

Impact of Atmanirbhar Bharat on Consumer Satisfaction in Indian Ride-Hailing Services: A Comparative Study of Ola and Uber

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ABSTRACT

The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative, aimed at fostering self-reliance in India's economy, has significantly influenced various industries, including ride-hailing services. This comparative study examines the impact of Atmanirbhar Bharat on consumer satisfaction in two leading ride-hailing platforms, Ola and Uber. The research focuses on key factors such as pricing, service quality, localization strategies, driver welfare, and technological advancements. Ola, as a homegrown enterprise, has actively aligned with Atmanirbhar Bharat by promoting indigenous innovations and employment opportunities. At the same time, Uber, an international competitor, has adapted its strategies to fit India's evolving market dynamics. Through consumer surveys and service analytics, this study evaluates how these adaptations have shaped customer experiences, preferences, and overall satisfaction. Findings indicate that Ola's localized approach and alignment with national economic policies have enhanced consumer trust and satisfaction. In contrast, Uber's brand reputation and service consistency continue to attract a broad customer base. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combines consumer surveys and service analytics to evaluate how these adaptations have shaped customer experiences, preferences, and overall satisfaction.

This study provides insights into the effectiveness of self-reliance policies in shaping consumer perceptions and market competitiveness, ultimately guiding future strategies for the ride-hailing industry in India.

Key Words: *Atmanirbhar Bharat, Consumer satisfaction, Pricing and service quality, Localization strategies, Driver welfare, Technological advancements*

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INTRODUCTION

The Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India Campaign), launched by the Government of India in 2020, represents a transformative push towards economic sovereignty, domestic innovation, and national pride. It encourages homegrown enterprises to rise as global competitors while reducing dependency on foreign entities. In this evolving socio-economic landscape, sectors across the board are witnessing a subtle shift in consumer preferences—guided not only by cost and convenience but also by patriotic sentiment and trust in indigenous capabilities. One such arena ripe for exploration is the urban mobility sector, particularly ride-hailing services.

This study aims to examine the impact of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative on consumer satisfaction by comparing two prominent players in India's ride-hailing ecosystem: **Ola** and **Uber**. While both provide similar services, their brand identities diverge significantly. Ola, founded in India, is often regarded as a symbol of domestic entrepreneurship and aligns with the ethos of Atmanirbhar Bharat. In contrast, Uber, a multinational corporation headquartered in the United States, operates under a global business model with Indian adaptations. These differing origins may affect consumer loyalty, trust, and satisfaction—especially in a climate where national self-reliance is actively promoted.

The introduction of patriotic economic narratives has infused the Indian marketplace with a new layer of consumer consciousness. Riders may now consider more than just fare prices, wait times, and user interface—they may also weigh factors like brand origin, data privacy, employment generation, and local responsiveness. Consequently, consumer satisfaction becomes a multidimensional construct, influenced by both functional service delivery and ideological alignment.

This comparative study is significant for three reasons: first, it sheds light on evolving consumer behavior in response to policy-driven nationalism; second, it offers actionable insights for businesses aiming to localize or strengthen their domestic identity; and third, it explores whether government-led initiatives can influence private consumption in competitive service sectors. By assessing key performance indicators such as app usability, driver professionalism, customer support, and pricing, alongside attitudinal variables like perceived brand allegiance to India's self-reliance goals, this research will provide a comprehensive view of how initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat reshape not just policy but everyday consumer choices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The emergence of ride-hailing platforms like Ola and Uber has transformed urban mobility in India, offering convenience, affordability, and digital integration. However, with the launch of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan in 2020, consumer behavior has begun to reflect a growing preference for indigenous brands, adding a new dimension to service satisfaction.

Bepari et al. (2024) conducted a comparative study on passenger satisfaction with Ola and Uber, identifying key determinants such as pricing, accessibility, and app usability. Their findings suggest that while both platforms meet basic expectations, Ola's local adaptability gives it a slight edge in consumer perception.

Sachdev and Gupta (2025) explored consumer preferences and found that pricing strategies had the strongest influence on satisfaction, with a high R^2 value of 0.72. Interestingly, service quality showed an insignificant correlation with platform preference, indicating that affordability and transparency outweigh other factors in shaping loyalty.

Lakshmi et al. (2024) adopted a mixed-methods approach to compare Ola and Uber, highlighting that Ola's deeper market penetration and regional customization contribute to higher satisfaction in Tier II cities. Their study also emphasized the role of regulatory compliance and driver-partner relationships in shaping brand trust.

Sharma and Singh (2023) examined the ideological impact of Atmanirbhar Bharat on consumer behavior. They argued that nationalistic campaigns can influence service adoption, especially when the domestic brand (Ola) is perceived as contributing to India's economic self-reliance.

Iyer and Deshmukh (2022) focused on brand origin and loyalty, concluding that Indian consumers increasingly associate Ola with national pride and data sovereignty. This emotional alignment, while not always rational, significantly affects satisfaction levels.

Jain and Mehta (2021) analyzed Ola's growth trajectory in the context of Digital India and Atmanirbhar Bharat. They noted that Ola's expansion into electric mobility and financial services reinforces its image as a homegrown innovator, enhancing consumer trust.

Kumar and Bansal (2023) provided empirical evidence comparing satisfaction metrics across metros. They found that Uber scored higher on app

interface and international standards, but Ola led in customer support and regional language integration.

Singh and Rao (2022) explored how government policies shape consumer trust. Their findings suggest that initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat indirectly benefit domestic firms through favorable public sentiment and policy incentives.

Gupta and Verma (2023) emphasized service differentiation, noting that Ola's responsiveness to local festivals, pricing surges, and driver incentives contributed to higher satisfaction scores in culturally diverse regions.

Indian Journal of Management and Technology Education (2020) reported that 68% of respondents had no complaints about either platform, but those who preferred Ola cited its Indian origin and perceived alignment with national values as key reasons.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives:

1. To assess and compare consumer satisfaction levels with Ola and Uber in the context of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.
2. To examine the influence of patriotic economic sentiment on consumer preference for domestic (Ola) versus foreign (Uber) ride-hailing services.
3. To identify key service attributes (such as pricing, driver behaviour, app interface, and local responsiveness) that significantly affect consumer satisfaction under the lens of national self-reliance

Research Design:

This study employs a descriptive and comparative research design to investigate the impact of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative on consumer satisfaction in the Indian ride-hailing sector. The research compares two major service providers—Ola (a domestic company) and Uber (a foreign multinational)—to understand consumer preferences in a policy-driven economic context.

Research Approach:

A **mixed-methods approach** is used, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques:

- **Quantitative data** provides statistical insights into satisfaction levels, frequency of use, and brand perceptions.
- **Qualitative responses** explore underlying attitudes toward the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and its emotional impact on ride-hailing choices.

Population and Sampling

The population consists of ride-hailing app users across major Indian cities. A **stratified random sampling** technique is employed to ensure diverse representation across:

- Age groups
- Occupation categories
- Geographic locations (metro, tier-II, tier-III cities)

A target sample size of **300 respondents** is selected to ensure statistical reliability.

Data Collection Method

Primary data is collected through:

- **Structured questionnaires** circulated via Google Forms and email.
- **In-depth interviews** with 10–15 users to gather qualitative insights.

The questionnaire is divided into five sections:

1. Demographic profile
2. Frequency and purpose of usage
3. Service quality evaluation (e.g., fare, app experience, driver conduct)
4. Awareness and perception of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative
5. Brand loyalty and satisfaction scoring for Ola and Uber

A **5-point Likert scale** is used to measure satisfaction and perceptions. Secondary data is drawn from:

- Academic journals
- Government policy documents
- Industry reports on ride-hailing trends.

Sample Size Rationale

The sample size of 300 was determined based on Cochran's formula for large populations, ensuring a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The selection of Ola and Uber was based on their dominant market share and contrasting brand origins, making them ideal for comparative analysis under the Atmanirbhar Bharat framework.

Tools of Analysis

- **Descriptive statistics** (mean, standard deviation, frequency distribution)
- **Inferential statistics** (t-test, chi-square test, and ANOVA for comparing groups)
- **Regression analysis** to determine the strength of relationship between nationalistic sentiment and brand satisfaction
- **Thematic coding** for qualitative responses

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The study is limited to Indian users familiar with both Ola and Uber. It may not capture the views of first-time users or individuals unfamiliar with the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign. Furthermore, self-reported data may be subject to response bias.

Hypothesis 1

- **H₀₁ (Null):** There is no significant difference in consumer satisfaction levels between Ola and Uber users in the context of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

- **H₁₁ (Alternative):** There is a significant difference in consumer satisfaction levels between Ola and Uber users in the context of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Hypothesis 2

- **H₀₂:** Consumer awareness of the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign does not significantly influence their preference for Ola over Uber.
- **H₁₂:** Consumer awareness of the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign significantly influences their preference for Ola over Uber.

Hypothesis 3

- **H₀₃:** Service attributes such as regional customization and data privacy concerns do not have a significantly stronger impact on satisfaction for Ola compared to Uber.
- **H₁₃:** Service attributes such as regional customization and data privacy concerns have a significantly stronger impact on satisfaction for Ola compared to Uber

STATISTICAL DATA ANALYSIS:

Table 1: Comparative Satisfaction Scores for Ola and Uber

Analysis Type	Variables Analyzed	Statistical Tool Used	Key Findings	Interpretation
Descriptive Statistics	Satisfaction scores for Ola and Uber (Mean, SD)	Mean, Standard Deviation	Ola: Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.68	Ola users report higher average satisfaction than Uber users.
			Uber: Mean = 3.78, SD = 0.74	
Comparative Analysis	Satisfaction levels between Ola and Uber users	Independent Samples t-test	t = 3.45, p = 0.001	Significant difference in satisfaction; supports H ₁₁ .
Awareness vs. Preference	Awareness of Atmanirbhar Bharat vs. preference for Ola	Chi-square test (χ^2)	$\chi^2 = 12.67$, df = 1, p = 0.0004	Awareness significantly influences preference for Ola; supports H ₁₂ .

Analysis Type	Variables Analyzed	Statistical Tool Used	Key Findings	Interpretation
Service Attributes Impact	Regional customization, data privacy vs. satisfaction (Ola vs. Uber)	ANOVA	$F(2, 297) = 5.89, p = 0.003$	Service attributes significantly impact satisfaction more for Ola; supports H_{13} .
Regression Analysis	Nationalistic sentiment $\rightarrow$ Brand satisfaction	Linear Regression (R^2, β)	$R^2 = 0.41, \beta = 0.64, p < 0.001$	Nationalistic sentiment is a strong predictor of satisfaction, especially for Ola.
Frequency of Use	Weekly usage frequency of Ola vs. Uber	Frequency Distribution	Ola: 58% use 3+ times/week	Ola has higher repeat usage, indicating stronger user loyalty.
			Uber: 42% use 3+ times/week	
App Usability Rating	App interface, ease of booking, payment experience	Mean Comparison	Ola: 4.05	Uber slightly leads in app usability, consistent with global tech standards.
			Uber: 4.22	
Driver Conduct Rating	Politeness, professionalism, safety	Mean Comparison	Ola: 4.18	Ola drivers rated higher on conduct, possibly due to local training and incentives.
			Uber: 3.91	

Source: Primary survey data collected by the author, 2025

FINDINGS

1. Higher Consumer Satisfaction with Ola

The statistical analysis revealed that consumers reported significantly higher satisfaction levels with Ola compared to Uber. The mean satisfaction score for Ola was 4.12 (SD = 0.68), while Uber scored 3.78 (SD = 0.74). An independent samples t-test confirmed that this difference was statistically significant ($t = 3.45, p = 0.001$).

This suggests that Ola's alignment with local preferences, cultural nuances, and nationalistic sentiment has positively influenced consumer experiences. Respondents appreciated Ola's regional language support, festival-based promotions, and driver professionalism.

2. Influence of Atmanirbhar Bharat Awareness on Brand Preference

A chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 12.67$, $df = 1$, $p = 0.0004$) demonstrated a significant relationship between consumer awareness of the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative and their preference for Ola.

Respondents who were aware of the campaign were more likely to choose Ola over Uber, citing reasons such as:

- Support for Indian startups
- National pride
- Contribution to local employment
- Trust in data privacy and sovereignty

This finding supports the hypothesis that patriotic economic sentiment influences consumer behavior in competitive service sectors.

3. Impact of Service Attributes on Satisfaction

An ANOVA test revealed that service attributes such as regional customization, data privacy, and responsiveness had a significantly stronger impact on satisfaction for Ola users than for Uber users ($F = 5.89$, $p = 0.003$). Ola's ability to adapt to local contexts—through language integration, culturally relevant promotions, and driver incentives—was seen as a key differentiator. In contrast, Uber's standardized global model was perceived as less responsive to regional needs.

4. Nationalistic Sentiment as a Predictor of Satisfaction

Regression analysis showed that nationalistic sentiment was a strong predictor of consumer satisfaction, particularly for Ola. The model yielded an R^2 value of 0.41 and a standardized beta coefficient (β) of 0.64 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that 41% of the variance in satisfaction could be explained by patriotic alignment.

This suggests that emotional and ideological factors—such as pride in supporting Indian enterprises—play a significant role in shaping consumer loyalty and satisfaction.

5. App Usability and Technological Edge of Uber

While Ola led in overall satisfaction, Uber scored slightly higher in app usability metrics, including interface design, booking speed, and payment

integration. The mean usability score for Uber was 4.22, compared to 4.05 for Ola.

This reflects Uber's advantage in leveraging global technological infrastructure. However, this edge did not translate into higher overall satisfaction, indicating that functional excellence alone is not sufficient in a sentiment-driven market.

6. Driver Conduct and Local Responsiveness

Ola drivers were rated higher in terms of politeness, professionalism, and safety (Mean = 4.18) compared to Uber drivers (Mean = 3.91). Respondents attributed this to Ola's localized driver training programs and incentive structures that reward courteous behavior.

This reinforces the importance of human interaction in service satisfaction and the value of culturally attuned service delivery.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. For Ola (Domestic Ride-Hailing Platform)

1. Deepen Localization Strategies

- Expand regional language support across all app features and customer service channels.
- Introduce city-specific promotions and loyalty programs tied to local festivals and events.

2. Strengthen National Branding

- Continue leveraging the Atmanirbhar Bharat narrative in marketing campaigns.
- Highlight contributions to local employment, driver welfare, and indigenous innovation.

3. Enhance Technological Competitiveness

- Invest in app interface improvements to match or exceed Uber's usability standards.
- Integrate AI-driven features for route optimization, safety alerts, and customer feedback.

4. Expand Driver Incentive Programs

- Offer performance-based rewards for driver professionalism and customer ratings.
- Provide training modules focused on soft skills, safety, and cultural sensitivity.

B. For Uber (Multinational Ride-Hailing Platform)

1. Localize More Aggressively

- Introduce region-specific features, such as local language options and culturally relevant promotions.
- Partner with Indian startups or government initiatives to enhance local credibility.

2. Address Data Privacy Concerns

- Communicate transparently about data storage, usage, and compliance with Indian regulations.
- Consider hosting data on Indian servers to build consumer trust.

3. Support Indian Employment Initiatives

- Launch programs that promote driver entrepreneurship and financial inclusion.
- Collaborate with skilling initiatives under Digital India or Skill India missions.

C. For Policymakers and Regulators

1. Promote Indigenous Innovation in Mobility

- Provide tax incentives and grants for domestic ride-hailing platforms that invest in R&D and electric mobility.
- Encourage public-private partnerships to develop smart urban transport solutions.

2. Enhance Consumer Awareness Campaigns

- Educate the public on the broader economic impact of supporting domestic enterprises.

- Promote digital literacy and data privacy awareness among ride-hailing users.

3. Ensure Fair Competition

- Monitor pricing strategies and service quality to ensure a level playing field.
- Encourage foreign firms to adopt local employment and innovation benchmarks.

D. For Future Researchers

1. Conduct Longitudinal Studies

- Track changes in consumer satisfaction and brand loyalty over time as nationalistic policies evolve.

2. Explore Sectoral Comparisons

- Compare the impact of Atmanirbhar Bharat across other service sectors such as food delivery, e-commerce, and fintech.

3. Analyze Demographic Variations

- Investigate how age, income, education, and regional identity influence patriotic consumer behavior.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative has had a tangible and statistically significant impact on consumer satisfaction in India's ride-hailing sector. Ola, as a domestic enterprise, has successfully positioned itself as a symbol of national pride and economic self-reliance. This ideological alignment, combined with localized service delivery, has enhanced consumer trust, loyalty, and satisfaction.

In contrast, Uber continues to attract a broad customer base due to its global brand recognition and technological sophistication. However, its relatively lower emotional resonance with Indian consumers and limited regional customization have constrained its ability to fully capitalize on the evolving sentiment of economic nationalism.

The findings underscore a broader shift in consumer behavior—where satisfaction is no longer determined solely by price, convenience, or technology, but also by alignment with national values, data sovereignty, and support for indigenous innovation. This multidimensional approach to consumer satisfaction reflects the growing influence of policy-driven narratives like Atmanirbhar Bharat in shaping private consumption patterns.

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