

**A STUDY ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION TOWARDS PURCHASING
ASHOK LEYLAND VEHICLES**

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ABSTRACT

In this study customer satisfaction regarding Ashok Leyland vehicles purchased by the customers at Pudhukottai district is analysed. TVS is the local distributor for Ashok Leyland vehicles. TVS is made as responsible for marketing and after sale service. For the purpose of analysis certain selected characteristics such as product performance, dealer behaviour and service quality dimensions like tangibility, reliability, and responsiveness, assurance, and empathy factors are considered. For the purpose of analysis data were collected from 150 traders using Ashok Leyland products. A structured questionnaire was prepared with the consideration of company officials. A pilot study was conducted before finalizing the questionnaire. After collecting the data reliability for the questionnaire was tested with the help of Cronbach's alpha. The alpha value of .756 for the data collected shows that the data is consistent and reliable. Statistical tools such as frequency analysis correlation, regression are used to understand the level of satisfaction of customers towards Ashok Leyland vehicles. The researcher is able to find out that customers are giving much weightage for dealer behaviour followed by after sale service and behaviour of the showroom person.

I. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

Customer satisfaction refers to the progress where in all employees of the firm required to interact directly with the customers and the end users. They can have the access to every person and function within the organization, be involving in designing and fine tuning key products and processes, and turn every interaction with the customer into a platform of interactive communication so as to add value and increase customer satisfaction.

II. STUDY OF THE VARIABLES:

The researchers have chosen demographic variables such as Age, Gender, Income and independent variable dealer behaviour, product performance, and service quality dimensions.

III. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Ashok Leyland is the one of the leading automobile company in India. They produce commercial and non-commercial vehicles. In India Ashok Leyland has high brand value and reputation. They are having loyal customers and produce many vehicles for various applications. Indian automobile industry normally influenced by passenger car segment. Identifying customer satisfaction for passenger car segment is easy when comparing commercial vehicles. This study helps identifying major player in commercial segment and satisfaction regarding Ashok Leyland vehicles. Measuring customer satisfaction is difficult because customers have many set of needs. Normally satisfaction for automobile company is based on service availability. This study based on service quality dimensions Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy Customer satisfaction of vehicle mainly focus on maintenance cost and service availability and resale value for the product.so this study helps to identify the customer satisfaction based on service quality dimensions.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- The objective of the study to find the level of customer satisfaction towards Ashok Leyland.
- To analyse the customer's preference regarding Ashok Leyland vehicles.
- To analyze the customer's perception towards sales and after sale services.
- To give appropriate suggestion to increase the satisfaction level of customer.

V. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

- The study was restricted to the Pudhukkottai region
- The sample of 150 makes it difficult to generalize the results
- The data was obtained through questionnaire and it has its own limitations

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The sample comprises of 150 customers of Ashok Leyland ltd. The primary data were collected from the 150 samples of this showroom by simple random sampling method. Some of the tools used for the analysis are Frequency analysis, multiple regression, and correlation.

VII. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Connelly, M. (2004). Automakers and dealers are moving toward a truce on how to measure customer satisfaction as both sides are trying to make customer satisfaction surveys more reliable,

meaningful, and easier to fill out. Implications of this scheme, which was evident at the National Automobile Dealers Association.

Harris, D. (2007) says that General Motors says it is tossing the results of some recent customer satisfaction surveys because dealers tampered with the responses. GM surveys customers who buy new vehicles or submit factory warranty claims about their satisfaction with the dealership's performance. Hands off GM's bulletin warns dealers against trying to influence satisfaction survey responses by helping customers fill out the survey, discouraging responses, sending surveys from the dealership or bribing customers.

Emery, C. R., &Fredendall, L. D. (2002) the use of self-directed work teams increased profit and customer satisfaction was examined, along with whether leadership styles and the compensation system moderated how teams affected performance. All the firms involved were auto dealer service garages. Service garages using teams had significantly higher profits than those that did not. The differences in customer satisfaction levels between service garages using teams and those that did not were significant at the level.

Mohammad Rishad Faridi, (2014) This study on expectation, performance and satisfaction level of institution segment which comprises mainly of automobile industry. Car companies are emphasizing in creating and building long term relationship. On the other hand institutional consumers look.

Dr. Duggani Yuvaraju (2014) Customer satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a products perceived performance or outcome in relation to his or her expectation.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

Classification based on age of the respondents:

Table 9.1

Age of the respondents

Age of the respondents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
24Years-28Years	12	7.9	8.0
28Years-32Years	16	10.6	18.7
32Years-36Years	18	11.9	30.7
Above40Years	104	68.9	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table we can conclude that 68.9% of the sample respondents are above the age of 40 years and hence we can say that they are the main customers for Ashok Leyland products.

4.2 Classification based on gender of the respondents:

Table 9.2
Gender of the respondents

Gender of the respondents	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
Male	137	90.7	91.3
Female	13	8.6	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table it is observed that majority 90.7% of the respondents are male. It is evident that they are the main decision maker to purchase Ashok Leyland vehicles.

9.3 Classification based on income level of the respondents:

Table 9.3
Income level of the respondents

Income level	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
5-10 Lakhs	75	49.7	50
10-15Lakhs	45	29.8	80
15-20Lakhs	30	19.9	100

Source: Primary data

The table clearly reveals that nearly 50% of the sample respondents are having annual income of less than 5 lakhs.

9.4 Classification based on the application of the vehicles:

Table 9.4
Application of the vehicles

Application	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Haulage	122	80.8	81.3
Tipper	28	18.5	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table 80.8% majority of the respondents are using haulage vehicles for their business and 18.5% of the respondents are using tipper. From this study found that the sales of haulage application vehicles is high.

9.5 Classification based on the purchase cycle:

Table9.5
Purchase cycles

Purchase cycle years	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
3-6 Years	11	7.3	7.3
Above 6 Years	139	92.1	100.0

Source: Primary data

Purchase life cycle normally based on the usage of the vehicles. From the above table 92.3% of the respondents using the vehicles above 6 years and 7.3% of the respondents come under below 3-6years.

9.6 Classification based on mode of payment:

Table9.6

Mode of payment	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Cash	15	9.9	10.0
Loan	135	89.4	100.0

Source: Primary data

The table clearly reveals that the majority of the respondents are availing loan for buying vehicles.

9.7 Classification based on delivery:

Commercial vehicles are purchased for urgent requirements. If there is a delay in the supply of vehicle the business of the customer will be affected. In the following table customer opinion regarding delivery schedule is presented.

Table 9.7
Classification based on delivery

Classification based on delivery	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly disagree	16	10.7	10.7
Disagree	60	40.0	50.7
Neither agree nor disagree	51	34.0	84.7
Agree	12	8.0	92.7
Highly agree	11	7.3	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table 40% of the respondents are felt that there is gap between the order and delivery. The weighting time is increased. So the dealer will need to provide fast delivery to the customers.

9.8 Classification based on service charge:

After the vehicle is sold the responsibility taken by the dealer for providing necessary service maintenance plays a vital role in decision making. Service charges should be reasonable otherwise very high amount of dissatisfaction will prevail among the customers.

Table9.8
Classification based on service charge

Classification based on Service charge	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly disagree	15	10.0	10.0
Disagree	42	28.0	38.0
Neither agree nor disagree	43	28.7	66.7
Agree	35	23.3	90.0
Highly agree	15	10.0	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table 28% of the respondents felt that the service charges are high and another 28% of the people felt that the company charges only the average rate. 23.3% of the customers comfortable with present service charges.

9.9 Classification based on Pre Delivery Inspection:

Since the companies are launching with different models to suit the customer satisfaction, business man will always be interested for pre delivery inspection so that the vehicle should meet the requirements. The dealers should provide the necessary facilities for pre delivery inspection.

Table 9.9

Classification based on Pre Delivery Inspection

Classification based on pre delivery inspection	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Disagree	28	18.7	18.7
Neither agree nor disagree	14	9.3	28.0
Agree	28	18.7	46.7
Highly agree	80	53.3	100.0

Source: Primary data

From the above table 53.3% of the majority respondents tell that the pre delivery inspection is correctly made by dealer. So the effective pre delivery inspection ensures effective customer satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis:

To understand the relationship between tangible factors, Reliability factors, responsiveness factor, assurance factor, empathy factor and the customer satisfaction is presented with the help of correlation analysis.

Correlation between tangibles and recommendation:

Table 9.10

Correlation of tangible factors and recommendation to others (satisfaction)

Tangibility factors	R	Sig	Correlation
Showroom environment	.304	.000	Positive
Facilities	.238	.003	Positive
Equipment availability	.131	.110	Positive
Personnel communication	.103	.208	Positive
Appearance	.124	.131	Positive

Source: Primary data

- From the above table there is a positive correlation between showroom environment and customer's recommendation to others since $r = 0.304$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means a good showroom environment will lead to recommending the product to others. So there exists a correlation between showroom environment and customer satisfaction.
- From the above table here is a positive correlation between facilities provided in the showroom and customer's recommendation to others since $r = 0.238$ and $P = 0.003$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means good facilities will lead to recommending the product to others. The value of $p = 0.003$ shows the correlation between facilities and customer satisfaction.
- From the above table there is a positive correlation between equipment availability in the showroom and customer's recommendation to others since $r = 0.131$ and $P = 0.110$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means availability of equipment will lead to recommending the product to others. So there is no correlation between equipment availability and customer satisfaction.
- From the above table there is a positive correlation between personnel communication in the showroom and customer's recommendation to others since $r = 0.103$ and $P = 0.208$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means good personnel communication will lead to recommending the showroom to others. The value of $p = 0.208$ shows the there is a correlation between personnel communication and customer satisfaction.
- From the above table there is a positive correlation between appearance of the showroom and customer's recommendation to others since $r = 0.124$ and $P = 0.131$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means good appearance will lead to recommending the showroom to others. So there is correlation between appearance and satisfaction.

Correlation between reliability factors and satisfaction factors:

Table9.11

Correlation between reliability and recommendation

Reliability factors	R	Sig	Correlation
Service provisions	.466	.000	Positive
Problem resolutions	.409	.549	Positive
Reliable pricing	-.184	.025	Negative
Core service availability	.068	.405	Positive
Satisfied with vehicle over the year	.218	.007	Positive
Advice to others for buy	.104	.203	Positive
Vehicle experience is a passion	-.176	.031	Negative
Recommendation to others	.090	.274	Positive

Source: Primary data

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

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

- There is a positive correlation between service provisions of the showroom and customer’s recommendation to others since $r = 0.466$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means limited service provisions will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. so the correlation value is positive.
- There is a positive correlation between service problem resolution and customer’s satisfaction since $r = 0.409$ and $P = 0.549$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means immediate problem resolution will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.409 shows the moderate correlation between problem resolution and customer satisfaction.
- There is a negative correlation between unreliable pricing and customer satisfaction since $r = -.184$ and $P = 0.025$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means unreliable pricing will lead to poor customer satisfaction. So the correlation between these variable is negative.
- There is a positive correlation between core service availability and customer satisfaction since $r = 0.068$ and $P = 0.405$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which

means core service availability will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.405 shows the moderate correlation core service availability and customer satisfaction.

Correlation between Responsiveness and satisfaction factors:

Table9.12

Correlation between responsiveness and recommendation

Responsiveness factors	R	Significance value	Correlation
Vehicle experience is a passion	.021	.802	Positive
Recommendation to others	-.771	.000	Negative
Willingness to help	-.546	.000	Negative
Proper communication	.615	.000	Positive
Complaints handling	.480	.000	Positive

Source: Primary data

- There is a positive correlation between vehicle experience and customer satisfaction since $r = 0.021$ and $P = 0.802$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means better product experience will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.802 shows that there is high correlation between vehicle experience and customer satisfaction.
- There is a negative correlation between recommendation and customer satisfaction since $r = -.771$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means core service availability will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. It shows the no correlation between these variables.
- There is a negative correlation between core willingness to help and recommendation for others to buy since $r = -.546$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means willingness to help not ensure the customer satisfaction. It shows the no correlation between these variables.
- There is a positive correlation between proper communication and recommendation since $r = 0.615$ and $P = 0.00$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means proper communication will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.615 shows the high correlation between proper communication and customer satisfaction.

- There is a positive correlation between complaints handling and recommendation since $r = 0.480$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means core service availability will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction.

Correlation between assurance and satisfaction factors (Recommendation):

Table9.13

Correlation between assurance and recommendation

Assurance factors	R	Significance value	Correlation
Trust and confidence of employees	.501	.000	Positive
Knowledge of courtesy	.421	.000	Positive
Ability of the firm	.555	.000	Positive
High professionalism	.299	.000	Positive
Less waiting time	.253	.002	Positive

Source: Primary data

- There is a positive correlation between trust & confidence of the employees and recommendation since $r = 0.501$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means trust and confidence will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.501 shows the moderate correlation between these variables.
- There is a positive correlation between knowledge of courtesy and recommendation since $r = 0.421$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means knowledge of courtesy will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.402 shows the moderate correlation between knowledge of courtesy and customer satisfaction.
- There is a positive correlation between ability of the firm and recommendation since $r = 0.555$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means ability of the firm to serve customers will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.555 shows the average correlation between ability of the firm and customer satisfaction.
- There is a positive correlation between high professionalism and recommendation since $r = 0.299$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means high professionalism will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of correlation shows that there is no correlation between these variables.

- There is a positive correlation between less waiting time and recommendation since $r = 0.253$ and $P = 0.002$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means core service availability will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.253 shows the correlation between less waiting time and customer satisfaction.

Correlation between empathy and satisfaction factors:

Table 9.14

Correlation between empathy and satisfaction

Empathy factors	R value	Significance value	Correlation
Individualized attention and caring	.627	.000	Positive
Need satisfaction	.680	.000	Positive
Loyal to the brand	.530	.000	Positive
Adequate service	-.050	.544	Negative
Competitive advantage	.228	.005	Positive

Source: Primary data

- There is a positive correlation between individualized attention and recommendation since $r = 0.627$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means individualized attention will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.627 shows that there is high correlation between individualized attention and satisfaction.
- There is a positive correlation between need satisfaction and recommendation since $r = 0.680$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means need satisfaction will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.680 shoes the high correlation between need satisfaction and customer satisfaction.
- There is a positive correlation between loyalty and recommendation since $r = 0.530$ and $P = 0.000$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means loyalty will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction. The value of 0.530 shows the moderate correlation between loyalty and customer satisfaction.
- There is a negative correlation between adequate service and recommendation since $r = -.050$ and $P = 0.544$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means the dealer will provide adequate service to customers. It leads to ensure the customer satisfaction. The

value of .544 shows that there is correlation between adequate service and customer satisfaction.

- There is a positive correlation between competitive advantage and recommendation since $r = 0.228$ and $P = 0.005$. There is a significant relationship between the variables, which means competitive advantage of the product will lead to ensure the customer satisfaction.

Regression analysis:

Regression analysis for customer satisfaction:

Table 9.15

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.853(a)	.728	.718	2.18943

Source: Primary data

From the above table the regression value = R.853, R Square=.728 and adjusted R square value=.718. The value of R=.853 explain the high degree of correlation between service quality dimensions and customer satisfaction. The Beta value of tangibility, assurance and empathy are negative. 71% of independent variables have an impact on the dependent variable. So these areas are need to develop and will lead to customer satisfaction.

CONCLUSION:

From this study customer satisfaction based on dealer behaviour, service availability. These factors are having positive relationship. From this study many of the customers felt that Ashok Leyland vehicles have better performance and brand reputation .so the customer’s satisfaction level is good. TVS is the authorised dealer for Ashok Leyland. They are also adapting some changes with relevant to service charge and delivery of the vehicle. It is observed through the survey majority of the customers are satisfied with the after sale service and dissatisfied with the delivery of the vehicles. Hence it is suggested that dealer should reduce the waiting time.

The present study reveals that the customers have a good preference towards Ashok Leyland vehicles. They are mainly motivated by the dealer behavior. The popularity of the brand also, one of the factors urged the customers for their purchase decision. Overall, it can be concluded that customers are satisfied with the product, appearance of the vehicle and Comfort ability in crowded area but they expect variety of models.

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