

## Cultural identity and its role in marketing of Cultural Goods

Ettishri B Rajput<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Daisy Kurien<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor at NIFT, Gandhinagar. She is a PhD Scholar in Marketing of Indian Crafts at Indus University; she can be reached at [Ettishri.rajput@nift.ac.in](mailto:Ettishri.rajput@nift.ac.in)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor of Marketing at the Indus Institute of Management Studies, Indus University, she can be reached at [daisykurien.mba@indusuni.ac.in](mailto:daisykurien.mba@indusuni.ac.in)

### Abstract:

*Consumer expectations is a very widely researched topic in the service quality literature. Recent trends in examining consumer expectations towards products have focused on the influence of online marketplaces and social media WOM among others. In this paper Indian consumer expectations of Handloom based fashion apparel with respect to four primary constructs, viz. cultural identity, price sensitivity and past purchase experience has been studied. Survey was conducted in the Northern and North Western India among handloom consumers. Data from 295 respondents has been collected using online survey form. Findings suggest that even as cultural identity has been identified as one of the most significant factors affecting consumer decisions in literature for purchase of handloom products, its significance may have weakened against other factors. None the less cultural identity remains a factor that affects consumer expectations from these products. Brands dealing in Handloom products need to revisit their engagement with certain groups of population, for e.g. Gen Z, who may have a more liberalized and globalized understanding of cultural identity.*

**Keywords:** Handloom marketing, cultural identity, cultural heritage management, price sensitivity, past purchase experience

### Introduction:

The luxurious beauty of Indian hand-crafted textiles dates back at least 6000 years where Indian craftsmen and traders adapted their “collections” to the taste of their patrons in Japan, the Americas, West Africa, Chinese Central Asia, South East Asia, the Middle Eastern regions of Jordan and Egypt (Brennig, 1975; Broudy, 2021; Davidson, 2012; S. Sharma, 2024). In those days, as one reads, “Courtly splendor was proclaimed by sumptuous fabrics”. The website of the Victoria and Albert Museum reads, “...*The ability of Indian artisans to know their customers and adapt their making accordingly made the success of Indian textiles truly international*” (*Indian Textiles · V&A*). Craft-based textiles and handloom fabrics were not opposed to technology and industry, in fact they *were* the industry (Adamson, 2019) and a thriving hub of the small-town capitalistic economy of India.

Today, according to the Fourth Handloom Census, 88.7% of the weaver households are in rural areas and 11.3% are in urban areas; nearly 72% of handloom weavers are women. Around 95 per cent of the handloom fabrics of the world come from India. The sector has a broad base of artisans, mostly located in rural part of India, working with

traditional techniques to develop a wide range of products. Artisanal entrepreneurship has found some acceptance, but the financial instability and lack of digital literacy (Thounaojam & Ojha, 2025) among artisans have moderated its success. The traditional textile craft is ironically dynamic as seen in the craft sector of Assam given the role played by the mediators, agents, etc. (Jogendranath Chutia & Sarma, 2023). Other studies have emphasized the factors like *trust, generic artistic skill and inconsistency of the yarn and artefact quality* to be creating a void between supply and demand (Borsaikia et al., 2023). And yet again studies have found that a handloom textile is not just what is made on the loom, in fact handloom is not to be hyphenated with the weaver, but with the weaving eco-system (Jain, 2018). Studies have been undertaken to understand the desired product attributes in context of crafts (Das & Dave, 2023). Authors have suggested better marketing practices and research encourages consumer focused research in this sector (Mohitkumar Trivedi et al., 2023). Several studies suggest that pricing of cultural goods like handlooms and handicraft is beyond the economic value of these goods, and that contingent value models are insufficient to capture the non market value of these goods (Throsby, 2003).

Subsequently, cultural economics has invited much thought on public utility of cultural goods, be it tangible or intangible, as Bille (2024) prescribes, *“The idea is that when private consumption of arts and culture is taking place, the individual will accumulate cultural capital. This accumulated cultural capital can impact other people (e.g., through changed behavior, future decisions or interactions) and create externalities, i.e., the cultural capital externalities”* (Bille, 2024). Frater, & Hawley (2018), in the Indian context argues that artisans are on their own sufficient to develop luxury lines with no real requirement of designers (Frater & Hawley, 2018). What is though, the most significant and yet the most ignored aspect of the handloom and handicraft supply chain, is the consumer. It is necessary to find if cultural identity, as a fluid construct, has a positive impact on consumer expectations towards cultural goods like handlooms, and that in presence of price sensitivity and past purchase experience.

#### Literature review:

Consumer expectations is a very widely researched topic in the service quality literature (Praveen K. Kopalle et al., 2001; R. Kenneth Teas & Teas, 1993; Valarie A. Zeithaml et al., 1993) but it has not been researched in the product context, for the reason that authors describe product as a rigid entity having fixed attributes, like television, toothbrush, etc. Handloom products, rather are more complex in their nature and carry a cultural value along with a historical and aesthetic value. Recent trends in examining consumer expectations towards products have focused on the influence of online marketplaces (Arunarjun, 2024), social media WOM (A. T. Krishnamurthy et al., 2015) among others. Handlooms are a cultural heritage of India. The exquisite quality of Indian Handlooms of the Pre-British era has been well documented in literature (Brennig, 1975; Broudy, 2021; Droß-Krüpe, 2013; S. Sharma, 2024). In terms of the economic classification of goods, handlooms are beyond the Veblen goods construct as handlooms necessitate intrinsic value (Bagwell & Bernheim, 1996). The role of cultural identity, price sensitivity and past purchase experience on cultural goods may be different from that observed in other standard service and goods.

#### CULTURAL IDENTITY

It was in the 1988, that Russell Belk (1988) formally extended the self-construct to include our possessions that are a reflection of our identity. A very simple yet profound premise was thus found to influence consumer consumer brand choices (Belk, 1988). A recent study on trends in favor of local brands in China found that “cognition of cultural symbols” through emotional cues are able to elicit consumers purchase intention. Additionally traditional cultural symbols have an impact on consumers PI, all of which is mediated by the emotional value conferred on to these symbols (Zong et al., 2023). That cultural differences play a vital role in the nature of reviews given by consumers of e-commerce websites has been recently researched (Truong, 2025). Importance of Cultural identity in driving consumer perception towards products having cultural value, like handlooms, has also been studied in India, and it has been theorized that cultural identity is an important, in fact one of the most important factors affecting the sale of handloom products (Khaire, 2018; Koli, 2021; Littrell & Frater, 2013). Studies in China have also echoed similar sentiment where cultural identity has been found to influence consumer purchase intentions towards cultural products (Dong & Li, 2025). The cultural identity construct used in all these studies is different from each other, but has been carefully derived from historical edifices of tradition. While tradition seems a static concept, the concept of tradition and cultural identity is dynamic and fluid in context of history, changing social context and cultural forces amongst others (Hall, 1993, 2015).

How cultural identity affects formation of consumer expectations is important to consider and has thus been studied with other factors.

#### PRICE SENSITIVITY

In the Indian context, price sensitivity has been studied with regard to value v/s price conscious behaviour, quality v/s price, service subscription v/s product sales, brand loyalty, consumer trust, psychological pricing among others. Among insurance customers of USA, price sensitivity is affected by level of purchase involvement, bundled discounts and brand loyalty (Dominique-Ferreira et al., 2016). In India, around 69 percent of the

population identifies themselves as a value conscious consumer (Nandi, 2025). Choudhary and Mishra (2025) identified authenticity and cultural motivation as core drivers of purchase intention toward handicrafts, with price influencing but not dominating decision-making. Although Indian consumers are known to be generally price-sensitive, those with cultural capital or value-driven preferences tend to justify higher prices for culturally rich products, if product narratives and authenticity are compelling. They further corroborate that perceived information asymmetry contributes to lack of knowledge among consumers regarding the handicraft/handloom products worth (Choudhary & Mishra, 2025). Another study conducted in China, summarized the attributes of cultural creative products as per the ambivalent attitude theory. The ambivalent attitude being influenced by individual and situational factors, where price sensitivity influence the consumer attitude as individual factors (Zhang et al., 2022). In comparison to standard goods, it is difficult to find the reference price of a handloom product as such comparison necessitates a certain level of knowledge of the attributes of handloom products. In their highly cited review, (Mazumdar et al., 2005) have critiqued extensively on the formation of reference price. In the craft market, be it handloom or handicrafts, reference price formation for products will not be uniform, considering the difference in level of the intricacy of workmanship employed in the product. Here, hence the price sensitivity aspect may heighten in presence of information asymmetry. (Dalal et al., 2023) have identified 6 factors that cause strenuous externalities in this sector, which are “inadequate market access, quality control challenges, inconsistent raw material supply, branding and positioning difficulties, infrastructure limitations (e.g., logistics and transport), and seasonality in demand”. One can deduce that branding and positioning is difficult in the sector due to the perceived information asymmetry. Most of the handloom consumers being women, price sensitivity is all the more important as women consumers are relatively more knowledgeable about prices (María Rosa-Díaz, 2004)

### **PAST PURCHASE EXPERIENCE**

Past purchase experience refers to the cumulative perception a consumer holds based on previous interactions with a product or brand. In the context of handloom products, this includes quality, durability, service, pricing, and emotional or cultural satisfaction.

Consumer satisfaction with regard to product quality, artisanal narrative, uniqueness of workmanship, among others are veritably predictors of repeat purchase behaviour (Hernández-Ortega et al., 2008; Krishnakumar, 2018; Ling et al., 2010; McEachern & Warnaby, 2008; Su et al., 2012). In a seminal study by Mittal and Kamakura (2001), the authors found “that consumers with different characteristics have different thresholds such that, at the same level of rated satisfaction, repurchase rates are systematically different among different customer groups”, they further state, an example of 60 plus years of age customers, who have lesser liabilities to be more brand loyal and their repurchase rate at the same level of satisfaction is much better (Mittal & Kamakura, 2001).

GI certification studies (Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020) emphasize that quality consciousness and product diagnosticity via GI labels reduce information asymmetry, leading to increased trust and ultimately, higher purchase intention toward handloom apparel. Consumers who have previously purchased GI-certified garments exhibit lower price sensitivity, as trust and perceived product quality mitigate price concerns (Prathap & Sreelaksmi, 2020)

Singh & Baral (2024), applying the Theory of Planned Behavior to GI-tagged handloom from Champa, found that price veracity and consumer trust positively influence attitudes toward purchase. Prior exposure and confidence in certification reduce perceived risk and thus decrease sensitivity to price (P. Singh & Baral, 2024).

### **CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS**

The consumer expectations from handloom-based fashion apparel and textiles is based on the work of (Clow et al., 1997). Clow et al., (1997) extended the consumer expectations framework service firm image to the construct proposed by (A. Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1988; Valarie A. Zeithaml et al., 1993;

William Boulding et al., 1993) and Gronroos (1982, 1984, 1990). A construct for consumer expectations of Handlooms was necessary to evaluate the impact of the three factors Price Sensitivity, Cultural identity and past purchase experience on consumer expectations of these products. Expectation hierarchy as outlined by (Jessica Santos et al., 2003) has been followed. It was essential to understand if the above factors had an influence on consumer expectations, in terms of how the interplay of price sensitivity, cultural identity and past purchase experience, if at all, had a significant impact on consumers expectations. The expectations on design, quality, cultural representation, fashion value, environment friendly attribute, assortment were sought. These are the attributes found most suitable for Indian handloom based apparel and textiles (Kimemia, 2024; J. Lee & Hwang, 2019; M.-Y. Lee et al., 2008; N. Singh et al., 2023; Sobuj et al., 2021; Tey et al., 2018; Valaei & Nikhashemi, 2017; Zheng & Chi, 2015).

## Objective:

To find if cultural identity has a significant impact on consumer expectations of cultural goods like handlooms, in presence of price sensitivity and past purchase experience.

We would also like to ascertain if price Sensitivity and past purchase experience have a significant impact on consumers expectations towards Indian Handloom based apparel and textiles.

## Conceptual Model:

While cultural identity has always been thought as the most important variable influencing consumer behaviour towards handlooms in India, certain aspects like price sensitivity and past purchase experience have not been assessed for their influence on consumer expectations towards Indian Handloom based apparel and textiles. While price sensitivity being an established economic indicator has been ignored by cultural goods market, the past purchase experience aspect has been addressed to the extent that well-known retail brands operating in this sector allow. Little focus has been expended on pricing of the handloom products and majority of the sector works on cost plus pricing. One may assume that cultural goods like handlooms are competing only with other handlooms and not with substitute products. A branch of handloom marketers and

designers are positioning their products as luxury. Even the Indian Government is of the opinion that handloom products are meant to be expensive and will compete only in that market. It is strange how ignoring an important aspect can affect consumer behaviour towards a product. For as we speak of luxury brands, the offerings include the very real luxe products like couture gowns and the not so luxe products like eye wear, Louis Vuitton expanding to street wear, Ralph Lauren working at various price points, all this to expand the reach of products. But obviously handlooms are not one brand in reality, rather an eco-system, and at the core, it is a capitalistic one, once we trace the roots. Hence it is necessary to study the impact of Price Sensitivity on Consumer Expectations of Indian handloom based apparel and textiles.

Hypotheses 1: Price Sensitivity has a positive and significant impact on consumer expectations of Indian Handloom based apparel and textiles

Past Purchase experience is a common factor that has influenced consumer behaviour towards different types of products and services. The concept of familiarity heuristic in psychology predicates importance of past experience in making everyday decisions. In consumer psychology research, it reduces decision making effort and foster brand loyalty by trusting familiar choices. While past purchase experience may seem one variable, it is verily the only variable which has the potential to create an eco-system of favourable variables for any given product. With the artisans reliance on Handloom sales through “haats” and “mela”, past purchase experience is one variable that has been overlooked in its entirety. The well-known privately owned national brands that sell handloom based apparel and textiles under their brand name are selling more than 50 percent of non-handloom merchandise. Thus brand considerations of past purchase experience have been excluded from this study that specifically seeks “Consumer’s past purchase experience of Indian handloom based apparel and textiles” from traditional channels with an emphasis on traceability of information on authenticity of the craft, certifications, quality and purchase experience in general. Prior studies in this area have highlighted the above areas where consumers expend maximum effort when it comes to decision making (Das & Dave, 2023;



Krishnakumar, 2018; P. Singh & Baral, 2024). Which means that reducing the mental workload in these respects will also improve the purchase experience. It was also essential to see how past purchase experience actually impacts consumer expectations of Indian handloom based apparel and textiles, which is our second hypotheses,

Hypotheses 2: Past Purchase experience has a positive and significant impact on consumer expectations of Indian Handloom based apparel and textiles.

Role of cultural identity in shaping consumer behaviour towards Indian handlooms has been studied by several authors (Chattaraman & Lennon, 2008; Datta et al., 2018; Koli, 2021). A long held view is that cultural identity by far is the most important aspect that will result in consumer engagement with the products (R. Sharma, 2025) and the same can be translated to a good story telling in order to influence consumer perception of cultural goods like handlooms (Mohitkumar Trivedi et al., 2023). That economic stability of handloom weavers and cultural continuity are interlinked is well noted (Devbrath & Singh, 2025), but is the inverse true. With production of machine made handloom look alike products, most of them being manufactured in Surat and distributed across India, whether cultural identity will significantly impact consumer expectations is to be seen. While the correct answer is that it should, what is the reality? Hence our third hypotheses,

Hypotheses 3: Cultural Identity has a positive and significant impact on consumer expectations of Indian Handloom based apparel and textiles.

### Methodology:

**Survey Instrument:** The study on consumer expectations employed an online survey methodology to capture a broad range of consumer attitudes and perceptions in a cost-effective and timely manner. Impact on Consumer Expectations from handloom products was to be ascertained in presence of Price sensitivity, cultural identity and past purchase experience. A structured questionnaire was developed and administered through a digital survey platform, featuring a mix of

closed-ended questions using Likert scales and multiple-choice items, along with a few open-ended prompts to gather qualitative insights.

The survey was based pre-existing constructs of Cultural Identity (Koli, 2021) and while the consumer expectation was adapted from (Clow et al., 1997) and was measured using 6 items (E1, E2, E4, E5, V1 and V3), Price Sensitivity, Past Purchase Experience constructs were adapted from literature and qualitative research conducted prior to this one. The questionnaire was checked by 3 independent evaluators for validity. Revisions were suggested on the consumer expectation and past purchase experience construct, which was revised and re-evaluated for Cronbach's alpha. In the questionnaire, there are 6 items used for measuring cultural identity (CL1 to CL6),

Price sensitivity was measured using 4 items (PS 1 to PS 4), Past Purchase Experience was measured using 6 items (IS2, IS3, PP1, PP2, V4, W). The pilot survey conducted to check reliability of the survey exhibited a Cronbach's alpha value greater than 0.8 (but less than 0.90) for all constructs independently and 0.91 for the questionnaire.

The finalized online survey, prepared on surveyparrot.com was then distributed via email lists, social media channels, and professional networks to reach a diverse demographic sample. Convenience non-probabilistic sampling was adopted. Respondents belonged to various cities across India except for the northeastern states of India, where the authors had limited reach. But the data did not collect responses on region of origin, rather it collected data on the current place of residence. The idea was to collect data from urban consumers of handloom textiles and apparel from across India.

**Data Collection:** Data collection occurred over a period of 2 months, accumulating responses from participants varying in age, socioeconomic status, and geographical location.

Of the 508 form shares, a total of 201 responses (response rate of approximately 40 percent) were received; the demographic profile of the sample is as under:

**Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents**

Classification of respondents as per age group, gender and marital status		
Cohort	No. of respondents	Percentage
1946 and 1964	8	3.98
1965 and 1980	73	36.32
1981 and 1996	50	24.88
1997 and 2012	70	34.83
Marital Status		
Married	110	54.73
Single	91	45.27
Gender		
Male	87	43.28
Female	114	56.72
Region		
Northern India (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Ladakh)	68	34.04
North Western India (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhatisgarh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa)	88	43.80
Eastern India (West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orrisa)	17	8.44
North East India (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura)	6	2.90
Southern India (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Pondicherry, Lakshwadeep)	22	10.82
Total	201	

### Data Analysis:

SEM is particularly useful for evaluating causal relationships and examining measurement errors in a model. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the complex relationships between latent constructs related to consumer expectations. SEM was chosen for its ability to simultaneously assess both the measurement model (validity and reliability of constructs) and the structural model (hypothesized relationships among variables). The analysis followed a two-step approach: first, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to validate the measurement model, to understand whether or not the variables are correlated at all, but it has not been reproduced here as the findings were superfluous considering that the literature actually has assessed the above variables in various other contexts. Following this, the structural model was tested to assess the strength and significance of hypothesized paths between constructs such as

expectation, price sensitivity, cultural identity, and past purchase experience. Model fit indices—including CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR—were examined to confirm the model's adequacy. The analysis was performed using statistical software JAMOV version 2.6.23.0, depending on the data distribution and sample size. As Cultural Identity was an important construct the was expected to significantly influence expectations, it was desirable that the variability across age groups be compared for this construct. In order to understand if “Cultural Identity” construct showed any significant differences across age groups, single factor ANOVA was employed.

### Results:

#### *Single Factor ANOVA for Cultural Identity across Age Groups:*

We checked whether cultural identity construct showed significant differences across age groups. Single Factor ANOVA was employed in order to ascertain the same. The aim was to check if there is

a statistically significant difference in their average scores for the cultural identity construct.

#### Group Descriptive Statistics

Group	Count	Mean	Variance
1946 and 1964	8	4.0833	0.5815
1965 and 1980	74	4.1031	0.4374
1981 and 1996	49	4.2526	0.5076
1997 and 2012	70	4.1959	0.531

All means are between 4.08 and 4.25 — differences are small. Variance values are close, meeting ANOVA's homogeneity assumptions

#### ANOVA Interpretation

Source	SS	df	MS	F	P-value	F crit
Between Groups	1.5542	3	0.5181	1.0535	0.3688	2.6273
Within Groups	195.7192	198	0.4918			
Total	197.2734	201				

$F = 1.0535$ ,  $F_{critical} = 2.6273$  ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ),  $P\text{-value} = 0.3688$  ( $> 0.05$ )

As,  $F (1.0535) < F_{crit} (2.6273)$  and  $P\text{-value} (0.3688) > 0.05$ , we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

This means there is no statistically significant difference between the average scores of cultural identity across the four groups. The variation in mean scores is so small that it is likely due to random chance, not actual group differences. In practice, all four groups seem to have very similar average ratings for Cultural Identity, thus the null hypotheses of single factor ANOVA was not rejected.

#### Assessment of validity and reliability:

To assess the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales used in the study, several reliability indices were calculated. Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs ranged from 0.78 to 0.91, exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency across items.

Additionally, Composite Reliability (CR) values for each latent construct were found to be between 0.81 and 0.93, further confirming the robustness of the measurement model. Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.54 to 0.76, meeting the minimum criterion of 0.50 and confirming convergent validity. These reliability metrics demonstrate that the constructs measuring consumer expectations, price sensitivity, Cultural Identity and Past Purchase experience were both reliable and valid for further structural analysis. Therefore, the measurement model was deemed suitable for evaluating the hypothesized relationships in the structural model. The rule for convergent validity is  $CR > 0.5$ ,  $CR > AVE$ ,  $Max(H) > MSV$

( $CR$  – Construct Reliability,  $AVE$  – Average Variance Explained,  $MSV$  – Maximum Shared Variance,  $Max(H)$  – Maximum Reliability ( $H$ ))

**Table 2: Reliability and convergent validity**

Factors	CR	AVE	Max R (H)	MSV
Consumer Expectations	0.7683	0.3243	15.6895	4.7296
Price Sensitivity	0.7022	0.3711	5.9341	2.5155
Past Purchase Experience	0.5840	0.4624	12.8881	3.8259
Cultural Identity	0.8228	0.670	15.6668	3.3744

#### Discriminant validity: Fornell-Larcker criterion or HTMT ratio

Discriminant validity ensures that a construct is truly distinct from other constructs in a model—that it measures what it is supposed to measure, and not something else. According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is established when,

the square root of the Average Variance Extracted ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ ) for a construct is greater than its correlation with any other construct in the model

This means the diagonal values ( $\sqrt{AVE}$ ) in the correlation matrix should be higher than any other

off-diagonal value in their respective rows and columns. Another method used in modern SEM software like SmartPLS, AMOS, JAMOV, etc. is the HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio). Discriminant validity is confirmed when  $HTMT < 0.85$  (conservative) or  $HTMT < 0.90$  (liberal). For example, the  $\sqrt{AVE}$  for the "Consumer Expectations" construct was 0.569, which exceeded its highest correlation with another construct, 0.575

(with "Past Purchase Experience"). This satisfied the criterion for discriminant validity. Additionally, the HTMT ratios between all pairs of constructs were below 0.85, further confirming that the constructs in the model were conceptually and statistically distinct from one another. Thus, the measurement model demonstrated acceptable discriminant validity and was deemed appropriate for further structural analysis.

**Table 3: Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations**

Variables	Past Purchase Experience	Price Sensitivity	Cultural Identity	Consumer Expectations
Past Purchase Experience	1.000	0.1002	0.1134	0.5746
Price Sensitivity	0.100	1.0000	0.0421	0.3805
Cultural Identity	0.113	0.0421	1.0000	0.0902
Consumer Expectations	0.575	0.3805	0.0902	1.0000

### Structural Model Analysis

The structural model was evaluated to test the hypothesized relationships among the constructs, using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Key model fit indices, including Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR (Scaled) = 0.061) and Normed Fit Index (NFI (Scaled) = 0.957), indicated a good overall fit. The path coefficients were analyzed to determine the strength and significance of the hypothesized

relationships. Results showed that Consumer Expectations had a significant positive influence on Past Purchase Experience ( $\beta = 0.598$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Price Sensitivity ( $\beta = 0.392$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Furthermore, Consumer Expectations of Handlooms has a positive influence on Cultural Identity ( $\beta = 0.114$ ,  $p < 0.056$ ), but given  $p > 0.05$ , it cannot be considered significant.

**Table 4: Parameters estimates**

			95% Confidence Intervals				
Predictors	Estimate	SE	Lower	Upper	$\beta$	z	p
Past Purchase Experience	0.650	0.0669	0.519	0.781	0.598	9.72	<.001
Price Sensitivity	0.387	0.0590	0.271	0.502	0.392	6.55	<.001
Cultural Identity	0.105	0.0551	-0.002	0.213	0.114	1.91	0.056

### Model fit indices

To evaluate the overall fit of the structural model, the Chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) test was conducted. The model yielded a scaled user model Chi-square value of  $\chi^2 = 623$ , with  $df = 206$  and a corresponding p-value < 0.001. Although the Chi-square statistic was significant, indicating a potential discrepancy

between the model and the data, this result is common in models with larger sample sizes, as the test is highly sensitive to sample size. Therefore, relative fit indices were also considered. The Chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was 2.39 (<3), which falls within the acceptable range (less than 3), suggesting a good model fit.

**Table 5: Chi Square/df, Model Tests**

Label	$\chi^2$	df	p
User Model	623	206	<.001
Baseline Model	16118	231	<.001
Scaled User	494	206	<.001
Scaled Baseline	7675	231	<.001



Complementary fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI = 0.961) and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA = 0.059) also indicated a well-fitting model. Thus, despite the significance of the Chi-square statistic, the overall evidence supports the adequacy of the structural model.

**Table 6: Fit indices**

Type	SRMR	RMSEA	95% Confidence Intervals		RMSEA p
			Lower	Upper	
Classical	0.074	0.071	0.065	0.077	<.001
Robust	0.064	0.082	0.074	0.090	<.001
Scaled	0.064	0.059	0.052	0.066	0.013

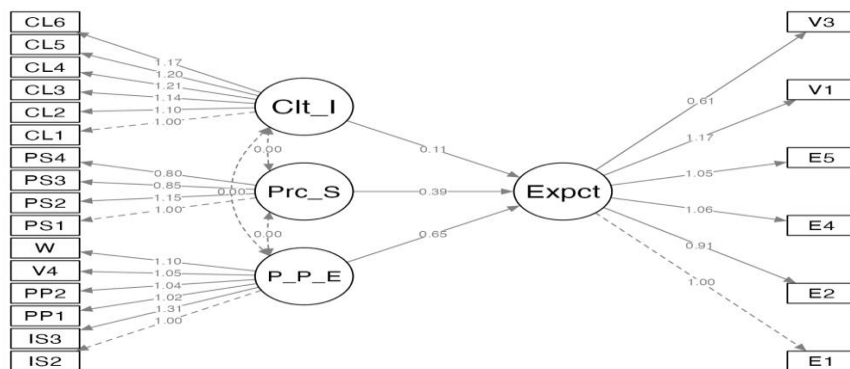
**Table 7: User model versus baseline model**

	Model	Scaled	Robust
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.974	0.961	0.858
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI)	0.971	0.957	0.841
Bentler-Bonett Non-normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.971	0.957	0.841
Relative Noncentrality Index (RNI)	0.974	0.961	0.858
Bentler-Bonett Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.961	0.936	
Bollen's Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.957	0.928	
Bollen's Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.974	0.961	
Parsimony Normed Fit Index (PNFI)	0.857	0.834	

### Path Analysis:

Path analysis was conducted to test the direct and indirect relationships among the key constructs in the conceptual model. The path coefficients were analyzed to determine the strength and significance

of the hypothesized relationships. Results showed that Consumer Expectations had a significant positive influence on Past Purchase Experience ( $\beta = 0.598$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and Price Sensitivity ( $\beta = 0.392$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).



**Figure 1: SEM model for consumer expectations of handloom products using Jamovi**

### Findings & Conclusion

For a very long period of time, the handloom sector has primarily been evaluated from the perspectives of rural livelihood development, design and

heritage. The policies of state and central government are aimed at economic development of the handloom artisans. The results suggest that if the focus is turned towards the consumer, the rest of the supply chain will develop in a more robust manner.

The study also shows that consumer expectations are positively influenced by cultural identity (traditions and historical values), but cultural identity of different cohorts may have progressively globalized, but uniformly so as the ANOVA among different cohorts did not find any significant difference in the cultural identity scores across age groups. As compared to price sensitivity and past purchase experience, cultural identity, though an important factor, will need revision in the way it sets the stage for creating demand for handloom goods. The study also suggests that with the rise of e-commerce and easy price comparisons, price sensitivity and past purchase experience of consumers will play a role in setting expectations from handloom products. Though a fixed reference price for craft goods is difficult to ascertain, the information asymmetry in the sector adversely influences the price sensitivity.

All age groups, adopt a cultural identity that is more global in nature, especially when trends and relevant information is at their finger-tips. As the social context evolves, it is necessary for the marketers to adopt a marketing strategy that addresses this new cultural identity which should be reflected in the design of textiles and apparel and the social and cultural context in which the said handloom is to be adopted. For example, the shawl weaving cluster in the region of Khambhaliya in Dwarka have been making shawls to be draped by the Mer community as a lower garment or to be worn over “Chaniya Choli” (A Gujarati version of a flared skirt and blouse) on festive occasions. Given the traditional context of the said shawls, they can be probably worn only twice or thrice a year. Hence in order to expand the context of handlooms, innovative products, wearable in different social and cultural contexts are important. National Institute of Fashion Technology, with its 17 centers across India, has been doing excellent work in this direction, but on account of systemic challenges in the sector, such change will take time and most certainly will be led by the growth of private labels in this sector and market demand instead of government intervention.

#### Limitations:

The study was conducted across Indian cities, but the north eastern and eastern part of India could not be reached for adequate representation due to logistical constraints. The sample size is also limited. The first cohort, that must be enjoying its

retirement years could not be adequately addressed. The authors are currently studying more variables that affect consumer expectations of the handloom-based textiles and apparel and that forms a part of their future research with greater sample sizes.

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