

Impact of Marketing Mix Management on the Customers' Satisfaction of Tehran Iran Khodro Company

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ABSTRACT: The research conducted focuses on customer satisfaction, using a descriptive correlation method. The questionnaire used in the study was found to be reliable at 93% using the Alpha Cronbach test for Tehran Iran Khodro Company. All the variables analyzed showed normal distribution according to the Kolmogorov-Smirnoff test results. The Pearson Correlation test results revealed a positive and significant relationship between customer satisfaction and the distribution, promotion, product, and price elements. The multiple regression test results indicated that the distribution factor had a direct effect of 82%, promotion had 77%, product had 68%, and price had 55% in predicting customer satisfaction. Key factors that played a role in customer satisfaction include spatial distribution of representatives for the distribution element, towing and roadside assistance for the promotion element, warranty period for the product element, and special sales for different occasions for the price element.

Key words: Business Management, Marketing, Economy, Tehran, Customer's Satisfaction

I. INTRODUCTION:

In today's competitive world, companies focus on satisfying their customers to gain a competitive advantage. Meeting the customers' needs and understanding their demands, expectations, tendencies, abilities, and limitations in purchasing products are crucial for achieving customer satisfaction. (Salar, 2006). Customer's satisfaction and providing necessary services, are the most important modern issues in the field of parts production and car manufacturing industries. Satisfied customer causes survival and durability of the manufacturing companies and meeting his need is the main goal of every production unit (Roosta et.al 2011). Marketing mix is one of the most important indexes of decision making and

evaluations related to marketing of a business, because marketing mix or combined marketing strategy is one of the necessary elements of planning and implementation of all marketing operations. On the other hand, marketing mix elements are controllable and in interactive relation with each other. Making decision about one of them influences activities of other elements. If marketing mix elements are combined in an effective way, so that they both meet the consumers' needs and are compatible with the environmental forces of the total selected market, then they will result in a successful marketing system. In fact, the concept of marketing mix determines the organization's performance path, using series of controllable variables in the environment, which have lots of uncontrollable factors (foreign market) (Moghimi, 2010). On the other hand, globalization and membership at the world trading organization, are among the main current challenges of Iranian economy and its industry. Meanwhile, one of the most controversial industries is car manufacturing industry. Some theoreticians believe that the relative advantage of the industry is more doubted compared to other industries. Relatively lower quality of the cars produced in the country leads the globalization process to destroy the industry like a terrible hurricane. Under such a condition, the most important strong point of the Iranian car manufacturers, compared to the foreign competitors, is familiarity with the local market. Such an advantage, naturally, enjoys Iranian car manufacturers of the higher potential and capability of identification of needs and the customers' demands. Such a better identification of the local market, helps Iranian car manufacturers to transfer their relative advantages and strong points to all latent aspects of the market. In fact, considering identification of the market and familiarity with

different aspects of it, local car manufacturing companies find the opportunity to attract their potential and actual customers' trust through providing appropriate after sale services at the qualitative and quantitative aspects or through proper spatial distribution (Vazir Zanjani et.al 2010).

Present research objective are as follows:

- Studying impacts of marketing mix elements (i.e. distribution, promotion, product, price) on the customers' satisfaction in Tehran Iran Khodro Co.

The research questions of the present study are as follows:

- Do marketing mix elements (i.e. distribution, promotion, product, price) impact the customers' satisfaction?

Present research hypotheses were developed as follows:

- Marketing mix elements (i.e. distribution, promotion, product, price) impact the customers' satisfaction.

Present research variables were developed as follows:

Independent variables: in this research distribution, promotion, product and price elements were considered as independent variables.

Dependent variable: in this research, customer's satisfaction was considered as dependent variable. Hence, the aim of present research study is to evaluate and investigate impact of distribution, promotion, product and price elements (from among marketing mix elements) on the customer's satisfaction from Iran Khodro Co. managers and staffs' perspective. Moreover, the study tries to show how these elements are influential in formation and development of the customer's satisfaction and how they improve and promote profitability and performance of Iran Khodro Company.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE:

1. Theroretical Framework of the Marketing Mix

Marketing and marketing management: marketing and marketing management are among the most important indexes of knowledge management, which are mainly responsible for identification of human needs and demands and meeting them through resource exchange process (Nazari,2011). Marketing management is referred to "analyzing,

planning, implementing and controlling predetermined plans in order to provide exchanges in appropriate with the underlying markets in order to achieve the organization's goals" (Roosta, et.al 2011).

Definition of marketing exchange: marketing exchange is constituent of tactical tools, which helps establishment of the company's fixed position in the target markets. The issue, which is developed in the field of elements of marketing mix is that it is claimed that the concept 4p considers marketing from the seller's perspective not from the buyer's (Cutler and Armstrong, 2010). Price: price is the amount of money which, the customer has to pay to obtain the product. Sale price involves price list, discounts, special discounts, and payment time and credit conditions. Product involves following variables and components: product diversity, product quality, product design, product specifications, brand, good's packing, size, dimensions, product quantity, good's services, product warranty, product returns. Distribution: involves a set of the company's activities to make the products available for the target customers. Supply place involves distribution channels, the product coverage, product's matching, supply points, stock and transportation. Promotion: is referred to the acts, which introduce the product's merits to the target customers, encouraging them to buy the product. These activities involve sales development advertisements, media advertisements, sale staffs, public relations and direct marketing (the same reference).

2-Theoretical framework of the Customer's Satisfaction

Definition of customer: customer is referred to the person, who defines his needs by himself. The one, who consumes our services and products and is ready to pay cost for them, He pays the costs until he finds value in the product or delivered service where the payment justifies the cost (Mohammadi, 2009).

Types of customer: from satisfaction level perspective, customers are divided into :

Satisfied customer: satisfied customer is one, who currently is satisfied, however he is , still, not among our value, loyal and permanent customers. This customer is at good state, however he is ambivalent and our competitor can change his mind and make him indifferent toward our organization. Happy customer: this customer is highly loyal to you, because he believes in you, praises you to his friends and brings you new customers. Dissatisfied customer: instead of being satisfied, he is , unfortunately, among dissatisfied

and adverse people. Since you have not met his needs and your competitors have provided better services to him than you have provided. So try prevent customer's dissatisfaction from the beginning, through providing fundamental services. Fascinated customers: these are ardent and fanatic customers of your organization and they, insist on leading others toward your organization. These are the most valuable customers of you. Angry customer: your organization and your own performance have not only not satisfied him but also they have made him upset and even angry. These groups of customers try to take revenge and

their least wish is elimination of you and your organization from the scene (Asadi Safa, 2012).

Concept of customer satisfaction: according to the investigations, the concepts related to customer satisfaction and measurements of them were first developed by Oliver in the year 1997. He defined customer satisfaction as good or pleasant sense of past experiences of buying a product or service (Adams,2000). According to Oliver "satisfaction is response to the consumer's achievement or success". He uses following figure to define the concept:

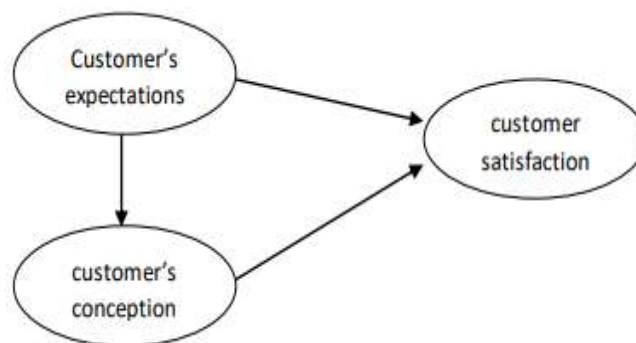


Fig (1). Definition of the concept of customer satisfaction (Kawousi and Saghaei, 2009)

Customer satisfaction can be divided in different fields as follows:

- satisfaction from the product or service quality
- satisfaction for continuing relation with the organization (establishment of a continuous and stable relation with the organization)
- satisfaction from the price/the product ratio or service performance
- satisfaction of the customer from the supplied products or services through meeting his needs and expectations (Kawousi and Saghaei, 2009)

Aspects of customer satisfaction: information satisfaction: satisfaction from the information presented by the supplier to the buyer to choose the product. It is always related to the supplier's department of advertisement and sale.

Performance or overall satisfaction is a scale or degree, which determines to what deal business performance expectations have been met in the mind of one of business exchange partners within commercial framework of the partners. Attitude satisfaction: is a mental judgment about satisfaction, which is obtained by controlling performance and specifications of the products or services of a supplier. Personal satisfaction reflects traditional and ordinary definitions of satisfaction,

which are related to psychological judgments of members of contact point in the customer's organization, being caused by appropriateness in the communication establishment environment with the supplier (Jin Rosome , 2003).

Determining factors of customer satisfaction: when studying customer satisfaction it should be noted that such a satisfaction is achieved by a set of conditions and factors. Presenting an interesting model, Hoisington and Nowman , introduced determining factors of customer satisfaction as follows:

- product quality
- service quality
- relation quality of the supplier and customer
- image
- price

After investigation of customer satisfaction in the car industry and among car buyers, Roskino andPolice introduced following items as influential factors of customers' satisfaction:

- satisfaction from buying
- satisfaction from delivering (Roskino and Police,2004)

Results of customer satisfaction: the reason for paying increasing attention to customer satisfaction and measuring it is its positive results and consequences. Some of these results are:

- loyalty
- advice to others
- decreased sensitivity to price

- decreased loss of customers
- increased share of market (Khodadad Hussein et al. 2004)
- decreases costs (specially advertisement costs)
- increased profitability
- increased value of the stockholder (Hoisington and Nowman, 2003)

Research Conceptual Model

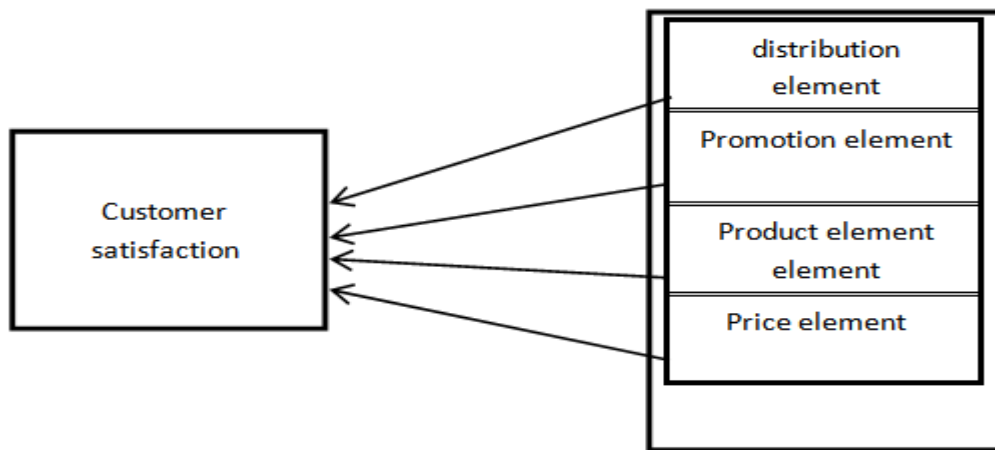


Figure (2) shows the research conceptual model.

Research Methodology

Considering its subject and objectives, present research is among applied studies. Considering the research design and its hypotheses statement way, the research method is descriptive and among descriptive studies it is of correlation type. Field and library studies were employed in order to collect necessary data and information. In this research a 46-item scholar made questioner was used for data collection and determining factors of customers' satisfaction were evaluated in the field of four elements of marketing mix (i.e. distribution, promotion, product and price). Since customer satisfaction indexes and marketing mix elements are qualitative in this study, so Likert's 5-score scale was used for quantification of them. To ensure whether the questioner, really, measures the exact underlying specifications or not, it was distributed among some of the masters and philosophers of the field and they were asked to declare their comment about the types of questions, number of questions and their correlation compared to the research instruments and objectives, after studying them in detail. After implementation of the comments, final questioner was developed and distributed among initial samples of the research. In this research, using Alpha Cronbach test, the questioner reliability was obtained as follows for different elements of marketing mix: distribution

(0.819), promotion (0.802), product (0.829), price (0.765), total (0.932) and customer satisfaction (0.907). Descriptive statistical tests such as calculation of average and percent, table and diagrams along with inferential tests such as Alpha Cronbach, Kolmogorov - Smirnov test, Pearson correlations test (if data are normal) Friedman ranking test, Durbin Watson test and stepwise regression analysis and finally SPSS were used in this study for data analysis.

Statistical population of the study involves all organizational staffs and managers of Tehran Iran Khodro Company. According to the official statistics in the company, number of the staffs is 102 and number of managers is 7 and statistical population is 109 in total. Considering limited number of the statistical population, sampling method of the research was selected to be census or all censuses.

Subject framework of the study is in the field of marketing management being limited to investigation of effect of marketing mix elements on customer satisfaction and hence, the issues related to such variables constituted subject domain of the study. Spatial domain of the study was Tehran town and its time interval included early in the March, 2012 to late in the September 2013.

Findings of the Study

Kolmogrov-Smirnoff Test

According to the Kolmogrov-Smirnoff test, in this research all variables enjoyed normal data distribution and the condition for investigation of correlation test and multiple linear regression is established in hypotheses analysis.

Hypothesis 1 Test and results: marketing mix elements (i.e. distribution, promotion, product and price) affect customer satisfaction.

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that each element of marketing mix is in direct relationship with customer satisfaction, being significant at confidence interval of 95% and the relationship level is 82% for distribution element, 77% for promotion element, 68% for product

element and 55% for product element, respectively. Considering table (1) prediction fit condition of customer satisfaction indicates that firstly distribution element, secondly, promotion element and thirdly product element correlation values of which are 82%, 84% and 85% respectively and determination coefficient value indicate that each of the marketing mix elements explains customer satisfaction variable's predication. In this prediction, firstly, distribution element explains 67% of customer satisfaction, which presents a good description in its turn. In the second step, combining distribution element with promotion element, 71% of the customer satisfaction is explained and at the third step, product element along with distribution and promotion elements, 72% of customers' satisfaction is described.

Table (1): fitting condition of prediction model

Model type	Entering type	Variable prioritization	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Adjusted coefficient	Durbin Watson Statistic	Level of Significance (F)
Features of regression fitting	stepwise	distribution	0/82	0/67	0/67	2/17	0/00
		promotion	0/84	0/71	0/70		
		product	0/85	0/72	0/71		

Considering the table (2) model fitting shows that, prediction model of customer satisfaction by each element of marketing mix is as follows in step by

step method
 (Product) 0.19+ (promotion) 0.31+ (distribution) 0.56=satisfaction

Table 2. customer satisfaction fitting model with marketing mix elements

Step 3	Variable coefficients	Direct effect	t-statistic	Level of significance	Compared to	Result in the model
Constant value	-0/17		0/85	0/39	more	-----
Distribution	0/56	0/51	5/38	0/00	less	effective
Promotion	0/31	0/25	2/75	0/00	less	effective
Product	0/19	0/16	2/08	0/04	less	Effective
Price	Without effect			0/77	less	Effective

Considering the fitting model, significance level of distribution, promotion and product elements is less than $\alpha=0.05$ error level. This shows good level of effect on prediction of customer satisfaction level. Standardized beta coefficient was used for studying direct effect of each element of marketing mix on the customers' satisfaction in the regression prediction, through which it is possible to judge about relative importance of the variables. In this fitting model effect was, respectively,

obtained 51% for distribution element, 25% for promotion element and 16% for product element. Hence, according to the findings of the study in Tehran Iran Khodro Co. it can be concluded that distribution element had the most effect and product element indicated the least effect on the customers' satisfaction.

According to the findings of Freidman test, level of significance was obtained as 0.000 which is less than error level of ($\alpha=0.05$). So it is

concluded that we can do prioritization among independent variables (marketing mix elements). According to the prioritization carried out by Friedman test, distribution element ,with average prioritization of 4.02 obtained first place, promotion element with average rank of 3.24 obtained second place, price element with average ranking of 2.41 obtained third place and product element with average ranking of 2.15 obtained fourth place in this study from the respondents' perspective.

Hypothesis 2 conclusion and test: distribution element affects the customers' satisfaction

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that distribution element has direct and significant relationship with customer satisfaction at the confidence level of 95%, where relationship value is 82%. Considering table 3 of customer satisfaction prediction fitting condition it can be seen that distribution element explains 67% of the changes of customer satisfaction variable which is relatively good value.

Table(3) fitting condition of customer satisfaction prediction model with distribution element

Model type	Customer satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Adjusted coefficient	Durbin Watson statistic	Sig (F)
Characteristic of regression fitting	Distribution element	0/82	0/67	0/67	2/18	0/000

Considering table(4) of linear regression fitting and considering the model fitting it can be seen that the prediction model of customer's satisfaction by distribution element is obtained as

follows:

(Distribution) $0.91 + 0.25 = \text{satisfaction}$
 Direct effect of distribution element is 82% in prediction of customer satisfaction.

Table(4): customer satisfaction model fitting with distribution element

Result in the model	Compared to 0.05	Level of significance	T-statistic	Direct effect	Variable coefficient	Customer satisfaction
-----	more	0/16	1/42		0/25	Constant value
effective	less	0/00	14/90	0/82	0/91	Distribution

Results of main hypothesis 2 test indicated that there is a correlation of $r=0.82$ between the two above mentioned variables at significance level of $p=0.000$ and since significance level is less than 0.05 it can be concluded that the correlation between the two variables is significant. Hence, distribution element is in direct relationship with customer satisfaction and the relationship value is 82%. Moreover customer satisfaction prediction fitting indicates that distribution element explains 67% of the changes related to customer satisfaction, which is relatively good value.

Considering result s of Friedman test, significance level was obtained as 0.000 which is less than error level of $\alpha=0.05$. So it can be concluded that we can do prioritization among indexes of distribution element. According to the

prioritization carried out by Friedman test it can be concluded that spatial distribution of Iran Khodro Co. representatives obtained first place in this research from the respondents' perspective.

Hypothesis 3 Conclusion and Test: promotion element affects customer satisfaction

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that promotion element has direct and significant relationship with customer satisfaction at the confidence level of 95%, where relationship value is 77%. Considering table 5 of customer satisfaction prediction fitting condition it can be seen that promotion element explains 59% of the changes of customer satisfaction variable, which is relatively good value.

Table (5) fitting condition of customers' satisfaction prediction model with promotion element

Model type	Customer satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Adjusted coefficient	Durbin Watson Statistic	Sig (F)
Feature of regression fitting	Promotion element	0/77	0/59	0/59	1/82	0/000

Considering table(6) of linear regression fitting and considering the model fitting it can be seen that the prediction model of customer satisfaction by promotion element is as follows:

(Promotion) $0.93 = \text{satisfaction}$
 Direct effect of promotion element is 77% in prediction of customer satisfaction.

Table(6): customer satisfaction model fitting with promotion element

Result in the model	Compared to 0.05	Level of significance	T-statistic	Direct effect	Variable coefficients	Customer satisfaction
-----	more	0/97	0/03		0/000	Constant value
effective	less	0/00	12/53	0/77	0/93	Promotion

Results of the main hypothesis 3 test indicated that there is a correlation of $r=0.82$ between the two above mentioned variables at significance level of $p=0.000$ and since significance level is less than 0.05 it can be concluded that the correlation between the two variables is significant. Hence, promotion element is in direct relationship with customer satisfaction and the relationship value is 77%. Moreover customer satisfaction prediction fitting indicates that promotion element explains 59% of the changes related to customer satisfaction, which is relatively good value.

Considering results of Friedman test, significance level was obtained as 0.000 which is less than error level of $\alpha=0.05$. So it can be concluded that we can do prioritization among indexes of promotion element. According to the

prioritization carried out by Friedman test it can be concluded that having towing and roadside assistant obtained first place in this research from the respondents' perspective.

Hypothesis 4 Conclusion and Test: product element affects customer satisfaction

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that product element has direct and significant relationship with customer satisfaction at the confidence level of 95%, where relationship value is 68%. Considering table 7 of customer satisfaction prediction fitting condition it can be seen that product element explains 36% of the changes of customer satisfaction variable which is relatively good value.

Table(7) fitting condition of customer satisfaction prediction model with product element

Type of the model	Customer satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Adjusted coefficient	Durbin Watson Statistic	Sig (F)
Feature of regression fitting	Product element	0/68	0/46	0/45	2/25	0/000

Considering table(8) of linear regression fitting and considering the model fitting it can be seen that the prediction model of the customers' satisfaction by product element is obtained as

follows:
 (Product) $0.83+0.67 = \text{satisfaction}$
 Direct effect of product element is 68% in prediction of customers' satisfaction.

Table(8): the customers' satisfaction model fitting with product element

Result in the model	Compared to 0.05	Level of significance	T-statistic	Direct effect	Variable coefficients	Customer satisfaction
-----	less	0/000	3/31		0/67	Constant value
Effective	less	0/000	9/58	0/68	0/83	Product

Results of main hypothesis 4 test indicated that there is a correlation of $r=0.68$ between the two above mentioned variables at significance level of $p=0.000$ and since significance level is less than 0.05 it can be concluded that the correlation between the two variables is significant. Hence, results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that the product element is in direct relationship with customer satisfaction and the relationship value is 68% . Moreover customer satisfaction prediction fitting indicates that the product element explains 46% of the changes related to customer satisfaction, which is relatively good value.

Considering results of Friedman test, significance level was obtained as 0.000 , which is less than error level of $\alpha=0.05$. So it can be concluded that we can do prioritization among

indexes of promotion element. According to the prioritization carried out by Friedman test it can be concluded that the product's warranty by the company obtained first place in this research from the respondents' perspective.

Hypothesis 5 Conclusion and Test: price element affects customer satisfaction

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicated that price element has direct and significant relationship with the customers' satisfaction at the confidence level of 95% , where relationship value is 55% . Considering table 9 of the customers' satisfaction prediction fitting condition it can be seen that the price element explains 31% of the changes of customer satisfaction variable, which is relatively good value.

Table (9) fitting condition of customer satisfaction prediction model with price element

Model type	Customer satisfaction	Correlation coefficient	Determination coefficient	Adjusted coefficient	Durbin Watson statistic	Sig (F)
Feature of regression fitting	Price element	0/55	0/31	0/30	2/19	0/000

Considering table(10) of linear regression fitting and considering the model fitting it can be seen that the prediction model of customer satisfaction by price element is obtained as follows:

(Price) $0.64+1.19$ =satisfaction
 Direct effect of price element is 55% in prediction of customer satisfaction.

Table (10): customer satisfaction model fitting with price element

Result in the model	Compared to 0.05	Level of significance	T-statistic	Direct Effect	Variable coefficients	Customer satisfaction
-----	less	0/00	4/70		1/19	Constant value
Effective	less	0/00	6/86	0/55	0/64	Price

Results of the main hypothesis 5 test indicated that there is a correlation of $r=0.55$ between the two above mentioned variables at significance level of $p=0.000$ and since significance level is less than 0.05 it can be concluded that the correlation between the two variables is significant. Hence, price element is in direct relationship with customer satisfaction and the relationship value is

55% . Moreover, customer satisfaction prediction fitting indicates that price element explains 31% of the changes related to customer satisfaction, which is relatively good value.

Considering results of Friedman test, significance level was obtained as 0.000 , which is less than error level of $\alpha=0.05$. So it can be concluded that we can do prioritization among

indexes of price element. According to the prioritization carried out by Friedman test, it can be concluded that special sales for different occasions obtained first place in this research from the respondents' perspective.

III. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS:

The research findings suggest that the distribution component of the marketing mix has the greatest impact on customer satisfaction, while the product component has the least impact. To enhance customer satisfaction, the company is advised to prioritize the following actions:

- Provide excellent sales and after-sales services
- Ensure safe product delivery
- Address failures and faults promptly and efficiently
- Maintain effective control and management of distribution channels
- Minimize costs associated with product delivery
- Ensure timely product delivery
- Maintain sufficient inventory to meet customer needs

The study also revealed that the spatial distribution of the company's representatives is the most influential factor in the distribution element. To improve customer satisfaction, the company should ensure that repair shops are appropriately located and offer satisfactory services. In terms of the promotion element, the presence of roadside assistance and towing is crucial for customer satisfaction. Roadside assistance providers can enhance their reputation and customer satisfaction by offering special services such as sending aid workers in a timely manner, setting up mobile assistance teams, and collaborating with insurance companies. The warranty period of products was identified as the key factor in the product element. The company should offer an appropriate warranty period and cover most parts of the car to increase customer satisfaction. The company should also ensure efficient service supply and availability of spare parts. Special sales during different occasions were found to be important in the price element. The company can increase customer satisfaction by offering sales promotions during specific periods of time.

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