A Study on Customer Satisfaction on Service Quality of Multibrancd Car Service Centre with Special Reference to Pudukkotai District

[1]Ms. A. Ramalath, [2]Dr. S. Adaikala Charles

[1]Full Time Research Scholar in Commerce, Rajah Serfoji Govt. College (A), Thanjavur – 613005. (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli 620024)

[2]Assistant Professor& research advisor in Commerce, Rajah Serfoji Govt. College (A), Thanjavur – 613005. (Affiliated to Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli 625024)

Abstract

Automobile Industry has played a major role in the Indian economy during the last decade. The Indian market opening its wings to MNC's, the competition has become severe in terms of product quality and service. Multi brand car service centre has brought forward customer satisfaction at each level where they render service of all brand under one roof. Satisfied customer's form the foundation of any successful business as customer satisfaction leads to repeat service, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth. Many researches are going on in the field of customer satisfaction for not only retaining the customer but also for repeated business deals. An attempt is made in this paper to highlight the use of customer service of multi brand car service centre as a tool for improving the relationship with the customer.

Key words: Customer Satisfaction, Attributes, Dealer, Loyalty, Authorized centre

1. Introduction

Customer satisfaction is the key to business servers. According to a study Customer in India are more concerned with the service that are performed at timely manner with the affordable cost The Service provider in India must be responsive to all the needs of their customer; simply providing a good product at a good price is no longer enough. Every aspect of their service from the initial sales call to the maintenance of product sold must exceed the expectation of the customer. Multi brand car service quality is an important aspect influencing customer satisfaction. A customer who has a good experience with the concerned Multi brand car service may probably use the same car service centre again while the customer who experiences problems with Multi brand car service may not use the same car service centre next time. For this reason improving service quality is important for existing customer and for attracting new users. Customer satisfaction among different Multi brand car service centre has become an important and necessary concept in today's service business world. Due to the importance of repeat business, it is vital for service business to focus on long term relationship with customer. In this paper an attempt is made to demonstrate that customer satisfaction research is not only a tool to measure customer attitude but also to be a proactive tool for managing customer relation with respect to different Multi brand car service centre across Pudhukkotai District. Customersatisfaction is the outcome felt by those that have experienced a company's performance that have fulfilled their expectations. Many researchers and academicians highlight the importance of customer satisfaction. Many researchers see that customer satisfaction has positive effects on organizations profitability. Empirical evidence also shows the positive connection between customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention. Nowadays all companies are realizing the significance of delivering and managing service quality, which leads to customer satisfaction.

According to Hansemark and Albinson (2022) "Satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfilment of someone's needs, goals or desire".
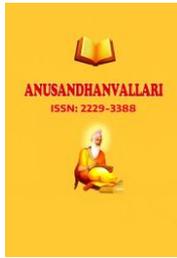
Customer loyalty on the other hand refers to a deeply held commitment to re-buy a preferred product or service in the future despite situational influences and marketing effort having potential to cause switching behaviour (Oliver1977). This paper deals with Customer satisfaction of four wheeler Multi brand car service centre acrossPudukkotai District.

This gives an insight on how customer satisfaction index for service sector like Automobile Industry is computed. Customer satisfaction index in dealers are initiated into customer requirement that in terms will be translated into measurable targets which provides an easy way to monitor the measurement of attributes. This in turn will help in the improvement of customer satisfaction index. Responses to questions are grouped under five different factors that have been provided weight age in accordance to priority of the customer provided by the service centre.

2. Review of Literature

Multi brand car service quality is one aspect markedly influencing customer satisfaction. Building on its longstanding work to improve the quality of service that affects customer wellbeing, the Customer satisfaction of four wheeler multi brand car service centre across Pudukottai District has developed a customer satisfaction index. Successful consumer models used by industries to ensure customer service and satisfaction can be applied effectively to improve the quality of services among different multi brand car service centre across Pudukottai. In the study of 2012 Dealer satisfaction with Automotive manufacturers Arora mentioned that overall dealer satisfaction is determined by examining nine factors: Marketing and sales activities, product, vehicle ordering and delivery, sales team, parts, warranty claims, after-sales team training and support from the manufacturer.

This review of literature suggest finding out the factors affecting customer satisfaction with service quality of four wheeler multi brand car service centre across Pudukkotai Districts . In this article the researchers will be concerned about the different factors namely: Service Initiation, service advisor, service quality. These factors are given below.

1.   SERVICE INITIATION:

This includes

• Ease of arranging service visit (Through telephone, SMS, etc. This includes the length of time to speak to someone).

• Appearance and cleanliness of service centre workshop.

• Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge.

• Timeliness of handover process (time waiting to be greeted, time conferring with service advisor, time to hand over keys and complete initial work). "

2.   SERVICE ADVISOR

• Courtesy and Friendliness of service Advisor to take vehicle for service

• Able to understand the problem and helpful for customer

• Explain service requirement cost and time

• Thoroughness of explanation, and Service brand building.

3.   SERVICE QUALITY

• Fix problem on first visit and ability to diagnosis problem properly.

• Repair quality and washing quality.

• Fairness of charges for routine maintenance.

• Feedback call from service centre regarding service.

• Addressing repeat complaints and attending to it on priority basis.

• Service reminder from service centre to the customer.
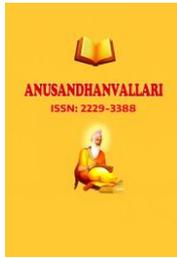
• Repair quality and cleanliness of vehicle while returning it to the customers. (Undamaged, controls and position unchanged).

• Overall rating of the service centre.

After going through the literature it has been found that many researchers have studied some of the attributes of customer satisfaction with automotive manufacturers, dealers satisfaction with online buying service, dealer satisfaction and performance in motor industry, but studies with respect to the satisfaction of customers related to Multi brand car service centre across Pudukottai District, are rarely available and the major factors affecting their satisfaction level as per car service centre view by using Index method. Thus, the present study is an attempt to find the satisfaction level of the customer on any particular car service centre.

Factors That Influence Customer Satisfaction:

From literature review, there are many factors that affect customer satisfaction. Such factors include friendly and courteous employees, knowledgeable and helpful employees, accuracy of billing, billing timeliness, competitive pricing, service quality, good value, billing clarity and quick service (Hokanson, 1995). From the studies carried out in many countries, factors like: service quality, and perceived value, are the key constructs affecting the customer's satisfaction with mobile services. Studies also point out that customer satisfaction results ultimately in trust, price tolerance, and customer loyalty. Therefore, building customer relationship is a backbone for all organizations in general, and companies in service industries in particular. Issues like: customer satisfaction, service quality, customer perception, customer loyalty, are the main concerns of service companies, which improves organization's performance and translates into more profits.
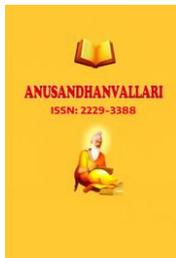
Customer Satisfaction

Customer Satisfaction has been a central concept in marketing literature and is an important goal of all business activities. Today, companies face their toughest competition, because they move from a product and sales philosophy to a marketing philosophy, which gives a company a better chance of outperforming competition (Kotler, 2000). Overall customer satisfaction translates to more profits for companies and market share increase. The importance of customers has been highlighted by many researchers and academicians. The principal concern of marketing is to connect with customers by building a strong customer relationship in order to meet their expectations. Companies that are successful follow a model which has the customers at the top. Next according to the importance are front-line people who meet, serve,and satisfy customers, under them are middle managers, whose job are to support the front people so they can serve customers well, and at the base is top management, whose job is to hire and support good middle managers. For customer centred companies, customer satisfaction is both a goal and a marketing tool. Therefore, companies need to be concerned about the customer satisfaction level. Otherwise with the extensive use of the internet technology; the quick spread of bad word of mouth marketing, as well as good word of mouth information will percolate to the rest of the world.

Researchers have tried to define customer satisfaction and they have defined it as transaction process. Oliver (1981) defined satisfaction "as a summary of psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations with the consumer's prior feelings a consumption experience". Kotler (2000) defined satisfaction as: "a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations".

According to HansemarAlbinsson (2023) "satisfaction is an overall customer attitude towards a service provider, or an emotional reaction to the difference between what customers anticipate and what they receive, regarding the fulfilment of some need, goal or desire".

Parasuraman et al. (1988) distinguish service quality and satisfaction: "perceived service quality is a global judgment, or attitude, relating to the superiority of the service, whereas satisfaction is related to a specific

transaction". Customer satisfaction as an attitude is like a judgment following a purchase act or based on series of consumer-product interactions (Yi, 1989).

Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on an organization's profitability. The more customers are satisfied with products or services offered, the more are chances for any successful business. Customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchase, brand loyalty, and positive word of mouth advertising. Customer satisfaction leads to repeat purchases, loyalty and to customer retention (Zairi, 2000). Satisfied customers are more likely to repeat buying products or services. They will also tend to say good things and to recommend the product or service to others. On the other hand dissatisfied customers respond differently.

Dissatisfied my try to reduce the dissonance by abandoning or returning the product, or they may try to reduce the dissonance by seeking information that might confirm its high value (Kotler, 2000). Companies need to develop strategies of how to handle dissatisfied customers. Businesses cannot afford under any condition to lose customers, because the cost of replacing the lost customer with a new customer is bigger. Therefore, companies must find ways of winning back the unsatisfied customers by designing special programs for service recovery. Companies should handle customer complaints with care and not seeing them as time consuming.

Service

Service industries are playing an increasingly important role in the overall economies of the countries of developed and developing countries. Researchers have tried to define service and to explain what service constitutes. There are many definitions regarding the concepts of service. Services are deeds, processes, and performances (Parasuraman et al. 1985). Gronroos service as: "An activity or series of activities of more or less intangibles nature that normally, but not necessarily, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources , goods or systems of ser Service is: "Any primary or complementary activity that does not directly produce a physical product that is, the non-goods part of the transaction between customer and provider" (Payne, 1993).

Service Quality

Service quality has become a major area of attention during the past few decades for managers, researchers, practitioners because of its huge impact on business performance of firms. Brown and Swartz (1989) think that customers prefer and value companies that provide high service quality. Thus, the attainment of quality in products and services has become a prime concern of the 1980s. Customers judge service quality relative to what they want by comparing their perceptions of service experiences with their expectations of what the service performance should be. Marketers described and measured only quality with tangible goods, where as quality in services was largely undefined and unresearched (Parasuraman, et.al. 1985). Quality in a service business has become a measure of the extent to which the service provided meets the customer's expectations. Companies have found that in order to increase profits and market share, they should pay much attention to service quality. Service quality has become a key strategic factor for companies to differentiate their products and services from other competitors by using service quality as a process that customers evaluate. Many researchers suggest that customers assess service quality by comparing what they feel a seller should offer and compare it against the seller's actual service performance (Gronroos, 1982). The importance of quality to firms and customers is unequivocal because of its benefits contributing to market share and return on investment (Parasuraman, et al. 1985). The search for service quality is no doubt the most important consumer trend of the new era, as consumers now are demanding higher quality in products and services than ever before. The fierce and intense competition and rapid deregulation have made many businesses in the service sector to seek profitable ways and become competitive. Delivering high service quality is a good strategy for businesses to succeed. Quality has been recognized as a strategic tool for attaining efficiency and business performance. With service assurance, companies not only retain their existing customers but increase chances of getting and
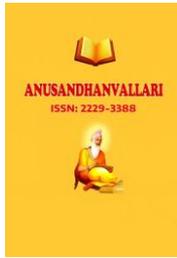
attracting new customers. Service quality presents 'the consumer's overall impression of the relative inferiority / superiority of the organization and its services". Therefore, service quality is a key for survival to all service providing companies. Measuring the quality of goods is easier because it can be measured objectively with indicators like durability and number of defects, but service quality is an abstract item. According to Parasuraman et al., (1988), service quality has three features which are unique; intangibility, heterogeneity, and inseparability of production and consumption. Therefore, they suggest that in the absence of objective measures, an appropriate assessment of the service quality of a firm is to measure consumers' perceptions of quality.

Research Methodology

In order to answer the core of the research problem customer satisfaction index among Multi brand car service centre across PudukkotaiDistricts , the information from the customer perspective play an important role. Quantitative data collection methods were used to obtain all the necessary data needed for answering the core research questions and problems of the research. Common Attributes have been used for all Multi brand car service centre across Pudukkotaito measure customer satisfaction index. In order to make the study more useful and informative descriptive statistics have been applied.

Weightage is given for the desired attributes:

1) Service Initiation,

2) Service advisor and

3) Service quality.

The customer satisfaction index represents the overall satisfaction of customer towards dealer, usually as a percentage. Plotting this satisfaction index of the customer against different dealers show exactly how well the dealer is accomplishing the task of customer satisfaction over a period of time. Since the survey feedback comes from many respondents in one organization, the bias due to the individual perception needs to be accounted for. This can be achieved by calculating the satisfaction index. The data is to collect the information of customers of four wheelers who are getting serviced from multi brand car service centre across PudukkotaiDistricts . Data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources.

For the primary data a questionnaire survey was used. Moreover, different local and internationally published articles were reviewed to strengthen theoretical backgrounds of the study. Then the respondents were asked to indicate their level of satisfaction by using a 5 point Likert scale (from 1= strongly dissatisfied to 5= strongly satisfied). For the purpose of the study Reputed Recognized 10 Multi Brand outlets were selected 3 from Pudukkotai, and one each from Kulathur, Illuppur, Alangudi, Pudukkottai, Gandarvakottai, Thirumayam, and Aranthangi.

For every Multi brand the sample was fixed as 100 Customers. To analyze the data, index method was used. Survey was done for customers who have completed their car warranty terms with the dealer and getting serviced in Multi brand from past 6 to1 year.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION 1000 questionnaires were distributed among the 10 MULTI BRAND CAR SERVICE CENTRE across PudukkotaiDistricts . 810 questionnaires were found fully completed and used for further analysis.

1. Service Initiation
a. **Service Centre Location**
- Around 667 customers (82.34%) were satisfied due to the proximity to access the service centre.
- 103 Customers (12.71%) were found to be dissatisfied in Bangalore .This is due to the fact that they were located far away from the service point and no pick up and drop facility is available from the Multi brand car Service centre.
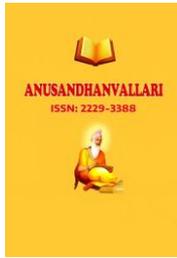
- 40 Customers (4.93%) are Neutral because they were getting the service even when they were away from their own dealer OR service centre, OR their Driver would take the vehicle and get the service done.

Table :1 Service Initiation

No of Customer	Percentage
667	82.34%
103	12.71%
40	4.93%
Total =810	Percentage=100%

b. Appearance and Cleanliness of Dealer Workshop

- Around 480 Customers are satisfied (59.25%) with the Appearance and Cleanliness of service centre.
- Around 230 Customers (28.39%) are very dissatisfied.
- However 100 Customers (12.35%) remain Neutral as they are either not worried about the appearance OR they have seen better layouts and better workshops.

Table: 2 Appearance and Cleanliness of Dealer Workshop

No of Customer	Percentage
480	59.25%
230	28.39%
100	12.35%
Total =810	Percentage=100%

c. Appearance and cleanliness of customer lounge

• 350 Customers (43.20%) are satisfied by the appearance and cleanliness of Customer lounge.

• 40 Customer (4.93%) are Neutral due to the fact that they do not wait at the customer lounge (Because they leave the vehicle in the morning for service and get back in evening to take delivery after the service).

• 120 Customers (14.81%) are Dissatisfied because of the poor maintenance.

• Remaining 300 Customer (37.03%) are highly dissatisfied due to poor maintenance and non-availability of Air conditioners in Customer lounge

Table 3: Appearance and Cleanliness of Dealer Workshop

No of Customers	Percentage
350	43.20%
40	4.93%
120	14.81%
300	37.03%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

d. Service openings and closing Time

• 650 Customer (80.24%) are satisfied with the opening and closing time of the service centers.

• 160 Customers (19.75%) are dissatisfied because they are seldom able to make it to the service center to collect their vehicle before the service centre closes.
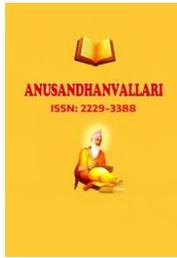
Table 4: Service openings and closing Time

No of Customers	Percentage
650	80.24%
160	19.75%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

2. SERVICE ADVISOR

a. **Waiting period for service Advisor to take the vehicle for service.**

A majority of 623 customers (76.91%) are very highly satisfied with lesser waiting period to meet the service advisor.

• 33 customers (4.07%) are dissatisfied due as it takes longer time to meet the service advisor.

• Around 154 customers (19.01%) are neutral because they had directly walked in to the dealer. At that time service advisor was attending to other customers.

Table 1: Waiting period for service Advisor to take the vehicle for service.

No of Customers	Percentage
623	76.91%
33	4.07%
154	19.01%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

b. **Able to understand the customer problem**

• 642 customers (79.25%) were satisfied with service advisors capability to understand the problem with the vehicle.

• Around 168 customers (20.74%) were dissatisfied with service advisor and not felt they were not helpful.

**Table 1: Able to understand the customer problem**

No of Customers	Percentage
642	79.25%
168	20.74%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

c. **Information about Cost and Time.**

• Around 598 customers were satisfied (73.82%) with the explanation given by the service advisor regarding cost and time of service.

• 212 customers (26.17%) are dissatisfied with the explanation given by the service advisor. d. Intimation of the completed service by the service advisor.

• 683 customers are satisfied with the service advisor (84.32%) because they call after the service is completed.

• 127 customers are dissatisfied (15.67%) as the service advisor had not bothered to call the customer even when the vehicle was ready.

Table No: 1Information about Cost and Time.

No of Customers	Percentage
598	73.82%
212	26.17%
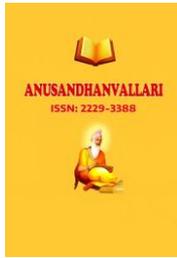
683	84.32%
127	15.67
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

e. **Detailed explanation of workcarried out**
• Around 599 customers (73.95%) are satisfied with the Explanation provided by the advisor on the work done.
• Around 112 customers are dissatisfied (13.82%) due to the lack of explanation by the service advisors.
• 99 customers are highly dissatisfied (12.22%) the way service advisor explained.

Table No: 1Detailedexplanation of workcarried out

No of Customers	Percentage
599	73.95%
112	13.82%
99	12.22%
127	15.67
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

SERVICE QUALITY

a. Fixing the problem during first visit/ability to diagnose the problem properly.
• Around 583 customers (71.97%) are satisfied with the service centre diagnosis of the problem at the first instance.
• 127 Customers are dissatisfied (15.67%).
• 100 customers are highly dissatisfied (12.34%)

Table No 1: Fixing the problem during first visit/ability to diagnose the problem properly.

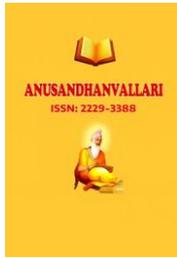| No of Customers	Percentage
583	71.97%
127	15.67%
100	12.34
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

b. Repair quality and Washing quality.
• 300 customers are satisfied (37.03%) with repair quality and washing quality.
• 350 customers are dissatisfied with (43.20%) washing quality but happy with repair quality
• Remaining 160 are highly dissatisfied (19.75%) with washing quality and repair quality

Table No 2: Repair quality and Washing quality.

No of Customers	Percentage
300	37.03%
350	43.20%
160	19.75%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

c. Fairness of charges for routine maintenance.
• 619 customers are satisfied (76.41%) with the fairness of charges made.

• 191 customers are highly dissatisfied with (23.58%) charges done by service centre.

Table No 3: Fairness of charges for routine maintenance.

No of Customers	Percentage
619	76.41%
191	23.58
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

d. Was the feedback call given by the service center regarding impending of service?

• 416 customers very satisfied (51.35%) with the service calls from the service centre.

• Remaining 394 customers dissatisfied (48.64%) as they did not get the call.

Table No 4: Was the feedback call given by the service center regarding impending of service?

No of Customers	Percentage
416	51.35%
394	48.64%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

e. Was repeat complaints attended on priority basis?

• 234 customers are satisfied (28.88%) as repeat complaints were attended on priority

• 280 customers are dissatisfied (34.56%) due to delay in attending to the repeat complaints.

• Remaining 296 customers (36.54%) are neutral.

**Table No 5:** Was repeat complaints attended on priority basis?

No of Customers	Percentage
234	28.88%
280	34.56%
296	36.54%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

f. Was repeat complaint solved completely?

• 468 customers are satisfied (57.77%) with the dealer as the problem was fully solved.

• 342 customers are highly dissatisfied (42.22%) as repeat complaints were not solved completely. Reminder about the upcoming service

• 568 customers are satisfied (70.12%) because they get service reminders from the dealers.

• Remaining 196 customers (24.19%) are dissatisfied as they are not getting service reminders.

Table No 5: Was repeat complaint solved completely?

No of Customers	Percentage
468	57.77%
342	42.22%
568	70.12%
196	24.19%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%
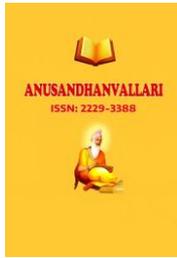
h. Overall rating of the Multi brand service centre.
• 328 customers are very satisfied (40.49%) with the dealer due to the service extension at any time • 218 customers are satisfied (26.91%)
• 182 customers are neutral (22.46%).
• 82 customers are dissatisfied (10.12%) due to non availability of highly skilled manpower.

Table No 6: Overall rating of the Multi brand service centre

No of Customers	Percentage
368	40.49%
182	22.46%
82	10.12%
Total= 810	Percentage 100%

The study was conducted at 10 Multi brand car service centre across PudukkotaiDistricts . This study has been conducted with three main variables namely a. Service Initiation, b. service Advisor, c. Service quality, which were found to be the most relevant parameters at the present time. The questionnaire was developed covering these variables and the same where administered to customers at all Multi brand service centre across PudukkotaiDistricts . The data collected were analyzed and several findings emerged. The finding of this survey could now be grouped into two categories namely satisfied and dissatisfied with the service centre according to the perception of the customer who responds to the questionnaire.

Finding And Research Questions (Conclusion)

In the analysis we have not considered the Neutral category as they are not contributing towards the satisfaction or dissatisfaction with respect to the service centre. The purpose of this study was to measure customer satisfaction of 10 Multi brand service centre across PudukkotaiDistricts . As was mentioned, the three Attributes questions the Service Advisor (S/A), Service Initiation (S/I), and Service Quality(S/Q).Out of 1000 questionnaires, 810 were analyzed using index method in this study. The empirical findings from the customer's opinion,- Personal Car Users across Pudukkotai District were satisfied with service offered by the Multi brand service centre .Findings also showed that satisfied percentage is more than the dissatisfiers. Multi brand service centre names are not mentioned as the study aims in finding the Customer expectation and perception towards the Multi brand car service centre across Pudukkotai Districts. Thus the service centre is now required to concentrate their efforts on sustaining satisfiers and at the same time there is scope for improvement. Efforts can be put to improve areas which will increase the level of overall customer satisfaction. This will also result in re service with the same Multi brand service centre and recommendation of the service center to others. In conclusion, the companies can benefit from the fact of knowing how customers perceive the service quality and knowing the way of how to measure customer satisfaction. The Multi brand car service centre can use the specific data obtained from the measurement of overall customer satisfaction in their strategies and plan. This will help the companies to better understand various service quality dimension that affect overall service centre customer satisfaction. In this way companies can better allocate resources to provide better service to their customer. Thus, understanding customer satisfaction with Multi brand car service quality is very important and challenging.
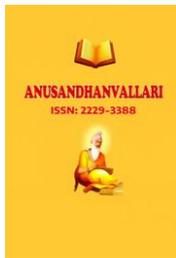
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