A Study on the Perception of Customers with Respect to the after Sales Initiatives of Godrej Appliances India

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Abstract: The study is performed to have an insight on the customer perception towards the After Sales Service initiatives provided by Godrej Appliances, the White Goods Division of the Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company. Godrej, the renowned Indian Company and the Indian Manufacturing Company which has a high acceptance and admiration from the customers especially for its quality and as well the after Sales service provided by them. The current trend or rather change in the Home Appliances Industries' customers buying behavior is the after sales service support is being considered as the prime factor for buying the home appliance rather than the price and functional attribute factors which used to be believed as the key factors of purchasing these products. A product which forms part of the reputed Brand, a deficiency –free may be unsuccessful if it does not manage to get into the frame of the consumers perception of good quality or if there is scarce or dearth in providing good after sales service. The After sales service of Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Co.Ltd., the holding company of the Godrej Group, plays a pivotal role in strengthening the bond between the Organization and the customers. The major objectives of the study is to identify the potential customers of Godrej, the type of Home Appliances preferred by them, and the study also laid focus on understanding the buying behavior of the customers and to study the perception of the customers on the CRM initiatives practices of the company to ensure quality and effective after sales service. The study undertaken was a Descriptive research study which involved 200 respondents who were selected through non random sampling techniques. The study was conducted in Salem, which is a growing city of the TamilNadu state which is geographically located in the Southern part of India. The findings do reveal that the Organization has not completely utilized and made active use of the after sales service potential of the organization, and has yet to cash upon the customer loyalty to generate further business which would really ensure higher profitability if tapped professionally.

INTRODUCTION

With the sea of changes creeping into the buying pattern of the home appliances and as well with the increase in the purchasing power of the custome, the Home appliance Industry has shown a surge in the

sales growth year on year. With lot of thrust being laid on Research and Development, Technology and Innovation, the Home appliance Industry is a becoming so dynamic that the market is flooded with new and existing product getting phase lifted in terms of features and aesthetics. This trend of flooding of new product from the prime players and market leaders is on one side and looking at the response from the customers for these products, large numbers of companies have chosen to enter into the home appliances market. This has lead to the existing players to show some point of difference factors and attributes to not only attract the customers but also hold them tight to their brand. Thus the recent trend of this Industry is to put forth "Service Recovery" on the prime front in their agenda of differentiation and lay utmost focus on the after sales service as a market promotion tool and a core competency of their Business propositions. However with all these initiatives and thrust laid by the companies' marketing and manufacturing the home appliances have also felt the pinch of the fact that the failure rates of the Home appliances is always on the rise for reason known and unknown. The failure rates are attributed to the facts related to the optimum usage and as well the abuse of the products. Yet another dimension is the aspect of remedy and cure is taken up as a process of solving the product failures and break downs rather them a scientific and systematic approach of preventive and maintenance care.

"The life of an appliance in India is much higher than the world average. Service has been a Godrej strongpoint for decades now. So to ensure that the quality and responsiveness of our customer service keeps pace with our sales growth, the Company has set a team of 5,000 technicians servicing Godrej products on an outsourced basis. Since after-sales service serves as one of the key differentiators for the Godrej brand, the group endeavors to ensure that service issues get resolved in the first call itself. In addition, the number of hours taken to resolve a complaint following a call is also tracked meticulously.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

When it comes to buying the spares for the household equipment, the customers is forced to look at the cost implication of the replacement of the component or the service charges through magnifying lenses. Therefore there is lot of importance attached to the relationship between the after sales services and consumer satisfaction and their by the satisfaction factor leading to loyalty and repeat purchase of the home appliance products of the same Brand and Company.

Primary objectives

To Study the buying behavior and the perception of the customers on the after-sales service provided by Godrej appliances, the white Good division of Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Co. Ltd with special reference to the Salem city.

Secondary objectives

- To study the buying behavior of the home appliances & the type of product preferred by them.
- To measure the quality & effectiveness of after sales service as perceived by the customers.
- To study on the system of CRM practiced by the Godrej Company.
- To study the existing practice of after sales services adopted by the company in order to retain the existing customers and attract new customers.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The most important characteristic feature of the service is the aspect of heterogeneity, it can only be felt and is not tangible, more importantly the production and the consumption happens simultaneously. There has been research undertaken in the field of service recovery, after sales service and post sales service management. Few research reviews are presented for in depth understanding of the research topic.

The research on the **Buyer –seller relationship** is yet another important aspect particularly for the Technology based products, this is evident from the research study undertaken by Levitt T (Sep 1983), observed as a contract for services or technology oriented products commits both buyer and seller to an on-going relationship. Selling firms that do not acknowledge this relationship may lose repeat orders or damage their reputations. As the dynamics of the sales process change in response to the complexity of technology the focus of the seller must change from just landing sales to keeping the purchaser satisfied after the purchase. The longer the period over which the service must be extended or the more complex the product the more attention the relationship needs.

The study undertaken by the researchers across the globe re-instates the fact that the **Effective service recovery system** would enhance the satisfaction level to a great extent which can be evidenced from the study undertaken by Yang(2012).The research work under taken by Yang (2012) re-i the fact that if appropriate importance is attached by the Organizations marketing the Home appliance is laid on the service recovery and effective after sales service management system then the consumer satisfaction levels will get enhanced and not only that, the customer would become the spokes person of the Organization to advocate the product to other potential purchasers.It has also been explained in the study conducted by Tsai (2009) that the concentrated efforts taken to bring out successful service recovery acts as an enhancer of the customer satisfaction and creates a very positive brand building and reputation. This also paves way for the long lasting bonding of the Organization and the customer.

The after sales service not only depends on the product it also can be improved with **Effective use of the technology**.Marcel (2003) observed as Technological advances extend the after-sales services portfolio from traditional service encounters to voice- and bit-based services. Technology enables service organizations to transcend geographical as well as cultural boundaries. This paper examines the interaction between perceived service performance and national cultural characteristics in the formation of customer satisfaction for three types of after-sales service contact modes. The results suggest that, in contrast to the traditional face-to-face service encounter, the perceived quality– satisfaction relationship is particularly moderated by national culture in the case of an after-sales service contact mode mediated by technology.

There has been lot of small improvements suggested by the researchers addressing the point that level of satisfaction of the customers would increase if **micro tuning is performed to mitigate errors by** providing on time delivery, mistake free services and on time delivery of components and spares can also enhance the customer satisfaction to a multifold. The researcher varela-Neira (2008) study proved that if the service errors and failures are taken care effectively and on time would ultimately lead to optimum customer satisfaction. The research in this area also indicates that the effective after sales service not only increases the customer satisfaction levels it also **paves way for the customer retention and promote the Brand image** in a big way. The researcher N.Saccani, L.Songini, P.Ghirardelli, (2006), observed as the role attributed to after-sales activities in the IT and consumer electronics and household appliance industries

show an orientation to improve company image, customer satisfaction and retention (marketing focus). The measurement of non-financial performance emphasises effectiveness rather than efficiency, and the automotive industry, on the whole, presents more advanced measurement systems, together with more integrated strategic management of after-sales.

There are **several factors and determinants that contribute to the customer satisfaction**, the details are presented by researchers varies and is justified in their study. It has been explained by Paraasuraman, Berry (1988) that the positive perception of the customers towards the organization though depends on lot of factors the prime factors of reliability, transparency in communication, competency and courtesy of providing quality after sales service tops the list among all the other factors. Dirk Morschett, (2006), observed as this study proposes identifying determinants of the choice of an organizational mode for providing after-sales service in foreign markets. It aims to focus on the decision between contractual/equity cooperation and wholly-owned foreign entities and the influence of firm-specific variables on this decision. The paper finds that international experience of a company and strategic considerations such as the seeking of global integration advantages and the choice of service as competitive advantage, seems to exert a strong influence on the decision of the internalization of after-sales service operations. The Author and researcher Rust Oliver (1994) briefed the most important dimension of service is related to the personnel who are involved, the offerings that are mostly tangible and some time intangible (in terms of kind)and the scope of service related factor. Therefore what matters to the customers and their satisfaction is the quality of the offerings provided to them by the quality and well trained personnel as per the agreed and defined scope of service. Hence the value what the customer would attach more is towards the quality of service that brings not just satisfaction much beyond the delight factor.

The researchers have also indicated that **providing after sales service also serves as a factor of differentiation, can become a profit earning strategy and defend** the competitors effectively which would result in helping the company strong in after sales service to win over the customers and take away customers from the competitors . Elena Legnani, Sergio Cavalieri & Stefano Ierace, (03 April 2009)10, in this context, after-sales (AS) service has become increasingly important as a source of differentiation and market share for manufacturers and resellers, as well as a strategic driver for customer retention. The aim of this article is to propose a framework which provides a common representation of the AS processes and activities according to a configuration model that links different typologies of assistance with product characteristics for service operations. Rene T. Domingo (2002), observed as after sales service is an integral part of customer service and a key determinant of customer satisfaction and even competitiveness in any industry, manufacturing or service, particularly banking. Most banks have mastered the art of selling their services or the customer processes 'before sales'. Unfortunately, there is an observed lack of emphasis in banking services 'after sales'. Survival in the next millennium may depend not only on innovative bank products but also on innovative and responsive after sales service. Paolo Gaiardelli, Nicola Saccani, Lucrezia Songini, (2006), observed as The After-Sales service can become a key differentiator and a major profit source. Thus, after-sales cannot be considered simply a set of operative activities; rather it plays a strategic role, affecting the definition of the product-service mix offered to the customer and the physical and organizational configuration of the overall logistics chain. In this context, this paper provides a review of the existing body of knowledge about AS performance measurement systems, proposes an integrated framework for AS performance measurement consisting of four levels.

The Researcher Karande had evolved a new concept of remedies voices which would make the customers understand the organizations transparent process of handling customer grievances and complaints. These processes of keeping them abreast of the status of the service ensure utmost satisfaction and enhance their loyalty towards the product and Organization further.

Milind M. Lele, (1997)2, observed as in response to questions about how to provide the correct level of after sales service in the face of shifting customer needs and expectations, has developed an after-sales service framework, which examines the costs customers absorb when their equipment fails. Suggests that the framework can also be used to predict how product and service strategies must change in response to new technologies and evolving customer needs.

There has been an evident finding from various research study on the customer satisfaction which indicates that **the customers value the quality of service even more important than the cost economics factors**. This is proved in the research work undertaken by Oko (2013), the renowned consumer behavior analyst who has pointed out an important factor that the quality of the service is more valued by the customers than the economic factors such as price (explicit variable), ease to use and accessibility (implicit variable), and the aspect of explicit and implicit variables becomes small and redundant when it is compared with the quality of service.Hans Casper(2002) observed as this article focuses upon the perceived quality of after sales services. It is a case study about a large supplier of office e equipment active in the Dutch market. The perceptions of the industrial customer on after sales services are compared with the view the service managers in the company have about these customer perceptions. Some striking differences as well as some similarities on services are found. Conclusions can be drawn for an after sales services strategy to gain a competitive edge.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Home appliance market is no more a seller's market as there is stern competition in the market leaving way for the buyers to hold a dominant position. The process of purchase of these Home appliance based on the comparison of the quality price and features is taking a back seat and the factors of efficient, prompt and cost effective after sales service is taking the prime front position when it comes to buying these products.

The study involved 200 customers of the Godrej Home appliances drawn from Pune city of Maharashtra state strategically located in the western part of the country. In addition to the data retrieved from the customers, discussion wer held with the channel partners, the service staff who were directly and indirectly involved in the process of the after sales of the Godrej Appliances directly or indirectly in order to have good insight on the after sales service process of the Company. The respondents were selected through Non random sampling technique and the sample size was made judgmentally.

The data collection was made through the structured Questionnaires. The Questionnaire was subjected to Pilot study and tested for the Cronbach's Alpha, based on the results the Questionnaire was re-defined and the final version of the questionnaire was derived. The internal consistency was established as the values of the Cronbach's alpha for various the dimensions considered for the after sales service ranged between 0.79 to 86 which was little above) than 0.7.

The important attributes which are pertinent to the after sales service of the home appliances were selected after making a thorough review of the review of literatures and based on focus group discussions

with the professionals of the home appliance Industry who are engaged in the pursuit of providing after sales service.

The Data which were collected across the respondents of the study through the Questionnaire were analyzed by means of the statistical techniques and tools which included percentile analysis, the correlation tests using pearson correlation co-efficient- 'R''. The chi square tests were applied to test for any significant associations between the attributes like age, gender, education, Income and the Profession with other related variables that enhance the process of home appliances after sales service. The least square estimation procedure was used to make an analysis of the consumer buying behavior.The data collection involved the Likert Five point scales (ranging from 1 indicating poor and a rating of 5-indicating excellent) elaborately and the analysis depended on the feedback from the respondents.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Customer satisfaction level with regard to the Service personnel's first instance response to the service problem

From the data it is interpreted that 34% of the respondents are highly satisfied, 39% of the respondents are Satisfied, 45% of the respondents are Neutral, 2% of the respondents are Dis- satisfied and 2% of the respondents are highly Dis-satisfied with regard to the first instance response of the company to the complaints made by the customers. There is further scope for improvement in this regard as more than 49% of the respondents have neutral and dissatisfaction with regard to the first instance response of the service professional to the service problems of the customers.

Customer satisfaction level with regard to the provision of timely Service to the service problem

It is inferred from the data that 22% and 48% of the respondents are highly satisfied and satisfied with respect to the service extended at the right time respectively. About 22% and 2%of the respondents are Dis- satisfied and highly Dis-satisfied with respect to the service extended at the right time respectively. About 25% of the respondents have neutral opinion. This indicates that there is some more room for improvement in offering timely service to the customers.

Level of Satisfaction of the customers on the skill levels and competency of the service personnel

From the above data it is evident that 20% of the respondents are Highly satisfied about the skill levels of the servicing person, 40% of the respondents are satisfied over the skill level of the servicing person, 35% of the respondents have given their neutral opinion on the skill levels of the servicing person, about 4% of the respondents are Dis-satisfied with regard to the skill level of the servicing person and 1% of the respondents are Highly dis- satisfied with respect to the skill levels of the servicing person.

Customer satisfaction level with regard to the Service Personnel's work involvement

From the above data it is evident that 20% of the respondents are Highly satisfied with performance of the product after the service, 44% of the respondents are satisfied with performance of the product after the service, 33% of the respondents have Neutral opinion on the performance of the product after the service,

5% of the respondents are Dis-satisfied with performance of the product after service is done and 2% of the respondents are Highly Dis-satisfied with performance of the product after the service.

Level of Satisfaction of the Respondents on the performance of the product after service

From the data analysis it could be inferred that 20% of the respondents are highly satisfied with the time taken for service, 50% of the respondents are satisfied with the time taken for service. About 25% of the respondents have Neutral opinion with regard to the time taken for service, 3% of the respondents are dis-satisfied with the time taken for service and 2% of the respondents are highly dis-satisfied with the time taken for service. It is clear that the products performed well after the service and hence the satisfaction of the customers in this regard is very encouraging.

Level of satisfaction of the customers on the Quality of the Components replaced during the servicing of the Product

The data on analysis indicates that 20% of the respondents are highly satisfied about the quality of the components replaced, 45% of the respondents are satisfied about the quality of the components replaced, 30% of the respondents have given Neutral opinion about the quality of the components replaced, 2% of the respondents are Dis-satisfied about the quality of the components replaced and remaining 3% of the respondents are highly dis-satisfied about the quality of the components replaced.

Level of satisfaction of the respondents on the cost of service levied after the warranty period

From the above table we can infer that 20% and 42% of the respondents are highly satisfied and satisfied about the cost of service levied after the warranty period respectively. About 33% of the respondents have given Neutral opinion on the cost of service charged after the warranty period. About 4% and 1% of the respondents are Dissatisfied and highly dis-satisfied towards the cost of service after the warranty period respectively.

Level of Satisfaction of the customers on the overall initiative related to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) made by the company specifically towards the after ales service

It could be inferred from the data that 20% of the respondents are highly satisfied towards the overall relationship imitative made by the company through their CRM Programmes towards the after sales service, 50% of the respondents are satisfied towards the CRM initiatives taken on service front and 25% of the respondents have expressed Neutral opinion towards the overall relationship perspective through CRM, about 2% of the respondents have expressed their dis-satisfaction regarding the CRM efforts of the organization taken specifically towards the after sales service.

Hypothesis 1: The Relationship between the no. of years associated with Godrej &service at the right time.

Null hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between the number of years associated with Godrej and Service at the right time.

Alternative Hypothesis

H1: There is significant difference between the number of years associated with Godrej and Service at the right time.

Degrees of Freedom:

V = (R-1)*(C-1) = (5-1)*(5-1) =1

Chi-Square

$X^2 = \Sigma\ (O_{ij}-E_{ij})\ \hat{}\ 2\ /\ E$

= 39.598

The tabulated value of Chi-Square for degree of freedom 16 at 5%

Level of significance is 26.296.

INTERPRETATION

The Calculated value is more than the tabulated value and hence the result rejects the Null Hypothesis. There is significant difference between the number of years associated with Godrej and Service at the right time.

Hypothesis 2: The relationship between the monthly income and amount chargedafter the warranty period.

Null hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between the Monthly income and Amount charged after the warranty period.

Alternative Hypothesis:

H1: There is significant difference between the Monthly income and Amount charged after the warranty period.

Degrees of Freedom

V = (R-1)*(C-1) = (5-1)*(5-1) =16

Chi-Square

$X^2 = \Sigma\ (O_{ij}-E_{ij})\ \hat{}\ 2\ /\ E$

= 21.4425

The tabulated value of Chi-Square for degree of freedom 16 at 5% Level of significance is 26.296.

INTERPRETATION

The Calculated value is less than the tabulated value and hence the result accepted alternative hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the Monthly income and Amount charged after the warranty period.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between the no. of year associates with Godrej and Satisfaction towards the after sales service

Null hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between the number of years associated with Godrej and satisfaction towards the after sales service.

Alternative Hypothesis:

H1: There is significant difference between the number of years associated with Godrej and satisfaction towards the after sales service.

Degrees of Freedom

$V = (R-1)*(C-1) = (5-1)*(5-1) =1$

Chi-Square

$X^2 = \Sigma (Oij-Eij)^2 / E$

$= 38.036$

The tabulated value of Chi-Square for degree of freedom 16 at 5%

Level of significance is 26.296.

INTERPRETATION

The Calculated value is more than the tabulated value and hence the result rejects the Null Hypothesis. There is significant difference between the numbers of years associated with Godrej and satisfaction towards the after sales service.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between the monthly incomes & presently using the Godrej products.

Null hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference between the monthly incomes & presently using the Godrej products.

Alternative hypothesis:

H1: There is significant difference between the monthly incomes & presently using the Godrej products.

Degrees of Freedom

$V = (R-1)*(C-1)$

$= (7-1)*(5-1)$

$=24$

Chi-Square

$X^2 = \Sigma (Oij-Eij)^2 / E$

$= 51.27854$

The tabulated value of Chi-Square for degree of freedom 24 at 5%

Level of significance is 36.415.

INTERPRETATION

The Calculated value is more than the tabulated value and hence the result rejects the Null Hypothesis. There is significant difference between the monthly incomes & presently using the Godrej products.

Model on Home Appliances customer Buying Behavior with special reference to the After Sales service The home appliances buying behavior of the customers is represented by HACBB, which is dependent on various techno commercial factor. However the research is focused to derive a model with special reference to the functions of the after sales services and the influence of these specific factors pertaining to after sales in the customer buying behavior of the home appliances.

The depiction of the equation in this regard is given as follows

HACBB = Functions of (TSP, EXWS, CRMPS, CESC, QSC, SCIA, SKSP, WESC)

The TSP refers to the aspect of Timely service of the Products; (EXWS) refers to the Extended warranty services, (CRMPS) is the Customer relationship management Programmes specifically towards service, (CESC) is the cost economics of the spares and consumables,(QSC) indicates the quality of the spares and consumable, (SCIA) is the spares and consumables inventory and availability,(SKSP) is the skills of the service personnel and (WESC) indicates the Warranty extension for the spares changed)

The Model to elucidate the findings is represented by the Equation as follows

$$X_0 + X_1 (TSP) + X_2 (EXWS) + X_3(CRMPS) + X_4(CESC) + X_5(SCIA)$$

$$+ X_6(SKSP)\ X_7(WESC) + C$$

The co-efficient is considered to be positive and the "C" is considered as the correction factor to absorb the error.

The Results and interpretation explain on the application of the least square estimation technique is deployed in order to institute the relationship between the variables which have been considered in the equation.

Table on Home Appliances Buying Behaviour Determinants

Sl. No	Variable	Co-Efficient	T value	P- Value	Variance Inflation Factor
1.	Constant	0.743	2.037	0.041	
2.	TSP	0.161	2.449	0.006	1.031
3.	EXWS	0.202	2.891	0.004	1.499
4.	CRMPS	0.0.53	1.008	0.274	1.296
5.	CESC	0.107	2.663	0.003	1.124
6.	SCIA	0.004	0.055	0.895	1.358
7.	SKSP	0.248	3.107	0.002	1.308
8.	WESC	0.193	0.366	0.815	1.192

Adjusted R2 Value = 0.216   F Value (Probable) = 10.943

From the Table above it is obvious that the factors such as the TSP, EXWS, CESC and SKSP have got a positive influence in terms of the home appliances consumers buying behavior and the aspects such as the CRMPS, SCIA and WESC have not shown significant influence on the home appliance consumer buying behavior.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The overall satisfaction of the customers on the after sales initiatives made by the Godrej as a manufacturer and the channel partners is satisfied and a few are highly satisfied. However there are certain customers who are moderately satisfied, a few were indicating a neutral opinion and few dis-satisfied customers were also identified who expect the after sales system needs to evolve further to the next level. Some of the major areas of improvement is the prompt and timely delivery of the product after the completion of service and increase the number of service stations so that the satisfaction levels of the customers could be improved further. The results on the consumer buying behavior very clearly indicates that the factors such as timely service of the products, extended warranty services, cost economics of the spares and consumables and the skills of the service personnel are considered as highly influencing factor when it comes to buying the home appliances. Therefore the company has to lay more emphasis on these aspects which would have a twin positive effect of enhancing the satisfaction levels of the customers and also serve as a motivating and inducing factor for the customer who are looking for the purchase of these home appliances equipment.

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