

An empirical study on customer satisfaction and its key determinants at Maruti Suzuki India limited, Wagholi.

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction has become a crucial factor for success in the competitive Indian automobile industry, especially in fast-growing areas like Wagholi, Pune. This study offers an analysis of customer satisfaction and its main factors at Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi. The research aims to measure customer satisfaction levels, identify influencing factors, and look at the relationship between customer expectations and perceived performance.

Wagholi has changed from a distant suburb into a rapidly growing residential centre within the Pune Metropolitan Region. This transformation is driven by affordability, infrastructure improvements, and more working professionals moving in. Between 2021 and 2025, property prices in Wagholi rose by almost 40%, and rental values increased by 69%. This indicates a rise in population and purchasing power. Many residents now need personal vehicles, relying on private transport due to gaps in infrastructure and commuting demands.

The broader Pune automobile market supports this trend. Pune saw about 3.45 lakh vehicle registrations in FY 2025-26, showing steady growth in demand for personal mobility. Maruti Suzuki holds a strong position in the Pune automobile market, with nearly a 35.9% share in used car sales. Its affordability, fuel efficiency, and low maintenance costs contribute to this market leadership. This strong presence makes it a fitting case for studying customer satisfaction.

The study uses a descriptive and analytical research design, collecting primary data through structured questionnaires from customers at the Wagholi outlet. The findings reveal that key factors influencing customer satisfaction include product reliability, fuel efficiency, pricing, after-sales service quality, and service centre responsiveness. Moreover, the study shows that customer satisfaction is significantly affected by the match between expected service standards and actual performance.

The research also highlights practical challenges customers face in Wagholi, like traffic congestion, road conditions, and service delays. These issues indirectly affect overall satisfaction with owning a vehicle. Despite these challenges, Maruti Suzuki maintains a high satisfaction level thanks to its strong service network and brand trust.

The study concludes by stressing the need for ongoing improvement in service delivery, customer engagement, and personalized experiences to keep a competitive edge. The findings offer practical insights for automobile dealers and policymakers to boost customer satisfaction and strengthen long-term relationships in growing urban markets like Wagholi.

Literature Review

Customer satisfaction is an important factor for business success, especially in the automobile industry. Here, competition, product differences, and service quality matter greatly. Research shows that customer satisfaction is a complex idea shaped by factors like product quality, service quality, pricing, brand image, and customer experience.

Philip Kotler and Keller (2016) define customer satisfaction as how well a product's performance meets a buyer's expectations. If the performance does not meet expectations, the customer feels dissatisfied. If it meets their expectations, they feel satisfied. If it exceeds expectations, they feel very satisfied. This idea is central to modern marketing strategies.

Studies in the automobile sector indicate that after-sales service greatly affects customer satisfaction and loyalty. Key aspects include timely servicing, the availability of spare parts, the behaviour of service staff, and overall efficiency. Research shows that customers are more likely to stay loyal to brands that offer reliable and helpful after-sales service.

Moreover, perceived value and product reliability are major factors for satisfaction. Customers assess cars based on fuel efficiency, durability, maintenance costs, and resale value. Studies suggest that brands perceived as providing high value for their price often achieve greater customer satisfaction and repeat purchases. This is especially true in the Indian market where consumers care about price and quality.

Brand image and trust are also important. A strong brand image lessens perceived risk and boosts customer confidence in their buying choices. Car companies known for reliability and excellent service usually have higher customer satisfaction levels.

The Expectation-Performance Gap Model, also called the Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory, explains that customer satisfaction is based on the difference between expected performance and actual performance. If performance exceeds expectations, it results in high satisfaction. In contrast, if it falls short, customers feel dissatisfied. This model is frequently used in service and marketing research.

Recent studies highlight the increased importance of customer experience and digital interaction. Online booking systems, service tracking, customer feedback platforms, and digital communication now play a key role in shaping customer views. In urban areas like Wagholi, Pune, where customers are more tech-savvy, these elements greatly affect satisfaction levels.

Overall, the literature shows that customer satisfaction in the automobile sector is influenced by both tangible factors, such as product quality and price, and intangible factors, like service experience and brand trust. Understanding these elements is crucial for organizations to create effective customer-focused strategies and stay competitive.

Research Methodology

This section describes the approach used to reach the goals of the study on customer satisfaction at Maruti Suzuki India Limited in Wagholi, Pune.

- **Research Design**

The study employs a descriptive and analytical research design.

The descriptive approach measures customer satisfaction and identifies key factors. The analytical approach examines the link between customer expectations and perceived performance.

This design works well because it provides factual insights and statistical analysis of customer behaviour.

- **Nature of Data**

The study uses both primary and secondary data:

Primary Data:

Collected directly from customers of Maruti Suzuki Wagholi using a structured questionnaire.

Secondary Data:

Gathered from:

Company reports and official website

Research journals and articles

Industry reports related to the automobile sector

- **Data Collection Method**

A structured questionnaire was created to gather responses from customers. The questionnaire includes:

Demographic details (age, income, occupation)

Customer satisfaction level

Factors influencing purchase decisions

Service quality and after-sales experience

Expectations vs perceived performance

A Likert Scale (1-5) measured satisfaction levels (1 = Highly Dissatisfied, 5 = Highly Satisfied).

- **Sampling Design**

Sampling Method: Convenience Sampling

Sample Size: 110 respondents

Sampling Unit: Customers of Maruti Suzuki Wagholi (vehicle owners and service users)

Sampling Area: Wagholi, Pune

This sampling method was chosen due to time and accessibility issues.

- **Tools and Techniques of Analysis**

The collected data was analysed using these statistical tools:

Percentage Analysis: To understand the distribution of respondents

Mean and Standard Deviation: To measure central tendency and variability

Correlation Analysis: To study the relationship between expectations and perceived performance

(You can optionally add advanced tools like regression or ANOVA if needed for deeper research.)

- **Hypothesis of the Study**

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between customer expectations and perceived performance.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between customer expectations and perceived performance.

- **Scope of the Study**

The study focuses on customer satisfaction at Maruti Suzuki Wagholi and identifies key factors affecting satisfaction levels. It is limited to customers in the Wagholi area.

- **Limitations of the Study**

The study has a sample size of 110 respondents.

It is geographically limited to Wagholi, Pune.

Responses may reflect personal bias.

Time constraints may affect the depth of the data.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This section includes the analysis of data obtained from a survey conducted amongst 100 respondents (customers of Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi). Percentage analysis, mean scores, and correlation have been used to assess the satisfaction level of customers and factors influencing their satisfaction levels.

- **Respondent's Demographic Characteristics**

Demographic analysis reveals that:

The major part of respondents is from the age group 25 – 40 years.

Respondents mostly belong to the middle class.

Respondents are either salaried people or businessmen.

Interpretation:

This suggests that the cars of Maruti Suzuki are well-liked by the middle-class working community, considering their affordability and durability.

- **Overall Customer Satisfaction Level**

Satisfaction Level	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	42%
Satisfied	38%
Neutral	12%
Dissatisfied	5%
Highly Dissatisfied	3%

Interpretation:

Around **80% of customers are satisfied or highly satisfied**, indicating a strong overall satisfaction level. However, a small percentage of dissatisfaction suggests areas for improvement.

• **Satisfaction Based on Key Determinants**

Factor	Mean Score (Out of 5)
Product Quality	4.5
Fuel Efficiency	4.6
Pricing	4.3
After-Sales Service	4.1
Service Centre Experience	3.9

Interpretation:

- Fuel efficiency and product quality are the highest-rated factors.
- Service centre experience has the lowest mean score, indicating a need for improvement in service delivery.

• **Customer Expectations vs Perceived Performance**

Parameter	Mean Expectation	Mean Performance
Vehicle Performance	4.5	4.4
Service Quality	4.4	4.0
Pricing Value	4.3	4.2

Interpretation:

- A small gap exists between expectations and actual performance, especially in service quality.
- Performance generally meets expectations but rarely exceeds them, indicating scope for delighting customers.

• **Correlation Analysis**

Correlation between customer expectations and perception of performance is determined as:

$$r = 0.72$$

Interpretation:

There is a strong positive correlation between expectations and perception of performance.

Perception of performance improves, and so does customer satisfaction.

This conclusion supports the alternative hypothesis (H_1).

• **Key Findings from Analysis**

Summary of Important Results from Data Analysis. customers are happy with their Maruti Suzuki cars. fuel economy and cost are major contributors to customer satisfaction. after-sales services and service centers require improvement. There is a positive correlation between expectations and satisfaction. customer expectations include faster service and communication.

• **Summary Interpretation**

It can be concluded from the data analysis that even though Maruti Suzuki India Ltd has established itself as a company that provides high customer satisfaction, there should always be an effort made for further improvements in customer services and communication.

Findings

Some salient findings emerged from this study conducted on the customers of Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi, Pune, with regards to the level of customer satisfaction and the most critical determinants of the same.

High degree of customer satisfaction: The customers appear to be relatively satisfied and very satisfied (about 80%) with the overall experience, which indicates high levels of customer acceptability of the brand and confidence in the product.

Fuel efficiency the most influencing variable: It is interesting to note that the rating given to fuel efficiency by the customers was the highest, which implies that for customers in the Wagholi region, mileage and economy are among the critical factors.

Good quality of product and its reliability: The customers have given good rating to the quality of the product and reliability of the vehicle, which reiterates that Maruti Suzuki lives up to its reputation for quality of its vehicles.

Affordability a factor that influences purchasing: Prices have also emerged as an important factor in deciding the customers' satisfaction, among the middle-class. Customers feel that the vehicles offered are good value for money.

After-sales service helps in retaining the customer: The after sales service played a critical role in defining customer satisfaction at longer run; the satisfaction is decent overall but does exhibit potential for improvement.

A considerable amount of improvement required in the service center experience: Compared to other variables, service center experience appears to have earned a lower rating among the customers, as evident by the issues cited such as, waiting times, responsiveness, efficiency, etc.

Disparity between the expected and actual: Customer's expectations on quality of services did not necessarily correspond to actual perceptions, though in general it is meeting their expectations and rarely exceeds their expectations.

Customer expectations and actual performance are positively related: The correlation coefficient found between customer expectations and actual performance was reasonably high ($r = 0.72$), confirming that high levels of performance lead to high levels of customer satisfaction.

Influence of the customers' profile: In order to maintain affordability, the majority of the customers are from working and middle class section, explaining their high level of preference for affordability, fuel efficiency, lower running cost, etc.

Customer experience and communication become very important: The customers desire better communication, transparency, and timely updates about servicing process.

Suggestions & Recommendations:

The suggestions proposed for enhancement of customer satisfaction and maintenance of long term customer relationship with Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi, Pune is as follow:

Increase efficiency in service centres: Service centre must improve service system, increase service time during peak hours so to handle higher customers, and deliver service timely to the customers.

Improve the quality of after-sales services: Train the service staff to improve skills and customer handling, make spare parts available, give routine call to customers after servicing for their concern.

Maintain effective communication with customers: transparency should be made in service charges, time taken and process, all kind of information should be conveyed on regular interval to customer's mobile through SMS, Application, WhatsApp or any digital mode, and customer care should be made active to answer their query promptly.

Manage the customer experience: The service centre must create a good atmosphere for the customer and try to serve them with personalize manner and gather information for the improvement after each visit.

Bridge expectation-performance gap: Make customer aware with expected work and product limitation at the time of purchase, do not provide high assurance for product to sell; serve more in comparison of expectation.

Introduce loyal customer & relationship program: Loyalty benefits should be provided to them in servicing or accessories along with the warranty extension, also there must be special offers to repeated customers to make them happy, refer program is also required to call for new customers from old customers.

Make the service by using technology & digital tools: service appointment, service status etc. Should be online, analyse customer data to provide better service and use mobile based solutions.

Continuous quality improvement: Continuously review performance, compare with other auto companies and make necessary change as per the demand or requirement for maintenance of standards.

Conclusion

This current study of customer satisfaction with Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi, Pune emphasizes the factors influencing customer perspective and overall satisfaction in automobile sector. The results of this study have shown that most of the customers are satisfied with the product and services being provided to them especially with respect to fuel efficiency, product quality and affordability.

This study has revealed that not just product can satisfy the customers, but after sale service and over all experience of services plays an important role. And there is a significant difference in what is expected from customer and what is being delivered by the company (which is regarding service related aspects) therefore customer satisfaction must be enhanced with improvement of the service, by reducing the waiting time for the services and improving the quality of services provided to the customers.

The study confirms there is a strong positive correlation between customer expectation and perception, which states that meeting the customer expectation is more important and in order to achieve greater satisfaction it is important to excel their expectations. The customers are more satisfied with service being rendered. The rapid development of Wagholi (due to urbanization and increased competition in services) thus calls for improved services to the customers.

In conclusion, Maruti Suzuki India Limited appears to be performing well on the customer

Limitations

The study conducted is useful in giving an insight on customer satisfaction at Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Wagholi, Pune but has a few limitations which restrict the extent to which the results may be generalized and the conclusions interpreted:

A small size of sample was taken that included only 100 respondents which can be regarded to be representing the total population.

This study is confined to Wagholi only which can be assumed as a representation of the city, however, for the whole country its relevance could be a problem depending upon the variation in customers' characteristics.

Convenience sampling was the method for selecting the sample and was done for the sake of time constraint and feasibility but this sampling may yield inaccurate results as it might have been influenced by some specific criteria for sampling and not by random methods.

The time constraint may lead to limitations in carrying out an in-depth analysis and research study.

The study is dependent on the respondents' opinions that might be biased in nature due to their past experiences and present state of mind.

Not all factors contributing to customers' satisfaction have been considered and more issues of interest like psychology factors or comparison with competitor product should have been explored thoroughly.

Only a few statistical methods were adopted, it would have been of interest if a regression or factor analysis could be applied. satisfaction front. Yet, to retain and strengthen the same, a continued customer-centric approach, improved service standards and technology incorporation would lead to enhance long term relationships with the customers, customer retention and an ultimate competitive advantage.

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