

CONSUMER PERCEPTION AND BRAND LOYALTY: THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON MARKET EXPANSION AT 3M CAR CARE STUDIO

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ABSTRACT

The automobile service industry is growing rapidly due to increasing vehicle ownership and rising customer expectations for vehicle maintenance and appearance. This study focuses on consumer perception, brand loyalty, and the role of digital marketing in expanding the reach of 3M Car Care Studio in Madurai. The research examines customer awareness, satisfaction, and their preference towards car care services. Primary data were collected from customers using a structured questionnaire, and statistical tools such as percentage analysis and cross tabulation were used for interpretation. The findings indicate that most customers have a positive perception of 3M Car Care services and show strong brand loyalty due to service quality and brand reputation. The study also highlights that digital marketing platforms such as social media and online reviews play a significant role in increasing customer awareness and attracting new customers.

Keywords: *Consumer Perception, Brand Loyalty, Digital Marketing, Customer Satisfaction, and Car Care Services.*

INTRODUCTION

The automobile industry has witnessed rapid growth in recent years due to the increasing number of vehicles and the growing demand for vehicle maintenance and protection services. As vehicles have become an essential part of daily life, customers are becoming more conscious about maintaining the appearance, performance, and longevity of their vehicles. Car care services play a significant role in ensuring that vehicles remain in good condition through regular maintenance, cleaning, polishing, and protective treatments. Professional car care studios provide specialized services that help customers maintain the aesthetic value and durability of their vehicles. 3M Car Care Studio is one of the well-known brands in the automobile service sector that provides a wide range of professional car detailing and protection services. The services offered include car washing, interior cleaning, car polishing, paint protection film, ceramic coating, and other specialized vehicle protection solutions. These services help customers maintain the quality and appearance of their vehicles while also improving their resale value. Due to the strong brand reputation and quality service standards, 3M Car Care Studios have gained the

trust of many customers in different parts of the country. In today's competitive market, understanding consumer perception has become an important factor for business growth and sustainability.

Consumer perception refers to the way customers interpret and evaluate the services offered by a company. Positive perception among customers leads to higher satisfaction levels and strengthens brand loyalty. Brand loyalty plays a crucial role in the success of service organizations because loyal customers are more likely to revisit the service provider and recommend the brand to others. Another important factor influencing customer behaviour in the modern business environment is digital marketing. With the rapid development of technology and internet usage, digital marketing has become an effective tool for businesses to communicate with their customers and promote their services. Social media platforms, online advertisements, websites, and customer reviews influence customer decisions and create awareness about various products and services. Businesses that effectively utilize digital marketing strategies can reach a wider audience and improve customer engagement.

This study focuses on analysing the consumer perception towards the services offered by 3M Car Care Studio and examining the role of digital marketing in expanding its customer reach in Madurai. The findings of the study will help in understanding customer expectations and improving marketing strategies to enhance business performance.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Schiffman & Kanuk (2010) – “Consumer Behavior” This study explains how consumer behavior influences purchasing decisions and brand preferences. According to the authors, consumer perception is formed through personal experiences, marketing communication, and social influences. The study highlights that understanding consumer behaviour is essential for businesses to design effective marketing strategies and improve customer satisfaction. By analysing consumer attitudes and expectations, companies can provide better services and strengthen their relationship with customers.

Aaker, D.A. (1991) – “Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name” This research focuses on the concept of brand equity and the importance of brand value in influencing customer loyalty. The author explains that brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty are the key elements that contribute to building strong brand equity. The study also emphasizes that companies with strong brand equity are able to create a positive perception among customers and gain a competitive advantage in the market.

Kotler & Keller (2016) – “Marketing Management” The authors explain the importance of marketing strategies in developing strong relationships with customers. The study highlights that businesses must focus on understanding customer needs and delivering value through quality services. Effective marketing strategies help organizations build customer satisfaction and loyalty. The research also emphasizes that modern marketing practices should include both traditional and digital marketing approaches to reach a wider audience.

Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) – “The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance” This study examines the relationship between brand trust, emotional attachment, and brand loyalty. According to the authors, customers who trust a brand and feel emotionally connected to it are more likely to remain loyal and continue purchasing the brand's services. The study also indicates that positive brand experiences and customer satisfaction contribute to stronger brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth communication.

Duffett (2017) – “Influence of Social Media Marketing on Consumer Attitudes” This research analyzes how social media marketing influences consumer attitudes and buying behavior. The study reveals that social media platforms play a significant role in shaping consumer perception and increasing brand awareness. Businesses can use social media marketing strategies to interact with

customers, promote their services, and create strong brand engagement. The research also highlights that social media helps companies attract new customers and retain existing ones.

Oliver (1999) – “Consumer Loyalty” The study explains the concept of customer loyalty and its importance for business success. According to the author, customer loyalty develops through different stages such as cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, and action loyalty. The research suggests that when customers experience high satisfaction and service quality, they are more likely to remain loyal to a particular brand and recommend it to others.

Mangold & Faulds (2009) – “Social Media: The New Hybrid Element of the Promotion Mix” The authors discuss the growing importance of social media as a powerful marketing communication tool. The study explains that social media platforms allow businesses to interact directly with customers and build strong relationships with them. Through social media, companies can promote their products and services, increase brand visibility, and create customer engagement.

Kumar et al. (2013) – “Examining the Role of Customer Engagement in Influencing Customer Loyalty” This research focuses on the importance of customer engagement in developing brand loyalty. The study states that businesses must maintain continuous interaction with customers through personalized communication and quality service. Customer engagement helps in building trust and” long-term relationships with customers. The research concludes that effective engagement strategies can significantly improve customer loyalty and business performance.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985) – “A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research” This study introduces the SERVQUAL model, which explains the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. According to the model, service quality is measured through five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, Assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The research highlights that high service quality leads to positive consumer perception and increases customer satisfaction and loyalty.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the Consumer Perception towards 3M Car Care Studio.
2. To identify factors contributing to brand loyalty among regular customers of 3M Car Care Studio.
3. To study how digital marketing helps automotive service centers reach more customers beyond their local area.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design - Descriptive research design was adopted.

Data Collection - Primary data were collected from 117 customers using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were collected from books, journals, and company records.

Type of Sampling – Convenience Sampling Method was used.

Tools Used for Analysis – Frequency Analysis, Cross Tabulation, Chi-square Test & Correlation Analysis and regression Analysis

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	78	66.7%
	Female	39	33.3%
Age Group	Below 25 years	28	23.9%
	25 – 35 years	46	39.3%
	36 – 45 years	25	21.4%
	Above 45 years	18	15.4%
Educational Qualification	Undergraduate	34	29.1%
	Postgraduate	51	43.6%
	Others	32	27.3%
Occupation	Student	22	18.8%
	Employed	63	53.8%
	Business	21	17.9%
	Others	11	9.5%
Monthly Income (₹)	Below Rs. 20,000	26	22.2%
	Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 40,000	38	32.5%
	Rs. 40,001 – Rs. 60,000	29	24.8%
	Above Rs. 60,000	24	20.5%
Car Ownership	Yes	89	76.1%
	No	28	23.9%
Area of Residence	Urban	27	23.1%
	Semi-Urban	60	51.3%
	Rural	30	25.6%

Inference: The demographic analysis reveals that the majority of respondents are male (66.7%), indicating that car care services are predominantly utilized by men. A significant proportion of respondents fall within the 25–35 years age group (39.3%), followed by those below 25 years, suggesting that young and middle-aged individuals form the core customer base. In terms of education, most respondents are postgraduates (43.6%), followed by undergraduates, reflecting a well-educated sample with higher awareness levels about car care services and digital platforms. Regarding occupation, a majority are employed (53.8%), indicating stable income sources and the ability to spend on professional car care services.

The income distribution shows that a considerable portion earns between ₹20,000 – ₹40,000 (32.5%), followed by higher income groups, suggesting moderate to good purchasing power among respondents. Notably, 76.1% of respondents own a car, confirming the relevance of the sample to the study. With respect to the area of residence, more than half of the respondents belong to semi-urban areas (51.3%), followed by rural and urban areas. This indicates that car care awareness and digital marketing reach are expanding beyond urban centres into semi-urban and rural markets.

Overall, the findings suggest that the typical customer of car care services is a young, educated, employed individual from a semi-urban background with moderate income and car ownership, highlighting the growing importance of digital marketing in reaching diverse and emerging market segments.

CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS 3 M CAR CARE STUDIOS:

Variables	Customer perception	Locality			
		Urban	Semi Urban	Rural	Total
First impression when you entered 3M car care studio	Excellent	1	8	4	13
	Good	9	16	17	42
	Average	17	36	9	62
	Total	27	60	30	117

Inference: The majority of customers across all localities rated their first impression as "Average" (62 out of 117), especially in semi-urban areas (36) and urban (17). This suggests there is room for improvement in ambiance, initial interaction, or welcoming experience. "Good" impressions were most common in rural areas (17) and semi-urban (16), indicating that expectations may be lower in these areas, or service standards are seen more favourably compared to local competitors.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO BRAND LOYALTY AMONG REGUAR CUSTOMERS OF 3M CAR CARE STUDIO:

S. No.	Demographic Factors	Asymptotic Significance	Null Hypothesis	Interpretation
1.	The service is delivered on time, Which makes to return again.	0.024	Rejected	There is a significant relationship between the service is delivered on time, which makes to return again.

Inference: The p-value of 0.024 indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between timely service delivery and customer retention. This suggests that when 3M Car Care provides services on time, it positively influences customers' decisions to return. Therefore, ensuring prompt and efficient service can enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty.

OPINION TOWARDS THE HELP OF DIGITAL MARKETING & AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE CENTERS THAT REACHES MORE CUSTOMERS BEYOND THEIR LOCAL AREA

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	20.290	0.000
1	(Constant)	3.142	0.155		20.290	0.000
	Type of online content do you find most trustworthy when choosing a service center.	0.027	0.070	0.036	0.386	0.700

Inference: In this analysis, the regression result is $Y = 0.027X + 3.142$, Where, X = Type of online content do you find most trustworthy when choosing a service center. Y = To what extent do your opinion about 3M Car Care Studio's service quality, trust in the brand, and their digital marketing efforts influence your loyalty and willingness to choose or recommend their services, even outside your local area. The regression analysis shows that the variable "trusted type of online content" has a very small

positive impact on customer loyalty ($B = 0.027$), but this effect is not statistically significant ($p = 0.700$). The Beta value (0.036) indicates a very weak relationship, and the t-value (0.386) further supports that the variable does not meaningfully influence loyalty or willingness to recommend 3M Car Care.

CORRELATION BETWEEN PREFERRED ONLINE COMMUNICATION CHANNELS AND ENGAGEMENT WITH CAR CARE ADVERTISEMENTS:

Particulars		Type of online communication preferred for interacting with a car care brand	Engage with car care advertisements or promotions online
Type of online communication preferred for interacting with a car care brand	Pearson Correlation	1	0.346
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.000
	N	117	117
Engage with car care advertisements or promotions online	Pearson Correlation	0.346	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	=
	N	117	117

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

Inference: The correlation analysis examines the relationship between preferred type of online communication with a car care brand and frequency of engagement with car care advertisements or promotions online. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.346, which indicates a moderate positive correlation between the two variables. The p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.01, meaning the correlation is statistically significant at the 1% level. This means that customers who prefer specific types of online communication (such as WhatsApp, email, social media, etc.) are more likely to engage frequently with online car care promotions or advertisements. In other words, engagement increases with preferred and effective digital communication. This finding is useful for targeting customers through the right communication channels to improve digital marketing effectiveness.

FINDINGS

- The study reveals that a majority of the respondents are aware of the services offered by 3M Car Care Studio in Madurai. Customers are familiar with various car care services such as car washing, polishing, interior cleaning, and paint protection. This awareness has been created through both direct customer experience and promotional activities.
- The analysis shows that most of the customers have a positive perception towards the quality of services provided by 3M Car Care Studio. Customers believe that the studio provides professional and reliable services which help in maintaining the appearance and durability of their vehicles.
- The study indicates that service quality and brand reputation are the major factors influencing customers to choose 3M Car Care Studio. Customers prefer the brand because of its established reputation and the trust associated with the 3M brand name.
- The findings show that a significant number of customers are satisfied with the services provided by the studio. Customer satisfaction is mainly influenced by factors such as service efficiency, staff behavior, and the quality of service delivered.

- The study highlights that digital marketing plays an important role in creating awareness and attracting new customers. Social media platforms, online advertisements, and customer reviews help in increasing customer engagement and expanding the reach of 3M Car Care Studio.

SUGGESTIONS

- 3M Car Care Studio should focus more on digital marketing activities such as social media promotions, online advertisements, and customer engagement through digital platforms. This will help in increasing customer awareness and attracting more potential customers.
- The studio can introduce promotional offers and seasonal discounts to attract new customers and encourage existing customers to revisit the service center for regular vehicle maintenance.
- The management should continue to maintain high service quality and professional standards in order to strengthen customer satisfaction and build long-term brand loyalty.
- Customer feedback should be collected regularly to understand customer expectations and improve the quality of services offered by the studio.
- The studio can organize awareness campaigns or demonstrations about the benefits of professional car care services, which will help customers understand the importance of maintaining their vehicles properly

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that consumer perception and brand loyalty play an important role in the success and growth of service organizations such as 3M Car Care Studio. The findings of the study reveal that customers have a positive perception towards the quality of services offered by the studio and show a good level of satisfaction with the services provided. Service quality, brand reputation, and customer experience are the major factors influencing customer loyalty and repeat usage of services. In addition, the study highlights that digital marketing has become an effective tool for creating awareness and attracting potential customers. Social media platforms and online promotional activities help the company reach a wider audience and improve customer engagement. Therefore, by maintaining high service quality and implementing effective digital marketing strategies, 3M Car Care Studio can further strengthen customer relationships and expand its market reach in the future.

Overall, the study provides useful insights into customer perception and loyalty towards 3M Car Care Studio. It also highlights the growing importance of digital marketing in influencing customer decisions and expanding business reach. By focusing on customer satisfaction and adopting effective marketing strategies, the organization can strengthen its position in the competitive automobile service market.

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