Chapter - I

Introduction and design of the study

“Customer satisfaction lives at the intersection of reality and expectations.”

Ron Muns

1.1 Introduction

Automobile industry is one of the fastest growing industries of the world. The automobile industry in India, the tenth largest in the world with an annual production of approximately two million units, is expected to become one of the major global automotive industries in the coming years. A number of domestic companies produce automobiles in India and the growing presence of multinational investment, too, has led to an increase in overall growth. Following the economic reforms of 1991 the Indian automotive industry has demonstrated sustained growth as a result of increased competitiveness and relaxed restrictions. The monthly sales of passenger cars in India has exceeded one crore units. The automotive industry directly and indirectly employs about 3.1 per cent of India’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Indian automobile industry has grown tremendously since 1898, a time when a car had touched Indian streets for the first time. At present it holds a promising tenth position in the entire world holding the second place in two wheelers and the fourth place in commercial vehicles. Withstanding a growth rate of eighteen per cent annum and an annual production of more than two million units, it may not be an exaggeration to say that this industry in the coming years will soon touch a figure of ten million units per year.

Economic liberalisation, increase in per capita income, various tax relief policies, easy accessibility of finance, launch of new models and exciting discount offers made by dealers all together have resulted in the emergence of a stupendous Indian automobile industry.

A number of domestic companies produce automobiles in India and the growing presence of multinational investment, too, has led to an increase in overall growth. The monthly sales of passenger cars in India exceed one crore units.
It is Maruti Suzuki that brought revolution in Indian automobile industry. Maruti Suzuki entered the market in 1983 at a time when scooters were in keen demand and motorcycles were rare. It took a lot of patience and hard work to develop the market. Today almost every major car maker of the world is present in India where Maruti Suzuki is the market leader with over fifty per cent market share. Maruti Suzuki has achieved this as a result of its service quality and customer satisfaction.

A satisfied customer is the best advertisement. And a prospect who is being satisfied will be turning into a customer of a product or service. Whatever it may be, business or industry, it can sustain only with satisfied customers in the long run.

Customer satisfaction is a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from a perceived performance in relation to his or her expectation. If performance falls short of expectations, a consumer is dissatisfied. If performance matches expectations of a customer, he is satisfied. If performance exceeds the expectations of a customer, he is highly satisfied or delighted.

The quality improvement by manufacturers and service providers has become extremely a preferred objective in today’s competitive markets. Hence, the measurement and management of service quality is considered the essential issue for the sustenance and growth of Service Company. The application of superior service quality by service providers is increasingly widespread to seek out competitive advantages and experience higher academic returns. It has been widely accepted that the customer assessment of service quality is increasingly important for service providers to enhance business performance, make core companies stronger and position themselves more strategically in the market

place. In other words, organisations have to afford the opportunity to explore customers’ expectations of service quality and their perceptions of its actual service performance.

Knowledge about how customers integrate their perceptions of service as well as how these perceptions lead to customer satisfaction enables organisations to manage the resources on important fields which have a direct influence on their customers’ expectations, and the perceptions of the actual performance lead to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a service. It has been shown that customer satisfaction depends on how well perceived performance matches or exceeds customers’ expectations of service. Unsatisfied customers have a tendency to generate a negative word-of-mouth and express their negative feelings to other customers. Therefore, the organisations have to close the gap between expectations and perceptions of customers and attempt to keep a long-term relationship with them.

Despite the importance of measuring service quality in today’s marketplace, little empirical research has been conducted in the context of car service agencies. Therefore, the present study aim at investigating the extent to which various dimensions of service quality permeate car agencies as well as gaining insight into differences between expectations and perceptions of customers.

This study attempts to study customer expectations, perceptions and satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The current scenario due to the emergence of globalisation and liberalisation is a stiff competition among the variety of car industries which are focusing attention on capturing Indian markets. Cars, though considered “luxury ones”, now occupy an important


part of life and has become a necessity. Coimbatore district, which is selected for the study, is one of the main growing markets for car manufacturers. People who were not ready for spend their money on luxuries have now changed their attitude that yesterday’s luxuries are today’s necessities. To be a successful marketer it is absolutely essential to read the minds, perceptions and satisfaction of prospective owners of cars.

In the passenger car industry, the psychological satisfaction of a car user becomes relevant not only with respect to the attributes he demands in a car but also, with respect to his post-complaint expectations from the company. This implies that it is important for the companies to identify the aspect of the performance of the product and the company which will satisfy the customer psychologically. A car user, who rates a new technology as the most sought-after attribute in a car, may want to be identified as an innovator or risk-seeker. The company should keep this in mind while judging a customer’s post-purchase and post-complaint satisfaction. Sometimes customers face a few problems like inconvenience in the physical structure of a car, an improper after-sales-service and so on. In addition, the due weightage which is given by the government for the growth of passenger car industry and the involvement of consumers in the selection of a particular brand of a car have made the researcher undertake a study on customer expectations, perceptions and satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki - manufacturers of cars like Maruti 800, Alto, WagonR, Eeco, Swift, SX4 etc. - in Coimbatore district. The study is restricted to Coimbatore district, in Tamil Nadu. In this connection, the following specific questions were researched and framed:

1. What are the expectations a customer has on the service quality of Maruti Suzuki to become satisfied?
2. What are the perceptions a customer has on the service quality of Maruti Suzuki?
3. What are the differences between expectations and perceptions (gap 5 in the SERVQUAL-model)?

Hence the present study has been carried out to examine the above enquiries and offer solutions.
1.3 Significance of the study

Nowadays, a car has become a necessity and forms a part of life even for the majority of middle-class people. The study is conducted in Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu, which is economically the richest district and famous for textile industries, pump industries, information technology related companies and so on. Due to the increasing purchasing power, the people of Coimbatore district have started buying cars for business, personal use, prestige or social status. The district is a potential market for all consumer products and services. A knowledge of the buying behaviour of different market segments helps a seller to select their target segment and evolve suitable marketing strategies to increase sales. The present study focuses on the customers of Maruti Suzuki. Understanding their expectations, perceptions and satisfaction will help manufacturers to improve the physical attributes of cars and also service quality. Manufacturers may be able to adopt new strategies which help not only to attract new customers but also to maintain the loyalty of an existing customer, as in the present competitive scenario customers are prepared to choose their car not only on the basis of their needs but also on the basis of personal care shown by manufacturers while servicing their car. Many studies have been conducted on customer satisfaction in the automobile industry. However, a study on the expectations, perceptions and customer satisfaction about service quality has not been carried out so far. So, the present study entitled “Customer Expectations, Perceptions and Satisfaction in the Service Quality of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore District” has been taken up.

1.4 Objectives

The study has been carried out with the following objectives:

1. To study the socio-economic profile of the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

2. To study the expectations and perceptions of the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district with regard to service quality.

3. To find out the gap between expectations and perceptions (gap five in the SERVQUAL-model).
4. To study the level of satisfaction of the customers in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

5. To analyse the trend and growth pattern of Indian automobile industry.

6. To study the problems faced by the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

7. To suggest remedies to the problems faced by the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

1.5 Hypotheses

In the light of the objectives, the following hypotheses have been framed to find out the relationship between the independent variables such as sex, age, marital status, the level of education, the nature of occupation, family status, family size, and the annual income of the family, and the dependent variables such as overall service quality and the level of satisfaction.

1. There exists a significant association between the attributes namely customer’s personal characters such as gender, age, education, occupation, monthly household income, and marital status, and the level of satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki.

2. There exists a significant difference in the overall mean attitude score in the satisfaction of the service quality of Maruti Suzuki in dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.

3. There exists a significant function which discriminates between the two groups of customers of Maruti Suzuki: those with lower satisfaction and those with higher satisfaction, and identifies the substantially important variables to discriminate the two groups of customers of Maruti Suzuki.

4. There is no significant difference between the fuel type used by the respondents and the level of satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki.

5. There is no significant difference between the number of kilometres run per month by the respondents and the level of satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki.

6. There is no significant difference in the mean ranks for a customer’s level of satisfaction on the performance of sales person of Maruti Suzuki.
1.6 Concepts and Definitions

1.6.1 Customer

A “customer” (also known as a client, buyer, or purchaser) is usually used to refer to a current or potential buyer or user of the products of an individual or organisation called a supplier, a seller or a vendor. This is typically through purchasing or renting goods or services. However, in certain contexts, the term “customer” also includes by extension any entity that uses or experiences the services of another. A customer may also be a viewer of the product or service that is being sold despite deciding not to buy them. The general distinction between a customer and a client is that a customer purchases products, whereas a client purchases services.

1.6.2 Service

Services are deeds, processes and performances.\(^8\) Broadly speaking, services include all economic activities whose output is not a physical product or construction is generally consumed at the time it is produced and provides added value in forms (convenience, amusement, timeliness, comfort or health) that are essentially intangible concerns of its first purchaser.\(^9\) Service has been entering every part of life from the most essential demands (such as eating, sleeping) to other entertainment needs (such as sport, travelling, cooking, and telecommunication). In other words, banks, hotels, restaurants, and beauty salons are defined as being service-based business. Service is an activity that impacts all parts of one’s life. Since birth the lives of people have relied on services (such as hospital service, education service, retail service etc.). In addition to that, nowadays a wide range of products heavily rely on their services to acquire competitive advantages. For instance, a television buyer is now buying not only tangible components of a television receiver set but also other service benefits like free delivery and installation, twenty four hour technical support, etc.\(^{10}\)

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Another definition of service is that a service is any activity or benefit that one party offers to another which is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its product may or may not be tied to a physical product. These modern marketers view services as a business that produces no tangible product.

1.6.3 Customer service

Customer service is the provision of service to customers before, during and after a purchase. “Customer service is a series of activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction—that is, the feeling that a product or service has met the customer expectation”.[11]

Customer service is a set of behaviours that a business undertakes during its interaction with its customers: the degree of assistance and courtesy granted to those who patronise the organisation; anticipation and identification of customers' needs and expectations, and necessary action for positive customer satisfaction. It also consists of codes of ethics, etiquette, and behaviour courtesy and so on.

1.6.4 Value-added services

Value-added service means giving customers more than their expectations. Companies have been offering value-added services in many product areas, either by the way of additional attractive features or delivery mechanisms. Most of these value-added features have been worked out, based on today's technology empowerments and changes in the life styles of users. Value-added services to customers have gained importance in the recent period, particularly, in the wake of a rapid adoption of technology by car sellers.

1.6.5 Customer expectation

Customer expectation may be defined as the ideas and feelings that a customer has about a product or service, based on what he or she needs from it and expects it to do. Customer expectation can be created by previous experience, advertising, what other people say about it, an awareness of competitors’ products, and a brand image. If customer expectations are met, then it results in customer satisfaction.

1.6.6 Customer perception

Customer perception is defined as the process by which an individual selects, organises, and interprets stimuli into a meaningful and coherent picture of the world. Perception has strategy implications for marketers because customers make decisions based on what they perceive rather than on the basis of objective reality. It is described as "how we see the world around us." Two individuals may be exposed to the same stimuli under the same apparent conditions, but how each person recognises, selects, organises, and interprets these stimuli is a highly individual process based on each person's own needs, values, and expectations.

1.6.7 Customer satisfaction

Definitions of customer satisfaction have been widely discussed from the view of many researchers and organisations who increasingly desire to measure it. The conceptualisation of satisfaction is based on the customer’s experience of both contact with the organisation (the moment of truth) and personal outcomes. According to these researchers, satisfaction can be experienced in a variety of situations and connected to both goods and services. To another extent, satisfactions can be defined as a “highly personal assessment” that is greatly influenced by “individual expectations”.  

This definition views “individual” element as powerful force to create satisfaction. Likewise, many researchers conceptualise customer satisfaction as an individual’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance (or outcome) in relation to his or her expectations.

Whereas Boulding et al. and Yi and La classify satisfaction into two general conceptualisations: transaction-specific satisfaction and cumulative satisfaction. Transaction-

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specific satisfaction is a customer’s evaluation of his or her experience and reactions to a particular service encounter. Cumulative satisfaction refers to the customer’s overall evaluation of the consumption experience to date.\(^\text{17}\)

Because customer satisfaction is a highly variable assessment individuals on the basis of their experiences with specific features of products and services they receive, it makes sense for servicing organisations to involve customer satisfaction measurement as their meaningful benchmark for development.

1.6.8 Service quality

Service quality was defined differently by researchers. Service quality may be defined as ‘the consumer’s overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organisation and its services’. Therefore, service quality is the key of survival to all servicing companies.\(^\text{18}\) It is viewed as a form of attitude representing a long-run overall evaluation. Maintaining service quality at certain level and improving service quality must be life-time efforts to those companies who desire life-time prosperity in customers’ heart.\(^\text{19}\)

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry defined service quality as “a function of differences between expectation and performance along quality dimensions.”\(^\text{20}\) Likewise, Roest and Pieters\(^\text{21}\) held the same view that service quality was a relativistic and cognitive discrepancy between experience-based norms and performances concerning service benefits.

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1.6.9 Link between service quality and customer satisfaction

Researchers have realised the interrelated values of service quality and customer satisfaction. It is considered that service quality and customer satisfaction “share a close relationship”. Service quality is the key to measure user satisfaction. It has identified several factors that precede customer satisfaction. They argued that there were five antecedents that contributed to satisfaction: clear understanding of customer needs and expectations, perceived value, service quality, internal satisfaction and complaint management. This research showed that service quality is one major attribute of satisfaction. It is that service quality is a casual antecedent of customer satisfaction, due to the fact that service quality is viewed at transactional level and satisfaction is viewed as an attitude. Service quality divisions are related to overall service quality and or customer satisfaction. It is expressed that satisfaction is a consequence of service quality.

To another extent, other researchers suggest that service quality and customer satisfaction are separate and distinct constructs. They argue that service quality has specific dimensions judgments while customer satisfaction can be resulted from any dimension, whether or not it is quality related. They report that expectations for quality are based on ideals or perceptions of excellence, whereas customer satisfaction assessment comprise non-quality issues such as needs, equity, perceptions of fairness etc.

From the above concepts presented above it can be inferred that performance of service delivery can result in a level of customer satisfaction.

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1.6.10 Passenger car

An automobile, auto car, motor car or car is a wheeled motor used for transporting passengers, which also carries its own engine or motor. Most definitions of the term specify that automobiles are designed to run primarily on roads, to have seating for one to eight people, to typically have four wheels, and to be constructed principally for the transport of people rather than goods.

1.7 Description of the study area

Coimbatore district is one of the more affluent and industrially advanced districts of the State of Tamil Nadu in India. The headquarters of the district is Coimbatore city, the third largest city in Tamil Nadu, which is located approximately four hundred and ninety seven kilometres from Chennai, the State capital. It is the highest revenue yielding district in the State, next to Chennai.

Coimbatore district lies in the western part of Tamil Nadu, part of the Kongu Nadu region. The district borders with Palakkad district of Kerala in the West, Nilgiris district in the north, Erode district in the North East and East, Idukki district of Kerala in the South and Tirupur district in the south east. The district has an area of 7,649 square kilometres. The major rivers flowing through the district are Bhavani, Noyyal, Amaravathi, Siruvani and Aliyar. The Siruvani River is the main source of drinking water for Coimbatore city and is known for its taste.

The following table enlists the details of revenue divisions, taluks, firkas and revenue villages.

Table 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue division</th>
<th>Number of taluks</th>
<th>Number of zones</th>
<th>Number of firkas</th>
<th>Number of revenue villages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pollachi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>325</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Textiles are the major industry in Coimbatore district; it is one of the important textile hubs of India. Coimbatore is also called the “Manchester of South India” because it houses many textile industries. India's leading Textile Machinery Manufacturer Lakshmi Machine works Limited produces textile machinery for textile mills in India and abroad. LMW is a pride of Coimbatore. There are many electric pump manufacturing companies in and around Coimbatore, such as Deccan, CRI, Texmo, KSB, and Sharp. Coimbatore also houses some auto component manufacturing brands, such as Roots, Pricol and LGB. German auto component major Robert Bosch started their R & D facility in Coimbatore. Coimbatore also houses many Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing companies, such as Cognizant Technology Solutions and Perot Systems. The district is a home to almost 50% of the poultry population of Tamil Nadu.

1.8 Methodology and research design

The methodology and design adopted for the study was as follows:

1.8.1 Pilot study and pretesting

A pilot test was conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. It should, therefore, draw subjects from the target population and simulate the procedures and protocols that had been designated for data collection.

This study was undertaken to study the satisfaction on the various cars of Maruti Suzuki and the service provided at the authorised service centres of Maruti Suzuki. The pilot study was conducted during March 2010 by circulating questionnaires among fifty Maruti Suzuki customers. Accordingly, for the final study, the questionnaire was modified to accommodate necessary questions to collect the required information to fulfill the objectives of the study. The findings of the pilot study enabled the researcher to formulate the hypothesis and finalise the design of the study.

1.8.2 Sources of the data

Data were collected from the respondents using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was constructed with a focus on respondents’ socio-economic profile, satisfaction derived during the purchase of the vehicle and satisfaction derived after the purchase of the
vehicle. It took seventeen months for the researcher to complete the process of collection in person. As the universe of the study is large, the researcher decided to select sample respondents by adopting the Convenience Sampling Technique. The secondary data were collected from the companies’ bulletins, annual reports and websites. Further, the researcher used national and international journals in the field of management, marketing, business magazines, and business dailies, and referred to text books in marketing management, consumer behaviour and academic studies conducted in the related areas for the purpose of building a strong conceptual background including the review of literature for the study. Primary data being most significant, gathered through depth interviews, focus groups, observations and surveys. Secondary data helped the researcher to create a better comprehension of the present topic. Thus the study analysed the primary data with the rationale of the secondary data.

1.8.3 Sample

The study examined customer expectations, perceptions and satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district. A study of this nature required the selection of a suitable place. To fulfill this, the collection of primary data from the customers of Maruti Suzuki vehicles became pertinent. For this purpose, a list of customers of Maruti Suzuki residing within Coimbatore district was obtained from the authorised service stations/dealers of the Maruti Suzuki. There are six taluks in Coimbatore district. Out of these six taluks, only three taluks have Authorised Maruti Service Stations totalling nineteen. A sample of fifty respondents per service station from nineteen service stations was chosen by adopting the convenience sampling method to make the total respondents nine hundred and fifty. Eight hundred questionnaires out of nine hundred and fifty questionnaires issued were received back from the respondents, and of them only seven hundred and fifty questionnaires were found usable. A list of service station is provided in the table below:
Table -1.2  
Service stations of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.N.</th>
<th>Taluk</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type of workshop</th>
<th>Branches</th>
<th>Number of respondents selected</th>
<th>Number of respondents taken for the study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>South Ukkadam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>PN Palayam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Mettupalayam Road</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Ambal Auto</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Singanallur</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Ambal Auto</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Saibaba Colony</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Ambal Auto</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Sanganur</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Ambal Auto</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Saravanampatty</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.N.</td>
<td>Taluk</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Type of workshop</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>Number of respondents selected</td>
<td>Number of respondents taken for the study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Jai Krishna Auto sales</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Mettupalayam Road</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pollachi</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Udumalai road, Pollachi</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mettupalayam</td>
<td>ABT LTD</td>
<td>Dealer workshop</td>
<td>Coimbatore Main Road</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Emerald Auto Pvt. Ltd.</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Lakshmi Mills</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Guru Auto Garage</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Chinnampalayam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>Lotus Automobiles</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Peelamedu</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>MM Motors</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Kaundampalayam</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>South India Motors</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>SITRA</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Coimbatore</td>
<td>TDK Automobiles</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Peelamedu</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Karumathampatty</td>
<td>Sivan Motors</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Near Kongu Vellalar School</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Pollachi</td>
<td>JD &amp; Co.</td>
<td>MASS</td>
<td>Coimbatore Road</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**  
950  
750

MASS: Maruti Suzuki Authorised Service Station
1.8.4 Field work and collection of data

The field work for the study was conducted during the period between May 2010 and September 2011. Questionnaire was the major tool of data collection. Data were collected through a questionnaire at the authorised service stations of Maruti Suzuki. Before the data collection, proper rapport was established. Due care was taken to ensure accuracy, consistency and completeness of the information given by them.

1.8.5 Framework of analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were scrutinised for analysis. The data thus collected were categorised and posted in the master table. The personal views regarding expectations, perceptions and satisfaction were obtained and converted into scores using standard scaling techniques. Such scores were used to study the level of satisfaction. The views of the individual respondents regarding the different models of the cars of Maruti Suzuki, their level of satisfaction and the inconvenience, if any, were also obtained. Such subjective answers were converted into scores. Based on such scores, the order of importance of different aspects like price, quality, etc. was ascertained.

1.8.6 Statistical tools

The primary data were collected from the respondents from different areas and were sorted properly, classified, edited, tabulated in a proper format and analysed by deploying appropriate statistical tools. The following statistical tools were used:

The statistical tests were conducted at five per cent and one per cent level of significance. The following statistical tools were used:

1. Reliability analysis
2. Descriptive Analysis
3. Analysis of variance
4. Multiple regression
5. Factor analysis
6. Weighted Average score analysis
7. Friedman Rank Test

8. Discriminant analysis

9. Gap analysis, and

10. Trend Analysis.

1.8.7 Sampling techniques

For the purpose of analysis, the data were been collected from seven hundred and fifty customers from various service stations in Coimbatore district. The above said samples were selected on the basis of the convenience sampling method. All sample respondents have been finally accepted for a critical analysis and interpretation. The data were tabulated and statistically interpreted whenever and wherever needed.

1.8.8 Scaling techniques

Scale is a device by which measurement of things is possible. It is a technique used for measurement of some aspect of human behaviour by means of precise scale. But measurement is a relatively complex and demanding task, especially when it concerns abstract phenomena. Expectations, perceptions and customer satisfaction in the service quality of Maruti Suzuki involve qualitative aspects. This qualitative data were to be converted into quantitative data so that statistical tools could be employed for the purpose of analysis.

Even though there exists a large number of scaling techniques, summated scale i.e. Likert type scales were used for the present study. In a Likert scale, several degrees can be adopted, but in this present study five degrees had been used ranging from five to one. The response to various statements was scored in such a way that a response indicative of the most favourable attitude was given the highest score of five and that with the most unfavourable attitude was given the lowest score of one.

1.9 Limitations

The following limitations occurred when the research was carried out.

1. Due to the constraints of time, only a sample of seven hundred and fifty customers of Maruti Suzuki were interviewed, therefore, the data collected may not be a representative of the entire population.
2. The scope of study was restricted only to the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

3. The respondents answered the questionnaire with their level of knowledge that might not be indicative of the actual situation.

4. Not all the respondents might have answered in an unbiased manner.

1.10 Chapter scheme

The study is organised and presented in five chapters.

The first chapter is introductory in nature stating the problem, defining the scope, drafting the objectives, explaining the methodology and presenting the limitations of the study.

The second chapter reviews elaborately and presents the previous studies made in the relevant area.

The third chapter gives an overview of the car industry and analyses the trend and growth pattern of Indian automobile industry.

The fourth chapter presents analyses and interpretations relating to the data collected from the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.

The fifth chapter is the summation of findings, and it offers suggestions for improving the satisfaction of the customers of Maruti Suzuki in Coimbatore district.