine websites, have become popular for consumers to consult. It was found that consumers researching in order to make a purchase decision consider the following decision factors first: quality, trust in technical assistance, confidence in the brand, safety and finally price. To a consumer looking for a new car these items are found to be the most important. The present study aims to set the parameters for future studies and to justify an interest in research.

Keywords: Behaviour; Consumer; Automobiles; Purchase;

#### 1. Introduction

Despite the changes in the economy of the country in recent years caused by the global financial crisis, Brazil has managed to stand positively, notwithstanding the many variations in the national and international economic scenario. As a result of its stability during the period between 2008 and 2010, the Brazilian economy advanced.

A prominent contributor to this advance was the auto sector, which was the main concern of the government in the crisis period; it became much more advantageous for a consumer to buy a new vehicle.

However, national traffic control agencies have focused their speculation on the growth in the number of motor vehicles on Brazil's roads, since there is not enough infrastructure to accommodate this growing and constant demand.

Each year thousands of cars of all brands roll on to the streets of its towns and cities; meanwhile the numerous strategies launched by the automakers to empty their stockrooms make the fate of the army of used cars a matter of doubt.

The general objective of the present research was to analyze the factors that influence a consumer's decision to buy a new vehicle. To this end, the following specific objectives were enlisted: to identify the socioeconomic profile of consumers of new cars in the municipality under study; to study consumer buying behaviour when buying a new vehicle; and to analyze the main consumer influences on the purchase of a new car.

#### 2. Theoretical Foundation

#### 2.1 The Consumer

Art. 2 of the Consumer Protection Code conceptualizes a consumer as an "individual or legal entity that purchases or uses a product or service as a final recipient". However, this concept in the Code has led to an innovation in terms of international law, because a legal entity is not considered a consumer in any country, but this code brings in the consumer as a legal entity. This interpretation reduces the figure of the consumer to a person who purchases and uses a product for his/her family's use.

Given this change, it is noted that the consumer as an agent who makes decisions is no longer the individual but the family. Broadly speaking, a consumer is someone who enjoys a good or service that meets a need, whether essential for survival or not linked to any necessity, but merely an act driven by an exercise of marketing.

Solomon (2008) defines consumers as organizations or groups, in which one or more people can decide to buy a particular product that can be used by many. Hence, in other organizational situations, buying decisions can be made by a large group of people. In a general context, consumption should be considered as an act of purchase with a view to consume, but it is necessary to define the term 'consumption' as 'the act of buying without the intention of reselling what was acquired'.

If this definition is accepted, industrialists, intermediaries, and dealers are excluded from the category of consumers because consumers are more commonly characterized as individuals or collectives that purchase goods or services, whether public or private, which may be used for private, individual or collective purposes.

#### 2.2 Consumer Behavior

Art. According to Paul and Olson (2009), consumer behaviour can be defined as the dynamic interaction between affect and cognition, behaviour and environment through which humans conduct actions related to barter exchange, where traders use the goods that they own to bargain before the creation of financial securities. There are several ways to analyze consumer behaviour in making decisions about a particular good or service, methods during which the manufacturer and/or seller inserts ideas into the consumer's mind before s/he buys a product or service.

The human body responds to the subliminal stimuli of its human consciousness, which are deeply capable of affecting the subconscious and, in turn, an individual's opinion about a particular item (FREITAS; PITZER; AZEVEDO, 2009).

According to Solomon (2008), many marketers recognize that behaviour is an ongoing process and is not restricted to what happens when the consumer gives the money or uses a credit card and in return receives his merchandise or service contract.

#### 2.3 Decision-Making Process

Consumers have specific needs, often affected by variables that directly influence their decisions. As influencing factors they are usually added to the daily experience of consumers. There they act quietly, but decisively, in the process of making choices to meet needs and wants as a consumer.

According to Cobra (2009), the consumer is exposed to the strong impact of marketing devoted to the purchase of brands of all categories of product by extolling one or more of them in the market, and persuading a consumer to buy it.

This makes the main task of the marketer who wants to find the best place in the market despite the competition to ascertain and understand what happens in the buyer's conscious mind between the arrival of the external stimulus and the buying decision.

Alves (2010) mentions that individuals seek their fulfilment when they are motivated by internal stimuli, i.e. the stimuli that individuals have within themselves. These stimuli, sometimes called internal motivation, are caused by the prospect of pleasure, profit, self-esteem, or of avoiding pain or preventing loss; they depend on social approval or external factors such as personal factors, social factors, or the living group

into which they are inserted, or cultural factors such as beliefs and experiences passed on to the individual by the family.

#### 2.4 The Automotive Sector in Brazil

Consumers According to Botelho (2008), the first automobile manufacturer to settle in Brazil was Ford Motors do Brasil in 1923, followed in 1925 by General Motors do Brasil, better known by the acronym GMB. Both started their activities in São Paulo; initially, the companies were only assembly plants, together with maintenance services for their products.

Brazil began the twentieth century with about 18 million inhabitants, and a demographic density of 18.2 inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>. In this period technological advances led to the full use of production lines in the commercialization of goods and services; large urban nuclei begin to appear, forming population conglomerates and bringing more businesses that would require specialization into sectors at all levels.

Botelho (2008) mentions that in 1953 the Brazilian government opted to levy taxes on heavy-duty and imported vehicles, to minimize the cost of importing automobiles. Since automotive items and components were the most extensive imports, this measure to restore the balance of trade.

In recent years, the increase in consumer income in Brazil's economic expansion, has helped to leverage and accelerate market growth and consolidate the presence of famous car manufacturers in the sector's sales (SANTOS; SOUZA; COSTA, 1995). But before 1990 the Brazilian automobile market was closed to vehicles imported from other countries, generating a domestic monopoly.

This meant that companies supported by a market closed to external competitors were not concerned about the quality or price of their vehicles. They had such control of an uncompetitive market that they never worried about the welfare of the consumer (BOTELHO, 2008).

Cardoso (2000) notes that the function of quality inspector of Brazilian cars as they leave the production line is showing a slight tendency to become extinct. According to Godoy, Loreti, and Monteiro (2010), however, the recent world economic crisis observed and felt by countries such as Brazil forced the government to take urgent and far-reaching decisions to preserve the economy from the abrupt effects of its impact.

# 3. Methodology

This research is mainly characterized by a descriptive methodology, together with other methods such as the deductive method. In the view of Prodanov and Freitas (2013), the latter aims to explain the content of the premises, through a chain of reasoning in descending order, analyzing from the general to a particular conclusion.

This study took a qualitative and quantitative approach to the collection of data. Qualitative research was included because an exclusively quantitative approach limits researchers to the factual description of this or that event, ignoring the complexity of social reality (Prodanov and Freitas, 2013).

The empirical data were collected from answers to 14 (fourteen) semi-open and closed questions, structured according to the Likert scale. The survey was distributed during October and November 2018, through the tool googleforms.ca in the city of Cacoal, Rondônia, to a random sample of 198 residents. The sample size

was chosen to comply with the proportion set by Anderson, Sweeney, and Williams (2003); it allows an error margin of 7% and a confidence level of 95%. After the data were collected, they were systematically classified through selection, coding, and tabulation. Content analysis was also used.

# 4. Data Analysis

# 4.1 Socioeconomic Profile of the Sample

The sample consisted of 208 participants, 107 female, and 101 male, between the ages of 18 and 66 years and over: 4.6% of the respondents were between 26 and 35 years old and both sexes represented. 99.5% are people of a physical nature. The highest percentage had mostly completed their formal education or were undergraduates. 109 respondents said that they were married, 66 were single and 33 people were either divorced, widowed or in a stable union; 56.7% had children, which corresponds to about 118 of all respondents.

From their answers it appears that 30.8% of them were single, and 30.8% also would describe themselves as young couples with independent children; 17.8% were young couples without children, 6.3% of the respondents were divorced and had children under six years old; 9.1% formed a group of older working couples with independent children, 2.9% were couples who had already retired, and 2.4 % of the total were widowed.

It was observed that 38.5% of them had a monthly family income ranging from R \$ 2,800.00 to R \$ 3,800.00; 23.6% of them had a salary of up to 1,900.00, about 20.7% said that their wages ranged from R \$ 4,700.00 to R \$ 5,700.00; in percentage terms, 17.4% of the respondents had a family income of R \$ 6,600.00 to R \$ 9,500.00, and half of this group had \$ 9,500 as their highest income.

#### 4.2 Consumer Purchasing Behavior in the Purchase of New Cars

The information was collected during routine visits to the interviewees in which they were asked about this subject. It was found that 40.9% of the respondents claimed never to go to new car dealerships, 37% made an annual visit, and 18.3% frequented new car dealerships every six months.

The reason for this is that owners of new cars must meet the manufacturers' requirements by periodically bringing them back for warranty revisions. It is relevant to note here that at least 3.4% of the interviewees claimed to visit their original dealers every month to visit departments such as the auto repair shop, the outlet for auto parts, the insurance brokers, and the financial and other services.

Table 1: Consumer Behaviour Concerning Newly Available Makes and Models of Cars.

VARIABLE

1 2 3 4 5 1

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
I seek information about the options of popular car models that are available.	7%	11%	18%	42%	22%	100%
I seek information about the available colours in stock.	11%	16%	22%	37%	14%	100%

I want to know about the quality of the commercialized vehicles (factory warranty, fuel consumption, series accessories, comfort).	4%	5%	11%	34%	46%	100%
I seek information about the service provided before, during, and after sales (test drive, satisfaction survey, employee proactivity, etc.).	5%	11%	21%	35%	28%	100%
I want to know about the origin of the brand.	4%	7%	16%	35%	38%	100%
I research prices and payment and instalment terms	5%	7%	9%	33%	46%	100%
I look for the prices of spare parts and warranty reviews.	4%	10%	18%	33%	35%	100%
I seek information only on brands that I already know, and I'm used to buying.	10%	19%	19%	31%	21%	100%
I look for information only at dealerships located near my home or place of work.	19%	19%	25%	24%	13%	100%
I do not compare prices owing to lack of interest or time.	41%	23%	17%	12%	7%	100%
I do not gather information owing to lack of interest and time.	41%	24%	17%	12%	6%	100%

1 - Strongly Disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - Neither disagree nor agree; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree

Source: Research data (2018).

Regarding consumer behaviour regarding the full range of makes and models of the new cars available, 46% of respondents looked into prices, payment terms and instalments before deciding to purchase a new vehicle and 46.2% compared the quality of the vehicles on sale, regarding items such as factory warranty, fuel consumption, standard accessories and comfort, etc.

Among all the brands and models on offer in the market, it was essential for 38% to choose a brand of which they approved; 35% of this group looked into the prices of spare parts and warranty reviews.

#### 4.3 Main Consumer Influences in New Car Buying

Given the large proportion of people who have access to the internet, it is not surprising to hear from the survey respondents that 71% of them used the internet as their primary source for researching car brands and models in the market.

Table 2: Sources of information regarding available new makes and models of cars.

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Referral by friends and relatives	11%	12%	25%	30%	22%	100%
Going personally to the dealer (self-assessment)	8%	9%	15%	31%	37%	100%
Flyers	27%	25%	24%	15%	9%	100%
Via telephone enquiries to dealers	30%	24%	22%	12%	12%	100%
Advertising in specialized magazines	18%	19%	15%	26%	22%	100%
Internet	7%	10%	12%	22%	49%	100%
TV Advertising	11%	22%	21%	23%	23%	100%
Newspaper Advertising	28%	25%	20%	13,5%	13,5%	100%
Outdoor Advertising	23%	21%	24%	17%	15%	100%
Previous consumer experience	11%	8%	15%	28%	38%	100%
Car fairs	16%	16%	16%	30%	22%	100%

<sup>1-</sup> Never used as a source; 2 - Little used; 3 – Neither used nor avoided; 4 – Used as a source; 5 – Often used as a source.

Source: Research data (2018).

However, it is relevant to note that 66% of the respondents still took their previous experience as a consumer into account. Among the sources of information used or most often used by consumers, the item 'friends and relatives' stands out with 52% of respondents agreeing; 52% also visit factory fairs in search of better terms at the time of purchase. The medium of television has an essential influence on consumer behaviour and is hugely significant; the survey data indicate that 46% of respondents use TV advertising as a source of information in making their decision.

Table 3: Criteria used in choosing the brand/dealership

VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
Variety of vehicles on delivery	13%	13%	28%	20%	26%	100%
Company tradition	5%	11%	25%	24%	35%	100%

Attendance	4%	8%	20%	23%	45%	100%		
Reliability	4%	7%	15%	19%	56%	100%		
Price	5%	5%	16%	12%	62%	100%		
Payment conditions	4%	8%	15%	17%	56%	100%		
Willingness to accept used vehicles in part payment.	6%	6%	18%	21%	49%	100%		
Referrals from Other customers	9%	13%	20%	27%	31%	100%		
Location	13%	23%	30%	15%	19%	100%		
1-Less important 5 - More								
important								

Source: Research Data (2018)

According to the data shown in Table 3, in the opinion of the interviewed individuals, reliability in the broad sense is the criterion in choosing a brand: 75% considered it essential or thought it more critical among all the variables. Of the respondents, 68% believed that the service provided by the seller was an important factor. Regarding the price, 74% rated this as an important or more important criterion and 73% of the respondents considered suitable payment terms to be essential or more critical; only 15% thought it was merely relevant and 12% saw it as a less significant factor.

Of the given criteria, the acceptance of used vehicles in part payment was rated as an essential or more critical factor in the purchase decision process, by 70% of the respondents. 35% of the interviewees used the tradition of the company as the crucial criterion, while 36% of them considered it less than crucial. Importantly, the location of the company in the municipality was believed by about 30% to be an irrelevant criterion, which shows that other factors contributed more directly to the decision process and the place of purchase is not a competitive differential.

The variety of brands and prompt delivery were considered irrelevant by 28% of consumers, and 26% considered them less critical, a sign of consumer attitudes to price, payment conditions, reliability, and service. These were recognized as the criteria in operation in most decisions to buy a new vehicle.

#### 4.4 Factors that Influenced a Consumer's Decision to Purchase a New Vehicle

An important question in this research was which attributes were considered necessary in the decision to purchase a new vehicle, and which were the main ones: quality, price, fuel economy, durability, luggage space, comfort and durability are among the attributes that could be considered relevant when the participants in the survey were contemplating the purchase of a new car.

Table 4: Attributes considered most important in the decision to buy a new car.

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VARIABLE	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL		
Quality	3%	5%	13%	16%	63%	100%		
Price	2%	6%	17%	19%	56%	100%		
Performance	2%	4%	18%	20%	56%	100%		
Colour	9%	14%	34%	24%	19%	100%		
Fuel Economy	4%	2%	17%	25%	52%	100%		
Durability	2%	4%	16%	21%	57%	100%		
Fuel (A. Diesel, Alcohol, Gasoline, Flex, Hybrid or Electric)	4%	9%	24%	27%	36%	100%		
Brand Confidence	3%	5%	15%	27%	50%	100%		
Modern Design	3%	9%	20%	38%	30%	100%		
Safety	3%	3%	17%	12%	65%	100%		
Confidence in technical assistance	3%	5%	14%	24%	54%	100%		
Payment facilities	5%	4%	19,5%	20,5%	51%	100%		
Luggage space	4%	9%	26,5%	24%	36,5%	100%		
Comfort	3%	4%	15%	24%	54%	100%		
Attendance	3%	6%	23%	25%	43%	100%		
Embedded technology	5%	10%	17%	30%	38%	100%		
1-Less Important 5 - More important								

Source: Research Data (2018)

The analysis of the survey data regarding the attributes considered most important in the decision to buy a new car identified the car's quality (chosen by 63%) and durability (chosen by 57%) as the most important. Aspects such as brand trust supported 77% in their choice and confidence in technical assistance attracted 78% of the answers. These qualities were cited as relevant or most important, earning 4 and 5 respectively in the ranking of percentages.

Regarding the attributes that the numerous manufacturers offered, 78% of the people answering this questionnaire evaluated comfort as an essential or significant feature, but 68% considered modern design to have equal importance. 65% believed that safety was essential or most important and 60.5% thought the same about luggage space, further data on this attribute, in their final decision to purchase a new car. 36.5% of the respondents rated this attribute with the 5th degree of importance and about 26.5% were indifferent to it, making this feature unimportant as a decision factor in the opinion of consumers.

In this survey of 208 people, 56% considered price the crucial attribute while 51% gave this rank to ease of payment. Hence the consumer sample considers both factors to be determinants, most important according this analysis, in the choices made. With regard to the attributes considered determinative and influencing consumer behaviour in the decision-making process, it was found that fuel economy was cited by 52% as more critical

#### 5. Conclusion

To demonstrate through the data the factors that influence a consumer's decision to buy a new vehicle, this field research sought to ascertain consumers' socioeconomic profiles from their buying behaviour. Thus, it was possible to analyze the leading influences on their consumption before any specific desire to buy a new car, by considering all the factors responsible for determining the behaviour in consumers who make a purchase. The objectives of the research were satisfactorily achieved, since the collected data responded clearly and objectively to the general purpose, the specific concerns and the problems raised by the proposed theme. These were made viable for analysis through the answers, which revealed the perspectives and behaviour of consumers at the time the influential factors were presented.

Regarding the expression of desire or aspirations to purchase an auto mobile, it was observed that consumers use very diverse sources to resolve matters of choice, given the immense variety of brands, models, and technologies available in the new car market of Brazil.

The desire-generating factor is responsible for several steps, from feeling the need to buy and searching for information on the market to the act of choosing the vehicle, where consumers are hit by a range of factors that try to influence their decision and behaviour during the decision process.

The present study is intended to provide parameters and reasons for research in future studies. Having completed this analysis, we suggest that new vehicle dealers in the municipality under investigation would benefit from the results if they re-designed their service, marketing, inventory, additional service, and aftermarket standards to leverage the results and ensure more efficient competitive advantage over their rivals.

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