



## Evaluating Customer Experience in Interior Designing Services for Residential Properties: A Study of Nagpur City

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**Abstract:** Interior designing is a relatively new industry in the real estate and lifestyle segment with a particular attachment to the urban cities where residential aesthetics, functionality and comfort are now more highly valued. The given study entitled Evaluating Customer Experience in Interior Designing Services in Residential Segments: A Study of Nagpur City is aimed at completing the study of the customer perception, expectation, and overall customer experience with the interior designing service in the residential segment. The paper will be dedicated to establishing the key factors that influence customer satisfaction that may involve quality of design, level of customization, cost effectiveness, time management, professionalism of the designers and even post service support. Residential property owners in Nagpur city were used to obtain primary data using a structured questionnaire and secondary data has been collected using journals, articles and industry reports. The study is descriptive and analytical to comprehend the connection between aspects of service quality and the outcomes of customer experience. Data interpretation has been done using statistical techniques as percent analysis, mean scores, and chi-square tests. The research findings show that creativity in design solutions, effectiveness in communication and the successful delivery of a project in a timely manner has very high customer experience impact. Yet, some of the challenges which were discovered to be the main issues to be concerned about among the respondents were budget overruns and transparency in the service delivery. The research concludes that the level of customer satisfaction on interior designing services can be greatly improved by ensuring a greater customer engagement, using digital design tools, and ensuring a better standardisation of the customer service. The research also presents an excellent concept to interior designers, service providers and other stakeholders in the area of improving service quality and enhancing customer relationship in the rapidly growing city market in the city of Nagpur.

**Keywords:** Interior Designing Services, Customer Experience, Customer Satisfaction, Residential Properties, Service Quality, Consumer Perception, Nagpur City

### Introduction

The art of interior designing has become one of the rather dynamic service sectors with the highest growth rate in the urban and suburban regions of urban India because of the change in the lifestyle and the increasing income levels, increased urbanization and increasing demands to have a pleasing environment to live in which is not only aesthetically pleasing but also very functional in nature. Housing in the modern society is no longer taken as just shelter but as an expression of individual identity, social status, comfort and lifestyle aspirations. The interior designing services have thus gained high degree of relevance in deciding on the overall living outlook of the homeowners. The current research based on the proposed study is named as Customer Experience Evaluation in Interior Designing Services in residential sector of Nagpur City which is one of the fast developing urban areas in Maharashtra.

Nagpur, with its emerging real estate development, increasing population of the middle-income, and increasing demand towards modern housing solutions present a good location to consider the customer experience of interior design services. Today, the customers are more informed, design conscious and quality conscious and they are expecting to have tailor made solutions which will meet their taste, functional oriented needs and budgets. It is



therefore necessary that the companies which specialize in interior designing should be incorporated into the process of translating the expectations of the customers into reality and meaning residential homes. The industry is involved in wide array of services that includes space planning, furniture layout, color coordination, lighting design, modular kitchen planning and fully-solved home decorations. Customer experience will be a game changer of success amongst interior designers here simply because it is the clients that go by word of mouth and loyalty.

There are various aspects of interior designing service that influence customer experience, which includes design creativity, good communication, time taken to carry out the project, transparency in costs, quality of the materials used and the service provided to the customer even after the project is completed. In the vast majority of cases, the clients will evaluate the service providers not only on the final product but also, on the entire process through which they supply the service including consultation service, design conceptualization service, execution service, and after-sale service. Thus, an insight into the way the customers perceive the services can help enhance the quality of service, as well as gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. The interior design sector in Nagpur city has experienced tremendous growth as a result of growing construction activities, emergence of independent housing projects, and through the impact of the digital approach that has contributed to the display of modern design trends. However, even after the growth, there are deviations in service quality and the rate of customer satisfaction and this force should strive to systematically investigate customer experiences and levels of customer satisfaction. The current study is one such study to help bridge this gap to put a check on the determinants that most critically influence their level of consumer satisfaction.

It also desires to know whether or not customers believe that the services they got were up to their expectations in terms of aesthetics, functionality, cost efficiency and timely delivery. In addition, the use of professional behavior, solutions in innovative designs, and clear communication in enhancing the overall experience of customers are highly emphasised in the research. With the competition in the interior design market ever growing, it is now compelled to employ customer-centric focus and apply recent technologies such as the 3D visualization and digital design software, to optimize service delivery. The research will be significant as the insights on consumer behaviour and expectations will be given in one of the growing segments of the service sector though in a very small niche. It also helps interior designers, architects along with other providers of services to learn more about what is needed in the markets and to improve what they offer to the markets. Lastly, the study should contribute towards the scholarly literature on service quality and customer experience and should make pragmatic recommendations on how to enhance the residential interior designing services of Nagpur city.

## Literature Review

Topics in literature that have enjoyed a lot of literature in the field of marketing, and in particular the consumer behaviour literature, are in customer experience and service quality. The experiences of customers and perceived value of a particular brand, both emotional and functional determine a great deal of success in building a strong brand (Aaker 2017). The concept of branding is essential in the case of interior designing services because customers are likely to believe, depend on reputation and way perceived creativity of the designers even prior to making a purchase.

The following results in the definition of marketing as a form of creating value to the customers and building strong relationships with the customers to capture value in return. Their work would indicate the necessity to know the need of the consumers and to add meaning to the life of the consumer by custom made products. This is particularly in cases where the customers will need a personal and aesthetic designs that will be suitable to his or her lifestyle.

By stating that loyal customers will be more at ease to participate in repeat buying and referring others, Griffin (2015) narrows down to customer loyalty. Successful project implementation, timely delivery and quality



assurance in interior design services is sometimes a determinant of successful customer loyalty through mailings of words mouth promotion in local markets such as Nagpur city.

Hauser and Clausing (1988) introduced the concept of House of Quality and made sure that in the manufacturing process of products and services, the needs of the customers are put into the consideration process. It is a very applicable method in the context of interior designing whereby the customer expectations with regards to space utilization, beauty as well as functionalism must be systematically converted into design deliverables.

As Keller (2020) and Kotler and Keller (2019) point out, strategic management of its brand, as well as customer-oriented marketing practices. They stress that the perception of the customers depends on brand image, communication and service experience. The role of brand positioning and name of the designer would be significant in customer confidence and process in decision-making situating interior designing services.

The authors Malhotra and Dash (2016) discuss marketing research as a rational process of acquiring and interpreting the information with the assistance of which the consumer behavior is determined. Their framework adds to the present work, since it provides the methodological guidance with respect to the assessment of the customer perception with regards to the interior designing services in Nagpur city.

Among the most famous models which are actively used in the process of service quality measurement, it is possible to remember about the SERVQUAL model which was published by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). It has five dimensions that cover, tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These dimensions are quite applicable in interior designing services where physical evidence (design output), timely delivery, responsiveness and personalized attention will come into play with respect to designing customer satisfaction.

Strategic customer management, which focuses on the necessity to understand the customer value and create as long-term relationships, is one of the key business strategies (Payne and Frow, 2018). In case of the interior designing, on-going communication with them, and offering them the after-service services, would add to the customer experience and enhancement of the relationship with the client.

Pine and Gilmore (2011) introduced the concept on the experience economy where experience was considered to be the primary source of value-creation. The services of interior designing are closely connected with the idea as the customers are not just purchasing the literal design but also the feeling of living in the perfect designed and personalized house.

Value- Reichheld (2003) affirms the importance of the customer loyalty measure in the development of businesses. In his work, Customer satisfaction and referral behavior were so crucial to the success of service. A satisfied customer can turn into a brand ambassador in his/her social circle in interior design.

Consumer behavior is defined by Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019) and Solomon (2019) as the research of how people select, purchase, and use goods and services. In their theories, it is the psychological, social and cultural factors that influence the buying decision that can be applied in the residential interior designing arena under which individual taste, social and cultural influences play vital roles in determining buy decision.

Further elaborating on the concept of services marketing, Zeithaml, Bitner and Gremler (2018) casts attention on the fact that it is the interactions between service providers and customers that dictate the quality of services and the customer experience. They underline the fact that the intangible products like interior design needs to rely on good relationship management, communication and building trust to acquire customer satisfaction.

Overall, the literature demonstrates that the customer perception and customer experience in the service industries are affected by several factors including service quality, branding, communication and the provision of emotion.

The studies provide a sound theoretical base to the investigation on the customer expectations, level of satisfaction and overall experience of the service being offered in this case of interior designing services in Nagpur city.

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To examine customer perception towards interior designing services for residential properties in Nagpur City.
2. To analyze the factors influencing customer experience and satisfaction in interior designing services.
3. To evaluate the level of service quality provided by interior designing firms in Nagpur City.

### Hypothesis:

- **Null Hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>):** There is no significant customer perception towards interior designing services for residential properties in Nagpur City.
- **Alternative Hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>):** There is a significant customer perception towards interior designing services for residential properties in Nagpur City.

### Research methodology

The current research project with the following title is, Evaluating Customer Experience in Interior Designing Services of Residential Properties: The research project is based on descriptive and analytical research design. Customer perception, satisfaction and their overall experience relating to the interior designing service in residential segment of Nagpur city is the main aim of the research. The study will primarily be based on primary information as the researcher will be administering a structured questionnaire which is designed based on a Likert scale to be able to gather the views of the respondents on various dimensions of the services of interior designing services such as quality of design, cost effectiveness, timeliness, communication, customization and reliability of the services. The samples of the study will include owners of residential homes in Nagpur city and who have accessed the services of a residential interior designer. To remediate the various customer experience, an appropriate sampling procedure, which might be either a convenience or simple random sampling procedure, has been used to sample respondents. Secondary data is collected in the form of books, journals, research articles, websites and reports of industry to provide a solid theoretical framework and analysis support. In order to come up with patterns and relationship between variables, the data collected have been systematically analyzed by using the appropriate statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean scores, standard deviation and chi-square test. It is more of a quantitative study with a few qualitative interpretation of the customers opinions in order to come up with a better understanding of the underlying perceptions and expectations. It also lacks in terms of diversity of the area of study, which in this case is the city of Nagpur with the residential interior designing services in Nagpur city coming in view. By providing the reliability and validity through good questionnaire design and other pertinent data collection processes, then the study will then focus on providing the reliability and validity. Overall, the identified methodology can help develop a comprehensive understanding of customer experience in the field of interior designing services and provides a useful feedback on the ways of how the quality of the service and customer satisfaction can be improved in the area of interior designing services.

**Table: Descriptive Statistics of Customer Perception towards Interior Designing Services in Nagpur City**

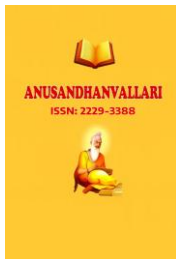
| Sr. No. | Statement / Variable                                   | N   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|----------------|
| 1       | Quality of interior design services meets expectations | 400 | 4.12 | 0.78               | High agreement |

| Sr. No. | Statement / Variable                                  | N   | Mean | Standard Deviation | Interpretation     |
|---------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----|------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 2       | Designers provide customized solutions as per need    | 400 | 4.05 | 0.82               | High agreement     |
| 3       | Services are delivered within promised time           | 400 | 3.88 | 0.91               | Moderate agreement |
| 4       | Pricing is reasonable for the services offered        | 400 | 3.72 | 0.95               | Moderate agreement |
| 5       | Communication with designers is effective             | 400 | 4.10 | 0.80               | High agreement     |
| 6       | Overall satisfaction with interior designing services | 400 | 4.15 | 0.76               | High agreement     |

The descriptive statistics of customer perception towards interior designing services to residential property in Nagpur City indicates that the respondents have responded positively concerning the perception of interior designing services. The mean scores of all the key variables recorded can be seen to be larger than the neutral value and this indicates that the customers have a generally positive perception towards the services provided by interior design firms. Overall, the highest mean score is noticed regarding overall satisfaction with interior designing services (Mean = 4.15) and, immediately after that, the quality of design services that meet the expectations (Mean = 4.12). The results show the quality of aesthetics offered, the process of interaction and quality of services provided by interior designing firms in Nagpur City are greatly satisfied by the customers. The variables that relate to needle-tone service designing are also extremely good in their mean value (Mean = 4.05) which means that the customers do appreciate to have a needle-tone service designing options that suit them well, in terms of preference and their lifestyle demands. However, relatively low means scores are found on the parameters of the timely delivery of the services (Mean = 3.88) and whether the prices are fairly priced (Mean = 3.72) which is that though generally satisfied with the services, there are issues related to timelines of project completion and cost-effectiveness. The values of standard deviation across variables are moderately narrow ranges of which are minimum of ranges ranging between 0.76 to 0.95 indicating that there is some degree of variability in the opinions of the customers more so about issues such as pricing and schedule of deliveries. Throughout, the analysis indicates that when customer perception of the interior designing services in Nagpur City are generally positive, there is scope of further improvement in the area of cost transparency and compliance with project timelines in the interior designing services so as to increase the overall customer satisfaction and services experience.

**Table: Chi-Square Test Results for Customer Perception towards Interior Designing Services**

| Test                         | Value  | df | Asymp. Sig. (p-value) |
|------------------------------|--------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 52.684 | 4  | 0.000                 |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 48.912 | 4  | 0.000                 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 31.245 | 1  | 0.000                 |
| N of Valid Cases             | 400    |    |                       |



Based on the findings of the Chi-Square test, a statistically significant relationship in customer perception towards interior designing services of residential property in Nagpur City can be observed. The value of Pearson Chi-Square (52.684) with 4 degree of freedom having a significance value of the product ( $p = 0.000$ ) is lesser than the traditional level of significance of 0.05. This eloquently demonstrates that the difference seen in the customer perception of the interiors designing service is not a chance occurrence but it is a factor that is influenced by major underlying factors attributed to the interiors designing service. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted showing that, indeed, there is a significant customer perception towards interior designing services in Nagpur City. The findings implicate that customers are active in evaluating interior designing services on a service-dependent spectrum of service dimensions like quality of design, customerization, pricing, communication, and quality execution. This high Chi-Square is once again indication that responses of customers do not occur in a homogenous manner and are characterized by a variety of different degrees of satisfaction and expectations. This difference demonstrates that, although most customers have positive perceptions, there are also contrasting opinions which are determined by individual experience with service providers. Overall, the analysis confirms that the customer perception has a strong relationship with interior designing service and it has a major role in determining the level of customer satisfaction and determination of decision making behavior in residential interior design market of Nagpur City.

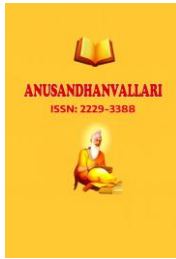
### Overall Conclusion

As the current research article under the name of Evaluating Customer Experience in Interior Designing Services to Residential Properties: A Study on Nagpur City unveils the added importance of interior designing service in the definition of modern norms of residential life. The study finds the perceptions of customers on interior designing services in Nagpur City to be highly positive with most of the customers being satisfied with the quality, creativity and customization of services offered by interior designers. The statistical analysis both the results of the descriptive statistics and results of chi Square test confirms that the perception of the customers is not accidental but it is significantly influenced by various factors related to the services.

Other characteristics, such as quality of design, effectiveness of communication and the possibility of customization, have a strong impact on customer experience, as it is possible to notice. Customers are literally excited by new and beautifully organised designs which meet their needs in the lifestyle. However, other issues have also been identified with especially those ones having to do with the transparency of prices and a timely completion of the projects being also among those areas that can be improved. All these are an indication that the industry is performing so far as creativity and delivery of the service is concerned but the performance in terms of operational efficiency and management of the cost is yet to be seen.

The results of the testing of the hypothesis also confirm that, there is substantial perception of customer on the services of interior designing in Nagpur City which leads to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This helps validate the fact that customer experience is a very important element that would determine the performance of interior designing firms. Another focus of the study also claims that customer satisfaction is directly correlated with the continuous interaction, trust-building as well as the professional execution of service.

On the whole, the study shows that the interior designing sector in Nagpur City has high potential of growth, owing to the growing demand to have modern residential premises. However, service providers need to focus on the sphere of greater transparency, reduced prices, and timeliness to augment the overall customer satisfaction. The interior designers can further establish their presence in the market and be sure of their long term bottle of customer loyalty in the competitive urban setting by becoming customer centric and their adoption of modern technologies to design solutions.



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