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Differentiated customer preferences in landscaping: A comparative study of residential and institutional segments

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Abstract: *The landscaping industry is increasingly important as urban areas expand and residential and institutional clients seek to enhance their outdoor environments. This study investigates the perceptions of residential and institutional customers within the landscaping market to understand the differing priorities and influences that affect their decision-making processes. Utilizing a sample of 60 customers out of which 30 residential and 30 institutional customers from the company Vruksha Kuteeram, the research employs demographic analysis and factorial analysis to identify key factors impacting customer behavior. For residential customers, the study highlights that understanding of landscaping features and familiarity with services are primary determinants of their purchasing decisions. These customers value aspects such as warranty, value for money, and needs satisfaction, with their choices often influenced by lifestyle, income, and personal preferences. Conversely, institutional customers prioritize factors like competitive pricing and warranty, reflecting their need for cost-efficiency and reliability in maintaining professional environments. Their decisions are also shaped by budget constraints and the potential impact of landscaping on organizational image. The factorial analysis reveals that for residential customers, understanding and familiarity with landscaping services are the most significant factors, while warranty and value for money also play important roles. Institutional customers, however, place greater emphasis on competitive pricing and warranty, with less emphasis on brand reputation and customer service. The study further explores the role of information sources, finding that both residential and institutional customers rely heavily on social media for information, though they prefer direct communication with service providers. This comparative analysis provides valuable insights into how different customer segments perceive and prioritize landscaping services, offering implications for landscaping companies aiming to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies to better meet the needs of diverse clientele.*

Key Words: *Customer behavior, comparative analysis, factor analysis, residential segment, institutional segment, landscaping.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

The landscaping industry plays a pivotal role in enhancing the aesthetic and functional aspects of both residential and institutional properties. As urbanization continues to accelerate, the demand for professional landscaping services has seen a significant rise. Understanding consumer behavior in this context is crucial for landscaping companies aiming to tailor their services effectively to meet the diverse needs of their clientele.

Consumer behavior in the landscaping market can be complex, influenced by a variety of factors including cultural, social, personal, psychological, and economic elements. This study aims to delve into the perceptions of two key customer segments within the landscaping industry: residential and institutional clients. By examining these perceptions, we can gain insights into what drives customer preferences, how they prioritize different aspects of landscaping services, and how these priorities differ between residential and institutional settings. Residential customers typically seek landscaping solutions that enhance their home environment, focusing on aesthetic appeal, functionality, and the overall value that landscaping can add to their property. On the other hand, institutional customers—including

businesses, schools, and other organizations—approach landscaping from a perspective of enhancing their operational environments and maintaining a professional image.

The understanding of consumer behavior "is defined as mental and physical activities performed by customers consumer and industry that result in decisions and actions, how to buy and use products and services and pay for them" (SHETH; MITTAL & NEWMAN, 2001, p. 29). The consumer behavior can have several "models" or "concepts" which require assumptions about the buying process. Kotler (1998) highlights the factors that influences consumer behavior. The consumer is influenced by cultural, social, individual, psychological and economic factors. This study employs a comparative analysis of residential and institutional customers to uncover the distinct factors that influence their perceptions and choices regarding landscaping services. By utilizing demographic data, factorial analysis, and exploring various factors affecting customer behavior, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how different customer segments perceive and prioritize landscaping services. This knowledge can aid landscaping companies in refining their service offerings and targeting their marketing efforts more effectively.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Inoue *et al*. (2022) in their study "Landscape Value in Urban Neighbourhoods" applied the framework of landscape value to evaluate natural landscapes on a large scale in the Tokyo metropolitan city. The results evaluated that gender and age affects the evaluation of landscape values. The correlation coefficients with the overall impression of the place are more significant in women than men for all types of values. The associations between landscape values and the favourable impressions of places are stronger for the older generations.

Reddy *et al*. (2022) in their study "Technological innovations in commercial high-tech horticulture" found that landscape gardening is becoming more important in mitigation and adoption to climate change. It's different types such as indoor, outdoor gardening, terrace gardening and commercial park management are in high demand and generate employment to un-employed youth. Landscaping combines elements of art and science to create a functional, aesthetically pleasing extension of indoor living to outdoors.

Noora Sreshtha (2021) in her study "Factor Analysis as a Tool for Survey Analysis" proposed a factor analysis to identify the factors underlying the variables of a questionnaire to measure tourist satisfaction. In this study, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of Sphericity are used to assess the factorability of the data. Determinant score is calculated to examine the multicollinearity among the variables. To determine the number of factors to be extracted, Kaiser's Criterion and Scree test are examined. Varimax orthogonal factor rotation method is applied to minimize the number of variables that have high loadings on each factor. The internal consistency is confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability to test the instrument accuracy. The convergent validity is established when average variance extracted is greater than or equal to 0.5. The results have revealed that the factor analysis not only allows detecting irrelevant items but will also allow extracting the valuable factors from the data set of a questionnaire survey. The application of factor analysis for questionnaire evaluation provides very valuable inputs to the decision makers to focus on few important factors rather than a large number of parameters.

Meryam *et al*. (2018) in their study identified the importance of landscape building to consumers, and to study consumer perceptions on the construction of landscapes in Darulaman Lake Recreational Park. The methodology used in the study were interviews and questionnaires. This study involved 80 respondents from users who visited Darulaman Lake and interviewed with the management of Darulaman Lake (BDB Land Sdn Bhd). The findings show that respondents agree with the construction of landscapes in recreational parks as it brings importance to consumers and consumer perceptions of Darulaman Lake Recreational Park in terms of management and preparation of landscape elements.

Norat Roig-Tierno *et.al* (2017) in their study "An overview of qualitative comparative analysis: A bibliometric analysis" organized the study in two parts. They conducted a general analysis of the use of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), and a bibliometric study of the use of QCA to analyze the specificities of the research publications that apply this methodology. Our results show the differences in quantitative terms of the three variants of this methodology: fsQCA, csQCA, and mvQCA.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS:

To explore the perceptions of residential and institutional customers within the landscaping market, a random sample including 30 residential clients and 30 institutional clients from the company Vruksha Kuteeram was selected and interviewed in Hyderabad. A combination of convenience and random sampling techniques was used to gather the data. The interview questionnaire was divided into two sections. The first section collected demographic information,

such as name, age, gender, and annual household income for residential clients and the institution details for the institutional clients. The second section addressed key factors that could impact customer behavior, with questions formulated using the Likert scale. Subsequently, factor analysis was conducted to gain insights into customer perceptions, employing this statistical method to facilitate a comparative analysis of residential and institutional customers.

The methods used are:

Likert scale: Likert scaling technique will be used to analyze the perception of supply chain partners. Likert scale assumes that the strength/intensity of experience /response is linear, i.e., on a continuum from strongly agree to strongly disagree, and makes the assumption that attitudes can be measured. Respondents may be offered a choice of five or seven pre-coded responses with the neutral point being neither agree nor disagree.

Factor analysis: Factor analysis refers to a method that reduces a large variable into a smaller variable factor. Furthermore, this technique takes out maximum ordinary variance from all the variables and put them in common score. Using this factor analysis, we can prove that landscaping will increase the aesthetic value which leads to customer satisfaction. Likert scale can be used to make questionnaires for the factor analysis.

Comparative Analysis: Comparative analysis is a research technique employed to draw comparisons between two or more groups, entities, or phenomena to uncover patterns, differences, and insights that might not be apparent through single-group studies. This approach is particularly valuable in understanding diverse perspectives and behaviors within a given context.

4. RESULT:

Perception of Residential customers on Landscaping market:

Table 1.Key variables that affect the residential customers of landscaping market

Variable	Aspects taken into account
FAMLTY	Familiarity
UNDSTD	Understanding
NDSATIS	Needs satisfaction
VFM	Value for money
COMPRI	Competitive price
CUSSAT	Customer satisfaction
BRANREP	Brand reputation
WARNT	Warranty
RECMD	Recommendation

Socio economic characteristics of residential respondents: The information details regarding the gender, age and annual income of residential respondents have been collected and analyzed the influence of these factors on landscaping market which were depicted in figure 1., table 1. and table 3.

` The results revealed that out of the 30 respondents, 26.67 percent are female and 73.33 percent are male. It is revealed from the closer study that even though 3/4th of the respondents is male their buying decision of landscaping has been influenced by their wives(females). Hence, female gender is indirectly dominant in taking the buying decisions of landscaping in the residential segment.

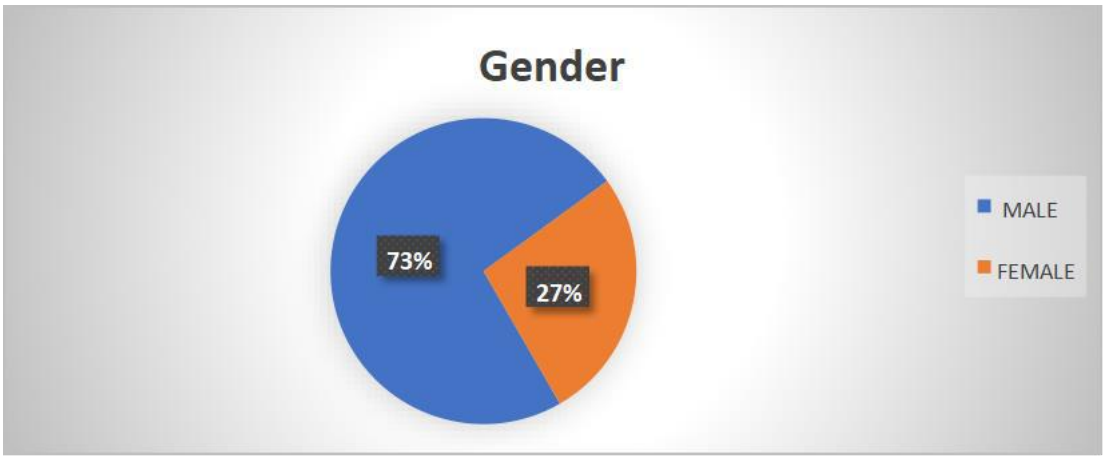

Figure 1. Gender-wise distribution of residential landscaping customers

Table 2 Age frequency of residential sample respondents

Age	**Frequency**	**Percentage%**
21-30 years	00	0
31-40 years	14	46.67
41-50 years	10	33.33
51-60 years	06	20.00
61 years & more	00	0
	Total	**100%**

It is noted that from the table 2 that among the residential landscaping customers 46.67 percent were youngsters with 31 to 40 years of age followed by 33.33 percent of middle-aged customers and 20 percent were old aged. None of the customers fall under the age groups of less than 30 years and more than 60 years. The study shows that young customers were increasingly interested in recreational activities and aesthetic pleasure in landscaping and also, they started home ownership and family at that age.

Table 3 Annual income Frequency of residential sample respondents

Annual Household Income	**Frequency**	**Percentage%**
10 lakhs	04	16.67
12 lakhs	10	33.33
15 lakhs	11	36.67
20 lakhs	02	13.33
	Total= 30	**100%**

It is observed from the table 3 that majority of the sample respondents (36.67 percent) fall under the range of 15 lakhs annual household income followed by 12 lakhs, 10 lakhs and 20 lakhs range with 33.33 percent, 16.67 percent frequencies respectively. It can be interpreted that moderate income respondents also elicit proclivity towards pleasing landscapes which brings mental and physical benefits to people. All the sample respondents are scattered around the six zones of Hyderabad.

Factorial Analysis of residential landscaping market :

In Table 1. were grouped variables studied, called factors, which describe the importance of customers perception about landscaping. From the generation factor, two factors were obtained with eigenvalue more than 1 (Latent Root Criterion). The two factors are equivalent an explanation of 70.907% (cumulative variance), approximately total variance data.

Factor analysis using the principal component method with Varimax Kaiser normalization. Before applying factor analysis, the data was tested for its appropriateness. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) was applied to test the appropriateness of the data (sample adequacy) The analysis using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) was found a value of 0.451 indicating the inadequacy of data analysis. So, in order to get valid results, the input data has been subjected to some changes by be removing all the variables whose variance is less than 0.7. The variables Competitive price, Brand reputation and Recommendation have been removed from the analysis, since they show a variance less than 0.7 and have very less influence on the customer perception of landscaping. After the removal of those three variables the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) was found a value of 0.521 indicating the adequacy of data analysis. By using Bartlett's test of sphericity, approximate chi-square value obtained was 81.011 which means null hypothesis rejected so that correlation matrix is an identity matrix.

Table 4 also shows the value communalities of variables. Commonality is the total amount of variance that one original variable share with all other tests (HAIR et al., 2005). The communalities vary between 0 and 1, and 0 when common factors don't explain any variance of variable to 1 when all variance explained.

Table 4 Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
FAMILIARITY	1.000	.934
UNDERSTANDING	1.000	.948
NEEDS SATISFYING	1.000	.610
VALUE FOR MONEY	1.000	.632
CUSTOMER SERVICE	1.000	.477
WARRANTY	1.000	.652

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Considering the criterion statistical significance, where significance of loadings factor depends on the size of the sample studied, was accepted minimum value of 0.62 for significant factor loadings in a sample 30 elements.

Table 5 Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component	
	1	2
WARRANTY	.798	-.123
VALUE FOR MONEY	.786	-.121
NEEDS SATISFYING	.745	.236
CUSTOMER SERVICE	.690	
UNDERSTANDING		.974
FAMILIARITY		.966

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Table 6 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.286	38.097	38.097	2.286	38.097	38.097	2.286	38.095	38.095
2	1.969	32.810	70.907	1.969	32.810	70.907	1.969	32.812	70.907
3	.859	14.311	85.218						
4	.476	7.935	93.153						
5	.338	5.635	98.788						
6	.073	1.212	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

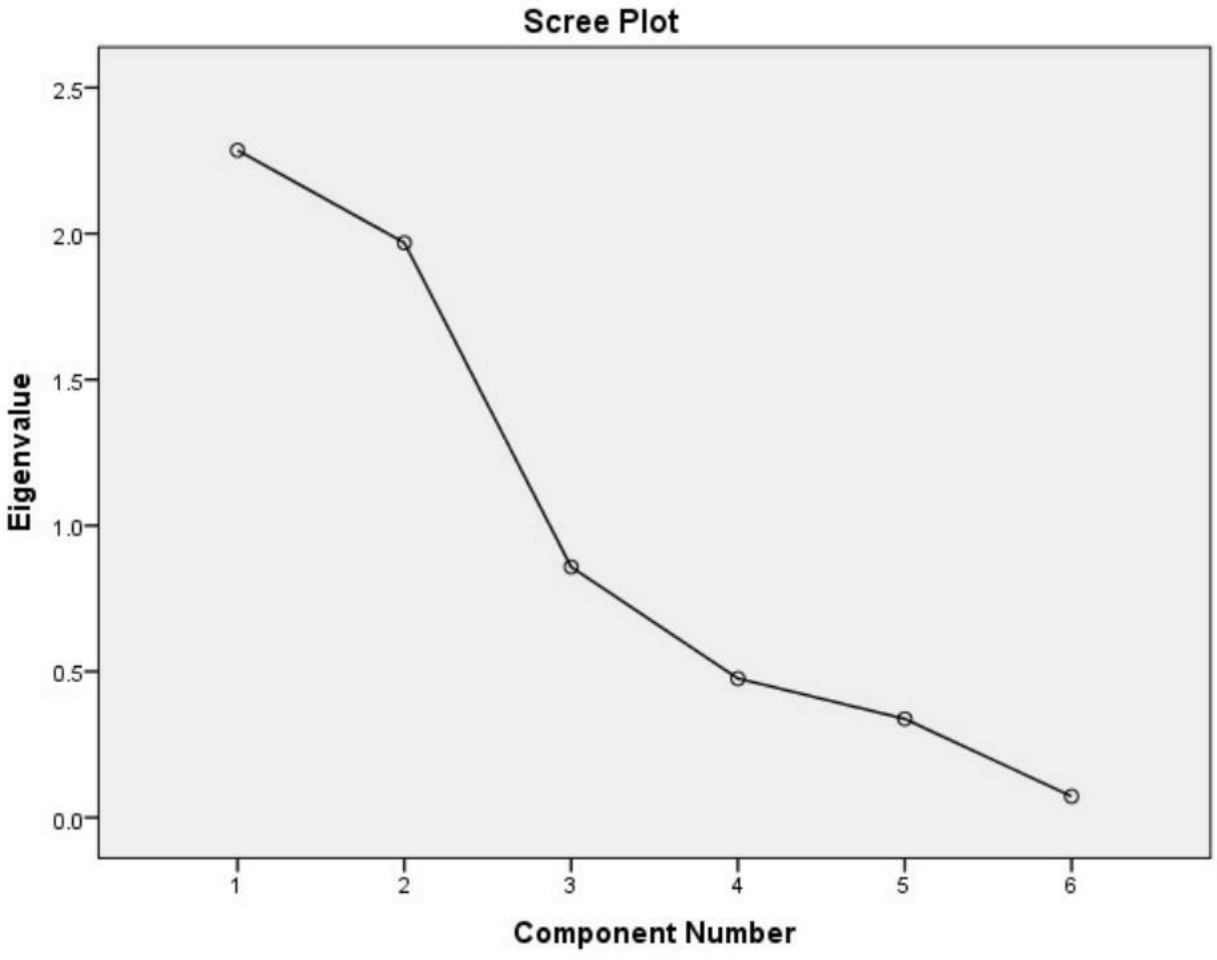

Figure 2 Scree plot of residential customer factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis is a technique that imply data reduction and permit simplification of the correlational relationship between continuous variables.

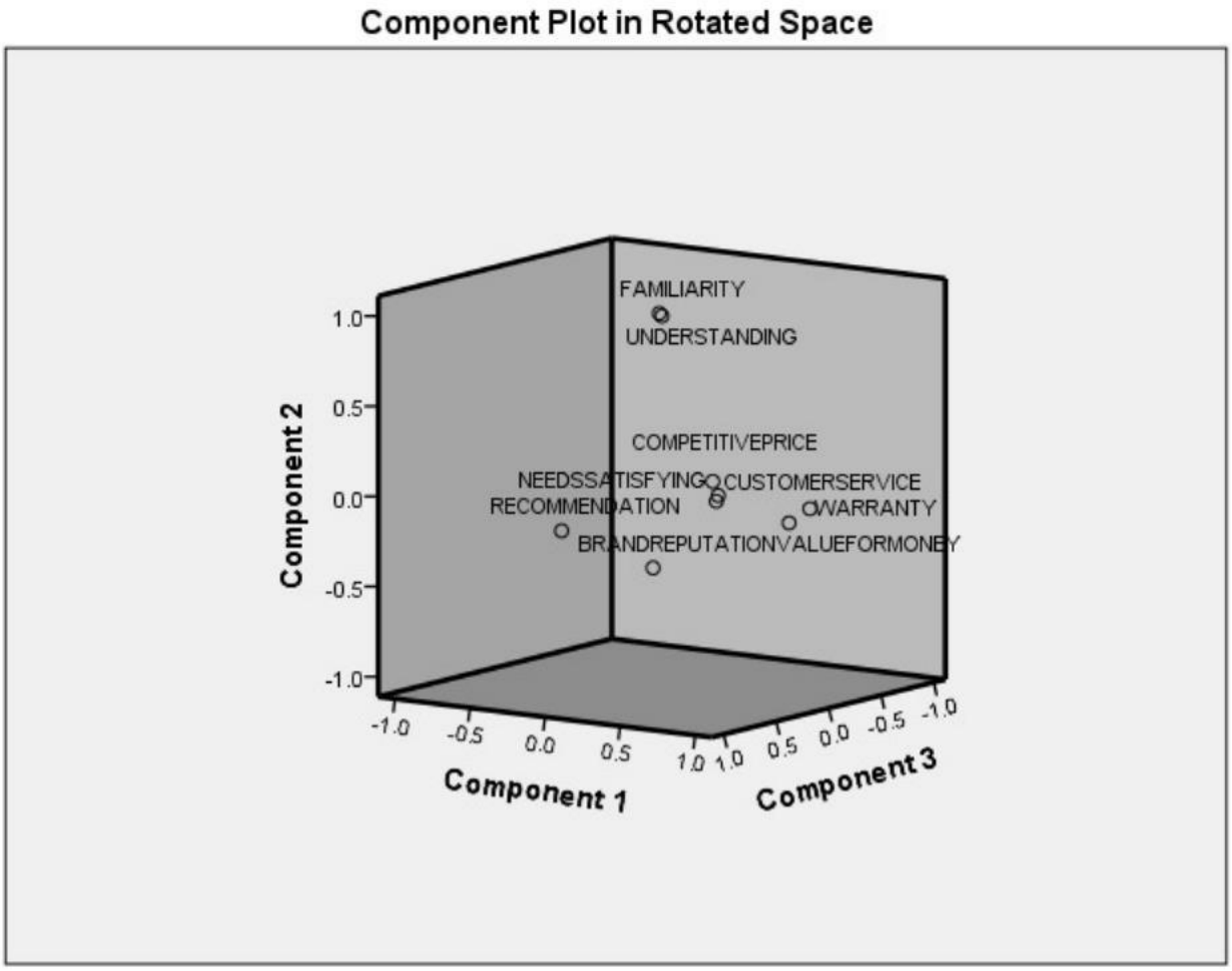

Figure 3 component plot in rotated space

It is elicited from the table 6 that by observing the variables, the first two factors contribute about 70 percent of the variance. The first factor understanding have an eigenvalue of 2.286 and a factor loading of 0.974 which is the highest amongst all. It shows a variance of 38.097 percent which concludes that it has a greatest influence on the customer perception when it comes to landscaping in the residential segment.

Understanding the features and benefits of landscaping can be an added advantage when choosing a landscaping service. By knowing the features and benefits such as enhancing the value of property while renting or selling, one can choose the best landscape design for their residence that suits their home needs and environment.

Coming to the second factor, familiarity which have an eigenvalue of 1.969 and a factor loading of 0.966 shows a variance of 32.810 percent proves that along with understanding it has a great influence on the customer perception on landscaping.

Familiarity with the landscaping can bring about more understanding of the different kinds of landscaping technologies and services that are available in the market. Familiarity when combined with understanding of features and benefits can bring about great changes in the customer perception on landscaping. The third factor warranty also took a good share. It has an eigen value of 0.859 and a factor loading of 0.798 showing a variance of 14.311 percent such that it also influences the perception of customer on landscaping. The warranty offered by the companies of landscaping can be a good factor that is considered by the customers when choosing a landscaping service. Warranty for a service can be a good add on, so that a customer can perceive that the company is reliable and trustworthy. The fourth factor value for money contributes a little. It has an eigen value of 0.476 and a factor loading of 0.786 showing a variance of 7.935 depicting that customers also sees the worth of what they are buying where all the ages of people are benefitted viz, children have play activities, adults can prefer to have leisure activities that can relax their minds. For elderly and disabled group if any, prefer to have a comfort, security and easy access in their housing area without spending. Other factors like Needs satisfying and Customer service also take up a little part in influencing the customer perception. The factors Competitive price, Brand reputation and recommendation takes the least position when it comes to influence on the perception of customer. Since almost all the respondents are sound enough in income to get good

services these three factors have become their least priority while choosing a landscaping company for acquiring services.

Other factors influence on the perception of residential customers

a. Source of information:

Source of information is one factor that plays a key role in influencing the customer behavior. When the information about a particular service is given by a person who is from our closest friends group or from our family there is a greater chance of choosing that service. When we observe the results of this particular source of information most of the respondents have voted to friends, family and colleagues.

Social media is also one of the most important sources of information which has been trending in the current world. Sample respondents in the study area have also opted social media as their source of information. Public media has been opted the least when it comes to being a source of information.

b. Ideal budget:

A budget is one of the most important tools to have in your financial planning arsenal. An ideal budget involves the allotment of the available money to the purchase of required products/services in a cost-effective manner. It is spotted from the study that; half of the customers (50 percent) have opted Rs.20,000 – Rs.50,000 as their ideal budget for their landscaping services. Hence, it is noted that budget is not an effective factor that has influence on the customer behavior since most of them are well earned and financially stable.

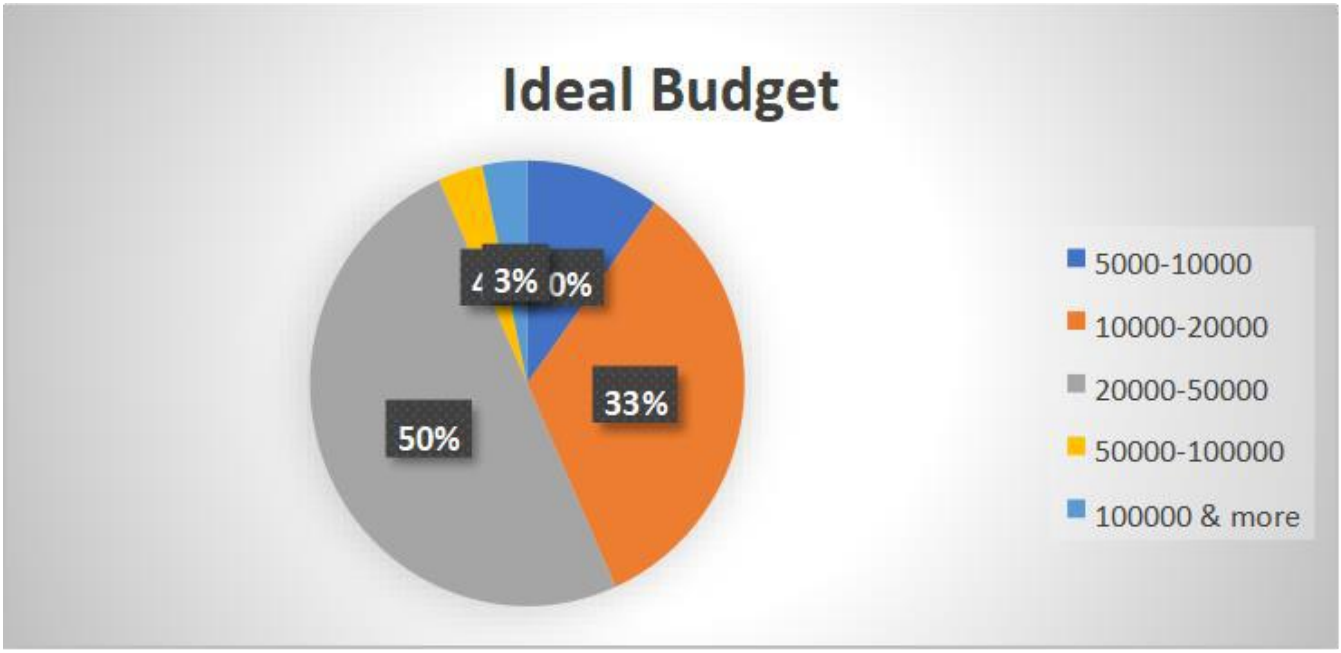

Figure.4 Residential landscaping customer segmentation based on budget allocation

c. Mode of Communication:

Communication is the key to success in any field. Good communication becomes the best method of promotion for any company which grabs the attention of the customer. It can also be one of the most important reasons for the customer loyalty. It is observed from the study that, most of the respondents are comfortable with direct communication with the landscapers.

Perception of institutional customers on landscaping market:

In order to find out the perception of the institutional customers of landscaping market, a random sample of 30 institutional customers of the company Vruksha Kuteeram. Convenient and random sampling technique was adopted to select 30 institutional landscape customers. The primary data on demographic variables like age and annual turnover and data on principal factors that can influence the behavior of customers were collected through personal interview method by using well-structured schedule. The data on customer behavior were structured using Likert scaling technique.

Table 7. Key factors that influence customer perception of institutional landscaping customers

Variable	Aspects taken into account
FAMLTY	Familiarity
UNDSTD	Understanding
NDSATIS	Needs satisfaction
VFM	Value for money
COMPRI	Competitive price
CUSSAT	Customer satisfaction
BRANREP	Brand reputation
WARNT	Warranty
RECMD	Recommendation
IDBGT	Ideal budget

Demographic characteristics of institutional landscaping respondents:

A well-organized landscape attracts more people, helps promote workplace wellness which can result in business growth so that employees can feel better. The results of the analysis revealed that the following factors have influenced the customers behavior regarding institutional landscaping.

a. Annual Turnover

From the figure 5. it is observed that most of the institutional customers annual turnover is in the range of one crore. This shows that institutions with more annual turnover are more into landscaping for their offices and organizations. But some of the institutions have not mentioned the turnover for some legal reasons.

Figure 5 institutional customer segmentation based on annual turnover

Factorial Analysis of institutional landscaping market

From table 7. it is noted that the grouped variables called factors were studied, which describe the importance of customers perception about landscaping. From the generation factor, four factors were obtained with eigenvalue more than 1 (Latent Root Criterion). The percentage of cumulative variance explained by four factors is 82.96.

Appropriateness of data collected on factors were checked by using KMO and Bartlett test for factor analysis. The results of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin test (KMO) was found a value of 0.526 indicating adequacy of data analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was evaluated through Chisquare value 79.718 which is significant at 0.000 percent level of significance. Null hypothesis stating item to item correlation as identity matrix is rejected indicating that the data is suitable and normally distributed. So, it can be used for factor analysis. Considering the criterion of statistical significance, where significance of loadings factor depends on the size of the sample studied, was accepted minimum value of 0.62 for significant factor loadings with a sample of 30 customers. In order to get valid results, the input data has been subjected to some changes by removing all the variables whose factor loadings is less than 0.6. The variables

Competitive price and Recommendation have been removed from the analysis, since they show a variance less than 0.6 and have very less influence on the customer perception of landscaping. The table 8 depicted the communality values of variables. Commonality is the total amount of variance that one original variable share with all other tests (HAIR et al., 2005). The communalities vary between zero and one, and zero when common factors don't explain any variance of variable to zero when all variance explained.

Table 8. Communalities

	Initial	Extraction
FAM	1.000	.923
UND	1.000	.934
NEEDS SATISFYING	1.000	.672
VALUE FOR MONEY	1.000	.774
COMPETITIVE PRICES	1.000	.923
BRAND REPUTATION	1.000	.787
WARR	1.000	.871
IDEAL BUDGET	1.000	.753

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 9 Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
UND	.962			
FAM	.954			-.108
WARR		.932		
VALUE FOR MONEY		.827	.277	-.116
IDEAL BUDGET		.182	.822	.190
BRAND REPUTATION	-.236 .172	-.173	.761	-.350
NEEDS SATISFYING		.436	.673	
COMPETITIVE PRICES				.951

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Table 10 Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.349	29.358	29.358	2.349	29.358	29.358	1.940	24.248	24.248

2	1.935	24.184	53.542	1.935	24.184	53.542	1.818	22.720	46.968
3	1.291	16.143	69.685	1.291	16.143	69.685	1.790	22.381	69.349
4	1.062	13.275	82.960	1.062	13.275	82.960	1.089	13.610	82.960
5	.506	6.325	89.285						
6	.479	5.993	95.278						
7	.270	3.380	98.658						
8	.107	1.342	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

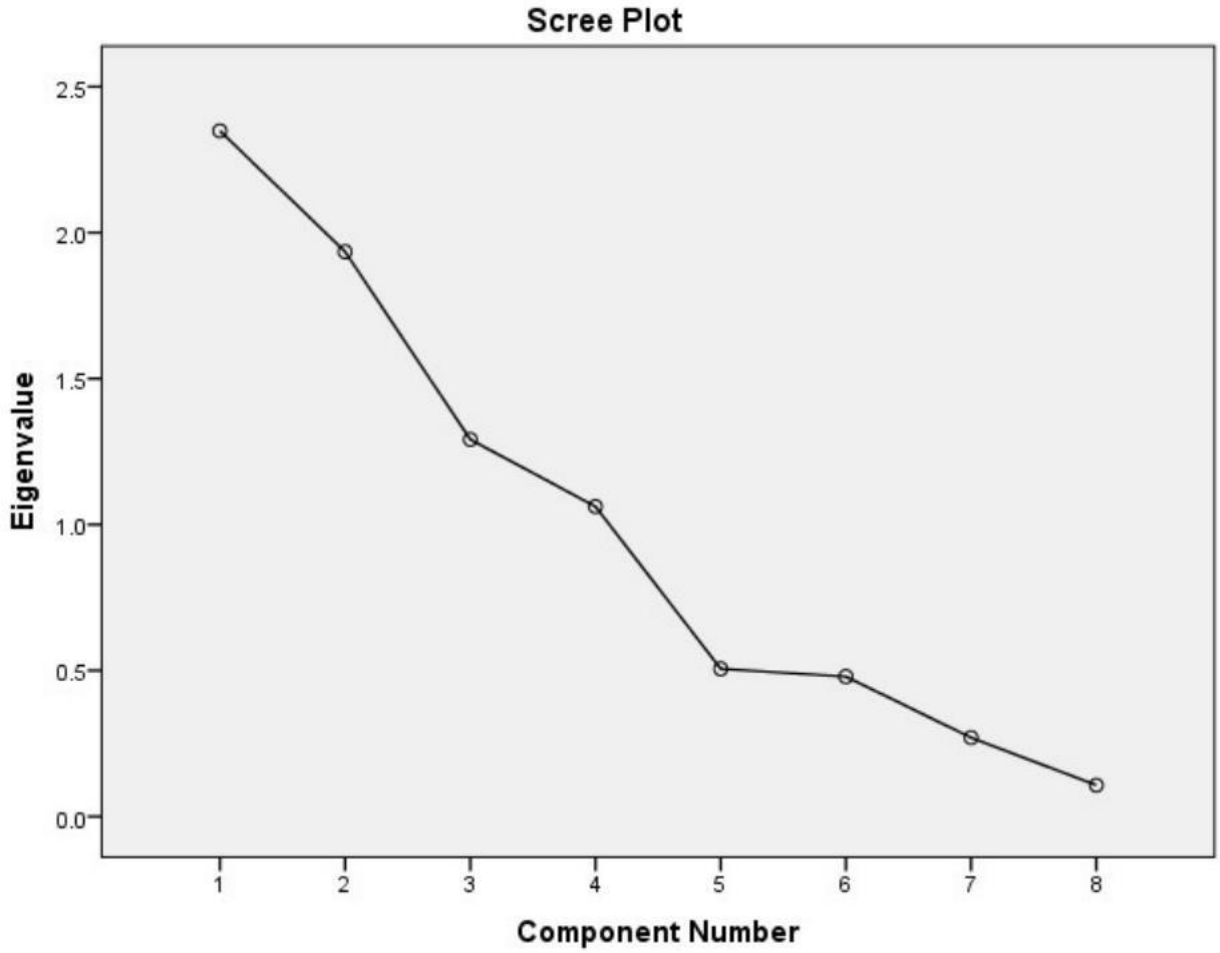

Figure 6. Scree plot

By observing the variables in table 10., the first four factors contribute about 82.906% of the variance. The first factor Understanding have an eigenvalue of 2.349 and a factor loading of 0.962 which is the highest amongst all. It shows a percentage variance of 29.358 which concludes that it has a greatest influence on the customer perception when it comes to landscaping.

Understanding the features and benefits of landscaping can be an added advantage when choosing a landscaping service. By knowing the features and benefits one can choose the best landscape design for their institution that can add some aesthetic value and improve the customer experience. Coming to the second factor, familiarity which have an eigenvalue of 1.935 and a factor loading of 0.954 shows a variance of 24.134 proves that it along with understanding has a great influence on the customer perception on landscaping.

Familiarity with the landscaping can bring about more understanding of the different kinds of landscaping services that are available in the market. Familiarity when combined with understanding of features and benefits can bring about great changes in the customer perception on landscaping.

The third factor Competitive prices have an eigenvalue of 1.291 and a factor loading of 0.951 showing a variance of 16.143 revealing that it also has an influence on the perception of customer. Competitive price is one of the most

important factors any customer considers while choosing any product/service. In landscaping market, customers will be particular on prices since this is not a basic need and that too institutions will be least bothered as their focus will be on the sale of their products. But institutions like schools, colleges, universities will be having a different perspective on landscaping as it can change the environment for students. So they go for prices that suit their budgets and interests as well.

The fourth factor Warranty have an eigen value of 1.062 and a factor loading of 0.932 showing a variance of 13.275 revealing that it can be one of the important factors that has an influence on the perception of the customer. The warranty offered by the companies of landscaping can be a good factor that is considered by the customers when choosing a landscaping service. Warranty for a service can be a good add on, so that a customer can perceive that the company is reliable and trustworthy. The other four factors have a very lesser influence on the perception of the customer. The factors are Value for money, Ideal budget, Brand Reputation and Needs satisfying. Value for money indicates the worth for the purchase made. Customers always be particular on value for money. They become loyal when they found that the purchase is worth buying or service is worth receiving.

The product or services that matches the budget plan of customers will be readily purchased by the customers. Institutions in particular will have a budget for every single purchase and maintain records. So, the budget will also be one such factor that can influence the perception of customer while choosing any landscaping service. Brand reputation here took a back seat since the customers have a different perspective. Generally, brand reputation is also considered while making any purchase since many people will be choosing their brands based on the reputation. But here the interviewees opted it as their last option.

Other factors influence on the institutional customers:

a. Source of information:

Source of information is one factor that plays a pivotal role in influencing the customer behavior. When the information about a particular service is given by a person who is from our closest friends group or from our family there is a greater chance of choosing that service. But when we observe the results of this particular source of information, most of the customers have voted to social media. Social media is also one of the most important sources of information which has been trending in the current world. Our customers have also opted social media as their source of information. Public media has been opted the least when it comes to being a source of information.

b. Mode of Communication:

Communication is the key to success in any field. Good communication becomes the best method of promotion for any company which grabs the attention of the customer. It can also be one of the most important reasons for the customer loyalty. It is evident from the study that most of customers are comfortable with direct communication with the landscapers.

5. MAJOR FINDINGS:

The perceptions of residential and institutional customers regarding landscaping services are compared and the key findings from the study analyze how these two groups differ in their views and behaviors.

1. Overview of Customer Segments

A. Residential Customers:

Demographics: Predominantly male (73.33%) with a significant influence from female family members. Most are between 31-40 years old, with annual incomes primarily between 10-20 lakhs INR.

Key Factors: The main factors influencing perceptions are understanding of the service, familiarity, warranty, and value for money. Gender, age, and income play a role in shaping their preferences and decision-making.

B. Institutional Customers:

Demographics: Institutional customers typically have higher annual turnovers, indicating that they invest significantly in landscaping to enhance their organizational environment.

Key Factors: Understanding, familiarity, competitive prices, and warranty are pivotal. Institutions also consider competitive pricing more than residential customers due to their budget constraints and focus on efficiency.

2. Comparative Analysis

Understanding and Familiarity:

Residential: Both understanding and familiarity are crucial, reflecting a need for detailed knowledge about landscaping benefits and familiarity with different service options.

Institutional: Similar to residential customers, but with a stronger emphasis on understanding due to the complexity of institutional needs. Familiarity still matters but is less critical compared to understanding.

Warranty and Value for Money:

Residential: Warranty is an important factor, suggesting that residential customers value assurance and reliability in services. Value for money is also significant, but less so compared to understanding and familiarity.
Institutional: Warranty remains important but is secondary to competitive pricing. Value for money is critical, reflecting institutional needs to ensure services meet budgetary constraints while delivering quality.
Competitive Pricing:
Residential: Less emphasized due to generally higher income levels and a focus on service quality and features.
Institutional: Competitive pricing is more significant, reflecting budget constraints and the need for cost-effective solutions.
Brand Reputation and Recommendations:
Residential: These factors are less influential compared to understanding and familiarity. This may be because residential customers place more value on the immediate benefits and personal assurance of the service.
Institutional: Brand reputation and recommendations are less emphasized as well, with a stronger focus on the tangible aspects of service delivery such as pricing and warranty.

3. Sources of Information

Residential:
Preferred Sources: Friends, family, and social media are the main sources of information. Personal recommendations and social media influence decisions, indicating a reliance on personal networks and online platforms for reviews and insights.
Institutional:
Preferred Sources: Social media is also important, but institutions may place more emphasis on formal recommendations and reviews given their focus on efficiency and effectiveness.

4. Communication Preferences

Residential:
Preferred Mode: Direct communication with landscapers is favored, suggesting a desire for personal interaction and customization of services.
Institutional:
Preferred Mode: Direct communication is also preferred, but institutions may have more structured communication channels and formal procedures.

5. Budget and Financial Considerations

Residential:
Budget: Most residential customers are willing to allocate Rs. 20,000 – Rs. 50,000 for landscaping, indicating a flexible but moderate budget range.
Institutional:
Budget: Institutions with higher turnovers likely have more substantial budgets, but still seek competitive pricing and value for money.

6. CONCLUSION:

The study highlights the significance of customer understanding, familiarity and the source of information in shaping customer decisions in the residential landscaping market. Companies should prioritize these factors and direct their communication efforts accordingly to meet the demands of their target audience. In contrast, understanding the factors that influence the perception of institutional customers in the landscaping market is vital for landscaping companies looking to tailor their services to this specific market segment. The study underscores the importance of understanding, familiarity, competitive pricing, and warranty in shaping customer perception. Moreover, it highlights the role of social media and direct communication in the decision-making process for institutional customers. Companies should leverage these factors and communication channels to meet the preferences and expectations of their target institutional customers effectively.

Overall, while both residential and institutional customers prioritize understanding and familiarity with landscaping services, institutional customers place a higher emphasis on competitive pricing and formal processes. Residential customers, on the other hand, are more influenced by personal recommendations and are generally more flexible with their budget allocations.

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