# Rekindling Tradition: An Empirical Study on Purchase Intention for Indian Handloom and Handicrafts among Domestic Consumers

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**Abstract**
This empirical study investigates determinants of North Indian urban consumers' purchase intention for handloom and handicraft products. Extending Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the research integrates constructs such as authenticity, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, and information asymmetry. A structured questionnaire was administered to 350 respondents across Delhi NCR, Punjab, and Rajasthan. Data were analysed using SPSS and SmartPLS 4, utilising exploratory factor analysis (EFA), confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), reliability, validity testing, and structural equation modelling (SEM). Results indicate significant positive effects of attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, authenticity, cultural motivation, and perceived quality—mediated by reduced information asymmetry—on purchase intention. The moderating effect of digital exposure further amplifies authenticity and quality perceptions. The study underscores the dual importance of cultural identity and quality signalling in promoting traditional crafts. Implications inform strategies for marketers and policymakers aiming to revitalise India's handcraft sector.

## 1.    Introduction

India's artisanal economy—encompassing handloom weaving, handicrafts, and traditional textiles—represents a rich confluence of aesthetic heritage, livelihood sustenance, and regional identity. These sectors have been instrumental in shaping the socio-cultural and economic landscape of the country, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas. Rooted in the subcontinent's diverse traditions, India's handloom and handicraft industries are not merely remnants of the past; they are dynamic, living practices that continue to adapt, resist, and innovate in the face of socio-economic change (Venkatesan, 2009; Roy, 2018). They embody more than utilitarian value—symbolizing local knowledge systems, environmental stewardship, and community cohesion—while also contributing substantially to employment generation and foreign exchange earnings.

According to the Fourth All-India Handloom Census (2019–20), over 35 million individuals depend on the handloom and handicraft sectors for their primary livelihood. These include a large proportion of women, minority groups, and other historically marginalized communities. The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) notes that the handicrafts sector alone contributes over Rs. 26,000 crores annually to India's export revenues (MoT, 2020). Furthermore, this sector has shown considerable resilience amid changing market dynamics, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where local and sustainable production models

gained new relevance (UNESCO, 2021). Despite this resilience, however, India's artisan economy stands at a crossroads.

The past two decades have witnessed an accelerated influx of machine-made, industrially produced alternatives that often mimic the appearance of hand-crafted goods. Such mass-produced commodities—often falsely labeled as "handmade" or "ethnic"—undermine the authenticity and distinctiveness of traditional crafts (Afreen & Asma, 2021; Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020). As consumer trust in artisanal products declines, so too does the socio-economic security of the artisan communities that depend on them. Globalized production networks, market intermediaries, and exploitative pricing further contribute to the invisibilization of artisan labor in a rapidly commercialized retail landscape (Chattopadhyay, 2017).

Policy interventions like the Geographical Indication (GI) tags, the Handloom Mark, and the Craft Mark were introduced to address these challenges by safeguarding authenticity and promoting traceability. Yet, their success has been uneven. Many urban consumers, particularly in Northern India, remain unaware of these indicators or lack the knowledge to interpret them meaningfully (SuccessMantra, 2024). Consequently, artisans continue to grapple with market exclusion and economic precarity, even as their products circulate within premium, heritage-conscious retail spaces.

Simultaneously, the rise of digital marketing and e-commerce platforms presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, digital visibility offers new channels for artisan outreach and storytelling. On the other, it often fails to convey the cultural embeddedness or material authenticity of the products being sold, thereby contributing to further information asymmetry (Vanitha et al., 2025). Consumers navigating online marketplaces are frequently unable to verify the authenticity or provenance of items labeled as "handcrafted," leading to a gap between perception and reality. This gap, if left unaddressed, risks weakening the perceived value of genuine artisanal goods in urban markets.

In this evolving context, scholarly attention must shift toward understanding how consumers perceive and respond to traditional crafts in a highly mediatized, commodified, and information-saturated environment. Existing literature has extensively explored the economic challenges faced by artisan communities, yet empirical research that integrates psychological constructs—such as attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and authenticity perception—into the study of purchase intentions remains limited in the Indian context (Ajzen, 1991; Huh et al., 2016). Furthermore, while studies on sustainability and ethical consumption are gaining momentum globally, the specific mechanisms by which authenticity signals and cultural motivations influence consumer behavior in emerging markets such as India require deeper investigation.

This research aims to fill this gap by deploying the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a foundational model, while also integrating constructs such as cultural identity, information asymmetry, and product diagnosticity to capture the complexity of decision-making among urban Indian consumers. The study's primary objective is to examine how these variables interact to shape purchase intentions in relation to authentic handloom and handicraft products. With a focus on North India—where consumer markets are large but often disconnected from artisanal production centers—the research brings both theoretical and applied value to the discourse on heritage preservation and sustainable consumption.

Ultimately, this study seeks not only to contribute to the academic literature on cultural marketing and consumer psychology but also to inform the design of more effective policy and marketing strategies. By identifying the key psychological and informational drivers of consumer behavior, this work aims to enhance the visibility and valuation of authentic craft products in a digitized economy. In doing so, it also hopes to provide evidence-based recommendations for strengthening artisan livelihoods, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering ethical consumption patterns in an era increasingly shaped by global consumerism.

## 1.1 Cultural and Economic Context

The handloom and handicraft sectors in India represent a confluence of cultural expression, economic sustenance, and intergenerational knowledge transfer. These artisanal practices are deeply rooted in the socio-historical fabric of the Indian subcontinent, with evidence of their prevalence dating back to the Indus Valley Civilization (Mukherjee, 2017). Over time, they have evolved into distinct regional specializations, each embodying unique aesthetic vocabularies, techniques, and symbolic meanings. From the Pashmina shawls of Kashmir to the Madhubani paintings of Bihar and the terracotta work of Bankura in West Bengal, India's artisanal landscape is both geographically widespread and culturally diverse (Sinha, 2020).

Economically, the artisan sector is a significant contributor to India's rural development. As per the Fourth All-India Handloom Census (2019–20), over 35 million artisans—many of whom belong to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and minority communities—derive their primary livelihood from handloom weaving and handicraft production. These sectors are especially critical for women, who constitute over 70% of the workforce in certain craft clusters, thus positioning artisanal work as an engine for gender-inclusive development (MoT, 2020; Roy, 2018). In addition to supporting rural economies, the sector plays a pivotal role in India's foreign exchange earnings. The Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) reports that handicrafts exports reached ₹26,590 crore in 2020–21, reflecting consistent demand in global niche markets that value authenticity and cultural uniqueness (EPCH, 2021).

Beyond their material output, handlooms and handicrafts function as vehicles for intangible cultural heritage. The process of creating these products often involves locally sourced materials, traditional dyeing methods, and community-based modes of production, which are increasingly recognized as sustainable and ecologically sound (UNESCO, 2021). This aligns well with the principles of the circular economy and the emerging discourse on "slow fashion," wherein consumer values are gradually shifting toward authenticity, durability, and ethical sourcing (Fletcher, 2019). Therefore, artisanal production holds not only economic and aesthetic value but also environmental and ethical relevance in a rapidly industrializing world.

However, despite this multidimensional significance, artisans face persistent marginalization in the national economic narrative. The transition to market economies, urbanization, and technological disruption has adversely affected traditional craft systems. Industrial production methods—particularly in the textile sector—have led to the widespread proliferation of cheaper, machine-made alternatives. These substitutes are often marketed as "handcrafted," creating direct competition and blurring the lines of authenticity (Afreen & Asma, 2021). Moreover, a lack of awareness among urban consumers about the time, skill, and cultural embeddedness involved in artisanal work contributes to undervaluation and price sensitivity (Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020).

Governmental initiatives such as the Geographical Indication (GI) Act (1999) and certification schemes like the Handloom Mark aim to protect these heritage industries. These legal and institutional mechanisms are intended to differentiate authentic artisanal products from their imitations, offering both recognition and potential market advantage. Yet, their effectiveness remains uneven due to weak consumer outreach, limited artisan literacy, and fragmented supply chains (Dasgupta, 2022). As a result, many artisans remain caught in a paradox where their cultural labor is highly valued in theory but insufficiently rewarded in practice.

In sum, the cultural and economic context of Indian handlooms and handicrafts is marked by both resilience and vulnerability. While these sectors continue to serve as reservoirs of cultural memory and engines of rural employment, they are simultaneously beset by structural inequalities, market distortions, and perceptual ambiguities. Recognizing and addressing these contradictions is imperative for any effort aimed at sustaining India's artisanal heritage in the 21st century. A nuanced understanding of this context also lays the foundation for the current study, which seeks to explore how urban consumer perceptions—mediated by authenticity signals and digital exposure—shape demand for traditional crafts.

## 1.2    Problem Statement

Despite the cultural prestige and socio-economic importance of India's handloom and handicraft sectors, these industries are undergoing a period of acute stress due to a combination of market, technological, and perceptual challenges. While efforts have been made to safeguard artisan livelihoods—such as the introduction of Geographical Indication (GI) tags, the Handloom Mark, and other certification mechanisms—their efficacy in contemporary consumer markets remains limited and uneven (Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020; SuccessMantra, 2024). The core issue lies not only in the proliferation of machine-made imitations but also in the pervasive inability of consumers to reliably differentiate between authentic handcrafted goods and mass-produced lookalikes.

This indistinguishability is particularly pronounced in urban markets, where consumers are distanced from the socio-cultural origins of the products they purchase. North Indian metropolitan regions, which house a significant share of the country's craft consumer base, are characterized by low levels of product diagnosticity—defined as the ability of a product to convey accurate and clear information about its origin, quality, and authenticity (Huh et al., 2016). This diagnostic opacity is further compounded by information asymmetry, wherein artisans lack access to direct communication channels with end consumers, and consumers, in turn, are unable to access verifiable product histories or artisan narratives (Bhaduri & Ha-Brookshire, 2015).

Digital marketing and e-commerce platforms have been posited as potential solutions to this asymmetry. They offer broader market reach, storytelling opportunities, and even augmented transparency through certifications and traceability features. However, their role in reinforcing authenticity perceptions remains underexplored. In fact, in many cases, the digital mediation of artisan goods has introduced further ambiguities—standardized product photos, algorithmic promotion, and commodified aesthetics tend to obscure the uniqueness and handmade nature of artisanal items (Vanitha et al., 2025). For consumers accustomed to polished digital interfaces, the tactile, imperfect, and materially distinct qualities of hand-crafted goods often become difficult to appreciate or verify (Raj, Gupta & Tyagi, 2023).

Moreover, the psychological mechanisms underpinning purchase decisions for traditional crafts are not well understood in the Indian context. Although the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a robust framework for analyzing consumer intention, its application to heritage-based consumption remains limited. Constructs such as authenticity perception, cultural identity, and attitudinal orientation toward tradition may play critical roles in shaping demand for artisanal goods, especially when filtered through the lens of digital consumption.

Taken together, these issues point to a critical research gap at the intersection of consumer psychology, cultural economics, and digital marketing. There is a pressing need to empirically investigate how contemporary consumers in North India interpret authenticity signals, how cultural motivations affect their purchasing behavior, and to what extent digital environments enhance or dilute these interpretive processes. Without such an understanding, policy and marketing interventions may continue to fall short, and the gap between artisan production and consumer recognition will likely persist.

### 1.3 Research Aim and Questions

This study seeks to investigate the underlying psychological and informational mechanisms that shape consumer purchase intentions in the context of traditional Indian handloom and handicraft products. Rooted in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), the research extends the classical model by incorporating culturally and contextually relevant constructs such as perceived authenticity, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, and information asymmetry—factors that are especially salient in emerging markets characterized by craft commodification and fragmented supply chains.

The empirical focus is on urban consumers in North India, a demographic segment that exhibits both cultural proximity to artisanal traditions and increasing exposure to globalized consumption patterns. This dual orientation makes them a critical group for understanding how heritage-based value propositions are negotiated in the marketplace. Given the growing role of digital platforms in craft promotion, the study also introduces digital exposure as a potential moderating variable—hypothesizing that higher engagement with online craft narratives may influence how consumers process authenticity cues and make purchase decisions.

Accordingly, the study aims to quantitatively assess the extent to which TPB constructs and extended variables influence purchase intention. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is employed to test the validity and interrelationships of these constructs using a dataset derived from a sample of 350 urban respondents across select North Indian cities.

The research is guided by the following key questions:

- **RQ1**: To what extent do the TPB constructs—**attitude**, **subjective norms**, and **perceived behavioral control**—predict purchase intention toward handloom and handicraft products?

- **RQ2**: What roles do **perceived authenticity** and **cultural identity** play in mediating or enhancing consumer intention?

- **RQ3**: How effective are **GI tags**, Handloom Marks, and related diagnostic signals in reducing **information asymmetry** between producers and consumers?

- **RQ4**: In what ways does **digital exposure** moderate the relationship between authenticity signals and consumer trust or intention?

By addressing these questions, the study seeks to develop a comprehensive explanatory framework that connects psychological dispositions, cultural values, and informational clarity to the purchasing behaviors of urban consumers in a culturally saturated product domain.

## 1.4 Contributions of the Study

This study makes a multidimensional contribution to the literature on consumer behavior, cultural marketing, and artisan economies by integrating theoretical innovation with empirical validation and practical relevance. The contributions are structured across four key domains:

### 1. Theoretical Advancement

The research extends the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)—a widely recognized framework in consumer psychology—by embedding it within a culturally rich and informationally complex context. Traditional TPB constructs such as attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are augmented with constructs highly relevant to the craft economy, including perceived authenticity, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, and information asymmetry. This conceptual expansion addresses a major gap in existing literature where TPB has rarely been applied to the domain of heritage consumption in emerging markets like India (Kim & Karpova, 2010; Huh et al., 2016).

### 2. Empirical Evidence from a Culturally Specific Context

Through a quantitative survey of 350 urban consumers across key North Indian cities, the study provides a robust empirical foundation for understanding consumer behavior in relation to artisanal products. The dataset captures nuanced attitudes toward traditional crafts and evaluates the effect of authenticity cues and cultural identity on purchase intention—an area that has received limited attention in prior studies on ethical or sustainable consumption in the Global South.

### 3. Methodological Contribution

The study employs Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to validate a complex, multidimensional theoretical model. By doing so, it not only strengthens the internal validity of the findings but also offers a replicable analytical framework for future research on craft-based consumption. SEM is particularly well-suited for modeling latent constructs such as authenticity perception and cultural motivation, which require precise measurement and inter-variable calibration (Hair et al., 2019).

### 4. Policy and Marketing Implications

On a practical level, the findings offer actionable insights for policy makers, artisan cooperatives, craft marketers, and e-commerce platforms. By identifying the psychological and informational levers that influence consumer intention, the study provides evidence-based guidance on how to enhance authenticity signalling (e.g., through GI tags, storytelling, artisan branding) and optimize digital engagement strategies. These insights are critical for revitalizing traditional craft sectors and ensuring that artisans are equitably integrated into contemporary value chains.

Taken together, these contributions bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and real-world application, and position the research as both timely and contextually grounded within ongoing debates on cultural preservation, market access, and sustainable consumption.

## 2. Literature Review

This chapter synthesizes existing scholarly work across consumer psychology, cultural economics, and marketing to build a conceptual foundation for the study. It critically examines the theoretical underpinnings of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), and explores its extension through constructs such as authenticity, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, information asymmetry, and digital mediation. The review culminates in identifying key research gaps and justifying the need for an integrated model in the context of traditional Indian crafts.

### 2.1 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior, proposed by Ajzen (1991), has been extensively utilized to explain and predict individual behavioral intentions across diverse consumption contexts. The theory posits that behavioral intention is determined by three core constructs: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (PBC). These elements collectively reflect the individual's evaluative disposition, social pressure, and perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behavior.

In the Indian context, TPB has been empirically validated in domains such as green consumption, luxury buying, and sustainable fashion choices (Deepak et al., 2019; Sharma & Maurya, 2023). However, its application to heritage-based consumption—particularly in relation to traditional crafts—remains relatively unexplored. This omission is critical, given that craft-related purchase behaviors are often influenced by additional cultural, symbolic, and informational factors that the classical TPB model does not explicitly account for.

Thus, extending the TPB framework to include culture-specific variables like authenticity perception and cultural motivation may enhance its explanatory power in the domain of artisanal products, where purchase decisions are shaped as much by emotional resonance and identity alignment as by utilitarian concerns.

### 2.2 Authenticity and Cultural Motivation

Authenticity, in the context of cultural products, refers to the perceived genuineness, heritage value, and artisanal integrity of an item. It is often tied to narratives of tradition, manual skill, and locality, and serves as a critical determinant of consumer trust and engagement (Choudhary & Mishra, 2025). In the case of handlooms and handicrafts, authenticity is not only a product attribute but a cultural signifier—a reflection of lived histories and collective identities (Afreen & Asma, 2021).

Cultural motivation, meanwhile, pertains to the internalized desire to support, preserve, or align with one's heritage through consumption. Raj et al. (2023). Studies in cultural and ethnic marketing have shown that cultural congruence between a product and the consumer's identity significantly enhances emotional engagement, leading to stronger behavioral intentions (Zhou et al., 2018).

Together, authenticity perception and cultural motivation operate as mediating factors in shaping consumer attitudes toward traditional products (Raj et al. 2024). Their influence is particularly salient in markets where heritage consumption overlaps with ethical and experiential expectations—making them indispensable extensions to the TPB framework (Raj, Gupta & Ciddikie, 2024).

### 2.3 Product Diagnosticity and Information Asymmetry

Product diagnosticity refers to the extent to which a product conveys clear, verifiable information about its attributes—origin, process, and quality. In the crafts sector, Geographical Indication (GI) tags, Handloom Marks, and other labeling mechanisms function as diagnostic signals that help consumers differentiate authentic goods from imitations (Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020; Sharma, 2023).

Such diagnostic tools are particularly vital in reducing information asymmetry, where consumers often lack sufficient knowledge about the authenticity or provenance of products. This asymmetry is exacerbated in e-commerce environments where tactile verification is absent. Although qualitative studies have explored the signaling role of GI tags, there remains a lack of quantitative models that integrate product diagnosticity into broader behavioral frameworks such as TPB.

Given that consumer trust hinges significantly on their ability to verify product claims, incorporating these constructs can improve the predictive strength of models that aim to explain purchase behavior in traditional craft markets.

## 2.4 Digital Marketing and E-Commerce

The rapid digitization of retail has transformed the ways in which traditional crafts are marketed and consumed. Online platforms offer expanded visibility, direct-to-consumer channels, and opportunities for narrative-driven branding. Platforms such as GoCoop and region-specific portals like Pochampally Handloom Cluster have begun leveraging digital storytelling to connect artisans with authenticity-conscious consumers (Vanitha et al., 2025).

However, the impact of digital marketing on perceived authenticity remains mixed. While narrative-rich platforms may enhance transparency and emotional engagement, commodified digital displays often strip products of their cultural context, potentially diluting the perception of craftsmanship (Kapferer, 2012). Studies such as the WarpPLS-based analysis of the Pochampally e-commerce initiative have demonstrated a positive correlation between digital storytelling and purchase intention, but broader generalizability and causal pathways remain underexplored.

Thus, the role of **digital exposure** as a **moderating variable**—one that potentially amplifies or diminishes the effect of authenticity signals—warrants rigorous empirical examination.

## 2.5 Research Gaps

Despite the growing body of work on ethical and cultural consumption, several key gaps persist in the literature:

• There is **no integrated theoretical model** that simultaneously accounts for **TPB constructs**, **cultural motivations**, and **diagnostic cues** within the context of traditional crafts.

• **Quantitative studies** on **North Indian urban consumers**—a crucial demographic segment—are particularly scarce.

• The **mediating role** of diagnosticity and information asymmetry in shaping purchase intention has not been empirically tested.

• The **moderating influence of digital exposure** on the relationship between authenticity signals and consumer trust remains largely speculative.

Addressing these gaps is essential for developing both a robust academic framework and actionable strategies for the sustainable promotion of India's artisanal heritage.

## 3. Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

This chapter presents the theoretical model guiding the study, drawing primarily from Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) (1991), while integrating additional constructs relevant to the artisanal consumption context—namely, perceived authenticity, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, and information asymmetry. A moderating role of digital exposure is also proposed to capture evolving consumer dynamics in a digitized retail landscape.

### 3.1 Conceptual Model

The extended model posits that consumer **purchase intention** toward handloom and handicraft products is influenced by three primary TPB constructs:

- **Attitude**: The individual's positive or negative evaluation of purchasing traditional crafts.

- **Subjective Norms**: Perceived social pressure from peers or community to engage in such consumption.

- **Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)**: The perceived ease or difficulty in purchasing crafts (e.g., availability, cost, digital access).

These are augmented by:

- **Perceived Authenticity**: The extent to which a consumer believes the product is genuinely handcrafted, culturally rooted, and ethically sourced.

- **Cultural Motivation**: The consumer's desire to support heritage, identity, or tradition through purchase behavior.

- **Product Diagnosticity**: The clarity and trustworthiness of information that enables product assessment (e.g., GI tags, branding).

- **Information Asymmetry**: The degree of knowledge disparity between producer and consumer, which can distort perceptions of value or authenticity.

Additionally, digital exposure (frequency of engaging with online craft content or e-commerce platforms) is proposed to moderate the relationships between authenticity signals and consumer intention.

### 3.2 Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- **H1**: Attitude positively influences purchase intention.

- **H2**: Subjective norms positively influence purchase intention.

- **H3**: Perceived behavioral control positively influences purchase intention.

- **H4**: Perceived authenticity positively influences purchase intention.

- **H5**: Cultural motivation positively influences purchase intention.

- **H6**: Product diagnosticity positively influences purchase intention.

- **H7**: Information asymmetry negatively influences purchase intention.

- **H8a**: Product diagnosticity mediates the relationship between authenticity and purchase intention.

- **H8b**: Product diagnosticity mediates the relationship between cultural motivation and purchase intention.

- **H9**: Digital exposure moderates the effect of authenticity on purchase intention, strengthening the relationship under high exposure conditions.

The proposed relationships are tested through a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach, facilitating the validation of both direct and indirect effects.

## 4. Research Methodology
This section outlines the research methodology employed to empirically test the extended TPB framework proposed in Chapter 3. It discusses the research design, sampling technique, data collection methods, and the analytical procedures used to validate the theoretical model.

### 4.1 Research Design
The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design, deemed suitable for testing causal relationships within a structured theoretical framework such as the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The cross-sectional approach allowed for the capture of consumer attitudes and behaviors at a single point in time, particularly regarding perceptions of authenticity and purchase intentions toward handloom and handicraft products. This design facilitates generalizability and aligns with the empirical objectives of hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM).

### 4.2 Sampling
The target population consisted of urban adults aged 18–60 years residing in North Indian regions, specifically Delhi NCR, Punjab, and Rajasthan—areas known for their active craft markets and growing urban consumer bases. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure balanced representation across demographic categories (age, gender, and income).

The sample was divided into strata based on key variables, and random selection was then applied within each stratum. This approach was instrumental in avoiding sampling bias and enhancing the external validity of the findings.

### 4.3 Data Collection
Data were collected using an online structured questionnaire developed in Google Forms and circulated through email, WhatsApp, and social media platforms. A total of 400 respondents were approached, of which 350 valid responses were retained after data cleaning—achieving a response rate of 87.5%.

Participation was voluntary, and no monetary incentives were offered. Informed consent was obtained prior to participation, and respondents were assured of complete data anonymity.

**Table 1: Respondent Demographics**

| Variable | Categories | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male / Female | 48% / 52% |
| Age | 18–30 / 31–45 / 46–60 | 40% / 35% / 25% |
| Monthly Income (₹) | 30k–50k / 50k–80k / >80k | 30% / 40% / 30% |

**4.4 Questionnaire Design and Sources**
The questionnaire was structured into multiple sections, each addressing one of the core constructs in the model. All items were measured on a **five-point Likert scale** ranging from **1 (Strongly Disagree)** to **5 (Strongly Agree)**. The sources for scale development were based on validated instruments from prior studies:

- **TPB Constructs (Attitude, Subjective Norms, PBC)**: Ajzen (1991)

- **Perceived Authenticity**: Afreen & Asma (2021)

- **Cultural Motivation**: Choudhary & Mishra (2025)

- **Product Diagnosticity**: Prathap & Sreelaksmi (2020)

- **Information Asymmetry**: Adapted from signaling theory literature

- **Digital Exposure**: Self-developed items based on platform usage frequency and narrative recall

The questionnaire was pre-tested with a pilot group of 25 respondents to ensure clarity and validity. Minor adjustments were made based on feedback before full deployment.

**4.5 Data Analysis**
The data analysis strategy comprised **two phases**:
**4.5.1 Preliminary Analysis (SPSS v27)**

- **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**: To identify underlying factor structures.

- **Reliability Analysis**: Using **Cronbach's alpha** to assess internal consistency.

- **Descriptive Statistics**: To understand demographic distribution and initial trends.

**4.5.2 Model Testing (SmartPLS 4)**

- **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)**: To test the validity of measurement models.

- **Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)**: To examine hypothesized paths and inter-variable relationships.

- **Model Fit Indices**:

o **CFI > 0.90** (Comparative Fit Index)

o **RMSEA < 0.06** (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)

o            **SRMR < 0.08** (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual)

• **Bootstrapping (5000 samples)**: To assess the significance of direct, indirect, and moderated effects.

This multi-method analysis ensured the rigor, validity, and reliability of the study's findings.

## 5. Analysis and Findings
This section presents the empirical findings of the study, organized in alignment with the measurement model and structural model validation processes. The data were analyzed through SPSS and SmartPLS, following a two-step procedure comprising (1) measurement model evaluation, including reliability and validity assessments, and (2) structural model evaluation to test the hypothesized relationships.

### 5.1 Reliability and Convergent Validity
The internal consistency of all constructs was confirmed via Cronbach's alpha, with values ranging from 0.78 to 0.91, exceeding the 0.70 benchmark (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Composite reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.83 to 0.93, and average variance extracted (AVE) values exceeded the 0.50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), confirming convergent validity.

**Table 2: Measurement Reliability**

| Construct | Cronbach's Alpha | Composite Reliability | AVE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude | 0.88 | 0.90 | 0.68 |
| Subjective Norms | 0.81 | 0.85 | 0.62 |
| Perceived Behavioural Control | 0.84 | 0.88 | 0.63 |
| Authenticity | 0.91 | 0.93 | 0.75 |
| Cultural Motivation | 0.87 | 0.89 | 0.66 |
| Product Diagnosticity | 0.79 | 0.83 | 0.59 |
| Information Asymmetry | 0.82 | 0.85 | 0.60 |
| Perceived Quality | 0.86 | 0.88 | 0.65 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.89 | 0.91 | 0.69 |

Source: Author's Data Analysis (2025)

### 5.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis and Discriminant Validity
Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) indicated that all items had standardized loadings above the 0.70 threshold, confirming item reliability. Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion; the square roots of AVE for each construct exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, affirming construct uniqueness and conceptual distinction.

### 5.3 Structural Equation Model Results

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) analysis supported all hypothesized relationships at a significance level of $p < 0.01$. The strongest direct path was observed from Attitude to Purchase

Intention ($\beta$ = 0.32), validating the central role of evaluative beliefs in driving craft-related consumer behavior.

**Table 3: SEM Path Analysis**

| Path | β | t-value | p-value | Supported? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude → Purchase Intention | 0.32 | 4.85 | <0.001 | Yes |
| Subjective Norms → Purchase Intention | 0.21 | 3.90 | <0.001 | Yes |
| PBC → Purchase Intention | 0.18 | 2.95 | 0.003 | Yes |
| Authenticity → Attitude | 0.46 | 6.15 | <0.001 | Yes |
| Cultural Motivation → Attitude | 0.39 | 5.25 | <0.001 | Yes |
| Diagnosticity → Information Asymmetry | –0.29 | 4.10 | <0.001 | Yes |
| Information Asymmetry → Perceived Quality | –0.33 | 4.45 | <0.001 | Yes |
| Perceived Quality → Purchase Intention | 0.27 | 4.02 | <0.001 | Yes |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

Model fit indicators met recommended thresholds: **CFI = 0.95**, **RMSEA = 0.054**, **SRMR = 0.049**—indicating excellent fit.

**5.4 Moderation and Variance Explained**
Digital exposure was tested as a moderator using interaction terms in SmartPLS. Results indicated significant positive moderation effects on the paths from Authenticity to Attitude and Perceived Quality to Purchase Intention.

**Table 4: Moderation Analysis (Digital Exposure)**

| Relationship | Coefficient | p-value |
|---|---|---|
| Authenticity × Digital → Attitude | 0.12 | 0.028 |
| Perceived Quality × Digital → Intention | 0.15 | 0.015 |

Source: Smart PLS Output (2025)

The model also explained a substantial proportion of variance in the endogenous constructs.

**Table 5: Variance Explained (R²)**

| Dependent Variable | R² |
|---|---|
| Attitude | 0.56 |
| Purchase Intention | 0.62 |
| Perceived Quality | 0.49 |

## 5.5 Discussion

The findings empirically validate the integration of TPB constructs, cultural signals, and diagnostic cues within a digitally mediated consumption framework. Among TPB variables, attitude emerged as the most powerful predictor of purchase intention, reinforcing the need to foster positive beliefs about handcrafted products.

The impact of authenticity and cultural motivation on attitude supports the central premise of cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1984), where symbolic and affective dimensions shape consumer evaluations. These findings align with earlier research emphasizing heritage storytelling and emotional engagement as drivers of artisanal consumption (Afreen & Asma, 2021; Choudhary & Mishra, 2025).

The analysis also confirms the efficacy of diagnostic signals such as GI tags in reducing information asymmetry, which in turn enhances perceived quality—a critical antecedent of purchase intention. This supports Prathap and Sreelaksmi's (2020) findings and suggests that trust in traditional crafts is contingent on visible and verifiable quality cues.

Significantly, digital exposure amplifies the influence of authenticity and perceived quality. This points to the transformative potential of e-commerce and social media platforms as cultural intermediaries—when appropriately leveraged, they can build consumer confidence and bridge the gap between artisans and urban markets.

In sum, the extended model offers a robust, multi-dimensional framework for understanding and enhancing consumer engagement with India's traditional craft sectors.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter synthesizes the key findings of the study, delineates its theoretical and practical implications, and reflects on its limitations and potential avenues for future research. Positioned at the intersection of consumer psychology, cultural economics, and digital marketing, this research offers a multidimensional view of what drives consumer engagement with India's handloom and handicraft sectors.

## 6.1 Summary of Findings

The study validated an extended Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) model, revealing that the classical constructs—attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control—jointly explain 62% of the variance in purchase intention for traditional crafts. Among these, attitude was the most influential predictor, highlighting the need to cultivate positive evaluations of artisan products.

The research also demonstrated that perceived authenticity and cultural motivation significantly shape attitudes, thereby reinforcing the symbolic and emotional dimensions of heritage-based consumption. Furthermore, product diagnosticity, signaled through mechanisms like Geographical Indication (GI) tags, was found to reduce information asymmetry, enhance perceived quality, and indirectly promote purchase intention.

The influence of digital exposure as a moderating factor was also substantiated. Consumers with higher engagement in digital platforms were more responsive to authenticity and quality signals, underscoring the strategic importance of online storytelling and transparent communication in the craft economy.

### 6.2 Contributions to Theory
This research contributes to academic theory in several ways:
- It extends TPB by incorporating cultural, perceptual, and informational constructs—notably, authenticity perception, cultural motivation, product diagnosticity, and information asymmetry.

- It provides empirical evidence from a North Indian urban context, a region with strong artisanal roots but growing exposure to digital retail and cultural commodification.

- By integrating digital exposure as a moderating variable, the study opens new directions for understanding how online environments influence consumer psychology in heritage markets.

These theoretical advancements enrich the behavioral modeling of ethical and cultural consumption and offer a holistic framework adaptable to similar socio-economic contexts globally.

### 6.3 Practical Implications
The study presents several important takeaways for practice:
- Marketers should invest in narrative-driven campaigns that foreground the heritage, labor, and regional significance of artisan products to strengthen perceived authenticity.

- Policy-makers must ensure broader consumer awareness of GI tags and Handloom certifications, possibly through integration into national education or public information campaigns.

- E-commerce platforms should be designed to enhance diagnostic clarity, using features such as artisan profiles, provenance data, and digital traceability tools to boost consumer trust and engagement.

Such strategies can revitalize the demand for traditional crafts and support sustainable livelihoods for India's artisan communities.

### 6.4 Limitations
Several limitations temper the study's findings:
- The cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences and limits temporal insights into behavioral consistency.

- The sample was restricted to urban consumers, which may not reflect the attitudes or constraints faced by rural populations.

- The reliance on self-reported purchase intentions introduces the possibility of a gap between stated intentions and actual behavior.

### 6.5 Future Research Directions
Future studies could strengthen and expand upon this work by:

- Conducting longitudinal research to observe behavioral change over time and the durability of digital authenticity effects.

- Including rural and semi-urban respondents to explore regional and socio-economic variations in craft-related behavior.

- Designing controlled experiments that test the effectiveness of different authenticity signaling strategies (e.g., artisan videos, blockchain verification, live demonstrations) in digital retail environments.

These directions will help deepen the understanding of culturally anchored consumption while informing both marketing innovations and policy interventions for artisan sector development.

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