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A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION OF HONDA ACTIVA AMONG WOMEN WITH REFERENCE TO KONNI TALUK, KERALA

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ABSTRACT

Today the importance of customer value and satisfaction is gaining importance day by day due to large number of competing brands. Consumer awareness has gone up due to mass advertising and electronic media, better technology available etc. The marketing companies are interested to achieve long term objectives through customer value and satisfaction. Today most successful companies adopt different methods or techniques to satisfy their customer and thereby retain them.

KEYWORDS

customer satisfaction, honda activa, konni taluk, kerala.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years there has been a significant change in attitudes of customers. Earlier customers are less critical and vocal if not totally satisfied when dealing with a business. Customers had limited choice on where and who to deal with. The power belonged to business owner, customer had nowhere else to go and therefore customer satisfaction was not so important. But today customers are becoming increasingly more demanding, less tolerant and very critical when not having their expectations met. Today customers have lots of choice on where and who to deal with. As a result, power has shifted to the customer. If they feel the company cannot satisfy their expectations, they will simply vote their feet and deal with someone who will.

So there is a great importance of customer in today's market. Outstanding marketing companies go out of their way to keep important customers satisfied. Customer satisfaction is the level of a person's felt state resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance in relation to the person expectation. It is the key to build long lasting customer relationship. Most of the studies shows that higher level of customer satisfaction lead to greater customer loyalty, which in turn results in better company performance. Research has shown that when a person is satisfied with a company or service they are likely share their experience with other people to the order of perhaps five or six people. However, dissatisfied customers are likely to tell another ten people of their unfortunate experience. With the social media readily available for customers to tell their story to all of those online, they can easily go to twitter or Face book and read about someone's experience with a company or service.

The two wheeler segment in the automobile industry plays a vital role in India. Today, for Indian women two wheeler become their part of life. Because they are easy to ride, affordable, there is no need to change gear and they are easy to maintain too. Working women, college girls or even for house wives, it helps to move independently for their daily needs. It is also more convenient for travelling short distance within the city or town. Today a list of scooters available in the market with a lot of features, specifications and stylish body for women customers. Most successful giant companies provide scooter for women. And a huge competition is going among these giants. Honda Activa is the leading scooter in the market. So the study has significance in the present context to know the level of customer satisfaction regarding Honda Activa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The sale of scooter depends much on the customer satisfaction because the customer can influence the purchase of decision of others. If they are not satisfied it will affect the entire sales. Honda is the market leader in two wheeler segment. They are also leading in the ladies scooter brand in India. Activa, Dio and Aviator are the scooters under the brand name Honda. Activa was the first ladies scooter launched by Honda in India in June 2001. It saw a superb success in the market. It has a great demand among women. Even though competition becomes stiff Honda has a major share in the market. Since competition become stiff earlier demand is not reflected today. There is shift in demand. Therefore, research is required to measure present customer satisfaction of Honda Activa among women. So the research problem is to identify the satisfaction level of customers and the problems facing by the customers of Honda Activa especially women.

1.3 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

When Activa was launched in India most two wheeler manufactures were seeing a decline in scooter sales. There is a great demand for Activa. It is the leading scooter brand for women. But at the same time there is a shift in terms of overall choice of customer especially women. Hero Motocorp, Mahindra, Piaggio, TVSMotors, Yamaha etc. has launched scooters recently. We can see a variation in demand and sale of scooter. This study helps to identify the reason behind that. So this topic will be beneficial. This study has been made to find the level of satisfaction that the customer has regarding the Honda Activa.

1.4 OBJECTIVES

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

- To study the customer satisfaction of Honda Activa among women.

SECONDARY OBJECTIVES

- To analyze the effectiveness of customer care service provided by Honda.
- To find out the factors affecting the customer satisfaction.
- To suggest suitable measures on the basis of the findings of the study.

1.5 HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the performance and customer satisfaction.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between support facilities and customer satisfaction.

1.6 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

(a) Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data includes the collection of information from the selected respondents by the help of questionnaire. The secondary data covers the published books report, websites etc.

(b) Sample Design

For the purpose of study Konni Taluk in Pathanamthitta district is selected. Convenient sampling method was adopted. 60 respondents were selected who are customer of Honda Activa (109 cc) to collect data.

(c) Tool for Data Collection

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. When compared with secondary sources, primary sources forms the major parts of data are collected from manuals, journals and websites were used for the overall study.

(d) Technique for Analysis

Data collected have been analysed by using both mathematical and statistical tools and also presented by means of tables and diagrams. Statistical techniques such as simple average, percentage analysis, statistical graph and statistical tools like Chi-Square test are used. Simple average analysis used to measure the satisfaction level. The hypothesis is tested with the help of "Chi-Square".

1.7 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A customer is a person who makes use of or receives the products or services of an individual or organization. The word historically derives from "custom" meaning "habit". A customer was someone who frequented a particular shop, who made it a habit to purchase goods of the sort the shop sold their rather than elsewhere, and with whom the shopkeeper had to maintain a relationship to keep his or her "custom" meaning expected purchase in the future. The shopkeeper remembered the size and preferences of his or her customer.

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. Satisfaction is a function of perceived performance and expectations. If the performance falls short of expectations, the customer is dissatisfied. If the performance matches the expectations, the customer is satisfied. If the performance exceeds the expectations, the customer is highly satisfied or delighted. Customer's expectations are influenced by their past buying experience; friend's and associate advice and marketers' competitors' information and promises. Some of today's most successful companies are raising expectations and delivering performances to match. These companies are aiming for TCS-Total Customer Satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction, a business term, is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction comes after the purchase of product whether the buyer is satisfied after purchase depends on the offers, performance in relation to the buyer expectations. Customer satisfaction is an abstract concept and the actual manifestation of the state of satisfaction will vary from person to person and product/services to product/services.

Customer satisfaction seems to be an uncomplicated concept. However, its definition is not a static one and has evolved overtime. Early Endeavour's to understand customer's post purchase response was directed on the conception of cognitive dissonance.

Howard and Sheaths have defined customer satisfaction as, "an outcome the buyer's cognitive state of being adequately or inadequately rewarded for the sacrifices he has undergone"

According to Kotler, "satisfaction is a person's feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product. It is a continuous process; which doesn't begin or end to purchase."

For customer centred companies, customer satisfaction is both a goal and a marketing tool. The success of a business depends upon customer satisfaction. Only through customer satisfaction business begins to realize the objective of making profit. Many companies are aiming for high satisfaction because customers who are just satisfied still find it easy to switch a better offer comes along. Those who are highly satisfied are much less ready to switch.

High satisfaction or delight creates an emotional affinity with the brand, not just a rational preference. The result is higher customer loyalty. As a country is vast geographically the customers of India are scattered over a vast territory. A customer creates business should seek the customers. There should perfect knowledge about the satisfactory level, behavioral pattern of the customers. Customer is the GOD, satisfying his wants can be a destiny for his existence for any product introduced in the market.

Customer satisfaction is extremely important to any business because no business can survive if it doesn't retain its customers. It is one of the most important factors in determining whether customers will continue to do business with the firm. If the customers leave the firm will no longer be able to make profit and stay in business. So customer satisfaction is vital to any business. Today companies are giving more importance to customer satisfaction due to following reasons.

I. IT IS LEADING INDICATOR OF CUSTOMER REPURCHASE INTENTIONS AND LOYALTY

In a competitive market place where business compete for customers; customer satisfaction is seen as a key differentiator. Businesses who succeed in these cut throat environment are the ones that make customer satisfaction a key element of their business strategy.

II. IT REDUCES CUSTOMER CHURN

Customer satisfaction is the matrices that help to reduce customer churn. By measuring and tracking customer satisfaction the firm will put new processes in place to increase the overall quality of customer service.

III. IT REDUCES NEGATIVE WORD OF MOUTH

McKinsey found that an unhappy customer tells between nine to fifteen people about their experience. It is another completely to lose twenty customers because of some bad word of mouth. Measuring customer satisfaction on an on-going basis helps to eliminate a bad word mouth to a certain extent. Tracking changes in satisfaction will help to identify if customers are actually happy with that product or services.

IV. IT IS CHEAPER TO RETAIN CUSTOMERS THAN ACQUIRE NEW ONES

The cost of attracting a new customer is estimated to be a six to seven times more than cost of keeping the current customers happy. The marketing team spends thousands of dollars getting the attention of prospects, nurturing them into lead and closing them into sales.

ABOUT HONDA ACTIVA

The Honda Activa is a motor scooter made by Honda Motorcycle and scooter India Pvt Ltd (HSMI), which is the 100% owned subsidiary of Honda Motor Co.Ltd. Japan. The Honda Activa was launched in India in 2001. It is a 103 cc, 7bhp (5.2kw) scooter. The vehicle has the option of kick and self start, includes the puncture resistant tuff up tire and tube combination. Launched in 2001, this scooter series is a great hit among both the genders as this two wheel drive offers practical, comfortable and stress free option of commuting and too with a great riding comfort.

HMSI launched a new and upgraded version of the Activa on 27 March 2009 with a completely new 110cc engine. Power output was bumped up to 8bhp (6.0kw) and new features like combi brake and key shutter were introduced. Now this gearless scooter is made available in two models, Activa standard and Activa Deluxe. All other features being equal, Honda Activa Deluxe as its suffix suggests, comes with extra features. They are combi Brake System (CBS) and key shutter. The Ex-showroom price of Honda Activa Standard is Rs. 46,138 whereas for deluxe model it is Rs. 47188.

1.8 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The important findings from the analysis of the primary data are briefly given below:

- The quality of product is an important factor that influences customer satisfaction. A customer's expectation as to the quality of product is influenced by price. A product that meets or exceeds a customer's expectations is more likely to result in a satisfied customer than one that does not. Majority of respondents are satisfied with the riding performance, mileage, durability, power, seating arrangement etc.
- Buying motives can be defined as all the impulse, desires and considerations of the buyer which induces a buyer to purchase a given product. More than half percentage of the customers buy the Activa on the recommendation of their relatives or friends while remaining give preference to personal experience and advertisement. Only a very few give preferences to brand name while buying this scooter.
- Price is an important factor that influences satisfaction. A customer is often concerned about whether or not seller may take advantage of him by charging too higher price. This is particularly true where a buyer feels that the seller is at an advantage because he has no choice but to buy. A fair price is more likely to be satisfied with his shopping experience. However too high of a price may be perceived as unfair and cause a customer to be exploited. When comparing with overall performance 52% of the customers says the price is fair, while 26.67% says it is high. But when coming to the price of spare parts majority of the respondents say the company charges high price for the spare parts.

- The speed, care and convenience of getting and making maintenance through authorized service centre are important in satisfying customers. Unideal location of service centre poses a constraint since they are able to serve only a limited and localized market. Out of 60 respondents 18.33% are highly satisfied, 55% are satisfied, 5% are neutral and 20% are dissatisfied and 1.67% are highly dissatisfied on availability of service centre.
- Another important factor affect the customer satisfaction is quality of service and approach and attitude of employees during each visit to the showroom. Succeeding in this aspect of satisfaction requires employing a concern type of people. A business where the employees are courteous and provide customers individualized attention is more likely to produce a satisfying shopping experience than one that does not. Additionally, knowledgeable employees willing to provide prompt assistance are more likely to satisfy a customer. A business must also be able to deliver accurate and dependable service on what it sells. 65 % of the customers are satisfied with the service of the employees. 56.67% are satisfied while 28.33% are dissatisfied on quality and number of free services provided by the company.
- The Honda Activa has many safety features expertly craft for women riders. It also gets combined breaking system. Tuff up tube and rear tire which reduces sudden puncture by 70%. Out of 60 respondents 18.33% are highly satisfied and majority are satisfied on safety features of Honda Activa. At the same time 5 % are dissatisfaction with respect to safety features.
- During rainy days the road is not in perfect condition especially for two wheelers due to its low grip and un-comfortability in riding through muddy roads. Balanced weight and high grip tyre ensure comfortable riding in rainy season as well as in off road. Out of 60 respondents 5% are highly satisfied, 35% are satisfied, 28.33% are neutral and 26.67% are dissatisfied and 5% are highly dissatisfied on riding Honda Activa during rainy season.
- Off-road means which are street roads or pocket roads or beaches other than public roads. For a women rider comfortability in any road is an important factor affects customer satisfaction. Tyre size, ground clearance and suspension make in riding off- road comfortable. When riding through off road 15% of respondents are comfortable to a very large extent, 41.67% are comfortable to a large extent, 23.33% are comfortable to a moderate extent 15% are comfortable to some extent and remaining 5% are not at all comfortable.

1.9 TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

HYPOTHESIS 1

H0: There is no significant relationship between performance and customer satisfaction.

H1: There is significant relationship between performance and customer satisfaction.

TABLE 1.1: OPINION ABOUT HONDA ACTIVA * RIDING PERFORMANCE OF HONDA ACTIVA

Particulars	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Total
Excellent	4	6	1	0	11
Very good	2	18	2	5	27
Good	0	9	2	8	19
Average	0	1	0	2	3
Total	6	34	5	15	60

Sources: Primary Data

TABLE 1.2: CHI SQUARE VALUES OF OPINION ABOUT HONDA ACTIVA * RIDING PERFORMANCE OF HONDA ACTIVA

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
4	6	1.1	3.8	2.2
2		2.7		4.84
0	6	1.9	8.433	-2.4333
0		0.3		5.92909
6		6.2333		.7021
18		15.3		2.7
9		10.7666		7.29
1	6	1.7	6.4499	.4499
1		0.9166		.2024
2		2.25		.031381
2		1.5833		
0	5	0.25	9.75	-4.75
0		2.75		22.5625
5		6.75		2.31411
8	10	4.75	5.5	4.5
2		0.75		20.25
$\Sigma(O-E)^2 / E$				8.769341

Chi-Square = $\Sigma (O-E)^2 / E$
 Degree of freedom = (n-1-loss of cell due to pooling)
 = (16-1-9)
 = 6
 Level of Significance = 5% i.e., 0.05
 Table value = 12.592

Calculated value (8.769341) is less than the table value therefore we accept the null hypothesis (H0). Therefore, the result is there is no significant relationship between performance and customer satisfaction.

HYPOTHESIS 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between support facilities and customer satisfaction.

H1: There is significant relationship between support facilities and customer satisfaction.

Here statistic used is Chi- square

The test statistic i.e. chi-square measures the how close to null hypothesis

The significance level select is 0.05 i.e., 5% level of significance.

If calculated value is more than the table we reject the null hypothesis (H0) and alternative hypothesis is accepted.

TABLE 1.3: SHOWING OPINION ON CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE OF THE COMPANY

Particulars	Highly satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Total
To a very large extent	2	0	1	0	3
To a large extent	2	17	2	3	24
To a moderate extent	1	16	1	12	30
To some extent	0	1	0	2	3
Total	5	34	4	17	60

Sources: primary Data

TABLE 1.4: SHOWING CHI SQUARE VALUES OF OPINION CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE OF HONDA ACTIVA

O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
2	0.25	1.75	3.0625	12.25
2	2	0.25	0.0625	0.03125
1	2.5	-1.5	2.25	0.9
0	0.25	1.75	3.0625	12.25
0	1.7	0.3	0.09	0.0529
17	19	-2	4	0.2105
16	12	4	16	1.3333
1	1.7	-0.7	0.49	0.2882
1	0.2	0.8	0.64	3.2
2	1.6	0.4	0.16	0.8
1	2	-1	1	0.5
0	0.2	1.8	3.24	16.2
0	0.85	1.15	1.3225	15.5647
3	6.8	-3.8	14.44	2.1235
12	8.5	3.5	12.25	1.4412
2	0.85	1.15	1.3225	15.5647
Σ (O-E)²/E				2.15092

Chi Square = $\sum (O-E)^2/E$
 Degree of freedom = (n-1-loss of cell due to pooling)
 = (16-1-11)
 = 4
 Level of significance = 5% level of significance i.e., 0.05
 Table value = 9.488

The calculated value (2.15092) is less than table value. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis (H0). So the result is there is no significant relationship between support facilities and customer satisfaction.

1.10 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The study reveals that Honda plays an important role in the market of motorcycle. In India Honda Activa is the leading scooter brand for ladies. The vehicle offers greater utility. The company wanted to compete on other two wheeler brands in the market. So Honda motors apply strategy of providing product or services which is in supreme quality. Modern technologies are introduced to reduce cost as well as to keep up with the modern environmental standards. Honda motors also make sure that all their vehicles have passed all passenger safety related test. HMSI (Honda Motor Scooter Pvt.Ltd) whole fine quality in Honda Activa and excels in offering various services to their customers and in achieving customer satisfaction and a strong customer patronage.

- Keep a vigil on the overall quality and performance of Honda Activa which is the major strength of the product. This being the factor that contributes to the number one position of this scooter in this segment.
- More number of authorized service centres' need to be established.
- Extend the period of warranty to match the competitors.
- Since women being a major segment the company needs to give serious thought to provide break down pick up facility.
- Make the vehicle some more trendy to attract college girls.
- The company's goodwill and overall performance does not warrant any price competitions. But ratio analyzing cost of spare parts needs to the consideration.

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