

EXPLORING FACTORS ON SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS CAR BRAND (OWNERS' PERCEPTION IN THE COIMBATORE DISTRICT)

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ABSTRACT

Measuring customer/client satisfaction is the focused area of every unit of all industries including automobile irrespective of their business size. Therefore, the company able to retain satisfied customers, in turn the satisfied one more loyal and helps to attract new customers by way of refer to others. This is lead to get better performance of a business in terms of profitability.

This descriptive research aimed to assess and analyze to owners' satisfaction level towards preferred car brand and also to dealer service. Further, this study explores that determinant factor of satisfaction level among the car owners. 485 valid responses were considered for the study. This study reveals that more than 7/10th of the car owners were satisfied about preferred car brand and also to dealer service. Resale value, riding convenience and availability of mileage are the most important variables that discriminate between lower and higher satisfied groups towards preferred car brand. Opening and closing time of service centre, intimation of the completed service and reminder about the upcoming service date are the important variables in determine owners' satisfaction level towards dealer service.

Keywords: Brand Possession, Brand Perception, Automobile Product, Customer Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTION OF THE STUDY

Introduction

The origin of Indian Automotive Industry was emerged in the pre-independence period, even though the industrial growth is very slow till 1970s. Further, the growth slowly improved after 1970s and upto 1980s. The cars were considered a luxury product till 1980s. During these periods manufacturing process and expansion was licensed by the Government. Moreover, the Government restricted the quantitative of car imports from different countries and the Indian market was dominated by six different manufacturers. They are Telco (now Tata Motors), Ashok Leyland, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Motors, Premier Automobile and Baja Auto. From 1985 to 1995 the great changes happened in automobile industry. Maruti Udyog was introduced as a passenger car segment. Light commercial vehicles and two-wheelers were also introduced by Japanese manufacturers.

Thereafter, the prediction of the industry were achieved by producing large variety of vehicles such as passenger cars, light, medium and heavy commercial vehicles, multi-utility vehicles, two-wheelers, three wheelers, etc. Due to economic liberalization in 1991 there was a threat in the further growth of automobile industry, whereas the threat was busted and the industry made it favor to the economy growth due to relaxed restrictions and became major competitor to the global level. In the 21st century, industry contributed large part of national income and the industry's turnover is equivalent to 7.1% of the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP). At present, industry provides both direct and indirect employment opportunities to 32 million people across the country. Availability of manufacturing resources, adoption of advanced technologies and continuous growth of domestic market considerably helps to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from the multinational automobile manufacturers.

Now, India became as a manufacturing center at global level and in terms of vehicle output, it is presently second largest in two wheelers (23.14 million), 5th largest in commercial vehicles (0.89 million) and the 4th largest passenger vehicle (4.01). During 2017-18, India exported vehicles to more than 40 countries which comprised of 0.75 million passenger vehicles, 2.82 million two wheelers, 0.38 million Three wheelers and 96,867 commercial vehicles. The automobile sector has estimated to generate its annual revenue more than Rs. 15,00,000 Crores, make 6.5 Crores of additional employment and stand first in most of the segments in terms of both production and sales by 2026 and also to all of them likely to add 5% of GDP.

Statement of the Problem

In the Automobile industry, Cars are the second most optional purchase made by a

consumer; after purchase of two-wheeler; the fortune of the car segment is closely connected with economy growth, spending capability of the purchaser and their self-confidence, necessity and interest. Currently, India has 11 cars for every thousand persons which is a lowest vehicle density than other comparable economies. In India, the majority of young population with higher income levels due to economic growth and availability of finance, increasing double income families, changing life style, improving saving habit in different avenues are influenced the demand of car products is expected to remain optimistic. The purpose of every car brand is to attract new customers, to build loyalty with them and to motivate repurchase. All true, when the buyers are satisfied. Therefore, the satisfied buyers retain the ownership of current brand and dissatisfied buyers expected to switchover to another brand in the car segment. So, the car manufactures needs to realize the car owners' satisfaction and its determinants.

Objectives of the Study

- To assess and analyze the owners' satisfaction level towards preferred car brand and also to dealer service
- To explore the factors that determinants of satisfaction level among the car owners

Research hypotheses

- **Ho₁**: Majority of the car owners are highly satisfied towards preferred car brand also to dealer service.
- **Ho₂**: A few variables are influence to determine the satisfaction level among the car owners.

REVIEW OF LITERATURES

Praveen and Revathi (2017) identified the influencing factors in the BRAND selection along with use of motor bike and also to measure the customers' satisfaction level. This study shows that the majority of the customer possesses TVS brand, followed by Hero Honda, Yamaha and Bajaj. Price, smooth suspension, fuel efficiency and brand image is the motivated factors on purchase of two-wheeler among the customers. Only 59% of the customers are in the satisfied area towards performance of two-wheeler they owned.

Rajesh (2017) constructed a model that relates to customer-base brand equity for local brands of Smartphone in the Indian market. In order to this study observed that brand aspects in four different areas which are awareness, association, quality and loyalty. Sebastian et al. (2017) in their electronic survey examined that brand personality traits with the help of building consumer-brand relationship model. For the brand characteristic, this model has been utilized for brand awareness, its

trust and loyalty. Structural equation model reveals that the brand personality traits directly influence the consumer brand relationship. The personality traits of the brand studied in terms of responsible and active brand. Moreover, statistical analysis indicates that an active brand is an important which is strongly predict brand awareness than responsible one. On the other hand, responsible brand lead better to brand loyalty and trust among the customers than the active brand. Ajay and Debdeep (2016) in their exploratory study showed that price perception, product quality, image of the brand and store, self-perception are the important factors which is great extent that influencing buying decision of private brand. Divisha (2016) discussed in detail the various dimensions of purchasing behaviour Maruti Suzuki and TATA cars. The analysis reveals that referential dimension plays dominant role for using cars and educational qualification plays an important role while considering the purchasing a car.

Laura Catalina (2016) examined that youth (18-30 years) preferences with reference to Romanian based products and foreign brands of cars, food products, alcoholic beverages, cosmetics, cleaning products, personal hygiene products, and clothing, footwear and consumer electronics. This study concludes that youth preferred in food products with a Romanian brand than foreign brands. But, over 50 percent of the youths preferred foreign brands for the products like Cars, consumer electronics, home appliances, clothing and footwear. High product quality, better value for money, previous experiences with foreign products is the main reasons for preferred products of foreign brand. The Low price of the products, favorable positive experience and a desire to support the Romanian economy are main motivators towards the preference of Romanian brand of products. Bhavsinh (2015) examined the level of satisfaction towards the Tata Nano car across demographics variables. The chi-square analysis revealed that there exists significant association towards satisfaction level among various education and occupational statuses. Moreover, various parameters namely price, design, mileage and interior space also studied (Jamuna and Bharathiraja: 2015).

Theo et al. (2015) analyzed the difference on perception between male and female as regards various elements of brand design. This study revealed that logo shape, brand name, type font and Colour constantly influenced between male and female perceptions. According to Ena Kumbara and Ali Goksu (2014) brand loyalty and brand awareness have direct relationship with buying decision of foreign products, but moderate level of relationship exists between brand association and perceived quality with buying decision of foreign products. Ratna Kishor (2014) studied about responsible factors to buy 'B' segment cars, Maruti Brand and also to analyze the satisfaction level towards selected parameters among owners of Maruti B Segment Cars. Over 50% constitute a Self-decision and family are motivated to buy 'B' segment cars. More Number of owners has a higher satisfaction towards the selected parameters namely maintenance expenditure, comfortable, performance and after sales service of Maruti branded cars. **Prieto and Caemmerer (2013)** in their

research analyzed the impact of socio-demographic factors of consumers on buying decision of used or new cars in Europe and France market. The study reported that socio-economic characteristics are positively impact on preference of car segment choice and also to buying decision of a car.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This descriptive research mainly depends on the primary data and the data were collected from car owners in the various areas of Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu state. The well-framed questionnaire has used for the study and the questionnaire covers the said objectives of the present study. Moreover, the secondary data and theoretical inputs of the study were collected from various published sources, namely Journals, books and various websites. Convenience sampling technique is the most suitable for the present study. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed, whereas 485 responses that make up 97% of the data were used for the final study. In order to 15 brands were considered (Refer Table - 1).The primary data were collected for the seven month period during January to July'2018.

Table - 1
Brand-wise Sample Respondents

Brand	No. of Respondents
Tata	109
Maruti Suzuki	94
Honda	58
Ford	30
Hyundai	28
Piaggio	26
Mahindra	27
Chevrolet	13
Volkswagen	18
Toyoto	20
Isuzu	10
Skoda	10
Fiat	14
Nissan	11
Renault	17
Total	485

About Coimbatore District

Coimbatore is the third largest district of the state in terms of area (7469 Sq. km) next to Erode and Kancheepuram. The Coimbatore District also known as Manchester of south India due to presence of more than 25,000 small, medium, large scale companies which constitute of automobile companies, Textile mills,

Foundry units, textile industry equipment manufacturing companies, wet grinder producing units, spare parts, motor pump set producing units etc. Over a decade, the Coimbatore was attracted by more number of Multinational Companies (MNCs), Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) Companies next to State capital of Chennai. Booming of these companies in the significant manner, lead to setting up of TIDEL park and various tech parks in the District. Therefore, Coimbatore has ranked one among the global outsourcing cities.

Application of Discriminant Function

Here, discriminant function which allows studying the differences between two groups namely lower and higher satisfied with respect to many number of variables concurrently and provides a means of classifying any object/individual into the group with which it is most closely associated and to infer the relative importance of each variable used to discriminate between different groups. The satisfaction level has been determined by the score values calculated for ten statements, which are associated with ownership of car brand and twenty four statements related to dealer service by adopting five-point Likert scaling technique. In order to, secure the total satisfaction for the respondents, five points are given for Highly Satisfied; four points for Satisfied, three points are given for Satisfied nor dissatisfied, two points for Dissatisfied and one point for Highly Dissatisfied. Finally, the satisfaction level towards car brand as well as dealer service has been determined. This study has been considered two groups of respondents namely higher and lower satisfied groups according to the discriminant approach.

Limitations of the Study

- Due to time and cost constraints, car models of various brands not taken into account. Therefore, the researcher cannot make sure the exact inference of the study in the selected brand.
- The area of the study is limited to the Coimbatore District in Tamil Nadu, India. The findings might vary depends on geographical areas, living standards, lifestyles and traditions.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Satisfaction towards Preferred Brand of Car -Discriminant Function

Table 2 shows that mean score of satisfaction on various parameters towards preferred brand of car. It explained that little more than 3/4th of the respondents are in the satisfied group towards preferred brand.

Table - 2
Satisfaction Level towards Preferred Brand of Car

Satisfaction variables	Satisfaction level towards Current brand of Car	
	Higher (76.1%)	Lower (13%)
X1-Maintenance cost	3.62	2.87
X-2 Riding convenience	3.66	1.46
X-3 Availability of mileage (per litre of fuel)	3.38	1.60
X-4 Resale value	3.88	1.46
X-5 Pick up speed	3.75	2.62
X-6 Loading capacity	3.37	2.37
X-7 Availability of car accessories	3.28	1.92
X-8 Cost of the spare parts	3.79	3.21
X-9 Technological advancement	4.11	2.06
X-10 Availability of dealers	3.25	1.94

Source: Primary data

Table - 3
Satisfaction Level towards the Preferred Brand of Car: Tests of Equality of Group Means Univariate ANOVA

Satisfaction	Wilks' Lambda	F (DF = 1, 430)
X1-Maintenance cost	.921	37.0135**
X-2 Riding convenience	.504	422.456**
X-3 Availability of mileage (per litre of fuel)	.690	193.153**
X-4 Resale value	.365	746.618**
X-5 Pick up speed	.830	88.2115**
X-6 Loading capacity	.901	47.3521**
X-7 Availability of car accessories	.800	107.377**
X-8 Cost of the spare parts	.942	26.5806**
X-9 Technological advancement	.577	314.732**
X-10 Availability of dealers	.803	105.278**

**Sig. at 1% Level; * Sig. at 5% Level; NS = Not Sig. at 5% level

Source: Primary data

DISCRIMINANT FITTED MODEL

Test Functions:

Eigen value: 4.761

% variance explained: 100

Wilks Lambda: 0.174

Chi-square = 747.724** DF = 6; p= 0.000

Canonical correlation: 0.909

The squared value of canonical correlation is 0.826 that is 82.6% of the variance in the discriminant group can be accounted, Wilk's Lambda and chi-square value is significant at one percent level. The variables given in the Table - 3 are eligible to discriminating the lower and higher satisfied groups. Discriminat fitted model is given below.

$$D = -11.228 + .440 X_2 + .330 X_3 + 1.125 X_4 + .318 X_5 + .477 X_6 + .455 X_{10}$$

Classification of Individual (Satisfaction Level towards Preferred Brand of Car)

From the discriminant model, and the observed predictor variables the respondents are classified into higher and lower satisfied groups. Table - 4 illustrate that the exact percentage of classification from the analysis.

Table - 4
Percentage of Correct Classification of the Respondents

Satisfaction level towards the preferred brand of car	Higher	Lower	Total
Higher	369	0 (0)	369 (100)
Lower	0 (0)	63 (100)	63 (100)
Source: Primary data (The values in brackets are percentages)			

The relative importance of variables which are discriminating power between the higher and lower satisfied category is observed and the results are given below.

Table 5
Relative Importance of Variables in Discriminating between the groups (Satisfaction towards the preferred brand of car)

Explanatory variable	Relative Importance	Rank
X-2 Riding convenience	17.1935	2
X-3 Availability of mileage	10.394	3
X-4 Resale value	48.2316	1
X-5 Pick up speed	6.3812	6
X-6 Loading capacity	7.44028	5
X-10 Availability of dealers	10.3594	4
Source: Primary data		

Among the selected variables under study, three variables namely Resale value-X4, Riding convenience -X2 and availability of mileage -X3 are substantially important variables that are having discriminating power about lower satisfied and higher satisfied respondents towards the preferred brand of car.

Satisfaction towards Dealer Service - Discriminant Function

Table - 6 shows that mean score of satisfaction on various parameters towards dealer service. It explained that more than 7/10th of the car owners are in the highly satisfied group towards most of the service aspects given by dealer.

Table - 6
Satisfaction level towards Dealers Service

Satisfaction variables	Satisfaction level	
	Higher (72.06%)	Lower (10.09%)
X1- Proximity to access the service centre	2.864	2.472
X2 - Availability of pick up and drop facility	3.276	2.849
X3 - Ease of getting appointments	4.020	3.528
X4 - Mode of getting appointments	3.739	2.472
X5 - Appearance of dealer workshop	3.966	3.472
X6 - Cleanliness of dealer workshop	4.210	3.321
X7 - Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge	3.628	2.377
X8 - Offers/ Discounts given by dealer	4.179	3.132
X9 - Opening and closing time of service centre	4.074	3.302
X10 - Cost estimation explained by service personnel	3.707	2.887
X11 - Time taken for complete the service	2.707	1.623
X12 - Waiting period to meet service personnel	2.389	1.604
X13 - Intimation of the completed service	3.378	2.245
X14 - Explanation given by the service advisor about work done	2.875	2.264
X15 - Work completion on promised time	4.139	3.170
X16 - Solving the problem during first visit	2.665	2.151
X17 - Quality of repairing service	2.838	2.000
X18 - Quality of car washing	3.759	3.340
X19 - Deviation of actual and estimated cost	3.355	2.585
X20 - Charges for routine maintenance	4.003	4.038
X21 - Receiving mode about feedback	3.750	2.491
X22 - Aspects of getting feed back	3.156	2.038
X23 - Solvency of repeated complaints	3.886	3.057
X24 - Reminder about the upcoming service date	3.705	2.679
Source: Primary data		

Table - 7
Satisfaction level towards Dealer Service: (Univariate ANOVAS)

Satisfaction variables	Wilks' Lambda	F (DF = 1, 403)
X1- Proximity to access the service centre	0.987	5.160*
X2 - Availability of pick up and drop facility	0.984	6.634*
X3 - Ease of getting appointments	0.954	19.499**
X4 - Mode of getting appointments	0.857	67.238**
X5 - Appearance of dealer workshop	0.970	12.361**
X6 - Cleanliness of dealer workshop	0.890	49.957**

Exploring Factors on Satisfaction Level Towards Car Brand (Owners' Perception in The Coimbatore District)

X7 - Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge	0.863	64.123**
X8 - Offers/ Discounts given by dealer	0.826	84.846**
X9 - Opening and closing time of service centre	0.873	58.458**
X10 - Cost estimation explained by service personnel	0.928	31.082**
X11 - Time taken for complete the service	0.929	30.882**
X12 - Waiting period to meet service personnel	0.953	19.801**
X13 - Intimation of the completed service	0.904	42.938**
X14 - Explanation given by the service advisor about work done	0.974	10.946**
X15 - Work completion on promised time	0.872	59.005**
X16 - Solving the problem during first visit	0.981	7.716**
X17 - Quality of repairing service	0.951	20.970**
X18 - Quality of car washing	0.981	7.977**
X19 - Deviation of actual and estimated cost	0.957	18.010**
X20 - Charges for routine maintenance	1.000	0.059 ^{NS}
X21 - Receiving mode about feedback	0.896	46.647**
X22 - Aspects of getting feed back	0.912	38.816**
X23 - Solvency of repeated complaints	0.932	29.567**
X24 - Reminder about the upcoming service date	0.905	42.533**
* Sig. at 5% level; ** Sig. at 1% level; NS = Not sig. at 5% level		
Source: Primary data		

DISCRIMINANT FITTED MODEL

Test Functions:

Eigen value: 1.863

Percentage of variance explained: 100

Wilks Lambda: 0.349

Chi-square = 415.553** DF = 16; p= 0.000

Canonical correlation: 0.807

The squared value of canonical correlation is 0.651 i.e., 65.1 % of the variance in the discriminant group can be accounted under this approach, Wilk's Lambda and chi-square value is significant at one percent level. The variables given in the Table – 7 are eligible to discriminating the lower and higher satisfaction groups towards dealer service. Discriminatory functional coefficients are illustrated below.

$$D = -16.314 + 0.360 X_1 + 0.203 X_5 + 0.208 X_6 + 0.266 X_7 + 0.300 X_8 + 0.733 X_9 + 0.251 X_{11} + 0.213 X_{12} + 0.361 X_{13} + 0.225 X_{14} + 0.304 X_{15} + 0.290 X_{16} + 0.159 X_{18} + 0.307 X_{19} + 0.260 X_{21} + 0.326 X_{24}$$

Classification of Individual (Satisfaction level towards Dealer Service)

For using the discriminant model, the observed predictor variables of the respondents' satisfaction level towards dealer service, the respondents are classified into lower and higher satisfied groups and the exact percentage of classification is given below (Refer Table – 8).

Table - 8
Percentage of Correct Classification of Respondents

Satisfaction level	Higher	Lower	Total
Higher	348 (98.9)	4 (1.1)	352 (100)
Lower	0 (0)	53 (100)	53 (100)
The values in brackets are percentages			

Important variable that predict satisfaction level Towards Dealer Service

The predictor variable in discriminating between the higher and lower satisfied category is collected from the analysis and the results are given in the Table – 9.

Table - 9
Importance of Predictor Variables of Satisfaction level towards Dealer Service)

Explanatory variable	Relative Importance	Rank
X1- Proximity to access the service centre	3.50	XIII
X5 - Appearance of dealer workshop	2.49	XV
X6 - Cleanliness of dealer workshop	4.59	X
X7 - Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge	8.25	IV
X8 - Offers/ Discounts given by dealer	7.79	VI
X9 - Opening and closing time of service centre	14.03	I
X11 - Time taken for complete the service	6.75	VIII
X12 - Waiting period to meet service personnel	4.15	XI
X13 - Intimation of the completed service	10.14	II
X14 - Explanation given by the service advisor about work done	3.41	XIV
X15 - Work completion on promised time	7.31	VII
X16 - Solving the problem during first visit	3.69	XII
X18 - Quality of car washing	1.65	XVI
X19 - Deviation of actual and estimated cost	5.86	IX
X21 - Receiving mode about feedback	8.12	V
X24 - Reminder about the upcoming service date	8.29	III
Source: Primary data		

Twenty four variables under study, seven variables namely Opening and closing time of service centre –X9, Intimation of the completed service –X13, Reminder about the upcoming service date –X24, Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge –X7, Receiving mode about feedback –X21, Offers/ Discounts given by dealer –X8, and Work completion on promised time –X15 are significantly

important in discriminating between higher level and lower level of satisfied respondents towards dealer service.

CONCLUSION

Customers and their retention is the valuable asset for car manufacturers. Even though, the customer retention is a major challenging due to existence of many brands in the segment. The companies follow on different ideas to maintain their existing customers in long term through improved services and also to attract new customers. It has been resulted that keep companies revenue and long term survive in the global market. It achieved when the customers are highly satisfied towards preferred brand. This study reveals that about 7/10th of the car owners were highly satisfied about preferred brand of car and also to dealer service. The presence of global brand in the competitive market, most of the car manufacturers introduces new products with advanced technologies for the intention of uphold the customers and also to develop better relationship with them. Therefore, car manufacturers should be move toward with innovative ideas according to the customers' requirements and new schemes and services, technological advancements for retaining their own customers, provide best offers to their dealers, in order to get enhanced satisfaction level among the customers.

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