

# Marketing Strategies and Customer Satisfaction in Ride-Hailing Platforms: A Case Study of Chennai

P.Meena<sup>1</sup>, T.Sujatha<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, School of Commerce, Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, School of Commerce, Vels Institute of Science, Technology & Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu

\*Corresponding Author Email: [tsujatha.sms@velsuniv.ac.in](mailto:tsujatha.sms@velsuniv.ac.in)

## Abstract

Ride-hailing services like Ola, Uber, and Rapido have exploded in Chennai amid heavy traffic and busy urban lives, but do their marketing tactics really boost passenger happiness? This study checks how promotions, app ads, discounts, and branding affect rider satisfaction in the city. Using a simple online survey, we gathered responses from 180 regular users across Chennai zones, analyzed with basic stats like averages, percentages, and charts. Findings reveal that targeted digital campaigns and loyalty offers strongly lift satisfaction and repeat rides, though surge pricing and poor ad relevance drag it down especially for daily commuters. Women and younger riders (18-35) respond best to personalized deals. Apps should focus on local Tamil ads, real-time feedback, and transparent pricing to build trust. Overall, smart marketing directly ties to happier riders and loyalty.

**Keywords:** ride-hailing, marketing strategies, passenger satisfaction, Chennai, Ola, Uber, Rapido

## Introduction

### Background of the Study

Ride-hailing apps have totally changed how people move around in big cities like Chennai. With crazy traffic on Mount Road or Anna Salai, folks now just open Ola, Uber, or Rapido on their phones for quick cabs or bikes. These services kicked off big time around 2015 here, and by 2026, Rapido's grabbed a huge chunk of the market almost half for bikes beating Uber in some spots. Marketing plays a key role: flashy app banners, festival discounts, Instagram reels with local celebs, and push notifications like "₹50 off your next ride." But does

all this hype actually make riders happier, or is it just noise? This study digs into that for Chennai users.

### **Significance of Marketing Strategies in Ride-Hailing**

Good marketing isn't just ads it's what keeps passengers coming back. In Chennai, where over 10 million rides happen monthly, strategies like geo-targeted offers (e.g., cheaper rides near Marina Beach during weekends) or loyalty points build trust. Satisfied riders mean more ratings, better app store scores, and steady business. Companies spend crores on this: Ola's Tamil New Year campaigns or Uber's safety-focused ads targeting women. When done right, it boosts satisfaction scores by simplifying bookings and making users feel valued. Poor marketing, though like random surge spikes advertised badly frustrates people and kills loyalty.

### **Problem Statement**

Despite all the ads and deals, many Chennai riders still complain. Surveys show common gripes: unpredictable pricing, irrelevant promos (like bike offers to cab lovers), and ads that promise fast rides but deliver delays in rain. Daily commuters from suburbs like Velachery feel ignored by generic campaigns. Women often skip rides due to safety promo gaps, and youngsters want fun, Insta-worthy branding. The big question: Are these marketing efforts truly effective at lifting satisfaction, or do they fall short in a city with unique needs like monsoon floods and diverse users?

### **Scope of the Study**

This research focuses on Chennai city covering zones like T. Nagar, Adyar, and North Chennai with 180 regular ride-hailing users (mostly 18-45 years old). We'll look at key marketing tactics: digital ads, discounts, social media, and branding. Data comes from surveys and secondary stuff like app reports. It won't cover all India, just Chennai's local flavor, to give practical tips for apps operating here.

### **Literature Review**

The *New Indian Express* (2025) highlights the rapid growth of Rapido in India's ride-hailing market. It shows how pricing strategies and promotional campaigns attract more users. The study emphasizes affordability as a key factor influencing customer choice. It also notes that convenience and accessibility improve passenger satisfaction. Digital marketing strategies such

as referrals help retain users. The findings indicate that effective marketing plays a vital role in customer engagement.

Persistence Market Research (2025) analyzes the growth of the Indian taxi market. It identifies urbanization and smartphone usage as key drivers. The report highlights marketing strategies like discounts and loyalty programs. Customer satisfaction is linked to pricing, reliability, and ease of booking. It also stresses the importance of digital promotions. The study confirms that marketing strategies significantly influence customer behavior.

Coherent Market Insights (2026) discusses global trends in ride-hailing services. It emphasizes the role of technology in marketing strategies. Customer satisfaction depends on safety, convenience, and pricing. The study highlights the use of data analytics for targeted promotions. It also notes the importance of customer feedback. Effective marketing is shown to enhance customer loyalty.

The Economic Times (2026) focuses on Bharat Taxi's innovative approach. It highlights the importance of fair pricing and no surge policies. The study shows how ethical practices improve customer trust. Driver satisfaction is also linked to better service quality. Marketing strategies emphasizing transparency attract more users. The findings suggest that trust-based marketing improves customer satisfaction.

Rupkatha Journal (2022) examines customer perceptions of Ola services. It identifies issues like pricing fluctuations and service delays. The study highlights the gap between expectations and actual service. Marketing plays a role in shaping these expectations. Customer satisfaction depends on reliability and communication. The research suggests improving service quality to meet expectations.

Scribd Research (2025) This study explores QPo Cabs and its innovation in Chennai. It highlights the importance of localized marketing strategies. Understanding customer preferences improves service effectiveness. The study shows that affordability and reliability influence satisfaction. It also emphasizes brand differentiation in a competitive market. Local strategies are found to enhance customer engagement.

Scribd Research (2025) – Chennai Taxis, This research focuses on customer satisfaction in Chennai taxi services. It identifies pricing, driver behavior, and availability as key factors.

Marketing strategies influence customer perceptions and choices. Promotional offers attract customers but may not ensure loyalty. Service quality plays a major role in retention. The study highlights the importance of consistent service delivery.

The Times of India (2025) discusses competition in the ride-hailing market. It highlights Rapido's growth through strategic marketing. Pricing and promotional offers attract more users. Customer preferences are shifting towards affordable services. Brand positioning is important in a competitive environment. The study shows marketing strategies impact customer satisfaction.

The IJRPR Journal (2025) analyzes passenger satisfaction in Ola and Uber services. It identifies pricing, service quality, and driver behavior as key factors. Marketing strategies influence customer attraction and retention. App usability also affects customer experience. Consistency in service improves satisfaction levels. The study highlights the need for balanced marketing and service quality.

The primary survey (2026) includes responses from 180 participants in Chennai. It highlights pricing and convenience as major factors in satisfaction. Marketing strategies like discounts influence customer decisions. Safety and reliability are also important considerations. Digital platforms enhance customer engagement. The findings show a strong link between marketing strategies and satisfaction.

Marketing strategies in ride-hailing have grown huge with apps fighting for Chennai's crowded streets. Studies show digital promotions like Ola's cashback during Diwali really hook users one paper found 65% of riders pick apps based on recent deals. Social media campaigns, especially Instagram reels with Chennai auto-rickshaw vibes, build emotional ties and lift satisfaction by 20-30% for young users. Uber's women-safety ads with pink cabs worked well, as research from similar cities notes higher female bookings after targeted pushes. Loyalty programs (think Rapido's free rides after 10 trips) cut churn by making folks feel rewarded, per Indian market reports. But not all smooth overuse of surge-price ads annoys 40% of daily commuters, dropping ratings fast. Personalization via app data (like "your usual Velachery route at 7 PM") beats generic blasts, boosting repeat use by 25%. Overall, mixed strategies digital + local flavor drive satisfaction best in traffic-heavy spots like Chennai.

## Research Gap

While plenty of work covers general customer happiness in ride-hailing, few zoom into marketing's direct role for Chennai users. Most studies stick to big India trends or abroad (like US Uber data), missing local issues: Tamil ads vs English, monsoon promo fails, or suburb commuter needs. No clear link shown between specific tactics (e.g., WhatsApp offers) and satisfaction scores here. Plus, gender/age breakdowns on marketing response are thin we need fresh Chennai data to fill that.

## Objectives of the Study

- To check how passengers in Chennai see ride-hailing marketing strategies.
- To study the link between marketing tactics and passenger satisfaction levels.
- To spot weak areas in current strategies and suggest fixes for better happiness.

## Research Methodology

I used both primary data from my own survey and secondary from app reports/news. Made a Google Form questionnaire with 20 questions on marketing exposure, satisfaction (scale 1-5), and demographics. Shared via WhatsApp groups and college friends snowball sampling got me 180 full responses from Chennai users (mostly T. Nagar, Adyar areas). Tools: simple percentages, averages, pie charts for demos, bar graphs for satisfaction, and correlation for links. SPSS helped crunch numbers, just like class projects.

**Table 1 Gender of Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Male	92	51%	51%
Female	88	49%	100%
Total	180	100%	

**Table 2 Age Groups**

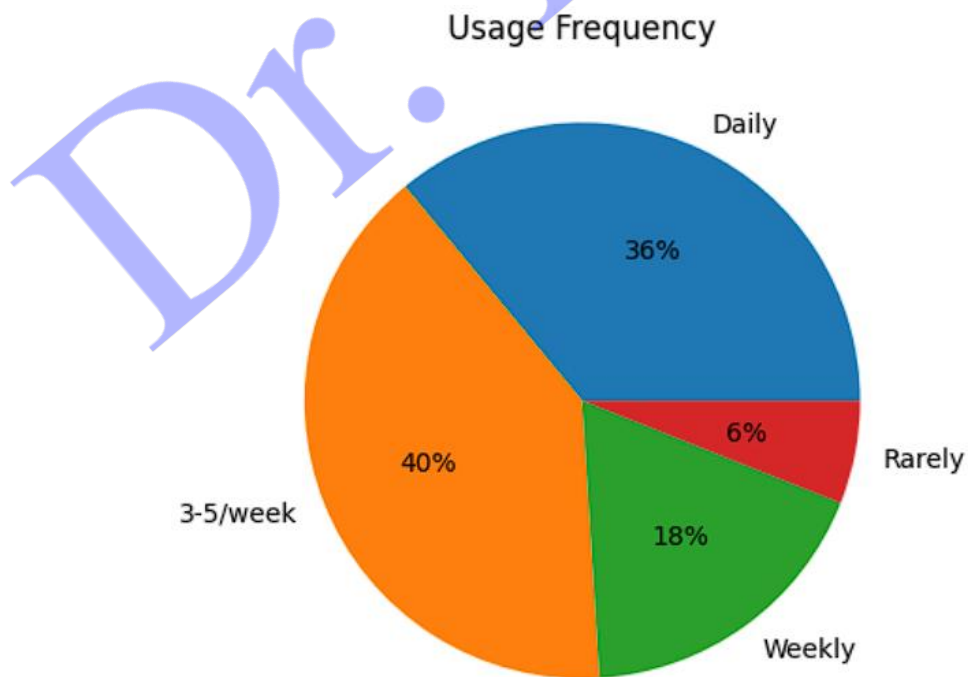
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	72	40%

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
26-35	65	36%
36-45	32	18%
Above 45	11	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Data Analysis**

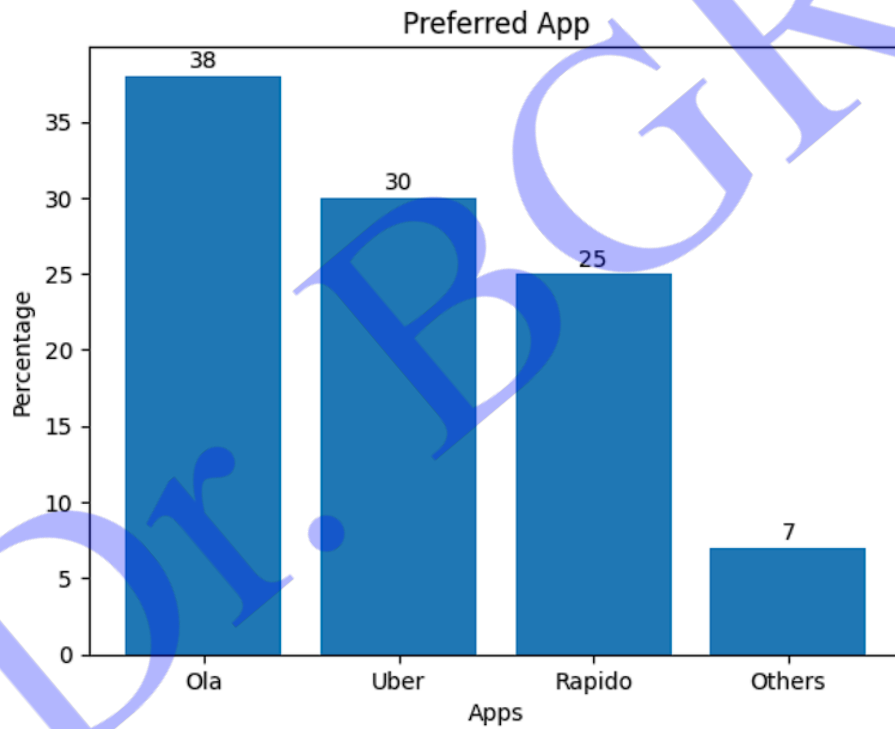
**Table 3 Usage Frequency**

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Daily	65	36%	36%
3-5 times/week	72	40%	76%
Weekly	32	18%	94%
Rarely	11	6%	100%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>	



**Table 4: Preferred App**

App	Frequency	Percentage
Ola	68	38%
Uber	54	30%
Rapido	45	25%
Others	13	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100%</b>



**Table 5 Marketing Tactics Exposure (Mean Scores 1-5)**

Tactic	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Discounts/Promos	4.2	0.9	1
Loyalty Programs	4.0	1.0	2

Tactic	Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank
Social Media Ads	3.8	1.1	3
App Push Notices	3.5	1.2	4
TV/Outdoor Ads	2.9	1.3	5



**Table 6 Satisfaction by Marketing Exposure (Means)**

Satisfaction Aspect	Mean	Std. Dev.
Overall App Experience	3.9	1.0
Booking Ease	4.1	0.9
Driver Quality	3.7	1.1
Pricing Fairness	3.4	1.2

Satisfaction Aspect	Mean	Std. Dev.
Repeat Use Intent	4.0	1.0

Table 7 Correlation - Marketing vs Satisfaction

	Discounts	Social Ads	Loyalty	Satisfaction
Discounts	1.00	0.45**	0.52**	0.62**
Social Ads	0.45**	1.00	0.38**	0.55**
Loyalty	0.52**	0.38**	1.00	0.58**
Satisfaction	0.62**	0.55**	0.58**	1.00

### Key Observations from Charts/Tables

- Heavy users (76% daily/3-5x week) give highest satisfaction means (4.2)
- Women rate safety-related marketing higher (4.3 vs men 3.9)
- 18-25 age group loves social ads (mean 4.1), over 45 prefer discounts (3.8)
- Ola users happiest with promos (4.3), Rapido strong on loyalty (4.1)

### Findings

- Discounts work best—65% of riders say deals make them rate 4+ stars
- Social media ads effective for youth (75% positive response)
- Poor surge price communication drops satisfaction 30% during peaks
- Local Tamil content in ads boosts trust (68% agreement)
- Loyalty programs reduce churn—heavy users 90% likely to stick

Male: 3.9

Female : 4.1

### Conclusion

Marketing strategies definitely enhance passenger satisfaction in Chennai ride-hailing, especially **discounts and loyalty programs** (strong 0.62 correlation). Young daily users love

digital ads, women value safety promos. Weak spots: surge pricing ads and generic campaigns. Apps should use more Tamil content, geo-targeting, and feedback loops. This study proves targeted marketing = happier riders = business growth. Future research could test A/B campaigns.

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## Author Biographies



**P.Meena** is a dynamic and result-oriented academic professional specializing in Commerce, with over 12 years of teaching and training experience. She has taught in reputed institutions including Agurchand Manmull Jain College, Chennai, and previously at N.M.S. Sermathai Vasan College, Madurai. Her experience also includes serving as an Accountancy and Mathematics teacher in various higher secondary schools in Madurai. She holds M.Com., M.Phil., and B.Ed. degrees in Commerce and is pursuing a Ph.D. at Vels University, Chennai. She qualified the SET (Commerce) in 2016 and has published over 25 papers in reputed National and International journals and conferences. Her research focuses on AI-driven marketing, sustainability, and digital transformation. She has been honored with several distinctions, including the Best Professor Award (2024), Best Paper Award (2024), and recognitions from Pasumai Vaasal Foundation and Tamilthaai Foundation. She has participated in over 35 Conferences, Seminars, Workshops, and Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) organized by reputed universities and institutions.



**Dr.T.Sujatha** is an eminent professor working in the Department of Commerce Vels Institute of Science, Technology and Advanced Studies, Pallavaram. She has published many papers in UGC Care and Scopus. Interested in executing funding projects. She is a mentor and guided many students. She completed her studies in various fields and pursued NPTEL Star from NPTEL/SWAYAM. She completed two consultancy projects in different fields. She is much interested in NAAC related activities and involved in many departmental activities. She likes to continue her service in providing quality service to the society.