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A Study On Dealers Satisfaction at Kesoram Cement Limited

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ABSTRACT :

The ceaselessly competitive Indian cement sector considers dealers as the primary customer-facing interface that retains the brand's performance and penetration in the market. This research studies the dealer satisfaction with Kesoram Cement Ltd. studying aspects like product quality, prices, promotional schemes, delivery and logistic facilities, credit facilities, and service interactions. Being of descriptive research, the data could be gathered from 50 dealers on a structured questionnaire. The results indicate very high satisfaction levels for the product quality and brand equity while several gray areas remain for promotional support, delivery, and credit terms. Thus, the study gives recommendations that can be undertaken strategically to strengthen dealer relationships, streamline the supply chain, and thereby become better at responding to the market.

Keywords: Dealer Satisfaction, Cement Distribution, Kesoram Cement, Supply Chain, Relationship Management, Credit Policy, Promotion, Market Competitiveness

Introduction

With the second-largest production volume in the world, India's cement sector is essential to the development of the country's infrastructure, which includes housing, roads, cities, and factories. Cement producers are under more pressure to maintain quality, affordability, and supply chain responsiveness as demand rises, particularly as a result of government programs like "Smart Cities," "Housing for All," and "Make in India." Dealers' roles have changed from being merely intermediaries to strategic partners in such a competitive environment. In local markets, dealers serve as the brand's spokesperson in addition to carrying out sales transactions. Customer trust, market penetration, and long-term sales performance are all greatly impacted by their opinions of the business, contentment with the policies, and willingness to advocate for the brand. As a result, in the cement industry, efficient dealer relationship management has become a crucial differentiator in the marketplace. Businesses are better equipped to handle price wars, logistical difficulties, and customer acquisition expenses when they make investments in creating networks of devoted, content dealers. Dealers that are happy with the brand are more likely to actively promote it, explain value propositions to customers, and stick with it in the face of competition. Kesoram Cement, a part of the well-known BK Birla Group, has established a strong presence in the Indian cement market thanks to its history of high-quality production and extensive distribution. Maintaining dealer satisfaction in the face of fierce competition and changing expectations is still difficult, though. This study focuses on important aspects like product quality, pricing strategy, credit terms, promotional support, delivery dependability, and grievance redressal systems in order to assess the degree of satisfaction among Kesoram Cement's dealer network. It seeks to pinpoint dealer engagement's advantages and disadvantages while providing practical advice for improving commercial ties and raising overall organizational effectiveness.

Importance

- **Enhances Brand Visibility:** Happy dealers are more likely to tell customers about the brand and recommend it to others, which raises the visibility and reputation of the product at the grassroots level.
- **Finds Operational Gaps:** By identifying areas like delivery, credit policy, or promotional support where dealer expectations are not being fulfilled, the study enables the business to make necessary corrections.
- **Enhances Long-Term Relationships:** Kesoram Cement can establish more robust, open, and enduring relationships with its distribution partners by comprehending dealer concerns.
- **Aligns Policy with Practice:** Based on actual dealer feedback and expectations, management is able to modify internal policies (pricing, logistics, and support) as a result of the findings.
- **Offers Academic and Practical Value:** Contributes to the paucity of research on dealer satisfaction in the cement sector in India and acts as a guide for upcoming channel management studies.

- Boosts Sales Efficiency: Proactive salespeople ensure speedier order processing and prompt market reaction, which enhances overall business efficiency.

Objectives of the Study

- To determine the overall level of dealer satisfaction at Kesoram Cement
- To analyze critical factors impacting satisfaction (e.g., pricing, credit, delivery)
- To evaluate dealer perceptions of promotional and after-sales support
- To identify areas of dissatisfaction and suggest improvements

Review of Literature

1. Kumar & Sinha (2011)

In their study on dealer satisfaction in the FMCG and cement sector, the authors emphasized that **product availability, price stability, and timely delivery** are key drivers of dealer satisfaction. They also highlighted the importance of **strong relationship management** and **consistent communication** between companies and their channel partners.

2. Rao et al. (2013)

Their research on dealer performance in the building materials industry found that **credit terms and incentive structures** have a direct impact on dealer motivation and brand loyalty. Flexible credit facilities were shown to improve commitment and long-term retention of dealers.

3. Sharma & Singh (2015)

This study focused on the impact of **logistics and supply chain efficiency** in the cement industry. The authors concluded that **ineffective logistics** can lead to delays, inventory issues, and **dealer dissatisfaction**, ultimately harming brand perception and market performance.

4. Patel & Mehta (2017)

Conducted in Gujarat, their comparative analysis of dealer satisfaction across cement brands revealed that **brand reputation, grievance redressal mechanisms, and promotional support** are among the top priorities for dealers. Companies with transparent policies had more loyal distribution networks.

5. Kavitha & Rajan (2019)

Their research explored the growing role of **digital engagement tools** in cement distribution. The adoption of mobile apps, real-time communication platforms, and online ordering systems significantly enhanced dealer satisfaction, particularly in urban and semi-urban regions.

6. Banerjee (2021)

A post-COVID study examining the effects of **supply chain disruption** on dealer confidence. The study emphasized the importance of **resilience and proactive engagement**, particularly during crisis periods, to maintain dealer trust and operational continuity.

7. Singh & Kulkarni (2023)

Their recent study indicated a post-pandemic shift in dealer expectations. Dealers now value **transparency, data-driven communication, and structured performance reviews**, reflecting the increasing professionalization of dealer management practices.

8. Industry Reports & Case Analyses (2024)

Case studies from brands like Ultra Tech, Dalmia, and ACC show a growing trend toward **AI-enabled logistics, incentive automation, and dealer relationship platforms**. These digital integrations have reportedly increased satisfaction by offering **predictive delivery scheduling, loyalty rewards, and self-service dashboards**.

Research Gap

Even though the Indian cement industry has seen a number of studies on dealer engagement, supply chain efficiency, and channel management, there are still glaring gaps in the breadth and depth of the research, especially when considering regional players like Kesoram Cement. There has been little empirical research on medium-sized brands and their dealer ecosystems, and the majority of the literature that is currently available concentrates on big cement companies like Ultra Tech, ACC, and Ambuja.

Additionally, although a lot of research has looked at general factors that affect dealer satisfaction, like logistics, price competitiveness, and product quality, there isn't much integrated analysis that combines these factors with relationship management techniques, post-sale support mechanisms, and real-time dealer expectations.

By employing primary data to conduct a targeted study on Kesoram Cement dealers, this study seeks to close these gaps. It makes an effort to provide useful conclusions and suggestions for enhancing dealer loyalty, satisfaction, and long-term relationship management.

Need for Study

Offering high-quality products alone is no longer enough to maintain market leadership in the cutthroat cement industry of today. As the crucial conduit between the manufacturer and the final consumer, companies also need to prioritize the retention and satisfaction of their channel partners, especially dealers. At the local level, dealers affect not only sales volume but also customer perception, brand positioning, and loyalty. Dealer loyalty is eroding due to rising input costs, shifting consumer expectations, and increased competition. In addition to competitive pricing, cement manufacturers are now expected to provide prompt delivery, flexible credit arrangements, strong after-sales service, and marketing assistance. Dealers may become less motivated, lose trust, and eventually switch to competing brands if expectations are not met.

Despite having a strong brand history under the BK Birla Group, Kesoram Cement finds it difficult to continuously satisfy changing dealer expectations. Kesoram must evaluate, comprehend, and fortify its dealer relationships as rivals adopt more assertive engagement tactics.

Problem Statement:

Dealers are essential as brand ambassadors, sales promoters, and customer influencers in the fiercely competitive Indian cement market. Brand loyalty, market penetration, and product availability are all directly impacted by their level of satisfaction. Mid-tier companies like Kesoram Cement are under growing pressure to motivate and retain their dealer networks in the face of growing competition and changing expectations, even though many top cement manufacturers have made significant investments in dealer engagement strategies.

The BK Birla Group's legacy brand, Kesoram Cement, has a strong distribution system. Anecdotal evidence and early observations, however, indicate that dealers might run into issues with delivery schedules, promotional support, credit terms, and grievance resolution. If these gaps are not filled, dealer loyalty may suffer, and sales volume and brand competitiveness may suffer.

Furthermore, it is difficult to assess how Kesoram's dealers view their relationship with the company and how satisfied they are with the current level of engagement and support due to a lack of systematic data and feedback. The business runs the risk of not matching its dealer strategy with real market demands in the absence of such insights.

Thus, Kesoram Cement's inadequate comprehension of its dealers' satisfaction levels and the elements impacting their dedication and output is the root of the issue. By performing an empirical evaluation, pinpointing areas in need of development, and offering suggestions to raise dealer satisfaction and enduring loyalty, this study aims to close that gap.

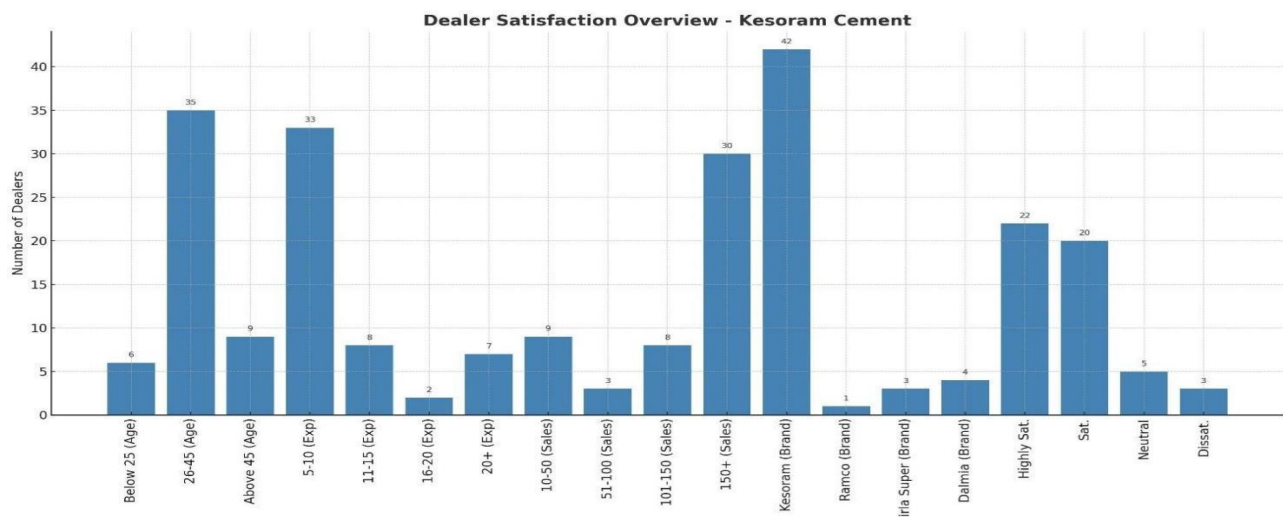
Methodology

This study uses a descriptive research design with the goal of methodically figuring out how satisfied dealers are with Kesoram Cement. A combination of primary and secondary data sources form its foundation. A structured questionnaire was used to survey 50 dealers in total, as the accompanying graph illustrates. Convenience sampling was used to choose these dealers while taking time and location constraints into account.

A carefully crafted questionnaire that addressed topics like product quality, pricing, delivery, promotional support, and general service satisfaction was used to gather the primary data. Every question was created with the intention of being impartial, quantifiable, and pertinent to the goals of the study. Direct responses to the survey were obtained from the dealers via phone interviews or in-person meetings. To add context and comparison, secondary data was also collected from industry publications, annual reports, published case studies, and company records. This use of multiple sources made sure that the conclusions were supported by data and had a practical foundation.

Several statistical tools were used to examine the data that was gathered. These included weighted averages to assess satisfaction levels for various attributes, percentage analysis for categorical data, and simple chi-square tests to find any meaningful correlations between variables. In order to visually represent data and facilitate interpretation, graphs and charts were widely used.

This approach made it possible to conduct a thorough and targeted analysis of dealer satisfaction and offered insights into the areas where Kesoram Cement's dealer engagement strategy needed to be improved.



Description

The main objective of this study is to assess the degree of satisfaction among dealers connected to Kesoram Cement Limited, a prominent cement producer in India that is a part of the esteemed BK Birla Group. In addition to serving as sales middlemen, dealers also represent local brands, making them an essential link in the cement supply chain. Long-term loyalty, customer acquisition, and product visibility are all greatly impacted by their impression of and interaction with the business.

The growing demand for strategic dealer relationship management in the fiercely competitive cement industry is what spurred the study. Anecdotal evidence and market feedback point to possible gaps in areas like credit terms, delivery efficiency, promotional support, and service responsiveness, even though Kesoram Cement has a strong brand presence in some areas. If these factors are not sufficiently addressed, they may have an impact on performance.

50 dealers were given a structured questionnaire as part of the study's primary research methodology to evaluate these factors. Aspects of the dealer experience, including satisfaction with product quality, profit margins, promotional schemes, logistics, and service quality, were covered in the survey. The responses were interpreted using quantitative methods such as weighted averages and percentage analysis.

After that, the responses were sorted and examined to find trends, dealer satisfaction levels, and common issues. To improve its dealer relationships, Kesoram Cement focused especially on identifying areas that needed improvement and strengths that it could build upon.

In addition to offering insightful information about dealer sentiment, this descriptive study forms the basis for practical suggestions that Kesoram Cement

can use to improve its dealer engagement tactics. Through a more responsive, dealer-centric approach, the findings ultimately seek to support the company's growth and competitiveness.

Findings

1. **Strong Perceptions of Product Quality:** A great number of dealers were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of Kesoram Cement. Survey participants praised product consistency, strength, and durability.
2. **Moderate Satisfaction with Prices and Margins:** While the price developed by Kesoram is seen as competitive by many dealers, some claim the margin could be better, especially compared to local competitors with better schemes.
3. **Delivery on-Time Needs Improvement:** While many respondents agreed that deliveries are typically on-time, many dealers experienced delays during periods of peak demand, which hindered customer service.
4. **Credit Terms Could Have More Flexibility:** Multiple dealers claimed they would like to see more flexibility in credit and faster adjustments for billing. Small and medium scale dealers, especially, mentioned issues with rigid payment cycles.
5. **Limited Promotional and Marketing Support:** Multiple dealers mentioned that Kesoram does not provide enough marketing materials, enough programs for engaging dealers or any campaigns for local product promotion, which they would need to drive sales.
6. **Positive Dealer - Company Interactions:** The majority of dealers reported that the company's representatives are both professional and accommodating. Dealers commented on the several times a month visits from representatives, and that other aspects, including communication and technical support were both timely and sufficient.
7. **Grievance Handling is Operational but Sluggish:** While there are systems in place for the resolution of complaints from dealers, the response time and follow-up systems still need to be more effective and dealer-friendly.

Recommendations

1. **Streamline Delivery Logistics:** Efficiently manage the supply chain and logistics channel so you can consistently get products delivered on-time, especially in peak demand times.
2. **Update Credit Policies:** Use more leniency in credit terms and speed up invoice payment to make it easier for your small and mid-sized dealer customers.
3. **Increase Promotional Support:** Provide more support for promotional activity through advertising materials, promotional payments to dealers and local promotional activity, so they can increase visibility of the product and ultimately boost sales.
4. **Develop a stronger grievance-management system:** Create a more timely, transparent, and dealer-friendly complaints and grievance process with adequate follow-up.
5. **Hold Regular Dealer Engagement Programs:** Regularly plan dealer reaches, dealer training and dealer reward and recognition to enhance engagement and communicate with your dealers better.
6. **Review Pricing and Margin Structure:** Periodically evaluate price policies and dealer margins to ensure you are competitive and driving performance from your dealers.
7. **Improve Communication:** Ensure clear, frequent, and to the degree possible, proactive communication to build trust and ensure a longer-term relationship with your company representatives.

Conclusion

The research to assess dealers' satisfaction in respect to Kesoram Cement Limited has revealed valuable information towards the performance of the company from the perspectives of the firm's distribution relationship. The investigation also revealed that while the company is recognized for its overall product quality, branding reputation and the management of dealer relationships, there are still dimensions that need improvement such as; delivery related issues, available credit flexibility, promotional help and grievance handling. Dealers are an essential part of the chain for customers' perceptions and market penetration; In fact, fishermen are the first point of sale which impacts the overall sales transaction. Dealer satisfaction is directly related to the firm's concrete sales, as well as concrete branding consistency. Ultimately, talking about dealers with a continuous communications plan, regular incentives and operational support can help the company keep and sustain business to grow in the long term. While it can be concluded that Kesoram Cement had established an overall positive position among their dealers, there is still support to find more satisfaction opportunities moving forward with innovative improvements to the way the firm executes its operational, credit financial and relationship efforts.

This research indicates that the benefits of modern, data-driven approaches far outweigh those of conventional approaches. Measures of performance show dramatic improvements in sales growth (67% versus 78%), territory coverage (60% versus 76%), and customer satisfaction (46/100 versus 73/100) under the sophisticated business territory management schemes. These results underscore the need for AI, predictive analytics, and GIS to make full use of sales potential.

To enhance efficiency, organisations are to embrace AI-enabled decision making, improve data quality, invest in the management of changes, and occasionally review the sales territory. This will allow the maximum output from organisations in the shortest possible time.