Research Article

Unveiling Brand Patronage Dynamics in Retail Settings for Decorative Paints

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Indian paints industry is one of the fastest growing industry and is estimated to grow to 12.22 billion USD five years from now. In this scenario, the support of paint retailers to manufacturers and an insight into factors influencing customer patronisation become important. The purpose of this study is to understand the retailers' patronisation and perception on assortment of marketing factors that plays a major role in brand preference. Further, the factors influencing customer purchase of decorative paints from retailers' perspective is also analysed. The study follows a descriptive research design. Primary data was collected using structured a questionnaire from 79 decorative paint retailers. IBM SPSS® 22 was used for data analysis. To characterize and summarize data, descriptive statistics were employed. Paired sample t test was used to find the gap between the expected and actual outcome of retailers on factors for a brand taken for study. Regression analysis is used to find out relationship between the overall willingness of retailers with factors considered in the study. It was found that there is a significant gap in the opinion of decorative paint retailers between the expected and actual outcome on most of the factors. The outcome of the research suggests that brand reputation of paint brans play a significant role in the choice of paint brands stocked by retailers and paint brands demanded by customers. Price of a paint brand is given the least importance while a purchase decision is made. **Keywords:** Brand reputation, Quality, Demand from customers, Profit margin, Paired sample test, Regression.

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, exterior and interior wall painting in buildings such as households and office spaces is done to protect the wall from the elements and conventionally lime mixture was used to whitewash the walls. Of course some color pigments were added to lime to give the walls some vibrancy. This has changed and most households and business spaces no longer use traditional methods to color their walls but use emulsions and enamels that offer better sun and mold protection, waterproofing and color fastness to paints. Further, exterior and interior paints are no longer applied just for the utility of protection of walls but also have decorative function. Paint industry is broadly classified into two broad segments based on its application namely, industrial segment and decorative segment. The decorative segment is characterized by exterior wall paints, interior wall paints, enamel based paints and wood finishes. The industrial segment comprises of automotive paints, powder and protective coatings. In the realm of home improvement and interior decoration, decorative paints hold a prominent position as they serve both functional and aesthetic purposes.

The organized sector of Indian paint industry made up by leading corporates is over 100 years old. Shalimar Paints in Calcutta (now Kolkata) is considered as a pioneer in setting up one of the first paint factories in India in 1902 heralding the start of organized paint industry in the country. Paint industry in India, in its nascent stages was primarily consisted of small manufacturers and two foreign companies. Presently, in India, the organized paint and

coatings manufacturing sector has twelve major players and the unorganized sector has over 2,500 small paint manufacturers.

The size of the Indian paints industry is estimated to grow to 12.22 billion USD in the next five years from the present 7.57 billion USD (IBEF, 2023). Indian paint industry has emerged as an attractive sector and has seen many new players entering into paint manufacturing in recent times. These manufacturers are actively investing in infrastructure, technology, and marketing to establish their presence and capture a share of the market (Press Trust of India, 2023).

Decorative paints dominate the Indian Paint market by accounting for more than 75 percent of market share, while the industrial paint segment contribute to about 25 percent of share (Jaganmohan, 2024). Within the decorative paint segment, the share of exterior paints is 21 percent, interior emulsions is 11 percent, distempers is 30 percent, solvent-based enamel paint is 36 percent and wood finishes are 2 percent (Devaraj, 2020). In India, per capita consumption of paint in any form is just 700 grams compared to 5.8 kg in Brazil, 2.7 kg in China and 19 kg in the U.S. This indicates that commercially manufactured emulsion and enamel decorative paints are still not affordably by the vast majority of population in India.

The retail industry plays a vital role in bridging the gap between manufacturers and consumers, making it an essential part of any product's distribution and marketing strategy. This study aims to delve into the perception of retailers towards decorative paints, with a specific focus on a particular brand of paint of interest (BoI). Understanding how retailers perceive and interact with a brand like BoI can offer valuable insights into the effectiveness of its marketing efforts, product quality, and overall market positioning.

REVIEW

Retailers usually make it a point to align themselves with brands that offer various positive outcomes to them, be it profit or reputation or any other aspect. Similarly, almost all manufacturers or service providers try to leverage the value of their highly respected and popular brand names (Zboja & Voorhees, 2006). Many empirical investigations (Berry, 2002) (Krishnan & Hartline, 2001) highlight the importance of branding of products including services and the organizations themselves.

Brand patronization can be defined as the deliberate decision made by customers to endorse and participate with a specific brand. Numerous elements wield an influence over brand patronization. Among these factors, one of great significance is the perception of the brand, as it holds a substantial impact on customer patronage (Abioro, 2021). Additionally, brand credibility plays a significant role in brand patronisation (Fazel, 2015). Another study found that retailers are willing to negotiate with the brand in accordance with the consumers' level of awareness, and they anticipate that companies have to advertise in mass media (Reena, 2020). The selection of a brand for business dealings by paint retail outlets is based on careful consideration of consumer demand and profitability (Sinha, 2017). The paint vendors in Indonesia took into account the services provided by the manufacturers when choosing the paint brand (Pujiyono, 2016).

A study has revealed that the primary determinant impacting the purchasing behavior of retailers is the quality of paint. Additionally, retailers take into account the brand name and price when selling paints at their respective outlets (Vembu, 2019). The paint retailers take into account both the compatibility of price and the reliability of the product (Suresh, 2019). A study conducted in the city of Coimbatore, located in the state of Tamilnadu, has unveiled that the retailers prioritize consumer brand preference as the primary determinant when it comes to the sale of paints and paint-related products (Vidhya, 2017). In the Srilankan market, the paint vendors are significantly swayed by the brand reputation and paint quality, as opposed to the price of the paints (Ubayachandra, 2015). The paint retailers hold the belief that influencers possess a significant influence on consumers' purchasing decisions when it comes to paints. Consequently, the retailers opt for suppliers who provide a higher number of advantages to said influencers (Kochukalam, 2016). A study conducted in the South African B2B market has unveiled that brand image, durability, and price significantly impact the decision-making process of B2B customers. Consequently, these factors play a crucial role in shaping their brand loyalty (Alexander, 2009).

When acquiring services from the company, market intermediaries express concern regarding their prior experience with the company. Should they have been content with the services rendered, they will exhibit loyalty towards it (Bennett, 2005). The commitment of B2B customers is influenced by the quality of the product and the

nature of the relationship between the manufacturer and the intermediaries. The loyalty of customers towards the brand is triggered by the trust they have in their suppliers and their cooperative efforts (Čater, 2010). The perception of product and service quality among market intermediaries is significantly affected by the specific influence of the brand's image. Conversely, the broader influence of the company's reputation plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of customer value and customer loyalty (Cretu, 2007).

Retailers will consider the brand created by the companies if it offers financial benefits, as well as customer and managerial benefits (Glynn, 2007). The degree of brand patronage is contingent upon the worth of the brand. The value of the brand is established by the functional and emotional benefits that the brand bestows upon the retailers (Leek, 2012). Brand preference plays a pivotal role in marketing, as it can be effectively attained by establishing a robust and favorable brand perception within the customers' mind (Maurya, 2018). The loyalty of retailers in their dealings with a paint brand is influenced by the factors such as brand reputation, price, and availability (Venkatesh, 2016). The satisfaction of customers is influenced by the attributes of the product and the rapport established with the sales person. This influence, in turn, affects the loyalty towards the brand (Jeyapaul P. P., 2023). In order to enhance brand loyalty, organizations must prioritize brand awareness, brand image, brand trust, and brand commitment (Ledikwe, 2020).

Based on the review of literature and the requirements of the BoI, this study endeavored to profile the decorative paint retailers based on their demographics, to find the availability of paint brands in paint retail stores thereby identifying the patronization pattern. The study also tried to find the factors influencing the patronization of different brands of paints by retailers. Further the factors affecting the willingness of retailers to stock different brands of decorative paints against BoI is compared. It was also explored to find if decorative paint are frequently suggested by the retailers to customers. Finally, the factors influencing customer purchasing decisions on decorative paints according to retailers is identified.

Table1. Brief summary of review

Factors	Author(s)
Brand reputation of a brand	Abioro (2021), Ledikwe (2020), Reena (2020), Vembu (2019), Venkatesh (2016), Fazel (2015), Ubayachandra (2015), Alexander (2009), Cretu (2007), Zboja & Voorhees (2006)
Quality of product as perceived by customer	Jeyapaul P. P. (2023), Vembu (2019), Suresh (2019), Leek (2012), Čater (2010), Alexander (2009)
Demand for a brand from the customers	Jeyapaul P. P. (2023), Maurya (2018), Sinha (2017), Vidhya (2017), Čater (2010), Glynn (2007)
Profit margin from a brand	Suresh (2019), Sinha (2017), Venkatesh (2016), Alexander (2009), Glynn (2007)
Sales person support	Jeyapaul P. P., (2023), Venkatesh (2016), Čater (2010), Bennett (2005)
Marketing and promotional support	Pujiyono (2016), Čater (2010), Berry (2002), Krishnan & Hartline (2001)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design, Area, and Period

To address the objectives of the research, descriptive research design with cross-sectional study is used. The study was conducted from July 15, 2024 to September 16, 2024. Data was collected from 79 decorative paint retailers in the cities of Chennai (41 retailers) and Madurai (38 retailers) in Tamilnadu state of India. Chennai and Madurai are two major cities in the state with a total population of over 14.33 million in which, Chennai being a much bigger metropolitan city, has a population of over 12.5 million (Britannica, 2024) and Madurai has a population of over 1.83 million (Britannica, 2024). Chennai district has 16 taluks and Madurai district encompasses

13 taluks. Both Chennai and Madurai's combined population exceeds the population of 156 countries out of 233 in the world. They have more population than countries like Bolivia, Belgium, United Arab Emirates, Cuba etc. Similarly, the population density of Both Chennai and Madurai is more than the population density of almost all countries in the world. These characteristics of the research geography make them more suitable to do a research on decorative paints. The two districts mentioned above are shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Chennai and Madurai Districts of Tamilnadu State in India

Rationale of methods

Data was collected from retailers as they are the link between the manufacturers of products and the end consumers. In case of decorative paints, manufacturers try to reach the consumers by convincing the influencers such as painters and building contractors to act as advocates for their brand. Manufacturers of decorative paints target the influencers with promotional programs and convince them to visit the retailers to make purchase on behalf of the end consumers or make the influencers persuade the end consumers to purchase their brands from the paint retailers. Apart from this, decorative paint manufacturers advertise heavily in mass media targeting the end consumers to stay popular and on top of mind of end consumers to make them choose a particular brand when they visit paint retailers for their painting needs. Thus it is justified to collect data from retailer as they can offer a comprehensive view on the perspectives of manufacturers, retailers and end consumers.

Data collection tool and procedure

Primary data for the research was collected by direct survey method using a structured questionnaire from the decorative paint retailers. The Questionnaire collected demographic details of paint retailers, their opinion on various factors of the research through multiple choice questions and Likert scale questions. Secondary data for this research was obtained from the journals, literature and the various websites. The degree to which one independent variable has impact on the dependent variable is measured using regression. Paired sample t - test is employed to compare the factors affecting willingness to stock different brands of decorative paints and BoI. IBM SPSS® 22 was used for data analysis.

ANALYSIS OF DATA TO ANSWER RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this section, the answer for the research objectives/questions taken up for the research is endeavored. Solutions to all the research objectives are taken up sequentially as per the chronological order of the same.

Profiling of decorative paint retailers based on their demographics

In this section Period of existence of paint retailer shops, Biological age of owners of paint retail shops, Location of paint shops, Types of Paint Retailers are discussed.

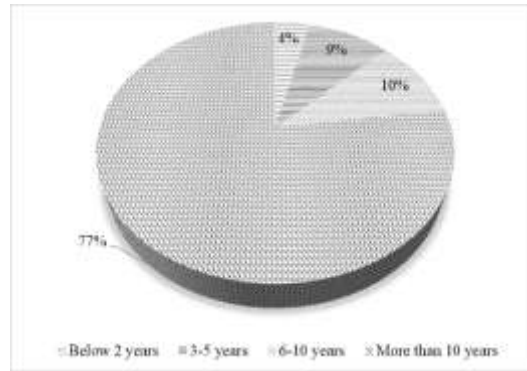## Period of existence of paint retailer shops

Figure 2. Period of existence of paint retailer shops

From the data it can be seen that 77% retail shops are existing for more than 10 years, 10% of the retail shop are existing between 6-10 years, 9% of the retail shops are existing between 3-5 years and 4% of the retail shops are quite new and are existing for the past 2 years only. From the above data it can be concluded that most paint retailers are in existence for more than 10 years.

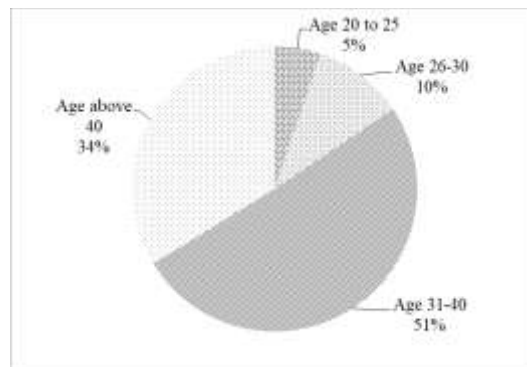## Biological age of owners of paint retail shops

Figure 3: Biological age of paint retailers

The biological age of respondents could indicate the shift in the adoption of promotional programs for decorative paints. From the data it is inferred that 5% of the respondents are in the age group of 20 to 25 and 10% of the respondents have age group between 26 to 30 years of age. These paint shop owners are quite young. About 51% of owners of paint retail shops are between the age group of 31 to 40 and 34% of the retailers are above 40. It can be seen that majority of the paint retailers are in the age group between 31 to 40 years.
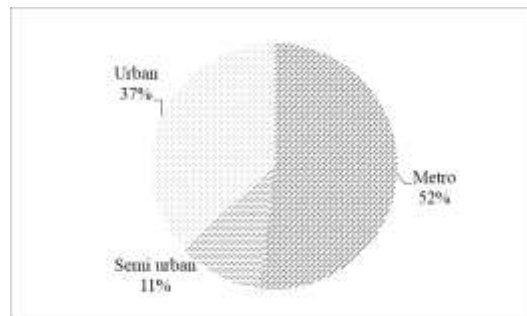
Location of paint shops

Figure 4. Location of the retailer's shop

From the above **Figure 4** it is inferred that the 52% retail shop are located in the region of metro cities, 37% of the retail shop are located in the urban area, 11% of the retail shop are located in the semi-urban area. From this we can conclude that paint retail shops are more located in the metro cities.
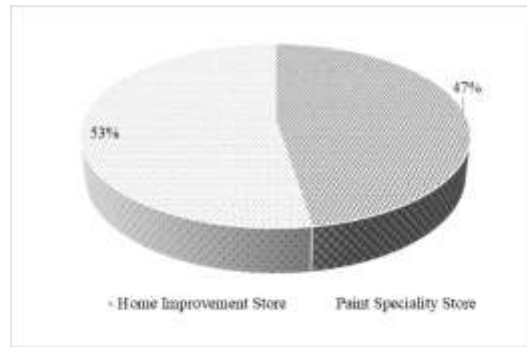
Types of Paint Retailers

Figure 5. Types of Paint Retailers

From the above **Figure 5** it is inferred that the 52% retail shop are paint specialty store, 47% of the retail shop are home improvement stores. From this we can conclude that paints are available in both the retail store and the home improvement store.

Availability of paint brands in paint retail stores thereby identifying the patronization pattern

The following section discusses the paint variants such as interior paints, exterior paints, wood finishes, metal paints and spray paints stocked by the retailers. This indicates the patronization of type of paints. In the next section, the different brand of paint stocked by the retailers is discussed.

Paint variants stocked by retailers

Table 2. Retailers holding paint variants of different paint brands

Type of Paint variant	Number of retailers
Interior Paints	75 out of 79 paint shops
Exterior Paints	76 out of 79 paint shops
Wood Finishes	50 out of 79 paint shops
Metal Paints	41 out of 79 paint shops
Spray Paints	08 out of 79 paint shops
Total Paint Shops	79

The data presents a breakdown of the sales distribution for different types of paint. Interior Paint and Exterior Paint are the most popular choices, accounting for 95% and 96% of total paint sales, respectively. Wood Paint/Stain follows next, with 63% of sales, making it the third most commonly purchased paint type.

Metal Paint and Spray Paint have relatively lower sales percentages, with 52% and 10%, respectively. These types of paint have a smaller market share compared to Interior and Exterior Paints. The company can use this information to gain insights into consumer preferences and make data-driven decisions about inventory management and marketing strategies. For instance, the company may consider increasing marketing efforts for Metal Paint and Spray Paint to boost their sales or focus on promoting best-selling Interior and Exterior Paints to maintain their market dominance.

Factors influencing the patronization of different brands of paints by retailers

In this section, the impact of factors such as brand reputation of a paint brand (BR), quality of paint as perceived by customer (QUAL), demand for a paint brand from the customers (DEM), profit margin from a paint brand (PM), sales person support (SS) and marketing and promotional support (MPS) offered by a paint brand on the overall willingness (OW) to stock a brand of paint is analyzed. The impact of the predictor variables (BR, QUAL, DEM, PM & MPS) on the criterion variable (OW) is computed using simple linear regression. The regressions were carried out separately and the results were compiled into a single table and are presented in **Table 3**. The outcome of the regression is presented as $y = a + b\,x_n$, where Y is the dependent variable, 'a' is the constant, 'b' is the regression coefficient, 'x' is the independent variable. The hypothesis considered is presented below.

Null Hypothesis: There is no impact on overall willingness to stock a brand of paint by the retailers from the factors considered for the study.

Alternate Hypothesis: There is a significant impact on overall willingness to stock a brand of paint by retailers from the factors considered for the study.

Table 3. Results of Regression showing the Impact of predictor variables on the criterion variable (OW)

Factors	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	Sig. F Change	Constant	Coeff
					Change Statistics				
BR	.147	.022	.004	.355	.022	1.237	.271	-	-
QUAL	.112	.013	-.005	.356	.013	.710	.403	-	-
DEM	.410	.168	.153	.327	.168	11.320	.001	2.921	.093
PM	.164	.027	.010	.354	.027	1.555	.218	-	-
MPS	.459	.211	.197	.319	.211	14.941	.000	2.801	.127
SS	.061	.004	-.014	.706	.004	.206	.652	-	-

$$y = 2.921 + 0.093\,x_1 \qquad (1)$$
$$y = 2.801 + 0.127\,x_2 \qquad (2)$$

Where

y = overall willingness to stock a brand of paint (OW)

x_1 = demand for a paint brand from the customers (DEM)

x_2 = marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand (MPS)

The regressions show that the factors brand reputation of a paint brand (BR), quality of paint as perceived by customer (QUAL), sales person support (SS) and the profit margin from a paint brand (PM) have no significant impact on the overall willingness (OW) of retailers to stock a brand of paint. However, the factors demand for a paint brand from the customers (DEM) and the marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand (MPS) have a significant impact on the overall willingness of retailers to stock a brand of paint. This implies that retailers are willing to patronize a brand that is popular among customers. This also implies that, those brands may offer adequate profits by virtue of volume of sales because they are popular, even though the retailers don't attach a lot of significance to profit margin as such. The retailers not attaching a lot of importance to profit margin may also be because of the fact that most brands do offer adequate profit margin to the retailers. Further, marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand, could also be instrumental in attracting more customers to a particular brand, thereby increasing the sales and profits. Thus the retailers are attaching more importance to the marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brands. While observing the regression equation it can be found that marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand is given more importance by the retailers than the demand for a paint brand from the customers. This indicates the importance of marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand.

Comparison of expectation and existing reality on various factors affecting willingness to stock brand of interest (BoI)

In an ideal retailing condition, the expectation of retailers of BoI from the manufacturer of paints (BoI) on the various factors that influence them to stock the BoI and the actual reality of the same factor being provided by the manufacturer to the retailer must be congruent and matched. However, when the factors are materialized by the manufacturer, there could be gaps in the above mentioned expectation and actual performance of manufacturers. To analyze this gap, the differences in mean ($\bar{x}$) values of the opinion of retailers on both expected and actual outcome of paint manufacturers are examined. The gap in the variables considered for the study (BR, QUAL, DEM, PM, SS & MPS) are tabulated in **Table 4**. If the mean vales of expectation and the actual reality are quite close then it can be concluded that there is congruence in the retailers' expectation and reality. If the differences in the means are wide, then the opposite is true.

Commonly, there will be a gap in the retailers' perception on the actual factors/service provided by the manufacturer and expectations, which is acceptable. However, if the gap is too wide, then the manufacturer will need to look into the gap quite seriously. To analyze the significance of the gap, a paired samples t test is carried out. The null hypotheses (H_0) in each of the cases are that there is no significant difference between expected level

of factors/services by the retailer and the actual factor/service provided by the manufacturer of paint (BoI).

Comparing the mean values in each of the pairs (between expected vs reality) from the results of the paired samples statistics presented in **Table 5**, it can be seen that there is a gap or difference between the expectation and actuals as perceived by retailers. Since the opinion of retailers are expressed in a five point scale, the values closer to five indicated higher expectation and higher satisfaction. In all the cases, the expectation of the retailers from the BoI is higher than the actual perception on factors. It can also be noted that the standard deviation (σ) is not much.

While observing the opinion of retailers on factor brand reputation (BR) in **Table 5**, there is a difference of 1.8793 (**Table 5**) in the mean values. This is considered a big difference since the measurement was done with a 5 point scale. This implies that the BoI has very less brand reputation than what the retailers expect compared to its competitors. The manufacturer thus will have to pay attention in building the brand reputation so that customers start demanding the BoI and the retailers are also satisfied. Further, the retailers will feel confident and prestigious in stocking the BoI based on its BR. The same phenomenon is observed in all the other factors also.   This clearly indicates that the BoI need to improve their product and services to match the retailers' expectations by enhancing its brand reputation, product quality, creating demand from customers, improved profit margin and marketing support to retailers.

However, observing the factor 'marketing and promotional support offered by BoI (MPS)', it can be seen that gap in the retailers' expectation on MPS and the actual MPS provided by the manufacturer, as perceived by the retailers are quite close albeit the expectation being slightly higher. The difference in the value is only 0.3103 and thus it can be assumed that there is a match in expectation and reality.

Table 4. Paired Sample Statistics

Factors \ Metrics		$\bar{x}$	N	σ	Standard error mean
Pair 1	Expected BR	4.500	58	0.8002	0.1051
	BR of BoI	2.621	58	1.3354	0.1754
Pair 2	Expected QUAL	4.017	58	1.0172	0.1336
	QUAL of BoI	2.862	58	1.4321	0.1880
Pair 3	Expected DEM	3.345	58	1.5734	0.2066
	DEM of BoI	1.914	58	1.3414	0.1761
Pair 4	Expected PM	3.759	58	0.9236	0.1213
	PM of BoI	2.638	58	1.2523	0.1644
Pair 5	Expected MPS	3.379	58	1.2818	0.1683
	MPS of BoI	3.069	58	1.3619	0.1788
Pair 6	Expected SS	3.793	58	1.0789	0.1405
	SS of BoI	3.034	58	1.5753	0.2051

In order to check if the difference or congruence between the expected and actual experience of the retailers' is statistically significant, the values shown in paired samples test (**Table 5**) is investigated. As stated before, the null hypothesis is that there is no significant difference between retailers' expected level on factors/services offered by BoI and the actual factor/service provided by BoI.

Table 5. Paired sample t – test

Factors \ Metrics	Paired differences					t	Sig.
	$\bar{x}$(Difference)	σ	Std. error mean	95% conf. Lower	95% conf. Upper		
Pair 1 Expected BR BR of BoI	1.8793	1.64	0.2159	1.4469	2.3117	8.703	.000
Pair 2 Expected QUAL QUAL of BoI	1.1552	1.75	0.2305	0.6937	1.6167	5.012	.000
Pair 3 Expected DEM DEM of BoI	1.4310	2.07	0.2729	0.8845	1.9775	5.244	.000
Pair 4 Expected PM PM of BoI	1.1207	1.42	0.1874	0.7453	1.4960	5.979	.000

Pair 5 Expected MPS MPS of BoI	0.3103	1.61	0.2119	-0.1139	0.7346	1.465	.148
Pair 6 Expected SS SS of BoI	0.7586	2.06	0.2685	0.2212	1.2959	2.826	.006

In all the cases except Pair 5 which is marketing and promotional support offered by BoI, the p-value (Sig.) is less than or equal to 0.05. Thus the null hypothesis is not accepted and is concluded that in these cases (except MPS), there is a significant difference between the expectation of retailers on factors/services offered by the manufacturer of BoI and the actual service they receive from BoI. In case of 'MPS', based on p value, it is concluded that there is no gap between the expectation on 'MPS' and the actual MPS the retailers receive from BoI. This implies that the marketing and promotional support offered by BoI is on par with what marketing and promotional support that is expected by the paint retailers.

Brands actively/frequently suggested by retailers to customers

In this section, various facets of retailers suggesting a particular brand to customers visiting their outlet are discussed. Here, it was enquired if retailers actively recommending a specific paint brand in their store and the specific brand retailers suggest their customers is also found.

Retailers actively recommending a specific paint brand in their store

Retailers may stock, recommend and promote sales of a brand for various reasons (Jeyapaul P. P., Satisfaction Paradigms of Retailers for a Brand of Kitchenware -Reasons beyond Profits, 2018) but profits remain one of the major motivator. In this section, it was attempted to find if paint retailers actively recommended a particular brand. To find this, retailers were asked about this and the results are presented in **Table 6**. It is seen that more than 85% of retailers actively promoted a brand of paint that was beneficial for them.

Table 6. Retailers actively recommending a specific paint brand in their store.

Actively promoting a paint brand	Number of retailers
Yes	69
No	10
Total	79

The reasons for recommending a paint brand were explored and the results of the same are given in **Table 7**.

Table 7. Reasons for recommending a paint brand

Factors	$\bar{x}$
Brand reputation of a paint brand (BR)	4.50
Quality of paint as perceived by customer (QUAL)	4.02
Sales person support (SS)	3.79
Profit margin from a paint brand (PM)	3.76
Marketing and promotional support (MPS)	3.38
Demand for a paint brand from the customers (DEM)	3.34

The mean scores on the variables as opined by the retailers show that reputation of a brand in the market is the first factor that makes a retailer recommend a brand to the customers. This may be because the retailer may be unwilling to put their business at stake by recommending brands on which they don't have a lot of confidence. So to be on the safer side they may be recommending brands that are popular in the market. Further, those brands that past customers feel are of good quality are recommended by retailers to other customers. Customers may usually give feedback about their experience with products of a brand. Thus retailers may have a fairly good enough idea on the quality of products as perceived by the customers and in their own experience. Sales person support is also considered important in recommending a specific paint brand to customers.

Factors influencing customer purchasing decisions on decorative paints

Various factors influencing the customer purchase decision on decorative paints from the perspective of retailers is analysed in this section. Before looking into the factors influencing the customer purchase decision on decorative paints, the retailers were questioned if they receive any feedback from their customers regarding the performance

of the decorative paints that customers had purchased, so that the retailers are in a position to express the opinion of their customers (Jeyapaul & Christa, Ranking of decision making criteria for purchase of air conditioners using analytical hierarchy process – Retailers perspective, 2020). The customers for decorative paints from retailers are the end consumers, painters, paint contractors, builders, masons etc. The details of Retailers receiving feedback from their customers about the paint purchased is compiled in **Table 8**.

Table 8. Retailers receiving feedback from their customers about the paint purchased

Frequency of getting feedback	Number of retailers
Yes, regularly get feed back	34
Occasionally get feed back	37
Rarely get feed back	08
No feedback received	0
Total	79

It is seen from the results that all decorative paint retailers get feedback from their customers, some more often than others. About 43% of retailers regularly get feedback from their customers while 47% at least get feedback occasionally. Thus all retailers will be able to reflect their customers' opinion on factors influencing their customers in purchasing a brand of paint.

The factors considered as influencing the customer purchase decision on decorative paints from the perspective of retailers are brand reputation of a paint, other customers' reviews and feedback, quality and performance of the paint brand, price of a paint brand and promotions and discounts offered by the brand to customers. The respondents were allowed to pick multiple responses from the multiple response scale choices provided. The outcome of the retailers' perspective on the factors influencing customer purchasing decisions on decorative paints is compiled in **Table 9**.

Table 9. Factors influencing customer purchasing decisions on Paints

Factors influencing customer purchasing decisions	Frequency
Brand Reputation	46 Retailers
Other customers reviews and Feed Back	25 Retailers
Quality and Performance	21 Retailers
Price of a paint brand	13 Retailers
Promotions and discounts	8 Retailers

The data provides insights the factors that influence customer purchasing decisions. Among the respondents surveyed, Brand Reputation of a decorative paint is the most influential factor with 58% of retailers stating that their customers considering this factor in their purchasing decisions. Reviews and Feedback offered by other customers and Quality and Performance of paints are also important factors with 32% and 27% of retailers agreeing to the above factors influencing customer purchase decisions. Price of a brand of paint is considered not so important as customers may be willing to pay a premium for reputed and good quality paints. Promotions and discounts offered by a brand to consumers has the least importance attached by them while making purchasing decisions for decorative paints because price of paints itself is not given much importance.

Some additional services expected by customers and end consumers from retailers

Apart from just purchasing paints, customers and end consumers of decorative paints expect additional services and support from paint retailers. Some of the services expected are Colour matching, paint mixing and customization, advice on appropriate paint application methodology and referrals for paint contractor, painters or related professional services.

Table 10. Services expected by customers from retailers

Particulars	Frequency
Colour matching	79
Paint mixing and customization	50
Contractor or professional referral services	34
Paint application advice	11

None of the above	0

The data reveals valuable insights into the types of services customers seek when purchasing paint. The most common service utilized by all respondents 79 is Colour Matching, indicating that ensuring the perfect color match is a top priority for customers when buying paint. Paint Mixing and customization is the second most frequently utilized service with 50 customers seeking custom color options. A significant portion of customers (43%) also sought assistance from retailers in finding paint contractors or painting professionals indicating that they value professional expertise from the retailers when it comes to painting projects. Further, paint retail outlets may act as a meeting hub for these painters and other related professionals whose contacts and knowledge about their professional expertise may be available with the retailers. Thus end consumers will seek those information from retailers.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

This study explored the factors influencing the availability and patronization of different brands of decorative paints by retailers and attempted to find if retailers frequently suggested a brand of decorative paint to customers. It also tried to identify factors influencing customer purchasing decisions on decorative paints from the perspective of retailers. To answer the research problem, descriptive research design was used and primary data was collected by direct survey method from 79 decorative paint retailers located in Chennai and Madurai. Most of the decorative paint retailers are in existence with this business for more than a decade thus giving them ample inputs for providing opinion of their customers for this research.

First the factors impacting the paint retailers' general wiliness to stock a decorative paint brand was analyzed. The factors considered were brand reputation of a paint brand, quality of paint as perceived by customer, demand for a paint brand from the customers, profit margin from a paint brand, sales person support and marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand. Linear regression was used here, and the results suggest that the factors BR, QUAL, SS, and PM have no significant impact on the overall willingness of retailers to stock a brand of paint. However, the factors DEM and MPS have a significant impact on the overall willingness of retailers to stock a brand of paint. The results clearly show that decorative paint retailers are willing to support and stock only those paint brands that offer robust marketing and promotional support which could also be instrumental in attracting more customers to a particular brand, thereby increasing the sales and profits. Further, retailers tend to stock brands that are well known and popular among customers that have higher demand from the customers. This also implies that, brands that are already popular with customers may offer adequate profits by virtue of volume of sales. This becomes significant because paint retailers don't attach a lot of significance to profit margin as such. The regression coefficients suggest that marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand is given more importance by the retailers than the demand for a paint brand from the customers. This indicates the importance of marketing and promotional support offered by a paint brand.

The retailers will have some expectation from the manufacturers of paint to stock the brand of interest and there must be congruence between the factors being provided by the manufacturer to the retailer and the expectation of the retailers. However, in reality there could be gaps between the retailers' expectation and actual performance of manufacturers. From the opinion of the retailers, it was found that the expectation on the factors considered for BoI, except MPS, the gap in congruence with the retailers' expectation and reality is wide. BoI has very less brand reputation than what the retailers expect, compared to its competitors. This indicates that the manufacturer of BoI needs to address its BR since improving BR is crucial for long-term success and customer loyalty.

The first step maybe started off with providing high-quality products consistently to meet or exceed customer expectations. It is also seen from the opinion of the retailers that the perceived quality of paint of BoI is also less. Thus the BoI need to address the quality issues swiftly. To improve BR and DEM, BoI needs to prioritize customer satisfaction and actively seek feedback to understand and address customer needs along with clearly communicating brand's values, mission, and story. BoI may use multiple channels such as social media, PR, and marketing to convey a consistent message. It has to address negative feedback promptly and professionally and demonstrate its commitment to customer satisfaction. BoI may also collaborate with influencers who align with its brand values. Positive endorsements from trusted influencers can enhance its reputation. The retailers also feel that sales person support is missing from BoI. To address this issue, BoI may provide excellent customer service by training its sales team to be responsive, helpful, and respectful. BoI may also get involved in local communities or

industry events to build positive relationships and show its commitment to the customers and retailers.

Factors influencing the customer purchase decision on decorative paints from the perspective of retailers were analyzed. The factors considered as influencing the customer purchase decision on decorative paints from the perspective of retailers are brand reputation of a paint, other customers' reviews and feedback, quality and performance of the paint brand, price of a paint brand and promotions and discounts offered by the brand to customers. Brand Reputation of a decorative paint is the most influential factor for customers in considering a paint brand for their purchasing decisions. Reviews and Feedback offered by other customers and Quality and Performance of paints are also important factors influencing customer purchase decisions. Price of a brand of paint is not an important factor in their purchase decision as customers may be willing to pay a premium for reputed and good quality paints. Promotions and discounts offered by a brand to consumers has the least importance attached by customers while purchasing decorative paints.

Customers of decorative paints expect additional services and support from paint retailers. Some of the services expected are color matching, paint mixing and customization, advice on appropriate paint application methodology and referrals for paint contractor, painters or related professional services. Of all these services, the most expected additional service color matching, and paint mixing and customization is the second most frequently sought after value added service from paint retailers. Also customers seek assistance from paint retailers in finding paint contractors or painting professionals indicating that they value professional expertise from the retailers when it comes to painting projects.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The managerial implications and outcomes of this study are that, while designing promotional programs for decorative paints, managers need to consider the factors that buyers consider most important in decision making. When it comes to deciding on a decorative paint brand, brand reputation of paint is considered the most valuable by customers. This implies that the marketers need to focus on building the brand reputation of a paint brand by focusing on various factors impacting the quality of paint such as wall area coverage, color fastness, durability etc., so that customers are confident on their purchase. Further, Reviews and Feedback offered by other customers and Quality and Performance of paints are also important factors influencing customer purchase decisions. Since customers may seek help from online sources on reviews and recommendations for paints, marketers of paint brands may think about creating a strong online review base through digital marketing techniques. Managers may also watch for opinions and suggestions from existing customers and build on the strengths of the brans. This will also help in bolstering the brand image which will in turn increase the sales of a paint brand.

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