

Impact of External Influencer Recommendation in Purchase Behavior Process of Selection of Cement for Construction

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ABSTRACT : *The multiple cement brands available in the market make the brand selection a difficult process. The present study focuses on studying the impact of influencer recommendation in customer purchase behavior process in selecting cement for construction. This will give an insight into the market and try to identify the major influencer which really influences the customers during cement purchase. Cement customers are broadly classified into 3 segments- trade customer i.e. dealer/ sub dealer/ wholesaler, retail customer which is individual house builders and non trade customer which includes industrial and government infrastructure and. Exploratory research was done initially with a sample size of 10 which include individual home builders, masons, engineer, architect, contractors, builders and dealer to get an insight into the problem, different segment of customer, buying process and the variables that influence the choice of cement. Research instrument used in collecting primary data was the Questionnaire. It was prepared and pretested with a sample size of 10 which was further modified and administered with a sample of 50 retail customers or individual home builder, 100 distribution channel partners and 50 non trade customers. Hypothesis testing was carried out to summarize the major influencer that influenced decision making process. The study was exploratory and was descriptive in nature and involved collection of secondary and primary data based on survey.*

KEYWORDS : *Cement, influencer, purchase decision, individual home builder, dealer*

I. INTRODUCTION

Competitors: The Indian cement industry has a large number of fragmented firms. There is however a dearth of new players as incumbents has already procured key raw material sources, like limestone reserves on long-term leases. Customer cement buying process depends on i) purchasing behavior ii) Number of external information sources which influence in buying decision. The study is on the impact of external influencer in purchase process of customers of cement.

Product: Cement is a bulk commodity and a low value product. It is sold in 50 kg packs as OPC grade 33, 43 and 53. It is used in all construction activities as a primary constituent of concrete. Cement companies claim to produce cement as per BIS standards; so there is hardly any scope for differentiation in the product of various cement companies. Due to similar raw material inputs and production processes, there is no significant differentiation in the cement produced across firms. As the majority of customers lack basic understandings regarding technical aspects of cement, so these customers primarily depends on information gathered from external sources. So there is a need to understand the impact of external influencer's information sources in purchase process of different segments of customers in purchasing of cement.

II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

An overview of the Indian Cement Industry: Cement is the preferred building material in India. It is used extensively in household and industrial construction. This makes India a high-potential market for cement. Earlier, the government sector used to consume over 50% of the total cement sold in India, but in the last decade, its share has come down to 35%. Rural areas consume less than 23% of the total cement. Housing has been a very dynamic sector in India for the last five years. Demand has tremendously increased because of the increase of purchasing power and urbanization, particularly in West Bengal. Availability of cheaper building materials for non-permanent structures affects the rural demand.

It is the construction sector which shares the blame of global economic slowdown leading to slackening of demand for housing; but withstanding that hard time, our cement sector is still growing at a 10 per cent when compared to the global average of 5 per cent. Indian Industry is fortunate in having an active support and services of the National Council for Cement & Building Materials with an excellent R&D Infrastructure and invaluable intellectual capital.

The Indian Cement Industry has achieved an installed capacity of 242 million tonnes and is targeted to reach 600 million by 2020. India has 97 per cent of the installed capacity through dry process; the Indian Cement Industry has been adopting latest technologies for energy conservation and pollution control as well as on-line process of quality control based on expert systems and laboratory automation. Despite having high demand in India, our per capita cement consumption is very low, where the world average is 396 kg, in India the per capita consumption is only 156 kg. India being the country of young population has a huge potential and its ushering social and economic base will improve the domestic consumption.

The rising cost of energy transportation and persistent raw material pressures have been playing a heavy strain on the cement and construction industry. As a result, Indian Companies have to not only explore alternate sources of energy and materials but also strive to enhance operational efficiency. But India's potential for growth remains intact. The need of the hour is to spend invest adequately in developing human resources capable of addressing the professional needs of construction industry like application of advanced technologies and construction practices, project management construction, litigation, insurance and finance, etc. In a general phenomenon that buyers in the same market seek product for broadly the same function, but different buyers have different evaluative criteria about which constitute the right choice of performing the function as a result different offerings will attract different buyers. The market segment consists of more or less homogenous group having buyers who seek for the same offerings. In other words market segmentation may be defined as the division of the market into groups of segments having similar wants. But what wants must be interpreted very broadly, broader than products characteristic only. Segment may differ also in their needs for information and reassurance, technical support, service, promotion, distribution and host of other non products benefits that are part of their purchases. So in general when customer search for information sources regarding cement, than automatically a role of external influencer comes into play in cement buying process of customers.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THIS RESEARCH

The study attempts to cover the following: to find the impact of influencer influencing in basic cement purchase behavior process across various customer segments.

IV. LITERATURE SURVEY

4.1 MARKET SEGMENTATION

Jean-Marie Choffray, Gary L. Lilien, (October 1980)- presents a methodology for segmenting industrial markets on the basis of functional involvement in phases of the purchasing decision process. Reviewed work(s) on Market Segmentation by Johan Arndt (Jan 1975) A substantial literature review (about 140 items) is provided. Similarly White, P.D (1992), on Market segmentation: overcoming the problems to capitalize on the promises. Wind, Y. (1978) discusses on the issues and advances in segmentation research". Green P.E (2001) states that all marketing strategy is built on segmentation, targeting and positioning. Camille P. Schuster, Charles D. Bodkin (May 1987), discusses on Market segmentation. To examine the marketing segmentation practices of industrial companies those are currently exporting their products. John T. Bowen, (1998) on market segmentation in hospitality research: no longer a sequential process and explores development in market segmentation relating to hospitality and tourism. The literature is divided into three sections: segmenting a market; market targeting and marketing positioning. Russell Abratt (May 1993) explains market segmentation practices of industrial marketers, and states that most of the research into market segmentation has focused on methods of positioning markets into segments and not on the practical use of market segmentation. Jay L. Laughlin and Charles R. Taylor (May 1991) in an approach to industrial market segmentation states that models of industrial market segmentation have been criticized for not considering managerial requirements and implementation issues. Doyle P (2002) in his book 'Marketing Management and Strategy', states that a market consists of customers with similar needs. But customer in market is never homogenous. They differ in the benefits they wanted. Very few products or services can satisfy all the customers in a market. Not all the customers want or are prepared to pay for the same thing. Jobber, D (2007) states the objective is to identify groups of customers with similar requirements so that they can be served effectively while being of sufficient size for the products or services to be supplied sufficiently. Kotler (2002) present four major segmentation variables for consumer markets: geographic, Demographic, psychographics and behavioral variables. Market segments must meet the following criteria: Measurable, substantial, Accessible, Differentiable and Actionable. Doyle (1998) states that targeting Strategies - Once the organization has identified its market - segments opportunities, it has to decide how many and which ones to target. Market segmentation is a means to end: target marketing.

This is a choice of specific segments to serve and is a key element in marketing strategy. Having evaluated different segments, the organization should consider different target marketing strategies. Among several strategies, both Doyle (1998) and Jobber (1998) agree about the following three different strategies:- Undifferentiated marketing, Differentiated marketing, Focused marketing. According to Jobber, D (2007), after market segmentation and target market selection, the next step in developing an effective marketing strategy is to clearly position a product or service offering in the market place. Jobber, D (2007) explains briefly that creating a differential advantage involves using a marketing mix to create something special for the customer. Jobber presents four keys to successful positioning: a) Clarity: b) Consistency: c) Credibility: d) Competitiveness.

V. BRAND PERCEPTION

Brand perception i.e Perceived quality of a Brand is the customer's judgment about a product's overall excellence or superiority that is different from objective quality (Zeithaml 1988, pp. 3 and 4). Objective quality refers to the technical, measurable and verifiable nature of products/services, processes and quality controls. High objective quality does not necessarily contribute to brand equity (Anselmsson et al. 2007). Since it's impossible for consumers to make complete and correct judgments of the objective quality, they use, quality attributes that they associate (Olson and Jacoby 1972, Zeithaml 1988, Ophuis and Van Trijp 1995, Richardson et al. 1994; Acebro'n and Dopico 2000). Hence perceived quality is formed to judge the overall quality of a product/service. The American Marketing Association (AMA) definition of a brand is "a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors" (p. 404). Within this view, as Keller (2003) says, "technically speaking, then, whenever a marketer creates a new name, logo, or symbol for a new product, he or she has created a brand" (p. 3). Chieng Fayrene Y.L, Goi Chai Lee (2011). Brand equity is a concept born in 1980s. It has aroused intense interest among business strategists from a wide variety of industries as brand equity is closely related with brand loyalty and brand extensions. Besides, successful brands provide competitive advantages that are critical to the success of companies. However, there is no common viewpoint emerged on the content and measurement of brand equity. Brand equity has been examined from financial and customer-based perspectives.

VI. CONSUMER BUYING PROCESS

A Buying Decision Process describes the process that a customer goes through when he/she is buying a product. Many scholars have given their interpretation of the buying decision model. Although the models vary, there is a common theme of five stages of the decision process. The Five stages of the buying decision process were first introduced by John Dewey (1910). The stages are:

- [1] Problem/Need Recognition
- [2] Information Search
- [3] Evaluation of Alternatives
- [4] Purchase Decision
- [5] Post-Purchase Behavior

These five stages make a good framework to evaluate customers' buying decision process, but it is neither necessary that customers get through every stage, nor that they proceed in any particular order. For example, if a customer detects the demand to buy chocolate, he might go straight to the purchase decision stage, skipping information search and evaluation. Problem/Need Recognition: Problem/Need Recognition is the first and most important step in the Buying Decision Process. Without the recognition of the need, a purchase cannot take place. The need can be triggered by internal stimuli (e.g. hunger, thirst) or external stimuli (e.g. advertising). Abraham Maslow dictates that needs are arranged in a hierarchy. According to Maslow's hierarchy, only when a person has fulfilled the needs at a certain stage, and then he/she can move to the next stage. Information Search: This stage is the next step customers may take after they have recognized their problems/needs in order to find out what they feel is the best solution. This is buyers' effort at searching the internal and external business environments to identify and observe information sources related to the focal buying decision. A consumer can rely on print, visual and voice media for getting information. Evaluation of Alternatives: At this stage, consumers evaluate different products/brands on the basis of varying product attributes; those have the ability to deliver the benefits that the customer is seeking. This stage is heavily influenced by one's attitude, as "attitude puts one in a frame of mind: liking or disliking an object, moving towards or away from it".

Another factor that influences the evaluation process is the degree of involvement. For example, if the customer involvement is high, then he/she will evaluate a number of brands; whereas if it is low, only one brand will be evaluated. Purchase Decision: This is the fourth stage, where the purchase takes place. According to Philip Kotler, Keller, Koshy and Jha (2009), the final purchase decision can be disrupted by two factors: negative feedback from other customers and the level of motivation to comply or accept the feedback. For example, after going through the above three stages, a customer chooses to buy a Nikon D80 DSLR camera. Although, because his very personal friend, who is also a photographer, gives him negative feedback, he will then be bound to change his preference. Secondly, the decision may be disrupted due to unanticipated situations such as a sudden job loss or the closing of a retail store.

Post-Purchase Behavior: These stages are critical to retain customers. In short, customers compare products with their expectations and are either satisfied or dissatisfied. This can then greatly affect the decision process for a similar purchase from the same company in the future, mainly at the information search stage and evaluation of alternatives stage. If customers are satisfied, these results in brand loyalty, and the information search and evaluation of alternative stages are often fast-tracked or skipped completely. As a result, brand loyalty is the ultimate aim of many companies. On the basis of either being satisfied or dissatisfied, a customer will spread either positive or negative feedback about the product. At this stage, companies should carefully create positive post-purchase communication to engage the customers.

VII. RESEARCH APPROACH

This research aims to find out the basic cement purchase behavior process across various customer segments by finding external influencer which impact in buying, so its main purpose is descriptive even though it also can be considered somewhat an exploratory research. Depending on the research problem, but also on the nature of the information sought, the choice of methodological approach can be divided into quantitative verses the qualitative. When conducting a quantitative research, statistical methods are used to analyze the data and a large number of respondents are selected, either randomly or judgmentally. A quantitative approach is formalized, structured and characterized by a high degree of control from the research. Since this research tries to gain a deeper understanding of the purchase behavior of cement; a qualitative approach is a more suitable choice. For the statistical analysis of data obtained, hypothesis testing with quantitative approach was carried out.

VIII. RESEARCH METHODS - DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Data that will be collected throughout this study is expected to be mainly of a qualitative nature. Two valuable source of evidence are documentation and interview. Documents could be either internal like management reports, market research journal. First data collection from Secondary sources: The secondary data was collected from the company and the company's website. The data was also collected from Retail stores, masons, engineers, builder and contractor to get an insight. Face to Face interview and documentation are used as main data collection methods for this study.

Data collection from Primary source

- [1] The basic research paradigm is followed:
 - [2] Define the target population.
 - [3] Select a sampling technique.
 - [4] Determine the sample size.
- Do the research on the sample.
Infer results from the sample back to the population.

Target Population: The population consists of all dealer/ retailer, individual house builders and non-trade customer. Sample selection: Sampling techniques provide a range of methods that enable you to reduce the amount of data you need to collect by considering only data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases of elements.

Sample size:

For Trade customer: a sample size of 100 was researched

For IHB: a sample size of 50 was researched.

For Non Trade Customer: a sample size of 50 was researched.

Sampling Technique: systematic random sampling was adopted.

Scaling Technique: 5-point Likert Scale is used.

Survey area: study attempt to cover 10 districts/districts town of West Bengal namely viz. Kolkata(Cossipore, Kalighat) Howrah(shalimar), Midnapore, Malda, Siliguri, Nadia(Krishnanagar), Murshidabad(Beharampore) Burdwan, Bankura, Birbhum(Sainthia). The questionnaire was pretested with 10 respondents and then refined before actual research. Before developing the survey questionnaire pilot survey was done by interviewing some cement dealers, masons, house owners, engineer, contractor and builder and promoter. The survey questionnaire was designed to understand the perception of the customer about the brands and its products at this point of time and the attributes based on which cement is purchased. The questionnaire consisted of both qualitative and quantitative questions as well open ended and closed ended questions. The study is both exploratory and descriptive in nature based on secondary data as well as primary data. Exploratory research was conducted through pilot interview for the first two objectives of this research. Descriptive research was done to identify the major influencer responsible for the purchase decision for the third objective of this research. The research method used in this project is hypothesis testing.

IX. CUSTOMER BUYING BEHAVIOR PROCESS

According to the first objective of this research, is to explore the structural framework of cement purchase behavior process to know the distribution channel. Cement is mainly used in Independent houses, housing complexes, commercial complexes and infrastructure. The demand drivers for the cement sector continue to be housing, infrastructure and commercial construction, etc. Housing sector acts as the principal growth driver for cement. However, in recent times, industrial and infrastructure sector have also emerged as demand drivers for cement. Individual housing sector is the major consumer of cement (50% of cement demand) followed by the government infrastructure sector.

MARKET SEGMENTATION: Segmentation is categorization of buyers into suitable classes so that the strategic options are customized and made appropriate to each specific class of buyers. From exploratory survey, on basis of cement distribution, the customers are categorized as Trade customers and Non-Trade customers.

Trade customer: Dealer/retailer/sub dealer/whole seller who sell cement to the retail customer and they are the direct customer of cement company as they lift cement through authorized CFA of company. Trade customer include retail customer can buy cement from a retail outlet (Hardware shop) from his area. People who build their own houses or mason/ contractors/Engineer/Architect who build housing infrastructure and opt to buy cement through distribution channel are the retail customers

Individual home builders: These are the trade customer or retail customer who purchases cement from cement retail store and build private house for own accommodation.

Non trade (Industrial) customers: A customer who has a registered company and buys large quantities of cement can buy cement directly from sales points. Government is an industrial customer. Big builders and promoters fall into this segment.

Generally 5 types of non trade customer segmentation:

- [1] **Builders and promoters:** Are private companies specialized in developing housing or commercial complexes to sell them on the market. E.g. PS Group, Fort group, Merlin Group, Riddhi Siddhi Group...
- [2] **Big infrastructure contractors:** are corporate companies that handle main civil construction projects for the government or private customers: poIr plants, water waste, airports, major bridges. E.g. Jusco, L&T ECC, Simplex Infrastructure, Ramky Infrastructure ...
- [3] **Small projects contractors:** are small public or private contractors which work essentially for government infrastructure projects at smaller scale: roads, schools, irrigation etc. E.g. Block Government Office.

- [4] **Manufacturers:** are industrial manufacturers which use cement as a raw material for their production: ready-mix, AC sheets, or concrete blocks manufacturers. E.g. Ramco, RDC Concrete, Rigid bricks, RMC Ready-mix...
- [5] **Expanding companies:** Are private companies which are building new industrial units to increase their production. They consume cement for their own purpose. E.g. Tata metaliks, Ramsarup, Utkarsh Galva...

KEY INFLUENCER IN PURCHASE DECISION PROCESS: From exploratory survey it is found that the key influencers in purchase decision-making of IHB and Non trade customers are:

Mason/Labor: they can give feedback on the process qualities of the building materials, but sometimes are not considered as direct influencers.

Engineers/ Architect: experts who make the technical tests and give followed recommendations on the cement to use. They have the power to short-list the brands, and are totally trusted.

Friend/ relatives: with good experience are also influencers to certain extent.

Contractor: with good experience in construction are also influencers to certain extent.

Word of mouth: advertisement by Cement Company also influence to a certain extent

Local Dealer/ Retailer: who deal with cement business with good experience and locally available are also influencers to certain extent by playing with price sensitivity customer.

Self decision/ end user: the people who will eventually judge the construction. They are generally customers (individual home builder, households, government board, corporate companies...).

For Non Trade Customers buy directly cement in bags from Company or through CFAs. Some institutional buyers happen to buy bags on the distribution channel when they have no time to wait for a delivery which is not coming here.

The decision makers can have very different responsibilities in their organization, which condition their approach to the purchase of materials.

Different profiles are:

- [1] Purchase managers (in corporate companies)
- [2] Project managers (in smaller projects)
- [3] Owners of the company
- [4] Head of plant (mainly with Ready-mix and AC Sheets)
- [5] Engineers (in infrastructure, small units)

The involvement in the field is therefore very variable, and so the major influences. The choice of the cement used also depends on the results of a test done with different samples by engineers. But the purchase manager is often more involved in this step, and has more knowledge about the specificities of the products. After approval from the test, they make their choice mainly on price and consistency in delivery. Workers play a significant role as influencers because the profit of those companies is related to the ease of using the materials. Since they are regular buyers, customers in this segment expect smoother relations with their supplier, and base it on cooperation. The confidence that cement is good and the high impact on their final product are arguments to keep on working with the same suppliers. This however does not imply a single behavior in this segment: some are exclusive, some have a reduced number of regular suppliers to ensure supply, and others keep an eye on the market to deal with the more competitive suppliers for each order. Some customers consider competition boosts suppliers, and have helped to improve the service offered in the past years. Small customers communicate more on the raw material they use, to enhance their credibility. If they do the reputation of the brand will definitely be taken into account in final decision. So from exploratory survey it is found that the numbers of external influencers in purchase behavior process are masons, engineers, architects, contractor, cement dealers, friends, relatives, reference groups, and opinion leaders. To test the influence of external influencer in buying decision process the following null hypotheses were framed:

- [1] Ho : Mason does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [2] Ho : Engineers/ Architect does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [3] Ho : Friend/ relatives does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [4] Ho : Contractor does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [5] Ho : Word of mouth does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [6] Ho : Local cement dealer does not play a significant role in buying decision process
- [7] Ho : Self decision does not play a significant role in buying decision process

Testing at 5% level of significance it was found that

In case of Individual home builder: it is found that masons/ engineer/ architect/ local cement dealer play a significant role in buying decision process. It is found that word of mouth, Self decision, contractors and friend and relative have less impact.

In case of Non trade customer as well as dealer, the influences of Engineer/Local cement dealer/ word of mouth/mason are significant.

INDIVIDUAL HOME BUILDER: DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the factors affecting the purchase behavior of Cement customer

Statement of Hypothesis	Sample mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation Of the Sample ($\sigma \bar{x}$)	Test statistic. Applied Z TEST (Z observed)	Zcritical $\alpha=0.05$	Null Hypothesis Status
Ho = Mason does not plays a pivotal role in purchase of cement	4.44	0.67	15.08	1.96	Ho rejected Ha accepted
Ho= Engineer/ Architect does not play a influential role in purchase of cement	4	1.21	5.83	1.96	Ho rejected Ha accepted
Ho= Friend / relatives does not plays an influential role in the buying of cement	3.02	0.713	0.19	1.96	Ho accepted Ha rejected
Ho = contractors does not plays an important role in the customer purchase behavior of cement	3.12	1.08	0.78	1.96	Ho accepted Ha rejected
H0 = Word of mouth plays an influential role in the customer buying behavior	3.68	1.07	4.46	1.96	Ho rejected Ha accepted
Ho=Local cement dealer does not plays an important role in the customer buying behavior of cement	3.82	1.06	5.45	1.96	Ho rejected Ha accepted
Ho =Self decision does not play a significant role in the purchase of cement	3.04	1.14	0.24	1.96	Ho accepted Ha rejected

So finally in case of individual home builder, mason is found to be the decision maker in both individual houses and flats. But, in case of individual house builder, the engineer/ architect/ local cement dealer has a say in

selecting cements. However, in most cases, mason decides the cement because he is believed to possess technical expertise. It is found that word of mouth, Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in purchase behavior of cement in case of cement customer who are building a brand new house or remodeling their houses by building new rooms and renovation.

NON TRADE CUSTOMER: DATA ANALYSIS

Statement of Hypothesis	Sample mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation Of the Sample ($\sigma \bar{x}$)	Test statistic. Applied Z TEST (Z observed)	Zcritical $\alpha=0.05$	Null Hypothesis Status
Ho = Mason does not plays a pivotal role in purchase of cement	3.26	0.723	2.54	1.96	H0 rejected H1accepted
Ho= Engineer/ Architect does not play a influential role in purchase of cement	4.3	0.78	11.65	1.96	H0 rejected H1accepted
Ho= Friend / relatives does not plays an influential role in the buying of cement	3.08	0.34	1.66	1.96	H0 accepted H1rejected
Ho = contractors does not plays an important role in the customer purchase behavior of cement	3.1	0.97	0.72	1.96	H0 accepted H1rejected
H0 = Word of mouth plays an influential role in the customer buying behavior	3.84	1.23	4.80	1.96	H0 rejected H1accepted
Ho=Local cement dealer does not plays an important role in the customer buying behavior of cement	3.76	0.98	5.48	1.96	H0 rejected H1accepted
Ho =Self decision does not play a significant role in the purchase of cement	3.08	0.89	0.62	1.96	H0 accepted H1rejected

So finally it is found that in case of Non trade customer, Engineer has a greater influence than to Local cement dealer and then to Word of mouth and then to mason. Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in purchase behavior of cement in case of Non Trade cement customer who are building concrete infrastructure.

LOCAL DEALER/ RETAILER: DATA ANALYSIS

Statement of Hypothesis	Sample mean (\bar{x})	Standard deviation Of the Sample ($\sigma \bar{x}$)	Test statistic. Applied Z TEST (Z observed)	Zcritical $\alpha=0.05$	Null Hypothesis Status
Ho = Mason does not plays a pivotal role in purchase of cement	3.3	1.10	2.71	1.96	H0 rejected H1 accepted
Ho= Engineer/ Architect does not play a influential role in purchase of cement	3.95	1.29	7.36	1.96	H0 rejected H1 accepted
Ho= Friend / relatives does not plays an influential role in the buying of cement	3.1	1.22	0.81	1.96	H0 accepted H1 rejected
Ho = contractors does not plays an important role in the customer purchase behavior of cement	3.05	1.20	0.41	1.96	H0 accepted H1 rejected
H0 = Word of mouth plays an influential role in the customer buying behavior	3.67	1.28	5.20	1.96	H0 rejected H1 accepted
Ho=Local cement dealer does not plays an important role in the customer buying behavior of cement	3.18	0.88	2.04	1.96	H0 rejected H1 accepted
Ho =Self decision does not play a significant role in the purchase of cement	3.15	1.14	1.31	1.96	H0 accepted H1 rejected

So finally it is found that in case of dealer, Engineer has a greater influence than to WOM and then to mason and then to local cement dealer. Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in selling behavior of cement dealer.

Self decision plays a role after post purchase or again for repurchase of cement.

X. CONCLUSION:

There are major influencers that influence the purchase decision of customer is recommendation of Engineer and mason exerts a greater amount of influences to the customer in making the choice of cement. So from the first objective the impact of influencer in basic cement purchase behavior process across various customer segments. It is found that in case of individual house builder, mason is found to be the decision maker in both individual houses and flats. But, in case of individual house builder, the engineer/ architect/ local cement dealer has a say in selecting cements. However, in most cases, mason decides the cement because he is believed to possess technical expertise. It is found that word of mouth, Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in purchase behavior of cement in case of cement customer who are building a brand new house or remodeling their houses by building new rooms and renovation. In case of Non trade customer, Engineer has a greater influence than to Local cement dealer and then to Word of mouth and then to mason. Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in purchase behavior of cement in case of Non Trade cement customer who are building concrete infrastructure.

However, even if they are professionals, our customers are not equally educated about cement. As said before, depending on their occupation in their organization, customers are more or less aware of the specificities of cement.

The factors that appeared to be the most decisive are:

- [1] Quality of the cement: that is approval by the engineers, and sometimes good feedback from the market and the field. It is the first and major criteria to consider the offer of cement.
- [2] It is the only way to be sure that the cement will respect the BIS, and gives guarantees on the consistency of the product and the trust they can have for the company. For some customers it is also a value for their customers.
- [3] Although brands are a major factor for customers, very low difference is done between the identity of brands, and only memories from mass marketing helps them associate brands to an image.
- [4] When the suppliers are already known, the quality of the delivery based on former experience is definitely one of the most decisive factors

In case of dealer, engineer has a greater influence than to WOM and then to mason and then to local cement dealer. Self decision, contractors and friend and relative has less or no impact in selling behavior of cement dealer.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY: The quality of information totally dependent on respondent knowledge. The limitation of this study is that the field research was conducted only in West Bengal. A more extended geographical sample may show greater differences in perceptions. Since there always remains a possibility of changing customer expectation so to cater and fulfill the need, the service quality standards shall be reviewed and modified periodically to meet the changing customer expectations. There may be change in view of respondent when comes in terms of Company official.

SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH: More in-depth study is need to be conducted for analysis and derive a advanced design framework for up gradation and modernization of cement sector is required in respect of overall industry strategy and its integrative component strategies.

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