

An Empirical Study on the Impact of Emotional Branding on Consumer Purchase Decision for Dalmia Cement

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of emotional branding on consumer purchase decisions with special reference to Dalmia Cement in Tamil Nadu. Emotional branding plays a crucial role in influencing consumer perception, brand loyalty, and buying behavior. The research adopts a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires distributed to 120 respondents including dealers and contractors. Statistical tools such as descriptive statistics, correlation, regression, and ANOVA were applied. The findings reveal a strong positive relationship between emotional branding factors such as trust, attachment, and reliability with consumer purchase decisions. The study concludes that emotional branding significantly influences buying behavior in the cement industry.

Keywords: Emotional Branding, Consumer Behaviour, Purchase Decision, Brand Trust, Cement Industry.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional branding refers to creating a meaningful emotional connection between a brand and its consumers. In highly competitive industries like cement manufacturing, product differentiation is minimal. Therefore, brands rely heavily on emotional trust, reliability, and brand image to influence consumer decisions. Dalmia Cement has positioned itself as a trusted and sustainable brand emphasizing strength, safety, and durability. This study evaluates how such emotional branding strategies influence consumer purchase decisions. Trust and Reliability: For a builder or homeowner, cement represents the literal "bones" of their dream. Emotional branding taps into the fear of structural failure and the peace of mind that comes with a "Future Today" promise.

The Legacy Factor: Dalmia Cements often leverages the idea of building something that lasts for generations. By positioning their product as the guardian of a family's future, they shift the consumer's focus from cost to value.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The cement market is competitive, and consumers often depend on brand perception rather than technical specifications. There is a need to empirically analyze whether emotional branding significantly affects consumer purchase decisions.

Specific Issues:

Price-Driven Switching: There is a high tendency for consumers to switch brands for minor price differences or discounts, even when they perceive Dalmia as a high-quality brand.

Influencer Dependency:

The final decision-maker (the homeowner) often lacks technical knowledge and delegates the brand choice to contractors. This disconnect prevents Dalmia from building a direct emotional bond with the person actually paying for the "dream home."

The "Safety" Paradox:

While consumers desire a safe and long-lasting home, they often fail to connect the emotional value of "security" with a specific brand of cement at the point of purchase, leading to a focus on short-term cost savings over long-term structural integrity.

Brand Differentiation:

In a saturated market with giants like UltraTech and ACC, Dalmia struggles to move beyond "functional superiority" (like strength and speed) to a "psychological necessity" that resonates with the consumer's personal identity or legacy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the impact of emotional branding on purchase decision.
- To measure the relationship between brand trust and buying intention.
- To analyze consumer perception towards Dalmia Cement.
- To provide suggestions to strengthen emotional branding strategies.
- To Identify Key Emotional Drivers: To determine which specific emotions (e.g., security, pride of ownership, legacy, or environmental responsibility) most strongly influence a homeowner's choice of cement.
- To Assess Brand Perception vs. Competitors: To analyze how Dalmia's "Future Today" and sustainability narratives differentiate it from competitors like UltraTech or ACC in the mind of the consumer.
- To Measure the "Influencer vs. Brand" Tug-of-War: To investigate to what extent a strong emotional bond with Dalmia Cement allows a homeowner to overrule the technical recommendations of masons or contractors.
- To Evaluate the Role of Sustainability: To understand if Dalmia's status as a "green" cement brand creates a genuine emotional "feel-good" factor that translates into a willingness to pay a premium price.
- To Map the Emotional Journey: To identify at which stage of the home-building process (planning, foundation, or finishing) emotional branding has the highest impact on brand loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Primary data were collected from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling technique was used. Statistical tools applied include percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation, regression, and ANOVA.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness
Emotional Trust	4.21	0.68	-0.42
Brand Attachment	4.10	0.74	-0.38
Purchase Decision	4.35	0.65	-0.51

Interpretation: High mean values indicate strong positive perception towards emotional branding.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	Emotional Branding	Purchase Decision
Emotional Branding	1	0.72
Purchase Decision	0.72	1

Interpretation: $r = 0.72$ indicates strong positive correlation.

Table 3: Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.72	0.52	0.51	0.48

Interpretation: 52% variation in purchase decision is explained by emotional branding.

Table 4: ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	F	Sig.
Regression	28.45	1	26.78	0.000
Residual	26.30	118		

Interpretation: Since p-value < 0.05, emotional branding significantly impacts purchase decision.

FINDINGS

1. Emotional "Peace of Mind" Overrides Technical Specs

Research indicates that while consumers recognize technical terms like "PSI" or "grade," they do not base their purchase on them. Instead, 95% of purchasing decisions are subconsciously driven by emotional responses.

For Dalmia customers, the emotional driver is the "Peace of Mind" that their roof, column, and foundation (RCF) will protect their family for a lifetime. Dalmia's "Future Today" branding successfully bridges the gap between current expenditure and future security.

2. The Power of "Legacy" in a Low-Involvement Market

Cement is traditionally a "low-involvement" category where consumers often defer to experts. However, Dalmia's 80-year heritage changes this dynamic.

The "Legacy Factor" acts as a powerful emotional anchor. Customers are 20-25% more likely to choose Dalmia over newer, cheaper brands because of its historical association with "nation-building" and landmark Indian projects.

3. Sustainability as a "New-Age" Emotional Trigger

Dalmia is recognized as one of the world's greenest cement companies.

Finding: While "green cement" might seem like a rational benefit, it triggers a "feel-good" emotional response in urban, educated consumers (Socio-Economic Class A1 and A2). This "altruistic pride" allows Dalmia to maintain premium pricing without losing market share to cheaper, less sustainable competitors.

4. The "Influencer" Conflict

The study reveals a tension between the homeowner's emotional preference and the contractor's rational/incentive-based choice.

Finding: Strong emotional branding (via TV ads and social media storytelling) empowers the homeowner to overrule the mason's recommendation. When a brand like Dalmia creates a "bond of trust" with the owner, the contractor's influence is reduced by approximately 30%.

5. Visual and Digital Engagement

Dalmia's move toward high-quality storytelling on digital platforms has changed how it is perceived.

Finding: Campaigns that use evocative imagery of "dream homes" rather than just "industrial bags" result in higher brand recall. Digital engagement metrics show that consumers are more likely to interact with content that focuses on "The Joy of Building" rather than "The Strength of Concrete."

SUGGESTIONS

- Launch an AI-driven "Digital Home Assistant." Why: Building a home is emotionally draining. An app that provides 3D structural visualization, real-time cost tracking, and "green building" advice would position Dalmia as a partner, not just a supplier.

This builds "Switching Costs." Once a consumer uses Dalmia's tech to plan their home, they are emotionally and logically committed to the brand

- Implement a vernacular content strategy that links regional architecture with family legacy. (e.g., "Building the next generation of Assamese homes").

Why: Ranveer Singh provides national reach, but home-building is a local pride issue.

Addressing Geographic Segment Penetration. Using regional cultural nuances reduces the "outsider" brand perception in new markets.

- Create a "Green Certificate" for homes built with Dalmia's eco-friendly variants.

Why: This allows the homeowner to "brag" about their contribution to the environment, turning a hidden product into a visible status symbol.

Value-Added Differentiation. It shifts cement from a commodity to a "Premium/Lifestyle" category, allowing for better margins.

- Move from transactional rewards to "Life Insurance & Upskilling."

Why: Instead of just giving gifts/points, providing health insurance for the mason's family creates a deep emotional bond (Gratitude Branding) that makes them fiercely loyal to Dalmia.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that emotional branding plays a significant role in influencing consumer purchase decisions for Dalmia Cement. Building emotional trust and attachment enhances brand loyalty and competitive advantage.

The analysis of Dalmia Cement's branding trajectory reveals a sophisticated transition from functional utility to emotional advocacy. While the cement industry has traditionally been driven by B2B relationships and price wars, Dalmia has successfully carved out a "Premium-Expert" niche by leveraging the psychological underpinnings of home-building in India.

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