

A Study of Customer Preference and Decision Variables in Joining a Music Class in Khamgaon

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Abstract: *Music education has emerged as a significant avenue for personal development, cultural expression, and career growth in semi-urban towns of India. This paper presents a structured study on customer preferences and decision-making variables that influence individuals to join music classes in Khamgaon, a growing town in Maharashtra. A structured questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents, covering demographic profiles, awareness levels, preferred learning modes, fee structures, timing, and key motivational and inhibiting factors. The data was analyzed using frequency distribution and descriptive statistics. Findings reveal that the majority of respondents are young males aged 21–25, predominantly students, who prefer offline instrumental learning with flexible evening schedules at an affordable monthly fee. Word-of-mouth through friends and family emerged as the most dominant awareness channel. High satisfaction levels were recorded among those already enrolled, with 89% willing to recommend their classes to others. The study provides actionable insights for music academy operators in Khamgaon to improve services, attract more learners, and bridge gaps in participation — especially among females and working professionals.*

Keywords: Music Education, Customer Preference, Decision Variables, Khamgaon, Consumer Behavior, MBA Research.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, music education has witnessed remarkable growth in India, driven by rising disposable incomes, increased awareness of holistic development, and the proliferation of social media showcasing musical talent. In semi-urban towns like Khamgaon in Maharashtra's Buldhana district, this trend is gaining steady momentum. Local music academies are becoming important cultural institutions that serve diverse age groups and socioeconomic segments.

Understanding what drives individuals to choose a particular music class — and what barriers prevent others from enrolling — is critical information for academy owners, educators, and policymakers. This research bridges that gap by examining the preferences, expectations, and decision variables of current and potential music learners in Khamgaon through primary survey data.

The study is rooted in consumer behavior theory and applied marketing principles, with a focus on service quality, pricing sensitivity, and social influence. It contributes to the sparse literature on music education consumer behavior in Tier-3 Indian cities.

Objectives of the Study

Main Objective:

To conduct a study and analyses customer preferences and decision-making factors that influence a person to take music classes in Khamgaon.



Specific Objectives:

1. To identify key factors influencing the decision to join a music class, such as fees, location, quality, timing, and instructor credentials.
2. To understand preferences and expectations for different music class types (vocal, instrumental, online, offline).
3. To investigate how demographic variables (age, gender, income, education, occupation) influence choice.
4. To evaluate satisfaction levels of students already enrolled in music classes.
5. To analyse the role of marketing, word-of-mouth, and social influence in decision-making.
6. To provide suggestions for local music academies to attract more students and enhance services.

1.2 Nature of the Study

This study is descriptive and exploratory in nature. It employs primary data collection through a structured questionnaire and uses quantitative analysis techniques. The research is cross-sectional, conducted during A.Y. 2025–2026, and focuses exclusively on respondents within Khamgaon and its immediate surroundings.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980): Widely used in service studies, it explains satisfaction as the gap between expected and actual performance. In music classes, students form expectations about teaching quality, instruments, fees, and environment, which determine their satisfaction after joining.

Relationship Marketing (Berry, 1983): Highlights the importance of building long-term relationships, trust, and emotional bonds. In smaller towns like Khamgaon, music students often prefer teachers with whom they share personal trust and comfort.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991): Suggests that intentions to join a service are influenced by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control. For music classes, this means students may join due to personal interest, peer/family influence, and ease of access/affordability.

III. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

3.1 Theoretical Framework

Customer decision-making and satisfaction in service sectors like music education have been widely studied using consumer behaviour theories. The **Expectation–Disconfirmation Theory (Oliver, 1980)** explains that satisfaction arises when the actual experience of learning matches or exceeds expectations. If teaching quality, environment, or fees do not meet expectations, dissatisfaction follows.

In addition, **Relationship Marketing Theory** is significant in music classes, especially in smaller towns like Khamgaon, where trust, personal interaction, and emotional bonding between teacher and student strongly influence preferences and loyalty. Together, these theories provide a sound base for analysing why students prefer certain music classes over others.

3.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual model of this study positions Customer Preference as the central dependent variable, influenced by five clusters of independent variables:

Customer satisfaction and willingness to recommend emerge as the outcome variables, reflecting the net impact of these determinants on enrolment decisions.



Variable Cluster	Key Elements
Demographic Factors	Age, Gender, Occupation, Education, Income
Service Quality Factors	Teacher quality, Facilities, Environment
Economic Factors	Fee structure, Affordability, Payment flexibility
Convenience Factors	Location, Timing, Class duration, Mode (online/offline)
Social Influence Factors	Word-of-mouth, Family recommendations, Reputation

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design, aimed at systematically describing the preferences and decision variables of music class consumers in Khamgaon.

4.2 Data Collection

Primary Data: Collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of 28 questions across four sections: respondent profile, awareness and preferences, decision factors (Likert scale, 1–5), and satisfaction and suggestions.

Sample Size: 100 respondents, selected through convenience and snowball sampling from Khamgaon and nearby areas.

Data Collection Period: Academic Year 2025–2026.

4.3 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using frequency distribution tables and percentage analysis. Likert-scale responses (Q16–Q24) were interpreted based on the aggregate of Agree and Strongly Agree responses to determine factor significance. All data was coded, tabulated, and interpreted in Microsoft Excel.

4.4 Limitations

1. The sample is restricted to Khamgaon; findings may not be generalizable to other regions.
2. The study relies on self-reported data, which may include response bias.
3. 87% male respondents limit the gender-balanced view of the findings.

V. DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND FINDINGS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Count	Percentage
Age Group	21–25 years (largest)	44	44%
Age Group	Under 15	37	37%
Gender	Male	87	87%
Gender	Female	13	13%
Occupation	Student	84	84%
Education	School Level	47	47%



Monthly Income	Less than ₹10,000	21	Highest among earners
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Interpretation: The respondent base is predominantly young, male, and student-oriented, reflecting the typical profile of music learners in a semi-urban town. The significant under-15 segment indicates strong early-interest in music education. The low female participation (13%) signals an important gap that music academies must address through targeted outreach and inclusive programming.

5.2 Awareness and Preference Findings

Preference Variable	Most Popular Choice	Percentage
Awareness Source	Friends / Family	55%
Music Class Type	Instrumental (Guitar, Piano, Tabla, etc.)	78%
Learning Mode	Offline	81%
Preferred Timing	Evening (6–7 PM)	37%
Class Duration	1 Hour	76%
Fee Structure	Monthly	79%
Comfortable Fee Range	₹500/month (Sat-Sun)	44%
Class Frequency	Every day	52%

Interpretation: Word-of-mouth via friends and family dominates as the primary discovery channel, underscoring the critical role of reputation and social networks. Instrumental learning — particularly guitar, piano and tabla — is overwhelmingly preferred over vocal training. The strong preference for offline, evening, 1-hour sessions indicates that students want structured, time-bound, in-person learning that fits around school or work schedules. Price sensitivity is evident, with nearly half preferring a budget weekend model at ₹500/month.

5.3 Decision Factor Analysis (Likert Scale)

Decision Factor	Agree + Strongly Agree	Significance Level
Teaching style and methods	85%	Very High
Location accessibility	79%	Very High
Affordable fees	79%	Very High
Clean and comfortable environment	84%	Very High
Availability of instruments & facilities	80%	Very High
Academy reputation	75%	High



Teacher quality and experience	74%	High
Performance/certification opportunities	79%	Very High
Recommendations from friends/family	77%	High

Interpretation: All nine decision factors scored above 74% combined agreement, highlighting that music learners in Khamgaon have holistic expectations. Teaching quality, environment, and affordability emerge as the three most decisive factors. Notably, performance and certification opportunities scored 79% agreement — suggesting that students are not just seeking skill but formal recognition and experiential milestones.

5.4 Satisfaction and Recommendations

61% of respondents rated existing music classes in Khamgaon as Very Satisfactory, and an additional 15% rated them Satisfactory — yielding a 76% overall satisfaction rate. Critically, 89% of respondents said they would recommend their music class to others, validating the high Net Promoter Score of the existing academy ecosystem.

When asked about desired improvements, respondents prioritized: more performance opportunities (31%), flexible timings (28%), lower fees (14%), better trained teachers (13%), and improved infrastructure (12%).

VI. CONCLUSION

This study successfully identifies the key customer preferences and decision variables shaping music class enrolment behavior in Khamgaon. The following major conclusions are drawn:

- The music education market in Khamgaon is primarily driven by young students (under 25), motivated by personal hobby and interest rather than career ambitions or external pressure.
- Instrumental learning — especially guitar, piano, and tabla — dominates demand, presenting a clear specialisation opportunity for local academies.
- Offline, evening, 1-hour sessions at a monthly fee of ₹500–₹800 represents the ideal service package for the majority of the target market.
- Word-of-mouth through friends and family is the single most powerful marketing channel, far surpassing digital and institutional channels. Academies should invest in referral programmes and community-building.
- The significant gender gap (87% male respondents) points to structural or social barriers preventing female participation. Academies can explore women-only batches, flexible timings, and targeted outreach to address this gap.
- High satisfaction (76%) and recommendation rates (89%) confirm that existing music academies in Khamgaon deliver good value, but improvements in performance opportunities, flexible scheduling, and pricing can further elevate the experience.
- Music academies should consider structured certification pathways and regular student performances to increase motivation, engagement, and word-of-mouth promotion.

In conclusion, Khamgaon's music education sector holds strong intrinsic demand that is currently underserved among female learners, working professionals, and those seeking structured career pathways. With targeted improvements in pricing, scheduling flexibility, and performance exposure, local academies can significantly expand their reach and deepen student loyalty.

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