

A STUDY ON THE CONSUMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS HANDLOOM SAREES IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on consumer perception towards handloom sarees in the digital era. In today's technology-driven environment, digital platforms such as e-commerce websites, mobile applications, and social media play an important role in influencing consumer buying behaviour. The traditional handloom industry has adopted digital marketing strategies to reach wider markets and increase awareness among consumers. The main objective of this study is to analyze consumer awareness, perception of quality, authenticity concerns, price sensitivity, and trust factors related to online purchasing of handloom sarees. The research adopts a descriptive research design, and primary data was collected from 100 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and ranking analysis were used to interpret the collected data. The findings reveal that Instagram plays a major role in creating awareness about handloom sarees. Most respondents consider brand reputation and customer reviews as important trust factors while purchasing online. Although many consumers feel that handloom sarees are slightly expensive, they accept the price due to traditional value and craftsmanship. The study concludes that trust, authenticity, and effective digital marketing strategies are key determinants influencing consumer perception in the digital era.

KEYWORDS Consumer Perception, Handloom Sarees, Digital Era, Online Buying Behaviour, Social Media Marketing, Brand Trust, Product Authenticity, Price Sensitivity.

INTRODUCTION

Handloom sarees are traditional Indian garments woven manually using hand-operated looms. They represent India's cultural heritage, craftsmanship, and artistic skills. Each handloom saree is unique in design, texture, and weaving pattern. Popular varieties include Kanchipuram, Banarasi, Chanderi, and Pochampally sarees. Traditionally, handloom sarees were sold through local markets, cooperative societies, and exhibitions. Consumers preferred physical stores to examine quality and authenticity.

However, with the rapid growth of the internet and smartphones, consumer buying behaviour has changed significantly. In the digital era, handloom sarees are promoted through online platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, Amazon, and Flipkart. Digital marketing has expanded the market reach of handloom products. However, issues such as quality mismatch, fake products, high price perception, and lack of physical inspection influence consumer perception. Therefore, understanding consumer perception towards handloom sarees in the digital era is essential for improving digital marketing strategies and strengthening the handloom sector.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

1. Handloom sarees represent Indian tradition and cultural heritage. They are handmade products that require skill and time. However, traditional products often face difficulty in adapting to modern digital markets. Consumers may find it hard to understand the value of handloom sarees online. This creates a challenge in promoting handloom sarees digitally.

2. The rapid growth of e-commerce and social media has changed consumer shopping habits. Handloom sarees are now available through various online platforms. Though availability has increased, actual online purchases remain limited. Many consumers still prefer offline buying. This creates a gap between digital presence and consumer acceptance.

3. One of the major problems in online purchase of handloom sarees is the absence of physical inspection. Consumers cannot touch or feel the fabric before buying. This leads to doubts about quality and comfort. Colour and texture differences also worry consumers. These concerns affect purchase decisions.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study consumer awareness of handloom sarees through digital platforms.
- To analyze perception of quality and authenticity.
- To examine price sensitivity towards handloom sarees.
- To study trust factors influencing online purchase decisions.
- To analyze the impact of digital marketing on consumer buying behaviour.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study examines customer satisfaction after online purchase. It also evaluates the role of social media marketing in promoting handloom sarees. The scope includes understanding convenience and accessibility of digital shopping. It helps identify consumer preferences and expectations in the online market. This study focuses on understanding consumer perception towards handloom sarees in the digital era. It examines how online platforms like Amazon and Flipkart influence buying behavior.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY DATA COLLECTION

PRIMARY DATA

Primary data was collected from 100 respondents using structured questionnaires focusing on awareness, price perception, trust, and buying behaviour.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data was collected from journals, research articles, books, and reliable online sources related to handloom and digital marketing.

SAMPLE DESIGN

The sample design describes the plan adopted for selecting respondents for the study. A non-probability sampling method, specifically convenience sampling, is adopted due to time and accessibility constraints.

SAMPLE SIZE

Sample size in the context of impulsive buying refers to the number of participants in a study. The sample size has implications for how accurate the estimate of the effect under study will be as well as how detectable the effect will be. I decided to select 100 people from different areas.

TOOLS FOR ANALYSIS

- Percentage Analysis
- Ranking Analysis

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is conducted with a limited number of respondents; therefore, the findings may not fully represent the perception of all handloom saree consumers.
- The data is collected from a specific geographical area, so the results may not be applicable to consumers in other regions with different cultural preferences and buying patterns.
- The study focuses mainly on online consumers; hence, it may not reflect the perception of customers who prefer offline or traditional purchasing methods.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Menon & Pillai (2024) ¹

This study focused on consumer perception of handloom sarees sold through online platforms. It found that digital visibility increased awareness among urban consumers. Handloom sarees were perceived as sustainable and culturally rich. Visual presentation influenced trust and interest. Authenticity concerns affected online buying decisions. Certification improved confidence. Younger consumers showed positive attitudes. Digital marketing reshaped perception significantly.

Arvind & Kowsalya (2024) ²

The research examined consumer attitudes towards handloom sarees promoted through social media. Consumers preferred platforms that provided fabric and weaving details. Digital storytelling created emotional connection. Modern presentation improved acceptance among youth. Lack of physical inspection remained a concern. Online reviews influenced perception. Transparency improved trust. Digital content quality was crucial.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

DIGITAL PLATFORM AWARENESS

S.NO	DIGITAL PLATFORM	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE%
1	INSATAGRAM	56	56%
2	YOUTUBE	31	31%
3	E-COMMERCE WEBSITES	7	7%
4	OTHERS	6	6%
	TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

Table shows the digital platforms through which respondents became aware of handloom sarees. It is observed that 56% of the respondents gained awareness through Instagram, followed by 31% through YouTube. About 7% of the

respondents came to know through e-commerce websites, while 6% through other sources. This indicates that the majority of 56% Instagram play a significant role in creating awareness about handloom sarees in the digital era.

RANKING ANALYSIS (TRUST FACTORS)

FACTORS	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL	RANK
GENUINE CUSTOMER REVIEW	220	120	45	10	5	400	I
CLEAR RETURN POLICY	220	130	50	15	5	390	II
TRANSPERANCY IN PRICING	180	140	55	15	10	380	III
HANDLOOM GI CERTIFICATE	170	135	60	20	10	370	IV
FABRIC TEXTURE	160	130	65	25	15	360	V

INTERPRETATION

The above table shows the ranking of factors that build trust in online handloom saree purchases. Genuine Customer Reviews rank first with the highest total score of 400. Clear Return Policy ranks second with a total score of 390. Transparency in Pricing ranks third with a total score of 380. Handloom GI Certificate ranks fourth with a total score of 370. Fabric Texture ranks fifth with a total score of 360. This indicates that the majority of respondents consider genuine customer reviews as the most important factor in building trust while purchasing handloom sarees online.

FINDINGS

- Instagram (56%) is the most influential digital platform in creating awareness about handloom sarees.
- It considers genuine customer reviews as the most important factor in building trust while purchasing handloom sarees online.

SUGGESTIONS

- Attractive promotional offers such as discounts and combo offers can be used strategically to boost sales.
- Providing an easy and clear return policy will reduce purchase hesitation.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that digital platforms have significantly influenced consumer perception towards handloom sarees. While convenience and variety encourage online purchases, trust and authenticity remain crucial factors. Effective digital marketing combined with quality assurance can strengthen consumer confidence and promote sustainable growth of the handloom sector in the digital era.