

FACTORS AFFECTING THE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR IN MARBLE INDUSTRY WITH RESPECT TO INDIAN AND IMPORTED MARBLE

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ABSTRACT

In current Marketing Scenario, the Study of Consumer Behavior has become essential. Consumers are the kings of markets. Without consumers no business organization can run. All the activities of the business concerns starts with consumers and ends with consumer satisfaction. Customer behavior study is based on consumer buying behavior, with the customer playing the three distinct roles of user, payer and buyer. Consumer buying behaviour has become an integral part of strategic marketing planning. In order to develop a framework for the study consumer behaviour it is helpful to begin by considering the factors which impacts on consumer buying behaviour. Consumer behaviour plays a very important role in Marble Industry, which is getting very competitive with the easy entry of imported marble. The objective of the research endeavour is to achieve a better understanding of consumer behaviour with the factors influence the purchase of marble. This research paper mainly focuses on Marble industry Customers and their buying behaviour in Jaipur city. Descriptive and Primary research was conducted amongst 200 customers of both Indian and Imported Marble and what influences them to purchase Indian and Imported marble was recorded. Convenience sampling technique is used in the research. Data is collected through structured questionnaire. Data is analysed through using Excel and various statistical tools. Findings are derived from the data analysis and required suggestions are given.

KEYWORDS: *Consumer Buying Behaviour, Imported Marble, Structured Questionnaire.*

Introduction

Consumer behaviour is the study of individuals, groups, or organizations and all the activities associated with the purchase, use and disposal of goods and services, including the consumer's emotional, mental and behavioural responses that precede or follow these activities.

Consumer Behaviour

According to Engel, Blackwell, and Mansard, 'consumer behaviour is the actions and decision processes of people who purchase goods and services for personal consumption'. According to Loudon and Bitta, 'consumer behaviour is the decision process and physical activity, which individuals engage in when evaluating, acquiring, using or disposing of goods and services'.

Consumer behaviour is not static. It undergoes a change over a period of time depending on the nature of products. For example, kids prefer colourful and fancy footwear, but as they grow up as teenagers and young adults, they prefer trendy footwear, and as middle-aged and senior citizens they prefer more sober footwear. The change in buying behaviour may take place due to several other factors such as increase in income level, education level and marketing factors.

Factors influencing Consumer Behavior

- Marketing factors such as product design, price, promotion, packaging, positioning and distribution.
- Personal factors such as age, gender, education and income level.
- Psychological factors such as buying motives, perception of the product and attitudes towards the product.

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- Situational factors such as physical surroundings at the time of purchase, social surroundings and time factor.
- Social factors such as social status, reference groups and family.
- Cultural factors, such as religion, social class—caste and sub-castes

Importance of Consumer Behaviour

Studying consumer behavior is important because these way marketers can understand what influences consumers' buying decisions. By understanding how consumers decide on a product they can fill in the gap in the market and identify the products that are needed and the products that are obsolete. Studying consumer behaviour also helps marketers decide how to present their products in a way that generates maximum impact on consumers. Understanding consumer buying behaviour is the key secret to reaching and engaging your clients, and convert them to purchase from you.

A consumer behavior analysis should reveal:

- What consumers think and how they feel about various alternatives (brands, products, etc.);
- What influences consumers to choose between various options;
- Consumers' behavior while researching and shopping;
- How consumers' environment (friends, family, media, etc.) influences their behavior.

Consumer behavior is often influenced by different factors. Marketers should study consumer purchase patterns and figure out buyer trends. In most cases, brands influence consumer behavior only with the things they can control; like how IKEA seems to compel you to spend more than what you intended to every time you walk into the store.

Marble Industry in Rajasthan

Indian marble is highly acclaimed in the international market. World famous Taj mahal is testimony of exotic quality snow white marble from Makrana region. According to expert estimates the total market for marble in India is around 35 million tons per year and out of this imported marble accounts currently accounts for only 800,000 tons.

The recent demonetisation of high currency notes has, as of February, 2017, provided a major blow to the construction industry in India where payment in cash is a major component, especially in the high end construction in major cities, precisely the segment where imported marble is most used. Since prices of the premium segment construction buildings are expected to drop significantly, some say it could be around 30%, the positive effects of the new policy are likely to be delayed because of a sudden drop in demand and decline in number of transactions. However, most people expect normality to return a year or two later, perhaps earlier. In the meantime, given the vastness and diversity of the market, fast economic growth in the range of 7% of the country's economy, there are already some new marble factories being set up in different parts of the country.

Color & Pattern

Snow white, Creamish white, White with grayish/ black bands and Wavy patterns, pink, pink with bluish bands, green, yellow, black, multi-color etc.

Export Varieties

Snow white - very **fine-grained**, green and pink. Indian green is highly priced and is the most desired marble in demand the world over.

Number of Mining Leases: About 3600

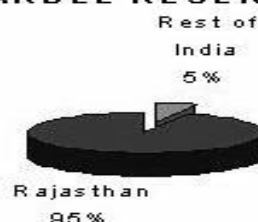
Marble Processing Capacity: Slabs - 1000 million sq.ft. p.a.
Tile - 300 million sq.ft. p.a.

Marble the Pride of India

- Practically inexhaustible marble deposits -over 1200 million tons
- Splendid varieties of white, green, black, grey, pink, yellow
- Physical and mechanical properties complying with international standards
- Amongst the top 5 countries in marble exports

Rajasthan is the Major Producer of Marble in India.

RAJASTHAN SHARE IN INDIAN MARBLE RESERVES



Imported Marble in India – An Insight

India is among the largest consumers of marble and marble products. The rising aspirations of the burgeoning middle class of India have also led to a sudden spurt in the consumption of imported marble. Imported marble from countries like **Italy, Spain, Turkey, Iran, Vietnam, Egypt, Oman & China** are increasingly being opted by customers in India due to their glaze, elegance and chic appearance. Topping the list of imported marble is the Italian marble.

In the month of September, 2016 the Indian Government announced a **new policy for the import of marble blocks** which has far reaching consequences for the development of the marble industry in India. The new liberalised policy, while still maintaining high import duties, at last made it easy for anyone setting up a factory to import marble blocks. Previously, even to import the blocks of marble there had been so many restrictions and conditions that only a select few were able to navigate their way through the bureaucratic maze and obtain license for importing marble. The high import duties mean that any finished imported marble will end up being in the premium segment of the market.

Imports of marble (total) increased slightly to 757,948 tonnes in 2013-14 from 757,793 tonnes in the previous year. Imports of dressed marble at 626,229 tonnes shared 83% imports in 2013-14 while the remaining 17% imports were of other marbles. Main suppliers of marble were Italy (45%), followed by Turkey (22%), Vietnam (8%), China (7%) and Oman (6%) (Tables 7 to 9).

Import of Marble

Countries	2012-13		2013-14	
	Quantity (in tons)	Value (in thousands)	Quantity (in tons)	Value (in thousands)
All Countries	757793	20313010	757948	22107203
Italy	354694	7784190	338611	8548055
Turkey	176480	3483725	165351	3759097
China	52332	2885204	50215	2731113
Oman	45326	2174374	44694	2356956
Vietnam	27916	809140	60754	1404039
Sri Lanka	18735	1012702	15897	960709
Egypt	35163	715817	28499	629608
Greece	8194	296296	13893	410023
Iran	6004	117212	12448	282432
Spain	13791	341573	9459	268392
Other Countries	19158	692777	18127	756779

Source: Indian Minerals Yearbook 2014, 53rd Edition

Between 2012 and 2016, India imported around INR 1,400 crore per annum worth of natural marble, 2015 being the significant exception when nearly INR 2,000 crore worth of natural marble was imported. Italy has been responsible for just over half of the total imports of natural marble per annum in the India marble & stone market. For example, in 2012, India imported over INR 736 crore worth of marble from Italy and over INR 1,300 crore overall. In 2015, around INR 1,000 crore worth of marble was imported from Italy and around INR 1,900 crore overall. Suffice to say that Italy is one of the most stable and exporter of natural marble to India in the India marble & stone market. Carrara marble, for example, mined in Italy has been used in many famous Indian monuments including the Prem Mandir in Vrindavan and Akshardham temple complex in Delhi.

Rationale of the Study

The proposed research will be of help to the business investors and customers to understand the dimensions of the factors affecting Consumer behaviour by having an in depth study conducted on the Indian and Imported marble varieties being used in Rajasthan which is the hub of the Marble Industry of India. Also, how the relationship can be strengthened with the customers and how loyal customer base can be created can be analyzed through the study. The study will throw light on the latest and innovative parameters of Consumer Behaviour in the Marble Industry. It will help us understand what is being appreciated by the customers and what bonds them with the business for a long period of time. It will also help the business investors to understand and study the various new emerging parameters of customer centricity who play the biggest role in the success of the business models.

Factors Affecting Consumer Behaviour in Marble Industry

There are many factors that affect consumer behaviour. According to Hokanson (1995) these factors include friendly employees, helpful employees, billing timelines, competitive pricing, service quality, good value, billing clarity and quick service. In order to achieve customer satisfaction, organizations must be able to satisfy their customer needs and wants (La Barbera and Marzurky, 1983). Customers' needs state the felt deprivation of customer (Kotler, 2000). Whereas customers' wants, according to Kotler (2000) refers to the form taken by human needs as they are shaped by culture and individual personality.

- **Price:** Price is an important determinant of consumer behaviour. It prompts the customer to make a purchase immediately.
- **Choice or Range of Marble:** If there is better choice or big range of choice of marble available, it will prompt the customer to make a purchase.
- **Aesthetics-Look and Feel:** If the look and feel of marble is good, it will immediately tempt the buyer to make a purchase.
- **Reputation of the Manufacturer/Dealer:** If the reputation of manufacturer/factory owner or dealer is good and they push a particular marble, the buyer is more convinced to make a purchase.
- **Recommendation of Architect:** If architect recommends a certain kind of marble, there is more probability to make a purchase.
- **Recommendation of Friend/Word of Mouth:** If a friend recommends a certain marble after installing in his house, we more confidently make a purchase decision by learning from their experience.
- **Recommendation of Contractor/Fitter:** Many times even contractors/fitters may influence certain kind of marble purchase.
- **Status Symbol:** In today's scenario status symbol takes a lead in making of choice of what kind of marble must we use in our houses.
- **Area of Application:** This is again an important parameter influencing buyer purchase as to which part of house we need to use marble; that will make us decide whether we should use Indian or imported marble.
- **Life of the Product:** At the time of making a purchase, it is important that we see which marble will last more and also which marble will not suffer cracks with passage of time.

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of the study is to have an in depth understanding of the factors specifically that affect the shaping of the consumer buyer behavior in Marble products with special emphasis on Indian Marble and Imported Marble in Jaipur, Rajasthan. To understand the factors influencing purchase of Natural stones in general and marble in particular. The data has been collected from Jaipur, with a sample size of 200, which gives a good representation of the cities of Rajasthan for customers who have installed both Indian and Imported Marble in their houses. The study seeks to clarify several propositions that revolve around the central theme of the study i.e. factors affecting consumer behaviour in the Marble products in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

Findings and Suggestions

The major findings of the factors influencing buying behaviour study of Indian and Imported Marble are:

- In the case of Indian Marble, choice or range of marble emerged on the first position as a factor influencing the customer to make a purchase, on second position is price, third position is taken by Aesthetics – look and feel of the marble, fourth biggest influence is the delay from where we purchased and his reputation, fifth factor affecting the purchase is the life of the product, sixth position was taken by recommendation of friend or word of mouth publicity, seventh position factor affecting purchase was recommendation of an architect followed by recommendation of contractor/fitter, ninth position was taken by marble leading to status symbol and last factor influencing the purchase is area of application whether it is for residential or commercial, room or bathroom etc.
- If we talk about Imported marble, the first number factor that influences their purchase is Imported marble being a status symbol. Second priority is given to area of application in case of imported marble, Price holds the third position, Aesthetics-look and feel of the product takes the fourth priority in influencing the purchase of Imported marble. On fifth position is recommendation of architect followed by choice or range of imported marble on sixth priority. Life of product gets seventh position in terms of influence on purchase. Eighth and ninth position are taken by reputation of manufacturer/dealer and recommendation of friend respectively. Tenth position is given to recommendation of contractor/fitter for influencing the purchase of Imported marble.
- It is interesting to note here that Status symbol which was given ninth position by Indian marble purchasers as an influencer to purchase got first position by the imported marble users. Similarly, area of application was not much important to Indian marble customers but became very important at the time of buying imported marble.

		Indian Marble (Rank)	Imported Marble (Rank)
Factors Influencing Purchase	Price	2	3
	Choice Or Range / Ease Of Availability	1	6
	Aesthetics - Look and feel of the product	3	4
	Reputation Of The Manufacturer / Dealer From Where Purchased	4	8
	Recommendation Of Architect / Interior Designer	7	5
	Recommendation Of Friend/word of mouth	6	9
	Recommendation Of Contractor / Fitter	8	10
	Status Symbol	9	1
	Area Of Application(For Example Residential / Commercial Or Drawing Room / Bed Room Etc)	10	2
	Life Of The Product	5	7

Conclusion

From the Research conducted, it was found that the factors that influence consumer buyer behavior in case of Indian marble are choice or range of variety of marble, price of the marble, look and feel of the marble. In the case of Imported marble, buyer is influenced to purchase imported marble as it is a status symbol to install imported marble in the homes, area of application of the marble and price. It is very important to understand what influences the buyer behavior so that marketing strategy can accordingly be planned and we can target the right customer with the right strategy so that the customer buys it.

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