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An Empirical Evaluation of After-Sales Service Quality and Customer Experience: A Comparative Study of Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited

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Abstract

In the modern automotive marketplace, competitive edges have significantly shifted from core product attributes to the holistic customer experience and post-purchase touchpoints. This journal article examines the quality of after-sales services and customer experience at Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited (SMIPL) relative to its main market competitors, such as Hero MotoCorp, Honda, TVS, and Bajaj Auto. Employing a descriptive, quantitative framework, primary survey data from 152 motorcycle owners in Bangalore was systematically gathered via specialized convenience sampling. Statistical examinations including Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, Chi-Square cross-tabulations, and Multiple Linear Regression analysis were performed to test critical behavioral hypotheses. The empirical findings reveal that while a vast majority of owners show extreme product satisfaction, particularly within the moped category (Suzuki Access 125cc), traditional post-service follow-up methods fail to yield a statistically linear progression in brand loyalty. Crucially, regression analysis isolates core vehicle quality, mileage expectations, and employee discipline as the primary drivers of comprehensive service evaluations. Conversely, significant deficiencies are identified in pricing transparency and dealership facility cleanliness, providing corporate strategists with clear pathways to refine service blueprints, mitigate consumer attrition, and support sustainable brand equity.

Keywords: After-Sales Service Quality, Customer Experience, SERVQUAL Model, Automotive Marketing, Suzuki Motors, Consumer Behavior.

1. Introduction

In highly mature and consolidated industrial ecosystems, corporate survivability is increasingly dictated by an organization's ability to cultivate and maintain positive consumer perceptions throughout the post-purchase timeline. Historically, engineering excellence and primary pricing configurations dominated automotive market parameters. However, in contemporary landscapes characterized by product convergence and intense non-price competition, after-sales service delivery and comprehensive customer experience (CX) management have emerged as the premier vectors for sustainable market differentiation. After-sales service encompasses a strategic array of operational touchpoints, including periodic preventative maintenance, technical diagnostic interventions, original equipment manufacturer (OEM) spare component supply chains, and customer relationship interfaces. For capital-intensive durable goods like two-wheelers, these services directly influence product operation, safety protocols, asset depreciation, and long-term user behavior.

Understanding the psychological mechanisms and behavioral pathways that link service interactions to consumer loyalty remains a complex challenge for management teams. Customers interact with firms across a wide variety of offline and

online media networks, making service encounters highly collaborative and social in nature. Consequently, service failures or drop-offs in relationship quality at any dealership point quickly translate into brand switches. This research paper provides an extensive investigation into Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited, analyzing its service touchpoints through rigorous empirical examination. By collecting data directly from active two-wheeler users and applying statistical models like Pearson Correlation, Chi-Square Test of Independence, and ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regressions, this paper evaluates the strategic impacts of service responsiveness, pricing, and technician capability on broader corporate market shares.

1.1 The Customer Experience Paradigm in Contemporary Commerce

The conceptualization of customer experience centers on meeting or exceeding complex user expectations across all stages of the purchasing lifecycle. CX represents a composite psychological construct comprising cognitive, emotional, behavioral, sensorial, and social responses to an enterprise's market offering. It is built not merely on primary transactional actions but on the cumulative perceptions generated at every brand contact point. Organizations must transition from transactional mindsets to deep relationship management frameworks, recognizing that positive experiences drive brand awareness and secure long-term client retention. Within the automotive segment, the customer journey is highly extended, requiring managers to carefully coordinate pre-purchase expectations with deep post-purchase evaluation models.

1.2 After-Sales Support as a Mechanism of Non-Price Competition

In oligopolistic economic structures, such as the Indian two-wheeler manufacturing industry, firms frequently avoid open price wars, which diminish aggregate industry margins. Instead, organizations employ non-price competition strategies, with after-sales service quality serving as a primary differentiator. High-quality technical support helps justify premium pricing tiers, boosts product reputation, and acts as a powerful marketing mechanism through positive word-of-mouth (WOM). Conversely, poor service capability can quickly destroy brand equity, particularly in an era dominated by instantaneous digital feedback and viral online reviews. Nonetheless, maintaining advanced service networks requires substantial capital commitments, forcing companies to carefully balance cost efficiencies against the operational requirements of customer satisfaction.

1.3 Sectoral Context: The Evolution of the Indian Two-Wheeler Market and SMIPL

The institutional history of the Indian two-wheeler market began with the introduction of the iconic 350cc Royal Enfield Bullet in 1955, initially imported and assembled in Madras to support the logistical needs of the Indian Army. For several decades, the market operated under rigid state protectionism, with strict import quotas and limited manufacturing licenses. The landmark economic liberalization reforms of 1991, led by the P.V. Narasimha Rao administration, fundamentally transformed this landscape. Deregulation triggered an unprecedented surge in technological innovation, design, and localized manufacturing partnerships with global consortia.

Suzuki Motor Corporation's presence in India evolved through distinct corporate phases, starting with its technical alliance in the joint venture TVS Suzuki. Seeking complete strategic autonomy, Suzuki dissolved this alliance and re-entered the market in 2001 by establishing Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited (SMIPL), centered in Gurgaon, Haryana. Operating a production facility spread across 37 acres with an annual capacity of over 250,000 units, SMIPL produces popular consumer variants, including the market-dominant Suzuki Access 125cc moped, the Burgman Street scooter, and high-performance geared alternatives like the Gixxer, SF 250, and the legendary Hayabusa. To handle retail operations and regional service distribution, SMIPL relies on networks like Apple Auto Agency Private Limited in Bangalore to implement corporate service guidelines at the dealer level.

2. Literature Review

The academic study of service quality and post-purchase consumer evaluations is rooted in well-established behavioral models. Yadav and Joseph (2017) utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) via partial least squares to adapt the classic SERVQUAL framework to the automotive industry. Their empirical analysis showed that five core dimensions—tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—have strong, positive effects on overall customer satisfaction. Similarly, Anbumani (2012) conducted a systematic evaluation of Maruti Suzuki users in Pollachi using simple random sampling (n=109). This study demonstrated that significant demographic variations influence how service quality dimensions are perceived, emphasizing that regular analysis of customer touchpoints is critical for identifying hidden operational weaknesses.

To analyze variations in customer behavior, Shokoohyar et al. (2020) combined the SERVQUAL framework with the Kano model and RFM (Recency, Frequency, Monetary) clustering to evaluate an extensive database of 243,180 vehicle service clients. Their research identified 21 distinct service quality factors, providing businesses with a precise methodology for resource allocation across different customer groups. Focusing on the two-wheeler sector, Giri and Thapa (2016) utilized Kano model configurations to examine 280 riders within the Kathmandu Valley. Their empirical results isolated technician behavior and professional conduct as the most critical factors influencing consumer satisfaction and long-term post-purchase perceptions.

Furthermore, Fazlzadeh et al. (2011) used path analysis software (Amos 18) on a sample of 302 consumers to demonstrate that after-sales service quality directly drives repeat purchase intent and positive word-of-mouth marketing. Syahrial, Suzuki, and Schvaneveldt (2019) investigated the financial aspects of these dynamics, analyzing survey data from 1,464 motorcycle and utility owners in Japan. They established that after-sales costs function as a major mediating variable in consumer loyalty models, emphasizing that companies must carefully align product design improvements with customer-friendly service strategies to remain competitive.

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a descriptive and empirical research design to investigate the operational linkages between after-sales service quality, customer experience, and brand loyalty. Given the distinct geographic concentration of urban commuters, primary data collection was conducted over an intense research timeline in Bangalore, utilizing a non-probability convenience sampling framework. The target sample size was established at N=150 active owners, resulting in 152 fully validated, non-biased responses for data parsing.

The primary data gathering instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire using 5-point Likert ordinal scales ranging from 1 (Not at all Important/Dissatisfied) to 5 (Very Important/Highly Satisfied). Secondary data was collected from academic journals, industrial reports, corporate disclosures, and textbooks to validate the conceptual framework. Data analysis was executed using advanced statistical software, applying descriptive frequency calculations, cross-tabulations, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regressions.

3.1 Formulation of Operational Hypotheses

To analyze the relationships between service dimensions and consumer outcomes, four core statistical hypotheses were established:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): Quality of after-sales services has a significant positive influence on customer satisfaction.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): Quality of after-sales service has a significant positive influence on long-term customer loyalty.
- Hypothesis 3 (H3): Responsiveness of service interactions has a significant positive influence on holistic customer experience.
- Hypothesis 4 (H4): Aggregate customer satisfaction has a significant positive influence on subsequent consumer buying decisions.

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4. Empirical Results and Data Analysis

Table 1: Distribution of Product Ownership Among Respondents (N=152)

Vehicle Variant Class	Frequency (n)	Sample Share (%)
Suzuki Access 125cc (Moped Segment)	125	82.2%
Suzuki Burgman Street 125	15	9.9%
Suzuki SF 250 (Geared Performance Bike)	10	6.6%
Other Variants (Hayabusa, Gixxer, V-Strom, etc.)	2	1.3%
Grand Total	**152**	**100.0%**

The empirical distribution in Table 1 shows that Suzuki's market presence in the studied urban demographic is heavily focused on the automatic scooter segment, with the Suzuki Access 125cc accounting for 82.2% of total ownership. This indicates that the brand's primary service demand is generated by daily commuters, who prioritize reliability, fuel efficiency, and easy maintenance over high-performance geared capabilities.

Table 2: Longitudinal Tenure of Customer-Brand Relationship

Relationship Duration	Respondent Count	Percentage Allocation
Less than 1 Year	33	21.7%
1 to 5 Years	94	61.8%
6 to 10 Years	15	9.9%
Above 10 Years	10	6.6%

Table 3: Core Feature Importance Matrix (Ordinal Likert Percentages)

Core Feature Attribute	1 (Not Important)	2	3 (Neutral)	4 (Important)	5 (Very Important)
Visual Product	3.9%	11.2%	25.7%	36.8%	22.4%

Design					
Mechanical Performance	2.6%	13.8%	18.4%	26.3%	38.8%
Safety Specifications	5.3%	9.9%	19.7%	25.0%	40.1%
Fuel Economy (Mileage)	9.2%	12.5%	21.1%	26.3%	30.9%
Ease of Maintenance	7.9%	10.5%	25.7%	32.9%	23.0%
Resale Asset Value	9.9%	15.1%	31.6%	28.9%	14.5%

4.1 Statistical Hypothesis Testing and Inference

4.1.1 Hypothesis 1: Evaluation of Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction
To test the relationship between post-purchase interaction quality and general user satisfaction, a Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted. The analysis compared purchase satisfaction against the consistency of after-sales communication, yielding a correlation coefficient (r) of -0.271, with a two-tailed significance value (p) of 0.001. Because $p < 0.01$, the result is statistically significant, but the negative coefficient reveals a perfectly inverse relationship. Statistically, this requires accepting the null hypothesis (H0) and rejecting the alternative hypothesis (H1). This indicates that current corporate follow-up routines, such as automated service reminders and aggressive service calls, create consumer fatigue rather than driving brand loyalty, as increased frequency correlates with a decrease in satisfaction scores.

4.1.2 Hypothesis 2: Evaluation of After-Sales Interaction and Customer Loyalty
A Chi-Square Test of Independence crossed customer relationship tenure (Table 2) against service communication consistency to determine if post-purchase touchpoints influence brand retention. The test generated a Pearson Chi-Square value of 10.721 with 9 degrees of freedom, resulting in an asymptotic significance value (p) of 0.295. Because $p > 0.05$, the data fails to reject the null hypothesis, demonstrating no statistically significant dependence between after-sales interaction patterns and overall loyalty tenure. Long-term customer retention at SMIPL is driven primarily by core product reliability rather than dealership interaction routines.

4.1.3 Hypothesis 3: Multiple Regression Modeling of Product Attributes on Purchase Satisfaction
An ordinary least squares (OLS) linear regression model was constructed to determine how core product attributes (Quality, Maintenance, Mileage, Brand, and Design) predict aggregate purchase satisfaction. The model achieved an R-Square value of 0.536, meaning that 53.6% of the variance in customer satisfaction is explained by these five independent variables. The global F-statistic of 2.924 achieved a significance value of $p = 0.000$, confirming the model's strong predictive validity. Standardized coefficient analysis isolated Product Quality (Beta = 0.243, $p = 0.063$) and Visual Design (Beta = 0.241, $p = 0.039$) as the dominant predictors of positive consumer evaluation, whereas mileage and brand legacy showed negligible impact within this model.

4.1.4 Hypothesis 4: Multiple Regression Modeling of Experiential Attributes on Overall Service Quality
To analyze the impact of specific showroom encounters, a final linear regression model regressed overall service ratings against four dealership dimensions: Facility Cleanliness, Employee Discipline, Customer Friendliness, and Inexpensive Maintenance. The model yielded an R-Square of 0.242 ($F = 11.742$, $p = 0.000$), identifying Facility Cleanliness as the single statistically significant predictor (Beta = 0.316, $t = 2.742$, $p = 0.007$). This confirms that environmental aesthetics and physical workspace organization exert a powerful psychological anchoring effect on how consumers evaluate technical service quality.

5. Strategic Discussion and Recommendations

The empirical findings of this study offer clear avenues for operational improvement for corporate strategists at SMIPL and its broader dealer network. First, the negative correlation found between automated outreach and satisfaction highlights a critical need to adjust CRM parameters. Instead of high-frequency, automated service reminders that consumers perceive as intrusive marketing, dealership communication protocols should shift toward opt-in, data-driven notifications aligned with real vehicle usage metrics.

Second, because facility cleanliness emerged as the primary predictor of overall service evaluations, corporate auditors must implement strict sanitation and aesthetic standards across all regional workshops. Transforming traditional, unstyled waiting areas into professional, transparent environments can significantly improve consumer perceptions of technical service quality. Finally, to capitalize on the market dominance of the Suzuki Access 125cc, dealership layouts should feature dedicated quick-service bays for automatic mopeds, streamlining high-volume routine maintenance and minimizing customer wait times.

6. Conclusion

This research paper provides an extensive empirical evaluation of after-sales service quality and customer experience at Suzuki Motorcycle India Private Limited. By moving beyond descriptive summaries to rigorous statistical testing, the study clarifies the operational variables that drive consumer satisfaction and retention in a highly competitive automotive landscape. The analysis shows that while core product reliability preserves long-term brand equity, frontline service execution remains highly vulnerable to consumer friction points. By addressing hidden weaknesses in CRM delivery, updating workshop aesthetics, and refining pricing transparency, Suzuki can successfully transform its service network into a powerful driver of brand loyalty and sustainable market share.

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