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A Study on Customer Perception on Service Quality of Car Dealer in Thanjavur District

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ABSTRACT

The automotive Industry in India is now working in terms of the dynamics of an open market. Many joint ventures have been set up in India with foreign collaboration, both technical and financial with leading global manufacturers. The Government of India is keen to provide a suitable economic and business environment conducive to the success of the established and prospective foreign partnership ventures.In India for inducting and absorbing the latest technology and upgrading the quality of products to an international level and a partner search mission is on. Indian firms are on the lookout for Joint Ventures and Technology Transfers specializing in niche technology and to complement their range of products as well as bench marking with the world's latest and the best.

Keyword: Joint Ventures, Technology Transfers, global manufacturers

1. INTRODUCTION

India's potential in both economic and population terms and the effect it will have on the auto industry in the years to come. With a well-developed components industry and a production level of one million four-wheeled vehicles a year, plus a further five million two- and three-wheelers, India came to be recognized as a potential emerging auto market a few years back. India has lately emerged as one of the fastest growing auto markets in the world, and one of the main reasons behind that is the fact that the car market is also undergoing significant structural shifts.The next three to four years could see the industry pump in as much as $5 billion, "out of which foreign direct investment would be close to $3 billion -- higher than ever," According to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturer's projections, domestic sales of passenger vehicles (cars and utility vehicles) are set to grow at 20 percent over the next two years, given the current GDP growth, and exports at 40 percent.

2. 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 (JParasuraman et al. 1985). Gronroos (1983) defined 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 service provider. 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).

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3. 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 the service of the quality.

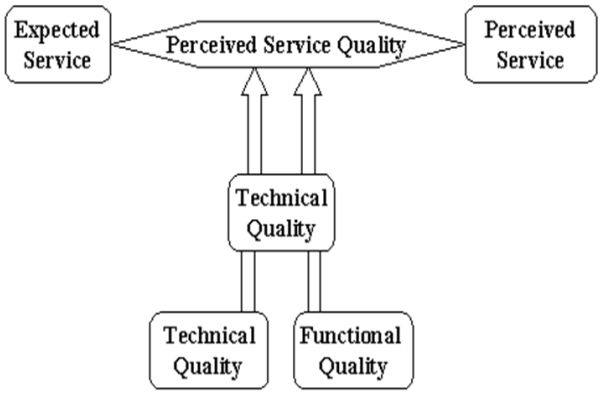


FIG 1

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

William B Dodds (1991) investigated the effects of the intrinsic cues of price brand and store information on consumer perception of product quality. They found that price had a positive effect on perceived quality but a negative effect on perceived value and respondent's willingness to buy. Samson Itamer (1992) has observed that purchase decisions are determined on the basis of both absolute attributes of the alternatives and their relative positions within the particular choice set under consideration. He has further suggested that consumers are less likely to choose alternatives that are offered with unneeded features or premium even when the features do not reduce the value of the product in any way. Aradhana Krishna (1994) viewed that buyers purchase behavior can be influenced not only by the current price of a product but also by what price they expect in future.

Gerald D Bell (1967) studies how a new car buyer feels about his purchase and what factors determine his reactions when he begins living with his new car. The finding of this investigation suggests the effect of a customer's self-confidence his personality and the quality of service he receives upon his cognitive dissonance. Edward L Grubb and Greg Hupp (1968) test a methodology for measurement of self-concept and consumer behavior in comparable terms and therefore to further substantiate the relationship of self-theory to consumer behavior. The author suggest that the owner of a specific make of automobiles perceive themselves as having self concepts similar to those of others who own the make of an automobile. Darlin Doman (1983) in the article has mentioned that satisfied new car buyers discuss their experiences with eight people dissatisfied buyers complain to an average of twenty two people.

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5. MEASURES OF AUTOMOBILE SERVICE QUALITY

Service quality in retailing is different from any other product and service environment (Finn, 2004).Because of the unique nature of automobile service, improvements and measurements of quality in automobile cannot be approached in the same way as that of the services perspective. In any automobile service, it is necessary to look at quality from the perspective of services as well as goods and derive a set of items that accurately measure this construct (Mehta *et al.*, 2000). For this reason, Dabholkar*et al*. (1996) developed and empirically validated the Retail Service Quality Scale (RSQS) to capture dimensions important to retail customers based on the triangulation qualitative research technique. They conducted qualitative research using three different methodologies - phenomenological interviews, exploratory depth interviews, and tracking the customer through the store. Combining these qualitative findings with the existing literature and SERVQUAL, Dabholkar*et al.* (1996) proposed that retail service quality has a hierarchical factor structure comprising five basic dimensions, namely 'physical aspects', 'reliability', 'personal interaction', 'problem solving', and 'policy', with first three basic dimensions having two sub-dimensions each and overall service quality as a second order

6. PERCEIVED VALUE UPON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The proposed relationship of perceived value upon customer satisfaction is supported by value disconfirmation experience. When a single purchase of a product or service is made, the customer expects to receive a benefit greater than the cost, that is, the customer expects to receive value. If anything happens after the purchase that unexpectedly reduces or increases the cost incurred or benefit received, the perceived value is altered. The customer becomes less or more satisfied, which in turn influences subsequent customer value expectations, purchase behavior and overall customer satisfaction (Carr, 1990; Voss *et al.*, 1998; Woodruff, 1997).

7. PERCEIVED QUALITY OF SERVICE UPON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The relationship of quality to satisfaction at either the transaction-specific or global level of analysis is not universally agreed upon (Parasuraman*et al.*, 1994b; Taylor and Baker, 1994; Zahorik and Rust, 1992). Some analysts treat perceived quality as a relatively stable perception of the service which is influenced as customers experience satisfaction or dissatisfaction with specific instances of the service over time (Athiyaman, 1997; Bejou*et al.*, 1996; Bolton and Drew, 1991a, b; Bouldin*et al.*,1993).

Even where perceived quality is understood to be antecedent to satisfaction, some researchers indicate that there can be diminishing satisfaction returns to an increase in the level of service quality(Anderson and Sullivan, 1993; Caruana and Pitt, 1997; Johnston, 1995; Mittal *et al.*, 1998; Woodruff,1997). It is also argued that perceived quality may not be a significant determinant of customer service assessments when the service has high credence attributes (Powpaka, 1996). This paper tests the view that perceived quality is a direct positive antecedent to satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction has a positive effect to recommendation but not repurchase intention as well. This can be conclude that the respondents are willing to recommend the car brand that they are satisfy with to someone but may not buy the same car brand in the future. After that we ask some respondents who were satisfy but may not buy the same car brand and we found that it is because the respondents want to buy the more expensive brand if they earn more money. Perceived service

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quality has positive effect to perceived value. This mean if the customers received good service the value in their eyes will increase.

8. CONCLUSION

From the above discussions it is concluded that the customer satisfaction is most important part of any industry. So it is the main responsibility of service industries to improve customer satisfaction and quality of service which is beneficial to enhance the no. of new customers. When the service industries provide the best in class service than there is no need to expand money on promotions and advertisement because a satisfied customer directly promote the brand of particular product and this is directly the word to mouth communication or promotion and it will be the most effective for particular service industry. The study will bring to light the relevance of maintaining quality as a means of offering satisfaction to four wheeler vehicle owners during the active period of use of the vehicle. The four wheeler automobile service industries will be better equipped to take decisions on the right investments to improve on quality of service and eventually on customer satisfaction. The result of this research work will benefit the society since this will serve as an information base which adds up to the existing body of knowledge and data on customer behavior in the automobile services sector.

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