

INFLUENCE OF OPINION LEADER IN THE DECISION MAKING

PROCESS OF CUSTOMERS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the role of opinion leader (one form of reference group member) in customer/consumer decision making on cement product purchasing. The study has focused on pertinent literature, quantitative and qualitative studies to assess how opinion leaders make the brand choosing decision and recommend cement brand to customers. Cement is a semi-engineering and high involvement product and therefore customers need to go through an extensive information search process. In such case opinion leader and reference group largely influence the decision making process of customers. This paper is an attempt to investigate the variables that influence the brand choosing decision of the architects- a major opinion leader group in cement industry. The qualitative research reveals some variables (BUET Test, Price, Availability, Delivery of order, Raw material, Goodwill, Initial setting time, Commission and Gift) that are considered when architects make suggestion for choosing the cement brand. Finally, these eight variables have been factorized into four factors namely; *technical aspects, goodwill and brand image, distribution coverage and service aspect and financial aspect* of the cement brand.

KEYWORDS: Influence of Opinion Leader in the Decision Making, Process of Customers