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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND SATISFACTION OF MARUTI CARS IN COIMBATORE

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ABSTRACT
The Indian automobile industry has witnessed rapid growth over the past decade due to rising income levels, urbanization, and technological advancements. Among automobile manufacturers, Maruti Suzuki has maintained a leading position in the passenger car segment because of its affordability, fuel efficiency, and extensive service network. This study aims to analyze customer expectations and satisfaction toward Maruti cars in Coimbatore district. The research focuses on factors influencing customer satisfaction such as mileage, maintenance cost, comfort, safety, after-sales service, and brand image. The study adopts a descriptive research design and primary data were collected through structured questionnaires from Maruti car users. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and chi-square tests were used for data interpretation. The findings reveal that customers are generally satisfied with the performance and service quality of Maruti cars, though improvements are required in advanced technological features and waiting periods for service. The study concludes that customer satisfaction plays a vital role in ensuring customer loyalty and repeat purchases in the automobile industry.

KEYWORDS: *Customer Satisfaction, Customer Expectations, Maruti Suzuki, Automobile Industry, Coimbatore, Passenger Cars*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The Indian automobile industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the economy and contributes significantly to employment generation and industrial development. Increased disposable income, improved infrastructure, and changing consumer lifestyles have boosted the demand for passenger cars in India. The passenger vehicle segment has shown continuous growth due to increasing urbanization and the availability of affordable financing facilities.

In the highly competitive automobile market, customer satisfaction has become an important factor for business success. Automobile companies focus not only on manufacturing quality vehicles but also on understanding customer expectations regarding comfort, mileage, safety, pricing, and after-sales services. Satisfied customers are more likely to become loyal customers and promote the brand through positive word-of-mouth communication.

1.2 About Maruti Suzuki

Maruti Suzuki is the leading passenger car manufacturer in India. Established in 1981, the company transformed the Indian automobile industry by introducing affordable and fuel-efficient cars suitable for middle-class families. Over the years, the company has expanded its product portfolio to include hatchbacks, sedans, SUVs, and hybrid vehicles. The company enjoys a dominant market share in India due to its strong dealer network, reliable after-sales service, and customer-oriented strategies. Popular models such as Alto, Swift, Baleno, WagonR, Brezza, and Dzire have gained widespread acceptance among Indian consumers.

1.3 Need for the Study

The automobile industry is experiencing intense competition due to the entry of domestic and international brands offering innovative products and advanced features. Customers today are more informed and expect better quality, performance, and service from automobile companies.
Understanding customer expectations and satisfaction is essential for automobile manufacturers to improve their products and services. Customer satisfaction directly influences customer loyalty, repurchase intentions, and brand

reputation. Therefore, this study attempts to identify the expectations and satisfaction levels of Maruti car users in Coimbatore district.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Despite the strong market presence of Maruti Suzuki, customers may face certain issues related to maintenance, service quality, waiting periods, technological features, and vehicle performance. There may also exist a gap between customer expectations and actual satisfaction levels. Hence, it is necessary to evaluate customer satisfaction and identify areas where improvements are required.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of the study are:

1. To examine customer expectations from Maruti cars.
2. To evaluate satisfaction levels among Maruti car owners.
3. To analyze factors influencing customer satisfaction.
4. To provide recommendations for enhancing customer experience.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study focuses on customers using Maruti cars in Coimbatore district. The research examines customer expectations, preferences, and satisfaction regarding vehicle performance and after-sales services. The findings of the study may help the company improve its marketing and customer service strategies.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to Coimbatore district only.
2. The sample size is limited and may not represent all customers.
3. Time constraints affected detailed analysis.
4. The study depends on the opinions and responses of customers, which may contain bias.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kotler (2018) stated that customer satisfaction is the key factor for long-term business success. According to the study, companies that understand customer expectations can improve customer loyalty and market performance.

Kumar and Joseph (2020) conducted a study on customer satisfaction toward passenger cars in India and found that mileage, maintenance cost, and fuel efficiency are the major factors influencing customer preference. The study revealed that customers prefer brands that provide economical and reliable vehicles.

Ramesh (2019) examined the importance of after-sales service in the automobile sector. The findings indicated that quality service, availability of spare parts, and timely maintenance significantly affect customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Sharma and Gupta (2021) studied consumer behavior in the automobile industry and observed that price, brand image, comfort, and safety features strongly influence purchasing decisions. The study also highlighted that customer expectations are increasing due to technological advancements.

Priya (2022) analyzed customer preferences toward modern passenger cars and found that younger consumers expect advanced technology, infotainment systems, and enhanced safety features along with fuel efficiency.

Suresh and Anand (2020) identified that satisfied customers are more likely to recommend the brand to others and continue purchasing vehicles from the same company. Their study emphasized the role of customer relationship management in improving satisfaction levels.

2.1 Research Gap

Most previous studies focused on the general automobile industry or customer satisfaction at the national level. Limited research has been conducted specifically on customer expectations and satisfaction toward Maruti cars in Coimbatore district. Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap by conducting a localized analysis.

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3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze customer expectations and satisfaction toward Maruti cars.

3.2 Sources of Data

The study uses both primary and secondary data.

- **Primary Data:** Collected from respondents through questionnaires.
- **Secondary Data:** Collected from journals, books, websites, magazines, and company reports.

3.3 Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from Maruti car users through online and offline surveys.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling method was used for selecting respondents.

3.5 Sample Size

The study consists of 161 respondents from Coimbatore district.

3.6 Area of the Study

The study area is limited to Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu.

3.7 Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were used:

- Chi-square test
- Weighted average method
- Correlation analysis
- Ranking method

3.8 Hypothesis of the Study

- There is no significant relationship between income and satisfaction level of customers towards Maruti Suzuki cars.
- There is no significant relationship between usage period and overall satisfaction of customers towards Maruti Suzuki cars.
- There is no significant relationship between customer expectations and satisfaction towards Maruti Suzuki cars.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The analysis revealed that most respondents belong to the age group of 18–35 years. Male respondents formed the majority of the sample. Most respondents were salaried employees and middle-income earners.

4.2 Customer Preference Analysis

The majority of customers preferred hatchback and SUV models due to affordability and fuel efficiency. Mileage, price, maintenance cost, and brand reputation were identified as major factors influencing purchase decisions.

Table 4.2.1 Income vs Satisfaction Level

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.436[a]	6	.208
Likelihood Ratio	8.212	6	.223
Linear-by-Linear Association	.107	1	.744
N of Valid Cases	161		
a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .17.			

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Interpretation

The Chi-Square test results show no significant relationship between ease of use and customer trust towards mobile banking and UPI, as the p-values are greater than 0.05. The Linear-by-Linear Association test also indicates no linear relationship between the variables. However, since 50% of the cells have expected counts less than 5, the results may not be fully reliable and should be interpreted carefully.

Table 4.2.2 Usage Period vs Overall Satisfaction

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.633[a]	9	.572
Likelihood Ratio	8.026	9	.531
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.579	1	.209
N of Valid Cases	161		

a. 8 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .30.

Interpretation

The Chi-Square test results show no significant relationship between the two categorical variables, as the p-values are greater than 0.05. The Linear-by-Linear Association test also indicates no significant linear relationship between the variables. However, since 50% of the cells have expected counts less than 5, the reliability of the results may be affected. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted carefully, and alternative tests such as Fisher's Exact Test may be considered for more accurate analysis.

Table 4.2.3 Expectations vs Satisfaction

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	83.094[a]	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	88.343	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	44.264	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	161		

a. 9 cells (56.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Interpretation

The Chi-Square test results show a significant relationship between the two categorical variables, as the p-values are less than 0.05. The Linear-by-Linear Association test also indicates a significant linear relationship between the variables. However, since 56.3% of the cells have expected counts less than 5, the reliability of the results may be affected. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution, and alternative tests like Fisher's Exact Test may be used for better accuracy.

5.1 FINDINGS

1. Most customers prefer Maruti cars because of fuel efficiency and low maintenance cost.
2. Customers are generally satisfied with after-sales service.
3. Brand image significantly influences purchase decisions.
4. Younger customers expect more advanced technological features.
5. Customer satisfaction positively influences repeat purchase intentions.

5.2 SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Improve after-sales service efficiency and reduce waiting time.
2. Introduce more advanced safety and infotainment features.
3. Strengthen customer relationship management practices.
4. Expand service centers in suburban and rural areas.
5. Provide attractive financing schemes and promotional offers.
6. Conduct regular customer feedback surveys for continuous improvement.

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6. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that Maruti Suzuki continues to enjoy a strong market position in Coimbatore due to its affordability, fuel efficiency, and reliable service network. Customers are generally satisfied with the quality and performance of Maruti cars. However, increasing competition in the automobile industry requires the company to continuously innovate and improve customer service standards. Understanding customer expectations and satisfaction will help the company strengthen customer loyalty and maintain its leadership position in the Indian automobile market.

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