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A Study among Decorative Paint Customers on Factors Influencing Preference of Decorative Paint Brands

Cris Kochukalam¹ and D. Kinslin²

¹ Research Scholar, Dept. of Management Studies, Noorul Islam University Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India

² Associate Professor and Head Dept. of Management Studies Noorul Islam University Kanyakumari, Tamilnadu, India

Abstract: There has been an uncompromising importance in marketing attached to the factors influencing preferences. The need and relevance of knowledge related to factors that directly or indirectly influence any marketing offer is of cause for competitive advantage. In this context this study is an attempt to enlist the factors that influence preference of decorative paint while throwing light on the perception of influencing factors among the same customers. Decorative paint category is different from other product categories because the customers are less involved with the category between two purchases and the category is more difficult to engage with throughout unlike, cars, television, smartphone etc. The repeat purchase is discontinuous and the need for repurchase is determined by economic, environmental, social and other factors and is not spontaneously decided but eventually inclined towards making an intend for purchase followed by continuous deliberation until no more deferment is desirable. The study tries to enlist the various factors influencing preferences for decorative paints in the first phase and tries to identify the influence of factors which the customers perceive as having the capacity to influence their preference.

Index Terms: Decorative paint, brand preference, brand, marketing, differentiators, innovation

I. INTRODUCTION

Consumer preferences are always considered to be an important marketing insight that makes it possible to market a product or service. In this context preference of customers are of far reaching consequences as far as marketing function is considered. The insight on customer preferences if obtained with minimum errors could enlighten the strategies where the otherwise deformed insight could hamper the strategies. Thus identifying the preference factors related to any market segment is relevant. It is dynamic also as the evolution of consumer behavior and the market environment could make this realism a dynamic one which requires constant monitoring and update [1] [2].

This study aims at generating an insight into various factors that influence preference for paint brands among the decorative paint customers. This is aimed at identifying the factors and its impact on preference as a factor. A literature review related to preferences and interaction with paint industry insiders have given a fair idea of the various factors understood for influencing the preference of paint brands. Further a detailed customer survey has been designed to capture the customer responses with which the impact of each factor on preference is analyzed and presented.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is very essential to identify the factors influencing preference of decorative paint brands as the level of competition is increasing while new entrants enter the market with selective market specialization. To sustain in an emerging competition it is necessary to focus on preference factors so that the preference set of paint customers can be featured with the brand. Identifying preference actors is a never ending process and changing market behavior reflects on change in the influencing factors also. Hence a continuous insight generation is necessary as far as the category is concerned.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The primary objective of this study is to identify the various factors influencing the preference of decorative paint brands and to evaluate the significant impact of each factor on the preference exhibited by the customers.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Earlier articles consider that consumer preferences are consistent to some level and thereby has the capability to provide a more consistent prediction of consumer choice behavior [3]. A similar insight could be found in articles of the times which also sounds the behavioural tendencies exhibited by consumers in either liking a brand or disliking a brand over the other further elaborating the preferences [9]. Consumers tend to be always in the process of continuously evaluating several options available for them and hence the closeness to reality could be found in preference models. Further this experience of consumers are reflected in their preferences also [5]. Consumer preferences consist of several processes and this is identified as cognitive, affective, conative or behavioural [6]. While a consumer approaches the end of the cognitive, affective and conative process the preference is revealed in the form of choices and explains the [7]. So in fact choice is explained by preferences and understanding preferences is more relevant in understanding and explaining choice behavior. Beyond this a subdued factor exists which is more economical in nature explained as the willingness and ability to pay for the desired preference [4]. Thus it could be understood that the essence of consumer behavior is revealed in intention formation and analyzing intention formation is possible by understanding preferences. Brand knowledge and brand experience have significant influence on preference behavior of consumers [8].

V. FACTORS INFLUENCING PREFERENCE OF DECORATIVE PAINT BRANDS

It is understood from the literature review that there are several factors that lead to brand preference and based on interaction with paint industry experts and executives certain factors which are deemed to be applied in case of paint brand preferences have been shortlisted for the study as exhibited in Table 1.

Based on the objective of identifying the impact of various factors on preferences of decorative paint brands the following hypothesis is generated.

H0: Construct Preferences1 to Preferences25 has no impact on Preferences while selecting a paint brand

H1: Construct Preferences1 to Preferences25 significant impact on Preferences while selecting a paint brand

VI. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Table 1
Influencer-Factors (Constructs for the Study)

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Explained</i>
Preference 1	Brand name
Preference 2	Brand image
Preference 3	Company name
Preference 4	Dealer
Preference 5	Price
Preference 6	Quality
Preference 7	Colours/ shades
Preference 8	Colour variety
Preference 9	Cost of application
Preference 10	Durability
Preference 11	Quantity Expected Finish
Preference 12	Right price
Preference 13	Availability at all dealers
Preference 14	Offers and deals
Preference 15	Guarantee
Preference 16	Product innovativeness
Preference 17	Application innovation
Preference 18	Environmental friendliness
Preference 19	Smell/odour reduction
Preference 20	Peer recommendation
Preference 21	Dealer recommendation
Preference 22	Painter recommendation
Preference 23	Literage
Preference 24	Neighbor
Preference 25	Colour matches

The main objective of this study is to identify the impact of various factors influencing preference for decorative paint brands . The survey was conducted among 450 respondents in the selected area of Kerala State in India by systematic sampling procedure. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in the following table.

The respondents are equally distributed among the three districts of Kerala State namely Kozhikode, Ernakulam and Trivandrum each representing the north, centre and south regions of the State. Most of the respondents reside in a municipal region and earns a monthly income of 20,000INR to 60,000 INR. Majority of the respondents have a house aged between 6-15 years that means there is a chance for the respondent to have painted the house a minimum of two times as the perceived gap between paintings for a house is estimated to be between 3-5 years. Moreover this indicates the knowledge level of the respondent in relation to paint and painting as they have two painting experience in general, atleast, to evaluate and compare. The respondents are repainting also validates this.

Further, it is required to test the normality and reliability of the data for analysis and hence the normality is tested for which Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed.

Since the questionnaire being adopted from the past studies it is essential to test whether the factors stated under each of the variable endogenous (dependent) variables measures the exogenous (independent) variable correctly. That is first we wanted to test the convergent validity of the endogenous (dependent) variables using measurement model of the CFA.

In this case all the constructs has regression coefficient value more than 0.4. That is in this case all these constructs has significant impact on Preferences.

The analysis reveals the influence of recommendation on preference. This suggests that consumers prefer paints by consulting with dealers, painters and peers. The highest influencing factor is the recommendation from dealers (0.958) where as peer recommendation (0.932) also has significant influence along with painter recommendation (0.932). The role of neighbours (0.834) is relatively significant in preference formation.

Preference of paint brands is influences significantly by the colour combinations and colour matches (0.947) available with the paint brand. Typically the colour varieties available within the brand (0.902) the range of colours and shades presented by the paint brand (0.894) also has influence on preference of a particular paint brand.

Paint brand preference is significantly influenced by durability (0.941) promised by the brand. Durability of paint brand is a belief that has been generated over the years through experience and recommendations from other sources. At present this general belief is enhanced and differentiated by brands by providing guarantee for the painted surface to a tune of five to seven years which provides a high impact on the positive inclination to prefer a particular paint brand which provides the best promise. Thus guarantee (0.923) is also a factor influencing preference of decorative paint brand. This promise of durability and guarantee is particularly evaluated by the market based on the quality, literage and quantity-finish ratio. While analyzing these factors together it is understood that quantity-expected finish ratio (0.898) shows a higher influence than literage (0.867) and quality of paint (0.808) this shows the priority assigned to each of these promises as far as a paint brand is concerned.

Preference factors are always positioned in the mind of the customers in relation to price , availability and application related factors. The analysis shows that price (0.863) plays an important role in consumer preferences. The role of offers and deals (0.878) also has a significant influence in paint brand preference. Offers and deals are mostly dealer specific factors associated with the prominence of dealer in the region

as well as the exclusivity of brands dealt with. The price paid by the customer is mostly considered as the right price for the brand as perceived by the customer hence the offers and deals could justify the value derived coupled with other promises from the brand provides a preference intention.

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

<i>Factors</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
District	Ernakulam	150	33.3
	Trivandrum	150	33.3
	Kozhikode	150	33.3
Resident locality	Corporation	90	20
	Municipality	272	60.4
	Panchayath	88	19.6
Income (INR)	20,001-40,000	204	45.3
	40,001-60,000	199	44.2
	60,001-80,000	32	7.1
	80,001-100,000	7	1.6
	Above 100,000	8	1.8
Age of the house	1-5 years	27	6
	6-10 years	114	25.3
	10-15 years	250	55.6
	> 15 years	59	13.1
Recent painting	First time painting	16	3.6
	Repainting	434	96.4

Source: Compiled from primary data

Table 3
Model Fit Indices for CFA- Preferences Preference CFA Model fit indices

X ²	4184.72
DF	198
P	0
Normed X ²	21.135
GFI	0.598
AGFI	0.34
NFI	0.65
TLI	0.482
CFI	0.658
RMR	0.125
RMSEA	0.246

Table 4
Regression Coefficients-Preferences

<i>Construct</i>	<i>Regression coefficient</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>variance</i>	<i>P</i>
Preference 1	0.86	27.334	73.9	<0.001
Preference 2	0.916	33.058	83.8	<0.001
Preference 3	0.87	28.184	75.7	<0.001
Preference 4	0.847	26.332	71.7	<0.001
Preference 5	0.863	27.59	74.5	<0.001
Preference 6	0.8.8	23.706	65.3	<0.001
Preference 7	0.894	30.447	79.9	<0.001
Preference 8	0.902	31.351	81.4	<0.001
Preference 9	0.852	26.711	72.6	<0.001
Preference 10	0.941	36.93	88.6	<0.001
Preference 11	0.898	30.906	80.7	<0.001
Preference 12	0.811	23.89	65.9	<0.001
Preference 13	0.765	21.315	58.5	<0.001
Preference 14	0.878	28.901	77.2	<0.001
Preference 15	0.923	34.016	85.1	<0.001
Preference 16	0.662	16.837	43.8	<0.001
Preference 17	0.617	15.226	38.1	<0.001
Preference 18	0.524	12.301	27.5	<0.001
Preference 19	0.897	28.994	77.3	<0.001
Preference 20	0.932	35.38	86.8	<0.001
Preference 21	0.958	40.615	91.8	<0.001
Preference 22	0.932	35.38	86.8	<0.001
Preference 23	0.867	27.926	75.1	<0.001
Preference 24	0.834	25.395	69.5	<0.001
Preference 25	0.947	10.784	89.7	<0.001

Cost of application (0.852), availability of the paint brand at the preferred dealer (0.847) and availability of the paint brand at all paint dealers (0.765) are also matter of concern as this also has relative importance in the preference behavior of paint customers.

Brand image (0.961) has a higher priority compared to the company name (0.87) followed by the brand name (0.860). One of the reasons that could be identified is that the product paint is mostly identified by the brand image not considering other brand factors. The sensory appeal of the brand carries relevant identity and hence brand image is considered with higher significance. Brand name is considered as the company name by most customers. Specific brand name to signify specialized product has significantly less significance in this category.

For example: the customers of Asian Paints give priority to the company name over recognizing it as a brand name. Asian Paints Royale is identified and positioned because of the brand name "Asian Paints" and "Royale" is mostly ignored at the time of preference formation.

Innovations are creeping in the category as differentiators. Smell and odour reduction (0.879) has been a significant influence in preferring the paint brand as customers give a thought on the need and relevance of this factor as far as post-application of paint is concerned. Product (paint) innovation (0.662) and application (painting) innovation (0.617) has not reached the customers significantly. Same is the case with environment friendliness (0.524) which has not been a priority differentiator so far and may be in the future as the norms of the regulators are uncompromising towards VOC paints, maybe in future environment friendly paints becomes a highly preferred one.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there are various factors that significantly influence the preference of decorative paint brands where dealer recommendation highest the highest influence followed by color combinations and matches possible with the paint brand. Durability and guarantee has been highlighted by many brands to ensure consumer preference which is a significant attempt as these factors play a major role in brand preference. Peer recommendation and painter recommendation is equally significant and this could be understood from the study and through customer interactions that peer recommendations are evaluated with recommendations of the painter and vice versa for an error free decision making by the paint customers. Brand image plays a significant role in brand preference followed by the significant influence of colour variety promised by the brand, quantity-finish ratio and colour shades available with the paint brand is also significant. Further the influence of smell/odour reduction promise of the brand influence preference for the brand. Preference is influenced by promotional offers and deals to a relatively significant manner. Company name, literage and price component makes the value benefit analysis significant for the brand preference. Customers are less bothered in evaluating the product innovativeness, application innovative and environmental friendliness features promised by the brand . This shows a lack of response to such factors in the market at present. Thus the change in attitude and behavior of the customers are still to evolve whereas the intermediary intervention seems to be bridging the industry and customer value chains in the decorative paint category. Paint companies must struggle to develop USPs not only in the product but also in the promotion, distribution , application and reinforcement efforts to stay on top of the customers mind while preferring a paint brand.

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