



INFLUENCE OF AGE ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON SMALL CARS

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ABSTRACT The Indian automobile industry has received high impetus due to post liberalization measures. Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from the product's perceived performance in relation to his or her expectations. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is delighted. If the performance is below the expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. The primary purpose of this study is to explore the performance of different attributes in automobiles in giving satisfaction to the consumers by comparing the same performance with the performance of the product attributes when it was brand new and how these attributes performance satisfaction affecting consumers' future purchase decision. Consumer satisfaction is a central concept in modern marketing thought and practice. The marketing concept emphasizes delivering satisfaction to consumers and obtaining profits in return. As a result, overall quality of life is expected to be enhanced. Thus, consumer satisfaction is crucial to meeting various needs of consumers, business, and society.

KEYWORDS :

INTRODUCTION

Today India is the 12th largest car market in the world. With an expected annual growth of 11% over the next decade, a low penetration of passenger car market with only seven cars for every 1000 members, there is a tremendous potential for motor cars in India. With India poised to become the third largest economy in 2050, the growth of the Indian passenger car industry is unquestionable. Given the poor condition of the public transport, every Indian desires a car, with a wide variety of options to choose from. The Liberalization policy and various tax relief measures by the Government of India in recent years have made noted remarks in the Indian automobile industry. The companies should try to satisfy their customers. Satisfied customers usually return and buy more, they tell other people about their experiences and they may well pay a premium for the privilege of doing business with a supplier they trust. Statistics are banded around that suggest that the cost of keeping a customer is only one tenth of winning a new one. Therefore, when we win a customer, we should hang on to them. The primary purpose of this paper is to explore the performance of different attributes in automobiles in giving satisfaction to the consumers and which affect future purchase decision. Customer satisfaction is a central concept in modern Marketing thought and practice. It is crucial in meeting the various needs of the consumers, business and society.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ON SMALL CARS

The socio-economic status of the consumers of small cars was analyzed. The value, comfortability, efficiency, accessibility, ambition and need are the factors affecting consumer's brand preference of small cars¹. The sudden entry of major global players has made the Indian auto industry very competitive, as India provides twin benefit of ready market and low cost manufacturing base for them. With the explosion of the automobile industry, due to its globalization and liberalization, car manufacturers introduced much innovative and technological advancement in their models. Customers have started thinking to change over to the new models of cars, with related ease than in the past, to suit their changing life styles.² Consumers' satisfaction for the attributes of vehicle delivery, vehicle features, vehicle performance, safety, comfort, maintenance and overall satisfaction are measured by computing Chi-square analysis has been computed and the results are discussed below. The customer satisfaction with a special reference to age and the aspects which attracted the attention of the respondents in buying the car has been elicited and discussed below.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Delivery

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the delivery of the car the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 1.

Table 1: Age and Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Delivery

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Delivery			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
161.05**	0.000	250	416	217	883
		28.3%	47.1%	24.6%	100.0%
	26 - 30	21	60	76	157
		13.4%	38.2%	48.4%	100.0%
	31 - 35	7	56	55	118
		5.9%	47.5%	46.6%	100.0%
	36 - 40	21	49	7	77
		27.3%	63.6%	9.1%	100.0%
	41 - 45	33	27	0	60
		55.0%	45.0%	0.0%	100.0%
	46 - 50	20	55	0	75
		26.7%	73.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	> 50	352	663	355	1,370
		25.7%	48.4%	25.9%	100.0%
	Total				

It is observed from the table that 883 respondents of 26 – 30 years satisfied over the vehicle delivery before buying the vehicle and majority of them (416) moderately satisfied, followed by 157 respondents of 31 -35 years also satisfied moderately on the vehicle delivery. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that age has very high impact on the vehicle delivery before buying the vehicle. It is concluded that majority of the youth satisfied over the delivery over the vehicle moderately while purchasing the desire vehicle.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Features

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle features the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 2.

Table 2: Age and Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Features

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Features			Total
		Low	Moderate	High	
419.530	0.000	251	198	434	883
		28.4%	22.4%	49.2%	100.0%
	26 - 30	21	21	115	157
		13.4%	13.4%	73.2%	100.0%
	31 - 35	0	0	118	118
		0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	36 - 40	21	21	35	77
		27.3%	27.3%	45.5%	100.0%
	41 - 45	13	47	0	60
		21.7%	78.3%	0.0%	100.0%
	46 - 50				

	> 50	0	68	7	75
		0.0%	90.7%	9.3%	100.0%
Total		306	355	709	1,370
		22.3%	25.9%	51.8%	100.0%

The table portrays that 434 respondents of 26 – 30 years of age, 115 respondents of 31 – 35 years of age, all the respondents of 36 – 40 years of age satisfied highly over the features of the vehicle while purchasing. The Chi-square value is insignificant and hence it can be inferred that the age has no impact on the vehicle buying basing on the features of the vehicle. Hence the features of the vehicle have no role to play in attracting the age of the respondents. It is concluded that majority of the respondents have highly satisfied over the features of the vehicle.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Performance

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle performance the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 3.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Performance			Total
325.62**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	251	165	467	883
		28.4%	18.7%	52.9%	100.0%
	31 - 35	21	74	62	157
		13.4%	47.1%	39.5%	100.0%
	36 - 40	0	21	97	118
		0.0%	17.8%	82.2%	100.0%
	41 - 45	0	63	14	77
		0.0%	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
	46 - 50	40	20	0	60
		66.7%	33.3%	0.0%	100.0%
> 50	27	20	28	75	
	36.0%	26.7%	37.3%	100.0%	
Total		339	363	668	1,370
		24.7%	26.5%	48.8%	100.0%

The table shows that 467 respondents of 26 – 30 years of age highly satisfied over the performance of the vehicle, 74 respondents of 31 – 35 years of age moderately satisfied and 97 respondents of 36 – 40 years of age satisfied highly over the performance. Above all, around 49 per cent of the respondents highly satisfied on the performance of the vehicle and majority of them are in the age group of 26 – 30 years. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that the performance of the vehicle has lot of impact on the vehicle buying by the respondents.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Safety

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle safety the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 4.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Safety			Total
184.23**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	369	452	62	883
		41.8%	51.2%	7.0%	100.0%
	31 - 35	74	55	28	157
		47.1%	35.0%	17.8%	100.0%
	36 - 40	21	97	0	118
		17.8%	82.2%	0.0%	100.0%
	41 - 45	28	49	0	77
		36.4%	63.6%	0.0%	100.0%
	46 - 50	60	0	0	60
		100.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
> 50	27	48	0	75	
	36.0%	64.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
Total		579	701	90	1,370
		42.3%	51.2%	6.6%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 452 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have satisfied moderately over the safety of the vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (701) moderately satisfied over the safety of the vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be

inferred that vehicle safety has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Comfort

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle comfort the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 5.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Comfort			Total
168.42**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	305	251	327	883
		34.5%	28.4%	37.0%	100.0%
	31 - 35	21	56	80	157
		13.4%	35.7%	51.0%	100.0%
	36 - 40	0	69	49	118
		0.0%	58.5%	41.5%	100.0%
	41 - 45	0	35	42	77
		0.0%	45.5%	54.5%	100.0%
	46 - 50	33	0	27	60
		55.0%	0.0%	45.0%	100.0%
> 50	27	13	35	75	
	36.0%	17.3%	46.7%	100.0%	
Total		386	424	560	1,370
		28.2%	30.9%	40.9%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 327 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have satisfied moderately over the comfort of the vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (560) moderately satisfied over the comfort of the vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that vehicle comfort has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Finance

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle finance the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 6.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Finance			Total
258.30**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	291	444	148	883
		33.0%	50.3%	16.8%	100.0%
	31 - 35	27	42	88	157
		17.2%	26.8%	56.1%	100.0%
	36 - 40	48	7	63	118
		40.7%	5.9%	53.4%	100.0%
	41 - 45	0	42	35	77
		0.0%	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
	46 - 50	13	20	27	60
		21.7%	33.3%	45.0%	100.0%
> 50	0	47	28	75	
	0.0%	62.7%	37.3%	100.0%	
Total		379	602	389	1,370
		27.7%	43.9%	28.4%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 444 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have satisfied moderately over the providing finance for buying vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (602) moderately satisfied over the the providing finance for buying vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that the providing finance for buying vehicle has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle service

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle features the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 6.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle service			Total
279.2**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	344	294	245	883
		39.0%	33.3%	27.7%	100.0%

31 - 35	0	88	69	157
	0.0%	56.1%	43.9%	100.0%
36 - 40	0	76	42	118
	0.0%	64.4%	35.6%	100.0%
41 - 45	0	56	21	77
	0.0%	72.7%	27.3%	100.0%
46 - 50	33	0	27	60
	55.0%	0.0%	45.0%	100.0%
> 50	13	55	7	75
	17.3%	73.3%	9.3%	100.0%
Total	390	569	411	1,370
	28.5%	41.5%	30.0%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 344 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have satisfied low over the service of the vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (569) moderately satisfied over the service of the vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that vehicle service has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Maintenance

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle features the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 7.

Chi square	p-value	Level of satisfaction on Vehicle Maintenance			Total
406.8**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	431	238	214	883
		48.8%	27.0%	24.2%	100.0%
31 - 35	7	136	14	157	
		4.5%	86.6%	8.9%	100.0%
36 - 40	7	76	35	118	
		5.9%	64.4%	29.7%	100.0%
41 - 45	7	21	49	77	
		9.1%	27.3%	63.6%	100.0%
46 - 50	33	0	27	60	
		55.0%	0.0%	45.0%	100.0%
> 50	47	7	21	75	
		62.7%	9.3%	28.0%	100.0%
Total	532	478	360	1,370	
		38.8%	34.9%	26.3%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 431 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have satisfied low over the maintenance of the vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (532) satisfied low over the maintenance of the vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that the maintenance of the vehicle has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

Level of overall satisfaction

The customer satisfaction basing on the age and the aspect of the vehicle features the customer impressed while buying has been elicited and presented in the Table 8.

Chi square	p-value	Level of overall satisfaction			Total
188.43**	0.000	Low	Moderate	High	
Age (years)	26 - 30	291	411	181	883
		33.0%	46.5%	20.5%	100.0%
31 - 35	21	108	28	157	
		13.4%	68.8%	17.8%	100.0%
36 - 40	0	76	42	118	
		0.0%	64.4%	35.6%	100.0%
41 - 45	0	42	35	77	
		0.0%	54.5%	45.5%	100.0%
46 - 50	33	27	0	60	
		55.0%	45.0%	0.0%	100.0%
> 50	40	35	0	75	
		53.3%	46.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	385	699	286	1,370	
		28.1%	51.0%	20.9%	100.0%

It is observed from the table that 411 respondents of the age group of 26 – 30 years have overall satisfied moderately over the vehicle and the number of the respondents of other ages satisfied moderately and low is rather low. It is concluded that majority of the respondents (699) moderately overall satisfied over the vehicle. The Chi-square value is highly significant at 1 per cent level and hence it can be inferred that the overall satisfaction has lot of impact on the age of the respondents while buying car.

CONCLUSION

Today India is the 12th largest car market in the world. The Indian automobile industry has received high impetus due to post liberalization measures. Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from the product's perceived performance in relation to his or her expectations. Consumers' satisfaction for the attributes of vehicle delivery, vehicle features, vehicle performance, safety, comfort, maintenance and overall satisfaction are measured by computing Chi-square analysis. It was found that majority of the youth satisfied over the delivery over the vehicle moderately while purchasing the desire vehicle, majority of the respondents have highly satisfied over the features of the vehicle, 49 per cent of the respondents highly satisfied on the performance of the vehicle and majority of them are in the age group of 26 – 30 years, majority of the respondents (701) moderately satisfied over the safety of the vehicle, majority of the respondents (560) moderately satisfied over the comfort of the vehicle, majority of the respondents (602) moderately satisfied over the providing finance for buying vehicle, majority of the respondents (532) satisfied low over the maintenance of the vehicle and majority of the respondents (699) moderately overall satisfied over the vehicle. It was suggested that vehicle safety must be given immensely importance.

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