



A Study To Determine The Home-Buyer's Preferences And Expectations Through Voice Of Customer

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Abstract: In human life, house is most expensive thing, so purchasing a house is always considered as most important achievement for an individual. Nowadays, many factors are playing the important role for housing purchase decision in Punjab state. So it's depending on the preference to which factors or perception of home buyer's and the preferences may vary from one person to another person. The main purpose of this study is to determine the home-buyer's expectations, preferences and residential satisfaction of home buyer and create awareness among the builders about what home-buyers prefer in terms of both product and service during the construction or purchase of their residential premises. A focus interview has been conducted among the home-buyers of Patiala City in Punjab State to find out the Voice of the Customer (Feedback) on their preferences on buying a residential property. Customer satisfaction and a theoretical model linking home-buyer's preferences have been developed through received home buyer's statements and after validating these items with the previous studies. The construction industry or builders can easily understand the expectations/needs of the home-buying customer through this model and finally in achieving customer satisfaction.

Keywords: House, Customer Expectations, Builder, Customer Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION:

In modern era rapidly changing world, there is a highly strong change in the life style of the people. Nowadays, People prefer to have a comfortable living with modern attire styles and rich looks, luxury cars, sumptuous food, air-conditioned rooms and homes with all amenities and facilities. The beautiful located House is dream of every individual and everyone wants to complete that dream in existing life. Today's, customer is smart and knowledgeable so before purchase of a house, the customer collect the information about construction projects and real estate agents and make a decision for house purchase after analysis of received feedback from the market or any other sources. But mostly home-buying customers are influence the demand of a construction project. The customer attain the status of customer in the context of home-buying once they complete the transaction of occupy or purchase a residential house or apartment/flat as an owner. The promoters or builders have to prepare him from to understand the customer's needs or expectations through a scientific feedback system or conclusions of the past projects. Even if they provide the all amenities to home buyer than also customer feel moderate satisfy after obtain all that.

In terms of satisfy the home-buyer's preferences; the builder (or promoter) has to prepare him from the learned lessons of the past projects. But the main problem is that the feedback of one client or buyer cannot be directly used for another buyer or client, as the main preference of one buyer may not be the preference of another buyer. Customers definitely differ in their preferences and buying behavior relative to the same product.

It is therefore extremely difficult for the builder to satisfy all the needs and wants of the customer which differ from one individual to the other, as there is no set standard or specific benchmark that is readily available to adopt them in real life. Apart from this, even most buyers are in dilemma as to what factors should be considered the most important while purchasing a new house. Since housing differs in its type, size and design, but whatever form it takes, there is a need to measure its quality to ensure that it satisfies the resident's family and cultural norms [18]. Improving the quality of construction projects from customer's perspective has gained increasing interest and customer satisfaction has been identified as one of the major challenges in the whole construction industry [28].

Customer's home-buying Satisfaction is a feeling of pleasure or fulfillment when the customer has finally achieved what he has expected in a house; home-buying or residential property satisfaction has been used as a key predictor of an individual's or consumer perception of common "quality of life"; residential property satisfaction is an ad hoc evaluative measure for judging the success of developments constructed by public and private sectors, and a valuation tool of residents' perceptions of inadequacies in their recent housing environment in order to improve the status quo. When customers are easily dealing with service providers, they are more willing to complain when service failures occur. The satisfaction level of home-buying buyer with respect to quality of materials and workmanship in the construction of building, maintenance works and quality of repair, performance of the builders or agencies for estate management, surrounding environment of the residential location responsible for individual satisfaction of living in that particular residential estate are some of the factors that are deemed important. To know about how satisfied its customers are, the company must from time to time measure customer satisfaction; but in construction, the extent of satisfaction, or dissatisfaction, is often known only late in the project when most of the customer's money has been spent.

Nowadays, peoples interested to known about house location and other some factors which affects their lives, so measuring the housing quality has become an important tool. Since there are no commonly accepted methods of measuring customer satisfaction in the construction industry, the present researchers have conducted this study to identify the most common home-buyer's preferences through the concept of Voice of Customer (VOC) or feedback and bring out a holistic model which will be helpful to the promoters and building industry.

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER:

The feedback of customer or Voice of Customer (VOC) is play the important role in make the market strategy for builders or construction industries but VOC is the critical analysis procedure.it is very difficult procedure that provides exact information concerning customer input requirements for a product/ service output and the comfort-level that a home-buyer experiences from his house-builder or service provider [5]. Voice of customer enables the engineers and other decision makers to successfully prioritize and understand the customer perceptions, needs, wants, preferences, and expectations and serves as a benchmark for future home-buyers on what should be considered important factors at the time of taking decision to buy a residential property; and also the information achieved from the customers can be set as goals to satisfy the customer desires. The beginning of research on Voice of customer made from the studies of Parasuraman et al. (1988) [3]. The researchers have mentioned that Voice of customer or feedback of customer can be collected through customer surveys and customer's recognition studies [5]. This feedback from the house owner's/ residents will bring out what the home-buyers prefer while

buying a house, what will satisfy them as a customer of a residential property, whether the customer's expectations and amenities are really met during the process of home-buying, and what is the level of satisfaction that is realized by customer on the quality of the constructed building/ facility or quality of services.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

In this research, 110 nos. of home-buyers were approached by the researchers of the present study for conducting a focus-interview in Patiala City, who have recently purchased an individual house or residential apartment from builders in the Patiala City. The customer feedback (Voice of the Customer) on their preferences or experiences in during the housing purchase / residential apartment or flats/ building has been obtained during the focus-interview, and the homebuyers for response were selected through convenience sampling method. Out of 110 respondents, only 85 were willing to participate in the focus-interview, and the response rate has been only 77.2 per cent. During the interview, the respondents were preferred to 45 common statements of home buyers or which had the same intent and meaning have been presented in Table .1. The literature review was also done to certify these 45 preferences of the home-buying customers, and after evaluating these statements, the preferences were summarized to 22 items, which were held by literature, and given in Table 2. Using these 22 items validated by literature, a theoretical model has been developed customer satisfaction and linking home-buyer's preferences, and presented in the Fig.1. Moreover, the home-buyer's preferences that are learnt through the focus interview by the present researcher are further analyzed and summarized in Section IV.

Table1.
Expectations of the Home-Buyers
(Based On Voice of the Customer/Customer Feedback)

S.N O	Expectations of Home-buying Customers (based on Voice of Customer through Focus Interview)
1.	I expect that my building should be designed by civil/ structural engineer, reputed architect.
2.	I expect that my builder should construct the building in a manner that the occupants are always safe.
3.	I will never recommend my builder to others if the quality of his building construction is not better if compare to building of other builders.
4.	I expect good image and behaviour about the builder in the society if I want to purchase a property from this builder.
5.	I will not take risk for my future projects to the same builder if I experience bad service from him.
6.	I prefer my builder to be kind, honest, trustworthy and polite to me throughout the purchasing process.
7.	I expect that my builder should not be harsh when I ask for clarifications in my residential project.
8.	I want my builder to be well-mannered and helpful to me at all times.
9.	I will check the builder's previous experience and reputation before I buy the house from him.
10.	I will not get convinced on the builder unless I see (myself) the finishes and qualities of his completed buildings.
11.	I expect my builder to show me the building approval received from regulatory authorities of Punjab State.
12.	I will ask the builder to show me evidence of the land-approval by the statutory bodies of Punjab state.

13.	I should be informed periodically on the actual progress at construction site.
14.	I expect the builder to intimate any delays on the project to us in a prompt manner.
15.	I expect the builder to have loyal and strong relationship with me.
16.	I prefer the builder should conduct monthly meetings with me for discussing project related issues and used materials.
17.	I expect that my builder should understand my desires/ needs/ expectations about the housing project.
18.	I want my builder to fix reasonable price for the housing project that I purchase from him.
19.	I will be happy if my builder completes my housing project within the estimated price and period quoted to me.
20.	I do not want my builder to keep any hidden charge or cost me extra cost on my residential project.
21.	I expect builder to complete my housing project within an agreement or stipulated time.
22.	I will get frustrated if my builder does not attend my service complaints on first priority basis.
23.	I expect the builder to guide me on housing loan/ insurance of housing property that I buy from him.
24.	I will be happy if my builder offers me payment of my house concession and on installment basis.
25.	I wish that my builder should appoint knowledgeable/ experienced personnel to construct my house.
26.	I will select my builder who is financially and trustworthy sound to take-up my project.
27.	I will not purchase my house from a builder who does not possess necessary resources.
28.	I expect my builder to coordinate with architect/ engineer of building project throughout construction.
29.	I will not allow my builder to continue if his workmanship in construction is not good in performance of work.
30.	I do not want the builder to be of selfish nature.
31.	I want builder to take safety measures and precautions to avoid accidents at site, which we consider as a sentiment.
32.	I expect dedication and involvement of the builder towards achieving good quality product (building).
33.	I want my builder to show keen interest in successful completion of the project.
34.	I want my builder to make correct estimation of cost for project before quoting them to us.
35.	I expect my builder to show me the exact built-in measurements.
36.	I expect my builder to complete the project as per the drawings and specifications finalized with me.
37.	I don't want any pending or half completed work while my builder hands over the premises to me.
38.	I will like if my builder is impartial among his various customers who have purchased a house.
39.	I expect my builder to maintain consistency in providing service to customers throughout the project.
40.	I want the builder to attend to my phone calls or SMS related to project, or promptly respond later in case he is busy.
41.	I expect that I should be able to simply file product or service (construction) related complaints.
42.	I expect that my builder should be genuine in all the business transactions with me.

43.	I will never compromise in the quality of work done in my project by my builder.
44.	I expect that my builder should use better quality and ISI mark materials in construction.
45.	I want my house to be designed eco-friendly and maintenance-free.

TABLE 2
IDENTIFICATION OF VARIOUS FACTORS RELATING TO HOME BUYER'S
(PREFERENCES FROM LITERATURE REVIEW)

S. No	Home-Buyer's Preferences	Items supported by Previous Studies	Brief Explanation on the Preferences of home-buying customers (By the Present Authors)
1	Customer-focused Approach	S David Soundarajan and V Susithra (2016) M Renuka Devi (2016) Robert A. et al. (2017) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009)	The builder should focus on serving the customer and achieving the stated and implied needs of the home-buying customers.
2	Societal Image	C Susilawati (2001)	Positive perception or good-will about the builder in the society.
3	Sound Financial Capability of Builder	Chia Julius et.al (2016) Jia Deborah Ng Si and Achu Kamalahasan (2016) Kumar Yogesh and Khandelwal Utkal (2018)	Soundness of the builder on financial investment/capital and his capability in ensuring that proper cash / fund flow is important for the successful running of the construction project
4	Construction on Approved Layout	Chia Julius et.al (2016) Lepkova Natalija, et al. (2016) Jia Deborah Ng Si and Achu Kamalahasan (2016) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009) Zrobek S. et al. (2015)	The proposed building should be constructed on an approved land/layout (i.e., land approved by statutory/regulatory authorities)
5	Authorized Building Construction	G Manoranjitham and K Singaravelu (2016) Lepkova Natalija, et al. (2016) Kumar Yogesh and Khandelwal Utkal (2018) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009)	The house should be constructed after taking necessary permission to build from statutory/ regulatory authorities
6	Safe Design	Chia Julius et.al (2016) Davaasuren Bildbayar, et al. (2018) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009) Zrobek S. et al. (2015)	A safe design of the building structure against wind forces and earthquake and safety against fire accidents, etc.
7	Previous Experience on Similar Projects	Manivannan K. T. and Joseph T. (2017) Kumar Yogesh and Khandelwal Utkal (2018)	Builder should demonstrate his competency level and experience through previous projects.
8	Excellent Design and Drawings/ Specifications	Davaasuren Bildbayar, et al. (2018) Kurniawan Cahya, et al. (2020)	Providing an excellent, up-to-date design with all drawings and specifications by consultants (i.e. architects, civil/ structural engineers and interior

			designers).
9	Charging of Reasonable Cost to the Customer	Jia Deborah Ng Si and Achu Kamalahasan (2016) Kurniawan Cahya, et al. (2020) Piyush et al. (2016)	Charging the customer reasonable price and abiding by what has been jointly agreed by the builder and customer at the time of initial negotiation/ signing of agreement/ contract with builder
10	Appointment of Experienced Construction Professionals	Jia Deborah Ng Si and Achu Kamalahasan (2016) Kumar Yogesh and Khandelwal Utkal (2018) Piyush et al. (2016)	Appointment of knowledgeable and experienced construction personnel (like construction engineers, employees and Construction workers).
11	Courteousness	Manivannan K. T. and Joseph T. (2017) Liu Yan and Li Zhichao (2018) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009) Piyush et al. (2016)	Politeness/ kindness of the builder (or his site/ office representatives) shown towards the customer.
12	Promptness	Haddad M. et al. (2011) Tan Teck-Hong (2012) Kamath Kavita and Jagtap Madhura (2018)	Prompt response of the builder to the customer throughout the project and in all aspects, viz., buildings finishes, project progress, delays, bills.
13	Healthy Builder-Customer Relationship	Yadav S.K.S and Itoria Renuka (2019) Araloyin F. M and Olatoye OJO (2011) S. Nithyamanohari and D. Ambika (2014) Tan Teck-Hong (2012) Viridi Sandeep Singh and Singh Jaideep (2016)	The level of rapport and maintaining interpersonal relationships of the builder with the customer.
14	Timely Response to Customer Complaints	C Susilawati (2001) Yadav S.K.S and Itoria Renuka (2019) Viridi Sandeep Singh and Singh Jaideep (2016)	It is immediate and quick action of the builder on attending to complaints raised by the customer.
15	Accurate Measurements	C Susilawati (2001) Araloyin F. M and Olatoye OJO (2011)	Ensuring that the built-in measurements of the building match with customer-approved drawings.
16	Better Involvement of Builder in the Project	Yadav S.K.S and Itoria Renuka (2019) Araloyin F. M and Olatoye OJO (2011) S. Nithyamanohari and D. Ambika (2014) Tan Teck-Hong (2012)	It is the level of dedication of the builder towards execution of the building project.
17	Good Quality of Materials	Kurniawan Cahya, et al. (2020) Ge, J & Lai, Y (2009) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009) Kamath Kavita and Jagtap Madhura (2018)	Using good quality of materials in Construction and which conforms to approved standards and technical specifications.

18	Good Workmanship	Ge, J & Lai, Y (2009) Araloyin F. M and Olatoye OJO (2011) S. Nithyamanohari and D. Ambika (2014) Viridi Sandeep Singh and Singh Jaideep (2016)	Quality of work achieved by skilled workers, as a result of supervision of experienced engineers/ supervisory staff.
19	Good Quality Finishes	Ge, J & Lai, Y (2009) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009)	Standard of finish or aesthetic appearance of the constructed building/ facility.
20	Construction Health & Safety	Mohammad Abdul Mohit et al. (2010) Kurniawan Cahya, et al. (2020) Ratchatakulpat Thanakon et.al (2009)	Concern of builder on health and safety of construction workers, and developing a safe and accident-free construction site and by providing personal protective equipments.
21	Scheduled Completion	Viridi Sandeep Singh and Singh Jaideep (2016) Kamath Kavita and Jagtap Madhura (2018)	It refers to project completion within the scheduled time and cost.
22	Customer Feedback	Mohammad Abdul Mohit et al. (2010) D Anupama Sundar (2017) Tan Teck-Hong (2012) Araloyin F. M and Olatoye OJO (2011)	Periodical feedback of customers on level of expectations and fulfillment of their needs.
	End-Result	Support by Previous Literature	Explanation by the Present Authors
	Customer Satisfaction	Mohammad Abdul Mohit et al. (2010) D Anupama Sundar (2017) Pauzi Hezzrin Mohd et al. (2017) Tan Teck-Hong (2012)	Customer Satisfaction is the overall feeling of contentment, fulfillment or satisfaction of the home-buying customers on purchase of the house, when he has ultimately achieved all what he wanted--his needs, desires or expectations on the residential building

DEVELOPING A MODEL LINKING HOME-BUYER'S PREFERENCES AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

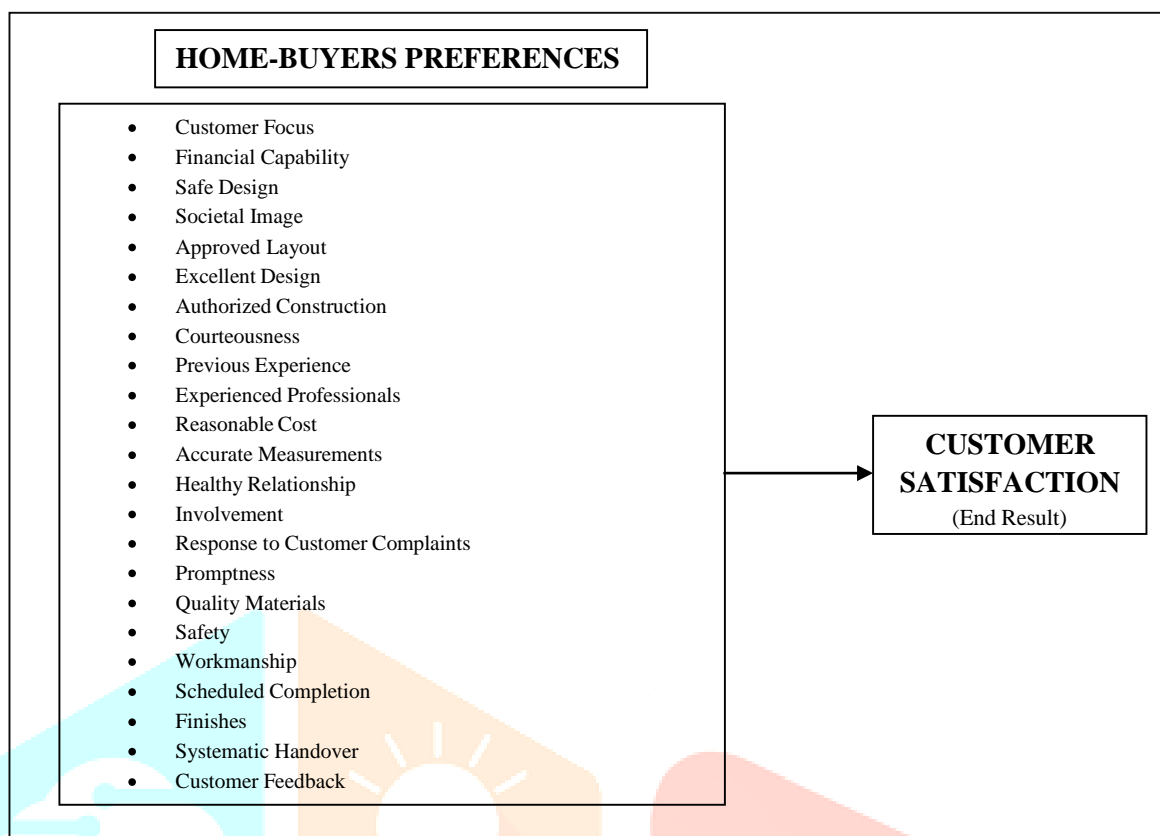


Fig.1. Theoretical Model linking Home-Buyer's Preferences and Customer Satisfaction

A Theoretical Model on home-buyer's preferences and the consequential Customer Satisfaction is theorized in Fig.1, based on views of the customer through Voice of the Customer interviews, which is summarized as follows:

House is necessary thing in human life so once everybody make decision for purchase of own house in their life. When an individual decides to buy a house than the first step what he does is that he enquires his relatives, neighbors or friends to recommend a best builder from whom they have purchased a property in previous occasions and if only their relationships were good and rich throughout the project. Further, the main requirement of the home-buying customer is that his residential property or house should be constructed under watch and designed by the well-reputed architect, and civil/structural engineer should provide the structural design. However, the word-of-the mouth recommendation of the pervious customers (who have purchased the house from the same builder) forms an integral part of the decision-making of the new home-buying customer.

The home buyer firstly approaches to the well-reputed house-builder who has also good image and name in the society. Today's customer don't take the stress and risk for construction of own house, and handover the fully workload of construction to the house-builder on contract or agreement. Not all but few customers will be interested in thoroughly understanding the technical, professional skills, financial capability and equipment and resources (such as, manpower and machineries etc.) of the house-builder.

After short listing the list of builders based on the capability of the builder in executing similar projects, the probable home-buyer will meet each of them for discussing about the new project and find out the selling price of the housing or residential property rates on per sq. ft. basis. It is very important for builders that make a bond with the prospective customer, and offers the best price of housing project compare to other competitive builders to the customer. The price of house is very important factors in term of house buying for customer so If the price of the house is affordable and reasonable, then the customer moves further in knowing about the specifics of the project;

he tries to understand some conceptual drawings /sketches or shows interest in viewing some scaled models of construction or attempts to see an animated movie-presentation on the new project to understand the type of project (independent house, residential flats or apartments), location, and facilities provided in the project by the builder or construction industries. The customer evaluates and forms his ideas/ own opinion on the worthiness of the project, and the value for the money that he will be spending on the project. Mostly home buying customer would like to visit some of the mock-finishes of the housing project or completed projects in order to understand the workmanship, quality of material and various finishes of the project.

Further, the customer would ask the builder to show approval of buildings received from the statutory/regulatory bodies and also would check the approval of land property which is used for construction of building. Home buyer would also investigate on the transfer of building and land or the undivided share (UDS) by the builder to the name of the customer. The home buyer would like to know whether the customer's modifications or changes in design or specifications will be considered by the builder and how the customer's complaints have been handled in the past by the builder. During the home-buying process, the customer expects that the builder should be polite, courteous and friendly with him, and patiently answer all questions posed by the customer regarding financial commitments or the house project.

Firstly, the home buyer collects the information for selection of best and well-reputed builders and once the customer choose a particular house-builder in real estate market, there home buyer expects to builder that should be a positive sign and quick response of the builder in providing all necessary information to the client or home buyer relating to the house project and complete the booking formalities. The mostly home buyer expects that the builder should involve in the housing project, and customer wants the builder to personally interact with him on all project-related issues, and expects even the builder should punctually answer all his phone calls. The builder should, at all times, promise to fulfill the needs of the customer and be committed to serve the customer. The home buyer should get a feeling that the builder is able to understand the perception and expectations/needs of the home buyer in terms of house design, and space utility, arrangements of rooms, aesthetical looks, and providing the needed furniture, fixtures and fittings, and the builder should transform the thoughts of the customer into reality. More significantly, the building should be designed for safety against earthquake, wind, lightning, fire accidents, etc.

The home buyer expects that the builder should maintain well and positive inter-personal relationships with him, and promptly and periodically intimate the progress or delays of the project. The home buyers who buy the house for personal use always expect that the builder or his representative should accompany the client or home buying customer to the construction site to show him the physical progress of the house project. The home buyer wants the builder to use good quality of construction materials compare to other builders projects in own project, and ensure that good and experienced workmanship is achieved by engaging skilled construction work force/professionals. The home buyer expects to builders that the workers or human resources who are appointed by the builder in the construction of building should always be in good health and honestly, and a conducive working environment is created by the builder to the labor (for example, proper house-keeping of the site, providing good accommodation to the labor for rest, and making sure that waste-water is not stagnated and getting drained-off away from the project site). The home buyer expects to construction industry or builders that no worker should meet with an accident due to negligence; also, the occurrence of an accident in construction site will create havoc or hindrance to the progress of the project; and, in case of serious accidents, the project may be halted till problems are resolved.

The home buyer expects to the builders that the builder should charge him a reasonable and affordable price, and provide the necessary information about home loan and guide him on how to apply for housing loan. The home buyer expects that the builder should not charge any extra amount or hidden cost over what has been agreed

during the signing of the agreement, and should be proper and transparent in all his transactions with the customer. The builder should complete the project on right time and within the estimated budget and show proper measurements to the customers while handing over the premises to them. All integral measurements are to be shown to the home buyer matching the drawings of house project, originally agreed by him. There should be a smooth handing-over of the building by the builder to the home buyer; and on taking over by the client, he should feel happy that the aesthetical looks, house layout and interior and exterior design are something great and extraordinary, which cannot be compared to the facilities provided by any other promoter or builder. During the hand-over of house to client, the builder should explain the features and operational mechanisms of the facilities provided in the building, for instance, geysers, use of chimneys in kitchen, taps and shower-mixers, electrical distribution boxes, door locks and safety child-lock facilities and invertors during power-cuts, phase change-over switches, and so on. After taking over possession of the building, if the customer comes across any problems such as improper fixing of windows and doors, dampness of walls and wall-painting related problems, non-working of electrical fixtures/fittings, leakage of taps, improper flooring or wrong slope in balcony floors, repair to weathering course in terrace, or wall tiling works, etc., he will certainly get disappointed as he would have spent a lot of his savings/hard-earned money towards purchase of an apartment or flat/ the house or would have even paid the cost of the building through a home loan; and therefore, the builder has to take urgent measures in resolving any construction errors/mistakes without any delay, and fully satisfy the customer. If all the home buyer's complaints are taken care of by the builder or promoter in a timely manner, then the home buyer will be thoroughly satisfied.

CONCLUSION:

The study identified the most common home-buyer's preference for satisfaction of homebuyer in Patiala city of Punjab state and a theoretical model linking these two has also been developed. This study will bring awareness among the house-builders or promoters world-wide on what home-buyers expect or prefer as important in terms of both product (house) and service delivery. The study concludes that positive relationship should be very important between the promoter or builder and home-buying customer so mutual trust and proportionate have to be developed between the builder or promoter and home-buying customer, and this will help a long way in successful finishing point of the project. The builder should make attempts in creating a friendly environment in which the builder and the home-buyer travel towards the journey of creating a fabulous building structure that is safe, outstanding in design and which reveals the aesthetical ingenuity. If the home-buyer's preferences are correctly fulfilled and identified, then the end aim, "customer satisfaction" will be reached.

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