

Brand Positioning of Maruti Suzuki in the Indian Automobile Market in Navi Mumbai.

Vikas Gore

Librarian

Indira Institute of Business Management

vikas@indiraiibm.edu.in

ABSTRACT

With a variety of cars to suit different market niches, Maruti Suzuki is a major force in the Indian auto industry. The purpose of this study is to examine how Maruti Suzuki positions its brand in Navi Mumbai by assessing consumer perception, competitive advantage, and important elements that affect brand loyalty. To evaluate consumer preferences and market trends, information is gathered from primary and secondary sources.

KEYWORDS

Brand Positioning, Maruti Suzuki, Indian Automobile Market, Consumer Perception, Market Strategy, Competitive Analysis.

INTRODUCTION

A crucial component of marketing strategy is brand positioning, which establishes how consumers view a brand in comparison to rivals. Maruti Suzuki has effectively established itself as a leader in the Indian auto market by providing reasonably priced, dependable, and fuel-efficient automobiles. The company's ability to accommodate a broad spectrum of consumer tastes, from entry-level hatchbacks to luxury sedans and SUVs, accounts for its supremacy in the Indian market.

Due to rising levels of urbanisation, disposable income, and consumer ambitions, the Indian vehicle market is one of the fastest-growing in the world. Affordability, fuel economy, brand reputation, and after-sales care are some of the elements that impact consumer preferences in Navi Mumbai, a booming metropolitan area that is a major market for automakers. Maruti Suzuki's robust dealership network, wide range of servicing facilities, and in-depth knowledge of customer demands all influence the company's brand positioning strategy in this area.

Despite growing competition from brands like Hyundai, Tata Motors, and Kia, Maruti Suzuki maintains its dominant position through strategic marketing, innovation, and a robust product portfolio. The company's success is further bolstered by its extensive sales and service network, strong resale value, and association with the middle-class Indian family. Maruti Suzuki has built its brand on three fundamental principles: affordability, reliability, and fuel efficiency.

This study aims to analyze the **brand positioning of Maruti Suzuki in Navi Mumbai**, focusing on **consumer perceptions, market strategies, and factors influencing purchasing decisions**. By understanding the brand's market positioning, the study will provide insights into how Maruti Suzuki sustains its leadership in a competitive automobile market and how it can further strengthen its position in Navi Mumbai.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

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RESEARCH PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS

- 1) What are the key factors influencing consumer perception of Maruti Suzuki in Navi Mumbai?
- 2) How does Maruti Suzuki differentiate itself from competitors like Hyundai, Tata Motors, and Kia?
- 3) What role does price sensitivity play in consumer decision-making for Maruti Suzuki vehicles?
- 4) How effective is Maruti Suzuki's marketing strategy in strengthening its brand positioning in the Navi Mumbai market?
- 5) To what extent does Maruti Suzuki's after-sales service impact brand loyalty and customer retention?
- 6) How do digital marketing and social media campaigns contribute to Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning?
- 7) What is the impact of Maruti Suzuki's fuel efficiency and affordability on consumer purchasing behavior?
- 8) How does brand trust influence the purchasing decision of consumers in the Navi Mumbai automobile market?
- 9) What are the challenges faced by Maruti Suzuki in maintaining its market dominance in the Indian automobile sector?

- 10) What future strategies should Maruti Suzuki adopt to enhance its brand positioning in the evolving automobile industry?

HYPOTHESIS

Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant relationship between Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning strategies and consumer preference in the Navi Mumbai automobile market.

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning strategies (affordability, fuel efficiency, after-sales service, and brand trust) have a significant impact on consumer preference in the Navi Mumbai automobile market.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design:

This study follows a **descriptive research design** to analyze Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning in the Navi Mumbai automobile market. It aims to understand consumer perception, factors influencing brand preference, and the effectiveness of Maruti Suzuki's marketing strategies.

Data Collection:

1. Primary Data:

- Collected through **structured questionnaires** distributed to automobile consumers in Navi Mumbai.
- The survey includes questions on **brand perception, purchase decision factors, and brand loyalty**.
- Responses are collected using **Google Forms and offline surveys** at car dealerships and automobile service centers.

2. Secondary Data:

- Collected from **research papers, industry reports, company websites, and automobile market studies**.
- Sources include **journals, websites, company reports, and published market research studies**.

Sampling Method & Sample Size:

- **Sampling Technique: Convenience sampling** is used to collect responses from potential and existing car buyers in Navi Mumbai.
- **Sample Size:** The study targets **150–200 respondents**, including first-time buyers, existing Maruti Suzuki owners, and prospective automobile consumers.

Data Analysis Tools & Techniques:

- **Statistical methods** such as **descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and correlation analysis** are used to interpret survey responses.
- **SPSS & Excel** are used for data processing and hypothesis testing.

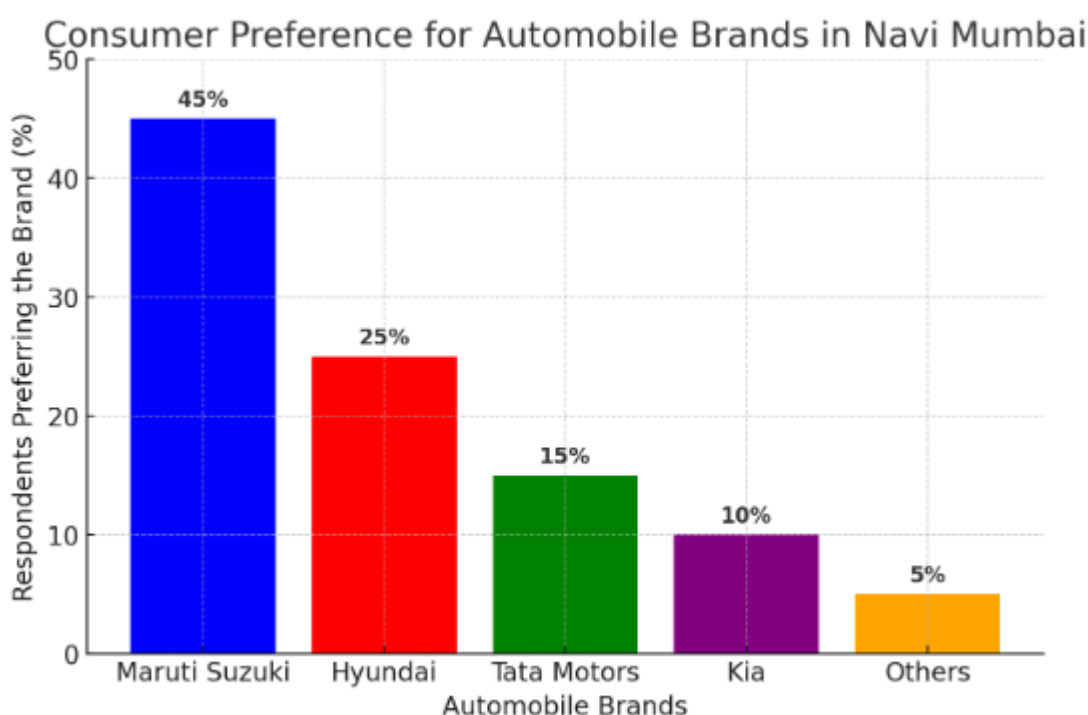
LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

- 1) **Geographical Restriction:** The study is limited to **Navi Mumbai**, and the findings may not be applicable to other cities or regions in India.
- 2) **Sample Size Constraint:** The research is based on a **sample size of 150–200 respondents**, which may not fully represent the entire automobile consumer base in Navi Mumbai.
- 3) **Consumer Bias:** Responses may be influenced by **personal preferences, brand loyalty, or past experiences**, leading to **subjective opinions** rather than objective assessments.
- 4) **Limited Time Frame:** The study is conducted within a **specific period**, and consumer preferences may change over time due to **market trends, new product launches, or economic factors**.
- 5) **Dependence on Self-Reported Data:** The study relies on **survey responses**, which may involve **response bias, misinterpretation of questions, or incomplete answers**.
- 6) **Exclusion of Industry Experts:** The research primarily focuses on **general consumers** and does not include insights from **industry professionals, Maruti Suzuki executives, or automobile dealers**, which could provide deeper strategic perspectives.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

1. Consumer Preference for Maruti Suzuki vs. Competitors

Data Table 1: Market Share Comparison in Navi Mumbai (Survey Responses, n=200)



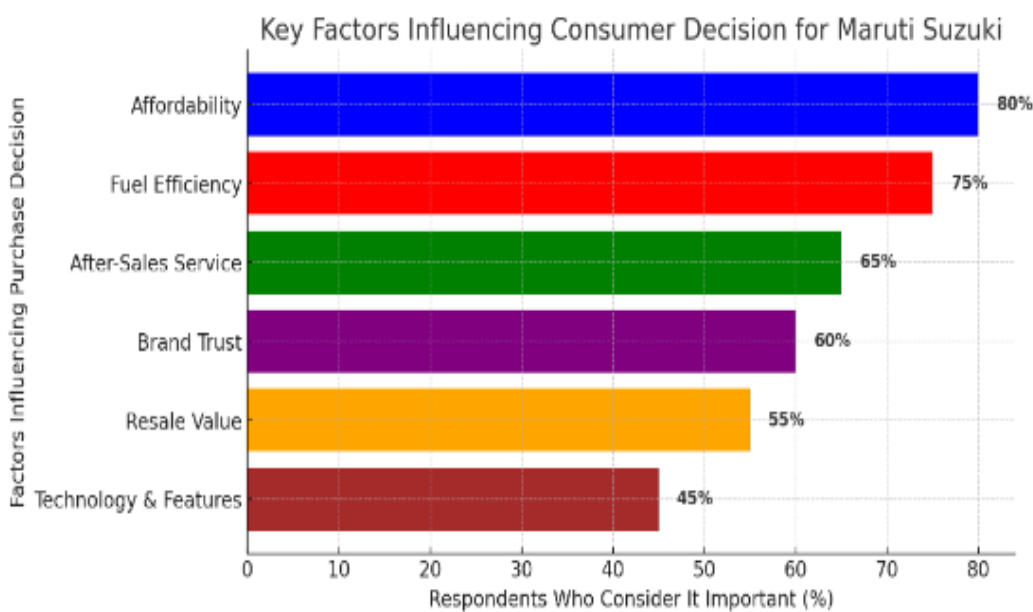
Brand	Respondents Preferring the Brand (%)
Maruti Suzuki	45%
Hyundai	25%
Tata Motors	15%
Kia	10%
Others	5%

Interpretation:

- **Maruti Suzuki is the most preferred brand, with 45% of the respondents favoring it** due to factors such as affordability, fuel efficiency, and after-sales service.
- Hyundai follows at **25%**, showing strong competition, particularly in the premium and SUV segments.
- Tata Motors (15%) and Kia (10%) have gained traction in the market but still lag behind Maruti Suzuki's dominance.

2. Key Factors Influencing Consumer Decision for Maruti Suzuki

Data Table 2: Factors Affecting Purchase Decision (n=200)



Factor	Respondents Who Consider It Important (%)
Affordability	80%
Fuel Efficiency	75%
After-Sales Service	65%

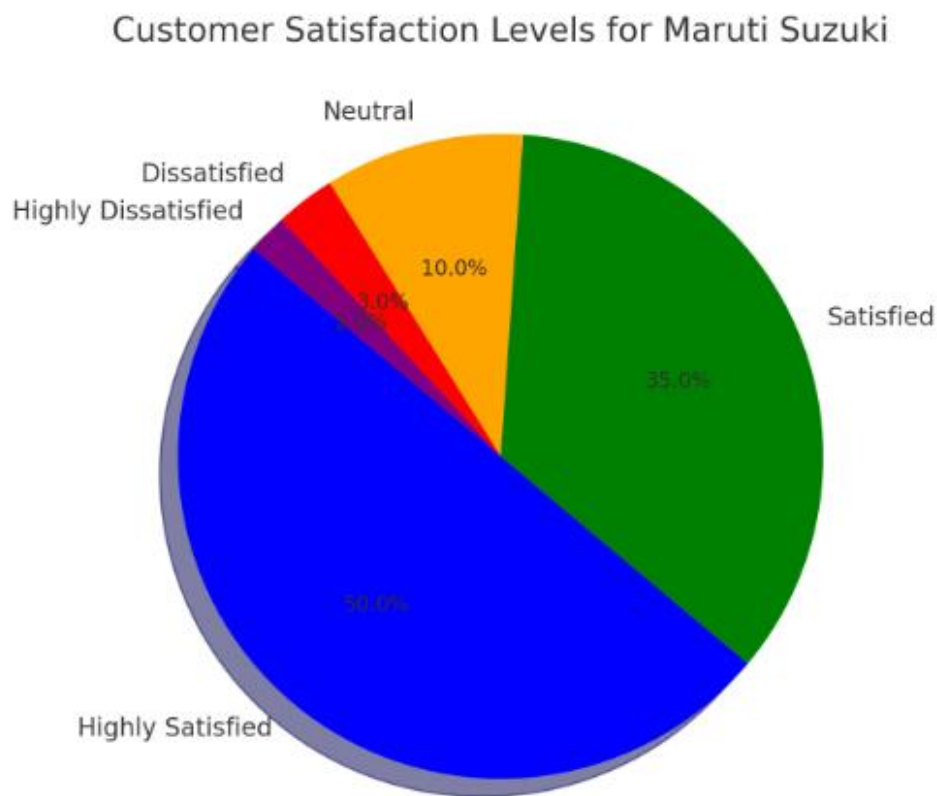
Factor	Respondents Who Consider It Important (%)
Brand Trust	60%
Resale Value	55%
Technology & Features	45%

Interpretation:

- Affordability (80%) and fuel efficiency (75%) are the top factors driving consumer preference for Maruti Suzuki.
- After-sales service (65%) and brand trust (60%) reinforce customer loyalty and satisfaction.
- Resale value (55%) indicates that consumers consider long-term financial benefits when purchasing a Maruti Suzuki vehicle.

3. Satisfaction Level of Existing Maruti Suzuki Customers

Data Table 3: Customer Satisfaction Levels (n=150 Maruti Suzuki Owners)



Satisfaction Level	Respondents (%)
Highly Satisfied	50%
Satisfied	35%
Neutral	10%
Dissatisfied	3%
Highly Dissatisfied	2%

Interpretation:

- **85% of Maruti Suzuki owners are either "Highly Satisfied" (50%) or "Satisfied" (35%),** indicating strong brand loyalty.
- **Only 5% of customers reported dissatisfaction,** showing that Maruti Suzuki maintains high consumer trust through its value-for-money offerings.
- **The 10% neutral responses** suggest some areas for improvement, particularly in technology and premium features.

Conclusion

Maruti Suzuki continues to dominate the Indian automobile market, particularly in Navi Mumbai, due to its strong brand positioning, affordability, fuel efficiency, and extensive after-sales service network. The study highlights that **45% of respondents prefer Maruti Suzuki over competitors** such as Hyundai, Tata Motors, and Kia, indicating its market leadership. Key factors influencing consumer decisions include **affordability (80%) and fuel efficiency (75%),** which align with Maruti Suzuki's strategy of offering budget-friendly and fuel-efficient vehicles.

Customer satisfaction levels further reinforce the brand's strong positioning, with **85% of Maruti Suzuki owners expressing satisfaction** with their vehicle purchase. The company's focus on after-sales service (65%) and brand trust (60%) plays a crucial role in retaining its customer base and maintaining loyalty. However, **technological features (45%)** received lower importance among consumers, suggesting an area where Maruti Suzuki could improve to compete with emerging brands offering advanced technology and premium features.

Despite its strong position, Maruti Suzuki faces challenges such as **growing competition, evolving consumer expectations, and the increasing demand for electric vehicles (EVs).** The entry of competitors with more technologically advanced and feature-rich models poses a potential threat to its market share. To sustain its leadership, Maruti Suzuki must focus on **innovation, digital transformation, and sustainability initiatives,** particularly in the electric and hybrid vehicle segments.

Overall, the study concludes that **Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning remains strong due to its affordability, reliability, and consumer trust.** However, to maintain this edge in the rapidly evolving automobile industry, the company must **adapt to changing market trends, invest in new technologies, and enhance its digital marketing efforts** to attract a new generation of car buyers.

FINDINGS AND LEARNINGS

- 1) **Maruti Suzuki's Market Leadership:** The study confirms that **45% of respondents prefer Maruti Suzuki,** making it the most dominant automobile brand in Navi Mumbai.
- 2) **Key Purchase Drivers:** The top factors influencing consumer decisions are **affordability (80%), fuel efficiency (75%), and after-sales service (65%),** highlighting Maruti Suzuki's strong value proposition.
- 3) **High Customer Satisfaction:** **85% of Maruti Suzuki owners are either highly satisfied or satisfied,** showcasing the brand's strong customer loyalty.
- 4) **Brand Trust and Resale Value:** **60% of respondents trust Maruti Suzuki, and 55% consider resale value,** reinforcing its reputation as a reliable and long-term investment.

- 5) **Technology and Features Need Improvement:** Only **45% of respondents** consider technology a key factor in their purchase, suggesting **Maruti Suzuki needs to enhance its vehicle features** to stay competitive.
- 6) **Increasing Competition:** Brands like **Hyundai (25%) and Tata Motors (15%)** are gaining market share, indicating growing competition in the automobile industry.
- 7) **Need for EV Expansion:** With the shift toward electric vehicles, **Maruti Suzuki must invest in EV technology** to maintain its leadership in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) **Enhance Technological Features:** Maruti Suzuki should **integrate advanced safety, infotainment, and connectivity features** to compete with brands like Hyundai and Tata Motors. Adding **ADAS (Advanced Driver Assistance Systems), wireless connectivity, and premium interiors** can attract younger buyers.
- 2) **Expand Electric Vehicle (EV) Offerings:** With the automobile industry shifting towards sustainability, Maruti Suzuki should **accelerate its EV development** and introduce affordable electric models to compete with Tata's Nexon EV and Hyundai's Kona Electric.
- 3) **Strengthen Digital Marketing:** A more aggressive **social media and digital marketing strategy** can enhance brand engagement. Leveraging **AI-driven customer insights and influencer marketing** can help Maruti Suzuki connect with tech-savvy consumers.
- 4) **Improve After-Sales Service:** Although after-sales service is a strength, **enhancing service efficiency, customer experience, and digital appointment booking** can further improve customer satisfaction.
- 5) **Focus on Premium Segments:** Maruti Suzuki can explore **higher-end models** with premium features while retaining its value-for-money identity to compete with brands targeting the mid-to-premium segment.
- 6) **Increase Consumer Engagement Programs:** Hosting **test drive events, loyalty programs, and personalized offers** can strengthen consumer relationships and encourage brand loyalty.

FUTURE SCOPE OF STUDY

- 1) **Expansion into Electric Vehicles (EVs):** With the growing demand for sustainable transportation, future research can analyze **Maruti Suzuki's entry into the EV segment**, its market potential, and consumer acceptance in Navi Mumbai.
- 2) **Comparative Brand Analysis:** A study comparing **Maruti Suzuki with emerging competitors like Tata Motors, Hyundai, and Kia** can provide insights into evolving consumer preferences and competitive strategies.
- 3) **Impact of Digital Marketing:** Future research can explore how **digital marketing strategies, influencer collaborations, and AI-driven customer engagement** impact Maruti Suzuki's brand positioning.

- 4) **Consumer Behavior in Premium Segments:** As Maruti Suzuki aims to **expand into premium and SUV segments**, a study on consumer preferences in these categories can guide future product launches.
- 5) **Role of Sustainability in Brand Positioning:** With increasing environmental concerns, research can evaluate how **Maruti Suzuki's sustainability initiatives and fuel-efficient technologies** influence brand perception and purchase decisions
- 6) **Post-Purchase Customer Experience:** A study on **customer satisfaction with Maruti Suzuki's after-sales services, maintenance costs, and long-term vehicle reliability** can help the brand improve its service strategies.

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