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A Study Explaining Brand Experience Among Decorative Paint Customers

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Abstract: Brand Experience has been a buzz word for most marketers and the concept is still in its emerging form. Not fully defined in the context of marketing, companies are trying to build models that may be replicable for many in the industry. The main factor revealed while brand experience is defined is that a proper explanation may not suit all the industries alike. The specific contextual application of brand experience has made it less approachable by many and hence specific industry brand experience models are sought after. With continuous improvement in the marketing concept and evolution of marketing is happening at the highest pace. Further to this staying relevant for the customer has become an imperative and maintaining uniqueness which is perceived by customers as of value is a haunting task. One of the mechanisms being used by a brand, to stay afloat in the mind of the customers, is by providing unique experiences by the brand that lingers around for a longer term discounting the efforts of the competitors. In this context brand experience of decorative paint customers is examined to explain it. The study is methodologically made to reveal the various experiences that explain brand experience and its significance to wards contributing to the brand experience variable.

Index Terms: customer experience, brand experience, experi- ence management, marketing, brands

I. INTRODUCTION

A protective coating is necessary to make the surface of the walls of houses look aesthetically pleasing as well as to protect it from external elements like climate variations, sunlight, heat, scratches and the like. The protective coating preferred in this regard is mostly paints and generally this product category falls under the definition of decorative paints. Decorative paints are throughout referred in this article as paint or paints . Analysing the industry of decorative paints it could be understood that the industry is classified as branded and non-branded decorative paints. Branded decorative paints are recognized and acknowledge by customers easily in contrast to no-branded paints. The industry statistics also carry gustimates of non-branded decorative paints business and is fairly accounted to as many as around 2300 small and medium

non-branded paint companies in India. This is against around 20-25 branded paint brands. There are few brands that have the highest recall in the customers mind which are as follows: Asian Paints. Berger paints India ltd. Kansai Nerolac Akzo Nobel Dulux Jenson and Nicholson British paints Shalimar paints The branded paint category hold around 60% of the market share and the competition in this segment is too far high that the leader brand has suffered losing its market share to others as well as to the unbranded segment. Asian paint being the market leader hold around 58% of the branded market share in decorative paints while Berger follows with 36%. Though the industry participants discounts the fact that Berger India Ltd. is a subsidiary of Asian Paints together these two brand phenomenally influence the market and its offerings. An anticipated growth of 63000 crores is projected based on the Akzo Nobels projection of the industry opportunity in India. (Akzo Nobel investor meet 2013, 2013). Paints also have classifications which are mainly classified as interior and exterior paints. Both product categories have severe competitions as far differentiation is concerned. Hence there is a burgeoning effort from all branded decorative paint companies to break the clutter and catch the customer attention. Once the attention is received then maintaining this attention and developing the customer is a herculean task. It is in this context thus the brand experience pose a higher stance. The significance of brand experience in several industries have been in the evolutionary phase yet in the paint industry evolution of marketing has been in product modification, improvements and innovations, while other marketing opportunities does not integrate as fast as it need to. Brand experience aspect need to be examined in this regard to reinforce the need , relevance and significance of it in the growing industry scenario. This study is attempted at explaining brand experience in the decorative paint industry and figuring out what contributes to explaining the brand experience significantly as well as trying to explore the managerial implications derived. As there have been several attempts in explaining brand experience based on studies pertaining to several industries, a check on the literatures related to the brand experience phenomenon is essential. This helps in drawing a fundamental outlook to the concept of brand experience.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

From the fundamentals of humans to code, classify and evaluate there are other factors beyond this that generate experiences [1] can be seen as one literature that could mark the history of experience in marketing context. Further to these attitude plays a significant influential role in evaluation in a marketing context [2] supported by the level of involvement exhibited by the customer towards the brand under consideration [3]. Brand associations and brand image significantly differs from the concept of experience [4] where the experiences related to brand need to be seen as behavioural responses to emotions, feelings, cognition and dynamic sensations [5] The later literatures followed the emotional rational combinations to model experiences but not explicitly deriving a connect meanwhile glaring impressions of value creation through integration of relationship marketing became the focus for strategically modelling experiences related to brands [6] in this regard when the literatures are explored for further deepening of planned interactions often considered as staged events in describing these experiences [7] One of the significant insight was in understanding the experience context may occur for both involved customers and uninvolved market. There are chances of brand experiences which are occurrences beyond the stages touch point of the marketer and these are also significant in explaining the brand experience continuum [8]. Brand experiences could occur despite the stage at which the individual is when the customer development process istaken into consideration [9]. There are different types and forms of experiences derived from product [10]

atmospherics [11], shopping [12], sensing, feeling, acting and relating [13], pleasure [14] social immersion [15] and various digital,online interactions with the brand [16]. From among various types and forms of experiences brand story and the experiences related to it are far more relevant and significant in defining the sustainability of the brand and hence the literature provides an unrelenting fact that brand experience tops the list of consumer experiences and is explained through models that integrates different types of experiences the individual has with the brand at different touchpoint interactions at a given period of time in a given context [17]. Thus based on the literature review the brand experience model can be explained by using the significant impact of physical experiences, sensory experiences, affective experiences, creative experiences, cognitive experiences and social identity constructs that make the model.

Table 1
Respondent Demography

<i>Respondent particulars</i>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
District	Ernakulam	150	33.3
	Trivandrum	150	33.3
	Kozhikode	150	33.3
Residence locality	Corporation	90	20
	Municipality	272	60.4
	Panchayath	88	19.6
	20,000-40,000	204	45.3
Montly earning	40,001-60,000	199	44.2
	60,001-80,000	32	7.1
	80,001-1,00,000	7	1.6
	Above 100,000	8	1.8
Age of the house	1-5 years	27	6
	114	25.3	
	250	55.6	
	> 15 years	59	13.1
Recent painting for the house	First time painting	16	3.6
	Repainting	434	96.4

Source: Primary data collected.

III. ANALYSIS

The main objective of this study is to explain brand experience based on the initial conceptual model generated. The survey was conducted among 450 respondents in the selected area 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 re-

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.

The effect of creative, affective, physical, social, cognitive and sensory experience on brand experience has been evaluated. That is in this case we test the following hypothesis.

- H1: Creative experience has positive impact on Brand Experience
- H2: Affective experience has positive impact on Brand Experience
- H3: Physical experience has positive impact on Brand Experience
- H4: Social experience has positive impact on Brand Experience
- H5: Cognitive experience has positive impact on Brand Experience
- H6: Sensory experience has positive impact on Brand Experience

Table 2
Model Fit Indices for Confirmatory Factor Analysis- Brand Experience

<i>Brand Experience</i>	
X ²	1.061
DF	3
P	0.786
Normed X ²	0.354
GFI	0.999
AGFI	0.993
NFI	0.999
TLI	1.005
CFI	1
RMR	0.453
RMSEA	0

Source: Primary data analysis.

Table 3
Regression Coefficients- Brand Experience

<i>Path</i>	<i>Estimate</i>	<i>Variance explained</i>	<i>CR</i>	<i>P</i>
Creative Experience → Brand Experience	0.333	21.6	5.966	<0.001
Affective experience → Brand Experience	0.448	39.2	8.31	<0.001
Physical experience → Brand Experience	0.612	72.9	12.272	<0.001
Social Identity → Brand Experience	0.29	16.4	5.145	<0.001
Cognitive experience → Brand Experience	0.451	39.6	8.375	<0.001
Sensory experience → Brand Experience	0.16	5	2.781	<0.001

Source: Compiled based on primary data analysis.

IV. BRAND EXPERIENCE WHAT MAKES IT?

The results revealed that the construct Creative experience had no significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.333, which is less than 0.4 (also p value was significant). So the hypothesis H1 is rejected and concludes that Creative experience has no positive impact on Experience.

The analysis gives an insight that the regulatory construct Affective experience had a significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.448, (p value was significant). So the hypothesis H2 is accepted and concludes that Affective experience has positive impact on Experience.

The data analyzed also elaborates that the regulatory construct Physical experience had a significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.612, (p value was significant). So the hypothesis H3 is accepted and concludes that Physical experience has positive impact on Experience.

It is also revealed from the data analysed that the construct Social experience had no significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.290, which is less than 0.4 (also p value was significant). So the hypothesis H4 is rejected and concludes that Social experience has no positive impact on Experience.

Further analysis shows that the regulatory construct Cognitive experience had a significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.451, (p value was significant). So the hypothesis H5 is accepted and concludes that Cognitive experience has positive impact on Experience.

The study also elaborates that the construct Social experience had no significant influence on Experience as the standardised direct effect of this construct on Experience was 0.160, which is less than 0.4 (also p value was significant). So the hypothesis H6 is rejected and concludes that Sensory experience has no positive impact on Experience.

V. MAJOR FINDINGS BRAND EXPERIENCE EXPLAINED

From the study it could be inferred that Creative experience has no positive impact on Brand Experience in case of decorative paints. The main focal point here is that, although brands position their paints with an

intention of influencing the customers to stay creative with their paints this is practically not gaining relevance. The main reason is that the creative side of painting is not typically explored by the customers. Moreover the painting process is always left with the painter. Painter experience, time availability, cost of painting coupled with urgency to walk over the inconveniences of painting might make the customer to compromise on creativity. Illustrations, painting guidance, support, model testing online etc are provided by paint brands but the customers tend to remain less creative with paint and paint brands. The creative experience does not explain the brand experience the respondents had in this regard.

Affective experience has positive impact on Experience. It could be inferred that there is a high level of feelings that dominate the paint brand preference as the feeling related aspects have much to explain the brand experience. The responses reveal that the brands evoke an element of feeling in the customer minds. The feeling ranges from fun, happiness, emotions, attachment, adventurous, curiosity and the like related to the brand of paint. The affective experience has significant impact on the brand experience.

Physical experience has positive impact on Brand Experience. The brand experience is explained by the physical experience the customers have in pre-purchase, during purchase and post purchase stages as the paints are expressed in terms of the brand which endorses it. The physical appearance of the brand in terms of its logo, colour, symbol, trademark etc. that emphasises the brand itself makes sense. The paint as such is experienced during painting which includes the physical properties of the paint, painting related proof obtained on the surface while painting as well as the expectation matched with the appearance, finish, odour, stickiness etc that physically connects the customer to the paint brand. This experiences adds value to the overall brand experience.

Social experience has no positive impact on Experience. Majority of the respondents opined that it is not the brand of the paint used neither the paint itself that makes his house stay unique but the design of the house makes the social identity. The social identity factor is also expressed as not adding to the overall brand experiences because no respondents supported the fact that the paint brand could be recognized once the surface is painted. This gives an insight that paint or the paint brand is not identified once the painting is done. The brand cease to exist on product usage ie, paint brand does not linger with the painted surface. Social recognition, identity and uniqueness is not provided by the paint brand and hence the contribution of social identity factor to the explanation of the brand experience is far less significant comparatively.

Cognitive experience has positive impact on Brand Experience. Customers tend to think a lot about the brand and the paints it endorses as well as the painting methods recommended. This makes the cognitive connection to the brand stronger for everyone who has a need for painting. Beyond the time of painting the low involvement of the customer to the category is still not a major challenge for the paint brands as when the need for painting is recognized the connect becomes stronger and heavy mental accounting takes place in every customers cognitive space in evaluating the cost and benefit of various offerings in the market. Moreover every brand tries to lure customers by positioning its uniqueness which in turn makes the customer think. Thus, the cognitive experience related to the brand adds to explain the overall brand experience.

Sensory experience has no positive impact on Brand Experience. It is fairly obvious that sensory connect with the brand in terms of smell, touch, sight or feel of the paint is rare or almost never in case of

a paint purchase. Most case the paint is sensed at the time of application and that too indirectly. The real sensory experience is post application and is of less significance in the current painting. Most respondents says that the sensory experiences are limited to just recognizing the brand among the multiple brands from the physical aspect of the brand and the perceived value attached with the brand. There is no custom of touching, smelling, feeling or even seeing the paint being bought. The brand vouches the promise and this catalyzes the perceived value of the paint and the paint is bought. Mostly the buying is based on the recommendation from other credible sources and hence sense of the paint is less significant at the customer end.

Technical understanding coupled with, minimum knowl- edge of the product (paint) and its ingredient quality other than the sellable aspects propagated by the brand owner and brand intermediaries makes the customer to apply the sensory faculty while selecting and using the paint.

Based on the study Brand experience may be expressed as the following:

$$BX=(0.612P)+(0.451G)+(0.448A)+(0.333C)+(0.290S) + (0.160E)+(K)$$

Where,

BX refers to Brand Experience

P refers to Physical Experience

G refers to Cognitive Experience

A refers to Affective Experience

C refers to Creative Experience

S refers to Social Identity

E refers to Sensory Experience

K denotes other Experience factors that may be found relevant in future (irrespective of brands in any category, industry, geography, economy, time period etc.)

VI. CONCLUSION

The study is aimed at explaining the concept of brand experience with specific reference to the decorative paint category and its customers. The study throws light on the specificity of brand experience in this category where brand experience plays a very important role. The role of the brands is significant in decorative paint category because the customer recognizes and differentiates one paint with that of the other only through their brands. Hence brands are synonymous to products (paints) because no customer can recognize paint and articulate its benefits without the physical evidence provided to it by the brands. The benefits are linked to the promises provided by the brands and paints by it are far short of evaluating by the customer. There is a need for physical experience to be strategized as the significance of physical experience is evident from the study. In preferring a paint brand physical experience with the brand shows a high significance in explaining the overall brand experience. It should also be noted that the way in which a paint brand physically expresses itself directly contributes to the overall brand experience of the customer. The category employs feelings and thinking of the customer with a relative balance where the thinking in relation to paint brand has a balance with the feelings and emotions attached with the brand. Hence the

balance of emotion and rationality determines and explains brand experience. Creative experiences, social identity and sensory experiences do not as much contribute to explaining brand experience in relation to the aforesaid factors. While brand experience is the focal point towards which brands are poised makes it necessary to explain the concept with its utmost possible scope so that the relative competitive advantage is possibly acquired by the decorative paint brands.

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