



# A Study on Consumer Perception towards Handicrafts Products with Special Reference to Ernakulam District

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**Abstract** — The handicraft sector plays a vital role in preserving India's cultural heritage while contributing to sustainable livelihoods and local economic development. Consumer perception is a key determinant of demand for handicraft products, especially in culturally rich and urbanizing regions such as Ernakulam District, Kerala. This study aims to examine consumer perception towards handicraft products with special reference to Ernakulam District, based on key variables including eco-friendliness, uniqueness, quality and durability, price and affordability, artistic value, cultural heritage, innovative design, and authenticity.

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design and is based on primary data collected from consumers in urban and semi-urban areas of Ernakulam District using a structured questionnaire. Appropriate sampling techniques and statistical tools are employed to analyze the influence of the selected variables on consumer perception and purchase decisions. Secondary data are sourced from journals, reports, and government publications to support the analysis.

The findings reveal that eco-friendliness, authenticity, and cultural heritage significantly enhance positive consumer perception towards handicraft products, while quality, durability, and artistic value strongly influence satisfaction and repeat purchase intention. Price sensitivity remains a moderating factor, particularly among younger and middle-income consumers, highlighting the need for affordable yet value-driven pricing strategies. Innovative design emerges as an important factor in attracting modern consumers without compromising traditional aesthetics.

The study concludes that a balanced integration of traditional craftsmanship with innovation and sustainability can strengthen consumer perception and market acceptance of handicraft products. The insights from this research are expected to benefit artisans, marketers, policymakers, and academicians by providing a deeper understanding of consumer attitudes and by supporting strategies aimed at promoting handicrafts in both local and broader markets.

**Keywords**— Authenticity, Consumer perception, Cultural heritage, Eco-friendliness, Handicraft products.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Handicraft is a form of creative “art and craft” work which includes creation of products by one's very own hands. Handicrafts in India is the Second-Largest economic Industry the word handicraft is the combination of two words hand and Craft. Handicraft products represent an important segment of India's traditional and cultural economy, reflecting the creativity, skills, and heritage passed down through generations. These products are not only a source of livelihood for millions of artisans but also serve as symbols of cultural identity and sustainable production practices. In recent years, growing consumer awareness regarding environmental sustainability, ethical consumption, and cultural preservation has renewed interest in handicraft products, positioning them as valuable alternatives to mass-produced goods.

Consumer perception plays a crucial role in shaping demand for handicraft products, as purchasing decisions are influenced by multiple tangible and intangible factors. Attributes such as eco-friendliness, uniqueness, quality and durability, price and affordability, artistic value, cultural heritage, innovative design, and authenticity significantly affect how consumers evaluate and prefer handicraft items. Understanding these factors is essential for developing effective marketing strategies, enhancing product acceptance, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the handicraft sector.

Ernakulam District in Kerala provides a relevant context for this study due to its diverse consumer base, high literacy levels, urban–semi-urban mix, and strong exposure to tourism and cultural activities. The district is known for a wide range of handicraft products, including coir items, woodcraft, metal ware, bamboo and cane products, handloom and decorative art forms. The increasing presence of modern retail formats, online platforms, and changing lifestyle preferences further influence consumer attitudes and buying behaviour toward handicrafts in the region.

Despite the cultural and economic significance of handicrafts, artisans and marketers face challenges such as price competition from machine-made products, changing consumer tastes, lack of awareness about authenticity, and limited market access. Therefore, a systematic analysis of consumer perception is necessary to identify the factors that motivate or hinder the purchase of handicraft products.

This study seeks to examine consumer perception towards handicraft products in Ernakulam District by analyzing the influence of eco-friendliness, uniqueness, quality and durability, price and affordability, artistic value, cultural heritage, innovative design, and authenticity. The findings of this research are expected to provide valuable insights for artisans, entrepreneurs, policymakers, and researchers, and to contribute to the existing literature on consumer behavior and the sustainable development of the handicraft sector.

## II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Handicraft products occupy a significant position in the cultural, social, and economic fabric of India. They represent traditional skills, artistic expression, and sustainable modes of production. Over the years, numerous researchers have examined consumer perception and buying behavior towards handicraft products, emphasizing the role of cultural, functional, and emotional factors in shaping consumer preferences.

Several studies have highlighted that consumer perception towards handicraft products is strongly influenced by cultural and heritage value. Researchers have found that consumers often associate handicrafts with tradition, regional identity, and authenticity, which enhances their emotional attachment and willingness to purchase such products. The symbolic meaning embedded in handicraft items has been shown to positively affect attitudes and purchase intentions.

A substantial body of literature indicates that eco-friendliness and sustainability significantly influence consumer perception. Handicraft products are commonly perceived as environmentally friendly due to the use of natural materials and traditional production methods. Studies suggest that environmentally conscious consumers prefer handicrafts over mass-produced goods, as they align with ethical and sustainable consumption practices.

Research on quality and durability reveals that these attributes play a critical role in consumer satisfaction and post-purchase behavior. While handicrafts are appreciated for their aesthetic appeal, consumers also expect acceptable levels of durability and functional quality. Positive perceptions of quality enhance trust, satisfaction, and repeat purchase intentions.

The literature also emphasizes price and affordability as decisive factors in buying behavior. Although consumers acknowledge the artistic and cultural value of handicrafts, many studies report price sensitivity, particularly among middle-income groups. However, findings suggest that consumers are willing to pay a premium when price is perceived as fair and justified by quality, uniqueness, and authenticity.

Studies focusing on uniqueness and artistic value reveal that the non-standardized nature of handicraft products is a major source of attraction. The exclusivity, creativity, and craftsmanship associated with handicrafts differentiate them from factory-made products and contribute to higher perceived value and emotional satisfaction. Recent research highlights the growing importance of innovative design in sustaining consumer interest. Scholars argue that combining traditional craftsmanship with modern designs enhances marketability and attracts younger consumers without compromising cultural integrity. Innovation in form, utility, and aesthetics has been found to positively influence buying behavior.

Authenticity has been widely recognized as a crucial determinant of consumer trust and perception. Studies indicate that assurance of originality, geographical identity, and artisan involvement strengthens consumer confidence. The absence of proper certification and the presence of imitation products have been identified as major challenges affecting consumer perception.

While existing studies provide valuable insights into consumer perception towards handicraft products, most research is conducted at national or state levels. Limited studies focus on district-level analysis, particularly in culturally diverse and urbanizing regions like Ernakulam District. Moreover, there is a need for integrated studies that examine multiple perceptual dimensions simultaneously. The present study attempts to bridge this gap by analyzing consumer perception towards handicraft products in Ernakulam District within a comprehensive framework suitable for academic and policy-oriented discussions.

## III. RESEARCH GAP

An extensive review of existing literature reveals that although consumer perception and buying behaviour towards handicraft products have been widely studied, most investigations are limited to national or state-level perspectives, with comparatively little emphasis on district-level analyses.

Specifically, Ernakulam District remains underexplored despite its distinctive composition of urban, semi-urban, and tourist zones, each of which shapes consumer exposure, preferences, and purchasing behaviour in different ways. Previous studies tend to examine consumer perception in a generalized manner, without adequately comparing perceptual differences across residential and tourist-oriented markets within the same geographical area. Furthermore, many studies focus on selected variables such as price, quality, or cultural value independently, rather than adopting an integrated approach that simultaneously considers eco-friendliness, uniqueness, artistic value, innovative design, and authenticity. Limited empirical attention has also been given to linking these perceptual dimensions with consumer satisfaction, post-purchase behaviour, and repurchase intention across diverse consumer segments. Hence, a clear research gap exists in conducting a comprehensive, zone-wise and multi-dimensional analysis of consumer perception towards handicraft products in the urban, semi-urban, and tourist zones of Ernakulam District, which the present study seeks to address.

#### IV. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine consumer awareness and attitudes towards handicraft products in Ernakulam District.
2. To understand consumer perception towards handicraft products in Ernakulam District.
3. To analyses the buying behavior of consumers towards handicraft products.
4. To assess consumer satisfaction, post-purchase behavior, and willingness to repurchase handicraft products.
5. To analyses the key factors influencing consumer decision-making and buying behavior towards handicraft products.

#### V. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

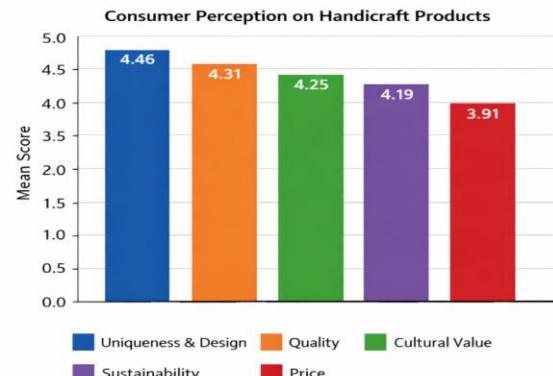
The conceptual framework of the present study is developed to examine the influence of key product-related and cultural variables on consumer perception towards handicraft products in Ernakulam District.

The framework identifies eco-friendliness, uniqueness, quality and durability, price and affordability, artistic value, cultural heritage, innovative design, and authenticity as the independent variables that shape consumers' overall perception of handicraft products. Consumer perception acts as a central mediating construct influencing behavioral outcomes such as buying behavior, consumer satisfaction, post-purchase behavior, and willingness to repurchase handicraft products. The study is contextualized within the urban, semi-urban, and tourist zones of Ernakulam District, acknowledging that consumer exposure, preferences, and purchase motivations may vary across these zones. By integrating perceptual attributes with behavioral outcomes in a location-specific setting, the framework provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer perception towards handicraft products, thereby supporting meaningful academic analysis and practical implications for the handicraft sector.

**Table I:**  
**Factors influencing consumer perception on Handicrafts products.**

**Table: Consumer Perception on Handicraft Products**

Factor	Mean Score	Rank
Uniqueness & Design	4.46	1
Quality	4.31	2
Cultural Value	4.25	3
Sustainability	4.19	4
Price	3.91	5



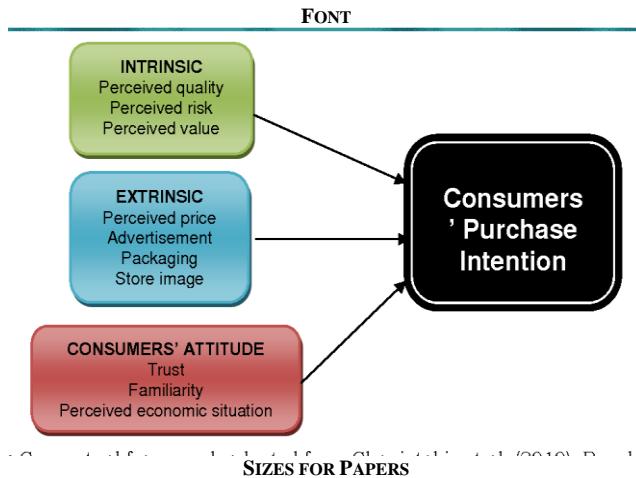


Figure 2 illustrates the conceptual framework explaining consumers' purchase intention towards handicraft products. It shows that intrinsic factors (perceived quality, perceived risk, and perceived value), extrinsic factors (perceived price, advertisement, packaging, and store image), and consumers' attitude (trust, familiarity, and perceived economic situation) independently and collectively influence consumers' purchase intention. The framework highlights how both product-related attributes and consumer-related perceptions play a significant role in shaping buying decisions.

## VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopts a descriptive research design to analyses consumer perception toward handicraft products in Ernakulam District. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 379 respondents selected using the convenience sampling method. The study area covers urban, semi-urban, and tourist zones of Ernakulam District to ensure representation of diverse consumer groups. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical tools to examine consumer awareness, perception, and buying behavior. The study follows ethical research practices, ensuring respondent confidentiality and voluntary participation.

## VII. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The data collected from 379 respondents in urban, semi-urban, and tourist areas of Ernakulam District were analyses using descriptive and inferential statistical tools.

The analysis shows that product quality, cultural value, design, and price are the major factors influencing consumer perception toward handicraft products. Most respondents expressed a positive attitude toward handicrafts, indicating strong appreciation for their traditional and artistic value. However, moderate concern was observed regarding price and availability.

The results further indicate a positive relationship between consumer perception and buying behavior, suggesting that favorable perception leads to higher purchase intention and satisfaction. Increased awareness through digital and promotional platforms has also contributed to improved consumer interest. Overall, the findings highlight the need for better promotion, wider availability, and awareness-building initiatives to strengthen consumer perception and support the growth of the handicraft sector in Ernakulam District.

## VIII. FINDINGS

- The study finds that consumers in Ernakulam District generally have a positive perception toward handicraft products, mainly due to their cultural significance and traditional value.
- Product quality and aesthetic design are identified as the most influential factors affecting consumer perception and purchase decisions.
- Although consumers appreciate handicrafts, a moderate level of price sensitivity exists, which affects purchase frequency, especially among urban and semi-urban consumers.
- Higher awareness through promotional activities and digital platforms has a significant impact on improving consumer interest and trust in handicraft products.
- The study reveals a positive relationship between consumer perception and buying behavior, indicating that favorable perception leads to higher purchase intention and customer satisfaction.

## IX. SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study explores consumer perception of handicraft products in Ernakulam District using data from 379 respondents. Findings show that product quality, design, and cultural value strongly influence perception, while price and availability are moderate concerns.



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Awareness through promotional and digital platforms improves consumer interest, and positive perception leads to higher purchase intention and satisfaction, highlighting the need for better promotion and accessibility to support the handicraft sector.

### X. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that consumers in Ernakulam District generally hold a positive perception of handicraft products, valuing their quality, design, and cultural significance. However, factors such as price and availability can limit purchase frequency. To enhance consumer engagement and promote sustainable growth of the handicraft sector, it is recommended that artisans and marketers focus on improving product accessibility, adopting effective digital and promotional strategies, and highlighting the cultural and artistic value of handicrafts. Strengthening consumer awareness and leveraging technology-driven marketing can further boost purchase intention, satisfaction, and long-term loyalty toward local handicraft products.

### XI. SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research can expand the study by including a larger and more diverse sample across different districts or states to compare consumer perception of handicraft products regionally. Researchers can also explore the impact of e-commerce, social media marketing, and AI-based personalization on consumer behaviour. Additionally, studies can examine tourist versus local consumer preferences or assess the influence of sustainability and eco-friendly practices on buying decisions, providing deeper insights to promote the growth of the handicraft sector.

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