



PERCEIVED LEVEL OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION WITH HERO BIKES: A STUDY ON RURAL PEOPLE IN M.P. REGION

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Abstract

As we know automobile industry is assumed as sunrise sector as it is one of the best transportation facilities. Innovations and commercialization of automobile industry, specifically two wheeler segments have shown a charismatic change in the industry. The demand of two-wheeler has been increased rapidly in both rural and urban areas as it is the comfortable and easiest mode of transportation and people get an edge with this technology. This specific study has been done to evaluate the customer satisfaction level of the rural people in Madhya Pradesh region. Total 540 respondents have been participated in the study who gave their response through structured questionnaire constructed by the researcher. Convenience sampling method was employed for the collection of primary data. Appropriate statistical tools were applied such as percentage analysis for demographical representation and the reliability of collected data has been checked through coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha (0.749) and internal consistency of the items has been found homogenous. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done to set the scale or criterion for measurement of satisfaction level. Mean score was calculated to access the satisfaction level of customers. The study reveals that there is significance difference between the satisfaction levels of different demographic profiles. However, brand image of Hero bikes differentiate itself in the industry that embraces high market shares.

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1. Introduction

Cultural transformation among the people of different countries is the impact of globalization which intensified it and people across the world could become closer which resulted into changing lifestyle. It's the common tendency of human being to have comparatively easy, comfort and better



life and human wants to show off their achievements or luxurious things acquired by them that are considered to be socially important. The needs and desires of the people, whatever and whenever required by them, can be fulfilled to the optimum level and it could be possible due to the effect of the globalization that enhances the satisfaction level of the people also. Cultural transformation could become a cause for creation more demand of better goods and services. Hence, the aspirations of human beings towards the luxurious goods have also increased and technological innovation gave the reason to world for fulfilling those aspirations.

It has been realized that to be remain in the market and for their sustainable growth it is very necessary for a producer that consumers must be convinced and satisfied. The producers started to produce and market the products according to the needs and wants of consumers so that optimum utility of the goods can be delivered to them which can produce satisfaction at most. Therefore, customer satisfaction is considered most important aspect for the survival of a product as well as company in the market. Customer satisfaction is an important aspect that must be considered by the firm to survive in the market.¹ Revisit intentions of consumers are greatly affected by the service quality which is an essential factor given by the company or dealers.² Quality of physical ambiance is a predecessor of customer satisfaction.³

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Transportation facility is the key factor for the growth and development of any region or country. Many economists have perceived that the growth of automobile industry is one of the outcomes of rapid industrialization which accelerated the overall industry. Automobile industry has become an indicator of economic growth of any country while two wheeler segments have shown a charismatic change in the industry. The demand of two-wheeler has been increased rapidly in both rural and urban areas as it is the comfortable and easiest mode of transportation. India's position in the production of two wheelers is first and it has been one of the largest market of the whole world where variety of two wheelers are being marketed and sold. Various multinational companies are existed to compete in the Indian market either they have separate entity or having collaboration or joint venture with Indian automobile manufacturers.

At the beginning, two-wheelers were included in luxurious product and the owner of a two wheelers was considered as a respected and prestigious person of the society. Middle income people also had two wheelers rarely. Two wheelers had been a rare thing for village people in those

days. Most of the middle income and almost lower income people could have never thought of owning a two wheeler. In the era of industrialization in the world, feeling of cultural transformation spread everywhere, this resulted into knowledge development by the way of increasing educational ratio in the country. Hence, awareness about the quality and brand among the people has been increased.

1.1 Customer Satisfaction

The concept of customer satisfaction, from historical point of view, has been existed in the study of marketing since 1950s' and still today it has been most important and relevant topic for practitioners, academicians and researchers in the marketing area. Customer satisfaction is considered prime domain of marketing by the marketers. Purchase and consumption are the process of customer satisfaction and it also links post purchase-behavior or attitude of the customers such as attitudinal change, repeat purchase and brand loyalty.

Oliver (1981) viewed customer satisfaction as an emotional reaction which a customer gives about the use of a product or service. He opined customer satisfaction as summary of psychological state and this state is the consequence of emotions surrounding against expectations is linked with consumers' prior feeling about the consumption experience.⁴

Schiffman and Kanuk (2004) seek customer satisfaction as the individual's perception. They opined that whatever perception an individual has regarding the performance of product or service against his or her expectations.⁵

Jamal Ahmad and Nasar Khan (2003) explained that customers' feeling or judgments regarding products or services which have been experienced by them, is referred as customer satisfaction.⁶

Subjective assessment of customers' towards their consumption experience, based on the interrelationship between objective attributes of the products and customers' perceptions.⁷

Customer satisfaction can be referred as the outcomes of their experiences perceived by the consumers after comparing the level of the product or service quality and performance with their evaluative standard.⁸

Not only repeat purchase behaviour is escalated by customer satisfaction but also intention to refer others is also provoked.⁹

Fornell (2006) has also defined about the customer satisfaction. He says that since repeat business is important and customers have options to go and purchase from elsewhere, high level of customer satisfaction must be delivered by the concern companies to be successful. However that though, increased customer satisfaction is counted among most crucial goals of the companies; few of them are able to measure the value of customer satisfaction.¹⁰

Churchill and Suprenant (1982) viewed customer satisfaction as an output which is derived from pre-purchase comparison of expected performance of the product by the customers with perceived actual performance. Customers also compare the cost whatever they pay for the same.¹¹

Haque and Gujar (2019) opined that role of customer satisfaction is not limited only to grow and remain in the competition but also it is an important tool for brand extension.¹² Only meeting or fulfilling the expectations of the customers' may not satisfy them. Dissatisfaction may create, only even short falls in atom of expectations. Customer satisfaction has become an important indicator of success of any product or company. It helps in creating loyalty and become a mode of advertisement through words of mouth by the satisfied customers. In the present scenario, marketers do not rely only on to supply the produced products to the customers but also they want to satisfy them ultimately.

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2. Review of Literature

D. Nivasini (2018), worked out on customer satisfaction with Honda Activa in Coimbatore city, India. The main purpose of carrying out this study was to examine the level of customer satisfaction and the reason behind the purchasing decision of Honda Activa in the region. The researcher pointed out the result that the most of the respondents gave the reason behind purchasing decision of Honda Activa to aid their jobs and comfort in riding while considering the features by the customers, look/style is the most influencing factor. Furthermore pick-up has been given least rank by the customers to be considered. She reached on the conclusion that due to fuel efficiency and eco-friendly the demand of Honda Activa is highest in the scooter segment. She suggest that

the producer must know the changing needs and desires of the customers thereby it can be satisfied through innovations by R&D.¹²

Khan, Mohd Akbar Ali and Rao, Dantrika Venkata Madhusudan (2018). found in their research that there is no effect of independent variables as well as demographical factors on the customer satisfaction. The suggestion given by them that technological development through research and development teams and various social responsibility programs through CSR are the areas which require more attention as these areas need to be improved by the producers. They have also implied that customer satisfaction must be improved for competing in a better position and to get economical advantages.¹³

Revathi K Lakshmi, Yerramilli S., Reddy, K. Vijay Sikhar (2017) has done study on Indian Automobile industry about their marketing strategies. They identified 3 classes of customers viz; 1) Worthless customers; who purchase goods on the basis of their quality and superior functionality with the logic and no emotional decision could be made. 2) Customer satisfaction; The brand is chosen to maintain status quo and to show their prosperity. 3) Luxury; Regional motives work behind the purchasing decision of goods. They have suggested that in near future the market of used cars would shine, so the companies should focus on marketing and promotional strategies of used cars also.¹⁴

V. Anbazhagan (March, 2017) The author found in the study that two wheelers are frequently used by most of the respondents for the purpose of going to office and shopping. Advertisement and word of mouth were become as the major influencing factors in their purchasing decision of two wheelers. The study revealed that users gave 1st priority to the safety while road grip, price and fuel efficiency and maintenance of two wheelers have been given 2nd, 3rd and 4th priority respectively. It is suggested that the producers of the concern must focus on these issue which influence overall customer satisfaction in cut throat competition.¹⁵

Huggi, Basavaraj, H. (2016) In India, two wheelers are frequently used for different purpose such as outdoor job, shopping, visiting friends and family etc. He pointed that rural people get benefitted

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more by two wheelers for travelling their nearby towns to accomplish their day to day needs. It has become a necessary product from luxurious one.¹⁶

Vijayalakshmi, D. Kumari M. Shanta, Deepika, S (April, 2015) suggested that the producers must consider on cost reduction of two-wheelers. The authors suggest that the expectations of customers such as mobile charger, baby carrier and matching helmets etc. should be considered by producers. It has also been suggested that the complaints of customers should be resolved quickly.¹⁷

Duggani Yuvaraj and Pro.S.Durga Rao (2014) have reached on the conclusion that customers give preference on different factors. Price, design, mileage, pickup are the factors preferred by them differently.¹⁸

Qadeer, Sara (2013). Finding of the analysis elaborate that service quality has certain level impact on customer satisfaction. There is casual relationship found between service quality and customer satisfaction, whereas performance, value price, physical existence, interactions among human etc. are such types of factors that affect to the quality of services. It is suggested by the study that the impact of image can be built as an added variable and through a quantitative research (customer survey, questionnaire.) customers' perception can be known towards quality and satisfaction.¹⁹

Asghar Afshar Jahanshahi (2011) raised some significant questions such as: Is there any link or connection existed among quality of goods and service to buyers and clients with satisfaction of customers and loyalty in Indian automobile perspective? If the answer comes in positive then which type of relationship existed among them. The automobile industry is significantly influenced by customer satisfaction and loyalty whereas customer service is determined as an inherent driver or aspect of industrial goods. All these 4 variables may be evaluated at various stages such as at the time of happening of buying and one or two years later of buying. The respondents were the owner of Tata Indica cars in Pune district. Regression and ANOVA were used in analysing data and testing hypotheses. The research revealed that there were highly positive correlations exist among these four variables.²⁰

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3. Objectives of the study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows;

- To analyze the personal profile of the respondents in the research area
- To find out the criterion on which customers measure the satisfaction level.
- To find out the customer satisfaction level towards Hero bikes.

4. Research Methodology

This study has been carried out to find out the criterion for measuring customer satisfaction of the consumers towards Hero bikes and the satisfaction level of the consumer analyzed. Various attributes of two-wheelers have been extracted through rotated component matrix and on the basis of the satisfaction level of customers were measured. For data collection most common method that is questioner survey method was used as it is very effective and inexpensive in market research.²¹ Respondents' profile was also illustrated who become from different demographic background. Some of the key points are given such as follows:

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Sample Unit – Users of two-wheelers

Research Area – Madhya Pradesh

Sample Size – 540 respondents were selected including the users of Hero bikes.

Scaling Technique - Likerts' scale

Sampling Technique - Stratified random sampling

Data Collection – Primary and secondary data

Primary Data - Through structured questionnaire using five points Likerts' scale technique.

Secondary Data - The published records of Hero MotoCorp Ltd. and other companies, journals and magazines, official website of SIAM and ACMA and various other WebPages

Application of statistical tools

On the basis of collected data different statistical tools were applied to achieve the objectives of the study given below:

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was done to set the scale for measurement of satisfaction level.

Percentage Analysis

Mean

5. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Reliability test

Table 1. Reliability Scale - Scale Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	No. of Items
.749	.750	131.84	136.804	11.696	32

The researcher has applied Cronbach’s Alpha as coefficient of reliability which ranges from 0 to 1, in this study for measuring internal consistency of variables. The reliability of collected data has been checked through coefficient of Cronbach’s Alpha (0.749) and internal consistency of the items has been found homogenous. Hence, it can be inferred that reliability statistics (Cronbach’s Alpha 0.749) are satisfactory for the scale measuring satisfaction level.

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6. Exploratory Factor Analysis

In compliance of measuring the satisfaction level of the customers, the criterion was set by the investigator by applying the exploratory factor analysis. 32 variables were reduced into few factors for grouping them to extract better result. It was based on the response of the customers selected for the study. Principle component analysis was applied for the factorization of the variables with varimax rotation method. 32 variables were reduced into 10 factors that explain the much of the original data. 10 factors extracted from the cumulative percentage column that accounts for 55.576% of the total variance. In other words, we can say that these factors contain the information of 32 variables. Only those factors are considered and taken into consideration which Initial Eigen Value gets more than one.



6.1 Factor score of items in each dimension extracted by Rotated Component Matrix

Following factors have been extracted from rotated component matrix with the items clubbed in each factor, given below:

Table 2

Factor	Items	Factor Score
Reliability	Resale value	.807
	Durability	.754
	Engine quality	.688
	Spare parts	.517
	Battery	.490
	Brand image	.426
Finance	Price in accordance with quality	.780
	Money value of the brand	.759
	Negotiation	.622
	Maintenance cost	.416
Performance on Road	Pick -up	.723
	Speed / power	.691
	Road grip	.571
	Fuel efficiency	.498
Tangibility	Fuel tank	.671
	Suspension	.594
	Wheels of the bike	.571
	Brake system	.536
	Seat	.444
Indicator Applets & Riding Comfort	Speedometer & fuel indicator	.715
	Safety measures	.661
	Riding comfort	.440
	Color	.694

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Style & Credit Facility	Style/ Looks/ Design	.628
	Availability of finance (loan/credit)	.493
Post-purchase Service & Self Start	After sales services	.697
	Warranty / guarantee	.685
	Auto start	.430
Exchange offer & Leg Position	Exchange offer	.703
	Leg position & leg guard	.401

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 11 iterations.

The above table exhibits about the factor loading on components by applying rotated factor matrix. Factor loading of different variables and their characteristics are extracted and kept in a different group that shows their relativity and set of variables. On the basis of the above measurement satisfaction level of customers are analyzed and reached on a conclusion.

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Table 3

6.2 Demographic Characteristics (Sample size, n=540)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (appx.)	Mean	SD
Gender	Male	437	80.92	4.251239	0.902246
	Female	103	19.07	4.229508	0.903712
Age	Up to 30 years	288	53.33	4.232021	0.909795
	Above 30 years	252	46.67	4.09202	1.007293
Education	Illiterate	112	20.74	4.195066	0.938782
	Literate	316	58.51	4.230018	0.906662
	Highly qualified	112	20.74	4.274481	0.885209
Occupation	Student	116	21.48	4.26529	0.882428
	Salaried	153	28.33	4.241322	0.8959185231
	Business man	129	23.88	4.214226	0.9233255114



	Farmer	142	26.29	4.241636	0.9093459188
Monthly Income	Nil	91	16.85	4.23529	0.882428
	Less than 10,000	118	21.85	4.215066	0.938782
	10,000 to 20,000	260	48.14	4.294481	0.885209
	More than 20,000	71	13.14	4.09202	1.007293
Marital Status	Married	305	56.48	4.294481	0.882428
	Unmarried	235	43.51	4.195066	0.938782

6.3 Assessing the Level of customer satisfaction demographically towards Hero bikes

For the purpose of analyzing the level of customer satisfaction on the ground of respondents' demography towards Hero bikes, the percentage analysis has been carried out to get the significant result. The satisfaction level of the respondents using Hero bikes was analyzed on the eight factors consisting thirty variables.

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6.3.1 To analyze the level of customer satisfaction towards Hero bikes on the basis of respondents' age group

Table 4
Age wise satisfaction level of respondents towards Hero bikes

S. No.	Age of respondents (years)	N	Mean	SD
1.	Up to 30 years	288	4.232021	0.909795
2.	Above 30 years	252	4.09202	1.007293



	Total	540		
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Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: In the compliance of above said objective, age wise satisfaction level of the respondents have been analyzed. The above table illustrates that 288 respondents fall up to the age group of 30 years whose mean score is 4.232021. It is noted that this age group is between 18 years to 30 years. The respondents above 30 years age are 252 and their mean score 4.09202. The mean scores of both age group inferred that the first group is more satisfied with the Hero bikes than the second group which mean score is less.

6.3.2 To analyze the level of customer satisfaction towards Hero bikes on the basis of respondents’ educational groups

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Table 6

Education wise satisfaction level of respondents towards Hero bikes

S. No.	Education of respondents	N	Mean	SD
1.	Illiterate	112	4.195066	0.938782
2.	Literate	316	4.230018	0.906662
5.	Highly qualified	112	4.274481	0.885209
Total		540		

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: From the above table, the satisfaction level of the respondents on the basis of their educational qualifications regarding Hero bikes has been deducted. The mean score of illiterate group is (4.195066) who are 112 in the group whereas, the presence of literate respondents is 316 whose mean score (4.230018). The mean score of highly qualified respondents (4.274481) is the highest than the other two groups that inferred the highest satisfied respondents with the Hero bikes fall under highly qualified respondents.



6.3.3 To analyze the level of customer satisfaction towards Hero bikes on the basis of respondents' area of residence

Table 7

Area of residence wise satisfaction level of respondents towards Hero bikes

S. No.	Residential area of respondents	N	Mean	SD
1.	Rural	276	4.229508	0.903712
2.	Urban	264	4.251239	0.902246
	Total	540		

Source: Primary Data

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Interpretation: To achieve the objective, area wise satisfaction level of the respondents with Hero bikes has been analyzed. The respondents of rural areas (276) whose mean score is (4.229508) and the respondents of urban areas (264) have scored 4.251239 mean score. Hence, it is inferred that the respondents of urban areas are more satisfied with Hero bikes in comparison of rural areas.

6.3.4 To analyze the level of customer satisfaction towards Hero bikes on the basis of respondents' professional status

Table 8

Professional status wise satisfaction level of respondents towards Hero bikes

S. No.	Professional status of the respondents	N	Mean	SD
1.	Student	118	4.26529	0.882428
2.	Salaried	154	4.241322	0.8959185231
3.	Business man	116	4.214226	0.9233255114
4.	Farmer	152	4.241636	0.9093459188



	Total	540		
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Source: Primary Data

Interpretation: The above table exhibits about the satisfaction level of the respondents according to their professional status. The highest mean score (4.26529) in these groups has been scored by students (118) followed by the farmers (152) and salaried persons (154) who scored mean value of (4.241636) and (4.241322) that shows the students' highest satisfaction level with Hero bikes and thereafter, farmers and salaried persons show the most satisfaction level with Hero bikes. The result shows that the businessmen (116) are least satisfied with Hero bikes in comparison of other professional groups as they scored mean value of (4.214226).

Findings

Assessing the customer satisfaction level on the basis of their demographic profile towards Hero bikes

- A significance difference has been observed regarding the satisfaction level of the respondents between two age groups. Among 540 respondents of Hero bikes users, up to 30 years age respondents were more satisfied with Hero bikes (4.232021) in comparison of those respondents who were above 30 years (4.09202).
- It was observed that the highly qualified respondents were highly satisfied (4.274481) with Hero bikes just followed by literate respondents whose mean score was (4.230018) and the illiterate respondents who use Hero bikes were least satisfied in the group as their mean score was (4.195066).
- On the ground of residential area of the respondents, urban users of Hero bikes were more satisfied as their mean score is (4.251239) whereas; the rural customers were less satisfied (4.229508) with Hero bikes.
- The findings regarding satisfaction level of Hero users on the basis of their professional status seem as the students were highly satisfied in the group as their mean score (4.26529)

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whereas; salaried persons (4.241322) and farmers (4.241636) were approximately equally satisfied with Hero bikes since their mean scores indicate. The businessmen or self employed respondents were likely to least satisfied in the group since they scored (4.214226) mean value.

7. Suggestion

- Brand image, color and design of the bikes are the major factors, towards the customers attract at the first time. Therefore, the manufacturer must continue their efforts to build and maintain the brand image and also continue innovations and up-gradation in colors and design of the bikes.
- More promotional activities should be there to attract more customers and to brand positioning of the bikes.
- Brand endorsement should be done through celebrities, sport personalities and film stars as the consumers especially youth are influenced highly with them.
- Engine quality of the bikes is the most important factor that a customer must consider while purchasing the bike. Innovations must be continued to improve the engine quality to deliver higher satisfaction.
- With mileage of the bikes, customers were not much satisfied especially high cc engine bikes. Hence, fuel efficiency of the bikes must be increased.
- The duration (number of years) of after sales services and warrantee/guarantee schemes must be increased to maintain long term customer relationship.
- Customers are also attracted by exchange offers provide by the dealers, showrooms. More exchange fairs should be organized by the dealers or showrooms owners and reasonable exchange and gifts should be provided to cater the market.
- More facilities should be there at service centers such as reduction of servicing time and proper follow up of the customers with regard to the services because it has been seen that in servicing long time have to spend at service centers.

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8. Conclusion



The two-wheeler industry of India with its growing scenario have become a sunrise sector and established itself as one of the biggest industry. As a means of transportation system, two-wheelers have become common man's vehicle and could become a need of the people as it's easy to ride in the cities and crowded areas and can reach in those areas where public conveyance can't. Due to stiff competition in the industry the sales performance of two-wheelers is being increased day by day. The strategies of brand endorsement also play a vital role in shining the industry of two-wheeler.

The study exhibited that the use of two-wheelers were significantly high for office going, business and college going purpose and they had been inspired mostly by media (advertisement through print and electronic media), and friend & family members to make the decision for purchasing the particular bikes. Loan and credit facility also had a significant impact in purchasing decision of two-wheelers.

The Hero bikes found more satisfactory as it has good brand image in the mind of consumers. However, Honda bikes (Former partner of Hero MotoCorp), are competing it with full efficiency and become a strong competitor. Brand image, color, style/design, engine quality, durability, resale value and riding comfort of Hero bikes gave high satisfaction to the customers whereas; pick-up, price of the bikes and its spare parts, consumption of fuel and exchange offers could not provide much satisfaction to its customers.

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9. Limitation and Scope for Further Research

The study belongs to only M.P. region and emphasized only on the products and services of a specific company Hero Moto Corps. Ltd. Hence its outcomes can't be universalized. People of other region and culture may have different opinions regarding the Hero bikes. Time and costs are the significant factors which could influence the study. It can also be inferred that respondents may be biased while giving the response.

The study can be conducted on different segments of two-wheeler like motorcycle, scooter, moped and e-bikes. Two-wheeler is not limited only to the men but women also

inclined to use the two-wheelers especially without geared bikes or scooters. Hence, a specific study can be done on the preferences and satisfaction of women regarding two-wheelers. A comparative study can also be done towards the customer satisfaction regarding the two-wheelers of different companies.

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