

INFLUENCE OF PAINTERS ON DECORATIVE PAINT PURCHASE DECISION

A STUDY AMONG THE PAINT DEALERS ABOUT THEIR PERCEPTION OF PAINTER'S INFLUENCE

Cris Abraham Kochukalam*

Dr. Stephen Mathews**

Abstract

Paints as a product category is gaining relevance in the consumer segments for the reason that people aspire to build their homes, want their homes look attractive and distinctive among the others in the social environment. This leads to consumers involving in paint purchase especially with the decorative paint category. But at the time of purchase this involvement is nullified where the dependency on the painters begins to influence the final decision. Consumers' preference, at the end of the day when the final purchase is made, is overly influenced by the painter's and dealer's recommendation. This is studied in several contexts and further to this a gap is identified to explore whether painter's influence is acknowledged by the dealers, hence this study focuses on how dealer's perceive the influence exercised by painters on the purchase decision of decorative paints.

Keywords: *Consumer experience , painter's influence, purchase decision making , preference*

* Research Scholar , Noorul Islam University, Thackalay, Kanyakumari dt. Tamilnadu , India

** Director , Berchmans Institute of Management Studies, S B College , Changanassery, Kerala ,India

Introduction

The emergence of Experience Economy era has resulted in a vibrant shift towards meeting consumer expectations through providing 'experiences' and less focused on the product attribute, features and benefits. Consumers, while purchasing, is no longer focusing on 'purchase behaviour' alone (Sharon Morrison and Frederick G Crane, 2007) instead they are influenced by several touch points (Andrew, 2003) that could lead to making a preference and ultimately acquiring a particular brand. Marketers in this context try to build experience strategies by integrating elements of marketing such as relationship management, value creation (Grönroos, Christian, 1997) and providing consumers with a purchase process experience (B. Joseph Pine 1998) (Schmitt, 1999). In the case of decorative paints the several touch points the consumers connect with generates preference but towards the purchase the influence of painters and dealers become active and powerful so that the preference is changed. The study takes into consideration one such influencer in the decorative paint category –the painters.

Influence of recommendation

Purchase of certain categories of products or services requires somewhat specialized knowledge about the category for making better informed decisions, the lack of which makes consumers susceptible to be influenced by influencers. Some categories of influencers, by way of their profession, have a personal interest in the buying behavior exhibited by the consumers. They actively exercise their influence through brand recommendations and, in most cases, ensure that their recommendations are adhered to. (Gopal, 2014). The consumer recommends a brand in terms of his own perceptions and feelings in the face of the characteristics presented by it, without taking into account the social consideration and the links of the brand with certain aspirational groups. The fact that neither the status function nor the social identification function have an influence on the recommendation seems to indicate that the consumer considers it irrelevant to base his advice on aspects that are not derived from his personal interaction with the brand and that, on the other hand, may already be known to the person to whom the recommendation is going to be made. The recommendation of the brand seems to be determined by the consumers' own perceptions of it, rather than by the image and social prestige of the brand. (Belen Del Rio, 2001).

Buying behavior of decorative paint customers

The customers for decorative paints exhibit dissonance buying behavior: - sometimes consumer is highly involved in the purchase but there are few differences between brands. Consumers will buy paints quickly as there are few differences between brands. The customer preference may vary from each other, depending on the factors like product, price, Quality, brand, and Advertisement. (Kuma, Subramanian, & Karthik, 2014). The customer buying decisions of branded paints are influenced by various factors, which are very different from non- branded paints where price plays very important role in purchase decisions. There no significant difference, in the opinion of respondents on the product, in respect of their demographic factors and price should not be considered as the first factor while purchasing branded paints. (Rao, 2014) Research has revealed that mostly the consumer's interaction with the category is on the lower side. Once the house is painted most users do not retain even a modicum of interest in the category until the house has to be repainted. The purchase decision in the case of paints carries undue importance of intermediary over the end consumer. This is, because more often than not, it is the painter or the contractor who makes the final decision of choosing the brand. (Dubey, 1999).

Methodology adopted for the study

For the study the survey was conducted among the selected dealers of decorative paints to explore the perception related to the painter's influence on the purchase decision of the paint buyers .Primary data were collected from 56 selected multi brand paint dealers. The selection of dealers was based on convenience.

Hypothesis developed for Objective:

Ho: There is no significant impact of influencers (Painters) on Customers of Paint.

Ha: Influencers (Painters) play a significant role in changing/influencing the decision making process for Paint buying.

Sl .n o.	Statement wise responses from painters (total no. =56)	Strongl y agree(5)	Agre e (4)	Neutr al (3)	Disagr ee (2)	Strongly disagree (1)	Tot al
1	After application it is difficult to judge the Brand of paint used	26	28	2	0	0	56

2	Paint customers insist for Brands just like they insist for brands of TV , Mobile phones etc.	4	20	6	18	8	56
3	Most of the customers consult painters before making a purchase decision of paints	20	28	4	4	0	56
4	Companies prefer to go for Painter schemes to motivate painters	18	20	8	10	0	56
5	consumers generally don't try to understand the technicalities involved in painting system, quality, application process etc	16	22	10	4	4	56
6	Majority of the Consumers are not aware about the application process/performance of Paints	10	24	10	10	2	56
7	Majority of the consumers engage Painters on recommendation of Dealers.	10	16	6	18	6	56
8	Companies give due attention for Painter's skill enhancement by Organizing Painter Meets	18	16	4	12	6	56
9	Painter schemes motivates painters for more WOM publicity	14	22	12	8	0	56
10	Painter schemes act as a powerful tool for Pushing the product in High Demand seasons	14	16	8	14	4	56
11	Painter meets have now become a useful tool to use Painters as influencers	16	18	6	12	4	56
12	Companies giving adequate attention for Painters' safety (free gloves in putty boxes, free Goggles for the eyes ,etc gets higher recommendations	16	28	4	8	0	56
13	Dealer will promote a particular company (Brand) where Senior management gives special attention by regular visits and interactions	10	14	16	14	2	56

14	Painters recommend those companies(Brands) which invites them for painters meet, treats them with surprise gifts and party	0	22	16	14	4	56
15	When asked for assistance in selecting a paint brand by customers , the dealers will recommend those which gives them more incentives	12	20	10	14	0	56
16	When asked for assistance in selecting a paint brand by customers , the dealers will recommend those brands which is proven for quality	20	20	16	0	0	56
17	Painters will recommend those brands which gives them more commission even when the quality is compromised	0	0	11	26	19	56
18	Painters believe that they are able to influence the decision of their clients in selection of paints	0	0	2	30	24	56

Following formula of t-test is used to investigate the significance of the difference between an **assumed population mean** and a **sample mean**, where population standard deviation is not known but the sample standard deviation is known.

$$t = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu_0}{s / \sqrt{n}}$$

Where t= 5.591

\bar{x} = sample mean

μ_0 = assumed population mean

s= Standard deviation

n= Sample size

Sample Mean = 3.6

Assumed population mean = 3.0

Standard Deviation (Sample) = 0.803

Sample size = 56

Critical table value of t at 55 degrees of freedom ($n-1$ or $56-1$) and 0.01 significance level = 3.251 Since observed t -value (5.591) is greater than the critical value (3.251), the Null hypothesis is not accepted. Hence it may be concluded that Painters play a significant role in influencing the decision making process for Paint buying.

Weighted mean of the responses

The weighted mean of the responses for each of the statements, collected on five point scale ranging from 1 to 5, are given in the chart A.

The pertinent values reveal the perception of the dealers on the influencing factors on the paint purchase decision.

The Mean Values at the extreme, ie, 5 strongly agree and 1 strongly disagree are the significant ones to be taken note of.

Notable disclosures:

Loss of brand identity: A number of brands of paints are available in the market, however, these brands lose their identity once they are applied on the surface.[Score of 4.43 signifies very high agreement with the statement given] Brands cannot be distinguished one from the other. The marketers may think of identifying or identifiable markings/texture/glow/ for their brands.

Painters- the consultant, the customers of paints consult the painters for deciding on the purchase decision.[4.14 score indicates the high agreement with the statement] However they disagree that the painters can influence the purchase decision [the score 1.61, the lowest secured in the study indicates the strong disagreement with the statement given]. That means even though the painters are consulted, there are others who play a crucial role in the decision making, which is not revealed by the study.

Customers' predicament: Majority of the Consumers are not aware about the application process/performance of paints [mean score 3.54] nor do they try to understand the technicalities involved in painting system, quality, application process etc [mean score 3.75]. These are the reasons for consulting the painters in selecting the paints. And the majority of the consumers engage Painters on recommendation of Dealers.[mean score 3.11] the customers insisting on the brand of paints, just like they insist for brands of TV, Mobile phones etc.is not definite, neither strongly agree, nor strongly disagree [mean score 2.89]

Dealers role in decision process as mentioned above, it on the recommendation of the dealers the clients/ customers engage the painters. The dealers will recommend those brands, proven for their quality [mean score 4.07] rather than those brands which offer more incentives [mean score 3.54]

The paint marketers role: Marketers, with the crucial role played by painters in mind, give adequate attention to safety of the painters [mean score 3.93] offer painter schemes [mean score 3.82] and pay due attention to skill enhancement of the painters [mean score 3.50]

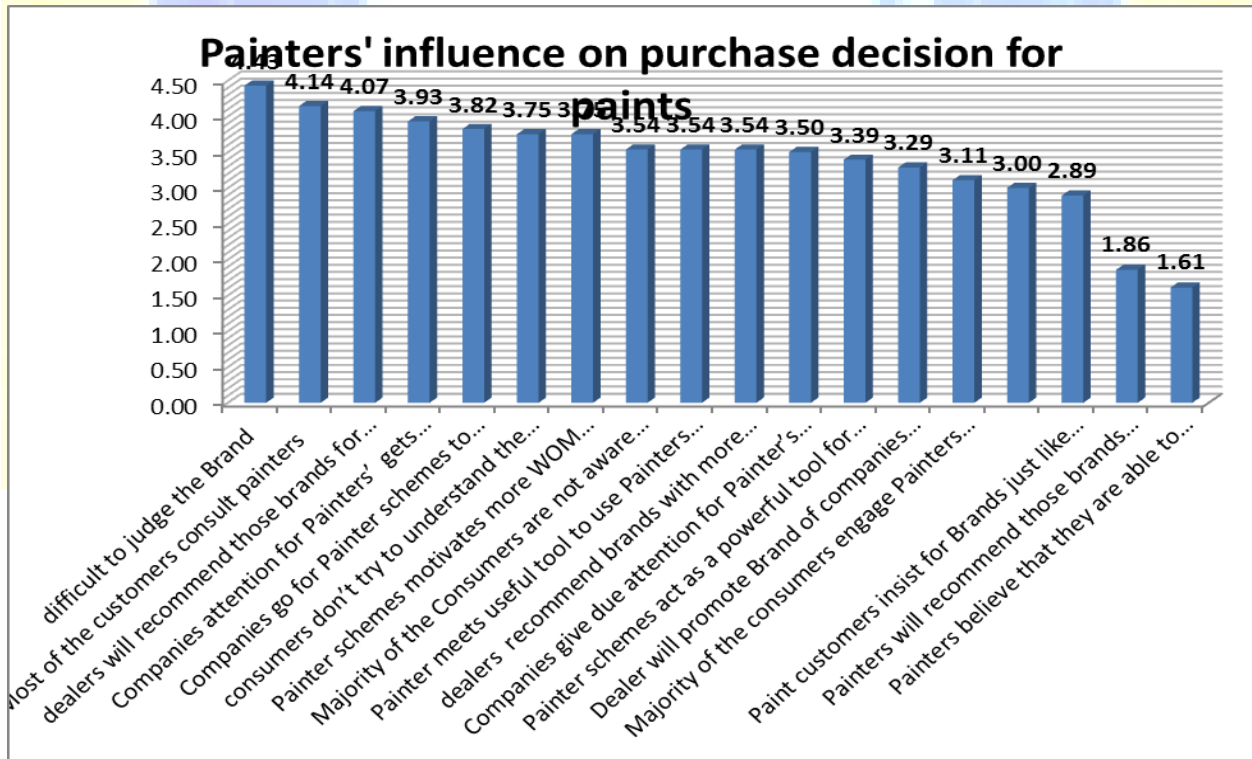
Painters meet and incentives as motivators: painter schemes motivates them to WOM publicity [mean score 3.75] and the painter meeting is a useful tool to influence the painters [mean score 3.39] However the painters do not recommend the brands just because they attend the meets and receive gifts, that's what the mean score 3 tells us . and they do not recommend the brands only on the basis of the commission paid to them [mean score 1.86] reveals their disagreement with the statement. So it is a difficult offer to be made to painters, schemes, but not straight forward commission.

Conclusion

The study revealed information related to the perception of the dealers on the painter's influence on the consumer decision making for the purchase of decorative paints. It is understood that the painters are consulted by paint customers before making a purchase and the dealers perceive that painters are not the ultimate influencer on the decision to purchase paints. Dealers also play a vital role in influencing the customer decision. Consumers depend on painters and dealers as

they are technically incompetent to understand the technicalities related to paints and painting. Unlike other products paints does not extend its brand identity after its useful application hence the disconnect experience is more once the paint is applied. This leads to the customers willingness to associate with the brand until the next requirement arises which will generally be after five or more years. Dealers perceive that the painters play a very important influencing role on the customer and hence adequate pampering and motivation is required to be made by the paint companies. While the quality is of less concern for painters, an average quality at an average price will be recommended but which provides high incentives and commission for the painters. Unlike dealers who usually recommend quality paints without any compromise painters compromises on quality aspect during recommendation. This makes the customer fall into further dilemma at the paint purchase stage as recommendations from the painter and dealer may vary based on their vested interests. This reveals that the purchase of decorative paints is influenced by both dealers and painters, but dealers perceive that the painter does not exercise influence to alter the purchase decision.

Chart A



Source : Primary data

Bibliography

- Andrew, G. (2003, June 01). Brands That Get Noticed. *Marketing Research* , 29-31.
- B. Joseph Pine II, J. H. (1998, July-August). The Experience Economy , Work is theatre and every business a stage. *Harvard Business Review* .
- Belen Del Rio, R. V. (2001). The Effects Of Brand Associations On Consumer Response. *JOURNAL OF CONSUMER MARKETING* , 18 (5), 410-425.
- Dubey, C. (1999, July 07). Asian Paints to tint consumer behaviour through retail pull. *Financial Express* , p. 1.
- Gopal, D. S. (2014). An Analysis of the Factors That Influence the Influencers' Recommendations with Regard to the Purchase of Automotive Lubricants for Two-Wheelers. *The IUP Journal of Marketing Management* , 13 (4), 24-38.
- Kuma, A. A., Subramanian, V., & Karthik, P. K. (2014). Customers Purchasing Behaviour Of Paints With Reference To Asian Paints In Coimbatore District –Empirical Evidences. *TAJMMR* , 3 (7-8), 31-49.
- Grönroos, Christian. (1997). Value-driven Relational Marketing: from Products to Resources and Competencies. *Journal of Marketing Management* , 13 (5), 407-419.
- Rao, D. M. (2014). A Study On Customer Buying Decisions Of Branded Paints: A Case Study With Reference To Berger Paints. *IJASMP* , 3 (2) . Retrieved February 2015, from <http://pezzottaitejournals.net/index.php/IJASMP/article/view/1358>
- Schmitt, B. (1999). Experiential Marketing. *Journal of Marketing Management* , 15, 53-67.
- Sharon Morrison and Frederick G Crane. (2007). Building the service brand by creating and managing an emotional brand experience. *Journal of Brand Management* , 14, 410-421.