Chapter VII

Summary and Conclusion

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The marketing success of any enterprise depends on its ability to create a community of satisfied customers. The experience of using the products or feeling satisfied on account of better customer services contribute consumer satisfaction. The outcome of consumer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, in turn, affects the future purchase decisions of the consumer. Thus, post purchase evaluation is considered as the beginning of the consumption process and not merely as the end of consumers’ decision making efforts. In this way, consumer satisfaction determines product technology expectations and simultaneously gives direction to the element of human interaction.

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topic in the field of consumer research. It has major implications on social and public policy issues and is helpful to policymakers, marketers and consumerists.

Consumer satisfaction is basically a mix of hardware which includes technology, product, price quality etc., and software comprising of attitude, responsiveness, deliverance, communication etc. Consumer satisfaction is important not only for the small and growing organisations but even major corporations cannot escape from the customer scrutiny. The management needs these informations about customer satisfaction in order to make some concrete product decisions.

The Indian market is highly complex and vast as there are diversities in terms of religion, customs, language etc. Although a few studies have been conducted by academic institutions and individual researchers on the isolated aspects of the buying behaviour of the Indian consumers, there is a need for a comprehensive study on the Indian Consumer Satisfaction / Dissatisfaction with regard to different products.

In a developing country like India, the auto industry plays an important role by linking the diverse cultural heritages of the country. The Indian auto industry, through its various products, provides a better transport facility in India and thereby provides the scope for the optimum utilisation of natural resources. Further, the recent economic liberalisation has created a revolution in the auto industry in general and 100 cc motor cycles in particular, by means of reduction in waiting time, ready availability, better range of models and modernised technology. This has created a better purchase atmosphere for the Indian auto consumers. Thus, the present study of CS/D among the users of 100 cc motor cycles has been planned and carried out in Madras metropolitan city and some selected semi urban centres like, Kanchipuram, Erode, Nagapattinam,
Thirunelveli and Vellore in Tamil Nadu. The main objective is to analyse the specific aspects of consumer satisfaction prevailing among the owners of 100 cc motor cycles. The present investigation examines consumer purchase preferences which forms the basis of consumer satisfaction.

The survey of literature in related field provides a scope for identifying the factors influencing consumer satisfaction. In this regard, five need areas of satisfaction have been identified as the factors contributing to consumer satisfaction. They are: i. Company Image, ii. Product Features, iii. Customer Support Service, iv. Delivery Terms and v. Product Price.

The specific objectives of the present study are:

- to identify the consumer preferences for some specific attributes of the 100 motor cycles;
- to measure the degree of achievement the consumer derives with the purchase of the product and its influence on Consumer Satisfaction level;
- to analyse the empirical relationship among the various variables affecting Consumer Satisfaction and
- to assess the Consumer Complaining Behaviour and to identify the effect of a few selected personal variables on the level of CS/D and Complaining Behaviour.
The samples have been randomly chosen from Madras metropolitan city and selected semi urban centres in Tamil Nadu. The centres chosen for the survey cover the entire region in the State of Tamil Nadu. The final sample size of the study was 499 consumers, selected with the help of a two stage stratified random sampling technique. The first stratification was done between the urban and semi urban. In the semi urban category, further stratification was done by using the various centres as a strata. The effective sample consists of 254 respondents from urban consumers and 245 respondents from semi urban group. The respondents of semi urban group were further stratified into five centres, each with an average of 50 sample respondents. Both the urban and semi urban sample groups consist of a heterogeneous group of respondents of different incomes and number of members in the family.

The data for the present study were collected by issuing questionnaires supplemented by personal interviews. The questionnaire was of a structured and non-disguised type. The data obtained from the respondents were master tabulated and item selected for different analysis. The Product preference criteria are expressed in terms of the desired product and service attributes. The attributes considered to be important by the consumers are identified using the Factor Analysis Technique. The same data are subjected to a further analysis of discrimination so as to bring out the differences between the groups of urban and semi urban with respect to purchase preferences by using Discriminant Analysis.

The factors identified in the first part of analysis provide a scope for the evaluation of level of satisfaction. The evaluation of the current level of consumer satisfaction is carried out in the second section by using the Likert Weighted Average Technique and the Fishbein Attitude Score. In order to identify the important attributes
contributing to overall consumer satisfaction, the Multiple Regression Analysis has also been carried out. The influence of personal variables on consumer satisfaction is also examined with the help of Fishbein Attitude Scores.

Different complaining intentions of the consumers and various manifestations of complaining intentions like ignoring the problem, private action and public actions are thoroughly examined. The study uses ratio measures (percent) to bring out certain facts and they have been interpreted to arrive at the correct perspectives. To bring out associations, a simple statistical measure, namely, chi-square has been applied.

The results have been rewarding enough in that the applications have accomplished the classification of the variables into 'factors' for further interpretations. The results derived have thrown sufficient light on the level of consumer satisfaction and their complaining behaviour. The variety that the results indicate is something that provides a thorough idea in the minds of the consumers in their post purchase evaluations.

The analysis of the present study is discussed in three sections. The first section concentrates on the purchase preferences of 100 cc motor cycle owners. The second section concentrates on identifying the level of satisfaction and the third section focuses on the complaining behaviour of the Indian.

**Consumer Preferences**

Preferences are identified as the direct outcomes of experiences. These purchase preferences may be about the nature and performance of the product or services, the cost and efforts expended before obtaining the product and the social benefits or costs accruing to the consumer as a result of the purchase. Thus, the consumers can have more
than one superior need while determining their purchase decisions. The results of the present survey provide the following as the important need areas as the consumer purchase preferences among the 100 cc motor cycle owners. Some important preference factors have been identified through Factor Analysis.

The consumer preferences on Company Image mainly depend on the word of the mouth from reference groups of friends and relatives, supplemented by advertisements. As automobiles require services, especially after sales, the next priority of the customer is on the Service Image and R & D Image. It may be pointed out that the customer preference on Brand Image and Quality Image are comparatively low.

The preference identification on Company Image suggests that the marketing personnel should take special care in their advertising strategy and image building. The promotional message should create expectations for the product as high as possible. At the same time, it should not create any disparity between expectation and performance levels during the post purchase evaluation stage. Special attention is also required in the selection of advertisement media, so as to build Brand Image among the interpersonal groups of the consumers. In this context, it is suggested that the organisations should promote a better R & D Image among the consumers.

It is interesting to note that all consumer durable products do not have equal potential for consumer acceptance and there is no precise formula by which the marketer can evaluate the product acceptance. Earlier researchers in the field of CS/D have identified Relative Advantages, Compatibility, Complexity and Trailability and Observability as the five important characteristics that influence the consumers’ acceptance of the product. However, the present study reveals that only four product
feature factors influence the purchase decision of the consumers of 100 cc motor cycles in India. They include: Comfort and Utility Factor, Product Performance Factor, Additional Necessity Factor, and Product Availability Factor, in the order of priority.

The essence of the product policy of any firm is to identify the opportunities that will generate maximum profits within the available resources. The results of the present study provide an important input into the organisations' development in the form of the above Product Feature Preference Factors. The Companies can take note of these preferences in their product development strategy, balancing between the availability of technology and consumer preferences.

The third variable of consumer satisfaction is Customer Support Service. In most of the situations the Customer Service Departments are facing great difficulties in identifying the superior needs of the customer in this regard. The factor analysis of the study indicates that the service facilities should be prompt and timely. Thus, Promptness in Service is identified as the first purchase preference evinced by the consumers of 100 cc motor cycles. The second factor included in this variable is Service Quality Improvement Attributes such as Service Centre Appearance, Employee Behaviour, Maintainenance Awareness and Problem Appraisal.

The above factors identified, provide an easy way to understand the preference of the customers on Support Service System. In order to excel in Customer Support Service, it may be noted that the organisations should provide two important support service factors, namely, Time Factor and Quality Factor.
In the Delivery Terms two more additional factors have been identified as important. These include the Ready Availability Factor and Switch Over Option Factor. The ready availability of the product without any delay and the availability of a wide range of model are also vital components of the first factor. The next factor, Change Over Option Factor, includes Change of Agency and Change of Colour Option in the event of difficulty in supply. By monitoring the perceptions of consumers on Delivery Terms, the manufacturers can gauge for themselves the performance of their delivery programmes. This, in turn increases the level of confidence among the consumers. It is obvious from the results of the present study that the timely delivery of the vehicle with Switch Over Option may improve the satisfaction among 100 cc motor cycle consumers. Since the change of agency is not normally encouraged in the Indian conditions, provision of this facility may prove to be a better marketing strategy in future.

In addition to the cost of production, there are some additional elements in pricing of the product. With regard to the Product Price Attribute, the consumers of 100 cc motor cycles feel that the competitive pricing and the resale value of the product are two important price attributes in their purchase decision. These two attributes may be collectively termed as Product Price Value Factor. Further, they give importance to the notification of alteration in price in case of delay in the delivery of the product. They are ready to accept higher pricing for loan arrangement and accept to bear additional cost for the environment protection equipments. This particular factor is termed as Pricing Term Factor.

Thus, the present study suggests that the two economic factors namely, Pricing Terms Factor and Product Price Value Factor as important in the purchase preference of the customers. It gives the decisive evidence that the consumers are mainly concerned
with the price of the product. Due to the high involvement and high cost of the product category chosen, the additional terms of pricing also play a significant role in influencing their purchase preference. Therefore, the marketers must take necessary steps in fixing the price or making modifications in price in the right direction.

In all, thirteen factors have been identified as important purchase preferences among the consumers of 100 cc motor cycles in Tamil Nadu. These factors, in turn are identified as prominent characteristics which contribute to the satisfaction of the consumers. Among the thirteen factors identified, Product Feature Factors are found to be the prime factors.

The discrimination when effected with varying number of variables, give rise to a perceptive insight into the difference between the urban and semi urban samples. Two points of view emerge from the discriminant analysis. First, there are slight differences between the consumers from the two areas as may be understood from the Mahalnobis Distance Criterion. Second, a majority in both the groups cluster around the means, indicating that the samples are drawn from normally distributed populations. The analysis using five variables between the groups of urban and semi urban provides the scope for determinants of discrimination for the product.

The two groups discriminate much on Brand Image, Service Image, and to a considerable extent, on the R & D Image. The difference is very small with regard to the Reference Group Image. The discrimination is also very low in the Product Utility Factors among the urban and semi urban categories. The two groups discriminate to a sizable extent in Product Efficiency and Product Comfort Factors. This is justified as
consumers of 100 cc motor cycles in metropolitan cities and semi urban towns differ in their standard and conditions of living.

A higher discrimination is noticed in the Customer Support Service Variable. Among the urban and semi urban categories the discrimination is more in the customer Support Service Facilities and Service Timings Factors.

The Delivery Terms Variable does not contribute any significant discrimination among the two groups of consumers. Even in the Product Price variable, a low level of discrimination has been observed through the Mahalanobis Distance Measure.

Consumer Satisfaction

The second level of analysis concerns itself with the relationship between each of the factors of satisfaction on their need fulfilment. The same analysis was carried out with reference to nativity, marital status and size of the family also. It is found that the level of satisfaction is high in Brand Image. With regard to Media Image and R & D Image, the level of satisfaction is average as there is no difference between preference ranking and the level of satisfaction. The level of satisfaction, regarding Product Features is comparatively more. It is observed that the level of satisfaction is very low in the Customer Support Service Variable when compared to the other variables. Thus, the consumers of 100 cc motorcycles are not satisfied with the quality of service rendered and also with the facilities provided at the service stations. There is also the problem of spurious spare parts. The manufacturers should take necessary efforts to reduce this menace. The level of satisfaction is very low for Ready Availability when compared to the second factor Switch Over Option. As regards Product Pricing, the consumers of
100 cc motor cycles have got a considerable amount of awareness of competitive pricing of the product and this contributes to a significant level of satisfaction on the overall product price satisfaction.

To examine the effect of the various attributes on the overall satisfaction of a particular variable, Multiple Regression Analysis has been carried out and it provides the following results. The image created by Product Quality contributes more for Company Image Satisfaction. The next priority goes to the Reference Group Image contributing considerable amount of Company Image Satisfaction. The Reference Group Image is out of the real product usage experience of the group and provides a reasonable level of expectation. This in turn provides an acceptable level of satisfaction.

Among the twelve Product Feature Attributes, Convenience for both City / Highway Riding contributes a high amount of Product Feature Satisfaction. At the second level, Fuel Efficiency Attribute contributes a considerable amount of satisfaction. Only because of these two particular features, the 100 cc motor cycles are popular among both the urban and semi urban consumers.

The main criterion of the quality of service is its time orientation and the human element in the service. But the co-efficient of determination for these two attributes are very low and further these two do not contribute any considerable amount of satisfaction in overall customer service satisfaction. Thus, the level of satisfaction in customer Support Service is very minimal. In this context, Peter Drucker stresses the importance of service by saying "the purpose of business is to create and retain customers." Thus, the manufacturers of 100 cc motor cycle should take this timely warning system in order to improve their service facilities.
In the Delivery Terms variable, Easy Availability contributes more amount of Customer Satisfaction, followed by Prompt Delivery. The innovative technology and effective marketing strategies by the new entrants in the market has reduced the time gap to a considerable extent. This in turn provides a better customer satisfaction among the 100 cc motor cycle owners. But the Switch Over Option of Dealer Outlet is not normally encouraged in the Indian conditions. The provision of this facility may prove to be a good marketing strategy in future.

In the Product Price category, the Resale Value of the Product contributes more amount of customer satisfaction. The consumers of 100 cc motor cycles have got considerable amount of awareness about the pollution control which is the fourth attribute contributing consumer satisfaction as regards the Product Price. This gives an evidence that the consumers of 100 cc motor cycles are aware of their social responsibilities.

The place of residence decides the community environment of the consumer’s family, work, play, worship, earning and his spending. As a part of identifying the change in the level of consumer satisfaction, the present study introduces the geographic location of the consumer as a personal variable which influences consumer satisfaction. In this regard, the following results are noticed. Among the semi urban consumer satisfaction score is better than the urban consumers as regards the Company Image Factors. But the Product Feature Factors shows a different result. As regards Product Feature Satisfaction the score is more for the urban category. A very low rate of scoring pattern exists in both the categories as regards customer support service. Among them, urban scoring is better than the semi urban. For Delivery terms also a very low scoring pattern prevails. Here again, the scoring is better in the urban category. These two phenomena show that adequate number of dealer outlets and service outlets have to be
provided to the semi urban consumers. A similar pattern exists in the Pricing Factors also.

The level of consumer satisfaction in the married category is more than the unmarried category. A high level of satisfaction is noticed in the Company Image Factors, followed by the Product Feature Factors and Product Price Factors. The minimum level of satisfaction is noticed in Customer Support Service and Delivery Terms. The preference level of the married category is comparatively low. Further, the level of satisfaction is also better, contributing a lesser amount of mean difference. But in the unmarried category the preference scoring is more and the level of satisfaction is relatively low. Thus, it provides a higher amount of mean difference.

For the category of the family with more than three members the consumers’ preference level is slightly higher than that of the three member family group. Top priority of preference is noticed for the Product Feature Factors. The second preference goes to Customer Support Service, followed by Product Price Variable. Further, it gives an evidence that the customers are ready to pay some extra money to incorporate some pollution control equipments in the motor cycle for the protection of the environment of the country. But they are not ready to bear any additional expenditure for the loan arrangement or R & D of the Industry.

**Consumer Complaining Behaviour**

The third stage of analysis concentrates mostly on identifying the problems faced by the consumers and the resultant complaint intentions and redressal behaviour. The study initiates the analysis through identifying the proportion of owners who experienced
problems in the product and customer support service facilities. It is evident from the results derived that more than 60 per cent of consumers face either product or service problems. Among these two, service problem dominates. A high percent of problem respondents are from the semi urban category than the urban category. Service problem dominates among all the categories of consumers chosen for the study.

As regards the complaint intentions, a majority of consumers prefer Private Action than the Voice Response and Public and Third Party Action. The Third Party Public Action is found to be with a minimum of 27.7 percent. Further, most of the urban and Semi urban consumers prefer Private Action rather the other two course of actions. The Chi-square analysis indicates that among the urban consumers, the nature of problem does not play any role in their complaint intentions. But among the semi urban category, the problem situation influences the complaint intentions.

A majority of the married category prefer either the Voice Response or the Private Response to the Third Party Response. The complaint intentions of the married category is not influenced by the product and service related problems. On the contrary, the problem situation does not influence the complaint intentions among the unmarried category.

Among the three member family category, the first priority goes to the Private Response Action followed by the Voice Response Action and Third Party Response Action. The same situation prevails among the more than three member family category also. Further, in both the categories of consumers the product and service problems have a influential role in their complaint intentions.
In addition, the present study indicates that most of the consumers expect the seller to at least send a letter of regret in the event of a product problem. Only a minimal percentage of consumers expect the replacement of the product. The above study also confirms the saying of a notable consumer activist that "the Indian consumer's blood has become so weak and diluted that it refuses to boil at any temperature."

**Scope for Further Research**

Several dimensions for future studies can be suggested from the findings of the present investigation. There is a scope for extensive research with a variety of products and services. The product category chosen for the present study is of high involvement and high cost. A logical extension of the present study is possible in the area of low involvement, low cost and less ego related goods.

Although the current study is exploratory in nature, the results are encouraging. It appears that the sample framework used here is a potential source for future research. Since there is diversity among the Indian consumers, the parallel analysis of other demography may be useful in explaining the Indian consumer behaviour in total.

In the present study only a few prominent variables affecting the Consumer Complaining Behaviour are utilised. There may be several other unknown dimensions of Complaint behaviour that remain unexplored and need further investigation.