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Research Paper Commerce

CUSTOMER PREFERENCES AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS MARUTI CARS IN POLLACHI TALUK

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ABSTRACT

Automobile is one of the sunrise industries in India. Many foreign companies have planned to start their production unit in India for manufacturing cars and spare parts. This creates more competition for the Indian companies. Customer is the central focus for all the companies. Each and every activity is planned, designed, executed and analyzed to satisfy him. Customer satisfaction is the only weapon through which any company can fight against its rivals. With increasing competition among several brands in the market, both national and international, the customer is faced with the problem of choice. He is confronted with a dilemma because of a plethora of brands flooding the market. Even in this scenario, Maruti continues be a brand much sought after by customers. The company has introduced cars in all segments and is a strong competitor even to foreign brands because of its brand equity. This study aims at finding customer preference, attitude and satisfaction towards the Maruti cars. The study helps to identify the areas of strength and weakness and also to improve the customer satisfaction towards the services of the company and also the performance of the cars.

Keywords :

INTRODUCTION

Automobile is one of the sunrise industries in India. Many foreign companies have planned to start their production unit in India for manufacturing cars and spare parts. This creates more competition for the Indian companies. Customer is the central focus for all the companies. Each and every activity is planned, designed, executed and analyzed to satisfy him. Customer satisfaction is the only weapon through which any company can fight against its rivals. This study aims at finding customer preference, attitude and satisfaction towards the Maruti cars. The study helps to identify the areas of strength and weakness and also to improve the customer satisfaction towards the services of the company and also the performance of the cars.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the specific objectives of the study.

1. To find the fast moving car in Maruti Udyog Limited.
2. To know about the customers satisfaction towards Maruti cars.
3. To find the satisfaction level of the services provided by the company and
4. To know about the brand loyalty of customers.

HYPOTHESES

To analyze the association between various factors, the following hypotheses are framed.

1. There exists no association between family income and mode of finance.
2. There exists no association between age and satisfaction level towards the services provided by the company.

METHODOLOGY

The sample size of the study is 217. To identify the samples from the population, simple random sampling method is used. The respondents from Pollachi Taluk are selected for the study. The primary data is used in the study. Data is collected through a well structured questionnaire. Pilot study is undertaken to restructure the questionnaire. The statistical tools used to analyze the data are simple percentage, weighted average and chi-square test. The data collected from the period of December 2011 to February 2012.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The time and cost is a major limiting factor.
2. Many respondents enquired about the study but went without responding in hurry.
3. This study was conducted in Pollachi Taluk, and hence care has to be exercised in extending the results to other area.
4. All the limitations of the primary data is applicable to this study also.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The results of the analysis of the collected data are presented below:

TABLE 1
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON GENDER

Sl. No.	GENDER	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Male	183	84
2.	Female	34	16
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 183 (84%) respondents are male and 34 (16%) respondents are female. Majority (84%) of the respondents are male.

TABLE 2

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON AGE

Sl. No.	AGE	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Below 30 years	91	42

2.	30 to 40 years	80	37
3.	41 to 50 years	36	17
4.	Above 50 years	10	4
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 91 (42 %) respondents are below 30 years, 80 (37%) respondents are between 30 and 40 years, 36 (17 %) respondents are between 41 and 50 years, and the remaining 10 (4%) respondents are above 50 years of age. Majority (42%) of the respondents are below the age of 30 years.

TABLE 3
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION

Sl. No.	EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	School level	49	23
2.	Graduate	111	51
3.	Professional	51	24
4.	Others	6	2
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 49 (23%) respondents completed their school level education, 111 (51%) respondents are graduates, 51 (24%) respondents are professional and the remaining 6 (2%) respondents belonged to other category. Majority (51%) of the respondents are graduates.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON OCCUPATION

Sl. No.	OCCUPATION	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Employee	42	20
2.	Business	117	54
3.	Professional	52	24
4.	Others	6	2
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 42 (20%) respondents are employees, 117 (54%) respondents are businessman, 52 (24%) respondents are professionals, 6 (2%) respondents are others. Majority (54%) of the respondents are businessmen.

TABLE 5
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME

Sl. No.	MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Below Rs.10,000	58	27
2.	Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000	97	45
3.	Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000	23	11
4.	Above Rs.30,000	39	17
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 58 (27%) respondents family income is below Rs.10,000. 97 (45%) respondents' family income is between Rs.10,000 and Rs.20,000 23 (11%) respondents' are with income between Rs.20,000 and Rs.30,000. 39 (17%) respondents are in the last category of family income above Rs.30,000. Majority (45%) of the respondents belongs to middle class and their income ranges between Rs.10,000 and Rs.20,000.

TABLE 6

CAR OWNED BY THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	CAR OWNED	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Maruti 800	45	21
2.	Alto	16	7
3.	Wagon R	28	13
4.	Zen	31	14
5.	Swift	20	9
6.	Versa	11	5
7.	Esteem	23	11
8.	Omni	34	16
9.	Baleno	5	2
10.	Gypsy	4	2
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 21% of the respondents are owning Maruti 800, 16% of them are owning Omni, 14% of them are owning Zen, 13% are owning wagon R, 11% of the respondents own Esteem, 9% own swift, 7% own Alto, 5% own Versa, 2% own Baleno and 2% own Gypsy. Majority of the respondents own Maruti 800. Second place is held by omni and third place is held by Zen.

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF YEARS OF USAGE

Sl. No.	TIME PERIOD	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Below 1 year	54	25
2.	1 to 3 years	95	44
3.	3 to 5 years	44	20
4.	Above 5 years	24	11
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Out of 217 respondents, 54 (25%) respondents are customers of Maruti for less than a year. 95 (44%) respondents are customers of Maruti between 1 and 3 years. 44 (20%) respondents own Maruti car between 3 and 5 years. 24 (11%)

respondents are customers of Maruti above 5 years. More number of respondents (44%) are customers of Maruti between 1 and 3 years.

TABLE 8
REASON TO OWN CAR

Sl. No.	REASON	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENT-AGE
1.	Usage	120	53
2.	Luxury	85	37
3.	Prestige issue	15	7
4.	Others	8	3
	TOTAL	**228**	**100**

Among total respondents, 53% of the respondents own Maruti cars for usage, 37% of the respondents own Maruti cars for luxury, and Prestige issue is the reason for owning Maruti car for 7% of the respondents. The remaining 3% of the respondents have various other reasons. Majority of the respondents own Maruti cars for usage rather than luxury or prestige reasons.

TABLE 9
FACTORS INFLUENCED TO BUY MARUTI CARS

Sl. No.	FACTORS	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Price	77	32
2.	Features	113	46
3.	Offers	12	5
4.	Advertisement	13	5
5.	Friends and Relatives	22	9
6.	Others	7	3
	TOTAL	**224**	**100**

Among the total respondents, 46 % of the respondents are influenced by the features of the car, 32 % of the respondents are influenced by Price, 9% of the respondents are influenced by their friends and relatives in buying Maruti cars, 5% of the respondents buy Maruti cars due to the offers given by the company, 5% of the respondents are influenced by the advertisements and remaining 3% of the respondents are influenced by other factors in buying Maruti cars.

TABLE 10
SATISFACTION LEVEL OF MARUTI CARS

RATINGS	POWER		BRAKE		GEAR		MILEAGE		COMFORT	
	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	%
Satisfied	147	68	139	64	161	74	118	54	132	61
Neutral	62	29	52	24	51	24	77	35	58	27
Dissatisfied	8	3	26	12	5	2	22	11	27	12
TOTAL	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 68 % of the respondents are satisfied, 29 % of respondents are neutral and 3% are dissatisfied towards the power of the car. 64 % of the respondents are satisfied, 24 % are neutral and 12 % of the respondents are dissatisfied towards the performance of the brake. 74 % of the respondents are satisfied, 24 % are neutral and remaining 2% are dissatisfied with the functioning of the gear. 54 % of the respondents are satisfied, 35 % are neutral and 11 % are dissatisfied towards the mileage of the car. 61 % are satisfied, 27 % are neutral and 12 % of them are dissatisfied with the comfort of the car.

TABLE 11 FUEL USED IN THE CAR

Sl. No.	FUEL	NUMBER OF RESPOND-ENTS	PERCENTAGE
1.	Petrol	131	60
2.	Diesel	52	24
3.	LPG	34	16
	TOTAL	**217**	**100**

Among 217 respondents, 131 (60 %) respondents are using petrol for their cars, 52 (24 %) respondents are using Diesel for their car, 34 (16 %) respondents are using LPG for their cars. Majority (60 %) of the respondents are users of petrol cars and the reason behind this is petrol cars incurs less maintenance than diesel cars and also majority of the cars manufactured and sold by Maruti is petrol cars than diesel cars.

TABLE 12
RATING FEATURES OF MARUTI CARS

FEATURES	PETROL		DIESEL		LPG	
	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	%	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	%
Mileage	32	22	41	70	30	75
Maintenance	104	72	3	5	3	8

Fuel Price	2	1	15	25	7	17
Comfort	7	5	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**145**	**100**	**59**	**100**	**40**	**100**

TABLE 13: RANKING OF BRAND PREFERENCE

RANK	WEIGHT	MARUTI		TATA		HYUNDAI		FORD		FIAT		HINDUSTAN MOTORS	
		No.	SCORE	No.	SCORE	No.	SCORE	No.	SCORE	No.	SCORE	No.	SCORE
I	6	95	570	39	234	25	150	15	90	2	12	40	240
II	5	64	320	69	345	38	190	16	80	11	55	19	95
III	4	32	128	63	252	77	308	22	88	8	32	15	60
IV	3	8	24	30	90	64	192	53	159	28	84	35	105
V	2	4	8	13	26	10	20	96	192	61	122	33	66
VI	1	14	14	3	3	3	3	15	15	107	107	75	75
Total Score			**1064**		**960**		**863**		**624**		**412**		**641**
Weight Average			**177.33**		**160**		**143.83**		**104**		**68.66**		**106.8**
Overall Rank			**I**		**II**		**III**		**V**		**VI**		**IV**

Among various brands considered in buying cars, Maruti stands first with weighted average 177.33, Tata stands second with weighted average of 160, Hyundai stands third with weighted average of 143.83, Hindustan motors stands fourth with weighted average of 106.8, Ford stands fifth with weighted average of 104, and the last rank is held by Fiat with 68.66.TABLE 14

RATING OF SERVICE OFFERED BY THE COMPANY

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	HANDLING ENQUIRIES		AFTER SALES SERVICE		TIMELY DELIVERY		FINANCE ARRANGEMENT	
	NOR	**%**	**NOR**	**%**	**NOR**	**%**	**NOR**	**%**
Satisfied	166	76	67	31	73	34	89	41
Neutral	40	18	134	62	103	47	105	48
Dissatisfied	11	6	16	7	41	19	23	11
TOTAL	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**	**217**	**100**

NOR = Number of Respondents

Out of 217 respondents, 76% of the respondents are satisfied, 18% are neutral and 6% of the respondents are dissatisfied towards enquiries handled by the company. Out of 217 respondents 31% of the respondents are satisfied, 62% are neutral and 7% are dissatisfied towards after sales service provided by the company. Out of 217 respondents, 34% are satisfied, 47 are neutral and 19% of them are dissatisfied towards timely delivery of the company. Regarding finance arrangement, 41% of the respondents are satisfied, 48% are neutral, 11% of them are dissatisfied towards financial arrangement of the company. Majority of the respondents, 76% are satisfied with the handling of enquiries by the company. Regarding other service like sales service, timely delivery, financial arrangements, maximum number of respondents are neutral.

CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

Ho: There exist no association between family income and mode of finance.

TABLE 15: FAMILY INCOME AND MODE OF FINANCE

INCOME	OWN FUNDS	BORROWED FUNDS	TOTAL
Below Rs.10,000	28 (49%)	29 (51%)	**57**
Rs.10,000 to Rs.20,000	75 (61%)	47 (39%)	**122**
Rs.20,001 to Rs.30,000	9 (41%)	13 (59%)	**22**
Above Rs.30,000	11 (69%)	5 (31%)	**16**
TOTAL	**123**	**94**	**217**
Degrees of freedom: 3	**Calculated c2: 5.42**		**Table Value: 7.815**

Among 217 respondents, 57 respondents' monthly family income is below Rs.10,000. Among them 28 (49%) respondents bought car through own funds and 29 (51%) respondents bought car through borrowed funds. Out of 217 respondents, 122 respondents monthly income is between is Rs.10,000 and 20,000. Among them, 75 (61%) respondents bought car through own funds and 47 (39%) respondents bought car through other financial institutions. Out of 217 respondents, 22 respondents monthly family income is between 20,001 and 30,000. Among them, 9 (41%) respondents bought car through own funds and 13 (59%) respondents bought car through other financial institution. Among 217 respondents, 16 of the respondents monthly family income is above Rs.30,000. Among them, 11 (69%) respondents bought car through own funds and five (31%) respondents bought car through borrowed funds. As the table value at 5% level of significance, is greater than calculated chi-square value, we accept null hypothesis. Therefore there is no association between family income and mode of finance.

Ho: There exists no association between age and satisfaction level of services.

TABLE 16
AGE AND SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS SERVICES

AGE	SATIS-FIED	NEU-TRAL	DISSAT-ISFIED	TOTAL
Below 30 years	37 (39 %)	52 (55 %)	6 (6 %)	**95**
30 – 40 years	33 (38 %)	48 (56 %)	5 (6 %)	**86**
Above 40 years	13 (36 %)	22 (61 %)	1 (3 %)	**36**
TOTAL	**83**	**122**	**12**	**217**

Degreesoffreedom:4Calculatedc2:22.16TableValue:9.488

Out of 217 respondents, 95 respondents are of age below 30 years. Among them, 37 (39 %) are satisfied with service provided by the company, 52 (55 %) respondents are neutral and 6 (six percentage) respondents are dissatisfied. Out of 217 respondents, 86 respondents belong to the age group between 30 and 40 years. Among them, 33 (38 %) said that they are satisfied, 48 (56%) respondents are neutral and 5 (6%) respondents are dissatisfied. Out of 217 respondents, 36 respondents are of age above 40 years. Among them, 13 (36 %) respondents are satisfied, 22 (61 %) respondents are neutral and 1 (3%) respondents are dissatisfied. As the table value is less than the calculated chi-square value at both 5% level of significance, null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there exist some association between age and satisfaction level of services provided by the company.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Among the various models introduced by Maruti Udyog Limited Maruti 800, Omni, Zen and Wagon R are popular. The company should give more advertisement to increase the sales of other models of Maruti cars.
2. The number of respondents who opted Maruti finance is very few. Steps should be taken to increase the awareness of Maruti finance.
3. ABT Maruti should concentrate and enhance the services like timely delivery, after sales service, receiving and handling customer enquires etc.
4. Maruti Udyog Limited can introduce diesel version in various models
5. Regular contact with customers helps the company to identify the problematic areas, increase customers satisfaction and this leads to increase the sales and goodwill.
6. Proper communication should be made with the customers regarding services.
7. Long-term relationship should be maintained with the customers by sending cards and gifts on important occasions.

CONCLUSION

Maruti is a market leader in the world to be ranked number one in customer satisfaction and the only company to top customer satisfaction ranking for 5 years in a row. Even though in a country like India where consumers buy about 1.33 millions cars per year and 100 of new brands entering in the market, the company should concentrate on important aspects to maintain its market share. Increasing customer satisfaction and providing the cars with more features at competitive prices will increase the sales.

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