

DECODING INFLUENCER IMPACT ON PAINT BRAND PREFERENCES - INSIGHTS FROM VIRUDHUNAGAR'S COMPETITIVE MARKET

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Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics shaping brand preference for Nippon products within a competitive market. The research objectives include identifying competitor brands, examining factors influencing brand preference among retailers, painters, and engineers, and analyzing brand movement patterns in retail outlets. A descriptive research design was adopted, utilizing both primary data collected through structured surveys and secondary data from company websites, journals, and magazines. The study employed a structured questionnaire based on the Consumer Research Model and Conceptual Model to gather primary data from 134 respondents, comprising engineers and painters, selected using convenience sampling. Data analysis was conducted using regression analysis, pie charts, bar charts, and weighted averages. The findings provide critical insights into the factors driving brand preference, offering implications for market strategies in competitive environments.

Keywords:

Paint, Brand Preference, Movement Pattern, Influencer

1. INTRODUCTION

The paint industry, known for its vibrant hues and diverse product range, plays a pivotal role in shaping interior and exterior design. Within this dynamic sector, influencers act as crucial intermediaries, connecting paint manufacturers with end consumers. For paint brands aiming to achieve market dominance, understanding the preferences and perceptions of these influencers is vital, especially in the competitive landscape of Virudhunagar District.

This paper seeks to unravel the complexities of influencer decision-making, focusing specifically on retail paint shop owners and painters. By examining their perceptions, preferences, and decision-making processes, the study aims to identify the key factors shaping paint brand preferences in this unique market. Located in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, India, Virudhunagar District offers a distinctive mix of urban growth and rural charm, reflecting a diverse spectrum of economic and consumer behaviors.

Retail paint shop dealers and painters emerge as critical influencers in this ecosystem, providing valuable insights into consumer preferences. Through interviews, surveys, and observational data, this research endeavors to construct a comprehensive understanding of the influencer landscape in Virudhunagar District. Factors such as brand reputation, product quality, pricing strategies, marketing initiatives, and customer service are explored to determine their impact on influencer perceptions and brand preferences.

By situating these findings within the broader competitive context, this study aims to deliver actionable insights for paint manufacturers seeking to establish a strong foothold in this vibrant market. Understanding the intricate dynamics of

influencer preferences not only enables brands to refine their marketing strategies but also fosters stronger partnerships with influencers, enhancing brand visibility and market reach. This paper provides a nuanced exploration of the influencer ecosystem, shedding light on the factors that shape brand preferences among retail paint shop dealers and painters in Virudhunagar District.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The study aimed to understand consumer preferences and identify market leaders in the paint industry. It found that companies should increase awareness through publicity and focus on customer relationships, as television advertisements significantly influence purchase decisions [1]. The study investigates the influence of reference groups, specifically artists, on product knowledge, technical knowhow, and buying decisions in Bangladesh's painting industry. Results show that 80% of end-users rely on professional reference groups for new architecture painting, while 20% rely on other reference groups. The study also reveals that 74% of end-users rely on reference groups for category and brand selection, with 54% being artists [2].

The paint industry, a global industry, has a long history dating back to 2000 BC, providing significant employment and a wealth of workmanship for skilled and semi-skilled workers. Research focuses on customer satisfaction, as finding new customers is often more expensive and challenging for firms [3]. The study explores the relationship between consumer purchase interest and paint behavior, revealing influencing factors and the impact of promotion and purchase interest. Factors such as quality, company name, price, purchase intention, and sales promotion significantly influence branded paint purchases [4]. Influencers, categorized into mega-influencers, macro-influencers, and micro-influencers, have a significant impact through word of mouth and can be classified into three categories based on their content sharing skills and engagement rate [5]. The study examines consumer perception of celebrity brand endorsements in decorative paints. Results show a significant disparity between demographic profile and recall, with female respondents having higher recall. Trust and celebrity relevance influence purchase decisions, with brand stickiness dominating over celebrity stickiness [6]. Paints are increasingly popular among consumers for their attractive and distinctive appearance. The final decision to purchase is heavily influenced by the painter and dealer's recommendations. This study aims to explore how dealers perceive the influence of painters on the purchase decision of decorative paints [7]. This paper identifies the dependency of paint consumers on influencers, highlighting the high level of information asymmetry in certain product categories. Consumers' beliefs are influenced by the credibility weight age of information from each influencer, and they are susceptible to being influenced by recommendations from diverse sources. Influencers have a personal interest in buying behavior and use brand

recommendations to exert influence [8]. This paper investigates the impact of consumer perception and satisfaction on brand image, particularly in the marketing mix of paint products. Using statistical analysis and descriptive techniques, the research reveals significant connections between factors such as product, cost, location, promotion, and contentment, highlighting the importance of these factors in achieving success [9]. This study explores the influence of workshop mechanics on two-wheeler automotive lubricant purchases and usage, revealing five key recommendations. It suggests market segment influences and create tailored marketing interventions [10]. This study investigates satisfaction, perception, and expectations of institutional consumers in Al Kharj region, compares paint marketing variables, and identifies sales growth opportunities using questionnaires [11].

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The scope of this study is to investigate the intricate dynamics of paint brand preference among retail paint shop dealers and painters in Virudhunagar District, Tamil Nadu. Analyzing every aspect of the brand's preference over others in this competitive environment is our goal. The influence of promotions, services, product quality, trust value, ease of use and pricing strategies on brand preference is explored in our objectives. By focusing on these specific factors, we seek to unravel the underlying drivers that shape the decisions of influencers in selecting paint brands. Paint manufacturers will benefit from this study by enhancing their market positioning in Virudhunagar District by tailoring their marketing strategies effectively and strengthening their relationships with influencers.

3.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are several limitations inherent in this study's methodology and scope. The findings may be limited by their geographical focus on Virudhunagar District. Furthermore, the sample size of influencers may be limited, potentially introducing bias and impacting the representativeness of the results. Another limitation is the dependence on self-reported data obtained through interviews and surveys, as respondents may exhibit biases or inaccuracies in their responses. Furthermore, time constraints may limit the study's ability to capture long-term trends or changes in influencer preferences. External factors such as macroeconomic conditions or industry trends are not fully explored, potentially overlooking important contextual influences. This is because external factors such as macroeconomic conditions or industry trends are not fully explored. Language and cultural barriers between researchers and participants may also hinder accurate interpretation of data. Understanding the study's limitations within the Virudhunagar District paint industry is dependent on acknowledging these limitations.

3.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the factors, influence brand preference on paint brands among the different retailers and among painters.
2. To find movement patterns of different brands in retail outlets in Virudhunagar District.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology adopted for this study uses a descriptive approach, focusing on understanding and delineating the various aspects related to consumer brand preference in the paint industry. To address the research objectives, both primary and secondary data have been used. Primary data, obtained through direct surveys employing structured questionnaires, were sourced from paint dealers and painters. The data provided valuable insights into aspects such as painters' information, brand availability, and factors influencing consumer brand preference. Secondary data, sourced from journals and magazines, complemented the primary data, enriching the study with additional contextual information. Secondary data sourced from journals and magazines complemented the primary data, enriching the study with additional contextual information. The primary data collection instrument, a structured questionnaire, was meticulously designed based on established consumer research and conceptual models, to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant variables. The questionnaire enabled the collection of detailed information relevant to the research, enabling a deeper analysis of consumer preferences within the paint industry. Due to its practicality and efficiency, the sampling design employed a convenient sampling method. The sample size of 134 was determined based on the available time period for data collection, which allowed for a representative sample to be obtained within the constraints of the study. Regression analysis was used to explore relationships between variables, weighted average calculations were used to assess aggregate preferences, and graphical representations were used to visualize data patterns. The gathered data yielded insightful insights, enabling a thorough comprehension of brand preferences within the paint sector.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 MOVEMENT PATTERN PAINT BRANDS IN VIRUDHUNAGAR DISTRICT

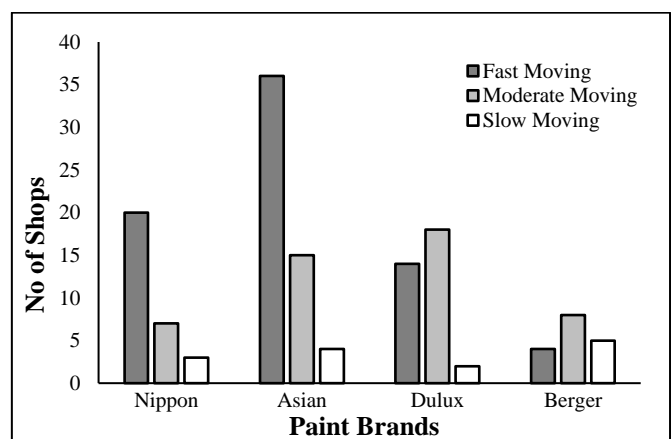


Fig.1. Movement Pattern Paint Brands in Virudhunagar District

The Fig.1 shows the number of shops that sell different brands of paint. Nippon, Asian, Dulux, and Berger are the paint brands listed. There are three categories: fast moving, moderate moving and slow moving.

This category has the highest number of shops selling Asian Paints products. Fast-moving sales make it stand out from the other three brands. In this segment, Dulux and Berger show similar performance. They are bigger than Asian Paints, but they've got a bigger chunk of the pie.

Across all categories, Japan lags. The slow-moving sales segment has the fewest shops selling it. Fast-moving sales show Asian Paints as the clear leader, while moderate-moving sales show Dulux and Berger in close competition. Unfortunately, Nippon is behind in shop presence across all sales categories. Keep in mind that this analysis is solely based on the provided graph, and additional context or data would be necessary for a more comprehensive inference.

5.2 IMPACT ON FACTOR INFLUENCING PAINT BRAND AND OVERALL SATISFACTION

Regression test is used to show the association between Overall opinion and other related factors of the respondents. The degree to which one independent variable has impact on the dependent variable is measured using regression.

5.2.1 Relationship between Various Factors and the overall opinion towards Painter Brand Preference:

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant relationship between Painter Brand Preference and Factors.
- **Alternate Hypothesis (H1):** There is a significant relationship between Painter Brand Preference and Factors.

Table.1. Relationship between Painter Brand Preference and Related Factors

Factors	Sig. F Change	Null Hypothesis
Promotions and Service	0.189	Accepted
Product Quality	0.759	Accepted
Trust Value	0.894	Accepted
Ease of Use Factor	0.282	Accepted
Price	0.450	Accepted

The analysis conducted on the relationship between Painter Brand Preference and various factors such as Promotions and Service, Product Quality, Trust Value, Ease of Use Factor, and Price yielded inconclusive results.

The null hypothesis could not be rejected for any of the factors showing a significant relationship with Painter Brand Preference. According to the analysis performed, factors like promotions and service do not influence Painter Brand Preference individually or collectively. The dynamics driving Painter Brand Preference may require further investigation or refinement of the analysis.

5.2.2 Relationship between Various Factors and the overall opinion towards Retailer Brand Preference:

- **Null Hypothesis (H0):** There is no significant relationship between Retailer Brand Preference and Factors.
- **Alternate Hypothesis(H1):** There is a significant relationship between Retailer Brand Preference and Factors.

Table.2. Relationship between Retailer Brand Preference and Related Factors

Factors	Sig. F Change	Null Hypothesis
Promotions and Service	0.006	Rejected
Product Quality	0.596	Accepted
Trust Value	0.007	Rejected
Ease of Use Factor	0.003	Rejected
Price	0.008	Rejected

Consumer behavior is revealed by the relationship between various factors and overall opinion towards Retailer Brand Preference. Consumer preferences for retail brands are influenced by promotions and service, trust value, ease of use, and price, according to the examination. The rejection of the 'null' hypothesis for these variables, exemplified by low statistical significance (Sig.) Retailers must focus on effective promotional strategies, high-quality service, trustworthy brand image, user-friendly experiences, and competitive pricing to enhance brand preference among consumers. The acceptance of the null hypothesis regarding product quality suggests that, in this investigation, product quality may not be the primary determinant of brand preference for consumers. Retailers can strengthen their market position and foster stronger connections with their target audience by prioritizing factors that have the most significant impact on brand preference

5.3 OPINION OF INFLUENCER ON VARIOUS FACTOR

5.3.1 Weighted Average between Various Factors Influencing Brand Preference in Painters:

Table.3. Weighted Average between various factors influencing brand preference in Painter

Factor	Average	Rank
Ease of Use	3.8235	1
Product Quality	3.7672	2
Trust Value	3.7255	3
Promotions and Service	3.6765	4
Price	3.5255	5

From the above table we can observe that Ease of use has the highest weighted average with a rank of 1 and followed by the factor Product quality with the rank of 2 and Trust value with the rank 3 and followed by Promotion factor with rank 4 and the Price factor has the least weightage with the rank 5.

5.3.2 Weighted Average between Various Factors influencing Brand Preference in Retailer:

Table.4. Weighted Average between various factors influencing brand preference in Retailer

Factor	Average	Rank
Trust Value	3.5556	1
Ease of Use	3.5278	2
Promotions and Service	3.5179	3

Product Quality	3.4127	4
Price	3.3405	5

From the above table we can observe that Trust Value has the highest weighted average with a rank of 1 and followed by the factor Ease of Use with the rank of 2 and Promotions and Service with the rank 3 and followed by Product Quality factor with rank 4 and the Price factor has the least weightage with the rank 5.

6. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 MOVEMENT PATTERNS OF PAINT BRANDS IN RETAIL OUTLETS

The study aims to analyze the movement patterns of various paint brands in retail outlets to understand the dynamics that govern their popularity and consumer demand. Based on data collected from 36 dealers, it was observed that Asian Paints emerges as the fastest-moving paint brand. This suggests that Asian Paints enjoys a significant level of consumer preference and demand, possibly due to its established market presence, brand recognition, and effective marketing strategies. The widespread availability and consistent product quality likely contribute to its status as the top choice among retailers.

- Nippon Paint, while slightly behind Asian Paints, also exhibits strong movement, with 18 dealers identifying it as a brand with moderate-to-high demand. This positions Nippon Paint as a close competitor to Asian Paints, indicating that the brand has successfully carved out a niche in the market, likely through targeted promotional campaigns and its reputation for quality.
- Dulux, a well-established international brand, was classified as a moderately moving brand, with 18 dealers supporting this classification. This suggests that while Dulux is a recognized brand in the market, it faces challenges in terms of fast-moving sales, possibly due to pricing factors, competition, or less aggressive marketing strategies compared to its competitors.
- Finally, Berger Paints was identified as the slowest-moving brand, with only 5 dealers agreeing on this classification. This slower movement could be attributed to various factors, including limited promotional efforts, lower brand awareness, or a mismatch between consumer expectations and the brand's offerings. The slow movement of Berger Paints presents an opportunity for the brand to reassess its marketing strategies and product positioning to increase its visibility and appeal in the competitive paint market.

6.2 INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN PAINT BRAND PREFERENCE

- The research further delves into the key factors that influence paint brand preference among retailers and painters. Several crucial elements were identified, each playing a pivotal role in shaping consumer choices:
- **Promotions and Service:** The study reveals that effective promotional strategies and exceptional customer service are central to influencing brand preference. Retailers are more likely to stock and recommend paint brands that offer attractive promotions, discounts, and reliable after-sales

service. This finding emphasizes the importance of value-added services in enhancing customer loyalty and brand preference.

- **Trust Value:** Trust in a paint brand is another critical factor. Retailers and painters tend to prefer brands that have established a reputation for quality, durability, and consistency. Trust can be built through positive word-of-mouth, product reviews, and brand history. Brands that maintain a high level of trust are more likely to secure repeat business and develop long-term relationships with retailers and end-users.
- **Ease of Use:** The ease with which paint products can be applied is a significant determinant of brand preference. Retailers and painters prefer brands that are easy to handle, provide good coverage, and require minimal effort in terms of application. Products that reduce time and labor costs are highly valued in the paint industry, as they directly impact the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of painting jobs.
- **Price:** Price remains one of the most important factors influencing brand preference. Retailers and painters are highly sensitive to price changes and often make purchasing decisions based on the cost-effectiveness of the product. Competitive pricing, without compromising on quality, is essential for brands to remain attractive in a price-sensitive market. Additionally, offering value-for-money products can help brands gain a competitive edge.

6.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGIC DECISION-MAKING AND MARKETING EFFORTS

The findings of this study have several important implications for paint brands, retailers, and marketers operating in a competitive landscape:

- **Brand Positioning and Marketing Strategies:** The movement patterns of paint brands indicate that a well-positioned brand with strong market presence (such as Asian Paints) is more likely to achieve rapid sales. Brands like Berger Paints, which exhibit slower movement, should consider revisiting their marketing strategies. This could include increasing brand visibility through targeted promotions, partnerships with retailers, and improving customer engagement. Moreover, highlighting unique selling propositions (USPs), such as superior quality or innovative features, could help differentiate slower-moving brands from competitors.
- **Focus on Consumer-Centric Marketing:** Given that factors like promotions, service, trust, ease of use, and price play significant roles in shaping brand preferences, paint brands must develop consumer-centric marketing campaigns. Tailoring promotions that emphasize value for money, offering customer-friendly services, and building trust through consistent product quality can enhance brand loyalty and preference. Additionally, creating educational content for consumers and retailers about the ease of use and benefits of specific products can increase brand appeal.
- **Retailer and Painter Engagement:** For paint brands to succeed, they must establish strong relationships with retailers and painters. Offering incentives for retailers who promote specific brands, providing training on product

application, and ensuring that retailers are well-equipped with promotional materials can help drive sales. Additionally, fostering direct communication with painters and providing them with product samples or discounts can increase brand adoption in the field.

- **Competitive Pricing Strategies:** Pricing remains a crucial determinant in the competitive paint market. Paint brands should carefully assess their pricing strategies to ensure they remain competitive while delivering value. Offering tiered pricing models or bundled promotions can help brands cater to different segments of the market, from budget-conscious consumers to those seeking premium products.
- **Long-Term Brand Loyalty:** Building long-term brand loyalty requires consistent product quality, strong customer service, and regular engagement with both retailers and consumers. Brands that invest in after-sales service, product guarantees, and transparent communication are likely to foster deeper connections with their target audience. These efforts can translate into repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

7. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate factors influencing brand preference, particularly for Nippon products, in Virudhunagar District. Through a combination of primary and secondary data sources, we gained an understanding of competitor brands, the preferences of retailers, painters, and engineers, and the movement patterns of different brands in retail outlets. The analysis, conducted using regression analysis, pie charts, bar charts, and weighted averages, allowed us to discern the key drivers of brand preference. The results hold significance for marketers and businesses seeking to enhance their market positioning and appeal to target audiences. The findings contribute to the existing knowledge on brand preference dynamics in competitive landscapes, providing a foundation for future research and strategic decision-making in studied district.

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