THINK INDIA (Quarterly Journal)

ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

A Study on Customer Satisfaction on Selected Air Conditioner with Special Reference to Chennai

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ABSTRACT

In the present age of liberalization and market economy, the management process needs more apt and appropriate market information to spearhead the marketing operations such as introduction of near products in new markets and also to retain the customer base. Satisfaction is a person's feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations. If the performance of the product falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds expectations, the customer is highly satisfied which is delightful. The aim of any organization should be to maximize profit in a long run through satisfying the customer's wants. The real purpose of business is to create loyal customers. The marketing concept is consumer oriented which integrated marketing aimed at generating customer satisfaction as the key to satisfy the organizational goals. The value of any chance (as the prospect of prize or property), that depends upon some contingent events. Expectations are computed for or against the occurrence of the event. A Customer expectation can pose a major challenge. Satisfied customer is really what we are trying to produce. Unfortunately we confuse customer satisfaction with meeting (or exceeding) their expectations and not honoring our commitments.

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an exchange of goods and services between buyers and sellers for a long period. The success of all economic activity depended on producing goods and services that the consumers consider suitable. Consumers have some freedom of choice in accepting or rejecting the produce of sellers. So marketers have always been subjected to the choice of consumers with technological transformation, the emphasis shifted to an effective sales force to find customers for their output. Marketers first consider the consumers' actual wants and manufacture their goods according to their satisfaction. As Modern marketing is consumer oriented it has to be concerned with the needs and wishes of the consumers. Customer satisfaction is closely linked to quality in a narrow sense defined as a "freedom from defect" where as in brand sense "Quality is the total features and characteristics of product or service that has been on its ability to satisfy the consumer's needs".

2. AIR CONDITIONER - MEANING

Air conditioning (often referred to as A/C or AC) is the process of altering the properties of air (primarily temperature and humidity) to more comfortable conditions, typically with the aim of distributing the conditioned air to an occupied space such as a building or a vehicle to improve thermal comfort and indoor air quality. In common use, an air conditioner is a device that lowers the air temperature. The cooling is typically achieved through a refrigeration cycle, but

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

sometimes evaporation or free cooling is used. Air conditioning systems can also be made based on desiccants. In the most general sense, air conditioning can refer to any form of technology that modifies the condition of air (heating, cooling, (de-)humidification, cleaning, ventilation, or air movement). However, in construction, such a complete system of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning is referred to as heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC -as opposed to AC).

3. HISTORY OF AIR CONDITIONER

There have been many attempts throughout history to avoid the ravages of heat and to keep cool in the hot summer months. From the simplicity of shade to architecture designed to take advantage of natural ventilation human history is ripe with methods to keep cool. Only in the last 100 years has man developed machinery that will allow for him to do more than just take advantage of his surroundings to keep cool. He can now artificially manufacture weather to help him to stay comfortable. The first cooling apparatus on record was made by American physician Dr. John Gorrie of Apalachicola, Florida. In the 1830s Dr. Gorrie designed a machine that in essence was a fan which blew across a container of ice for cooling hospital rooms. Similarly in 1881 when President James Garfield was dying a group of naval engineers constructed a machine which blew air through cloth saturated with melted ice water. The device could lower the room temperature by 20 degrees but used a half a million pounds of ice in just two months.
In the late 19th century "manufactured air" as it was originally called, was just a method of controlling the humidity in mills like textile mills to get a higher productivity level. Cooling stations were eventually set up which piped cool air to surrounding buildings where it was used to preserve food, cool beer and other beverages and protect important documents.

Willis Carrier - Willis Carrier was a mechanical engineer from Buffalo, New York. In 1902 he designed a spray driven temperature and humidity controlled system as well as a system for offices, apartments, hotels, and hospitals. Many call him the father of air conditioning because his companies became synonymous with air conditioning excellence. He built his "Apparatus for Treating Air" where chilled cooling coils were used to cool the air and lower the humidity to as low as 55%. The device was even able to adjust the humidity level to a desired setting creating what would become the modern air conditioner. Carrier was inspired with the idea while waiting for a train on a foggy night. By the time the train arrived Carrier had gained a deep understanding of the relationships between temperature, humidity and the dew point. The first air conditioner units were very large, very expensive, and extremely dangerous because the ammonia that was used as coolant was highly toxic.

Refrigeration was the New Empire Theatre in Montgomery, Alabama in 1917. The same year the Central Park Theater in Chicago was designed to use the new technology which quickly became hugely popular and caused the summer attendance to increase immensely.
In 1922 Willis Carrier made two critical breakthroughs. First he replaced the toxic coolant ammonia with the much safer coolant dyeline (dichloroethylene, or C2H2Cl2). Secondly he greatly reduced the size of the units. This led to air conditioning units being installed places like department stores, office buildings, railroad cars and other small buildings.
In 1924 three Carrier centrifugal chillers were installed in the J. L. Hudson Department Store in Detroit, Michigan. Shoppers were greatly pleased and intrigued by the air conditioned store and air conditioning became a marketing tool for many retail businesses. Between 1928 and 1930 the House of Representatives, the Senate, the White House, the Executive Office Building, and the Department of Commerce were equipped with air conditioning as were many important

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

buildings across the US. The Great Depression slowed the residential and light commercial use of air-conditioning.

Willis Carrier's igloo in the 1939 World's Fair gave visitors a glimpse into the future of air conditioning but before it could catch on World War II began. After World War II production shifted back to non-military use and the American economy was in great shape. Americans began to buy air conditioning for their homes and enjoy what they had up till then only experienced away from home. This began the trend of bringing conditioned comfort to the average American home. Home air conditioning quickly became very popular and by 1946 thirty thousand room air conditioners were produced. The demand at this time far exceeds the supply. In 1948 it increased to 74,000. In 1950 a major study shows that families living in air conditioned homes sleep longer in summer have more leisure time and enjoy their food more than families without it. In 1953 room air conditioner sales are over one million units with demand still far exceeding the actual supply? In 1957 the rotary compressor was first marketed, permitting smaller, quieter, lighter, and more efficient units than the reciprocating type of compressor previously used. In 1969 refrigeration technology helped to facilitate a trip to the moon.

Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin walked on the moon in space suits with cooling systems which protected them from the uninhabitable ravages of outer space. In 1987 the United Nations Montreal Protocol is established to protect the earth's ozone layer. This Protocol establishes multi-national cooperation to phase out his use of stratospheric ozone depleting substances, like the chlorofluorocarbon or CFC refrigerants used in a huge number of refrigeration and air conditioning systems.

Improvements are still being made in the industry. High efficient environmentally friendly air conditioners are the current rage. Air conditioning has gone from a curiosity, to a manufacturing tool to a necessity which is used in nearly every human endeavor. Because of air conditioning death rates have dropped, and economic activity during the summer months has soared. Working conditions have improved greatly along with productivity and worker satisfaction. Migration to the South increased and helped to create huge cities and suburbs where once there had been small stagnant sweltering cities. Refrigeration has helped in space exploration from the early walks on the moon to the sophisticated system on the Mir space station. Refrigeration has lead man forward to possibilities of which he had previously only dreamed.

TYPE OF AIR CONDITIONER USING CUSTOMERS

TYPES OF VEHICLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Samsung	75	36.42
LG Electronics	80	38.83
Voltas Tata	20	9.70
Onida	19	9.22
Others	12	5.83
Total	**206**	**100**

TABLE NO 1

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

It is found from the table that 38.83% of the customers own LG Air Conditioner and least use of the Air Conditioner is Onida and Voltas Tata 9.70%. So it is very clear that the LG Air Conditioner customers are majority.

HOW MANY YEARS OF USING

YEARS OF USING	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
a. Less than 1 year	70	33.98
b. 1 to 2 years	90	43.69
c. 3 to 5 years	30	14.56
d. More than 5 years	16	7.77
Total	**206**	**100**

TABLE NO 2

It is understood from the table that 43.69% of customer have been using the Air Conditioners from 1 to 2 years. So the majority of the Air Conditioners users belong to from 1 year to 2 years.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND EXPECTATION

Customer satisfaction has been a popular topic in marketing practice and academic research since Cardozo's (1965)[2] initial study of customer effort, expectations and satisfaction. Despite many attempts to measure and explain customer satisfaction, there still does not appear to be a consensus regarding its definition (Giese and Cote, 2000). Customer satisfaction is typically defined as a post consumption evaluative judgment concerning a specific product or service. The most widely accepted conceptualization of the customer satisfaction concept is the expectancy disconfirmation theory (McQuitty, Finn and Wiley, 2000)[5]. The theory was developed by Oliver[6], who proposed that satisfaction level is a result of the difference between expected and perceived performance. Satisfaction (positive disconfirmation) occurs when product or service is better than expected. On the other hand, a performance worse than expected results is dissatisfaction (negative disconfirmation).Studies show that customer satisfaction may have direct and indirect impact on business results. Luo and Homburg (2007)[7] concluded that customer satisfaction positively affects business profitability. The majority of studies have investigated the relationship with customer behavior patterns (Olorunniwo et al., 2006)[8] According to these findings, customer satisfaction increases customer loyalty, influences repurchase intentions and leads to positive word-of-mouth.

MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Customer satisfaction has been studied from the perspective of the individual customer and what drives their satisfaction Oliver and Swan (1989)[25] as well as from an industry-wide perspective to compare customer satisfaction across firms and industries Mittal and Kamakura (2001)[26], In attempting to measure customer satisfaction, it is possible that attributes can have different satisfaction implications for different consumer and market segments-the usage context, segment population, and environment can influence satisfaction and product use Anderson and Mittal(2000)[30]. It is clear, then, that market and consumer segments should be important factors to consider when measuring customer satisfaction and its implications. Garbarino and Johnson (1999)[31] did segment in the customer base in their study of satisfaction

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

where they analyzed the different role played by satisfaction between low relational and high relational customers.

CUSTOMER AWARENESS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PURCHASE DECISION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OFAIR CONDITIONERS

49.03% of the customers say TV advertisement is excellent.48.54% of customers say that print media advertisement is popular and it creates customer's awareness Excellent. Outdoor advertisement is popular, 60.68% of the customers say that it creates customers awareness Excellent. It is found out from the study that window display is also popular, 66.02% of the customers create awareness Excellent.69.42% of the customers said brand image for Different Types of Air Conditioners is excellent. It was found out that the exterior display perform well, 40.29% of the customers said it creates awareness Excellent. It is understood from the table that 69.42% of customers are excellent of brand image of Different Types of Air Conditioners in Chennai. So the majority of the Customers know the Brand Image of Different Types of Air Conditioners43.69% of customer have been Using Different Types of Air Conditioners 1 to 2 years in Chennai It reveals that 36.90% of customers collected information about Different Types of Air Conditioners from their friends. It is found that 25.07% of customers are influenced by the various models of the Different Types of Air Conditioners.**i**t is found that 33.20% of the customers are expecting good services from the authorized dealers of the Different Types of Air Conditioners. It is found that 37.90% of the customers like full cash payment system.

4. CONCLUSION

In general the present marketing strategy followed by the Different Types of air Conditioner dealers is successful to a great extent in satisfying the customer of different categories.
Today, satisfaction is considered to be among the greatest strengths of a company and the brand image is very important. It is what customers expect, if they expect at all. Brand image is built with the Brand image, name and logo all consistently speaking about the Different Types of Air Conditioners. However, the dealers should pay immediate attention to create awareness and meet the expectation of quality services of the customers. Based on the study the major conclusions drawn by the researcher are set out below: Price is an important factor that draws customers towards models which are accepted as good.TV advertisement creates an excellent awareness among the customers. Most of the customers belong to degree level. Majority of the customers working as private employee. Customers of middle class family group use of Different Types of Air Conditioners. Spending power among customers is more as they are ready to pay cash fully. Customers are overall satisfied with price, model, guarantee and maintenance cost of the Different Types of Air Conditioners. Dealers should attend the compliant immediately from the customers. High level of expectation of customers is the availability of spare parts in the show room. Mostly customers agreed the quick services of the company and also extending the service hours for the benefits of the customers.

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ISSN:0971-1260
Vol-22-Issue-4-October-December-2019

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