

THE EFFECT OF CUSTOMER ORIENTATION ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND PURCHASE INTENTION: A CASE STUDY OF AUTOMOBILE SERVICE IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

The automobile has been the most booming in India for decades. Indian automobile industry spread globally, it has been an importance source of the country's economy. The purpose of this study is to explore customer orientation of a selected automobile company in India and also indicated the level of satisfaction that the customer perceives from the automobile services qualities. The current study extended customer orientation of service employee model (COSE) for automobile services. 384 questionnaires were collected online from customers of dealers of a selected automobile company in India. This study found that customer orientation are the key sources of customer satisfaction and the satisfied customer leads to repurchase the product from the service provider. This study confirmed the impact of customer orientation on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.787$), customer satisfaction on repurchases intention ($\beta = 0.673$) and customer orientation has positive impact on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.806$). The current study found that the direct effect of customer orientation on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.806$) is stronger than the direct effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.787$). Furthermore, the company should focus technical skill and ability to read and understand customer to achieve customer satisfaction while extending technical skill and ability to deliver service for enhancing repurchase intention.

Keyword: Customer Orientation, Customer Satisfaction, Repurchase intention, automobile industry

Introduction

India has prospered in technological fields, such as the automobile industry. Indian automobile industry spread globally, therefore; a lot of profit is coming from overseas. According to Jadhao & Kedar (2016), Indian auto industry is one of the largest automobile industries in the world while gross domestic product (GDP) increase by 7.1 percent in fiscal year 2014-15. The automobile industry is influence by the two-wheeler segment, which is over 76 percent of total vehicles manufactured in India. Sinha (2017). The automobile dealers offer service includes speed-O-service, online service, door step service (DSS), 24x7 road side assistance, and quick repair.

Consumer orientation is key to achieve business goals in automobile industry. Consumer orientation emphasizes on understanding consumers' real needs and satisfying them better than competitors. Customer orientation has a direct impact on the company and salesperson performance. A company market has two primary dimensions one is customer orientation which is focused on the needs and wants of the customers, and another one is competitive orientation, which emphasizes a focus on competitive threats (Cross et al., 2007).

According to Wang & Chen (2012), individual has emotions while customer satisfaction impact on customer emotions. Therefore, emotions can be positive or negative. Positive emotions make customer pleasure

and lead repurchase intention while negative emotions mean negative feeling which may lead customers to switch the organization. According to Kaura, (2013,) customer satisfaction indicated the firm ability to make a profit because customer satisfaction enhances customer loyalty as well as repurchase intention since loyal customer prone to make long term relationship which is beneficial for organization.

According to Hanzae et al., (2011) previous researches focus on examining the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction while limited research studied the role of customer orientation applying customer orientation of service employee model in automobile service. Therefore, this research aims to explore the effect of customer orientation on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention of the selected automobile company in India. This study also intend to indicate the level of customer orientation, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention of the select company. This study contributes to extend customer orientation of service employee model (COSE) in automobile service. The current study provides empirical evidence of the effect of customer orientation of the after sales service on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. This study also propose managerial implication to improve after sales service to improve customer outcome.

Literature review

Customer orientation

Hennig-Thurau (2004) proposed customer orientation of service employee (COSE). This model influences service firm success. COSE has four dimensions which are the impact on employee behavior for extending customer orientation way.

The four dimensions are 1) technical skill, 2) social skill, 3) motivation, 4) decision-making authority. Technical skills refer to technical knowledge that fulfills customer needs during the personal interaction process. Social skill focuses on the service employee's ability to take the customer's perspective during interactions, visible, emotion, and conative. Motivation refer to customers motivated by employee's positive behavior. The employee's self- perception of being able to behave in a customer-oriented way. The last dimension is self-perceived decision-making authority which emerges when employee perceived authority to decide on an issue that concerns customer interest and needs. This dimension enables employee-friendly behavior and competent the way into actual behavior (Hennig-Thurau, 2004)

In addition, Donovan et al. (2001) developed a customer orientation scale appropriate for the service industry. This scale, which was used in the current study consists of the following four facets: 1.) Pamper: need to the customer pamper, to make customers feel special; 2.) Read: need to read customer, understand customer desire; 3.) Deliver: need to deliver, the employee should deliver the performance in promise time, which make customer satisfy; 4.) Personal relationship: need for a personal relationship, employees get to connect with customers on a personal level.

Llonch & Lopez, (2015) suggested to apply 'fit' theory to study customer satisfaction in relation to customer orientation. 'Fit' theory defined, which employee is fit for the job. It also includes whether the employee is suitable for the organization environment. It focuses on finding the right person who can equivalent the goal between the organization and an individual which predicts the long-term relationship between customer orientation and outcomes. This would lead the firm to have a good relationship with the customer. Consequently, customer orientation would increase customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction

Oliver (1980, 1997) introduced disconfirmation of expectation paradigm. This paradigm is a customer satisfaction concept that measure how products or services provider meet customer expectations (Huang, 2015). Thus, customer expectation and ability of serve customer are essential in automobile service business.

According to Kopalle & Lehmann, (2001), previous authors assumed that expectation is based on information, such as advertisement. High expectation increase satisfaction level and lower expectations decrease satisfaction level. Decrease expectations might increase future satisfaction. For example, customer hopes to get an offer from automobile company but customer expects to be rejected. Consequently, the result will be potential satisfaction.

Repurchase intention

According to Miniard & Cohen, (1981), Fishbein introduced the model for the prediction and explanation of specific behaviors. This model has two major factors which are a personal or attitudinal and social or normative factors, which influences in attempting to explain the formation of behavioral intention. Thus, this would explain how antecedents enhance repurchase intention of automobile service.

Repurchase intention is an individual judgment of customer, while perceived product performance fulfill customer expectation, then customer feel satisfied and want to purchase the product again from a certain organization (Ariffin et al., 2016).

A recent study shown that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repurchase intention (Balla et al., 2015). The study focus on automotive customers in Sudan. A total of 500 questionnaires were distributed randomly and the overall response rate was 63%. The finding of this research asserted that customer satisfaction has a significant positive relationship with repurchase intention (Balla et al., 2015). According to Nilsson et al., (2001) customer orientation has positive impact on customer satisfaction. The study focused on automotive companies, i.e. Maruti, Udyog, Hyundai Motor Ltd, Tata Motor Ltd. Data was collected from multiple respondents, i.e., executive's employees and customer. The finding of the research asserted that customer orientation has positive impact on customer satisfaction. Jyoti et al., (2012)

Hypotheses development

Customer orientation skill is very important for the organization and every employee needs customer orientation skill because there is high contact between employee and customer. As a result of the attitude of servicing, employee make a great influence on customer satisfaction (Li et al., 2019). Consistently, Customer orientation an important and positive predictor of service worker performance and it impacts customer satisfaction (Tseng, 2019). Therefore, this study proposed

Hypothesis 1: Customer orientation has a positive impact on customer satisfaction.

According to Hellier et al., (2003), customer satisfaction strongly has positive impact on repurchase intention. Customer satisfaction is a very important factor and it is the only one of the many variables that can influence repurchase intention. Satisfaction leads to increase repurchase and satisfaction positively associated with repurchase intention (Vigripat & Chan, 2007). Satisfaction is a positive affective reaction to an outcome of a prior experience. Satisfaction is antecedents of consumer repurchase intention therefore increase satisfaction would increases repurchase intention (Şahin et al., 2012). Therefore, this study proposed

Hypothesis 2: Customer satisfaction has a positive impact on repurchase intension.

In addition, according Kim and Ok (2010), they study on 299 respondents of full-service restaurants in a Midwestern state of the United States. They confirm that customer orientation has positive impact on repurchase intention. According to Jones et al., (2000) satisfaction is a judgment based on all previous experiences with organization because of customer orientation employees can understand customer real needs of customers.

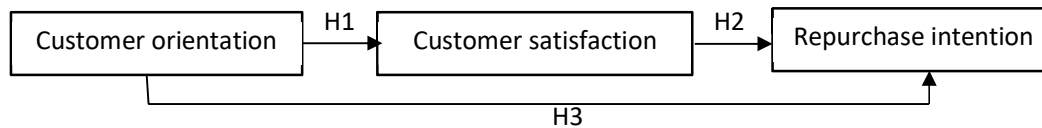
Conceptually, higher levels of core-service satisfaction reduce customer switching service behavior. Therefore, this study proposed.

Hypothesis 3: Customer orientation has a positive impact on repurchase intention.

Conceptual framework:

The study explores the effect of customer orientation on customer satisfaction and on repurchase intention. This study also examine the impact of customer satisfaction on repurchase intention.

Figure 1 Research Model



Methods

Subjects

This study randomly distributed 1,000 online questionnaires to the customers of the selected automobile company. The study collected the data from 384 respondents who are the customer of a selected automobile company in India. According to Cochran (1963) in determining the sample size unknown population number, the sample size of 384 with 95% level of precision should be adequate for the analysis. Among the total number of respondents, 58.6% of them are male and 41.4% of respondents are female. Most of respondents (50.5%) are between the ages of 31-45 years. Majority of them (55.2%) are the full-time employee. Similarly, most of them (53.9%) obtained master degree. Most of respondents (47.7%) earn INR 50,000-69,999 monthly. The majority of respondents (70.8%) have driving experience between 3 to 6 years. Among them, 95.3% of respondents has their own car. Likewise, most customers prefer mid-size cars (66.9%). Most of them (69.3%) has been owned the car for three to seven years. Most respondents (95.6%) intend to buy the same auto brand again. Most of respondents (60.7%) visit selected automobile service twice a year.

Table 1 : Sample characteristics

		Frequency	%			Frequency	%
Gender	Female	159	41	Vehicle Ownership	No	18	5
	Male	225	59		Yes	366	95
Age	18-25 Years Old	14	4	Auto Model	Economy/Compact	30	8
	26-30 Years Old	148	39		Mid-size car	257	67
	31-45 Years Old	194	51		SUV car/Vans	93	24
	45 Years Above	28	7		truck	4	1
Occupation	Business owner	111	29	Vehicle Ownership duration	< 3 years	96	25
	Full-time Employee	212	55		> 8 years	22	6
	Part-time Employee	29	8	3 - 7 years	266	69	
	Retired Person	15	4	Repurchase	No	17	4
	Student	17	4		Yes	367	96

Table 1 : Sample characteristics (continue)

		Frequency	%			Frequency	%
Education	Graduate	207	54	Current	Ashoke Laylend	6	2
	< Undergraduate	8	2	Brand	Eicher Motors	2	1
					Hidustan Motor		
	Postgraduate	15	4		LTD	9	2
	Undergraduate	154	40		Honda Motors	4	1
Income					Mahindra &		
	>= 100,000 rs	2	1		Mahindra	5	1
	30,000 - 49,999 rs	132	34		Maruti Suzuki	3	1
	50,000 - 69,999 rs	183	48		Tata motor limited	355	92
	70,000 - 99,999 rs	29	8	Frequency of the dealer visit	once a year	139	36
< 30,000 rs	38	10	more		12	3	
Driving	> 6 years	24	6		twice a year	233	61
Experience	< 2 years	88	23				
	3 - 6 years	272	71				

Measurement items

The measurement items of four dimensions of customer orientation include 8 items For Pamper, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Donovan & Hocutt, (2001). “They make me feel so special”, “they give importance to my problem”.

For read customer’s needs, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Donovan & Hocutt, (2001) “they talk with me for understand my need”, “employee generally knows what I want before I ask”.

For deliver, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Donovan & Hocutt, (2001). “The service provider delivers the service on time”, “they feel us safe because they have confidence on their service”.

For personal relationship, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Donovan & Hocutt, (2001). “The service provider interacted with me personally”, “they know my name”.

This study also includes items from Hennig-Thurau (2004) that include four dimensions: technical skill, social skill, motivation, decision-making authority.

The measurement items of four dimensions of customer orientation of service employees (COSE) include 9 items.

For Technical skills, The 3 measurement items were adopted from Hennig-Thurau (2004). “Tata motors staffs have a high level of knowledge”, “Tata motors staffs are experts in their job”, and “Tata motors staffs are highly competent”.

For Social skills, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Hennig-Thurau (2004). “Tata motors staffs are able to consider their customers’ perspective”, and “Tata motors staffs know how to treat a customer well”.

For Motivation, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Hennig-Thurau (2004). “Tata motors staffs show strong commitment to their job” and “Tata motors staffs do their best to fulfill their customers’ needs”.

For Decision-making authority, The 2 measurement items were adopted from Hennig-Thurau (2004). “Tata motors staffs are allowed to decide autonomously in customer matters” and “Tata motors staffs have appropriate room for maneuver in solving customer problems”

For customer satisfaction, the four measurement items were adopted from Pizam & Ellis, (1999). The items are “I am satisfy on performance of quality and management system”, “I get the facility and service, which are Hours of operation, Employee appearance, and the helpful attitude of employees”, “I am satisfied with the service experience”.

For repurchase intention, the six measurement items were adopted from Dhanabalan et al. (2018). It includes, “The service provider delivery within the time”, “the service provider service our car as soon as possible and along with low price”, “the dealership give me pick up and drop service”, “the dealership is reliable for me because when I need help they give me responded quickly”, “ I would like to purchase the car from certain company”.

Validity and reliability test

Confirmation factor analysis was conducted to check validity. Revised model of confirmatory factor analysis has P-value of all items that are statically significant. Some of the items are removed from the original model for low loadings. GFI, ILLI, and CFI has the value above 0.9 (GFI = 0.91, TLI=0.93, CFI=0.93) confirming model fit based on Hu and Bentler (1999). Meanwhile, RMSEA is 0.045 which is less than 0.08 confirming reasonable fit based on MacCullum, Browne, and Sugawara (1996).

Factor loadings of customer satisfaction are above 0.60 while those of customer orientation and repurchase intention are above 0.5. Except, one item of customer orientation and repurchase intention has 0.4 loading but still should be kept in the model. Hence, all three variables confirm validity Nunnally and Bernstein, (1994). The study found that all variables have sufficient convergent validity and reliability. In addition, the composite reliability and Cronbach’s alpha of variables exceeded 0.7, showing internal consistency for reliability. This study employed Cronbach’s Alpha to test the internal consistency of measurement items of each variable. All variables have Cronbach’s Alpha value above 0.7 which reflected that all variables have high internal consistency.

Table 2: Validity and reliability test

Variables	Loadings	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability	Number of Items
Customer orientation	0.41 - 0.64	0.886	0.887	17
Customer satisfaction	0.60 - 0.78	0.691	0.797	4
Repurchase intention	0.46 - 0.72	0.689	0.709	4

Findings

The findings of hypothesis 1 suggested that customer orientation has positive impact on customer satisfaction ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.787$). This study also confirmed hypothesis 2 that customer satisfaction has positive impacts on repurchase intention ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.673$). In addition, this study also confirmed hypothesis 3 that customer orientation has positive impact on repurchase intention ($p = 0.000$, $\beta = 0.806$). Thus, all three hypotheses are supported.

Table 3: Hypothesis 1 coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.786	.132		5.974	.000
1 Customer Orientation	.787	.038	.730	20.879	.000

a. dependent variable: Customer satisfaction

Table 4: Hypothesis 2 coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.145	.129		8.859	.000
1 Customer Satisfaction	.673	.037	.686	18.420	.000

a. dependent variable: Repurchase intention

Table 5: Hypothesis 3 coefficient

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.713	.122		5.841	.000
1 Customer Orientation	.806	.035	.763	23.063	.000

a. dependent variable: Repurchase intention

For the correlation analysis as shown in table 6, all dimensions of customer orientation are significantly correlated to customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. This study found that technical skill of customer orientation has the highest correlation with customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (0.607, 0.658) respectively compared to other dimensions of customer orientation. Meanwhile, pamper has the least correlation with customer satisfaction and repurchase intention (0.394, 0.403) compared to other dimensions of customer orientation

Table 6: Correlation among dimensions of customer orientation, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention

	Pamper	Read	Deliver	Personal	Technical	Social	Motivation	Decision
Customer satisfaction	.394**	.579**	.544**	.492**	.607**	.539**	.504**	.419**
Repurchase intention	.403**	.577**	.616**	.550**	.658**	.576**	.536**	.509**

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Discussion and Conclusion

This study explores the impact of customer orientation on customer satisfaction and repurchase intention as well as the impact on customer satisfaction on repurchase intention. This study confirmed the impact of customer orientation on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.787$). This finding is consistent with Tseng (2019) which suggested that trying to help the customers make purchase decisions that will satisfy customer needs. Customer orientation has significant effects on customers' satisfaction with the service worker, financial service worker etiquette could have a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Also, it is consistent with the finding of Li et al. (2019) In order to meet customer expectation, the attitude of service employees has a great influence on customer satisfaction, service delivery, and the needs of customers. Customer orientation also improve service quality of the company (Wang, et al, 2019)

Similarly, this study confirmed the impact of customer satisfaction on repurchases intention ($\beta = 0.673$). This finding is consistent with the research result of Hellier et al., (2003) which concluded that customer satisfaction with a service is a major factor. Because of customer satisfaction, customers return to the same service provider. Customer satisfaction is only one of the many variables that can impact customer repurchase intention. Also, it is consistent with the finding of Elbeltagi & Agag, (2016) found satisfaction and attitude to be major antecedents of customer repurchase intention.

In addition, this study found that customer orientation has positive impact on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.0806$). The finding is consistent with Kim & Ok (2010) that confirm the impact of customer orientation on repurchase intention. Furthermore, this study found that the direct effect of customer orientation on repurchase intention ($\beta = 0.806$) is stronger than the direct effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.787$). Thus, the company should develop strategy to retain current customer so that they will repurchase product or revisiting services of the automobile company. Meanwhile, the automobile company should strictly apply customer orientation concept to improve the business performance as it has very strong impact on customer satisfaction.

In addition, this study found that technical skill has the highest correlation with customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Thus, the company should ensure that the service staffs are strongly knowledgeable about the automobile services and have high competent to serve the customers. In contrast, pamper has the least correlation with customer satisfaction and repurchase intention. Thus, the company should focus on other dimensions of customer orientation to improve customer outcome.

Managerial Implication

The automobile should continue to gives importance to customer problem, recognize customer want before ask as well as paying close attention the customers which makes the customer very special and customer feel like he or she is only one customer. So that the automobile can achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the company should train the staff to be an expert in automobile service to achieve a higher level of customer satisfaction. The automobile in India should also have focus on keeping securely customer personal information, improving waiting lounge, adequate transportation service (e.g. pickup, drop up, and free rental car). Therefore, the application of customer orientation would enhance customer satisfaction and repurchase intention which will lead to advancement of overall corporate performance.

Limitation and recommendations for future research

The current research focus on customer orientation of the after-sales service of a selected automobile company in India. The future research should include service quality and service recovery in the analysis so that

the study can identify the importance dimensions of service quality in automobile business. The study might adopt Auto SERVQUAL in the future research. Further research should also include brand relationship and brand commitment in the analysis.

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