



Demographic determinants and consumer preferences for handicraft purchase outlets: Evidence from Odisha

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Abstract

Handicrafts have a special place in the market because they are traditional and culturally rich products that show the art and heritage of a region. The main objective of the study is to examine the association between demographic factors and the purchase frequency of handicraft products. Also to analyse and rank consumer preferences for handicraft purchase outlets in Odisha. This study provides a clear understanding of which purchase outlets, such as Handicraft Fairs, Craft Villages, Directly from Artisans, Local Markets, Online Platforms or Private Shops, are preferred by consumers the most. A sample of 310 respondents was surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics summaries consumer profiles, while chi-square tests examine associations between demographics and buying behaviour. Additionally, the Garrett Ranking Method identifies the most preferred purchase outlets. By identifying consumer preferences, the study enables artisans and retailers to optimise their sales strategies, enhance distribution channels and improve customer stratification. Results indicate that gender, age and occupation significantly influence the frequency of purchase behaviour, while local markets and handicraft fairs are the most favored purchase outlets.

Keywords: Consumer preferences, handicrafts, artisans, garrett ranking, purchase outlets, Odisha

Introduction

Handicrafts are an integral part of India's cultural and economic heritage, providing livelihood to artisans while reflecting regional artistry. The origin of Indian handicrafts dates back to one of the oldest civilisation in the world, the Indus Valley Civilisation. Numerous art and craft objects such as pottery, terracotta figurines, beads, ornaments, stone sculptures, shell and ivory works have been unearthed during excavations, showcasing India's rich and diverse heritage of craftsmanship (Bhan, 2018) [3]. These artifacts reflect not only the aesthetic sensibilities of ancient Indians but also the significance of handmade goods in early socio-economic life.

Early in the 20th century, the Swadeshi movement, particularly under Mahatma Gandhi, redefined the role of indigenous crafts in India's struggle for independence. Gandhi promoted self-reliance, local manufacturing and spiritual growth through khadi and village industries, turning consumption into an ethical and political act (Giri, 2004) [12]. Reviving the Gandhian principle through khadi and village industries (KVI) has been shown to be a sustainable and equitable path for rural development. It has significantly contributed to rural empowerment by increasing employment, boosting production and reinforcing economic self-reliance. The rising demand for khadi textiles and involvement of artisans shows how Gandhi's principles of equitable pay, community empowerment and holistic development in the fight against injustice and poverty in rural areas (Pandey & Kakati, 2024) [19].

Today, Indian handicrafts continue to evolve while retaining their cultural essence. Every region of India is known for its unique handicraft traditions, often rooted in locally available materials and techniques passed down through generations. Contemporary Indian fashion, emerging from the legacy of

colonial resistance and the swadeshi ethos, has grown into a global cultural movement that creatively blends traditional crafts with modern aesthetics. Designers, institutions and public figures have played pivotal roles in reviving indigenous textiles and integrating them into a vibrant fashion culture that expresses India's socio-political history and national identity (Mayer, 2018) [16]. Contemporary Indian fashion is not just about style, but it is a living expression of heritage, sustainability and innovation.

This study examines consumer demographics, buying behaviour and purchase outlets to generate actionable insights for the handicraft sector. It provides a comprehensive understanding of which outlets, such as Handicraft Fairs, Craft Villages, Directly from Artisans, Local Markets, Online Platforms or Private Shops, are preferred by consumers and the reasons behind these preferences. The findings enable artisans and retailers to optimise their sales strategies, enhance distribution channels and improve overall customer satisfaction.

Literature Review

The handicraft sector in India, particularly in Odisha, plays a vital role in preserving cultural heritage while offering economic opportunities for rural communities (Subbiah, 2022 Agasty & Senapati, 2015) [1, 23]. Several studies emphasised the importance of aligning traditional crafts with evolving consumer preferences to ensure their sustainability. Dash (2015) [8, 9] observed that consumers increasingly prefer modern or fusion handicraft designs, indicating that innovation in design and presentation is essential to meet changing tastes. Similarly, Xianfei and Dawam (2024) [24] proposed a model combining structured product development and modern marketing to revitalise traditional crafts, specifically in the context of Dong crafts in China.

In Odisha, tourism has had a positive impact on artisans' livelihoods, especially during peak travel seasons however, limited access to capital, education, and market linkages has restricted widespread benefits (Dash, 2015) [8, 9]. Behera *et al.* (2022) [2] found that tourists prefer authentic souvenirs, and their purchases are influenced by peer recommendations and repeat purchase intentions, highlighting the role of consumer perception and trust in shaping demand. Similarly, Pani and Pradhan (2016) [20] in their study on tribal handicrafts of Rayagada concluded that aesthetic appeal, eco-friendliness, and cultural symbolism drive consumer preferences more than demographic variables.

Design innovation remains a critical driver of consumer choice. Pradhan (2021) [21] reported that the revival of traditional textiles like the Bapta saree through innovative designs has helped preserve cultural value while expanding markets. Likewise, Sethi and Naik (2020) [22] highlighted the symbolic and cultural importance of Kapadaganda embroidery work in Rayagada, stressing its need for protection and market adaptation. Beyond Odisha, Xue *et al.* (2022) [25] found that in China, self-image enhancement and perceived behavioural control exert a stronger influence on traditional fashion consumption than cultural identity, implying that handicrafts increasingly function as lifestyle and identity products.

The emergence of e-commerce platforms has transformed handicraft marketing and consumer access. Meng (2023) [17] identified low brand awareness, weak innovation, and limited digital adoption as key barriers in the traditional craft sector, suggesting that branding, technology, and tourism can serve as powerful enablers of revival.

Recent studies extend these insights globally. Dalal, Bhattacharya, and Chattopadhyay (2025) [7] examined environmental, utilitarian, and hedonic factors affecting handicraft purchase and recommendation intentions, finding that cultural affinity and environmental concern significantly drive consumer interest. Choudhary and Mishra (2022) [5] revealed that impulse buying tendencies, shaped by emotional and cultural appeal, strongly predict handicraft purchases in India. Hamarah *et al.* (2023) [14] demonstrated that price, motivation, and convenience determine Malaysian consumers' online purchase intentions for Sarawak handicrafts, reflecting the digital shift in cultural product marketing.

Further, Guha *et al.* (2025) [13] explored determinants of urban consumers' interest in traditional and sustainable handicrafts, concluding that eco-friendliness, artisan support, and heritage connection motivate purchases. Oyedele *et al.* (2025) [18] found that cultural motivation and perceived authenticity mediate the decision to buy heritage crafts outside one's country, underscoring the global appeal of cultural authenticity. Chatterjee *et al.* (2024) [4] examined demographic influences on sustainable product purchase, reporting that age, gender, and education shape consumer behaviour, insights that parallel handicraft markets. Finally, Dzamedo *et al.* (2023) [10] noted that income level, affordability, and cultural identity influence preferences between traditional textiles and imported goods, emphasizing the socio-economic dimension of cultural consumption.

1. Research Gap

Prior research highlights that consumer motivations, cultural attachments and gifting traditions drive handicraft purchases. Studies also show that specific preferences for handicrafts, though limited research exists on specific preferences for purchase locations. Most works emphasised marketing challenges, artisan development and online purchasing trends, leaving a gap in understanding the intention of demographics with place-based consumer preferences.

Objectives and Hypothesis

1. To examine the association between demographic factors and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.
2. To analyse the consumer preferences for handicraft products outlets in Odisha.

H₀₁: Demographic factors have no significant association with the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

Sub-Hypotheses

H_{01a}: There is no significant association between gender and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

H_{01b}: There is no significant association between age and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

H_{01c}: There is no significant association between education level and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

H_{01d}: There is no significant association between occupation and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

H_{01e}: There is no significant association between monthly income and the purchase frequency of handicraft products.

Research Methodology

The study used convenience sampling to collect data. The study surveyed 310 consumers across Odisha using a structured questionnaire. Demographics included gender, age, education, occupation and monthly income. Purchase behaviour was measured through purchase frequency (Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often) and preferred place of purchase (Handicraft Fairs, Craft Villages, Directly from Artisans, Local Markets, Online Platforms and Private Shops). The study used descriptive statistics, the chi-square test and the Garrett ranking method. The data were analysed by using SPSS. Descriptive statistics summaries demographic and behavioural data (Cooksey, 2020) [6]. The chi-square test examines associations between demographics and purchase frequency (Franke *et al.*, 2012) [11] and the Garrett ranking technique is used to convert the consumer ranks for purchase places into mean scores for purity ranking (Ismanto & Arsyad, 2018) [15]. References are cited using the Mendeley software.

Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Analysis

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Profile and Purchase Behavior of Handicraft Consumers in Odisha

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	171	55.2
	Female	139	44.8
	Total	310	100.0
Age	Below 20	60	19.4
	21-40	119	38.4
	41-60	92	29.7
	Above 60	39	12.6
	Total	310	100.0
Education	Martic	24	7.7
	Higher Secondary	78	25.2
	Graduate	128	41.3
	Postgraduate	72	23.2
	Others	8	2.6
	Total	310	100.0
Occupation	Student	79	25.5
	govt. employee	54	17.4
	Private sector employee	76	24.5
	Business	58	18.7
	Homemaker	43	13.9
	Total	310	100.0
Monthly Income	Less than 20,000	83	26.8
	21,000-40,000	99	31.9
	41,000-60,000	83	26.8
	Above 61,000	45	14.5
	Total	310	100.0
Purchase frequency	Never	30	9.7
	Rarely	74	23.9
	Sometimes	124	40.0
	Often	82	26.5
	Total	310	100.0

Source: Compiled by Authors

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 310 respondents, indicating a moderately balanced gender composition, with males comprising 55.2 percent and females 44.8 percent, thereby ensuring representation from both groups. The age distribution means that the majority, 38.4 percent, fall within the 21 to 40 years category, followed by 29.7 percent in the 41 to 0 age group, suggesting that the sample is predominantly composed of young and middle-aged adults who are typically more economically active and consumption-oriented. Educationally, the respondents are highly qualified, with 41.3 percent graduates and 23.2 percent postgraduates, implying a well-informed population with potentially greater awareness and rational decision-making in purchasing behaviour. Occupational diversity is evident,

with notable representation from students of 25.5 percent, private-sector employees of 24.5 percent, businesspersons of 18.7 percent and government employees of 17.4 percent, reflecting a cross-section of both dependent and earning groups. In terms of income, a substantial proportion of 58.7 percent falls within the Rs 21,000 – Rs 60,000 monthly range, signifying a predominantly middle-income segment with moderate purchasing power and economic stability. Behavioural analysis of purchase frequency indicates that most respondents buy products ‘sometimes’ (40 percent) or ‘often’ (26.5 percent), denoting an active level of consumer participation, while only a marginal 9.7 percent reported never purchasing.

2. Chi-Square Test Results

Table 2: Chi-Square Analysis of the Relationship between Demographic Variables and Purchase Frequency

Sl.no.	Variables	Chi-square value	p-value	Significance
1.	Gender	20.017	.000	Significant
2.	Age	28.189	.001	Significant
3.	Education	4.875	.962	Not Significant
4.	Occupation	21.357	.045	Significant
5.	Monthly Income	3.776	.926	Not Significant

Source: Computed from Primary Data

Table 2 shows the chi-square analysis of the relationship between demographic variables and purchase frequency. The analysis revealed significant associations between gender, age and occupation with handicraft purchase frequency, while education and income showed no significant relationship. Gender recorded a chi-square value of 20.017 (p=0.000), indicating distinct purchasing

behaviour across male and female consumers. Age ($\chi^2 = 28.189, p = 0.001$) demonstrated that younger and middle-aged respondents were more active purchasers. Occupation ($\chi^2 = 21.357, p = 0.045$) showed that employment type and work status influence purchasing engagement. However, education ($\chi^2 = 4.875, p = 0.962$) and income ($\chi^2 = 3.776, p = 0.926$) were statistically insignificant, suggesting that

handicraft purchasing is not determined by academic background or economic level. One might have a good educational background or having high monthly income but less interest in handicraft.

Hence, the null hypothesis is partially rejected, confirming that certain demographic factors, specifically gender, age and occupation, significantly shape purchase behaviour.

3. Garrett Ranking Analysis

To determine consumer preferences for purchasing handicraft products from various outlets, the Garrett ranking technique was employed. Respondents ranked six types of purchase outlets, which are Handicraft Fairs, Craft Villages, Directly from Artisans, Local Markets, Online Platforms or Private Shops. Table 3 shows the places ranked by respondents for purchasing handicraft products.

Table 3. Ranking of Handicraft Purchase Outlets by Respondents

Si.no.	Purchase Outlets	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
1.	Handicraft Fairs	125	42	42	41	49	11	310
2.	Craft Village	20	57	61	67	86	19	310
3.	Directly Artisans	10	57	50	97	69	27	310
4.	Local Market	125	45	49	43	36	12	310
5.	Online	25	60	71	51	30	73	310
6.	Private Shops	5	49	37	11	40	168	310

Source: Primary data

To convert the respondents' rank data into a quantifiable score, the Garrett Ranking formula was applied:

$$\text{Percent Position} = 100 \times (R_{ij} - 0.5) / N_j$$

Where R_{ij} = Rank of the factor and N_j = Total number of factors (6 in this study).

Table 4: Conversion of Ranks into Garrett Scores

Si.no.	Formula	Calculated Value	Garrett Value
1	$100(1-0.5)/6$	8.33	77
2	$100(2-0.5)/6$	25.00	63
3	$100(3-0.5)/6$	41.66	54
4	$100(4-0.5)/6$	58.33	46
5	$100(5-0.5)/6$	75.00	37
6	$100(6-0.5)/6$	91.66	23

Source: Garrett Table of Scores

Table 4 shows the corresponding Garrett Table values for each percent position. This conversion was necessary to transform ordinal rank data into interval data, allowing for a more accurate quantitative comparison. The calculated

Garrett values were multiplied by the number of respondents assigning each rank to compute the total and mean scores for each purchase outlet.

Table 5. Garrett Mean Scores and Final Ranking of Handicraft Purchase Outlets

Sl.no.	Places	1 st *77	2 nd *63	3 rd *54	4 th *46	5 th *37	6 th *23	Total	Mean	Rank
1.	Handicraft fairs/exhibitions	9625	2646	2268	1886	1813	253	18491	59.65	2
2.	Craft villages (e.g., Raghurajpur)	1540	3591	3294	3082	3182	437	15126	48.79	3
3.	Directly from artisans	770	3591	2700	4462	2553	621	14697	47.41	4
4.	Local markets	9625	2835	2646	197	1332	276	18692	60.30	1
5.	Online marketplaces	1925	3780	3834	2346	1110	1679	14674	47.34	5
6.	Private stores/gift shops	385	3087	1998	506	1480	3864	11320	36.52	6

Source: Computed from primary data

Results and Discussion

Table 5 shows the Garrett mean scores and final ranking of handicraft purchase outlets. The Garrett Ranking results reveal that local markets are the most preferred purchasing outlets for handicraft products, achieving the highest mean score of 60.30 and ranking first. This reflects consumers' preference for physical interaction, easy accessibility, and direct evaluation of product quality before purchase.

Handicraft fairs and exhibitions, with a mean score of 59.65, ranked second, signifying their continued importance as major retail venues that combine cultural experience with product variety. Craft villages, such as Raghurajpur, ranked third with a mean score of 48.79, highlighting their appeal as destinations for authentic and traditional crafts, though accessibility and distance may limit their reach.

Direct purchases from artisans (mean score 47.41) and online marketplaces (mean score 47.34) occupied the fourth and fifth ranks, respectively. While both represent emerging channels, their limited reach and irregular supply chains may explain their secondary preference among consumers. Private stores or gift shops, with the lowest mean score of 36.52, were ranked sixth, indicating that high pricing and limited product variety deter frequent purchases through these outlets.

The analysis clearly demonstrates that local markets and fairs are the dominant retail platforms for handicraft purchases in Odisha, combining convenience, cultural value, and consumer trust. Meanwhile, online and private retail options remain underutilised but present opportunities for growth through improved digital marketing, brand visibility, and artisan participation.

Findings

The analysis of the collected data provides valuable insights into the demographic and behavioral patterns influencing handicraft purchasing decisions among consumers in Odisha. The results highlight key trends in market preferences, consumer trust, and digital engagement, offering a clearer understanding of the factors shaping buying behavior. The main findings of the study are as follows:

- Gender, age, and occupation significantly influence the purchase frequency of handicraft products, while education and income do not show a notable impact.
- Consumers show a strong preference for local markets and handicraft fairs, reflecting trust in traditional, face-to-face purchasing experiences.
- Online platforms remain a less preferred option for buying handicrafts, suggesting limited consumer confidence or accessibility in digital modes of purchase.
- Younger and working-age adults emerge as the most active consumer group, demonstrating higher purchase frequency and stronger engagement with handicraft products.

Suggestions

- To strengthen Odisha's handicraft sector, efforts should focus on enhancing traditional market channels by improving infrastructure and promotional activities in local markets and fairs.
- Creating more craft villages like Raghurajpur into vibrant cultural and commercial hubs can further promote authentic craft tourism and buyer engagement.
- Expanding the digital presence of artisans and cooperatives through e-commerce platforms, social media, and digital storytelling is essential for wider market access.
- Marketing strategies should particularly target younger and working-age adults, especially women who demonstrate higher purchasing activity.
- Promoting product innovation in design, packaging, and aesthetics can help align traditional crafts with modern consumer preferences without compromising their heritage value.
- Fostering collaboration and training among artisans, designers, and marketing professionals will bridge the gap between traditional craftsmanship and contemporary market demand.

Conclusion

The study concludes that demographic factors such as gender, age, and occupation play a pivotal role in shaping the purchase frequency of handicraft products in Odisha, while education and income show no significant influence. This suggests that cultural exposure, lifestyle, and employment status are stronger predictors of consumer engagement with handicrafts than educational or economic background. Furthermore, the Garrett Ranking analysis highlights that consumers predominantly prefer traditional purchase channels, specifically local markets and handicraft fairs, due to their accessibility, authenticity, and sensory buying experience. In contrast, online platforms and private stores remain secondary or least preferred options, indicating that the digital transition in handicraft marketing is still in its early phase. Overall, the findings reveal a blend

of cultural attachment and behavioral modernity among Odisha's consumers, emphasising the continued relevance of physical marketplaces even in a digitally evolving economy.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study, while contributing valuable insights into handicraft consumer behavior in Odisha, is subject to several limitations that suggest avenues for further research.

- The geographic focus on Odisha restricts the relevance of findings to other regions with distinct cultural and market characteristics.
- Although the sample size of 310 respondents is adequate for analysis, it may not capture the full demographic diversity of handicraft consumers across the state.
- The reliance on self-reported data may also introduce recall or social desirability bias. Moreover, the study emphasises demographic and behavioral factors while excluding psychographic dimensions such as lifestyle, values, and cultural attachment, which could provide a more nuanced understanding of consumer motivations.
- The limited examination of online purchasing behavior further constrains the analysis, given the dynamic digital transformation in post-pandemic markets.
- Future research should expand the geographic scope to a multi-state or national level, incorporate psychographic and cultural variables, and employ longitudinal approaches to trace evolving consumer trends.
- Greater attention should also be given to the role of digital platforms, e-commerce, and social media in shaping consumer engagement, alongside comparative and experimental studies exploring product innovation, pricing, and promotional strategies to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the handicraft sector.

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