

Survey: Family Cars - The Controversy of Style vs. Functionality

Half Who Say Minivan Best Fulfills Family Car Needs Would Rather Drive Something Else

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A recent New Vehicle-Buyer Attitude Study, conducted by the marketing research arm of Kelley Blue Book (www.kbb.com) was released today, giving consumers a voice on issues related to the "family car." The study shows that while minivans still provide some utility and many of the features desired by family car shoppers, half would rather be driving something else. 29 percent of those who say a minivan best fulfills their needs would rather be driving an SUV.

Best Fulfills Family Car Needs	SUV	Sedan	Minivan	Wagon
Would Most Like To Drive				
SUV	89%	14%	29%	6%
Sedan	10%	82%	16%	29%
Minivan	1%	3%	50%	0%
Wagon	0%	1%	5%	65%

"What we see in this study is a style versus functionality issue," said Charlie Vogelheim, executive editor, Kelley Blue Book. "Minivans have long been associated with 'a car full of kids,' which may be driving newer younger families toward more SUV-type styling. But several new minivans are coming out this year with more versatile and functional features that may be able to break through the stereotype and be the family car of a whole new generation."

In ranking which vehicle-types best fulfill the needs of family-car shoppers, SUVs come out on top followed by sedans, minivans and finally wagons. Consumer concern over high gas prices and safety issues caused a five percent decline in SUV interest according to a Kelley Blue Book study conducted in March of 2003, however when it comes to the family car, 43 percent of shoppers say SUVs best fulfill their needs as a family car.

Category	Attribute	Rank
Defining Factors	Seats 5 Comfortably	#1
Attribute Importance	Roominess/Comfort	#3
Feature/Option Importance	Power rear up/down windows	#1
	Fold flat seats	#2
	Rear climate controls	#4

Offering family-friendly features is one way manufacturers sway consumers toward specific cars, but the features families want may be a bit of a surprise. Based on the study, family car shoppers say they are looking for power rear up and down windows as well as fold flat seats, with entertainment packages and power sliding doors coming in at the bottom of their wish lists. Other top features family car shoppers find important include options that allow the rear passenger to control their comfort level such as rear climate controls.

- * Those with a household income over \$75,000 felt an SUV best fulfilled their needs as a family car while those with a household income under \$75,000 felt a sedan best met their family car needs.
- * Safety is seen as the most important attribute among consumers when buying a family car. Value for the money and comfort run close behind.
- * While family car shoppers say storage capacity is not an important factor when choosing a family car, 73 percent of them say it will be used to run errands "often" versus 44 percent of shoppers using the family car to transport children "often."
- * Half of vehicle shoppers plan to spend between \$15,000 - 25,000 on their next family car.
- * In-market car-buyers say seating five comfortably and overall value best define a "family car" rather than a vehicle that is simply "big."

Demographic Information of Survey Respondents

- * 57 percent of respondents are between 30 and 50 years of age
- * 80 percent of respondents are married
- * 54 percent have 3 - 4 people in their household
- * Half of the respondents have an annual household income above \$75,000

The KBB New Vehicle-Buyer Attitude Study on Family Cars was administered via the company's Web site; www.kbb.com, the No. 1 Internet site among car-buyers who are within 180-days of purchasing a new vehicle. For this particular survey, respondents include only those buying a new vehicle within 180-days and are likely to buy a "family car." The study was completed over a 10-day period at the end of May 2003 allowing consumers to discuss their buying choices and desires when it comes to the "family car."

For more information on future KBB New Vehicle-Buyer Attitude Studies or the complete results of the Family Car Study, please contact Robyn Eckard at 949-770-7704 x8349. All study results may be used for public and/or private use with clear attribution to Kelley Blue Book®. As long as clear attribution is present, no further permission is required for use.

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Safe Harbor Statement

This release contains data from recent news reports as well as a Kelley Blue Book New Vehicle-Buyer Attitude Study and does not reflect the opinions of Kelley Blue Book employees, management or any person associated with the company. The data presented herein reflects only the attitudes and opinions of consumers and in-market car-buyers participating in the online survey.

SOURCE: Kelley Blue Book

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