

**DIGITAL MEDIA INITIATIVES FOR CUSTOMER
ENGAGEMENT: A STUDY ON HANDICRAFT AND
HANDLOOM SECTOR OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**

A Thesis

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
degree of**

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

IN

MANAGEMENT

By

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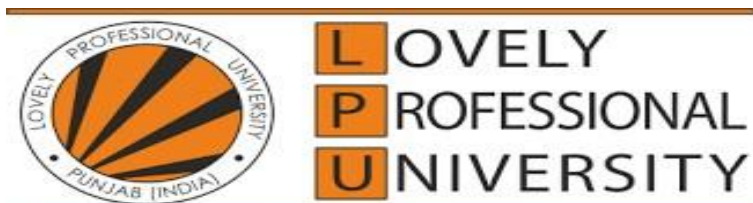
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Abstract

Handicrafts have existed since man's earliest days, later enhanced and improved according to environmental conditions, eventually becoming 'traditional' and recognized as an art that reflects the inventive sense, feelings, and ethnic characteristics of a people. The role of digital media in increasing patronage for any business is crucial these days. To enhance customer support for any business, small companies advertise their goods, services, and brands on social media platforms." The research tries to find out the efforts of digital media to increase patronage of Jammu and Kashmiri handicrafts and handlooms in the "UT of Jammu and Kashmir." Subsequently, the enormous development of digitalization has enhanced the need to develop customer engagement. With the evolution of social media and digital marketing, customers are more inclined to several domains and different contexts. However, this has led numerous researchers to broaden the impact of customer engagement in terms of online business. Customer engagement leads to brand awareness and spreading positive messages about their online purchasing experience. However, the literature and research gap explored the conceptual framework of customer engagement drawn based on the relevant determinants. The proposed integrated model of customer engagement has been established by proposing the relationships between seven latent constructs (platform design, content, product, and personal factors), related to behavioral consequences (customer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention), the present study focuses on antecedents and consequences of customer engagement in the context of purchase intention and brand awareness through social media platforms' attributes. In this view, specific objectives are designed for studying those that facilitate determining the antecedents and consequences of customer engagement to measure the influence of purchase intention of handicraft and handloom products. The four objectives have been framed for the current study. The first objective framed in the research is to determine the impact of social media attributes on customer engagement related to handicrafts and handlooms of Jammu and Kashmir through social media. This can be understood by knowing their awareness level towards familiarity with different types of handlooms promoted through social media, as the attributes of social media platforms such as platform design, content, product, and personal factors, The second objective is to assess the effect of personal factors on customer engagement by considering the variables and their impact of personal factors such as age, gender, education, occupation, etc with customer engagement through social media platforms, The third objective is to examine the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness measured by the promotion of handloom products through social

networking sites, Utilitarian Motivations, Hedonic motivation, Performance expectancy, Perceived relevance, and interaction. The fourth objective of the research is to examine the moderating effect of demographics on brand awareness and purchase intentions, which can be assessed by purchase intention toward social media promotion, Trends, liking, buying intention, price, perceived value, perceived risk, trust, perception towards the virtual store, customized services, e-Wom, and Subjective norms. The research design helps the researcher to get the whole picture about customer engagement, as the target population for the present study is online purchasing and followers of handicraft and handloom brand pages. The studies emphasized the handicrafts and handlooms of Jammu and Kashmir. 550 respondents were selected for data collection. The data was collected from July 2022 to January 2023 by using a self-administered questionnaire, which consisted of the items of handicraft and handloom attributes, content, platform design, product, personal factors, brand awareness, and purchase intention. The respondents were requested to rate on a point Likert scale, such as (strongly disagree – disagree – neutral – agree – strongly agree). Consequently, the reliability of constructs used in the structured questionnaire has been tested, and Cronbach's alpha (α) values appear in the range from .60 to .90 for all the constructs and can be used for further analysis. Advanced Multivariate data analysis techniques like the Structural Equation Model (SEM) have been used through the Smart PLS 3.2.9 software application to accomplish the objectives of the present research and for hypothesis testing. The findings revealed that e-service quality does not have a favorable influence on customer engagement, which has positively affected customer engagement and purchase intentions. Moreover, the hypothesized relationships among the exogenous and endogenous constructs in the proposed model have been tested through SEM using Smart PLS 3.2.9. The conceptual framework derived from the literature is found to be satisfactory. Moreover, the mediation analysis plays a prominent role in model/theory development. The mediation analysis provides a mechanism for reviewing the effect of exogenous variables on endogenous variables in a certain conceptual framework (Baron and Kenny, 1986). A moderation analysis assessed the role of constructs such as brand awareness and purchase intention in the conceptual model. Moreover, this showed that the conceptual framework best fits the partial mediation effect. From the perspective of academics, the present study contributes to the currently existing literature on digital marketing of handicraft and handloom products to enhance customer engagement. The present study provides a conceptual model to differentiate and recognize the antecedents and consequences of customer engagement. In other words, the organization strives to create value in traditional marketing activities, i.e., marketing research and advertising. The essential idea of the

proposed conceptual framework is that online retailers should understand in detail the factors that are needed to improve customer engagement, which will positively impact both brand awareness and purchase intentions of consumers. More importantly, by understanding these factors, online retailers will be better able to develop and execute their policies and strategies. However, building trust is a high priority for the social media platform. Marketing academics and practitioners have recognized that customer relationships play a central part in driving customer engagement initiatives. At last, the essential idea of the proposed conceptual framework is that online retailers should understand in detail the factors that are needed to improve customer engagement that will positively impact both the repurchase intention as well as word of mouth of the consumers. More importantly, by understanding these factors, online retailers will be better able to develop and execute their policies and strategies. However, building trust is a high priority for online retailers because consumers may or may not purchase from trustworthy online businesses, but for sure, consumers will not prefer to purchase from untrustworthy online businesses. So, without winning the trust of consumers, it is impossible to become their consumer. Marketing academics and practitioners have recognized that customer relationships play a central part in driving customer engagement among online shoppers.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the presented work in the thesis entitled in fulfillment of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) is the outcome of research work carried out by me under the supervision of Dr. Lokesh Jasrai, working as Associate Professor, in the Mittal School of Business of Lovely Professional University, Punjab, India. In keeping with the general practice of reporting scientific observations, due acknowledgments have been made whenever the work described here has been based on the findings of another investigator. This work has not been submitted in part or in full to any other University or Institute for the award of any degree.

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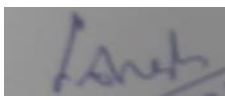
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work reported in the Ph. D. thesis entitled “Digital media initiatives for Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir” submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the reward of degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.)** in the Management _ is a research work carried out by Sakshi Beri 11916872 is a bonafide record of his/her original work carried out under my supervision, and that no part of the thesis has Have been submitted for any other degree, diploma or equivalent course.



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Preface/Acknowledgement

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SAKSHI BERI

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Digital media marketing is pivotal for entrepreneurs, startups, and firms seeking success and recognition in today's business landscape. Businesses should market their firm, products, and services using social media platforms, websites, and business pages. Digitalization has impacted business, particularly marketing trends (Agrawal & Gupta, 2023). Digital-commerce companies are establishing direct and interactive contact with their customers by interacting with them on social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. These platforms allow organizations to give customized recommendations, discounts, and promotions based on each customer's tastes by utilizing advanced algorithms and machine learning. Influencer marketing, in which brands work with social media influencers who have built trust with their following, has also emerged due to e-commerce expansion. This type of marketing works especially well for reaching younger, tech-savvy consumers who might not react as well to conventional forms of advertising. Consumer reviews and feedback are also very important to E-commerce firms. Ahmad, N. R. (2025).

Moreover, the contemporary retail industry is abruptly evolving due to advancements in the Internet and various technologies. E-commerce and a boom in mobile commerce have significantly impacted client purchase patterns, including product and information search variety seeking, and channel choosing (Mishra et al., 2021). Prior research has shown that consumers shop online for utilitarian reasons like low prices, product information, saving time, and convenience, as well as hedonic reasons like entertainment (Dorie & Loranger, 2020; Loupiac & Goudey, 2020). Consumers want several hedonic rewards, such as emotions, feelings, and entertainment, while shopping. According to Viejo-Fernández et al. (2020), in addition to digital marketing, brand image and pricing influence customers' purchase intentions. Branded apparel goods are becoming increasingly popular due to population expansion and rising incomes. With the end of the COVID-19 epidemic and more access to contemporary shopping, statistical reports state that approximately 61% of the world's population (Datareport.com), or 4.80 billion, use the internet. Consumer tastes are evolving from conventional to digital media consumption. Social media is now widely used in digital marketing to engage customers, raise brand awareness, and influence purchase intentions (Delbaere et al., 2020; Cao et al., 2021). The sudden rise in the use of digital platforms for online purchases in India has made the imminence of having digital channels to engage customers and also revenue generation (Afreen, 2021). Anything that can be processed, analyzed, stored, and distributed by electronic digital machinery or devices is considered digital media. Digital media is a category of media that includes content and advertising given via

“electronic media, mobile devices, computers, podcasts, apps, etc.” Digital media is used by businesses and people for several purposes, including information sources, entertainment, gaming, and commerce. The convenience of these platforms has led to an increase in the number of users and their percentage of overall media consumption. India now has more than 820 million active internet users. More than half of them (442 million) at present arise from rural areas of the country. In 2023, internet penetration surged by 8% year on year (Economic Times, 2023).

The problem statement and unique contribution in the current study are based on the facts that rapid development of digital technologies has transformed the way businesses interact with customers and promote their products. Digital media platforms such as social networking sites, e-commerce platforms, and mobile applications have become important tools for marketing communication and customer relationship management. Hence, digital media initiatives for customer engagement is an important phenomenon to study for evolving digital marketing strategies such as personalized communication, interactive content, and social media campaigns that strengthen long-term relationships with consumers. These digital initiatives help businesses to create more meaningful customer experiences and improve brand loyalty (Singh et al., 2024). The growing influence of social media platforms has also changed the way consumers discover and evaluate products. Social media marketing strategies enable businesses to build brand awareness, encourage user interaction, and influence purchase intentions through digital communication and user-generated content (Islam & Sheikh, 2024). The handicraft and handloom sector represents one of the most culturally significant and economically important industries in many developing countries. In India, this sector provides employment to millions of artisans and contributes to preserving traditional skills and cultural heritage. The region of Jammu and Kashmir is particularly known for its unique handicraft and handloom products such as carpets, shawls, papier-mâché items, wood carving, and embroidered textiles. However, despite their cultural value and craftsmanship, artisans and small handicraft enterprises often struggle to reach wider markets due to limited marketing resources and dependence on traditional distribution channels. Digital media platforms offer new opportunities for artisans to promote their products, connect with customers, and expand their market reach beyond local and regional boundaries. Recent studies emphasize that digital technologies and social media marketing play an important role in promoting traditional handicrafts and supporting artisan entrepreneurship. Digital platforms allow artisans to showcase their products, share cultural stories, and connect with global consumers, thereby increasing visibility and economic opportunities (Guha et al., 2024). Similarly, research on handicraft industries highlights that

integrating e-commerce and social media marketing helps bridge the gap between traditional craftsmanship and modern digital markets, improving brand awareness and sales performance for artisanal products (Mathur & Ranawat, 2024). Furthermore, digital transformation is increasingly influencing traditional craft industries by enabling artisans to participate in online marketplaces and adopt digital tools for business development. Such technological integration can enhance market opportunities while preserving cultural heritage (Yusrijal et al., 2024).

1.1 Customer Engagement: In the Digital Era

In the dynamic realm of digital marketing, customer engagement has emerged as the most important objective for businesses seeking to maintain their competitive edge and expand. The digital world has significantly transformed how companies interact with their customers. Engagement is no longer restricted to commercial transactions, but now includes continuous, meaningful connections across numerous digital touchpoints. As digital channels proliferate, customers demand seamless, personalized, and proactive experiences, compelling firms to reassess their engagement strategies. Rasul, T., Nair, S., Palamidovska-Sterjadovska, N., Ladeira, W. J., Santini, F. D. O., & Elgammal, I. (2024). Digital marketing refers to any online activities to interact with customers, improve exposure, and increase engagement and revenue. For artisanal industries such as handicrafts, which are strongly anchored in cultural history and manual workmanship, internet marketing provides a new opportunity to reach global audiences while also revitalizing local economies. Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). In today's marketing world, customer involvement has expanded well beyond traditional transactions to include complex emotional, cognitive, and behavioral elements across digital platforms. Digital customer engagement (DCE) refers to "consumers' online, behavioral manifestations of brand engagement that go beyond purchase," emphasizing the dynamic and multidimensional character of interactions via social media, mobile applications, and websites Srivastava et al., (2025). In a contemporary, swiftly developing digital ecosystem, customer engagement is no longer confined to transactional exchanges but also includes dynamic and immersive digital experiences that have a significant impact on brand loyalty and perceived value. Consumer interactions whether personalized information, seamless ease, or meaningful digital engagement significantly boost both loyalty and the value they ascribe to businesses. Kulshrestha, C., & Kapoor, A. (2024). Consumer engagement has evolved dramatically, particularly in light of technological developments and the start of the digital revolution. Consumer engagement has generally been a one-way street, with companies determining market trends and consumers' decisions influenced mostly by conventional advertising and limited channels of communication. (Ubgade & Joshi, 2023). The handicraft industry in India,

especially in culturally rich regions like Jammu and Kashmir, holds immense potential due to its uniqueness and authenticity. However, despite its artistic value, the sector has struggled with limited market access, middleman exploitation, and a lack of visibility. With the rise of social media platforms, e-commerce, and digital storytelling, artisans now have the tools to showcase their work, narrate their stories, and connect directly with consumers (Kumar & Rani, 2023).

Between the years 2024 and 2025, the digital landscape continues to evolve with trends like influencer marketing, content personalization, and AI-powered customer engagement taking center stage. For the handicraft sector, these tools can not only enhance brand visibility and customer engagement but also foster sustainable livelihoods and preserve cultural traditions (Sharma & Gupta, 2024). Therefore, understanding and implementing digital marketing strategies is not just a business imperative but a cultural responsibility. With increasing internet penetration and mobile usage, artisans now have greater access to tools that enable direct marketing, storytelling, and online sales (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2022). From social media engagement to e-commerce platforms, digital strategies are helping craft producers overcome geographical limitations, reduce dependence on intermediaries, and gain global visibility (Kumar & Rani, 2023). Social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest have made it possible to engage with customers in real time and share stories visually, strengthening the emotional bond between buyers and craftspeople. As a result, brand loyalty and customer awareness have grown, which has raised sales (Rani & Mehra, 2023). By avoiding the difficulties of traditional distribution and reaching end users directly, e-commerce platforms such as Amazon Karigar and Etsy have empowered small artisans (Singh & Bano, 2023).

The combination of artificial intelligence, influencer marketing, and digital analytics is altering the way handmade items are marketed and consumed. However, the success of digital marketing in the handicraft industry is dependent on specialized techniques that preserve cultural identity, maintain craftsmen's digital literacy, and promote sustainable practices (Sharma & Gupta, 2024). An effort combining the government, business sector, and artisan communities is required to fully realize the potential of digital platforms in protecting history and broadening market reach. However, there are also issues, such as rural artisans' limited comprehension of digital strategy, lack of infrastructure, poor training, and digital illiteracy. Government assistance, public-private partnerships, and consistent efforts in digital skill development are necessary to fully achieve the potential of digital marketing in the handicraft industry (Sharma & Gupta, 2024). In addition to changing the way handicrafts are promoted, internet marketing has changed how people view them, turning them from regional goods into highly valued cultural artifacts. As we proceed, maintaining traditional art while adjusting to contemporary market dynamics will need the development of inclusive digital ecosystems.

1.2 Digital Media Marketing and Its Impacts on Consumer Engagement

In the digital age, social media, marketplaces, and e-commerce offer a plethora of options for customers when it comes to purchasing. It is up to the consumer to decide where to shop on social media, e-commerce, or marketplaces. As a result, customers become pickier about where they shop. This incentivizes entrepreneurs to devise tactics to persuade customers to select their products and enables them to counter other businesses. Entrepreneurs need to use digital technology to market their products, according to Alfaraz et al. (2024). As digital media platforms continue to reshape marketing landscapes, influencer marketing has emerged as one of the most visible and successful ways for businesses to connect with customers. With the fast rise of social media platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, influencers—people who have the authority, expertise, or relationship with their audience to influence purchase decisions—have emerged as critical middlemen between businesses and consumers. The customized and presumably real character of influencer-generated content frequently connects better with consumers than traditional commercials, making it an attractive option for increasing both consumer engagement and brand success. Pan, M., Blut, M., Ghiassaleh, A., & Lee, Z. W. (2025). Digital marketing tactics have become a viable way to increase the reach and be more effective and efficient in targeting large numbers of consumers amid a competitive market. Startups can establish consistent communication with prospective customers, foster emotional connections, and raise brand awareness by utilizing social media, online advertising campaigns, and captivating digital content (Mingione & Abratt, 2024). Particularly in areas like India that are rich in traditional craftsmanship, digital media marketing has become a game-changing tactic for the handicraft and handloom industry. The way that consumers engage with craft-based products and the artisans who create them has changed recently due to rising smartphone usage, social media penetration, and consumer dependence on digital platforms. Craftspeople and small-scale producers increasingly interact directly with customers through social media sites like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest, and WhatsApp, forging emotional and intimate bonds that increase brand loyalty and buy intent (Kumar & Rani, 2024).

With globalization, there is a digital connection and customer preference for online buying, and businesses must adapt and innovate. The COVID-19 epidemic has expedited the transition towards internet buying, making it essential for many customers. Businesses and firms must make abrupt moves to create constructive marketing strategies that engage their target demographic, providing excellent customer experiences. Businesses are no longer the only way

that consumers participate in this setting. These days, it includes influencer partnerships, live demos, user-generated content, narrative, and behind-the-scenes material, all of which promote more engagement and trust (Sharma & Gupta, 2024). For instance, a Kashmiri weaver can now demonstrate fabric textures, livestream the weaving process, and instantly answer international client inquiries. The consumer-artisan relationship is strengthened by this reciprocal exchange of information, which also raises the product's perceived worth and authenticity. Additionally, the handicraft and handloom industries may establish specialized communities centered on sustainability, tradition, and craftsmanship thanks to digital media. Craftspeople and small companies may create engaging consumer experiences that promote repeat business and word-of-mouth advertising by utilizing analytics, targeted advertising, and tailored content (Mehra & Das, 2023). Because of this, digital marketing is now more than just a tool for promotion; it is a bridge across cultures and a driver of inclusive economic progress. However, challenges such as digital illiteracy, content creation skills, and access to stable internet still limit the full potential of these platforms, particularly in rural areas. Thus, strategic training programs, policy support, and collaborative partnerships are essential to ensure sustainable growth and inclusive engagement in the coming years. As digital media marketing grows, future research is needed to influence of platforms and technology on consumer involvement, such as generative AI and new social media formats. The continued move toward data privacy and first-party data methods will influence how companies communicate with their target consumers. In recent years, digital media marketing has been crucial for engaging customers, fostering loyalty, and driving corporate success. Brands that stress individuality, authenticity, and technical innovation are most suited to flourish in the continuously changing digital market. Antczak, B. (2024).

1.3 Evolution of the Indian Handicraft and Handloom Industry

The evolution of the Indian handicraft and handloom industry reflects a significant transformation driven by digitalization, increased global demand, and government interventions aimed at preserving traditional skills while fostering innovation. During this period, the industry witnessed renewed attention due to the growing global preference for sustainable, handcrafted, and ethically produced goods (Chatterjee, 2017). The Make in India initiative, launched in 2014, gained momentum post-2015 and played a key role in positioning handicrafts and handlooms as vital to India's cultural and economic narrative (Ministry of Textiles, 2018). Several policies such as the National Handloom Day (initiated in 2015) and schemes like Pehchan Card and India Handloom Brand aimed to formalize and empower artisans by enhancing market access and branding support (Kapoor, 2019). Digital platforms

like Amazon Karigar, Gaatha, and Okhai significantly enhanced the visibility of handmade products by providing artisans with direct access to consumers, both domestic and international, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pandey & Sinha, 2021). At the same time, collaborations between designers and artisan clusters led to the integration of traditional techniques with contemporary design sensibilities, appealing to urban and global markets (Dasgupta, 2020). From 2021 onward, the industry's emphasis shifted further towards sustainability, with increased focus on organic dyes, zero-waste practices, and eco-conscious packaging (Singh, 2023). The implementation of One District One Product (ODOP) and PM Vishwakarma Yojana in the later part of the decade reinforced artisan support and skill recognition (NITI Aayog, 2024). Overall, the Indian handicraft and handloom industry has not only revived and preserved heritage crafts but also embraced innovation, technology, and global branding to remain relevant in a competitive marketplace.

1.4 Indian Handicrafts Industry

India is a country with a vibrant culture and traditions, which have been preserved by the people of India. As a result, a wide variety of handicrafts have played a significant role in our country's culture. One of the oldest and most varied sectors of the Indian economy, the handicrafts sector reflects centuries of traditional craftsmanship, artistic history, and cultural identity. To satisfy both domestic and international needs, the sector continues to change recently changed, striking a balance between modernity and preservation. The industry, which includes a broad range of goods, including jewellery, metalwork, woodworking, textiles, and ceramics, is a major employer, particularly for women and craftspeople from tribal areas as well as rural and underprivileged groups. After agriculture, the Indian handicrafts industry is one of the biggest employers in the nation and a major contributor to exports, according to the Ministry of Textiles (2024). The sector has a robust and flexible workforce that serves both traditional markets and modern tastes, despite its mainly disorganized structure. The industry's sustainability and global reach are further supported by government programs such as the Ambedkar Hastshilp Vikas Yojana (AHVY) and the ODOP (One District One Product) scheme (Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts [EPCH], 2024). The growing power of e-commerce and digital platforms in recent years has given craftspeople new ways to display their creations and communicate with clients. Supply chains are being progressively transformed by these digital interventions, which are also increasing brand awareness and encouraging inclusive growth (Chatterjee & Sinha, 2023). Nevertheless, the industry continues to encounter difficulties, including poor infrastructure, a lack of standards, and obstacles to market access, emphasizing the relationship

between innovation, tradition, and funding from the government. It is important to the Indian economy since it employs over seven million people in rural and urban regions, earns significant foreign money for the country, and preserves its cultural legacy (Deb et al., 2022; IBEF, 2024). The growing power of e-commerce and digital platforms in recent years has given craftspeople new ways to display their creations and communicate with clients. Supply chains are being progressively transformed by these digital interventions, which are also increasing brand awareness and encouraging inclusive growth (Chatterjee & Sinha, 2023). India's handicraft industry is one of the biggest employers and a major source of export income, second only to agriculture. The handicraft industry fosters the economy by maintaining traditional crafts and making necessary adjustments for modern customer needs. Despite hurdles, artisans are supported by initiatives like 'Make in India'. The durability of the industry may be ascribed to its capacity to harmonize traditional and contemporary values in a manner that guarantees the worldwide acknowledgment of India's handcrafted excellence. The country's remaining instances of old traditional needlework are created by hand, mostly by rural women who work from home to support their families. Indian embroidery portrays the cultural and traditional values of the Indian. Indian traditional needlework is a highly recognized craft practiced by workers with an extensive understanding of a specific area. The craftspeople possess a timeless sense of colour and design. Indian embroidery art is well-known for its beauty and harmony, elevating it to the highest level of creativity. Rural women work from home to create traditional needlework, a source of revenue for their families. The embroidery designs depict flora, fauna, and birds, including elephants, horses, and peacocks, as well as floral designs such as lotus, lilies, cypress, etc. Artists are promoting Indian embroidery to portray the culture and traditions of the Indian people (Singh & Rani, 2021). The Indian handicrafts sector is a fragmented, highly labour-intensive cottage industry that is scattered throughout both rural and urban parts of the nation. India is growing, promoting and enhancing the handicraft industry, one of the burgeoning industries that is essential to the nation's economic growth. The government of India has initiated several measures to preserve this industry and its unique cultural characteristics and other features. The handicrafts sector is captivating, in a nation like India, where there is availability of labour, and capital is limited. Indian history is amplified by handicrafts, with a dual composition of beauty and usefulness. The nation's industrial basis has been strengthened in large part by the handicraft sector. Over time, the Indian handicraft industry has emerged as the most promising area for the country's economic growth. Superior handicrafts made with a variety of raw materials come from all around the nation, (Ray, S. S., Ota, R., & Sahoo, M.R. (2023). India's handicraft and handloom industries showcase the

kaleidoscope of cultural craftsmanship variety. Handicrafts are one of the areas that can help VIKSHIT BHARAT 2047 succeed. India is a significant provider of handicrafts to the global market, as evidenced by its long history. The handicraft sector is a key source of employment, particularly in rural regions, and ranks second in terms of unorganized sector employment in India. Regardless, the handicraft sector's production and exports have lately increased. But there were plenty of ups and downs throughout that period. However, this sector suffers largely due to its disorganized character, skill gaps among craftsmen, lack of funding, competition from machine-made items, inadequate databases, and changing marketing dynamics. Policy should focus on conducting frequent surveys to maintain a comprehensive database of handicraft workers, including their socioeconomic factors, so that programs can be executed effectively. Saha, D., & Giribabu, M (2024).

Table 1.4 Indian Handicraft and Handloom based on various aspects: Pre-British Era, British Era, and Post-British Era.

Aspects	Pre-British Era	British Era	Post British Era
1. Industry Nature	Highly decentralized, rural-based, self-sustaining cottage industry; integral to local economies (Singh, 2022)	Decline due to colonial economic policies and deindustrialization (Roy, 2021)	Revival via institutional support, cooperatives, and modernization (Ministry of Textiles, GoI, 2024)
2. Art and craft	Unique, region-specific artisanal traditions (e.g., Pashmina, Kalamkari, Dhokra) (Kumar, 2023)	Decline in quality and output due to loss of patronage and demand (Chattopadhyay, 2020)	Revival of traditional arts with GI tagging and export promotion (DC Handicrafts, 2024)
3. Employment	Large-scale rural employment; craft passed down generations (Mehta & Sen, 2023)	Massive unemployment as artisans couldn't compete with machine-made imports (Chattopadhyay, 2020).	Revival through Handloom Clusters, Skill India programs, and artisan cards (MoT, 2024)
4. Patronage/Support	Supported by royal courts, temples, and local rulers (Sinha, 2022)	Withdrawal of traditional patronage; artisans impoverished (Bagchi, 2020)	Government, NGOs, and international bodies involved in promotion and

			revival (UNDP & MoT, 2024)
5. Key Products	Chikankari, Pashmina, Kanjeevaram, Madhubani, Bidri, Banarasi silk (UNESCO, 2023)	Import of British textiles replaced indigenous ones (Roy, 2021)	Revival and GI-tagging of crafts like Jamdani, Kullu Shawls, Blue Pottery, etc. (DC Handicrafts, 2024)

(Source: DC Handicrafts, 2024)

1.5 Handicrafts and Handlooms Sector of Jammu and Kashmir

The handicrafts and handlooms sector in Jammu and Kashmir is a vital part of the region's socioeconomic landscape. Despite significant challenges, recent articles highlight ongoing government initiatives, technological adoption, and the sector's considerable potential for sustainable development and export growth. Qayoom, S., & Refayi, S. A. (2022). J&K's Handicrafts and Handlooms sector is a vital pillar of its rural economy—providing livelihoods to approximately 3.8 lakh craftspeople Integral to cultural heritage, this labor-intensive industry is sustained by both domestic commerce and international export

The ancient scripture on Kashmir, the "Nilmat Puran," states that a demon named Jalodbhava, which means "born of water," dwelt in the Satisar, a former lake in the Kashmir Valley, and was responsible for torturing and devouring individuals who lived close to the mountain slopes. As soon as Kashyap, an Indian rishi, learned about the suffering of the locals, he hastened to their aid. later saint was blessed after long penance, Lord Vishnu took on the appearance of a boar and hit the mountain at Varahamula, drilling a hole in it so that the water might flow down onto the plains below destroying the monster, The saint inspired and invited people to settle in the valley, the localities gave the valley name "Kashyap-Mar," which means "abode of Kashyap," and "Kashyap-Pura," which means "city of Kashyap." The Sanskrit words "ka" (water) and "shimeera" (to desiccate) imply a place that has been dried off from water and is named Kashmir after Kashyap (Snedden, 2015). Generations have been bewitched and inspired by the area's grandeur. However, Kashmir's attraction extends well beyond its breathtaking scenery; it's a location where the natural world and human history have merged to tell an enthralling story. This architectural wonder is covered in an equally fascinating human fabric. The tremendous cultural, religious, and ethnic variety of the valley has had a significant impact on the identity of its residents. Numerous historical causes have shaped the dynamic, ever-evolving idea of Kashmir (Howard,2023).

According to Indian mythology, Raja Jamboolochan built Jammu in the fourteenth century BC. During one of his hunting expeditions, he arrived at the Tawi River and noticed a goat and a lion sipping water together. The monarch was thrilled and chose to name a town after him, Jamboo. Later, the name "Jammu" was altered and twisted (Kapur, 1980). Jammu and Kashmir had a special place in post-colonial India, standing apart from other States. After independence, the majority of States combined with India; however, J&K kept its own identity by joining but not merging. This unique structure was highlighted in the 1947 Instrument of Accession (IoA), which was executed by the State's monarch at the time, Maharaja Hari Singh. The only state that bargained for its membership conditions with the Union of India is J&K. India's Constitution was drafted using excellent care and caution, with the only goal of protecting India's sovereignty, while acknowledging and respecting the demands and aspirations of each State and individual. Indian Constitution's Article 370 forbade the government from meddling in Jammu and Kashmir, lagging behind the rest of India economically, employment, corruption, gender equality, education, and in terms of many other factors. Meanwhile, the rest of India saw phenomenal social and economic development, one of the main obstacles to J&K's growth and progress was Article 370, which had to go for the benefit. After that, the state is the best in the Union of India since its abolition has improved the lives of the people living there, giving them new jobs, raising their per capita income, and increasing the state's contribution to GDP. With improved agricultural and medical facilities, a single state constitution, and a flag and national ideals system, among the most developed in India. Ahmad, I., & Parihar, S (2022).

Since Jammu & Kashmir is the northernmost extremity of India and remains cold throughout, people wear wool clothing most of the time, which leads to a great volume of embroidery on wool clothing. The exquisite grandeur of the Himalayan Mountain ranges serves as an inspiration for embroidery designs, which have their traditional patterns, motifs, and styles. Home furnishings, including linen, drapes, and tapestries, are embroidered. The term "Kashmiri Kadhai" refers to Kashmiri needlework. The kashida is embroidered with pastel hues and delicate designs of flowers, creepers, and tiny chinar leaves. As a cottage enterprise, Kashida involves the entire family in its work. Before beginning embroidery on the chosen pattern, the cloth is traced. A variety of wools, including Pashmina, Shahtoosh, and Aslitus, are used for needlework; these materials are often white or cream in hue. Darker colors, including black, maroon, bottle green, navy blue, and brown, were used in the mill to dye the cloth. Currently, fabrics made of silk, cotton, chino, and linen are utilized. Royal and glossy silk threads have replaced the high-quality woolen yarns that were once used for stitching. Because

silk threads are costly, art silk, or rayon, which is less expensive, is utilized nowadays. In the present era, big companies, telecommunication firms, and finance industries are headed and controlled by women. The Indian government has taken several initiatives and programs in recent years to empower women's entrepreneurship, like Stand Up India, Trade-related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development Scheme (TREAD), Mahila Udyam, Stree Shakti Package for women entrepreneurs, Bharatiya Mahila Business bank loan, Dena Shakti Scheme and many other such schemes have launched to uplift the womenfolk in India (Govt. of India 2018). Women in Kashmir have ample opportunity to launch their businesses, due to the abundance of natural resources, skills, and richness in art, particularly in the Kashmir valley of Jammu and Kashmir. Due to unemployment in Jammu and Kashmir, many women are coming up with their businesses or start-ups by pursuing their hobbies and abilities in a variety of professions, including agriculture, handicrafts, flower cultivation, clothes, embroidery, jewelry, cooking, cutting, and tailoring, etc, by launched successful enterprises, breaking away from conventional roles in the household or public sectors. By doing so, they challenge the conventional norm that women are less capable than men. Moreover, the government of Jammu and Kashmir has been playing a significant role in supporting women entrepreneurs through various schemes, including the Tejaswini scheme, which offers financial assistance of 5 lakhs to young women aged 18-35 for starting their own business. Additionally, the Mission Youth JK scheme provides 50,000 to valley entrepreneurs. The Mission Youth, Government of Jammu and Kashmir project offers interest-free loans to young female entrepreneurs in the valley. The J&K government and allied organizations, including JKEDI and the J&K Women's Development Corporation, have made a significant contribution to women's entrepreneurship. Moreover, the government of India is also seeking interest and offering financial and technical support to jobless youth and craftsmen. The J&K Handicrafts Department, through a variety of initiatives, contributes significantly to the development of handicraft products in rural and urban areas by providing "financial and technical" assistance to state artisans and young unemployed people for the construction of micro and small units in industrial sectors. The state's 553 training establishments train around 8500 persons each year. Handicraft activities are important in the economic framework of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu & Kashmir handicrafts are well-known across the world for their eye-catching designs, practical usefulness, and exceptional craftsmanship. Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft industry is exceptional in terms of both beauty and wealth. Despite the growing impact of technology and mechanization, Jammu & Kashmir's (J&K) handcrafted items are still highly recognized globally for their creativity and craftsmanship. Pashmina and Kani shawls, carpets, embroidery,

wood carving, papier-mâché, and woollen blankets are among the most common handicrafts and handlooms produced in Jammu and Kashmir. Handicraft exports fell by ₹733 crore in 2024-25, but are expected to rebound to ₹3,000 crore by March 2025. The Print. (2025, February 23).

Table 1.5 Handicrafts and Handlooms Sector of Jammu and Kashmir

Major category	Carpet, Crewel, Shawl, Pashmina, and Kani (GI-tagged), Chain stitch, Namda, Wood carving, Basoli painting, and Papier mache. Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Department of Finance. (2024).
Revenue	₹1,162.29 crore (Handicrafts & Handlooms combined). ₹2,567 crore (2022–24). Business Standard. (2024, February 23).
Growth	Increased from ₹563 crore (2021–22) to ₹1,162 crore (2023–24): - 100% growth in 2 years. Top Export Items (2023–24) Woollen Shawls: ₹477.24 Cr Silk Carpets: ₹317.33 Cr Papier-mache: ₹38.44 Cr Other Items (wood, embroidery, etc.): ₹329.28 Cr. Government of India, Ministry of Finance. (2024).
GDP	Estimated at 8% of UT's GDP , including related MSMEs and tourism-linked. The News Now. (2025).

Source: Government of Jammu & Kashmir, Department of Finance. (2024).

1.6 Role of J & K Government in The Handicraft Sector

Several policies, initiatives, and incentives have been put in place by the Indian government to help the handicraft industry flourish. has put in place a number of projects and programs designed to encourage the expansion of the country's handicraft industry. The Government of Jammu & Kashmir, along with federal ministries, introduced a number of innovative initiatives in 2024–2025 to revive the handicraft and handloom industries. The Artisan and Weaver Credit Card Scheme was one of the most important programs. It was redesigned to provide loans up to ₹2 lakh without collateral and with a five-year interest subsidy of 7%. This financial aid has helped more than 97,000 weavers and craftspeople throughout the UT as of early 2025 (JK Monitor, Jan 2025). With a yearly goal of 2,000 such groups, the Cooperative/SHG Support Scheme was created to assist traditional craft groups. It offers ₹1 lakh each group (₹50,000 up

front and ₹50,000 dependent on performance) through direct benefit transfer (DBT) (The Better Kashmir, Sep 2024).

The Karkhandar Scheme, a clusterbased program that offers organized instruction under master craftsmen, was extended by the government in the field of skill development. Trainers are paid ₹20,000 per month, while trainees get a stipend of ₹2,000. Reviving dying crafts and generating long-term jobs are the objectives (J&K Handicrafts Department, 2024). In addition, the Weavers' Mudra Scheme supported rural entrepreneurship by providing microcredit loans to about 3,000 weavers in 2024–2025, in line with the national MUDRA Yojana (Rising Kashmir, March 2025). On the education front, the Revised Educational Assistance Scheme for the children of artisans and weavers was rolled out in 2025. This initiative provides uniform benefits to boys and girls, offering ₹1,500 at the primary level and covering actual tuition fees for students pursuing professional and technical education (*JK Student News*, Jan 2025).

Another important area of concentration was infrastructure development. The J&K government obtained permission for 12 project proposals totaling ₹52 crore under the National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP). These projects included the creation of Common Facility Centers (CFCs), such as a Pashmina Dehairing Center (₹5.5 crore) and a Wool Processing Unit in Srinagar (₹5 crore). These initiatives seek to lessen dependency on outside processing facilities and upgrade domestic manufacturing (Rising Kashmir, March 2025).

The government hastened the implementation of GI tagging and QR code certification to improve product legitimacy and branding. There are already ten crafts with GI tags, such as Pashmina, Sozni, and Kani Shawl, and thirteen more are planned by 2025. To prevent counterfeiting and increase customer confidence, QR codes are now being included in certified items (Kashmir Observer, March 2025; Precious Kashmir, January 2025). Additionally, Jammu & Kashmir started actively participating in the government program known as the PM Vishwakarma Yojana, which was extended to the UT. Toolkits valued at ₹15,000, daily stipends of ₹500 during training, and official recognition via the Vishwakarma ID were all offered by the campaign. To date, more than 1.24 lakh J&K craftsmen have signed up (Ministry of MSME; PM Vishwakarma Portal, 2025).

Table 1.6: Major schemes in Jammu and Kashmir

Schemes	Objective	Promote
Co-op/SHG Financial Support Scheme	Cooperatives & SHGs in handicrafts/handloom	To enhance support, ₹1 lakh per group (₹50k + ₹50k) via DBT; target 2,000 annually (rural/urban). Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (n.d.). Credit Card Scheme for Artisans and Weavers of Handicrafts and Handlooms.
Artisan-Weaver Credit Card Scheme	Collateral-free credit for registered artisans/weavers	Loan up to ₹2 lakh (previously ₹1 lakh); 7% interest on subsidy for 5 years; annual target of 5,000 (4k artisans + 1k weavers). Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (n.d.). <i>Credit Card Scheme for Artisans and Weavers of Handicrafts and Handlooms</i>
Revised Education Scheme for Weaver/Artisan Children	Scholarships for children's education	Uniform benefit for boys & girls: ₹1,500(primary), ₹2,000(upper primary), actual fees. Government of India. (n.d.). <i>Co-op/SHG Financial Support Scheme for Handicrafts/Handloom Cooperatives and SHGs.</i> Offers ₹1 lakh per group (₹50k + ₹50k) via DBT
Handicraft Artisans' Scholarship Scheme (Srinagar District)	Scholarships for artisans' children	₹1,500 (primary), ₹2,000 (6–10), ₹3,000 (11–12), actual fees for technical courses. Government of India. (n.d.). <i>Co-op/SHG Financial Support Scheme for Handicrafts/Handloom Cooperatives and SHGs.</i>

		Offers ₹1 lakh per group (₹50k + ₹50k) via DBT
Weavers' Mudra Scheme	Microcredit via Mudra for weavers	In the Padder-Nagseni region: 3 cases sanctioned in 3 years; component of the central scheme. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).
Weavers' Mudra & Karkhandar Schemes	Credit & skill development	It included Karkhandar (cluster-based training) and Mudra credit card; 78 artisans registered locally. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).
National Handicrafts Dev. Programme Clusters & Export Support	MSME support to Infrastructure	12 proposals under NHDP worth ₹52 Cr, plus marketing/craft clusters, craft villages, bamboo cluster of ₹4.3cr. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).
GI-Tag + QR-Code Certification	Authentic product and branding	GI-tagged given to 10 crafts (e.g., Pashmina, Kani, Sozni), with QR-code certification. Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).
Brand J&K & Geographical Indication-Tag Expansion	Promotes branding & handicraft	The Government of India has significantly emphasized the use of Geographical Indication (GI) as a strategic tool for the branding and global positioning of Jammu & Kashmir's traditional craft sector. Main emphasis on geographical Indication and export branding, 13 crafts in new craft categories targeted; pipeline for geographical

		Indication and 7 for the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).
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Source: Ministry of Textiles, Government of India. (2023).

1.7 The Impact of Digital Marketing on the Handloom Industry: Opportunities and Challenges

The Indian handloom sector, which has historically relied on specialized crafts and offline distribution, is now witnessing a watershed moment thanks to internet marketing. Vanitha et al. (2025) define this transition as the introduction of a "promotional role" of digital marketing, critical in extending the reach of handloom sarees to broader audiences and boosting their market competitiveness. The Indian handloom sector, renowned for its cultural heritage and craftsmanship, faces a rapidly evolving marketplace shaped by digital transformation. The integration of digital marketing and e-commerce platforms presents unprecedented opportunities for artisans to expand their reach, improve sales, and compete in the digital economy. Digital platforms allow artisans to bypass traditional intermediaries, ensuring fair remuneration and direct access to national and global consumers. As the government and stakeholders actively promote handlooms through digital channels, the sector stands at the intersection of tradition and technology, seeking to bridge the gap between age-old craftsmanship and contemporary consumer trends. E-commerce can significantly empower traditional handloom craftspeople. While problems exist, e-commerce offers a range of alternatives to support the rejuvenation and maintenance of the handloom weaving sector. E-commerce eliminates geographical boundaries, allowing artists in distant or rural regions to reach metropolitan and worldwide customers without the need for a physical presence in many places. The importance of handloom survival must be acknowledged, and efforts must be made to preserve this cultural legacy. An objective analysis of the handloom business for empowering weavers and selling their goods is hence the need of the hour. Rajendra, H. V. (2023). Digital marketing has emerged as a significant catalyst for the growth and sustainability of the Indian handloom sector. It raises customer awareness, simplifies the purchase process, and promotes innovation by linking craftsmen directly with consumers. However, the industry must address issues such as digital literacy gaps, infrastructural restrictions, and the requirement for excellent storytelling in order to maintain authenticity in a crowded online environment. Continued investment in digital capacity-building, supportive policies, and collaborative marketing strategies will be required to ensure that the benefits of digital marketing are equally shared,

thereby empowering artisans and preserving the rich heritage of Indian handlooms in the digital Era. Vanitha, S., Senthil Kumar, C. B., Kandeepan, E., & Jayakanth, D. K. (2025).

Table 1.7: Impact of Digital Marketing on the Indian Handloom Industry: Opportunities and Challenges in Jammu & Kashmir.

Aspect	Opportunities	Challenges
Customer Base	Digital marketing and e-commerce platforms such as Government E Market allow J&K artists to contact national and worldwide clients directly, eliminating intermediaries and extending their market base. Government purchases from local vendors have increased, supporting local businesses' sales. Government of India, Ministry of Textiles. (2025).	Increased competition and compliance requirements on digital platforms can be overwhelming for small artists. Many people lack digital literacy and have challenges accessing and effectively using these platforms, particularly in rural communities. Government of India, Ministry of Textiles. (2025).
Branding and Advertising	Social media and digital marketing promote the distinct cultural identity and tales behind Kashmiri crafts like Pashmina, carpets, and papier-mâché, increasing their appeal to new audiences. Youth and design students are using digital technologies to create unique branding. Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12). <i>Jammu & Kashmir unveils transformative ₹1.4 lakh crore budget for 2025–26: Focus on growth, welfare, and infrastructure.</i>	Crowded digital areas and counterfeit items can erode brand legitimacy. Artisans want assistance in creating captivating digital tales and protecting their intellectual property, and being GI-certified. Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12). <i>Jammu & Kashmir unveils transformative ₹1.4 lakh crore budget for 2025–26: Focus on growth, welfare, and infrastructure.</i>
Sales & Revenue	Online sales and digital exhibits have boosted income potential. Government efforts, such as the PM Unity Mall and direct market access schemes, aim to increase artisan earnings and industry growth.	All craftsmen get profit equally; those without internet access or expertise may fall behind. Some customers are also sceptical about the legitimacy and quality of the products they buy online.

	Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12). <i>Jammu & Kashmir unveils transformative ₹1.4 lakh crore budget for 2025–26: Focus on growth, welfare, and infrastructure.</i>	Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12). <i>Jammu & Kashmir unveils transformative ₹1.4 lakh crore budget for 2025–26: Focus on growth, welfare, and infrastructure.</i>
Policy Support	The government promotes 'Brand J&K' and encourages GI registration, digital procurement, and direct market access. New rules aim to provide local MSMEs a pricing advantage and streamline digital processes for craftspeople. Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12).	Policy execution must guarantee that benefits reach the grassroots and bridge the digital divide. Sustained training and financial assistance are required for long-term effectiveness. Press Information Bureau. (2025, March 12).
Employment & Growth	Digital marketing is promoting job creation and economic growth in the industry, which employs over 4.22 lakh people in J&K. Srinagar's status as a 'World Crafts City' and UNESCO Creative City Network member is increasing its global prominence. Bold News. (2024). <i>SPECTRUM-2024: Empowering the future of handicrafts.</i>	The benefits of digital marketing are distributed unevenly, leaving disadvantaged and distant craftspeople at risk of marginalization if not appropriately supported. Bold News. (2024). <i>SPECTRUM-2024: Empowering the future of handicrafts.</i>

Source: Ministry of Textiles. (2025).

1.8 Use of Social Media in Handicraft and Handloom Industry

The process of increasing the number of people who visit a website is known as "social media marketing," and it is one of the methods that may be used. Word gets about via people's encounters with one another and their talks. The outcomes that can be achieved via earned media are far superior to those that can be achieved through paid media (Srivastava et al., 2021). Social media in response to these new trends, marketing researchers have moved quickly to

deepen our understanding of the role that social media plays in a marketing context, while also highlighting the various opportunities and challenges that the firm faces Li, F., Larimo, J., & Leonidou, L. C., 2023). The fast growth of social media has altered the marketing environment for traditional industries, such as handicrafts and handlooms. Indian handloom textiles, which are strongly ingrained in the country's cultural legacy, have traditionally depended on conventional marketing and word-of-mouth to attract customers. However, the introduction of digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and YouTube has allowed craftsmen and small companies to directly interact with a larger audience, increase brand awareness, and broaden their market reach. A recent study underlines that social media is not only a cost-effective marketing tool but also a catalyst for generating awareness, increasing sales, and encouraging community interaction in the handicraft and handloom industries. Menezes, M. (2025). The use of social media into the marketing strategies of the handicraft and handloom industries has been revolutionary. Research reveals that digital platforms greatly boost product recognition, enhance brand value, and drive sales, while also providing artists with direct access to customers and new markets. The interactive element of social media enables real-time participation, feedback, and community development, which is not achievable with traditional marketing tactics. To optimize these benefits, industry stakeholders, including government agencies, should continue to foster digital literacy and assist craftspeople in utilizing social media. This digital transformation not only increases economic sustainability and poverty reduction but also plays an important role in maintaining and showcasing India's unique handloom legacy worldwide. Menezes, M. (2025).

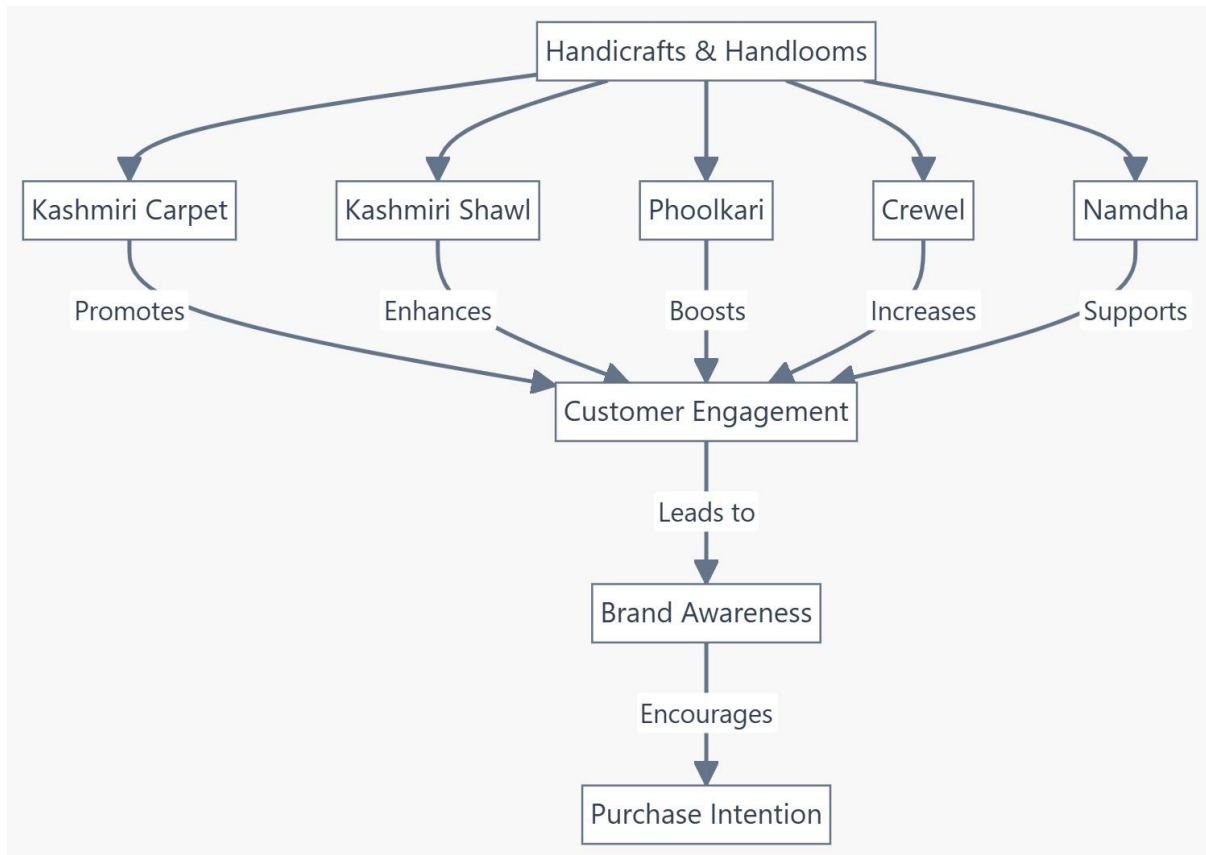
Table 1.8: Use of social media in the handicraft and handloom industry

Aspects	Key insights
Market Expansion	Social media and e-commerce have increased artists' reach, allowing for the global exhibition of handicrafts and handlooms. Knowledge Sourcing Intelligence. (2024, January).
Challenges	Limited digital abilities among craftsmen; just 7% of collectives have a website, highlighting the need for more digital training. Digital Empowerment Foundation. (2024).

Consumer Demand	Demand for special, handcrafted fabrics and ecological items has grown as a result of increasing digital exposure. Future Market Insights. (2024).
Awareness & Branding	Social media raises awareness of cultural relevance and history, attracting conscious customers. Future Market Insights. (2024).
Government Initiatives	Government portals and assistance (e.g., Indiahandmade.com) assist artists in accessing internet marketplaces and benefiting from digital exposure.OMR Global. (2024).

Sources: Future Market Insights. (2024)

1.9 Handicrafts and Handlooms Conceptual Framework



(Source : Author's own)

The flowchart provides a conceptual framework illustrating how traditional handicrafts and handlooms from Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) influence consumer behavior, particularly focusing on customer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention. The diagram categorizes five prominent craft forms—Kashmiri Carpet, Kashmiri Shawl, Phoolkari, Crewel, and Namdha—and highlights their individual contributions to customer engagement. For instance, Kashmiri Carpets *promote*, Shawls *enhance*, Phoolkari *boosts*, Crewel *increases*, and Namdha *supports* customer engagement. This engagement is seen as a critical intermediary step that leads to greater brand awareness, which in turn encourages purchase intention. The framework thus outlines a logical progression where cultural products are not only celebrated for their heritage but also strategically positioned to attract consumer interest through storytelling, branding, and digital interaction. It emphasizes that when these craft products are effectively marketed—especially using digital and visual platforms—they deepen consumer involvement, improve recall of the product's origin and uniqueness (often aided by GI tags), and ultimately

lead to informed and intentional buying decisions. This model offers valuable insights for artisans, marketers, and policymakers seeking to promote and commercialize heritage crafts in both domestic and global markets.

1.10 Benefits of Using Social Media in Marketing of Handloom Products

Social media has been a potent marketing tool for small businesses in recent years, particularly those that create handlooms and other handicrafts. Because of its low cost and wide reach, craftsmen may communicate with customers directly, cutting out conventional intermediaries and boosting profit margins. Fernando, A. R., & Perera, A. N. (2022). Visual storytelling, which uses high-quality photos and videos to highlight the elaborate patterns and cultural narratives behind handloom items, works especially well on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. This strategy not only improves visual appeal but also builds brand trust and emotional involvement. Noufa, S. S., Alexander, R., & Shanmuganathan, K. (2022). On social media, people connect rapidly and without delay, which may be utilized as collaborative capital to foster group innovation. It is a terrific notion that has to be implemented, of course. Furthermore, showcasing it is easy: just post it to your social media status or group social networking benefits people, particularly on an individual basis. Among these advantages are the opportunities to experiment with creativity and improvise in social situations. Tarigan, I. M., Harahap, M. A. K., Sari, D. M., Sakinah, R. D., & Ausat, A. M. A. (2023). According to recent studies, social media is revolutionizing the handloom industry and offering several tactical benefits. Through targeted campaigns and visually stunning storytelling, it raises brand recognition and product visibility at a far lower cost than traditional advertising. Artists may establish direct connections with customers, get immediate feedback, and grow their mailing lists naturally through newsletter sign-ups on social media sites like Facebook and Instagram. Furthermore, social media's ability to spread viral content encourages electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which includes user reviews, shares, and comments. This kind of content greatly increases the likelihood that people will make a purchase and builds a strong community around handloom goods. Agustina, A., Ambarwati, R., & Kumala Sari, H. (2023). Additionally, social media gives businesses access to extensive market information like competition research and demographic targeting, enabling them to customize their offers to suit customer preferences. The scalability of the platform promotes paid ad optimization, increasing reach without requiring an unaffordable investment. Together, these advantages not only increase sales but also help to preserve cultural heritage, give artists a means of subsistence, and position traditional crafts for international exposure. The handloom industry is well-positioned to

leverage these technologies for long-term growth and a competitive edge as digital usage continues to increase. Vijayalakshmi, N. S., & Shylendra Kumar, S. J. (2024).

Table 1.10: Benefits of Social Media in Handloom Marketing

Benefit	Key insights
Market coverage	Beyond local marketplaces, social media gives handloom companies access to national and international clients. Koh, P. S. (2024).
Cost-effective Marketing	For MSMEs with limited resources, platforms like Facebook and Instagram offer both free and paid options. Agustina, A., Ambarwati, R., & Sari, H. K. (2023).
Customer Engagement	Social media allows two-way communication, enabling artisans to receive feedback and respond instantly. Vijayalakshmi, N. S., & Shylendra Kumar, S. J. (2024).
Purchase Intentions	Features and attributes like reviews, shares, and influencer posts can boost buying and purchasing behavior. Fernando, A. R., & Perera, A. N. (2022).
Customer Loyalty	Frequent communication fosters a sense of community surrounding handloom brands, which promotes recurring business. Koh, P. S. (2024).

Source: Author's own

1.11 Conclusion

Digital media marketing is undergoing a fundamental transformation due to social media (Fakhreddin and Foroudi, 2022; Ren et al., 2023; Rodriguez, Peterson, and Krishnan, 2012). Sales personnel embrace the digital era by actively engaging clients in more dynamic digital interactions, particularly on social media platforms, according to recent Harvard Business Review (2022) research (Modern Retail, 2021). As per Forbes (2022), over 60% of consumers consider social media influencers while purchasing. Research indicates that these collaborations may yield a noteworthy return on investment, with \$4.87 generated for every \$1 invested in influencer marketing (Dash, 2023). Thus, to improve sales performance, firms are working with social media influencers more often (Schendzielarz, Alavi, and Guba, 2022). Learning and communicating with one another have been greatly impacted by social media.

Social media has changed education to make it more relevant and interesting than it can be as a platform to collaborate with peers worldwide, connect with experts in our fields of interest, and share information (Hortiguera Alcala, 2019). It specifically fosters a positive learning environment by promoting students' active engagement in class discussions, providing feedback from people with diverse backgrounds and cultures for various viewpoints on issues brought up, and facilitating peer group work using instant messaging or video conferencing tools. Businesses spotlight their target market and build enduring connections with consumers by employing efficient digital marketing solutions. Technology advancements drive the growth of digital marketing and the introduction of more potent instruments that support higher conversion rates. Social communications transitioned from an offline to an online setting, taking on new features that shaped user-company engagement. A considerable proportion of contemporary users are inclined towards communication through digital platforms, which fosters the emergence of diverse social networks. These networks differ in the way they structure messages and present material based on themes. The social network and microblogging platform Twitter began rebranding to X in 2023. This change included not only the name of the network but also updating its functionality and current offerings to reflect the needs of the contemporary market. Facebook changed its name to Meta in 2021 as a result of the necessity to build a virtual reality world that would serve as a social media platform for online user engagement Fernandez, P. (2022) The data gathered from diverse sources serves as an invaluable tool for determining how to optimize the best business's digital marketing strategy and provide commercially viable outcomes within predetermined timeframes. Moreover, businesses are well aware that it is vital to use social media to build online communities and spread information about their products through social media. There are 37000 handlooms in the area, and most of them are in the Kashmir valley. The need for expansion of this sector is very imminent in the aspect that this is one of the major players which is giving employment and also taking the cultural front of the country to a new phase (Najaret al. 2020). The demand for handicrafts and handlooms of J&K is not only famous in India but also in the international market. In the revival of the economy of the UT, the contribution of the sector is imminent as being an important segment of the SMEs in J&K. The issue lies in the study is that irrespective of having such fame there is a lack of contribution or inception of digital mean through which the products can be taken to a large target population and engage them in the process. Hence, there is the induction of digital media and the initiatives taken by the stakeholders in the total business operations to enhance the productivity and profitability in the sector, along with customer-enriched customer engagement. Which can generate a sizeable quantity of revenue

and a large number of job openings, the handloom industry is of vital importance to the economy of the state to supply both of these benefits. It is considered to be one of the most significant cultural traditions in this state. In terms of its visually rich intricacies and elaborate designs, handloom textiles just cannot be surpassed by any other kind of fabric (Mahaputra et al., 2021). The firm needs to use modern techniques, such as computer-aided designs, which give support to weavers in the process of generating new patterns for the company to attain its full potential. This can only be accomplished by adopting modern methods. Weavers would benefit from the government recognizing the critical need for a change in policy regarding the sector, as well as from the development of counselling organizations staffed by skilled professionals recruited from the same community. Weavers would also benefit from the government acknowledging the critical need for a change in policy regarding the sector. The last few years have seen a rise in the popularity of social networking websites, which have become some of the most visited locations on the internet. The ease with which content may be disseminated on social media platforms is a significant factor that contributes to the marketing industry's overall success. Since its inception, the handloom industry in the state has existed for a considerable amount of time and has had a substantial impact on the UT economy. The handloom business may benefit from expanded social media use in advertising in several ways, including increased sales, decreased marketing costs, increased brand awareness, and increased transparency about where buyers may buy specific handloom products. The growing usage of social media for advertising may result in these advantages. To realize its full potential and reach its ultimate potential, India's handloom industry needs to be adept at using social media to advertise itself. There is not much space for disagreement about the assertion that business owners and marketers will witness a significant effect as a direct consequence of social media in the next year. This assertion is supported by a large body of evidence. Marketing handloom products through social media can help reduce poverty and make the handloom industry more self-sufficient. This can be accomplished by increasing public awareness of handloom products, promoting and improving the skills of handloom weavers, creating new employment opportunities, assisting in the development of new designs, increasing the sale of their products, and providing income to weavers. This is performed through raising the general public's knowledge of handloom goods, fostering the promotion and improvement of handloom weavers' abilities, generating new job possibilities, boosting the sale of their products, and supplying the necessary resources. The usage of social media might be of assistance to the handloom sector in its efforts to compete with new opportunities and difficulties on a global scale. There is the potential for various social advantages to accrue if impediments to the

international trade of handloom items could be lifted. These benefits include the protection of India's time-honoured cultural traditions as well as the country's share of total global exports. It is recommended that the government of India encourage and support the use of social media by the handloom industry as a marketing tool to increase the familiarity of domestic customers with handloom items and their interest in purchasing them. The socio-economic well-being of the traditional weaver communities is seriously threatened by the handloom sector's declining position as a result of the textile industries' worldwide rivalry. The handloom industry has progressively declined over the past ten years due to increased competition from the contemporary textile industry, leaving thousands of weavers jobless or underemployed and leading to the large-scale closure of several societies and manufacturing units. Nevertheless, handlooms will maintain their market share due to their profound cultural and aesthetic worth; yet, to maintain both their market share and their historic significance, all types of manufacturing should be done to meet the needs of society. Therefore, to ensure the sustainability of the handloom industry, attention should also be paid to developing the skills of customers and marketers, marketing information systems, common facilities for mass storage and distribution, timely and cost-effective availability of all necessary resources, the implementation of regulated price mechanisms, the development of managerial skills, the prominent role that cooperative institutions play in the entire value chain, the need for training, the identification and bridge of skill gaps, modernization of existing resources without diluting the product's ethnicity, the creation of international markets and promotion, and policy initiatives to discourage the transition from weaving to industrial labour and traditional knowledge Mishra, S. S., & Mohapatra, A. D. (2024). social media marketing has emerged as a vital channel for the Indian handloom sector to engage customers. Rajendra Humbe (2023) demonstrates that handloom enterprises using social media platforms benefit from increased visibility, customer interaction, reduced marketing costs, and enhanced sales potential. A qualitative exploration of women-led digital entrepreneurship in handloom fashion (2024) elaborates that weaving brands narrate craft stories and cultural heritage through online channels. This narrative approach fosters emotional bond and trust with consumers. Further, a meta-analysis of influencer impact in fashion (2023–2024) underscores that influencers' credibility and content personalization significantly boost customer engagement, brand trust, and purchase intentions. Complementary analysis of digital marketing in textiles (2025) highlights how combined strategies like SEO, content marketing, and influencer collaboration support omni-channel engagement and deeper consumer interaction.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

A literature review is an important and vital component of research that exhibits the researcher's expertise in the subject, allowing the researcher to acknowledge the breadth and depth of the relevant issue (Okoli & Schabram, 2010).

In light of this, the current research review focuses on the relationship between several characteristics of digital customer engagement and purchase intention. The most important articles and other kinds of knowledge gathered via study, books, journals, papers, business Newspapers, and other sources have been utilized to learn about certain reviews. The literature study presented in this section demonstrates the antecedents of customer engagement, as well as the effects of brand awareness on purchase intention. The entire section indicates seven determinants, i.e., Platform Design, Content, Product, personal factors, customer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention. A conceptual framework derived from the recent work presented in this section indicates the relevant relationship among the various constructs. Particularly, the most pertinent studies have identified the antecedents that affect customer engagement through digital marketing or online purchasing. The details of determinants along with the consequences are presented as follows: -

2.1 Platform Design: Digital Media

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) is world-renowned for its rich tradition of handicrafts and handlooms, which reflect the region's unique cultural heritage, artistic finesse, and skilled craftsmanship. The sector is not only a vital part of J&K's identity but also a significant source of livelihood, especially in rural and artisan communities. Effective platform design is important for fostering customer engagement within the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. This includes the creation of a user-friendly interface that enhances accessibility and navigation for potential buyers. Jammu & Kashmir's handicrafts and handlooms represent a fusion of heritage, sustainability, and livelihood. A well-designed platform needs to reflect the unique artistry and the cultural significance of the handloom products by incorporating different features like high-quality images, detailed product descriptions, and customer reviews. This is integrated with the interactive aspects, such as virtual tours of weaving processes and live chat support, which can ensure a strong engagement with the customers. By prioritizing different types of aesthetics and functionality, the digital platforms can enhance customers' shopping experiences while bridging the gap between traditional craftsmanship and modern expectations of customers. An ex-ante design requires more commitment, focus, and feedback. Moreover, value generation

processes on platforms differ (McIntyre & Srinivasan, 2017). Platform design defines the layout of many design aspects of platform-based business models. First, how to promote and control value generation and capture it into smaller components and activities, and second, how to coordinate them to best enable platform value and ecosystem goals to be realized. The levels of openness of platform architecture (actors' access to resources and information) and governance (defining the norms of trade and sharing) define the potential for new value creation (Benial,882N. TURA ET AL.) nowadays, businesses are more realistic and work on creating digital relationships with their customers Soon, digital technology and gadgets like smartphones, smart goods, and artificial intelligence all promise to bring about major changes in consumer lifestyles. The development of digital technology is changing marketing tactics and procedures, which has important ramifications for digital marketing research. (Sahney & Arora, 2019) Digital platforms, nowadays, disrupt and upend businesses with their valuable propositions, by creating opportunities and opening doors for innovation and potential value. In general, it is said that digital platforms are special, and they offer services and work that can be done based on need and demand. Services include digital trade, remote work, and platform-mediated on-site work. (McIntyre & Srinivasan,2017). Digital platforms are widely recognized as a disruptive technology in the corporate world and are the primary focus of Information Systems (IS) research. The foundation of contemporary research on digital business models is digital platform business models, which majorly facilitate the creation of novel and innovative business models by arbitrating supply and demand between several entities (Guggenberger, Möller, Boualouch & Otto, 2020). New players in the corporate software space, including Workday and Salesforce, provided cloud-based platforms as opposed to on-premises ones. Because their platforms were made to be easier to use by outside developers, a greater variety of partners were able to create original solutions that expanded on the features provided by these innovative platforms. In response to the risks of disruption, several established enterprise software providers moved from their conventional technological setups (product platforms) and business models (product platform ecosystems) to innovation platforms, creating significantly larger ecosystems around them (Ceccagnoli et al., 2012; Schreieck et al., 2022). It is implied that incumbent businesses shift their primary resource from a product platform to an innovation platform to facilitate complementary innovations within the ecosystem throughout the shift from product platforms to innovation platform ecosystems (Schreieck et al., 2022. Thus, the shift from product platforms to innovation platform ecosystems involves different ecosystem organizing logics: optimizing the value appropriation of the focal firm versus raising the value of all firms in the ecosystem; managing a focal firm's exclusive resources versus capitalizing

on the development of multi-partner innovation; and enhancing the price and caliber of stand-alone offerings versus experimenting to produce integrated solutions (Stonig et al., 2022). Rather, the dynamic skills are needed to shift an ecosystem from a product platform to an innovation platform. Using the empirical data as a foundation, we can extract and distinguish dynamic capabilities, originality, ease of browsing, and error response, as well as the antecedents, consequences, and moderators of each of these capabilities.

Table 2.1: The Platform Design Role in Customer Engagement on Social Media

Elements of Platform Design	Impact on Customer Engagement
Customization / AI-driven logic	Customization can sometimes keep consumers in filter bubbles, and AI-driven recommendation systems boost time spent and brand engagement. Zhang et al., 2024
Interactive UX/UI Design	Features and attributes of social media, like stories, reels, polls, and reactions, encourage micro-engagements and real-time brand awareness and purchase intention. Shafer, 2025
Transparency	Social media platforms provide privacy settings, feed management, and content moderation, which foster trust, which is essential for long-term engagement. Hogg et al., 2024
Community Tools	Deeper involvement and emotional commitment in a company or cause are made possible via forums, live chats, co-creation tools, and specialist groups. Schafer, 2025
AR/VR Integration	Virtual influencers, 3D rooms, and augmented try-ons boost conversion rates and immersive brand interaction. Netty Awards, 2024.

(Source: Author's own)

2.2 Content Available on Social Media

The growing popularity of social media platforms has resulted in millions of new content pieces being published each day. This spike in content generation highlights the need to pay attention to our design decisions, which may have a significant influence on how long information remains relevant. In today's market, where promoting new material frequently is critical, especially in the lack of specific information, a range of elements, such as UI features,

algorithms, and system settings all play a role in structuring content journeys across platforms. While past research has focused on how new material influences user experiences, this study takes a different approach, examining these decisions in terms of the content itself. Saket, S., Agarwal, M., & Mehrotra, R. (2024). The content plays a significant role in engaging customers in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. For example, the e-commerce platform like the *Kashmir Box* uses the storytelling strategy for highlighting the rich heritage of the products, while reflecting different videos of artisans at work with the cultural significance of each item. Similar to that, J&K Handloom promotes its offerings through using blog posts, which can educate consumers regarding different types of weaving techniques and materials (Okat & Solak, 2020). Social media campaigns feature user-generated content, such as customers who are sharing their experiences and tips for storytelling to further amplify the brand's visibility and engagement. Such content strategies not only attract consumers but also celebrate and preserve the traditional craftsmanship, i.e., unique to the region. In a constantly changing environment, businesses need to use content marketing as a key tactic to advertise their goods and boost revenue. Content refers to the graphic components and pictures used in different types of communication, particularly marketing and branding. It includes all visual formats, such as photos, graphics, infographics, and videos, that are intended to transmit messages or information in a visually appealing manner. Content is critical in the digital age and online marketing because of its capacity to communicate quickly and effectively. Visual content may create emotions, express brand values, and aid in the comprehension of difficult information by including visual components such as color, shape, and design. As a result, visual information serves not only as a supplement to text but also as a strategic element that may boost attractiveness and engagement in marketing (Okat & Solak, 2020). Digital content is the art of engaging with customers without explicitly selling products. Creating quality content and engaging e-conversation may help a firm connect with existing consumers, attract new ones, maintain customer loyalty, and establish a trustworthy brand. The organization may increase sales-related activity through consumer involvement, loyalty, and relationships. In the long run (Holliman 2014). Attractive content combines branded, random, and customer-relevant material. Therefore, it is relevant to consumer engagement and syndication creating great content and customer engagement, a company can build brand awareness, acquire new customers, retain customer loyalty, and achieve repeat sales (Holliman, 2014; Hollebeek and Macky, 2019). Sellers may engage buyers through direct discussion and continual connection. Furthermore, great content contributes to client loyalty through two-way communication (2004; Ahmad et al., 2016; Naidoo and Hollebeek, 2016). Companies use social media as part

of Social Network Marketing (SNM) to cultivate both long-term and immediate content delivery (Madsen and Slåtten, 2015; Ahmad et al., 2016; Wertalik, 2017; Mason et al., 2021b; Abbas et al., 2022). In the context of digital marketing, attraction and conversion are critical metrics for determining the performance of a campaign. Visually appealing content can lead to increased conversion rates since customers are more likely to interact and respond positively to marketers' intended behaviours. Understanding the link between attraction and conversion is crucial for establishing effective marketing strategies and maximizing campaign outcomes. Marketers may improve their digital marketing efforts, hone their targeting tactics, and customize the consumer experience by utilizing data analytics tools and methodologies. Conversations on the elements that lead to success in digital marketing also frequently touch on content marketing. Optimizing website exposure and search rankings using SEO tactics is vital for boosting organic traffic and maximizing online visibility, given the dominance of search engines as portals to online information. In the context of digital inbound marketing, content marketing is a vital component that encourages value creation and customer interaction. The concept of 'content marketing' gives an understanding of the core elements of this digital marketing approach as well as strategies that businesses might use in online environments. As stated by Chandra and colleagues (2022). The real-time learning capabilities of AI enable managers to regularly improve the consumer value proposition by developing a strategy of carefully selected items that raise customer happiness. The study signifies that platform design is not just content or algorithm strength it determines what content gets on users' radar. It recommends lifecycle-aware design adjustments to enable diverse voices to gain fair visibility. Saket, S., Agarwal, M., & Mehrotra, R. (2024)

2.3 Product Quality and Its Value

Global accessibility of the internet has enabled millions of individuals worldwide to be potential clients for a particular business's goods and services. Customers are paying more attention to their daily online shopping as a direct result of the quick improvements in information technology, as well as the rising level of competition results of the survey indicate that the websites with the best user experiences also generate the most online sales (Khan, Alam and Kumar, 2020). Handicraft and handloom goods are valued not just for their aesthetic and cultural appeal, but also for their superior quality and long-term worth. Each piece is unique due to its handcrafted nature, which features artisanal textures, natural material integrity, and cultural histories. Recent studies show that this handicraft promotes financial stability, sustainability, and handcrafted standards of quality. Mishra, S. S., & Mohapatra, A. K. D.

(2023). Handicraft and handloom items have both tangible and intangible worth because of their distinctive craftsmanship, environmental responsibility, and cultural history. Their durability encourages long-term usage, and their manufacture promotes sustainable livelihoods. As worldwide consumers increasingly value ethical and artisanal goods, handcrafted objects attain both a premium price and long-term customer demand. Mishra, S. S., & Mohapatra, A. K. D. (2023).

Role of Product Quality and Value

1. Excellent craftsmanship and distinctive qualities: Customers who are conscious of manual workmanship place a high value on handloom textiles because they frequently have uneven textures, noticeable imperfections, and distinctive weave patterns—authentic indicators of skilled artisanal manufacture. Due to their inherent uniqueness and the artisan's personal touch, these objects have cultural and emotional value.

2. Sustainability: Human-powered weaving combined with the use of natural fibers and colors produces low carbon emissions and less use of hazardous chemicals. In stark contrast to the disposable nature of quick fashion, handloom fabrics are robust and frequently handed down through the generations.

3. Socio-Economic Value: It is estimated that 3.5 million weavers in India, primarily women, rely on the handloom industry for their living, making it a crucial employer in rural regions that promotes economic empowerment and social inclusion. Programs from the government and non-governmental organizations (such as India's NHDP and skill development projects) assist artisans' sustainable income and help uphold quality standards.

4. Market Demand: The worldwide handloom market was estimated to be worth USD 8.32 billion in 2024 and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 8–9% through 2030 due to consumers' conscious desire for items that are culturally, environmentally, and personalized. In areas like Europe, North America, and Asia-Pacific, sustainability, customization, and cultural authenticity are important factors.

2.4 Personal Factors: Urge to Purchase

The personal factors that influence a consumer's purchasing behaviour include age and life stages, employment, personality, lifestyle, and values. Personal characteristics have direct and indirect effects. Some of these have an immediate impact on purchase intention and awareness, while others have an indirect impact. Businesses should emphasize the personal element, which

generally applies to both specialized and everyday items. (Kotler & Keller 2016, pp. 183; Kotler et al., 2017, pp. 147.) Research and studies highlight how important individual characteristics—such as personality, social influence, social media usage, and time and money availability—are in determining buying impulses. These factors influence behaviors like eWOM, which in turn influence purchase intent and brand loyalty, in addition to causing instant expenditure resulting in impulse purchasing. Nizam, K., Ali, A., Iqbal, I., & Akram, M. (2024).

It is often deciding what products, services, or brands to buy, and many of them are not aware of the factors that affect their choice. These factors may be divided into four categories according to their distinct features: economic, sociological, psychological, and personal. The best indicators of eWOM behavior are human characteristics, which have a far greater impact than aspects of the product, such as brand trust. Furthermore, repurchase intention was positively connected with both positive and negative eWOM intents, suggesting that the desire to provide feedback—motivated by individual characteristics—serves as a motivating factor for further purchases. In order to successfully impact consumers' desire to buy and interact, marketers should include personal-level insights into their tactics, focusing on emotional, cognitive, and social motivators. Anastasiei, B., Dospinescu, N., & Dospinescu, O. (2024).

There are psychological, social or cultural, economic, and personal aspects of purchasing
Personal factors include the following:

2.4.1 Age and Life Phase of Customers

Consumers' purchasing habits are always shifting as they get older, go through different life stages, or go through different relationship phases. At different stages of life, people have varied tastes in products. For instance, a 70-year-old guy could purchase a family vehicle instead of a sports car. The marketers have divided the population into many age groups: under 12, 13 to 18 years, 19 to 26 years, 27 to 35 years, 36 to 50 years, and above 50 years. During these phases of life, an individual's purchasing habits are always evolving. These days influence a consumer's purchasing decisions for the rest of his life. The second is the many life cycle phases. The many stages of the life cycle of human relationships include getting married, getting divorced, having kids, having kids go to college, retiring, and so on. At different stages of life, consumers also have diverse choices. It might happen when someone gets married, after being married, after having kids, and when those kids go to college. Businesses frequently select the target market to sell their products in, as well as develop marketing plans depending on the various stages of a consumer's life cycle or age. Companies may base the creation of their products on the ages or life cycle stages of their target audience. (Kotler and others, 2017)

2.4.2 Occupation

A type of work done at a job is called an occupation. The term "set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterized by a high degree of similarities" refers to the notion of occupation (N.A., 2012). One aspect of a person's personality that influences their purchasing decisions is their occupation. Businesses should consider the needs of the consumer while developing new products or setting prices. Doctors, engineers, teachers, businesspeople, drivers, students, and so on are among the occupations. A consumer's profession influences the products or services they choose to purchase. For example, a businessman could purchase more costly goods or services than other professions. (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 148; Kotler & Keller, 2016, pages. 185).

2.4.3 Personality

Kotler defines personality as "the distinctive psychological traits that set an individual or group apart." Typically, personality is defined in terms of characteristics like aggression, defensiveness, adaptability, sociability, dominance, and self-assurance (Kotler et al., 2017, pp. 150). A consumer's personality is revealed when they choose to buy a certain branded product over other branded products. Additionally, brands have distinct personalities. "Brand personality" is described by Kotler & Keller as "the unique combination of human attributes that we can attribute to a specific brand" (Kotler & Keller, 2016, pp. 185). The five brand personality attributes were determined by Jennifer Aaker in her research study, "Dimension of measuring brand personality": Sincerity, Enthusiasm, Sophistication, and Toughness (Kotler et al., 2017, pp. 150). Most marketers create tactics based on the characteristics of their target audience to persuade them to buy their products or services. One of the personal characteristics that influence a customer's purchasing behaviour is their personality.

2.4.5 Lifestyle

A person's lifestyle is how they conduct themselves in the world while leading their unique existence. Every individual has a unique way of living. "A person's pattern of living as expressed in his or her activities, interests, and opinions" is Kotler's definition of lifestyle. A person's activities, interests, and ideas make up their lifestyle. Activities include a person's job, interests, hobbies, sports, and social gatherings. A person's interests include things like cuisine, clothes, family, and leisure activities. Opinions relate to the individual, societal issues, and commercial products. A person's lifestyle shapes their perception of the community. A buyer purchases a lifestyle in addition to a product. Businesses can benefit from the analysis of customer lifestyles.

2.5 Customer Engagement on Digital Media

In the business realm, engagement is known as a contract. Management literature refers to this as an organizational activity involving internal stakeholders. In marketing, customer engagement (CE) refers to a customer's interaction with a company (Kumar et al. 2010; Brodie et al. 2011; Vivek et al. 2012). The previous studies consistently agree that CE is impacted by marketing operations and can impact the performance of the business. Various definitions highlight the distinction between conceptualizing and defining CE (Singh et al., 2024). The rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed marketing practices across industries, enabling businesses to interact with customers through multiple online channels such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and digital content marketing. Contemporary research highlights that digital marketing initiatives enhance customer engagement by enabling interactive communication, personalized experiences, and continuous brand interaction (Singh et al., 2024). Similarly, recent research on customer engagement in the digital era suggests that responsive social media communication, personalized content, and interactive digital experiences play a vital role in increasing consumer involvement and strengthening brand relationships (Razak, 2024). These findings indicate that digital media initiatives are not merely promotional tools but strategic mechanisms for building long-term customer relationships. Digital platforms facilitate two-way communication between businesses and consumers, allowing organizations to strengthen customer relationships and improve brand loyalty. Studies show that digital marketing tools such as social media campaigns, targeted advertising, and content marketing significantly improve customer experience and engagement levels. There are many options to display and share different types of material with users through consumer applications. Emails, push alerts, and in-app surfaces may all be used for anything from marketing campaigns for new features or subscriptions to persistent engagement nudges or tailored suggestions. Effective personalization of content, time, frequency, and copywriting is hindered by the traditional orchestration for communication strategy, which mostly depends on labor-intensive manual marketing. In order to maximize incremental engagement for every funnel event, we construct this job within a sequential decision-making framework. Our goal is to optimize a modular decision-making strategy. Subramanian, V., Bhatia, A., Mehta, H., & Ganapathy, A. (2024). Several studies also support that personalization and omnichannel interaction are the most influential drivers of engagement, others highlight the role of community interaction and user-generated content in creating emotional connections with brands (Kumar et al., 2025). Social media has ingrained itself into our daily lives and offers both consumers and advertisers a variety of options. Social media, which is defined as a

collection of internet applications that facilitate the creation and sharing of user-generated content, has also served as a research outlet for a wide range of studies, including those on how social media brand pages can increase brand loyalty, how to analyze consumer sentiment from user-generated content and tweets, how to encourage citizen participation, and how to support businesses' public relations efforts. Additionally, social media gives businesses the chance to draw in, communicate with, keep, and connect with customers. The architecture for AI-driven content orchestration greatly increased user engagement across a variety of user touchpoints and product features, optimizing content kind, timing, frequency, and channel. Agentic customization may successfully increase incremental consumer engagement at scale, as demonstrated by the successful implementation of Subramanian, V., Bhatia, A., Mehta, H., & Ganapathy, A. (2025).

2.6 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness it comes to influencing consumer perception, trust, and buying decisions, brand awareness is crucial. Given the abundance of internet content, brands need to stand out not just with high-quality products but also with a recognisable and consistent online presence. In the face of competition, brand awareness aids customers in remembering and identifying a product or service. Building an emotional and cultural connection with audiences is greatly aided by digital storytelling, influencer engagement, and visual branding on social media platforms in industries like handicrafts and handlooms, particularly in areas like Jammu & Kashmir. Enhancing first-time discovery via SEO, hashtags, and paid ads. Building consumer trust through verified reviews, endorsements, and certifications. Supporting customer loyalty through repeat engagement on platforms like Instagram Reels, WhatsApp Business, and live digital events. Sharma, R., & Qureshi, A. (2024). In short, brand awareness is no longer limited to visual identity—it encompasses how effectively a brand communicates its value, purpose, and story in the digital space. Patel, M., & Joshi, R. (2024). Driving organic reach through user-generated content and community building. Brand Awareness is a major concern for companies looking to differentiate themselves in crowded industries and create enduring bonds with customers. It describes how well-known a brand's name, goods, and principles are to customers, and it has a significant impact on their choice to buy as well as their level of loyalty and trust. Brand awareness can be attained by establishing a Strong relationship with customers who are engaged with a brand. In the digital age, software facilitates client connection with destination management on online platforms, mostly social media. This has resulted in a shift in brand engagement. Building a strong brand, creating satisfying brand experiences, and adding value

for both consumers and businesses all depend on engagement. Influencer marketing greatly increases customer engagement (Yohanes, Suharyati, and Ediwarman, 2021). In the framework of marketing, businesses concentrate on raising consumer awareness to elicit the intended audience's reactions. According to Keller (2003), brand awareness refers to the cognitive representation of a brand and is described as "personal meaning about a brand stored in consumer memory, that is, all descriptive and evaluative brand-related information" (p. 596). It has to do with the ease and probability with which a brand will be remembered. According to Keller (1993), brand familiarity and brand recognizability make up brand awareness. One of the keystones in the customer purchase process is the consumers' knowledge of the company or brand. A greater level of awareness may increase the likelihood that customers will buy goods or services. It may give the business a stable, long-term competitive edge. Social media marketers focus on raising public awareness to influence perceptions, associations, and attitudes toward a certain company or brand Foroudi et al., (2014). In most businesses, people automatically recognize the term "brand awareness," which is a little nebulous and broad. According to Foroudi et al. (2014) and (2016), it is a tool that focuses on establishing and creating a target audience's familiarity and recognition of a certain brand. By fostering associations and beliefs within a target audience, businesses may influence customer attitudes about a brand or company through the use of consumer awareness. Increased awareness might lead to a higher chance of sales for products or services. It could provide the company with a steady, long-term competitive advantage. Businesses may use consumer awareness to affect customer attitudes about a brand or company by cultivating associations and beliefs among a target demographic. Increased brand awareness among customers makes the brand more prominent, which increases the possibility that consumers will remember the brand when making a purchase Yasin et al., 2007). Raising awareness of a topic or campaign may ultimately result in desirable and beneficial shifts in the mindset of a brand. The characteristic that is often found satisfactory can be seen more favourably and lead to a more favourable opinion of the brand. When a customer has an emotional connection to a product or service, they are more inclined to engage in marketing efforts and to spread the word about the company to their friends and family. Under the banner of relationship marketing, customer engagement expands beyond the conventional buyer-seller dynamic to encompass any combinations of prospective and existing consumers, in addition to any other stakeholders. This expands the scope of what is typically known as two-way communication, making it more appropriate to use the term. The fact that users have access to these kinds of tools is a significant advantage of using social media; these tools enable users to interact with companies more effectively and, as a result,

enhance engagement. The fact that users have access to these tools is a significant advantage of using social media. Customers are the individuals who, in the end, determine the amount of success that a company achieves; thus, an increasing number of businesses are realizing that they need to establish personal connections with their clients that are two-way streets. Customer engagement is a concept that has gained popularity in recent years to describe the emotional connection that may emerge between a company and its customers as a result of the participation of the customers in the relationship that the company has with the latter. This concept describes the emotional connection that can emerge between a company and its customers as a result of the participation of the consumers in the relationship that the company has with them. Businesses that are interested in maintaining client engagement will benefit from utilizing modern information and communication technologies because these tools make it possible to share information with customers and maintain direct contact with them. Businesses that are interested in maintaining client engagement will benefit from utilizing modern information and communication technologies (Liu et al., 2020). Although businesses that rent costumes and props have been around for some time, relatively little research has been done to identify how owners of such businesses might maximize the profits they make from such endeavours. There is a lot of competition in the market for renting costumes and accessories, just as there is in every other industry. These days, there are a lot of people who go shopping to only use the things they purchase once. This is because fashion trends are continually shifting, and a rising number of individuals are taking photographs of themselves to post online. Together, these factors have caused this phenomenon. This is something that may be used to find a local business that rents out costumes in a more uncomplicated way. As a consequence of this, companies are establishing new channels of communication with customers in an attempt to encourage customer engagement in the process of producing new products and services. Businesses must develop strategies and put those strategies into action if they are to maintain their current position in the market and their competitive edge over other businesses. The firms' place in the market, it is essential for them to invest resources into discovering ways to more effectively connect businesses with consumers, therefore allowing them to deliver their products to customers. This is necessary for the companies to maintain their market position. Because of this, companies will be able to get the knowledge necessary to engage with customers in a more efficient manner (Kaur, et al., 2020). Because businesses are acutely aware of the significance of maintaining and expanding their network of devoted customers, they are always on the lookout for new channels via which they may engage the demographic they have determined to be their ideal customer base. In any case, customer

engagement may be impacted by a wide range of factors, in addition to factors such as satisfaction, quality, and perceived value, amongst others. For this reason, extensive research in a number of situations is essential since it will assist in portraying a more realistic picture while also helping to consolidate the theoretical foundation for consumer involvement.

2.7 Purchase intention

Purchase intention and decision-making are related; both include customers expressing their likelihood, desire, or intent to buy particular brands (Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard, 2015). Purchase intention refers to a consumer's likelihood or willingness to buy a product or service. In the context of digital marketing (2024–2025), it is heavily influenced by multiple online touchpoints, including social media engagement, online reviews, influencer endorsements, website UX, and digital brand storytelling. For sectors like handicrafts and handlooms, particularly in regions like Jammu & Kashmir, digital marketing helps translate brand heritage and craftsmanship into value-driven content that builds trust and ultimately affects a buyer's intent. Purchase intention is not just shaped by product features, but also by how emotionally connected a consumer feels with the brand through digital engagement. Khan, S., & Mehra, T. (2024). According to Soebagyo (2014), purchase intention is a part of consumer behavior or the attitude toward particular goods or services. Several signs can be used to identify it (Putri, 2017). The current study made the argument that while the link between online purchase intent and behavior has generally been shown to be positive and significant, the strength of the relationship has varied depending on the study's specific setting. Several things may have an impact on how strong the intention-behavior link is, other than experiences and impulses; other factors may also have an impact on an individual's behavioral intentions while making live-streamed online transactions. Behaviour is determined by attitudes and perceived worth, like the internet. Shopping addiction, behavior based on self-worth, self-resolving issues, and opulent conduct in daily existence, internet transaction expertise, and/or other similar behavioral attributes, might result in modifications to the decision-making process for purchases (Q. Su et al., 2020). These action characteristics are thought to directly influence consumers' propensity to make online purchases. In the context of the Internet, buying intention denotes a customer's intention to buy a brand from a certain website (Shaouf et al., 2016). Additionally, online purchase intention is viewed by Ganguly et al. (2009, p. 27) as "the final consequence of several cues for the e-commerce customer. "The impact of consumer engagement on consumer behaviors, such as word of mouth, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty intent (Dwivedi, 2015; Islam and Rahman, 2016a; Khan et al., 2016). Previous studies show that purchasing intent and actual buying

behaviors are positively correlated (Morwitz et al., 2007; Shaouf et al., 2016). Additionally, the Purchasing Intention Indicator rates items according to the buyer's requirements and inclinations. There are several important and deserving components to the purchase behavior of consumers. These components consist of product selection, purchase timing, buy amount, purchase method, dealer preference, and brand choice (Hawkins & Mothersbaugh, 2010). Several factors or indications influence choice. When presented with two or more distinct options, one such choice concerns the range of options (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2008). Levy and BA (2012) assert that a trader must successfully create a sense of confidence that motivates clients to engage in buying activities by identifying elements that influence consumer purchasing behavior. Purchasing intention must foster an organization that is exceptional at judging purchasing behavior. This means acknowledging that other entities are influencing and stimulating the behavior that is being observed (Kotler & Lane, 2009). Moreover, customer acquisition patterns consistently need a combination of many behavioral tendencies. Kotler (2008) states that there are five different groups into which buying behavior may be divided: initiator, influencer, decision maker, buyer, and user. For purchase intervention market demand, which takes into account variables like price points, income levels, and the period under consideration, is the number of products or services that customers are willing and able to acquire within a certain market (Prayudi et al., 2019). According to Sarnowo and Sunyoto (2013), several variables, such as the item's price, income level, population, and the cost of other commodities, affect how much demand there is for either private or public goods. A rise in a good's price causes the desired quantity to drop. On the other hand, there is a corresponding rise in the quantity asked. Purchase intention is increasingly driven by interactive, personalized, and emotionally resonant marketing strategies. Consumers are not only influenced by product quality or price but also by digital experiences, such as influencer endorsements, user-generated content, social proof, and immersive storytelling. Verma, A., & Sheikh, M. I. (2024). For traditional sectors like handicrafts and handlooms, digital platforms have become crucial in shaping consumer behavior. When cultural authenticity is effectively communicated through digital media, it can significantly strengthen purchase intention. Trust-building elements such as verified reviews, detailed product visuals, and transparent brand messaging are now essential components of online decision-making. Ultimately, the brands that succeed in converting interest into action are those that combine emotional engagement with digital convenience, aligning their online presence with the values and expectations of digitally savvy consumers.

2.8 Relationship between platform design and customer engagement

A multilateral platform-based business is referred to as platform design. An ex-ante design is essential in the platform-based company to draw more attention and contributions. Many design characteristics of platform-based business models are defined by platform design. Platform design plays a critical role in driving customer engagement in the digital ecosystem. A well-designed digital platform—whether an e-commerce site, social media page, or mobile app—directly influences how users interact with content, navigate features, and make decisions.

From 2023 to 2024, key design elements such as interface simplicity, mobile responsiveness, loading speed, personalized recommendations, and interactive features (like chatbots, reels, or reviews) have proven to significantly impact user retention and engagement. Platforms that provide a seamless and immersive user experience tend to encourage longer browsing times, higher interaction rates, and stronger emotional connections with brands.

In sectors like handicrafts and handlooms, an intuitive and visually rich digital platform allows customers to connect with the story, texture, and authenticity of the product, leading to greater engagement, trust, and ultimately, purchase behaviour. Banerjee, R., & Gupta, L. (2023). Using organizational design literature (e.g., Mintzberg 1979; Burton, Obey, and DeSanctis 2011), we consider platform design as a solution to solve two connected difficulties. First, how to encourage and govern value production and capture into smaller components and activities, and second, how to coordinate them so that platform value and ecosystem goals may be accomplished to the greatest extent possible. Based on existing organizational design and platform literature, we identified four primary categories. Platform Architecture Platform-based ecosystems, like product platforms, provide a variety of building components from which designers must choose. Meyer and Lehnerd (1997). The platform architecture is concerned with concerns such as developing platform actors, markets, and fundamental structure. The first challenge is establishing the platform's principal purpose and core interaction, which comprises important interactions as well as associated aims and goals (Gawer and Cusumano, 2008; VanAlstyne, Parker, and Choudary, 2016). Because platforms are built around two-sided or multi-sided markets, the second step is to identify the relevant market structures and key actors representing different structures by identifying the set and types of platform users, as well as the minimum required stakeholders for the system to function (Morris and Ferguson, 1993; Van Alstyne, 1993). Van Alstyne, Parker, and Choudary (2016); Morris and Ferguson (1993). Other aspects to consider are platform openness and potential. Participation limitations have been proposed by Hagi (2006), Parker and Van Alstyne (2008), and Eisenmann, Parker, and Van

Alstyne (2009). Various academic fields, including political science, organizational behaviour, psychology, and sociology, have used the word "engagement" (Brodie et al., 2011). The words "brand engagement," "customer engagement," and "consumer engagement" first appeared in marketing literature in 2005 (Brodie et al., 2011). customers can have in their interactions with a business, including physical, emotional, and cognitive presence (Patterson et al., 2006), clients at every point of contact (Bowden et al., 2017). The research priorities for 2018–2020 also address engagement, emphasizing the best ways to guarantee that customers engage with the company, connecting it to media strategy optimization, and emphasizing the "moments" in the data that may indicate a unique engagement (Marketing Science Institute, 2018).

2.9 Relationship between content and customer engagement

Content emerged as a key driver of customer engagement across digital platforms. High-quality, relevant, and emotionally resonant content directly influences how consumers interact with brands online. Whether through storytelling, educational posts, or visually appealing media, effective content builds trust, sustains attention, and encourages actions such as likes, shares, comments, and purchases. Research and study highlight that informative and entertaining content significantly increases both cognitive (attention, interest) and emotional (affinity, loyalty) engagement. Personalized and authentic messaging, especially on social media, creates a sense of connection and community, motivating customers to become more involved with the brand. Aggarwal, P., & Chauhan, K. (2023). Customer engagement is essentially interactive; it may play out differently for highly interactive services (vs. physical objects) (e.g., Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014), providing considerable literature-based insight. We investigate CE's nomological network in the context of sports, which encompasses both service-based (such as sports clubs) and physical goods-based (such as sports stores). Harrigan et al. (2018) define Customer engagement as an interactive concept that emerges from interactions between customers and brands or enterprises. These contacts with CE represent the customer's resource investments. Depending on their level of devotion, they might expect a wide range of outcomes. Low (also known as un- or disengaged) consumers, according to Harrigan et al. (2018) and Hollebeek et al. (2014) study, consumers who are not involved with a brand have a limited propensity to participate in their interactions, whereas highly engaged consumers devote substantial thought, time, and effort to their brand interactions. This affects dependent variables such as client loyalty and self-brand connection. Vargo and Lusch (2016) define "mutual or reciprocal action or influence" as "mutual or reciprocal action or influence." It has thus far been studied mostly in the context of services

rather than physical things. CE is frequently viewed as a multi-dimensional word that incorporates cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components, according to Baldus et al. (2015), Calder et al. (2009), and Vivek et al. (2012). CE denotes a variable that is very context-dependent. In light of this, Hollebeek et al. (2019, p. 173) believe that CE varies "across contextual contingencies." CE may demonstrate that it can manifest as a negative, neutral, or positive valence, with variable levels of intensity that fluctuate based on the surroundings. Chandler and Lusch (2015) define CE as "the individual's context," which comprises chronological, relational, geographical, personal, and other situational elements.

2.10 Relationship between product and customer engagement

Research confirmed that the nature and presentation of the product itself play a crucial role in driving customer engagement. Customers are more likely to interact with and remain loyal to brands that offer products perceived as valuable, unique, customizable, and authentic, especially in niche sectors like handicrafts and handlooms. Products that reflect cultural significance, allow for personalization, or come with compelling stories (e.g., artisan backgrounds or sustainable processes) are more likely to encourage active interaction, such as social media sharing, reviews, and repeat purchases. This is particularly true in sectors that rely on experience-based differentiation, not just price or function. Sharma, R., & Rajput, N. (2023). Waller and Ahire (1996) define product quality based on how customers perceive real quality vs their perceptions of product quality in terms of performance, dependability, durability, and conformity. According to Keller's 2008 study, brand judgment often begins with good quality (product) evaluations, but attitudinal attachment is nearly always required for consumer engagement to develop. Product quality is "often considered to contribute to the development of competitive advantage, then the design and manufacture of products tailored to meet customer requirements should enhance quality performance" (Benson, Saraph, & Darwin Dhasan, and Mayuree Aryupong Schroeder, 1991).

According to Van Doorn et al. (2010), the higher the perceived product quality, the higher the level of consumer involvement. According to Harrigan et al. (2018) and Hollebeek et al. (2014), low (also known as un- or disengaged) consumers are only prepared to invest a small amount of thought, time, and effort in their brand interactions, whereas highly engaged customers invest a large amount of thought, time, and effort. This affects dependent variables such as client loyalty and self-brand connection. According to Vargo and Lusch (2016), "mutual or reciprocal action or influence," CE has been studied mostly in the context of services rather than physical objects. CE is frequently viewed as a multi-dimensional word that incorporates cognitive,

emotional, and behavioral components, according to Baldus et al. (2015), Calder et al. (2009), and Vivek et al. (2012). CE denotes a variable that is very context-dependent.

2.11 Relationship between personal factors and customer engagement

Studies emphasized that personal factors—such as age, income, education, lifestyle, values, and digital literacy—play a significant role in shaping how customers engage with brands, especially in online environments. Customers engage differently based on demographics (e.g., Gen Z tends to prefer visual content and short-form videos), Psychographics (e.g., environmentally conscious consumers respond more to sustainable product messaging), and Motivations and personality traits (e.g., those high in novelty-seeking are more likely to engage with creative or innovative campaigns). These personal attributes affect the type, frequency, and depth of engagement. For instance, a digitally literate, socially active consumer is more likely to comment, share, or create content, whereas a value-driven consumer might engage more with cause-based campaigns or artisan stories in the handicraft sector. Kapoor, S., & Yadav, R. (2023). The "Holy Grail of social media," according to Habibi et al. (2014)p 156, is consumer brand involvement, a highly context-dependent psychological state that consists of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral aspects, which are crucial to the process of interpersonal communication. Moreover, according to Brodie et al. (2011), engagement is a reflection of motivation, varies in intensity and valence, and arises from a person's (the "engagement subject") interactive experiences with a focal object (the "engagement object"), which could be a focal brand, organization, or product offering. Following a recent movement in scholarly emphasis towards a broader, relational orientation, engagement has received a lot of attention in the branding literature (Vivek et al., 2012). It's crucial to build dynamic consumer-brand interactions (Dessart et al., 2015).

Social media has emerged as a primary medium for customers to communicate with companies due to its interactive character (Dolan et al., 2016). Yet, scholarly and managerial understanding of the nature and dynamics characterizing consumers' online engagement practices is limited to date (Hollebeek et al., 2017), despite the growing interest among academics and practitioners on how to manage brand presence and engage customers on social media (Dessart, 2017). Previous research has mostly focused on Facebook and lacked context-specific approaches. Hollebeek et al. (2014) defined CBE as a multidimensional construct that centers on brands as the objective of engagement. It is characterized as a "consumer's positively valence brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand interactions." Page 154. Thus, three CBE dimensions are thinking activation,

attachment, and processing (the cognitive and emotional CBE dimensions). The definition of cognitive processing is "a consumer's degree of brand-related reasoning and clarification in a specific consumer-brand exchange. Putting a strong emphasis on brands as engagement objects, Hollebeek et al. (2014) conceived that a "consumer's positive valence brand-related cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity during or related to focal consumer/brand" is the definition of CBE, a multidimensional concept.

2.12 Relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention.

Buyers have a purchase intention when they are likely to purchase a particular product under particular circumstances (Venkateswara Rao & Elavarasan, 2022). According to Shah et al. (2012), a buyer is inclined to acquire a certain product in a specific circumstance. An effective tool for predicting purchasing decisions is purchase intention (Ghosh et al., 2021). Proximity to buying, perceived value, perceived quality, and price can all significantly influence this desire. Both internal and external influences might have an impact on purchasers during the purchasing process (Gogoi, 2013). Due to its significance, buying intention has been investigated by several researchers across cultural boundaries and has been connected to several variables, including perceived behavior, among other factors. Peña-García et al. (2020) mention compatibility, control, perceived utility, and subjective norm. Nonetheless, in the era of digital communication, buyers routinely utilize online reviews to inform their selections (Thomas et al., 2019). Customers' intentions to buy are influenced by how involved they are with a company on social media (McClure and Seock, 2020). Therefore, we propose that brand awareness serves as the foundation for the consumer's purchasing intention. The degree of customer knowledge of a certain brand's goods, services, or reputation is known as brand awareness.

Brand image is a major mediating factor in the era of digital communication (Tariq et al., 2017). Therefore, in the era of digital communication, brand awareness might not be enough to increase customers' purchase intentions. Thus, in the era of digital communication, a crucial question emerges as to how and when brand awareness leads to purchase intention to provide a more complete picture of this connection. However, because customers are deeply diverse, their attitudes about the informed brand may be influenced by the two primary components of attitude—thinking and emotion. According to Olmedo et al. (2020), a celebrity endorser is an influencer who utilizes any social media platform to promote products or a company. Increasing brand awareness boosts the possibility that a consumer would purchase the brand, which is crucial when making selections. Customers are more likely to remember a brand when they are

exposed to it, which makes it easier for them to recognize and recall it in certain situations. Furthermore, brand awareness is an important phenomenon as it has a big impact on customers' intentions and buying decisions (Shahid et al., 2017). Customers usually opt to purchase goods and services from brands that are more recognizable to them and that they feel more at ease doing business with. Alongside brand awareness tends to rise the ability and likelihood to purchase and think about the brand (Sharma et al., 2021). In a similar vein, although customers are continuously exposed to a wide range of brands, they are more likely to remember and recall those that are well-known, well-liked, and well-respected in the industry.

Consumer awareness of a brand influences their propensity to purchase that brand (Kim & Kim, 2016). Dabbous and Barakat (2020) attempt to explain how social media brand engagement and content quality affect customers' brand awareness and buying intentions in the era of digital communication in light of this expanding technological trend. Before customers can develop a relationship with a brand, it must first exist in their minds, with well-known companies, as people always consider them before purchasing. purchase choice is crucial since online buying intention has a major role in determining correct purchase decision-making (Riaz et al. 2021).

2.13. Effect of personal factors on customer engagement

Personal factors consist of Increased participation might be fuelled by personal incentives like active social media usage or self-assurance in one's assessments. Customers are more inclined to provide evaluations and feedback when they portray themselves as marketing experts or try to critically assess things, which increases their continued involvement and brand loyalty. Anastasiei, B., Dospinescu, N., & Dospinescu, O. (2024). Emotional resonance is another factor that determines customer engagement, in addition to whether or not someone engages with the information. According to this study, a user's gender and cultural background have an impact on how they feel and communicate their emotions online. Brands may increase emotions of engagement and connection by customizing experiences to emotional preferences while taking gender and cultural quirks into account. The main forces behind proactive engagement behaviors like eWOM and content production include personal characteristics such as mavenism, evaluative style, and social activity. The customers' reactions to digital touchpoints are influenced by emotional dynamics that are influenced by various factors. This affects how marketers should modify tone, content, and user experience elements. Both trait-level insights and emotional personalization are essential components of successful consumer engagement methods in order to establish a strong connection and encourage loyalty. Truong, V. (2025).

Table 2.13: Personal factors affecting customer engagement

1. Use of social media	Increased usage means there's a greater chance of creating eWOM and participating in brand discussions. Anastasiei, B., Dospinescu, N., & Dospinescu, O. (2024).
2. Marketing Perception	By reviewing and sharing, self-perceived opinion leaders increase engagement. Anastasiei, B., Dospinescu, N., & Dospinescu, O. (2024).
3. Evaluation	Critical evaluation to engage more deeply in reviewing and comparing products. Truong, V. (2025).
4. Gender	Influences emotional dynamics—e.g., expression of caring vs. pride differs in gender. Truong, V. (2025).
5. culture	Cultural context alters emotional engagement patterns, affecting platform interaction. Truong, V. (2025).

Source: Truong, V. (2025).

There is a substantial relationship between each of these five elements and the decisions that consumers make:

a) Psychological Factors

The emotions a person feels when making a purchase may often have a substantial effect on the decision that person ultimately makes. Even while it may be difficult to evaluate the influence that these intangibles have on customers' final judgments, this does not mean that one should ignore the importance of these factors (Mishra and Das, 2021).

b) Motivation

Each person has unique demands, which begin with necessities. "A need that is sufficiently pressing to direct the person to seek satisfaction of the need" is how Kotler described motivation. Numerous hypotheses on human motivation are offered by psychologists (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 150). Maslow's hypothesis is the well-known and renowned explanation of human motivation offered by Abraham Maslow. Maslow attempted to explain why individuals are motivated by a certain need at a specific moment (Kotler & Keller, 2016, pp. 188). Maslow's

Hierarchy of Needs ranks human wants from least to greatest. Maslow listed the following needs:

- 1) Physiological: Need for food, drink, and air.
- 2) Safety: Defense and safeguarding.
- 3) Belongingness: The urge to experience acceptance and affection from others.
- 4) The demand for prestige and accomplishments, among other things are want of the ego.
- 5) Reach self-actualization and experience fulfilment.

c) Perception

The sentiments that clients have towards a certain item or service are taken into consideration heavily while making their overall assessments. Following careful consideration of all of the information that is available on a product, consumers arrive at conclusions that serve as the basis for their impressions of that product (Rather et al., 2018). The motivation's action is perception. Positive perception is the attitude that a motivated individual has toward a product when they respond well to it. A motivated person's unfavorable reaction to anything is referred to as a negative view of that product. Among the psychological factors, perception is the most significant component. Thus, it influences how consumers behave while making purchases of any kind of goods. The process by which we choose, arrange, and interpret information inputs to build a meaningful image of the world is known as perception, according to Kotler et al. (Kotler et al., 2019). The judgment is made by the individual following the gathering of data. Information gathered via human senses. Senses include touch, smell, hearing, feeling, and taste.

d) Learning

Every time you make a purchase, you have the chance to gain a better understanding of the product by putting yourself in the shoes of the person who will ultimately be using it. Anyone who puts in the requisite amount of effort and the necessary length of time has a chance of learning anything. The skills that a client already has in their position have a direct bearing on how much they are capable of learning in that capacity (Kethan et al., 2022). Having stated that, the only method to gain knowledge is via one's own direct, personal experience; yet, one's competence may be enhanced by repeated practice. Both cognitive processes and conditioned reactions may contribute to learning in the brain. Learning can take place in any of these two ways. In the conditional learning paradigm, a consumer's response to a specific stimulus is the result of that customer's repeated exposure to that specific stimulus. This exposure occurs over a certain amount of time. Cognitive learning, on the other hand, is dependent on the preexisting

expertise of the customer to determine whether or not a product is suitable for the customer's requirements and how best to put that expertise to use. This is because cognitive learning is used to determine whether or not a product is suitable for the customer. The purpose of this form of learning is to establish whether or not a certain product is appropriate for a particular consumer.

e) Attitudes and Beliefs

A uniquely individualized set of values and guiding principles serves as the primary influence on a consumer's decision-making process on the products and services that they purchase. How a customer feels about a product is a significant factor in determining how they will respond to that product (Gopinath, 2021). When it comes to a product's overall success on the market, the attitudes that customers have about that product are quite crucial. Because having a clear grasp of the viewpoint of the consumer is crucial to the creation of successful marketing strategies, firms put a significant amount of effort into getting that understanding of the customer's perspective.

f) Social factor

One of the most important factors influencing customer engagement and purchase intention is the social component. The group, social network, online social network, and family of an individual are all considered social factors. One such social aspect influencing customer purchasing behavior is word-of-mouth. "Two or more people who interact to accomplish individual or mutual goals" is Kotler's definition of a group. Additionally, Kotler stated, "Membership groups are those to which an individual belongs and that have a direct influence." On the other hand, a person's attitudes and behaviors are formed through direct (face-to-face encounters) or indirect points of comparison or reference in reference groups. Individuals are frequently impacted by reference groups that they do not identify with (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 144). The effect of trustworthy friends, family, colleagues, and other customers' remarks and recommendations on purchasing behavior (Kotler et al., 2017, p. 144). People spend more time on social media websites these days, which improves social networks. Blogs and social media websites are examples of online social networks. The social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, and others. Businesses are concentrating more on leveraging social media platforms on the internet to connect with customers (Kotler et al. 2017, pp. 145).

g) Economic Factor

The element influencing customer purchasing behavior is the economic factors. A consumer's choice of a particular brand or product and decision to buy is influenced by their financial situation. Businesses can do research on customer spending and saving patterns. For example, Samsung sells both expensive and inexpensive smartphones. Several economic elements are involved, such as personal and family income, savings, consumer credit, income expectations, and other aspects (Ali & Ramya, 2016). An individual's income is referred to as their income. A person's purchasing habit is influenced by their income. Based on their net income after taxes, consumers make decisions. The total number of family members is the family income.

2.13.2 Moderating Effect of Demographics between Brand Awareness and Purchase Intentions

a) Personal Factors

Personal factors such as age, gender, education, income level, lifestyle preferences, and cultural values significantly influence consumer behavior, artisan involvement, and product perception in the handicraft and handloom sectors. These factors affect both the production and consumption sides of the industry. Personal characteristics like wealth, gender, and degree of education have a big impact on how consumers feel about handloom goods, according to Rani and Mehta (2023). Urban, educated women strongly like handmade textiles because of its uniqueness, sustainability, and legacy.

b) Age

Handicrafts and Handlooms in the practice, maintenance, and development of the handicraft and handloom industries, age is a critical factor. Intergenerational knowledge transfer frequently shapes these traditional sectors, with distinct responsibilities and difficulties experienced by various age groups, Bhat and Qadri (2023) state that most Indian artists are above 40 and that, as a result of a lack of financial incentives, young people are becoming less involved in traditional handloom activities. Targeted initiatives, such as design education, e-commerce access, and training, can draw in younger craftspeople and guarantee the survival of the industry.

c) Income

Handicrafts and Handlooms are essential for creating jobs and revenue. For millions of artists, weavers, and craft-based business owners in India and other developing nations, they are vital sources of income. Due to the high labor intensity and frequent home-based nature of these industries, disadvantaged groups—particularly women and traditional artisans—can generate income without having to relocate or seek official work. According to the Ministry of Textiles, handloom weaving, for instance, directly employs more than 3.5 million people in India. A substantial portion of both local and export revenue comes from handicrafts. In 2023, India's handicraft exports alone brought in over ₹30,000 crore (about USD 3.6 billion), underscoring their significance for both foreign exchange profits and the growth of the rural sector. Through value chains that include producers of raw materials, dyers, designers, and merchants, the money made supports local economies in addition to supporting artisan families. Additionally, artisans' earning potential has increased and their earnings have stabilized due to the availability of digital platforms and government programs like the Handloom Weavers' Comprehensive Welfare Scheme, PM Vishwakarma Yojana, and the DASTKAR project. Sharma and Verma (2023) point out that handicrafts and handlooms are "economic engines that support household income diversification, reduce underemployment, and empower rural populations through dignified livelihood opportunities." They are more than just cultural artifacts.

d) Occupation

Various professions with a strong foundation in traditional knowledge systems that have been passed down through the centuries are supported by the handicraft and handloom industries. These professions offer jobs throughout the value chain of manufacturing, design, distribution, and sales. When the employment situation of a customer is known, it is often easy to anticipate their purchase patterns. It is a frequent practice for people to only buy things that are directly related to the field of employment in which they are. There are different buying behaviors of a professor and those of a physician are going to be quite different from one another, According to the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH, 2023), the Indian handicraft industry employs over 7 million artisans, including many self-employed and home-based workers involved in weaving, embroidery, woodwork, metalwork, and other crafts. The handloom sector alone supports around 3.5 million weavers, making it one of the largest rural employment sources in India.

e) Lifestyle

Handicrafts and Handlooms are intricately woven into people's and communities' cultural identities and way of life. These traditional crafts are a deliberate lifestyle choice in contemporary culture since they frequently symbolize heritage, values, and ecological practices. First of all, they provide a sustainable and culturally rich substitute for mass-produced commodities. In keeping with the expanding worldwide movement towards sustainability, handcrafted goods created using natural colors, organic textiles, and traditional techniques encourage eco-conscious living. Handmade objects and handloom clothing represent aesthetic ideals, regional identity, and individual expression in fashion and home décor.

Furthermore, using handlooms and handicrafts is frequently associated with conscious consumerism, which values the history, skill, and time required to make them. This encourages a way of life that prioritizes. According to Kaur and Sharma (2023), incorporating handcrafted items and textiles into daily life is crucial for maintaining cultural identities and encouraging sustainable consumption patterns, particularly among urban consumers who are growing more conscious of the ethical implications of their decisions.

f) Economic Factors

Economic factors significantly affect the growth, sustainability, and challenges of the handicraft and handloom sectors. These factors influence raw material costs, income generation, market demand, labor availability, and government support, all of which shape the livelihood of artisans and the viability of traditional crafts. According to Mehta and Rajan (2023), economic factors such as unstable income, lack of credit access, and limited market reach are key constraints for artisans in India's handloom and handicraft sectors. They emphasize the need for a more inclusive economic framework that connects artisans to direct markets and fair-trade practices.

2.14 Summary of Literature

More importantly, customer engagement is considered the most essential factor for the growth of the digital business. Past research shows a strong and positive relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. Hence, if the customer is engaged and well aware of the brand will extend a positive attitude towards the purchase intention and will recommend others in family, friends, and neighbors (Krumay and Brandtweiner, 2010). However, customer engagement leads to repetitive purchases, which further exerts a positive influence on the performance of the online business (Ergun and Kuscu, 2013). When users are involved in the look of their profiles on social networking sites (SNS), they are more likely to engage in discussion with other users to create meaningful relationships with those individuals. Online stakeholders make public promises to the firm as well as to other consumers by taking part in conversations on the social networking website that is managed by the company. To provide further clarification, customer engagement in the context of relationship marketing encompasses not only interactions between buyers and sellers but also those between purchasers and any combination of prospective and existing customers, non-customers, society in general, and sellers themselves (Vinerean,2017). That is to say, the term "customer interaction" refers to more than only the act of doing business between buyers and sellers. The study also showed that brand perception and brand vision have a clear and meaningful effect on “brand equity” and consumers' plans to buy, and that brand equity has a further effect on consumers' plans to buy handicraft products in the social media environment. Indian handicrafts were also promoted through social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. Second, the study looked at how well brand awareness, brand image, and brand equity are affected by “social media marketing activities (SMMA)” for handicraft products. Third, this study looks at how brand awareness and brand image affect brand equity and consumers' plans to buy, as well as how brand equity affects consumers' plans to buy handicraft products. The results of this study showed that SMMA about handicraft products had a very strong effect on both brand awareness and brand image in the social media environment. This study also showed that brand perception and brand vision have a clear and meaningful effect on “brand equity” and consumers' plans to buy and that brand equity has a further effect on consumers' plans to buy handicraft products in the social media environment (Guha, S., et al., 2021) Customer involvement helps to build trust, goodwill, and commitment between customers and brands, regardless of whether or not those customers ever purchase from those

firms. Engagement of this kind is made possible by social networking sites, and it is this kind of involvement that builds trust, goodwill, and commitment between customers and brands. The process through which stakeholders participate in the products, services, and activities of the organization is called interaction, and as a consequence of interaction, engagement in the company may occur. When there is inadequate participation from customers, transactions of this kind might be difficult to execute. SNM is an extension of E WOM, and it directly impacts the linkages that bind customer loyalty, advocacy, and happiness together. SNM also enables customers to share their experiences with other customers. People may connect with one another using SNM, which is a social network. Social media handloom product marketing can aid in eradicating poverty and strengthening the handloom sector's economic independence. This can be done through raising consumer awareness of handloom items, fostering the growth of handloom weavers' skills, generating new job possibilities, supporting the creation of new patterns, raising the sale of their wares, and paying the weavers. This is accomplished through increasing public awareness of handloom products, encouraging the advancement and enhancement of handloom weavers' skills, creating new work opportunities, improving the demand for their items, and providing the necessary resources. E-mail, social media, and online discussion boards are examples of the various channel's businesses can use to communicate with their existing customers. By utilizing a variety of these channels, businesses may have greater success in acquiring new customers as well as retaining the customers they already have. This research has resulted in the creation of a practice among organizations in which the firms actively try to promote brand loyalty and consumer interaction within their target demographics. Customers are seen less as something to be sold to in today's world, and more as participants in dynamic, value-adding, interactive processes of co-creation. This shift in perspective is a direct result of the increased emphasis placed on customer engagement. The tendency toward increased focus on the consumer is directly responsible for this change in perception. Customer loyalty is correlated with improved profitability in research that focuses on the customer's emotional connection to the firm, the consumer's feeling of agency, and the value that the customer receives from the product or service. According to the findings of some research, there is a link between devoted customers and improved profitability. The usage of social media marketing not only bolsters the effectiveness of the conventional modes of communication but also broadens their scope. Therefore, those in charge of managing a brand page on Facebook shouldn't create a page for their company just because other businesses have done so. Before establishing the page, they should instead give some thought to the potential impact that their posts may have on the amount of time individuals spend participating in online

activities. This is due to the actions taken by other businesses in the industry. Problems with information accuracy, privacy, trust, the usage of social media, and the security of social media were identified as having a substantial effect on the quantity of consumer participation in the study. Customers are more inclined to conduct business with a firm if they are certain that the privacy of their personal information will be protected by that company. As a consequence of this, for marketers to maintain the attention of both their existing customers and the prospective consumers who visit their Facebook brand pages, they need to continually refresh both the media and the information that they publish. In other words, they need to publish new content. Maintaining regular communication with existing and potential clients is the single most efficient tactic for both maintaining the clients you currently have and luring new clients who will be devoted to your product or service. Users are more inclined to participate in conversations with other users to develop lasting relationships with those people when they are involved in the design of their profiles on social networking sites. By participating in dialogues on the social networking website that is run by the company, online stakeholders make statements in public to the company as well as to other customers. To be more specific, relationship marketing's definition of "customer engagement" includes interactions between buyers and sellers as well as interactions between buyers and any combination of prospective and existing customers, non-customers, society at large, and sellers themselves. We were able to establish five factors that have an impact on customer engagement by doing research in the appropriate literature and conducting an analysis of the information that consumers chose to read. There is a greater degree of engagement among consumers when they are supplied with information that is dynamic, responsive, descriptive, interesting, and original. This results in a better level of customer satisfaction. It is already well established that many individuals have a high esteem for visual media such as photography and motion pictures. Other examples include animation. The subsequent stage is to link these measurements with monetary signals, which will result in an improvement in the decision-making skills of the customer base as a whole, especially among the engaged customer base. It has been shown that there is a positive association between consumer involvement and a variety of indicators of the health of relationships. These indicators include customer satisfaction, trust, emotional commitment, and loyalty. With the assistance of a future empirical assessment of the influence of engagement on the views and attitudes towards the brand, managers will be able to enhance the formulation and execution of their social media strategy. This improvement will be possible thanks to social media. This gives a comprehensive overview of handicrafts, identifies the key problems, discusses how to comprehend the complicated phenomena of poverty, and explains why

handicrafts were selected as the program's starting point. The performance and growth of handloom in the state of Jammu and Kashmir were examined by Ahmad and Nengroo (2013). According to Fayaz Ahmad (2012), the handicraft industry holds significant promise for creating profitable job possibilities for jobless individuals and for boosting the economy of an area or nation like Kashmir, which is globally recognized for its customary crafts. According to studies by Gebremariam and Gebremedhin (2004), Hamdar, Najjar, and Karamah (2017), Ntea et al. (2014), Manzoor et al. (2019), and MSMEs continue to drive economic growth and development in both developing and advanced economies. Small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) have improved the economy by providing jobs, increasing rural industrialization, promoting entrepreneurship, and eliminating regional inequities (Bhuyan, 2016). Bhat, M., & Yattoo (2019) analyzed the variables influencing cloud computing adoption among SMEs in Jammu and Kashmir. According to the study, cloud computing may assist micro, small, and medium-sized organizations (MSMEs) by improving technology use and boosting growth. Amir and Iqbal (2019) found that effective investment evaluation is crucial for its value. The study explored how different capital budgeting options affect the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises in Jammu. In J&K, hand weaving has a long history and has been passed down culturally from one generation to the next. It is regarded as one of this state's most important cultural traditions. No other type of cloth can compare to handloom textiles in terms of their intricate designs and aesthetically rich nuances. Because of their expert weaving, the Jammu and Kathua Districts are well known for their long fabric and cotton check bed linens. The highlands of the state of J&K, on the other hand, are well known for producing Pashmina shawls, Raffal shawls, Kani shawls, Silk sarees, Kishtwari blankets, Lois, and Chashme Bul Bul blankets. It is important to conduct further studies to generalize the results since they were only based on one firm. This is because the results could not be immediately relevant to various categories of companies or communities of brand customers. In addition, the goals of consumer participation in corporate versus community relationships, and the advantages for both parties, should be investigated in future research. The next step is to link these measurements to financial signals, thereby enhancing the ability of the customer base, particularly the engaged segment, to make decisions. Therefore, policymakers, artisans, and marketers should design demographically targeted digital marketing strategies, such as personalized content, culturally relevant storytelling, and user-friendly platform design, to maximize customer engagement and purchasing behaviour. Such strategies can strengthen the market presence of handicraft and handloom products from Jammu & Kashmir while also supporting the sustainability of traditional artisans in the digital marketplace (Chatterjee & Kar, 2022; Verma & Rani, 2025).

The present study examined the moderating role of demographic variables in the relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention–related factors, including content, platform design, product factors, personal factors, and customer engagement, within the digital media environment of the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. The findings generally agree that demographic characteristics influence how consumers respond to digital media initiatives and how brand awareness translates into purchase intentions. However, the extent of moderation varies across different factors as shown-

Content

The results agree that demographic variables such as age, education level, and digital literacy moderate the relationship between content quality and brand awareness. Younger and more digitally active consumers tend to respond more positively to visually appealing and informative digital content related to handicraft and handloom products (Chatterjee & Kar, 2022; Tuten & Solomon, 2023).

Platform Design

The study partially supports the idea that demographics moderate the relationship between platform design and brand awareness. Consumers with higher education and greater familiarity with digital platforms are more influenced by user-friendly website or social media interface design. Prior research suggests that usability, navigation, and accessibility of digital platforms enhance brand perception and customer engagement across demographic groups (Lemon & Verhoef, 2022; Singh & Sinha, 2024).

Product Factors

The findings agree that demographic characteristics such as income level and occupation significantly moderate the relationship between product attributes and purchase intention. Consumers with higher income levels show stronger purchase intentions toward handicraft and handloom products. (Sharma & Jain, 2023; Verma & Rani, 2025).

Personal Factors

The study agrees that personal factors such as consumer interest in traditional crafts, cultural orientation, and lifestyle preferences interact with demographic variables to influence purchase intention. For instance, consumers belonging to certain age groups or educational backgrounds demonstrate greater appreciation for heritage-based products and are therefore more likely to

convert brand awareness into purchase behaviour (Kaur & Sandhu, 2023; Mishra & Singh, 2024).

Customer Engagement

The results strongly agree that demographic characteristics moderate the relationship between customer engagement and brand awareness. Younger consumers and digitally active users are more likely to interact with brands through likes, shares, comments, and online reviews. This increased engagement enhances brand awareness and subsequently strengthens purchase intention. (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Bilgin, 2022).

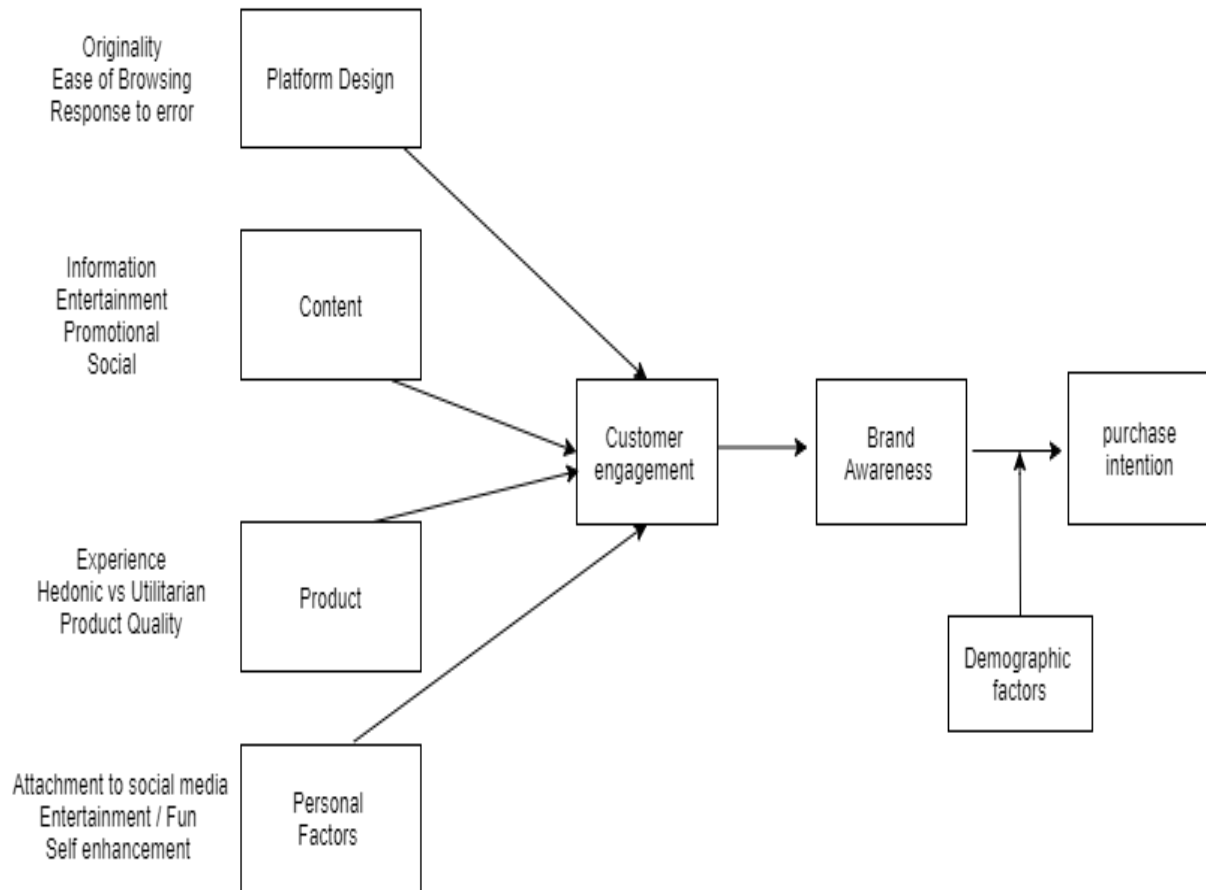
Brand Awareness and Purchase Intention

Overall, demographic variables act as a moderating factor between brand awareness and purchase intention in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. While brand awareness generated through digital media initiatives positively influences purchase intention, the strength of this relationship differs across demographic groups. Age, education, and income appear to be the most influential moderators, whereas gender shows relatively weaker moderating effects. (Kumar & Gupta, 2024; Sharma & Jain, 2023).

2.16 Conceptual Framework OF Customer Engagement

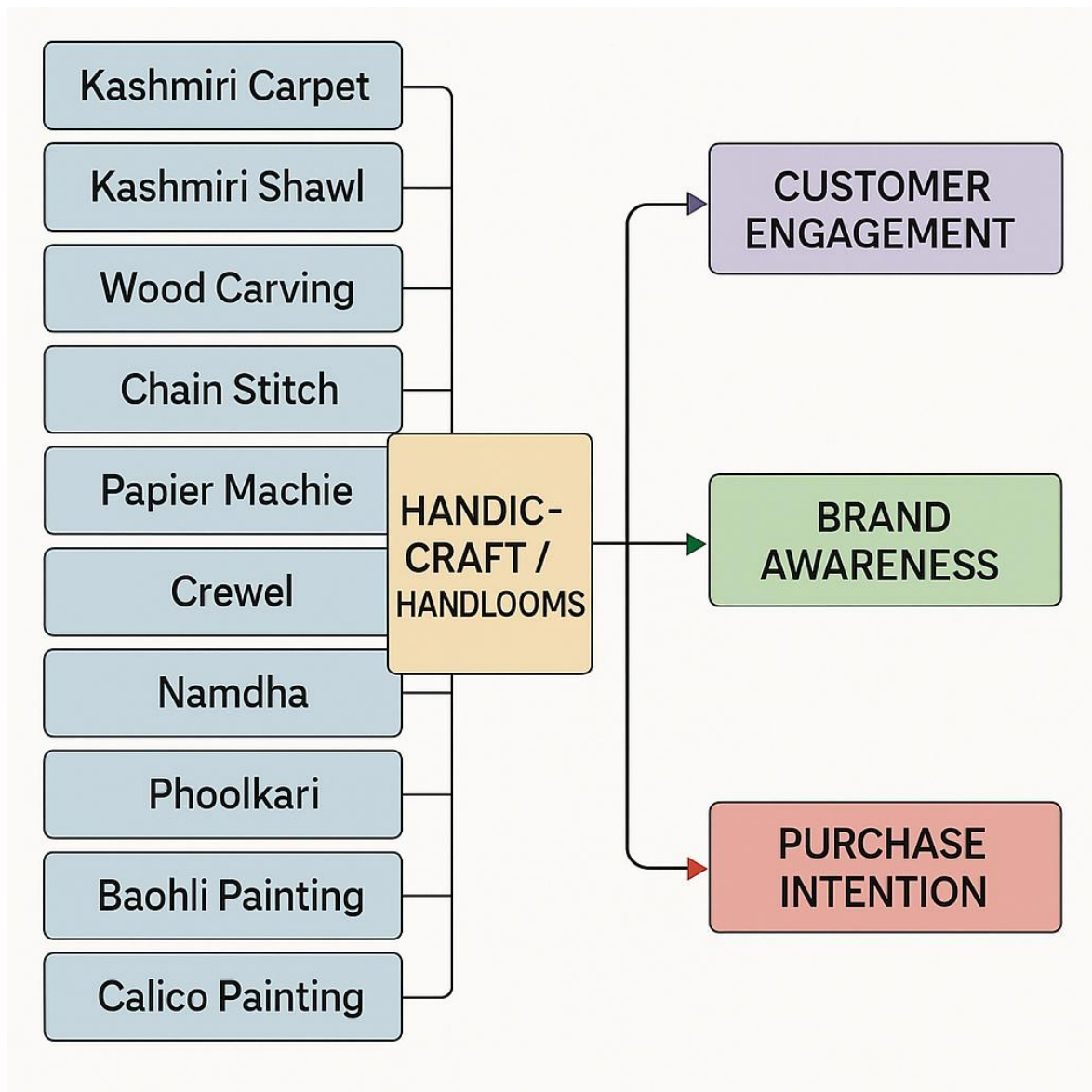
Based on the literature and the above-mentioned research gaps, this section presents a conceptual framework of Customer engagement based on the important factors and determinants. The proposed integrated model of Customer engagement has been determined by proposing the relationships between four latent constructs (Platform design, Content, Product, Personal Factor), online shopper-related constructs (originality, ease of browsing, response to error, information, entertainment, promotional, social, experience, hedonic vs utilization, product quality, attachment to social media, entertainment /fun and self-enhancement) and three behavioral consequences (customer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention).

Figure 2.16: Conceptual framework



(Source Author's own)

Figure 2.17: Conceptual framework of handicraft and handloom products



(Source Author's own)

Summary of Literature

Table 2.18: Summary of Literature

Constructs	Identified Variables	Source (s)
Platform Design	Originality, ease of browsing, responding to errors, Novel and innovative business, innovatively designed platforms, conventional technological setups, innovation platforms, and creating significantly larger ecosystems.	Guggenberger,T., Möller, F., Boualouch, K., & Otto, B. (2020). Ceccagnoli et al., 2012; Schreieck et al., (2022).
Content	Information, Entertainment, promotions, social, imaginative, original, and creative content utilize the platform's capabilities to maximize sales, boost exposure and interaction, shape consumer value and engagement, and creative content production.	Teresa Guarda et al., (2021) Meliawati, Gerald, and Akhmad Edhy Aruman (2023) Yana Respati Dewi, (2021)
Product	Experience, hedonic vs utilization, Product quality, internet shopping, and Digital transformation help shape corporate environments and increase digitalized goods and services business.	Prakash, K. C., Arun, R., Mayi, K., Kavitha, K., Sivaperumal, K, & Shivaratri, C. (2023) Delgosha et al., 2020; Papas et al., (2018)
Personal Factor	Attachment to social media, entertainment / fun set attachment, client involvement, social media strategy, products/services, social media selling process, customer understanding, identifying needs, presenting the value.	Kotler & Keller 2016, pp. 183; Kotler et al., 2017, pp. 147 Agnihotri et al (2012)
Customer Engagement	Use of social media platforms, promoting good communication, social interaction, and reducing negative effects, the influence of social media on relationships, and the effects of Digital media while buying products.	Wellyana et al. 2022, Azzaakiyyah (2023) D et al. (2023)
Brand Awareness	Building a strong brand, creating satisfying brand experiences, and adding value for both consumers and businesses all depend on engagement. Influencer marketing greatly increases customer engagement.	Yohanes, K., Suharyati, S., & Ediwarman,E. (2021)

Purchase Intention	Decision-making, Customers Expressing or intending to buy a Particular brand, consumer behavior, WOM, to recommend others, Price decision.	Mirabi, Akbariyeh & Tahmasebifard,2015, Q. Su et al., (2020)
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(Source Author's own)

Chapter 3: Research methodology

This part outlines the procedures and methods utilized to meet the study objectives set out in the preceding chapter. Research methodology is considered the layout of the research that enables the researcher to systematically solve the research problem. The strategies and tactics employed to accomplish the purpose of the study defined in the preceding chapter are described in this part. This study's primary goal is to comprehend customer choices on customer purchase intention, including the prominent attributes at each stage, as well as the moderating effects of age, gender, occupation, etc, with Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement.

An overview of the whole survey is provided by the process flow chart. The manner and location of the information collection are described in the data collection description. The strategy that the researcher takes in carrying out the research project is referred to as research methodology, and to some extent, this approach specifies the specific instruments that the researcher chooses (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). As a result, research technique is a researcher's methodical approach to performing research. The criteria employed in consumer surveys are explained by population and sampling procedures, which are then followed by instructions on data analysis and a summary of the survey's validity and reliability issues.

3.1 Need and Scope of the Study

The artisans in Jammu & Kashmir rely on the handicraft and handloom industries for their livelihoods, making them an essential component of the region's economy and cultural identity. However, due to limited physical access, a lack of contemporary marketing techniques, and competition from machine-made alternatives, this sector struggles to reach wider markets despite its long legacy and high aesthetic value. Studying how digital media initiatives might close the gap between craftsmen and consumers is crucial, given how the digital revolution is changing consumer behaviour. Digital storytelling, e-commerce websites, and social networking platforms present enormous opportunities to engage contemporary consumers, promote genuine crafts, and guarantee craftsmen's steady earnings. This study offers current insights into how conventional sectors might adjust to modern marketing dynamics by

analysing how well these digital technologies enhance client interaction. The handicraft industry is the trade of the rural and semi-urban population. This industry fulfils needs and productive role in society. Due to the numerous barriers that stand in the way of the handicraft industry's craftsmen's socio-economic advancement, the handicraft sector has recently fallen through the cracks. Comparing handcraft craftsmen to other segments of our society, their

socioeconomic situation is unsatisfactory. However, this industry suffers from a wide range of issues, including low production, low socioeconomic status of handcraft artisans, inconsistent and insufficient raw material supply, a lack of market infrastructure, a lack of interest from younger generations, and traditional technologies, etc. It will be extremely difficult for the industry to survive in the future. In terms of employment, the handicraft industry employs millions of people. Due to low income and low demand for the handicraft sector's products, artisans are gradually moving into other industries and different types of business. As a result, the handicraft sector and cultural heritage are declining.

The study is necessary to:

- Understand how digital media is transforming customer engagement in traditional sectors.
- Identify the tools and platforms most effective in promoting J&K's handicraft and handloom products.
- Assess the role of content, branding, and platform design in influencing customer behavior.
- Support artisans and policymakers with strategies to improve market reach and revenue through digital channels.
- Improve customer interaction and feedback loops
- Enhance storytelling and product appeal
- Drive purchase intention and customer.

Furthermore, the lack of a regular market is challenging in the handicraft and handloom industry. Since there is no direct contact with the clients, artisans do not receive payment regularly, which is the major cause of dissatisfaction. This study is based on "Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir." In this study, the methodology used during the execution of the research work is described, and both types of methods of data collection, such as the quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, are followed for the collection of the required information. In addition to that, sampling analysis is also performed during this research work for the understanding of the necessity of social media platforms for handloom and handicrafts. In this section of the research, the data collection method is described along with the justification of the method, and sampling analysis is also performed during this research work, which is attached to this section of this research.

3.2 Research Gap

Jammu and Kashmir have been contributing to the economy of the country via tourism, handicrafts, and handlooms. The handicraft industry of JK is globally well-known and well-recognized. However, the research found that there is limited research on the handicraft industry of Jammu and Kashmir, based on an analysis of the literature on customer engagement, a research need has been discovered. Seldom does noteworthy research exist that offers reliable insights into customer engagement. Although customer engagement among online consumers has been the subject of several research studies, there is a dearth of structured literature on traditional marketing and very little in the way of a common approach or model for fostering customer engagement digitally. Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft industry has significantly contributed to the economy of the region while generating around 2000 INR or \$240 million annually from exports. Despite the global recognition, research has indicated a major gap in terms of understanding customer engagement within the sector (Amir and Iqbal, 2019). While around 73% of small businesses leverage social media for marketing, there are very few studies available that specifically address the core impact of handicraft and handloom industries. Additionally, a survey done by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, or FICCI, showed that 60% of consumers are likely to purchase products from different brands while engaging with social media. This addresses the potential of digital platforms to enhance the brand awareness and purchase intentions of customers. Moreover, little research has been done on the causes and effects of customer engagement, specifically in Jammu and Kashmir (Naik & Bhardwaj, 2024). More specifically, very little research has been done on the handicraft and handloom sector digitalization, creating purchase intention and brand awareness through social media platforms. Today, the handicraft and handloom business are one of the rapidly growing sectors in most developing countries. Little research has been conducted, which has attracted academicians and industry professionals. Previous literature on handicrafts and handloom was reviewed, and it was found that a limited number of empirical studies have been published (both qualitative and quantitative) from the perspective of customer engagement. Thus, the present research has been focused on mending (Dastane, 2020). fulfilling the gap in the existing literature, and providing real-time and latest insights to the handicraft entrepreneurs in the region of Jammu and Kashmir, Mozumdar, S. (2020).

3.3 Research objective of the study

The study is mainly focused on the "Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir." To quantify the impact of customer engagement, digital media-specific study goals are established to identify the causes and effects of customer engagement to enhance purchase intention, and to evaluate the initiative of digitalization in J&K's handicraft and handloom industries. More precisely, the following are the main goals of the current study:

1. To examine the impact of social media attributes on customer engagement related to handicrafts and handlooms of Jammu and Kashmir.
2. To assess the effect of personal factors on customer engagement.
3. To examine the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness.
4. To examine the moderating effect of demographics on brand awareness and purchase intentions.

The first objective framed in the research is to determine the impact of social media attributes on customer engagement related to handicrafts and handlooms of Jammu and Kashmir through social media. This can be understood by knowing their awareness level towards familiarity with different types of handlooms promoted through social media, as the attributes of social media platforms such as platform design, content, product, and personal factors, The second objective is to assess the effect of personal factors on customer engagement by considering the variables and their impact of personal factors such as age, gender, education, occupation etc with customer engagement through social media platforms, The third objective is to examine the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness measured by the promotion of handloom products through social networking sites, Utilitarian Motivations, Hedonic motivation, Performance expectancy, Perceived relevance, and interaction. The fourth objective of the research is to examine the moderating effect of demographics on brand awareness and purchase intentions, which can be assessed by purchase intention toward social media promotion, Trends, liking, buying intention, price, perceived value, perceived risk, trust, perception towards the virtual store, customized services, e-wom, and Subjective norms. on account of its size, backwardness in the industrial sector, strategic position, and socio-economic structure.

3.4 Methodology of Study

A qualitative framework created from interviews with handicraft and handloom entrepreneurs in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) with specific criteria based on J&K handicraft handloom products mentioned on the official site of J&K handicrafts aims to systematically represent the themes, patterns, and insights derived from their lived experiences, business challenges, motivations, and strategies. Here's an overview of such a framework:

1. Objective: To understand the socio-economic, cultural, operational, and marketing dimensions of the handicraft and handloom sector in J&K through the voices of entrepreneurs.
2. Data Collection Methods: In-depth, semi-structured interviews focused on experiential insights, cultural context, and evolving business strategies.

Instrument: Semi-structured interview guide

Medium: In-person (preferred), telephonic, or video interviews

Duration per Interview: 45–60 minutes

3. Sample Criteria: Artisans, micro-entrepreneurs, and cooperative heads involved in Shawls, Namdha, Papier-mâché, Wood carving, Chain stitch, Crewel, and Phoolkari.
4. Data analysis Approach: Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006)
5. A deep-rooted sense of pride in continuing traditional crafts.

3.5 Scope of the study

The broad availability of various social media platforms in modern day has a considerable influence on people's connections. Businesses are swiftly catching on to the social media trend to use the most current advances in online communication tools. This is done to take advantage of the most recent innovations in online communication capabilities. People who run businesses have suggested that social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, amongst others, are fantastic places to increase the amount of exposure their firm gets. It is useful for the company when more people go to the website of the business and when existing consumers offer feedback in the form of recommendations for improving the firm's products and services. These platforms are as follows. According to the Social Media Marketing Industry Report (2012), the development of social media has revolutionized customer engagement strategies for performing business functions. This study explores the role and effectiveness of digital media

initiatives in enhancing customer engagement within the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. It focuses on understanding how platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, and e-commerce portals like Amazon Karigar and GeM are being utilized by artisans, cooperatives, and government bodies to reach wider audiences, build brand awareness, and drive sales. Ahmad, S., & Bhat, M. A. (2024). The scope includes:

1. Jammu & Kashmir, with attention to both urban marketing hubs (like Srinagar, Jammu) and rural artisan clusters.
2. Traditional crafts such as Kashmiri shawls, papier mâché, wood carving, crewel, Namda, chain stitch, and other indigenous products.
3. Artisans, cooperative societies, NGOs, digital marketing consultants, and government schemes such as Pehchan, ODOP, and Digital India Handloom Portal.
4. Social media marketing, influencer collaborations, virtual exhibitions, online marketplaces, and government-backed digital outreach programs.

This percentage increases to over sixty percent for businesses that have been doing social media marketing for more than three years (Harsh, 2022; The Hindu Business Line, 2023).

Thus, this study differs from previous traditional handicraft and handloom studies exploring digitalization. Instead, aims to understand customer engagement and their intention to purchase concerning brand awareness.

3.6 Research Design

Effective research design translates research questions into meaningful initiatives. Cooper and Schindler (2003) define research design as "a framework for achieving the research goals and answering questions." Robson (2002) emphasizes the significance of study design in establishing research processes, including strategies, techniques, and samples.

The research design explains the techniques and approaches used in this study. However, the study design and the overarching plan that specify how the entire research project will be executed are identical. It is possible to distinguish between three fundamental types of research design:

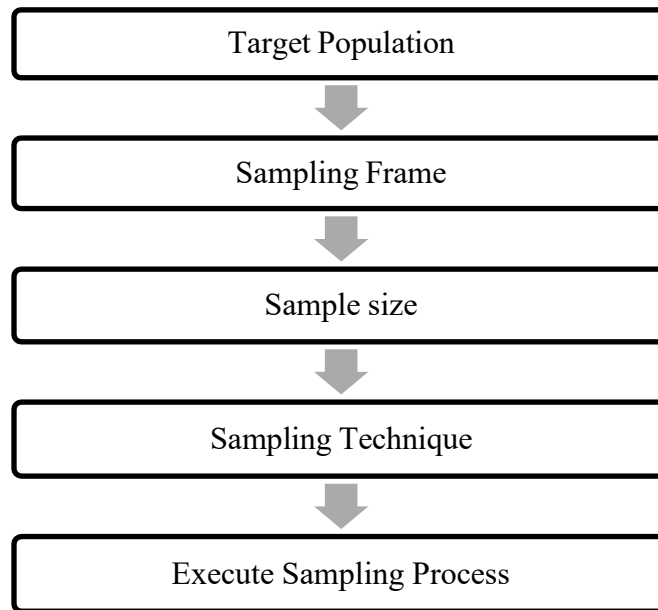
- (1) Exploratory research design
- (2) Descriptive research design
- (3) Experimental (or causal) research design.

A descriptive research strategy was used for this study, and the study methodology helped the researcher understand how customers interact with brand awareness. A thorough review of the literature on social media platform consumer interaction has been done to determine the variables that affect brand awareness while making online purchases. This study used a descriptive research approach to determine who, what, where, when, and how much (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). A descriptive study aims to explain or test certain assumptions or objectives. Descriptive research uses three basic methods: observation, case study, and survey. Survey approaches are more effective for large populations than interviews or group discussions. The behavioural observation method was used. The research was conducted utilizing a questionnaire and survey approach. Questionnaires are mostly used for survey purposes. This study utilized a survey-based approach to analyse customer purchase intention decisions and digital customer engagement.

3.7 Sampling design process

One important technique for ensuring that the sample is representative of the population and boosting the validity of the data gathered is sampling. It's a process that bases inferences about the entire population on a tiny subset of that group (Zikmund, 2003; Cavana et al., 2001). Sampling design is a process that researchers use to choose things for the study sample from the public. This procedure is carried out specifically before data collection. The sample design chosen by the researcher must be valid and relevant to the investigation. Therefore, a thorough explanation of the sampling design decision with supporting data is required for the appropriate execution of the sampling procedure, taking into account the target population, sampling frame, sample size, sampling unit, and sampling procedure (Malhotra, 2007). The five steps in the sampling design process are as follows:

Figure 3.7: Sampling Design Process



(Source: Author's own)

3.7.1 Target Population

The term "target population" refers to the total group of people from whom a researcher gathers data for a study. The research focused more on the handicraft and handloom sectors of Jammu and Kashmir. Research analysis was done using software, and a well-structured data set was collected (Sashi *et al.* 2019). Consumers who are familiar with handicrafts and handloom products and engaged in online shopping were considered as samples (Bhardwaj and Sharma, 2017). The selection of the target population was based on the followers of renowned entrepreneurs of handicraft and handloom categories, such as Kashmiri Carpet, Shawl, Wood Carving, and Crewel in J & K. The brand pages of these entrepreneurs that were digitally available on social media platforms with a minimum of 1000 (1K) followers were selected for the sample. The selection of target population based on followers of specific social media pages is suitable for the generalizability of the findings. The results of the study are most applicable to digitally active customers who use handlooms and handicraft-related social media for product discovery, brand interaction, and making purchasing decisions. However, focusing on digitally engaged audiences is consistent with the central objectives of the study, which further examined digital media initiatives and their influence on customer engagement. As digital platforms increasingly shape consumer behaviour and marketing strategies, understanding the

engagement patterns of online audiences provides valuable insights for artisans and entrepreneurs seeking to expand their market reach. Hence, the selection of the target population based on followers of renowned social media pages related to handlooms and handicrafts ensures the generalizability of the findings.

A total of 600 samples were selected through these brand pages, and online data was collected. Finally, around 550 samples were used for the analysis as the rest were not appropriate, vague, and incomplete. Different demographics such as gender, age, marital status, qualification, and type of employment were also considered important variables for the target population. The current study shows the generalizable findings quantitative phase of the study collected responses primarily from followers of selected social media pages related to handicraft and handloom products from Jammu & Kashmir. As a result, the respondents represent a group of digitally engaged consumers who actively interact with handicraft brands and artisans through online platforms.

3.7.2 Sampling Frame

Sampling refers to the list of the population that will be sampled in the study. It includes a set of people using social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, and following handicrafts and handlooms brand pages on social media platforms (Yousaf, 2020). Based on the categories mentioned on Jkhandicrafts.com, 10 categories of handicrafts and handlooms were selected, and entrepreneurs with a minimum of 1K followers were identified and interviewed through a qualitative open-ended questionnaire. The findings of these questions were used in framing the theoretical framework and also used in preparing the quantitative questionnaire to ensure the proper coverage of the required information. A sample size of 550 respondents has been selected for the present study out of 600 respondents from the union territory J & K. The process is shown as follows

Step1-

Based on the criteria mentioned on the official website, Jkhandicrafts.com, 10 criteria were selected, and entrepreneurs with a digital presence on any of the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) were selected for a qualitative interview, which contributed to the framing of the quantitative questionnaire and framework.

Step 2

A total of 20 interviews of Artisans or Entrepreneurs (at least 2 each from the identified 10 handicrafts and handloom categories) were executed by using quota sampling. A follower's more than 1K was used as the quota for this. The 20 entrepreneurs were asked to identify 30 customers each, which will form the list of potential respondents for the quantitative study.

Step 3.

Identification of factors influencing customer consumption experiences and their perception towards products and services offered by the artisans. The data obtained using interviews with the artisans refined the process of questionnaire development and led to the generation of Data collection.

Step 4.

A total of 30 customers were requested to fill out the questionnaires from each artisan, based on the attributes of the platforms they were associated with, along with the type of artisans or entrepreneurs, and their brands. This enhanced the sample size to 600 respondents, out of which 550 respondents were selected who contributed towards the quantitative data collection for the study. The data analysis was carried out using appropriate tools like Partial Least Squares Regression (PLS) through the Structural Equation Model (SEM). This study has successfully described two different types of data collection methods that are used in software work. The study explains which collection method is more appropriate.

3.7.3 Sample Size

To ensure that the sample is representative of the population, sample size and design are crucial. It is not necessary to take into account the complete target population to obtain the best findings; sample size is essential for setting up the representativeness of the population. Although a large sample size used for the research gives more reliable results, it is not compulsory to consider the entire target population to get the best results. To ensure the proper coverage of required information, initially, the sample size was 600 respondents, out of which 550 respondents were selected (those who filled out correctly) for the present study from Jammu and Kashmir. A total of 20 artisans or entrepreneurs and 10 categories were selected from J&K handlooms (Table 10). For each category, 2 artisans were selected, and then 30 followers from each category were selected. In this way, 60 followers belonged to each category and finally resulted in 600 samples (Table 3.7.3).

3.7.4 Sampling Technique

The nonprobability sampling approach was applied in this study. The nonprobability sampling approach is highly relevant for this research as it allowed the researcher to make a selection of participants based on specific characteristics, namely experience with the handicraft and handloom sector. Hence, the purposive sampling technique was used based on their engagement on social media for these brand pages. This method is specifically necessary for exploring relevant insights from the targeted group of audiences and ensuring that the data has been collected from different perspectives. Nonprobability sampling, according to Sekaran (2003), "allows researchers to obtain information quickly and inexpensively because it does not attach any probabilities to the elements in the population being chosen as sample subjects." According to Plumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2014), a nonprobability sampling method is a subjective technique in which samples are taken from an unidentified population. The nonprobability sampling method is efficient in terms of money and time.

Using a survey as a research tool, the quantitative study proved all objectives. A purposive sample was used for this quantitative research. Since "the sampling is limited to precise sorts of topics that can offer the favored records, both because they're the best ones who have it or agree to a few standards set by way of the researcher". The purposive sampling approach was used to gather information from the pattern respondents (Sekaran, 2003). In addition, purposive sampling is employed to select specific individuals or groups who possess deep knowledge or experience related to traditional arts, crafts, and textile production. This ensures that the collected data is rich, relevant, and insightful for the research objectives (Palinkas et al., 2024). In this way, the sample was followers of handicraft and handloom brand pages or websites on social media platforms.

Table:3.7.4 Respondents of handicraft and handloom

S.no	Region	Category of handicraft and handloom	Selection of Respondents	Number of Respondents
1	Jammu and Kashmir	Kashmiri Carpet	30*2	60
2	Jammu and Kashmir	Kashmiri Shawl	30*2	60
3	Jammu and Kashmir	Wood Carving	30*2	60
4	Jammu and Kashmir	Chain Stich	30*2	60
5	Jammu and Kashmir	Papier Machie	30*2	60
6	Jammu and Kashmir	Crewel	30*2	60

7	Jammu and Kashmir	Namdha	30*2	60
8	Jammu and Kashmir	Phoolkari	30*2	60
9	Jammu and Kashmir	Baohli Painting	30*2	60
10	Jammu and Kashmir	Calico Painting	30*2	60

(Source: Author's own)

3.7.5 Measurement and Instrument

A well-designed, closed-ended questionnaire was employed to gather first-hand information. are among the items on the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to score the statements on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting "strongly disagree" and 5 denoting "strongly agree." The scale is intended to be an interval scale (Table 3.7.5).

Table 3.7.5. Measurement and Instrument

Construct	Variable	Source
Customer Engagement	Level of Interaction	Adapted from the Customer Engagement Index (CEI).
	Frequency of Social Media usage.	Derived from social media usage studies.
	Customer Feedback.	Based on feedback mechanisms from prior research.
Brand Awareness	Recognition of Brand	Inspired by Aaker's Brand Equity Model.
	Recall of Handicraft products.	Developed from previous consumer behavior studies.
Purchase Intention	Likelihood to purchase	Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).
	Influence of social media on Decisions.	Adapted from studies on digital marketing effectiveness.
Satisfaction with Products	Overall satisfaction level.	Derived from Oliver's Satisfaction Model.
	Quality Perception.	Based on consumer satisfaction research.

(Source: Author's own)

3.7.6 Questionnaire design:

Three sections make up the questionnaire. According to Malhotra's (2007) findings, the Likert scale is a commonly used rating scale that asks respondents to indicate their level of agreement with each statement about a given characteristic. In the fields of marketing and business research, the five-point Likert scale, which ranges from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), is frequently used.

To enhance the transparency and methodological rigor of the research design, the themes identified during the artisan interviews were used to develop the constructs and items included in the survey questionnaire. This integration ensures that the quantitative instrument reflects the real experiences and perspectives of artisans working in the handicraft sector, as shown in Table 3.7.6.

Table 3.7.6: Relationship Between Interview Themes and Questionnaire Constructs

Interview Theme	Insight from Handicraft and Handloom Entrepreneurs Interviews	Survey Construct	Questionnaire Item
Cultural pride and heritage	Artisans emphasized preserving traditional craftsmanship	Personal Factors	I value handicraft and handloom products
Limited market access	Entrepreneurs highlighted the difficulty of reaching wider markets	Digital Media Initiatives	Social media helps handicraft and handloom products reach broader audiences
Storytelling and authenticity	Sharing artisan stories strengthens trust	Customer Engagement	I feel more connected to handicraft and handloom brands
Direct interaction with customers	Social media enables communication and feedback	Social Interaction	I interact with handicraft and handloom brands through comments or messages
Authentic handmade products	Customers prefer genuine handcrafted products	Consumer Perception	Authenticity influences my purchase decision

			for handicraft and handloom products.
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(Source: Author's own)

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Authentic handmade products	Customers prefer genuine handcrafted products	Consumer Perception	Authenticity influences my purchase decision for handicraft and handloom products.
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(Source: Author's own)

3.7.7 Data collection method

While conducting the Research, the data collection method is descriptive rather than numerical, as it focuses on context and people’s perceptions. It can be gathered to understand the motivations and reasons that drive certain behavior. This data collection method has different types of data collection processes. These processes are “One-on-one interviews,” “Questionnaires and open-ended surveys”, “Observation,” and “Focus groups”. In this research paper, the most important data collection method is questionnaires. This method allows participants to answer freely at length, rather than choosing from a group of responses. As per the view of Ma *et al.* (2020), it is such as, it can be asked open-ended questions, such as “Which clothes brand is most famous?”

3.7.8 Mixed Method

The proposed study has adopted a qualitative and quantitative method of data collection. Adopting the mixed method assumes that previous studies did not explore the relationship between the attributes of social media platforms and customer and their impact on customer engagement in the context of artisans. The importance of the proposed study increases manifold for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and also for the country, as handicrafts from Jammu and Kashmir earn around Rs. 1700 crores as foreign exchange every year (Jkhandicrafts.com), but to get a better understanding of the importance of social media platforms for handicrafts, in-depth interviews shall be conducted with the identified artisans or entrepreneurs. The artisans will be selected randomly or purposively based on the criteria chosen by the Department of Handicrafts, UT of Jammu and Kashmir. There are 10 criteria mentioned on the official site Jkhandicrafts.com, which are as follows:

1. Kashmiri Carpets
2. Kashmiri Shawls
3. Wood Carving

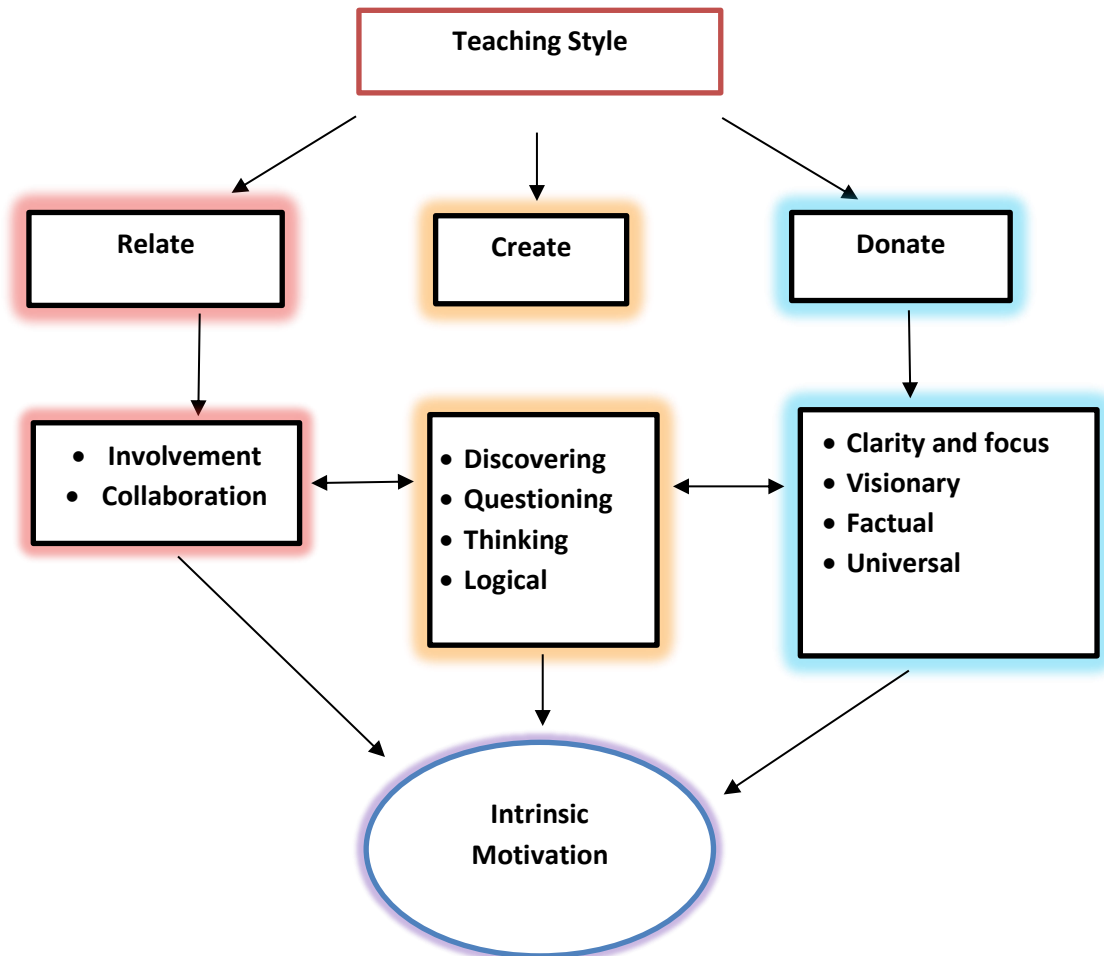
4. Chain Stitch
5. Papier Machine
6. Crewel
7. Namdha
8. Phoolkari
9. Basohli Painting
10. Calico Painting

This study was conducted to understand the initiatives that the entrepreneurs are taking to engage customers through brand awareness to create purchase intention of handloom and handicraft products and increase the customer base concerning digital marketing techniques. Questionnaire surveys were performed over the telephone and in person on twenty Jammu and Kashmiri-based entrepreneurs selling various handicraft and handloom products mentioned on the official site of Jkhandicrafts.com to understand their digital marketing patterns. Through these surveys, an idea can be generated about the role digital marketing is playing in increasing customer engagement, creating brand awareness, and increasing purchase intention.

- ***Theoretical Model***

The research on customer engagement in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu and Kashmir can be elaborated by using the “*Engagement theory*”. The theory posits the fact that meaningful customer engagement arises from the interactions, co-creation, and collaboration between businesses and consumers. The research emphasizes the need for emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connections, which suggests that as customers feel personally connected with the brand, their loyalty and purchase intentions might increase.

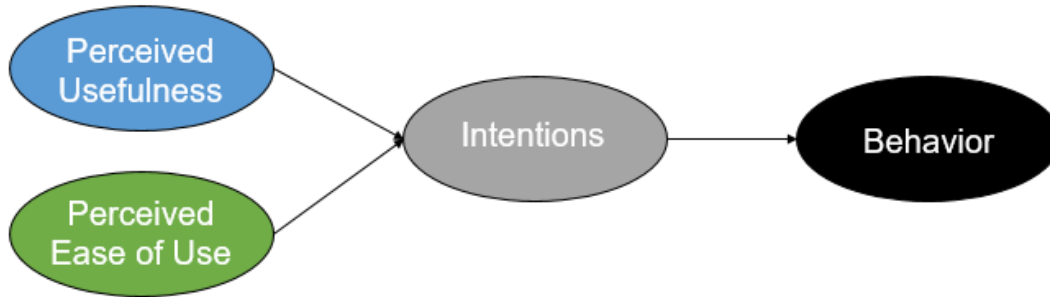
Figure 3.7.8: Framework of Engagement Theory



Source: Olivier et al. 2019

At the same time, the TAM or “*Technology Acceptance Model*” can be utilized to understand the way users can adopt new technologies in the digitalization of the handicraft sector. TAM highlights perceived ease of use and perceived level of usefulness by considering them as critical determinants of technology acceptance. This also influences the way customers can engage with the bands through online channels.

Figure 3.7.9: Framework of Technology Acceptance Model



Source: (Al Kurdi, Alshurideh, and Salloum, 2020)

These theories can provide a comprehensive idea for assessing the dynamics of customer engagement in digital landscapes and facilitating insights regarding the use of social media platforms, which can enhance brand awareness and drive the customer’s purchasing intentions.

Based on the criteria mentioned on the official website of Jkhandicrafts.com, criteria for handicrafts and handlooms were selected out of 10 criteria. The minimum criteria for the selection of artisans shall be their digital presence on any of the social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc.). The study proposes to initially interview 20 Entrepreneurs from Jammu and Kashmir (2 each from the identified 10 handicraft categories) using purposive sampling. The identified 55 artisans will be asked to identify 30 customers each, which will form the list of potential respondents for the quantitative study. Based on the criteria and their followers should be more than 1k, have selected the artisans or interviewed them on a random sampling basis, and they shall be interviewed with some general questions for understanding the factors influencing customer consumption experiences and their perception towards products and services offered by the artisans. The data obtained using interviews from the artisans will be employed to refine the process of questionnaire development and lead generation for Data collection. 30 customers each will be requested to fill out the questionnaires based on the attributes of the platforms they are associated with, artisans or entrepreneurs, and their brands. This will enhance the sample size to 550 respondents, who will contribute to the quantitative data collection for the study. The data analysis shall be carried out using appropriate tools like SPSS and PLS SEM.

3.8 Pilot Survey Test

During the research instrument design phase, a pilot study is conducted to ensure dependability. To evaluate the questionnaire, a default sample of 50 participants was advised (Perneger et al., 2015). Pilot testing typically involves 50 individuals (Whitehead et al., 2016; Lancaster et al., 2004; Browne, 1995). According to Teare et al. (2014), pilot research with a sample size of 50 is appropriate. The researcher sought feedback from respondents on any necessary changes to the questionnaire since their recommendations are crucial for creating an effective tool. The researcher found the following strategies helpful in overcoming various types of doubts:

- 1) Analysing perplexing questions.
- 2) Assessing the questionnaire's difficulty.
- 3) Determining the objection to each specific query.
- 4) Acceptance to include anything in the survey.

As a result, the pilot research assisted in identifying the need to correct the wording used in statements to eliminate communication gaps. The pilot survey helped to improve the prepared questionnaire by adjusting the phrasing, removing duplicate statements, examining the reliability of the replies, and making certain minor modifications to the questionnaire. The Cronbach α values were $>.7$, signifying acceptable reliability (Islam & Rahman, 2016).

3.9 Validity and Reliability Testing of the Constructs

3.9.1 Validity

Validity is the ability of a questionnaire to measure what it is intended to assess Malhotra and Dash, 2011. Since measurement error is rarely zero, we might assume that imperfect conditions do not exist when doing research. Making sure that a multi-item scale is accurate and used correctly to prevent measurement error is one of the requirements for evaluating it in research. Therefore, the validity and reliability of constructs must be thoroughly investigated to ensure that the measuring instrument is accurate. Nonetheless, to determine whether or not the scale items adequately cover the entire construct, the content validity of the instrument has been confirmed by the relevant expert. The instrument's dependability has been assessed to determine the extent to which repeated measurements yield consistent findings. The findings of a research study may include some flaws, even though they appear to be reliable. Therefore, it is vital to remember that taking precautions will help lower the likelihood of making mistakes when doing research. To reduce mistakes while inputting data into the computer, the data was

also coded using numbers. The questions were designed to be simple to grasp and error-free, with a quick and straightforward timetable. The questionnaire was presented to five professionals in the relevant field to validate the content, and their suggestions for changes were integrated into the final edition. Additionally, the questionnaire was delivered to thirty female internet shoppers to ensure face validity.

3.9.2 Reliability

Cronbach's alpha (α) is used to assess reliability by averaging split-half coefficients from various scale item splitting using modern software. Cronbach's alpha values greater than .70 ($\alpha > .70$) indicates adequate construct reliability (George and Mallery, 2011). Cronbach's alpha (α) is a measure of internal consistency for instrument constructs, measured using SPSS 21.0 statistical software. Cronbach's alpha (α) values range from .60 to .90 across all constructs. As a result, the reliability of the questionnaire's constructs has been evaluated and may be utilized for future investigation. In a nutshell, all forms of validity and dependability have been thoroughly documented to ensure the accuracy of measuring scales.

**Table 3.9.2: Showing Internal Reliability by Cronbach's alpha (α)
(*Acceptable range of Cronbach's alpha)**

Constructs	No of items	Cronbach's alpha(α)
Platform Design	4	.935*
Content	5	.883*
Product	5	.921*
Personal factors	6	.889*
Customer engagement	5	.877*
Brand awareness	4	.930*
Purchase intention	4	.859*

(Source: Author's own)

Additionally, other significant results explicitly related to Cronbach's Alpha, such as Corrected Item-Total Correlation and Alpha if Item Deleted, are also explored. The result of internal consistency reliability is shown in Table 3.9.2

Table 3.9.3: Internal Reliability if Deleted

Items	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted	Cronbach's alpha(α)
PD_1	11.08	14.171	.806	.930	.935*
PD_2	11.18	15.289	.850	.916	
PD_3	11.09	14.341	.866	.909	
PD_4	11.17	13.630	.876	.906	
CONT_1	14.67	16.900	.747	.852	.883*
CONT_2	14.46	18.387	.707	.861	
CONT_3	14.50	17.410	.753	.850	
CONT_4	14.61	18.019	.741	.853	
CONT_5	14.48	19.039	.654	.873	
PDT_1	15.28	16.278	.780	.906	.921*
PDT_2	15.32	16.044	.806	.900	
PDT_3	15.25	16.321	.802	.901	
PDT_4	15.31	16.217	.814	.899	
PDT_5	15.29	16.710	.770	.907	
PF_1	18.59	25.656	.716	.881	.889*
PF_2	18.53	25.809	.778	.873	
PF_3	18.53	25.159	.809	.868	
PF_4	18.60	24.859	.796	.869	
PF_5	18.71	26.529	.613	.898	
PF_6	18.60	26.269	.650	.892	
ENG_1	14.99	17.725	.792	.831	.877*
ENG_2	15.09	18.013	.734	.845	
ENG_3	15.04	17.464	.745	.842	
ENG_4	14.94	19.813	.626	.869	
ENG_5	14.83	19.204	.645	.865	
BA_1	10.66	13.375	.825	.913	.930*
BA_2	10.69	12.696	.861	.901	
BA_3	10.64	12.853	.848	.906	
PI_1	11.24	14.933	.488	.900	.859*
PI_2	11.40	11.615	.829	.767	
PI_3	11.26	11.839	.785	.786	
PI_4	11.46	11.903	.734	.808	

(Source: Author's own)

(Note: PD=Platform Design; CONT=content; PDT=Product; PF=Purchase Factor; CE=Customer Engagement; BA=Brand awareness; PI= Purchase intention)

Indeed, the Corrected Item-Total Correlation depicts the correlation of the item with the summated score for all other items, and the value should not be less than 0.40. Further, Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted value showed the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient if that specific item is removed from the proposed scale. If the value of the corrected item-total correlation is more than the total Alpha coefficient value, then this item is supposed to be eliminated from the scale to get a better result with better reliability (Gliem and Gliem, 2003).

3.10 Summary of Reliability and Validity Process

Given the above considerations, content validity, face validity, and dependability have been performed in a detailed manner. The reliability and validity results are good. To be more specific, the outcomes of these three procedures have been summarized in a single table.

Table 3.10: Summarize the reliability and validity processes used in the current investment.

Process	Details
1. Content Validity: Is the concept measured adequately in the past research or the viewpoint of concerned experts?	Expertise in the areas of consumer behavior, Retail Marketing, and Digital Marketing.
2. Face Validity: Does the sample validate only understandable and clear items?	A sample of 50 random online followers of the handicraft and handloom page has been taken.
3. Reliability: How consistently does a measuring instrument measure a concept?	Using internal consistency with Cronbach's Alpha > 0.70 (George and Mallery, 2011).

(Source: Author's own)

3.11 Sources of Data

This descriptive study used a self-administered questionnaire to gather data, which was then analyzed to confirm or deny the hypothesis. The study employed primary and secondary data collection approaches in a defined research procedure to address the identified research topic. The research relies on primary data gathered by sampling from the target population to provide accurate facts and estimations. Before using the final data collection procedure, the questionnaire was pretested. Secondary data was acquired from relevant publications, journals, books, and web-published items.

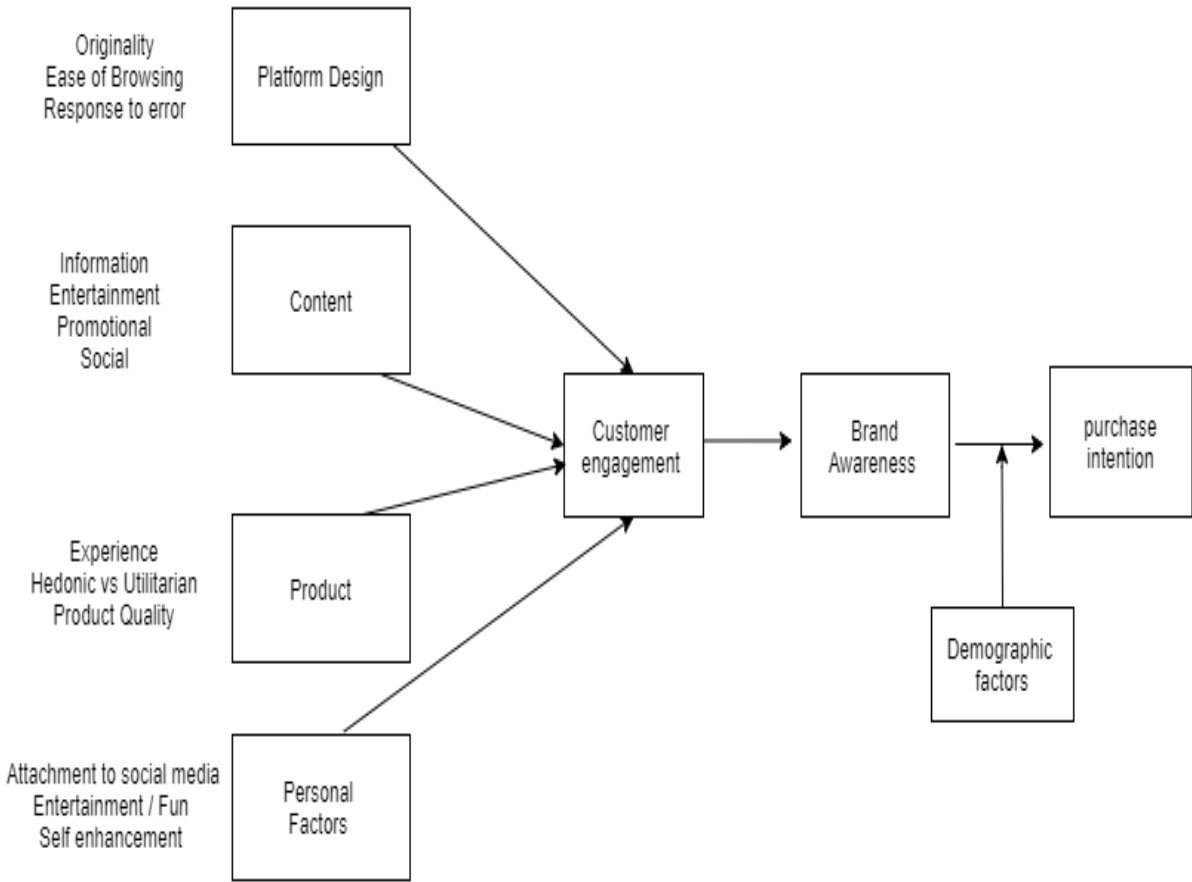
3.12 Analysis Technique

Data analysis is used to create knowledge that aids researchers in addressing research problems rather than merely completing the process. The data was evaluated to accomplish the study's objectives. The data was analyzed and interpreted using the appropriate statistical tools. The Smart PLS 3.2.9 program was used to do advanced multivariate data analysis, including the Structural Equation Model (SEM), to achieve research objectives and evaluate hypotheses. The data was analyzed using Smart PLS 3.2.9 and SPSS 21.0. Finally, hypothesis testing was done, and a literature study was undertaken to establish the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses. The data research revealed insights into the social media factors influencing customer engagement among online buyers. Descriptive analysis was utilized to better comprehend each variable's properties, including frequency, demographics, and means.

3.13 Conceptual Framework OF Customer Engagement

Based on the literature and the above-mentioned research gaps, this section presents a conceptual framework of Customer engagement based on the important factors and determinants. The proposed integrated model of Customer engagement has been determined by proposing the relationships between four latent constructs (Platform design, Content, Product, Personal Factor), online shopper-related constructs (originality, ease of browsing, response to error, information, entertainment, promotional, social, experience, hedonic vs utilization, product quality, attachment to social media, entertainment /fun and self-enhancement) and three behavioral consequences (customer engagement, brand awareness, and purchase intention).

Figure 3.13: Conceptual framework



(Source Author's own)

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

The analysis of the data and the interpretation of the findings are the main topics of this chapter. Utilizing the necessary statistical tests and statistical tools, including SPSS 21.0 and Smart PLS 3.2.9, the data analysis was completed. This chapter covers descriptive statistics, why PLS-SEM was chosen for this study, testing construct measures for validity and reliability, and assessing model structural relationships. Descriptive, inferential, and other statistical approaches were employed in the analysis, which was done using the software. To fully describe the features of the sample, statistical techniques were applied. Response analysis was utilized to determine the variables' measurements for the chosen study, and its results will provide a formal interpretation of the analysis. Based on the study's defined scope, the questionnaire was given out to respondents associated with the handicraft sector in J&K. Before analysis, the data were cleaned to remove “outliers”, “unengaged” responses, and missing responses to meet the study's objectives. 550 responses were used in the investigation. This section uses frequency distribution to provide an overview of the respondents' demographics. The data was obtained, and then a frequency distribution was used to arrange it in tables. In a graphical or tabular format, a frequency distribution displays the frequency of repeated entries. It visually represents the frequency of things or counts their occurrences.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The following tables show respondent profiles concerning Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics (n=550)1

	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	308	55.9
	Female	242	44
Age	Adolescents	192	35
	Middle	210	38.1
	Senior	148	26.9
Income	₹50,001 – ₹1,00,000	234	42.5
	₹1,00,001 – ₹2,00,000	131	23.8
	Above ₹2,00,000	95	17.2

(Source: Author's own)

To summarize, arrange, and simplify facts in a comprehensible manner. These statistics assist you in comprehending the fundamental properties of a dataset by providing numerical and

visual summaries. Common descriptive statistics include frequency, percentage, mean (average), median (middle value), mode (most common value), range, and standard deviation. They do not make predictions or draw inferences based on the data; rather, they present a snapshot of the facts at hand. For example, in a demographic study, descriptive statistics may be used to indicate how many respondents fit into particular gender, age, or income categories, allowing researchers to readily evaluate population patterns and trends. According to the analysis and Table 7, the gender distribution shows a slight male predominance (55.9%), while females make up 44%. This indicates that the sample has a slightly higher representation of males than females. Age-wise, the group is fairly spread out with the largest segment being middle-aged individuals (38.1%), followed by adolescents (35%), and seniors (26.9%). In terms of income, most individuals fall within the ₹50,001–₹1,00,000 bracket (42.5%), while fewer earn ₹1,00,001–₹2,00,000 (23.8%) or above ₹2,00,000 (17.2%).

Table 4.1.1: Social Media Platform Preference

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Facebook	Most preferred	173	31.4
	Preferred	150	27.4
	Somewhat preferred	160	29.0
	Least preferred	67	12.2
	Total	550	100.0
Instagram	Most preferred	142	25.8
	Preferred	109	19.8
	Somewhat preferred	189	34.3
	Least preferred	110	20.1
	Total	550	100.0
WhatsApp	Most Preferred	138	25.0
	Preferred	121	22.0
	Somewhat preferred	181	32.8
	Least preferred	110	20.0
	Total	550	100.0
Others	Most Preferred	105	19.1
	Preferred	62	11.3
	Somewhat Preferred	218	39.6
	Least Preferred	166	30
	Total	550	100.0

(Source: Author's own)

The respondents were asked to assign a rank from 1 to 4 (1 meaning highly preferred to 4 meaning least preferred) for their preference to follow handicraft and handloom business pages on the social media platforms in (Table 8), The options are chosen by the respondents concerning Facebook “Most preferred” option was chosen by 173 (31.4%) respondents, “preferred” option was chosen by 151 (27.4%) respondents, “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 160 (29 %) respondents and “least preferred” option was chosen by 67 (12.2%) respondents. The options chosen by the respondents concerning “Instagram” are shown in Table 8. “Most preferred” option was chosen by 142 (25.8%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 109 (19.8%) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 189 (34.3 %) respondents, and the “least preferred” option was chosen by 111 (20.1%) respondents. WhatsApp: The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “Instagram” (Table 4.2). “Most preferred” option was chosen by 138 (25%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 121 (22%) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 181 (32.8 %) respondents, and the “least preferred” option was chosen by 111 (20.1%) respondents. The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “other social media platforms” in Table The “Most preferred” option was chosen by 105 (19.1%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 62 (11.3%) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 218 (39.6 %) respondents and “least preferred” option was chosen by 167 (30%) respondents.

Table 4.1.2: Handicraft and Handloom Preference

Options		Frequency	Percent
Handicrafts	Most preferred	110	20.0
	Preferred	36	6.7
	Somewhat preferred	238	43.2
	Least preferred	167	30.1
	Total	550	100.0
Handlooms	Most preferred	108	19.6
	Preferred	51	9.3
	Somewhat preferred	231	41.9
	Least preferred	160	29.2
	Total	550	100.0
Accessories	Most Preferred	105	19.1
	Preferred	65	12.0
	Somewhat preferred	222	40.3
	Least preferred	158	28.7
	Total	550	100.0

Others	Most Preferred	105	19.1
	Preferred	68	12.3
	Somewhat Preferred	224	40.7
	Least Preferred	154	27.9
	Total	550	100.0

(Source: Author's own)

The respondents were asked to assign a rank from 1 to 4 (1 meaning highly preferred to 4 meaning least preferred) for the kind of arts and crafts that they buy from online social media platforms on different business pages concerning the products, as in Table 9. The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “Handicrafts” “Most preferred” option was chosen by 110 (20%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 37 (6.7%) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 238 (43.2 %) respondents, and the “least preferred” option was chosen by 166 (30.1%) respondents. The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “Handlooms” in (Table 4.3) “Most preferred” option was chosen by 108 (19.6%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 51 (9.3%) respondents, “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 231 (41.9 %) respondents and “least preferred” option was chosen by 161 (29.2%) respondents. The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “Accessories”. “Most preferred” option was chosen by 105 (19.1%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 66 (12 %) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 222 (40.3 %) respondents, and the “least preferred” option was chosen by 158 (28.7%) respondents. The respondents concerning “other categories”. “Most preferred” option was chosen by 105 (19.1%) respondents, the “preferred” option was chosen by 66 (12 %) respondents, the “somewhat preferred” option was chosen by 222 (40.3 %) respondents, and the “least preferred” option was chosen by 158 (28.7%) respondents.

Table 4.1.3: Business Page Attributes

	Options	Frequency	Percent
Content	Extremely Important	94	17.1
	Important	35	6.5
	Moderately Important	240	43.6
	Slightly Important	125	22.7
	Not Important	56	10.2
	Total	550	100.0
Information	Extremely Important	100	18.1
	Important	60	10.9
	Moderately Important	215	39.0
	Slightly Important	120	21.8

	Not Important	55	10.2
	Total	550	100.0
Authenticity	Extremely Important	87	15.8
	Important	78	14.2
	Moderately Important	202	36.7
	Slightly Important	121	22.0
	Not Important	62	11.4
	Total	550	100.0
Designing	Extremely Important	93	16.9
	Important	71	12.9
	Moderately Important	211	38.3
	Slightly Important	120	21.8
	Not Important	55	10.2
	Total	550	100.0
Branding	Extremely Important	100	18.3
	Important	43	7.8
	Moderately Important	231	41.9
	Slightly Important	127	23.0
	Not Important	49	8.9
	Total	550	100.0

(Source: Author's own)

The respondents were asked to give opinions on important factors of handicraft and handloom business pages on social media from 1 to 5 (1 meaning extremely important to meaning not important) (Table 10). The options chosen by the respondents concerning “content” “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 94 (17.1%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 36 (6.5 %) respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 240 (43.6 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 125 (22.7 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 56 (10.2%) respondents. The respondents choose the options concerning “information” “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 100 (18.1%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 60 (10.9 %) respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 215 (39 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 120 (21.8 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 56 (10.2%) respondents. The options chosen by the respondents concerning “authenticity” and “Extremely Important” option were chosen by 87 (15.8%) respondents, the “important” option was chosen by 78 respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 202 (36.7 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 121 (22 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 63 (11.4%) respondents. The respondents concerning “designing”. “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 87 (15.8%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by

78 respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 202 (36.7 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 121 (22 %) respondents, and “not important” option was chosen by 63 (11.4%) respondents. The respondents concerning “branding”). “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 101 (18.3%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 43 (7.8 %) respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 231 (41.9 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 127 (23 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 49 (8.9%) respondents.

Table 4.1.4: Content related to Business Page Attributes

Particulars		Frequency	Percent
Pictures	Extremely Important	100	18.1
	Important	58	10.5
	Moderately Important	204	37.0
	Slightly Important	125	22.7
	Not Important	63	11.4
	Total	559	100.0
Videos	Extremely Important	92	16.9
	Important	77	14.0
	Moderately Important	202	36.7
	Slightly Important	123	22.3
	Not Important	56	10.2
	Total	550	100.0
Products/ Services	Extremely Important	86	15.6
	Important	64	11.6
	Moderately Important	197	35.8
	Slightly Important	112	20.5
	Not Important	91	16.5
	Total	550	100.0
Story highlights	Extremely Important	90	16.5
	Important	63	11.4
	Moderately Important	194	35.2
	Slightly Important	126	22.9
	Not Important	77	14.0
	Total	550	100.0

(Source: Author’s own)

The respondents were asked to give opinions on important features of handicraft and handloom business pages on social media, assigning values from 1 to 5 (1 meaning extremely important to 5 meaning the respondents in Table 11). concerning “pictures” “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 100 (18.1%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 59 (10.7 %)

respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 204 (37 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 125 (22.7 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 63 (11.4 %) respondents. The respondents concerning “videos” in “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 93 (16.9%) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 77 (14 %) respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 202 (36.7 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 123 (22.3 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 56 (10.2 %) respondents. The options chosen by the respondents concerning “Products/Services” are in Table 4.5. The “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 86 (15.6 %) respondents, the “important” option was chosen by 64 (11.6 %) respondents, the “moderately important” option was chosen by 197 (35.8 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 113 (20.5 %) respondents and “not important” option was chosen by 91 (16.5 %) respondents. The options are chosen by the respondents concerning “Story highlights”. “Extremely Important” option was chosen by 86 (15.6 %) respondents, “important” option was chosen by 64 (11.6 %) respondents, “moderately important” option was chosen by 197 (35.8 %) respondents, “slightly important” option was chosen by 113 (20.5 %) respondents, and “not important” option was chosen by 91 (16.5 %) respondents.

4.2 Structural Equation Modelling - partial least squares (PLS)

Structural Equation Modelling is a method for illustrating the relationship between variables, divided into two parts: 1) Measurement Model. 2) Structural Model. The measurement model, also known as the outer model, helps researchers use multiple variables for a single dependent or independent variable. In contrast, the structural model, also known as the inner model, is a path model that connects independent variables to dependent variables (Hair et al., 2010). Structural Equation Modelling uses statistical approaches to evaluate correlations between latent construct ideas and explain them using several indicators (Esposito et al., 2010). SEM identifies factors associated with each concept and then assesses loadings. Hair et al. (2010) recommend avoiding cross-loading when variables are connected.

In structural equation modelling for consumer behaviour and marketing, two approaches are commonly used:

- 1) Covariance-based and partial least squares-based structural equation modelling (SEM)
- 2) Partial Least squares-based Structural equation modelling (SEM).

4.3 The assessment of the measurement model (reliability & validity tests of construct measures of the research model)

4.3.1 Internal Consistency Approach to Test Constructs

4.3.2 Factor loading

Factor loading refers to the degree to which each item in a correlation matrix corresponds with the specified major component. Factor loadings vary from -1.0 to +1.0, with larger absolute values suggesting the quality of the study's constructs is evaluated using the measurement model. The examination of the quality criteria begins with the factor loadings, which are followed by determining construct reliability and construct validity. The measurement model measures latent or composite variables, whereas a structural model tests hypothetical links using route analysis (Kline 2010; Hoyle 2011). Following the recommendations, Anderson and Gerbing (1988) used a two-step technique for SEM analysis. The measuring model was validated to ensure its reliability and validity for conducting structural connection research. According to Hair et al. (2013, p.40), the measurement model represents the link between composition and index variables. According to Hair et al. (2013), it's important to evaluate the reliability and validity of measured structures when studying structural interactions. A structural model may be assessed after its measurement criteria are established. The measuring approach has been verified based on recommendations. The methodical procedure of measuring and analysing models in this study. This study examines the Customer engagement initiative by digital marketing in Jammu and Kashmir, based on a review of the literature. The measurement model evaluates the research model's construct measures for reliability and validity, ensuring that the observed variables consistently and adequately represent their underlying latent constructs. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) assess reliability; values greater than 0.70 indicate adequate internal consistency among items. Validity is assessed using convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is demonstrated when factor loadings reach 0.70 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is more than 0.50, suggesting that indicators accurately measure the same concept. The measurement model evaluates the research model's construct measures for reliability and validity, ensuring that the observed variables consistently and adequately represent their underlying latent constructs. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) assess reliability; values greater than 0.70 indicate adequate internal consistency among items. Validity is assessed using convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is demonstrated when factor loadings reach 0.70 and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is

more than 0.50, suggesting that indicators accurately measure the same concept. The postulated factors of Customer engagement have been studied using both direct and indirect methods to understand their relationship. The indirect paradigm proposes that Customer engagement mediates the link between antecedents (Platform design, Content, Product, and Personal factors) and Brand awareness outcomes (Purchase intention). a stronger association between the item and the underlying factor (Pett et al., 2003, p. 299). None of the items in the research had a factor loading lower than the suggested value.50 (Hair et al., 2016). Consequently, no further items were eliminated. Factor loads are. Consequently, no further items were eliminated. The factor loadings are shown in Table 4.3.2.

Table 4.3.2: Factor loading

Item	BA	CONT	ENG	PD	PDT	PF	PI	Gender x BA	Income x BA	Age x BA
BA_1	0.895									
BA_2	0.927									
BA_3	0.910									
BA_4	0.906									
CONT_1		0.823								
CONT_2		0.820								
CONT_3		0.838								
CONT_4		0.839								
CONT_5		0.806								
ENG_1			0.888							
ENG_2			0.851							
ENG_3			0.864							
ENG_4			0.731							
ENG_5			0.751							
PDT_1					0.852					
PDT_2					0.879					
PDT_3					0.874					
PDT_4					0.890					
PDT_5					0.860					
PD_1				0.873						
PD_2				0.922						

PD_3				0.937						
PD_4				0.932						
PF_1						0.767				
PF_2						0.819				
PF_3						0.847				
PF_4						0.833				
PF_5						0.790				
PF_6						0.813				
PI_1							0.719			
PI_2							0.904			
PI_3							0.875			
PI_4							0.845			
Income x BA								1.000		
Gender x BA									1.000	
Age x BA										1.000

(Source: Author's own)

4.3.3 Indicator Multicollinearity

The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) statistic is used to evaluate multicollinearity in indicators (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982). According to Hair et al. (2016), multicollinearity is not a severe concern if the VIF value is less than 5. Table 4.3.3 displays the VIF values for the study's indicators and shows that each indicator has a VIF value that is lower than the suggested threshold.

Table 4.3.3: Indicator Multicollinearity

Item	VIF
PD_1	2.907
PD_2	3.811
PD_3	4.225
PD_4	4.326
CONT_1	2.602
CONT_2	2.104
CONT_3	2.617

CONT_4	2.351
CONT_5	1.796
PDT_1	2.615
PDT_2	2.957
PDT_3	2.861
PDT_4	3.046
PDT_5	2.501
PF_1	2.806
PF_2	3.094
PF_3	3.559
PF_4	3.821
PF_5	2.822
PF_6	2.843
ENG_1	3.611
ENG_2	2.985
ENG_3	3.965
ENG_4	3.675
ENG_5	3.760
BA_1	3.159
BA_2	3.907
BA_3	3.638
BA_4	3.024
PI_1	1.337
PI_2	3.648
PI_3	3.279
PI_4	2.341
Income x BA	1.000
Gender x BA	1.000
Age x BA	1.000

(Source: Author's own)

4.4 Internal Consistency Approach to Test Constructs

While using structural equation modelling, it's important to ensure that constructs are internally consistent (Hair et al., 2013). Hair et al. (2013) suggest that composite reliability (CR) can overcome the limits of Cronbach's alpha, which presupposes equal outer loadings and is sensitive to scale item count. Researchers and statisticians have established guidelines for acceptable levels of CR values. Nunnally and Bernstein (1994) and Hair et al. (2013) suggest that CR values between 0.60 and 0.70 are suitable for descriptive research, whereas values over 0.70 are necessary for advanced research (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). The CR and Cronbach's alpha

(α) values for all constructs were evaluated in this study. exceeds the acceptable standard. The CR values for constructs in this study ranged from 0.811 to 0.954. Cronbach's alpha (α) values ranged from 0.875 to 0.953 across all study characteristics. The greatest CR value was 0.954, while collaboration (COL) had the lowest CR value of 0.901. The 0.937 Product (PD) characteristic had the greatest Cronbach's alpha (α) value of 0.856. Purchase intention (PI) received the lowest Cronbach's alpha (α) score. Table 4.1 displays Cronbach's alpha (CA), rho_A indices, and composite reliability (CR) for each feature.

4.5 Reliability Analysis and Convergent Validity

Mark (1996) defines reliability as a measurement instrument's stability and consistency. The essence of dependability is repetition. Will administering an instrument repeatedly provide the same results" (p. 285). Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) are the most often used measures for determining reliability. Table 3 shows the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability results. Cronbach's Alpha varied from 0.728 to 0.899, while Composite Reliability statistics ranged from 0.816 to 0.923. Both reliability indicators exhibit reliability statistics that are above the acceptable level (Hair et al., 2011). Consequently, building dependability is established, whereas Convergent validity is the degree to which several measures of the same notion agree. The assumption is that two or more measures of the same item should have a high correlation if they are accurate measures of the concept (Bagozzi et al., 1991, p. 425). Hair et al. (2013) defined convergent validity as the positive correlation between two measures. Average variance extracted (AVE) is a frequently used metric of convergent validity, indicating tight correlations between construct elements. (Hair et al., 2013, p. 103) define AVE as "the grand mean value of the squared loadings of the indicators associated with the construct (i.e., the sum of the squared loadings divided by the number of indicators)". The study's convergent validity was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Fornell and Larcker (1981) found that valid findings are those with α values greater than 0.7, CR values of more than 0.8, and AVE values exceeding 0.5. Hair et al. (2013) found that values of AVE greater than 0.50 indicate convergent validity. Table 4.1 shows that all characteristics have AVE values larger than 0.5, which meets the criteria set by Hair et al. (2013). This study's AVE values vary from 0.681 to 0.840. The user-generated content (UGC) construct had the greatest AVE value (0.840), while the Convenience construct had the lowest (0.681). Table 4.5 displays the AVE values for measuring constructs.

4.5.1 Discriminant validity

“Discriminant validity” refers to how distinct the measurements of various ideas are. The idea is that if two or more ideas are distinct, valid assessments of each should not correlate very strongly" (Bagozzi et al., 1991, p. 425). Hair et al. (2013) define discriminant validity as a construct's ability to differentiate itself from others. To ensure discriminant validity, each construct should be unique from the others. Hair et al. (2013) identified two approaches for assessing discriminant validity: the cross-loadings assessment and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. This study used the Fornell-Larcker Criteria, which requires the square root of AVE values to be larger than the greatest correlation with any other component (Hair et al., 2013). In this investigation, the square root of AVE values ranged from 0.825 to 0.833, meeting the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

Table 4.5.1: Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Measured Constructs

Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability(rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (Ave)
PD_	0.937	0.953	0.954	0.840
CONT	0.884	0.891	0.914	0.681
PDT	0.921	0.924	0.940	0.759
PF	0.392	0.916	0.920	0.659
ENG	0.487	0.887	0.910	0.671
BA	0.856	0.875	0.901	0.695
PI	0.856	0.854	0.904	0.703

(Source: Author’s own)

4.5.2 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

“Discriminant validity” refers to how distinct the measurements of various ideas are. The idea is that if two or more ideas are distinct, valid assessments of each should not correlate very strongly" (Bagozzi et al., 1991, p. 425). Hair et al. (2013) define discriminant validity as a construct's ability to differentiate itself from others. To ensure discriminant validity, each construct should be unique from the others. Hair et al. (2013) identified two approaches for assessing discriminant validity: the cross-loadings assessment and the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. This study used the Fornell-Larcker Criteria, which requires the square root of AVE values to be larger than the greatest correlation with any other component (Hair et al., 2013). In this investigation, the square root of AVE values ranged from 0.825 to 0.833, meeting the Fornell-Larcker criterion for discriminant validity.

4.5.2 Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Table 4.5.2: Discriminant Validity Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	CONT	ENG	PDT	PD	PF	PI
CONT	0.825					
ENG	0.508	0.818				
PDT	0.412	0.683	0.871			
PD	0.392	0.468	0.394	0.916		
PF	0.487	0.811	0.557	0.398	0.813	
PI	0.512	0.669	0.564	0.558	0.559	0.833

(Source: Author's own)

4.5.3 Hetero Trait Mono Trait (HTMT)

The Hetero Trait Mono Trait (HTMT) method is based on estimating the correlation between constructs. Discriminant validity is established using the HTMT ratio. However, the threshold for HTMT has been contested in the current research; Kline (2011) proposed a threshold of .85 or less, whilst Teo et al. (2008) advocated for a more liberal threshold of .90 or less. According to the (HTMT) data (Table 7), the HTMT ratio is lower than the necessary threshold of .90.

Table 4.5.3: Discriminating validity and Hetero Trait Mono Trait (HTMT)

Items	CONT	ENG	PDT	PD	PF	PI
CONT						
ENG	0.565					
PDT	0.444	0.744				
PD	0.421	0.505	0.418			
PF	0.536	0.882	0.603	0.430		
PI	0.574	0.718	0.582	0.606	0.614	

(Source: Author's own)

4.6 Model Fit Indices

To ascertain the goodness of fit, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (F^*), and the predictive relevance measure (Q) were assessed in the present study. The results of the analysis reveal an R -value of .489 for OP. This study shows that a 48.9% variance in OP can be attributed to CSR and TI. Based on the recommended 0.10 cutoff value (Falk and Miller, 1992), results indicated that our model obtained an acceptable R^2 statistic for OP, which is substantial. In the present study, the influence on OP is assessed through several predictor variables. According to Hair et al. (2013), it is recommended that the effect size should also be presented. The effect size statistic specifies whether the removal of an independent variable from the model can have a substantial impact on the variable. When comparing observed and estimated values, the "Chi-square" index is used to quantify the dissimilarity between the two (Hair et al. 2010). The Root mean square error of approximation ("RMSEA"; good fit 0.08), and goodness of fit index ("GFI") are indices that fall under the category of "measures of absolute fit". The incremental fit indices are the Normed fit index (NFI; good fit >0.80) and comparative fit index (CFI >0.80).

The "measurement model" in this work was structured to allow all the factors to associate with each other, and all the factors' items to load on their respective factors. The values obtained for model fit indices (Table 4.14) were within reasonable levels (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 4.6: Model Fit Indices

Index		Test value	Cut off value/Range
	Cmin/df (normed chi-square)	3.5	$1 < \text{Cmin/df} < 3$
<i>Goodness of fit</i>	GFI	0.718	≥ 0.8 means a good fit
Incremental fit index	CFI	0.766	≥ 0.8 means satisfactory fit
	NFI	0.731	≥ 0.8 means satisfactory fit
	TLI	0.735	≥ 0.8 means satisfactory fit

(Source: Author's own)

4.7 Significance and relevance of the structural model relationships

In Table 4.7, the results of the PLS analysis are presented. Using a bootstrapping approach, the path's t-statistics and significance levels were computed for each hypothesized relationship. Using the PLS algorithm, path coefficients were calculated to determine the predicted performance of the structural model. Table 4.7 indicates that most of the relationships between the attributes of social media platforms and customer engagement with intention to purchase are well supported in the research model. The model is reliable since all sixty paths are significant (at least $p < 0.05$). The study found that customer engagement through social media platform attributes strongly influences purchase intention decisions.

4.8 Interpretation of Relationships and Model Fit

The results of the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis reveal that certain constructs demonstrate stronger relationships with customer engagement than others. Among these, personal factors exhibit a particularly strong effect, indicating that individual perceptions, attitudes, motivations, and personal interests significantly influence how consumers interact with digital media initiatives in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir. Among the examined constructs, personal factors such as level of motivation, self-esteem, self-identity, and purchasing behaviour demonstrate one of the strongest effects on purchase intention. This finding can be interpreted in the context of the unique nature of handicraft and handloom products. Consumers who possess a strong appreciation for traditional craftsmanship, cultural heritage, and authenticity are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward purchasing handicraft products. Digital media platforms further amplify these personal motivations by allowing brands to communicate the story, tradition, and craftsmanship behind the products. Customer engagement also shows a strong relationship with brand awareness and purchase intention. Digital media initiatives such as social media campaigns, interactive posts, and online reviews enable consumers to interact directly with brands of handicraft and handloom products. The findings also indicate that content quality and platform design have moderate but significant effects on brand awareness and consumer engagement. However, these factors may have slightly weaker effects compared to personal factors because they mainly function as facilitators of information and accessibility, rather than direct psychological motivators. While well-designed platforms and engaging content attract consumers, the final purchase decision often depends on deeper personal values and preferences. This finding suggests that customers who possess a higher appreciation for cultural heritage, authenticity, and artisanal craftsmanship are more likely to actively engage with digital content related to

traditional products. In practical terms, this implies that digital marketing strategies should emphasize storytelling, cultural narratives, artisan identities, and personalized communication in order to strengthen emotional connections between consumers and traditional crafts. Such approaches can enhance engagement by aligning marketing messages with the personal values and interests of consumers (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Furthermore, the strong influence of personal factors highlights the importance of consumer awareness and perception in shaping online engagement behavior. Customers who recognize the cultural and aesthetic value of handicraft and handloom products are more inclined to interact with digital platforms, share content, and develop long-term loyalty toward these products. Therefore, stakeholders in the handicraft sector should focus not only on promoting products but also on educating consumers about the heritage, craftsmanship, and cultural significance associated with these items.

In addition to interpreting the relationships among constructs, the study also evaluates the adequacy of the proposed model using several SEM model-fit indices. Model-fit indices are statistical indicators used to assess how well the proposed theoretical model corresponds with the observed data. Commonly reported indices include the Chi-square statistic (χ^2), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Among these, CFI and TLI are specifically important measures to indicate model fit indices, which are used to examine incremental fit by comparing the proposed model to the null model and making relevant to the theory testing. RMSEA is also an important measure as it reflects the model's approximation error and indicates how well the model would fit the outer population. SRMR is used to examine the discrepancy between observed and predicted correlations and represents the average residuals and provides a direct measure for model fit. For SEM studies in social science research, values of CFI and TLI above 0.90 generally indicate acceptable model fit, while RMSEA values below 0.08 and SRMR values below 0.08 suggest a good fit between the model and the data (Hair et al., 2019).

Among these indices, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA are particularly important because they provide a balanced assessment of model performance by considering both model complexity and data variance. Reporting these indices helps ensure that the proposed structural relationships are statistically reliable and theoretically meaningful. By demonstrating satisfactory model-fit values, the present study confirms that the conceptual framework effectively explains the relationships between digital media initiatives and customer engagement in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir.

4.9 Hypothesis Formulation

The hypothesis is an unproven assertion about a decision problem that might be empirically assessed with the use of information gathered throughout the investigation. Hair et al. (2006) developed theories to clarify events or the connections between different variables. Assuming no differences or effects, the null hypothesis (H0) is put out by Malhotra and Dash (2011). The sixty paths assessed under SEM were all significant at less than 0.05 (95%) levels, thus meeting Objective One of the research studies. Based on the results of the SEM analysis, we arrive at the following results, which explain the hypotheses formulated.

Null H01: There is no significant influence of platform design on customer engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of PD → ENG is more than 1.96 ($t=3.344 > 1.96$), $p < 0.5$. Hence, H01 is rejected, as there is no substantial effect of PD on ENG.

Alternative HA1: There exists a significant relationship between platform design and customer engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of PD on ENG is less than 1.96 ($t=3.344 > 1.96$, $p < .05$). Hence, the results support HA1 as there is a significant effect of PD on ENG.

Null H02: There is no significant relationship between content and customer engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of CONT → ENG is more than 1.96 ($t=2.060 > 1.96$), $p < 0.5$. Hence, H02 is rejected; thus, as there is no substantial effect of CONT on ENG.

Alternative HA2: There exists a significant relationship between Content and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of CONT on ENG is less than 1.96 ($t=2.060 > 1.96$, $p < .05$). Hence, the results support HA2 as there is a significant effect of CONT on ENG.

Null H03: There exists no significant relationship between product and customer engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-

value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of PDT→ ENG is more than 1.96 ($t=6.067 > 1.96$), $p<0.5$. Hence, H03 is rejected, as there is no substantial effect of PDT on ENG.

Alternative HA3: There exists a significant relationship between PDT and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of PDT on ENG is less than 1.96 ($t=6.067 > 1.96$, $p<.05$). Hence, the results support HA3 as there is a significant effect of PDT on ENG.

Null H04: There is no significant relationship between personal factors and customer engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of PF→ ENG is more than 1.96 ($t=23.608 > 1.96$), $p<0.5$. Hence, H04 is rejected, as there is no substantial effect of PF on ENG.

Alternative HA4: There exists a significant relationship between PDT and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made and tested based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of PDT on ENG is less than 1.96 ($t=23.608 > 1.96$, $p<.05$). Hence, the results support HA4 as there is a significant effect of PF on ENG.

Null H05: There is no significant relationship between customer engagement and brand awareness. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of ENG →BA is more than 1.96 ($t=13.498 > 1.96$), $p<0.5$. Hence, H05 is rejected, as there is no substantial effect of ENG on BA.

Alternative HA5: There exists a significant relationship between PDT and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of ENG on BA is less than 1.96 ($t=13.498 > 1.96$, $p<.05$). Hence, the results support HA5 as there is a significant effect of ENG on BA.

Null H06: There is no significant relationship between brand awareness and purchase intention. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above has been tested based on the t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). Table 17 illustrates that the t-value of BA

→PI is more than 1.96 ($t=3.706 > 1.96$), $p < 0.5$. Hence, H_0 is rejected, as there is no substantial effect of BA on PI.

Alternative HA6: There exists a significant relationship between PDT and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent). Table 17 outlines that the t-value of ENG on BA is less than 1.96 ($t=3.706 > 1.96$, $p < .05$). Hence, the results support HA6 as there is a significant effect of ENG on BA.

The above research hypothesis addresses the relationship between different factors and customer engagement levels in the handicraft and handloom sectors of Jammu and Kashmir. Each of the above-mentioned hypotheses (H_0) posits the fact that no significant relationship exists between the variables, as the corresponding alternative hypothesis, i.e., HA, asserts the fact that a significant relationship exists. The assessment is based on t-values and p-values from the SEM or “*Structural Equation Modeling*”. This provides highly compelling evidence for rejecting the null hypothesis across all tested paths. For instance, the significant t-values for platform design, content, product, personal factors, customer engagement, and brand awareness affirm their positive influence on customer engagement and subsequent purchase intentions. These findings underscore the critical role of digital strategies in enhancing customer interactions and driving business outcomes in the handicraft sector.

Table 4.9: Result of Hypothesis Testing Using Structural Model

Items	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Age -> PI	0.440	0.441	0.035	12.634	0.000
BA -> PI	0.192	0.194	0.052	3.706	0.000
CONT -> ENG	0.066	0.067	0.032	2.060	0.039
ENG -> BA	0.512	0.513	0.038	13.498	0.000
Gender -> PI	-0.130	-0.133	0.075	1.740	0.082
Income -> PI	0.112	0.112	0.044	2.533	0.011
PD -> ENG	0.091	0.091	0.027	3.344	0.001
PDT -> ENG	0.236	0.236	0.039	6.067	0.000

PF -> ENG	0.629	0.629	0.027	23.608	0.000
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So* Significant if t-statistic > than 0.05

(Source: Author's own)

4.10. Moderation (Gender, Age, and Income)

In this study, the moderating effects were assessed by first standardising the indicator values to their means before multiplying the moderator variable by the predictor variables. In this research, three moderators were used to analyse their impact on dependent variables. To analyze the moderating role of Gender, Income, and Age between brand awareness and purchase intention, a moderation analysis was performed using PLS-SEM. Study results indicate that demographic Gender and Income have no role as moderators between brand awareness and purchase Intention ($\beta=0.585$; $P = 0.381$). It is evident from the table that the P value for the moderating role of Age was found to be significant ($P=0.038$).

Table 4.10: Moderation Analysis

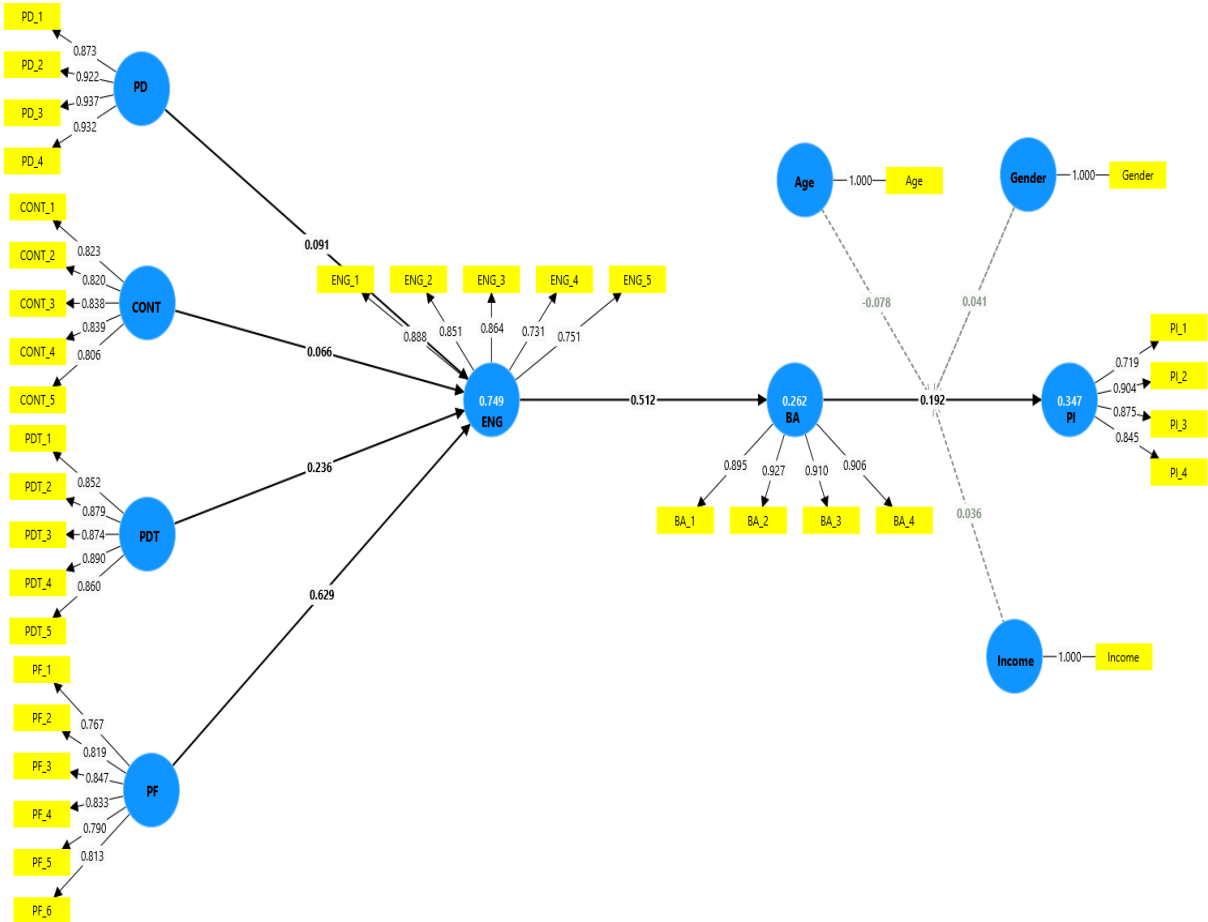
Items	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	Result
Gender x BA -> PI	0.041	0.042	0.076	0.547	0.585	Rejected
Income x BA -> PI	0.036	0.037	0.042	0.877	0.381	Rejected
Age x BA -> PI	-0.078	-0.078	0.037	2.080	0.038	Accepted

(Source: Author's own)

The moderation between business page attributes (BA) and purchase intention (PI) in the context of handcrafted items on social media is examined in this moderation study about personal characteristics, including gender, income, and age. Gender and income do not substantially influence the link between company page characteristics and purchase intent ($p > 0.05$). This implies that the influence of a company page's design, content, or branding on client purchase intent is rather similar across genders and income levels. However, age is a significant moderator ($p = 0.038$). The influence of company page qualities on purchase intention diminishes with age, according to the negative coefficient ($\beta = -0.078$). Stated differently, company page elements have a greater impact on younger buyers' decisions to buy handcrafted items.

The moderation analysis reveals that age significantly moderates the relationship between business page attributes (BA) and purchase intention (PI), while gender and income do not. Specifically, the negative interaction between age and BA ($\beta = -0.078, p < 0.05$) suggests that younger consumers are more responsive to business page elements such as content, authenticity, and branding. This finding aligns with recent literature, which highlights that younger audiences, particularly those in digitally-native generations, are more influenced by visually appealing and emotionally engaging social media pages (Kamthan & Thiruchanuru, 2024; Singh et al., 2025). Conversely, older consumers may rely less on digital cues when forming purchase intentions. These insights emphasize the importance of age-targeted digital marketing strategies for promoting handicrafts through social media platforms. Consumer knowledge and attitudes—especially among younger demographics—influence handicraft purchase intentions significantly, Choudhary & Mishra (2023)

Figure 4.9: Showing the Measurement Model



(Source: Author's own)

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

This chapter presents the study's results that were obtained by running Smart PLS 3.2.9 via SEM to meet the goals that were suggested. The study's shortcomings, consequences, and conclusion have since been covered.

5.1 Research findings

This Section Summarizes the Findings of The Study, "Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir." There are four antecedents: platform design, content, Product, and personal factors. The Literature study highlighted the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness outcomes connected to purchase intention. This study's findings provide valuable information for digital entrepreneurs and marketers regarding customers' interest in handicrafts and handlooms in Jammu and Kashmir. In evaluating the digital media initiative of customer engagement in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir, it is important to consider both the benefits and limitations of this approach. On the positive side, the use of digital media has allowed the sector to reach a wider audience, increase sales, and promote the cultural heritage of the region. By leveraging e-commerce sites, social media platforms, and other digital tools, the sector has been able to connect with customers and build brand awareness in a way that was not possible before. However, there are also some limitations to this approach that need to be taken into consideration. For example, access to technology and digital skills can be a challenge, particularly for traditional artisans who may have yet to gain prior experience with these tools. In addition, the rapid pace of change in the digital landscape can make it difficult for the sector to keep up and fully leverage new opportunities. Furthermore, there are also concerns about the potential impact of digitalization on the sector, such as the commoditization of traditional handicrafts and the loss of the personal touch that comes with traditional sales methods. In conclusion, while the digital media initiative of customer engagement in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir has shown promising results, it is important to carefully evaluate the benefits and limitations of this approach to ensure that it is sustainable and supportive of the growth of the sector in the long term. This chapter presents the study's results that were obtained by running Smart PLS 3.2.9 via SEM to meet the goals that were suggested. The study's shortcomings, consequences, and conclusion have since been covered, the study is presented based on the opinion of 550 respondents who are followers of the handicraft and handloom pages or entrepreneurs with more than 1k available on social media platforms are selected for the study where demographic factors are gender wise 308 (55.9) are male and 242

(44) are females, and age-wise adolescents are 192 (35)middle 148 (26.9) and senior 210 (38.1), Based on the results of SEM, the following findings have been extracted to confirm the objectives of the present study:

5.1.1 To examine the impact of social media attributes on customer engagement related to handicrafts and handlooms of Jammu and Kashmir.

The term "business page attributes" refers to the major features, components, and content elements that determine the presentation, functionality, and user experience of a company's web page. These web pages serve not just as information sources, but also act as brand marketing, client engagement, and trust development (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The term "business page attributes" refers to the major features, components, and content elements that determine the presentation, functionality, and user experience of a company's web page. There are various social media attributes for customer engagement

1. Content

The content of a business page is the most direct form of communication between a brand and its audience. It includes posts, images, videos, promotions, and messages that reflect the business's voice and value proposition. High-quality, relevant, and engaging content enhances user interaction and brand loyalty (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Content consistency and alignment with customer expectations can significantly improve online engagement and brand perception (De Vries, Gensler, & Leeflang, 2012). Recent studies emphasize that personalized, informative, and emotionally engaging content positively influences customer engagement and purchase intention (Alalwan, 2018; Kumar et al., 2021). Dynamic content strategies—such as real-time updates and storytelling—also enhance content performance on social media platforms (Gaber, Wright, & Kooli, 2019).

2. Information

The quality and clarity of information on a business page—such a valuable details, service descriptions, pricing, and contact information—impact users' trust and perceived credibility. High-quality information reduces uncertainty and supports informed decision-making (Kim & Kim, 2020). In the context of e-commerce and service marketing, clear and accessible information directly affects customer satisfaction and online conversion rates (Shareef et al., 2019).

3. Authenticity

The term Authenticity refers to how real, honest, and transparent a business appears in its online interactions. Recent literature emphasizes authenticity as a critical factor in building trust, especially in the age of influencer marketing and user-generated content (Moreno, Lafuente, & Muñoz, 2021). Businesses that reflect real voices, share behind-the-scenes content, and engage transparently with customers tend to be perceived as more credible and trustworthy (Audrezet, de Kerviler, & Moulard, 2020).

4. Designing

Designing includes Visual and functional design of business pages—such as the layout, color scheme, typography, and ease of navigation—has gained increasing importance as a predictor of user experience. Aesthetic appeal influences initial impressions and engagement (Lim et al., 2020). Recent studies also show that responsive and mobile-optimized designs are crucial in shaping users' overall satisfaction and willingness to revisit a business page (Park, Cho, & Lee, 2021).

5. Branding

Branding embedded in business pages—such as logos, consistent color palettes, tone of voice, and visual identity—serves to differentiate businesses in a competitive online environment. Effective digital branding reinforces brand equity and drives customer loyalty (Dwivedi et al., 2021). In the age of social media, branding has expanded to include relational and emotional dimensions, as customers expect interactive and value-driven engagement (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2020).

The analysis of the social media attributes shows that all five qualities—content, information, authenticity, design, and branding—are valued, none are significantly more so than the others. There is a balanced, comprehensive user expectation for social media company sites, as suggested by the majority response category across all criteria, which is relatively important. These findings emphasize how important it is for companies to provide multifaceted value by fusing factual information, eye-catching design, genuine communication, significant branding, and captivating content. These results provide credence to a user-centric digital approach, which holds that a company page's success is determined by the synergistic effect of all its features working together rather than any one attribute alone, ensuring engagement.

5.1.2 To assess the effect of personal factors on customer engagement.

The current study found that the personal factors and customer engagement suggested model resulted based on a null hypothesis; there exists no significant relationship between personal factors and customer engagement, as the hypothesis has been taken based on t-value and p-value (accepted level of significance as five percent). The t-value of PF→ ENG is more than 1.96 ($t=23.608 > 1.96$), $p < 0.5$. Hence, there exists a significant relationship between PDT and Customer Engagement. The decision for the hypothesis mentioned above was made based on the t-value and p-value (the accepted level of significance is five percent).

The **t-value** is a measure used in hypothesis testing to determine whether to reject the null hypothesis. It tells us how much the sample data deviates from the null hypothesis. A **t-value of 23.608** is quite large, which indicates that the observed relationship between personal factors (PF) and customer engagement (ENG) is strong and unlikely to have occurred by chance, suggesting that the personal factors strongly influence customer engagement.

The **p-value** is the probability that the observed result occurred due to random chance. In this case, the **p-value is less than 0.05** ($p < 0.05$), which means the relationship between personal factors (PF) and customer engagement (ENG) is statistically significant. In other words, we can reject the null hypothesis, which states there is no relationship between PF and ENG, further supporting the conclusion that personal factors do indeed have a significant effect on customer engagement.

The null hypothesis assumes there is no significant relationship between personal factors (PF) and customer engagement (ENG). Since the t-value is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, this suggests that we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, indicating that there is a significant relationship between personal factors and customer engagement. Personal Factors (PF) refer to individual traits or characteristics of customers, which could include factors like age, gender, income, education, personality, or personal preferences and Customer Engagement (ENG) is the level of involvement, interaction, and emotional connection a customer has with a brand, product, or service. The hypothesis test suggests that there is a significant relationship between personal factors (PF) and customer engagement (ENG), meaning that customers' traits or characteristics have an impact on how engaged they are with a brand or product. The statistical evidence ($t\text{-value} > 1.96$, $p < 0.05$) leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis, confirming that personal factors significantly affect customer engagement. Further, Businesses and marketers can use these insights to target and tailor marketing strategies based on customer demographics and personal characteristics.

Personal factors that influence engagement can help in creating more personalized and effective marketing campaigns, which further leads to higher customer engagement and loyalty. The study's statistical analysis provides strong evidence that personal factors significantly impact customer engagement. Therefore, by rejecting the null hypothesis, the results indicate that focusing on these personal factors is crucial for businesses looking to enhance customer engagement.

5.1.3 To examine the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness.

The study discovered that social media marketing improves brand recognition and engagement, with differences identified between regions. This implies that while social media activities typically boost brand recognition, the degree of influence may vary depending on geographical circumstances. The hypothesis testing was conducted using structural equation modelling (SEM), evaluating both the t-value and p-value, with an accepted level of significance of 5% ($p < 0.05$). As shown in Table 17, the t-value for the path ENG \rightarrow BA was found to be 13.498, which is significantly greater than the critical threshold of 1.96. Additionally, the p-value was less than 0.05, indicating statistical significance. Given that $t = 13.498 > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis (H_0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (H_A). This confirms that customer engagement has a statistically significant and positive effect on brand awareness. This result implies that the more actively customers engage with a brand, whether through social media interactions, content sharing, feedback, or participation, the more aware they become of that brand. These findings align with recent literature. For instance, Zeqiri et al. (2025) found that customer engagement via social media marketing directly enhances brand awareness in emerging markets. Similarly, Perera, Nguyen, and Nayak (2023) emphasized that interactive brand experiences on digital platforms foster stronger brand recognition and emotional connections. For the handicrafts sector, where brand differentiation can be challenging, enhancing customer engagement strategies (such as storytelling, co-creation, and personalized interaction) can significantly contribute to increasing brand visibility and market impact. Such evidence reinforces the importance for businesses, particularly in sectors like handicrafts, to prioritize strategies that foster customer interaction and engagement to build stronger brand awareness and visibility in the market.

5.1.4 To examine the moderating effect of demographics on brand awareness and purchase intentions.

This study used moderation analysis to evaluate interaction effects to determine whether demographic factors like age, gender, and income had an impact on the strength of the association between brand awareness (BA) and purchase intentions (PI). The reasoning for this is that the way that brand awareness is translated into real purchase behavior might change depending on the sociodemographic background of the customers. Brand awareness is an important predictor of purchase intentions since it increases. This study examined whether key demographic factors—specifically gender, income, and age—moderate the relationship between brand awareness (BA) and purchase intentions (PI). The findings reveal that age significantly moderates this relationship, whereas gender and income do not.

The moderation results ($\text{Age} \times \text{BA} \rightarrow \text{PI}$: $\beta = -0.078$, $p = 0.038$) indicate that younger consumers are more responsive to brand awareness efforts compared to older individuals. This suggests that digital brand awareness campaigns are particularly effective among younger segments, especially in the context of handicraft products that blend traditional craftsmanship with modern design and cultural value.

These findings are strongly supported by recent literature. For instance, Choudhary and Mishra (2023) found that age significantly influenced the link between brand attitudes and behavioral intentions in the context of handicraft consumption. Similarly, Singh et al. (2025) analyzed consumer reviews from e-commerce platforms and found that Millennials and Gen Z consumers were more sensitive to brand narratives and authenticity, both of which stem from brand awareness strategies. Kamthan and Thiruchanuru (2024) also emphasized that younger consumers are more influenced by product visibility and digital branding in the handicraft domain. Their study confirmed that brand awareness was a key driver of online engagement and ultimately purchase decisions, but only significantly so among younger age groups. On the other hand, gender and income did not show significant moderating effects in the current study. This suggests that brand awareness campaigns may have universal appeal across income levels and gender identities, allowing for a more streamlined marketing message, with age-based customization in the mode and tone of delivery. Kumar et al. (2023) similarly observed that although income levels impacted overall spending patterns, they did not significantly alter the effect of branding on purchase behaviour for handcrafted items.

The practical implication of this finding is that targeted branding efforts should focus on creating high-engagement content, such as Instagram reels, short videos, and storytelling posts, that resonate more strongly with younger consumers. Cultural storytelling, eco-friendly messaging, and artisan-centric branding are particularly effective tools for building awareness and stimulating purchase intention in this demographic.

In conclusion, age plays a pivotal role in moderating how brand awareness influences consumer decisions in the handicraft sector, aligning with a growing body of research (Choudhary & Mishra, 2023; Singh et al., 2025; Kamthan & Thiruchanuru, 2024). Marketing strategies should thus leverage this insight by segmenting campaigns based on generational preferences while maintaining consistent branding across other demographics.

5.2 Conclusion

The study highlights the impact of digital media initiatives in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu and Kashmir, a region known for its rich cultural heritage and craftsmanship. This industry serves as an essential source of income for numerous artisans and plays a critical role in both rural and urban economic development. The research underscores the importance of adopting a holistic approach to understanding the growth and decline of this sector, emphasizing that it should not be viewed merely through an economic lens but also by considering the wider social, cultural, and technological factors that affect its sustainability.

Key Insights from the Study:

1. Impact of Digital Media:

The use of digital media platforms, including social media, e-commerce websites, and email marketing, has proven to be effective in enhancing customer engagement and driving more demand and sales within the handicraft and handloom sector. The transformation towards digital platforms provides artisans and businesses with an opportunity to reach a larger audience, including both national and international customers.

2. Economic and Social Impact:

Handicrafts and handlooms not only support cultural treasures but also play a significant economic role for the regions, contributing to job creation, income generation, and overall wealth of the economy. Enhancing the need of the government to provide incentives, better salaries, and improved working conditions for the artisans and craftsmen, supporting them at

the state and central levels, which boosts and strengthens the sector's position and provides more stability for artisans and their families.

3. Government Support:

To foster growth in the handicraft and handloom sector, the study advocates for government involvement in promoting the industry by reducing or exempting sales tax, organizing national and international advertising campaigns, participating in exhibitions and fairs, and implementing brochure printing for better promotion. These efforts not only raise awareness but also safeguard producers and customers from potential exploitation, creating a fairer and more sustainable market.

4. Cultural Heritage Preservation:

Another critical outcome of the digital media initiative is its role in preserving and promoting Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage. By digitally showcasing traditional handicrafts, it not only improved the sector's market visibility but also contributed to the preservation of these cultural artifacts for future generations, which foster economic development and cultural preservation, offering a model for how traditional industries can embrace modernity without losing their historical significance.

The digital media initiatives undertaken in Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft and handloom sectors show great promise in enhancing customer engagement, increasing sales, and preserving cultural heritage. The successful integration of digital technologies offers a unique opportunity to revitalize the sector, allowing artisans to tap into broader markets. However, to unlock the full potential of these digital platforms, further training, support, and policy interventions are necessary. The continued collaboration between artisans, government, and industry stakeholders will be crucial in driving sustainable growth and ensuring the long-term success of this vital cultural and economic sector. In the present scenario, initiatives have been taken by the digital media initiative of customer engagement in the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu and Kashmir, which aims to study the use of digital media platforms to improve customer engagement and increase sales in this industry. Studies and literature show handicrafts and handlooms provide a significant source of income for many people. It promotes economic growth and uplifts the rural and urban economy, both by creating jobs and generating national and international sources of income. Understanding the elements that impact craft growth and decline requires a holistic approach rather than only focusing on economics. To encourage the handcrafted sector, the government should offer incentives and help. The

government should enhance salaries and improve working conditions for craftsmen in the handcrafted sector, both at the state and central levels. This study may focus on the effectiveness of different digital media channels, such as social media, e-commerce websites, email marketing, and others, in attracting and retaining customers, as well as identifying any challenges faced by the industry in adopting digital media for customer engagement. The findings of this study might help firms in the handicraft and handloom sectors in Jammu and Kashmir enhance their digital media strategy and better reach and engage customers. Also, to study the relationship between the attributes of social media platforms, customer and their impact on customer engagement in the context of artisans, the digital media project for consumer interaction in Jammu and Kashmir's handicraft and handloom sectors has demonstrated considerable potential for increasing the reach and exposure of traditional craftspeople and their goods. The industry has been able to interact with a larger audience and enhance sales by utilizing various digital channels such as websites, social media, and e-commerce sites. Studies also suggest there is a need to promote the handicraft business through national and international advertising, exhibitions, brochure printing, and participation in fairs for promoting long-term growth, and a well-organized handicraft marketing system should protect both producers and customers from exploitation. Moreover, there should be an exemption or reduction in sales tax to boost sales (Towseef Mohi Ud Din, Sangram Bhushan, 2014). The initiative additionally helped to foster Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage and preserve traditional handicrafts for future generations. Despite significant limitations, such as restricted access to technology and digital skills, the industry has shown a desire to embrace digitization and capitalize on its benefits. To further promote the sector's growth, efforts should be undertaken to equip traditional craftspeople with training and resources that would enable them to effectively use digital technologies.

5.3. Research Implications

The principal objectives are to examine the impact of social media attributes on customer engagement that are related to the handlooms and handicrafts in Jammu and Kashmir. The second objective is to assess the effect of personal factors on customer engagement (Chuah et al. 2020). The third achievement objective is to examine the effect of customer engagement on brand awareness. The last achievement is to examine the moderating effect of the demographics along with brand awareness, as well as purchase intentions.

5.3.1 Academic Implications

The academic implications of the present study are as follows:

1. Conceptual Framework of Purchase Intention

The conceptual framework of purchase intention serves as a structured model to understand how various factors influence consumers' intentions to make a purchase, particularly in the context of online retailing and digital marketing. The framework developed in this study provides insights into the antecedents (factors that precede and influence purchase intention) and consequences (outcomes of purchase intention) through customer engagement.

Here is an in-depth breakdown of the conceptual framework and its components:

1. Antecedents of Purchase Intention via Customer Engagement

The **antecedents** are the factors that lead to or influence purchase intention. The study identifies several key antecedents, which are directly related to **customer engagement** on digital platforms. These antecedents include:

Platform Design:

The design of digital platforms (such as websites or social media pages) is a critical factor in engaging customers and enhancing their user experience. A well-designed platform with easy navigation, fast loading times, visually appealing layouts, and mobile compatibility can positively influence customer perceptions and increase engagement, influencing customers with a positive interaction with the platform, and their purchase intention is more likely to increase.

Content:

The type, quality, and relevance of the content provided on digital platforms are essential drivers of customer engagement. High-quality, engaging, and informative content, such as blog posts, videos, social media posts, and product reviews, can help establish a relationship of trust with the customer, thereby encouraging purchase intention. Content that resonates with the consumer's interests, needs, or pain points can further influence their desire to make a purchase.

Product:

The product or service marketing plays a significant role in driving customer engagement and purchase intention. Products that are perceived as high-quality, unique, or problem-solving are more likely to spark interest and increase customers' desire to purchase. Additionally, personalized product offerings or targeted promotions based on customer preferences can significantly influence their purchase decisions.

Personal Factors:

Personal factors such as individual preferences, needs, lifestyle, demographics (age, gender, etc.), and psychological factors (motivation, attitudes) also influence purchase intention. These personal characteristics shape how a consumer interacts with brands and influence their likelihood of engaging with a platform. For example, a consumer's values and beliefs may drive them to support sustainable or ethical brands, thus influencing their purchase intentions.

2. Customer Engagement

In the conceptual framework, customer engagement acts as the mediator that connects the antecedents (platform design, content, product, and personal factors) to purchase intention. When customers are engaged with a brand or product through digital channels like social media, e-commerce websites, or mobile apps, they are more likely to develop positive perceptions about the product or brand. This positive engagement, in turn, influences their intentions to purchase. The more engaged customers are, the more likely they are to become loyal, make repeat purchases, and spread positive word-of-mouth, which further enhances brand reputation and drives additional engagement from potential customers.

3. Consequences of Purchase Intention

The consequences refer to the outcomes that arise from a consumer's purchase intention, which can have significant implications for businesses and marketers. Some of the main consequences include:

Increased Sales:

Purchase intention is a key driver of sales. When customers are inclined to purchase, businesses see higher conversion rates, translating into increased sales volumes. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence purchase intention helps companies better tailor their strategies to boost sales.

Brand Loyalty:

High purchase intention often leads to brand loyalty. When customers follow through with their purchase, they are more likely to continue purchasing from the same brand, contributing to long-term business success. Engagement that creates positive experiences builds trust and strengthens brand loyalty.

Word-of-Mouth and Referrals:

Satisfied customers who engage with a brand and make purchases are more likely to engage in word-of-mouth marketing. They might share their positive experiences on social media, review platforms, or recommend the brand to others, which in turn increases brand awareness and generates new leads and customers.

Customer Retention:

Purchase intention can lead to better customer retention rates. If a brand consistently engages customers effectively and provides satisfying experiences, those customers are more likely to return for future purchases, thereby lowering customer acquisition costs over time.

4. Modern Marketing Shift

The study also touches upon the shift in modern marketing practices. Traditional methods such as advertising, promotion, and market research still play important roles, but digital platforms and customer engagement are now central to contemporary marketing strategies. The framework highlights that online retailers need to understand how customer engagement influences purchase intention, especially through social media platforms. Since digital media enables direct interaction with customers, it's no longer sufficient to rely on traditional advertising alone. Instead, the focus is on creating engaging content, fostering meaningful interactions, and delivering personalized experiences that drive customers toward making purchases.

5.4 Conclusion

The conceptual framework presented in the study provides a comprehensive understanding of how customer engagement influences purchase intention through a combination of factors, including platform design, content, product attributes, and personal factors. The framework reinforces the need for businesses to adapt to modern marketing practices by integrating customer engagement strategies into their overall marketing approach. By doing so, they can

better align their offerings with customer needs and preferences, driving higher levels of purchase intention and ultimately sales. The findings emphasize that engagement is a crucial factor in today's digital marketing landscape, and it is the key to fostering long-term customer relationships and achieving sustained business growth. This study adds to the scholarly literature on internet marketing, service marketing, and customer engagement. The study established a conceptual framework for understanding the causes and implications of customer engagement. The conceptual framework outlines the factors that influence purchase intention through customer engagement. The conceptual framework is the first step towards an in-depth understanding of the various antecedents (platform design, content, Product, and personal factors). More importantly, the results reveal that these antecedents play a significant role in developing purchase intention. However, in other words, the organization seeks to create value in which traditional marketing practices like marketing research, advertising, promotion, etc., have become less important. Modern marketing is not limited only to the marketing function; instead, it also emphasizes marketing matrices. Therefore, to measure purchase intention, online retailers need to know the degree of customer engagement through social media platforms in the minds of online shoppers. The present study highlights the antecedents and consequences of purchase intention via customer engagement. The study on customer engagement through social media to the scale's reliability and validity. Academics can utilize the validated measure in future studies to have a better understanding of the factors influencing purchase intention through customer engagement.

5.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

- **Extension of Digital Marketing and Customer Engagement Theory**

This study contributes to the existing literature on digital marketing by extending customer engagement theory to the context of traditional handicraft and handloom industries. While prior studies have largely focused on large-scale industries and modern retail sectors, this research demonstrates how digital media initiatives can also shape engagement patterns for heritage-based and artisan-driven sectors (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014).

- **Context-Specific Insights into Traditional Craft Industries**

The research provides unique theoretical insights into the handicraft and handloom sector of Jammu & Kashmir, which has received limited scholarly attention in digital marketing research. By examining the intersection of traditional craftsmanship and digital communication tools, the study contributes to understanding how cultural

heritage products can be promoted and sustained in the digital age (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

- **Integration of Digital Media with Cultural Economy**

The study bridges the gap between digital media strategies and the cultural economy of handicrafts. It demonstrates how digital platforms such as social media, online marketplaces, and digital storytelling can help preserve traditional art forms while expanding customer engagement and global visibility (Brodie et al., 2011).

5.4.2 Practical contribution

- **Strategic Guidance for Handicraft and Handloom Businesses**

The findings provide practical insights for artisans, cooperatives, and small-scale handicraft businesses in Jammu & Kashmir on how digital media initiatives can be effectively used to enhance customer engagement, promote brand identity, and expand market reach.

- **Policy Implications for Government and Development Agencies**

The study offers valuable recommendations for policymakers and government bodies working toward the promotion of traditional crafts. By highlighting the role of digital media in marketing handicraft products, the research supports initiatives aimed at empowering artisans through digital transformation and e-commerce integration.

- **Marketing Strategies for Sustainable Craft Promotion**

The research outlines practical digital marketing strategies—such as social media engagement, storytelling, influencer collaborations, and online retail platforms—that can help traditional craft sectors connect with modern consumers while preserving their cultural authenticity.

- **Support for Digital Empowerment of Artisans**

The study emphasizes the importance of digital literacy and training programs for artisans and craft entrepreneurs. Strengthening digital capabilities can enable them to interact directly with customers, build long-term relationships, and participate more effectively in the global marketplace.

This study emphasizes the role of platform design, content, Product, and personal factors in fostering purchase intention in online buyers. The study's findings have significant management implications for Internet merchants. The findings of the present study have also provided important managerial implications for online retailers, which are as follows:

1. Consistent Competitive Advantage

By providing exceptional customer experiences through platform design, content, product, and product design, online sellers can increase customer engagement and brand awareness, which will lead to purchase intention. Online sellers must adapt themselves to swiftly and continually monitor online buyers' preferences and gratify their target audience. Customers who are satisfied with online sellers or page efforts to generate favorable word-of-mouth for brand pages are more likely to purchase products. To foster customer engagement among online buyers and increase purchase intention and customer engagement, businesses can support successful techniques that build through platform design, content, product, and product design. Internet shoppers often provide favorable offers. Customers are more likely to recommend an online shopping website to others and are repeat customers of the business. To have a sustained competitive edge, online businesses must be clear and define their aims accordingly and ensure customer satisfaction. Online store managers must evaluate all aspects of purchase intention and brand awareness to improve their competitive edge.

2. Customer Awareness Advantage

Digital awareness can be spread, and customers can be engaged, which can play an important role among consumers for marketing any products. In this study, it was found that the majority of the customers were aware of handicraft and handloom products through the traditional market. It is significant to note that digital media plays a significant role in advertisement but less in creating awareness among consumers. Also, it is important to note that even creating awareness through sales representatives is not adequate, and the strategy should be further strengthened. Both attempts will certainly be useful in bringing the desired results, and hence, the manufacturers, dealers, and advertisers should focus on this aspect to enable the smooth marketing of handloom products.

3. Create a consumer-centric strategy

This study provides a framework for online retailers to establish customer engagement resulting in purchase intention, which is influenced by a variety of factors beyond trust and satisfaction. Among several products manufactured in the handloom sector, customer preference is more towards women's wear. It is a good indication that even in modern days, it is quite encouraging to observe that women prefer to use handloom products widely. This can be fully utilized by the handloom sector, and an attempt is made to bring as many products as possible to cover more women customers. Also, it is necessary to focus on several other products that can be

widely used by families, children, and others. Handloom products naturally do not harm the users, and hence, that advantage shall be spread among a large number of consumers to boost sales and customer engagement.

4. Managing the Philosophy of Consumers

In today's rapidly evolving market, consumer demand is not just limited to products and services but also extends to how they experience interactions with brands, especially in the digital space. The findings of this study reveal key insights into the philosophy of modern consumers, especially those engaging with online platforms. The philosophy revolves around the idea that consumers seek more than just a transactional experience; they desire a deeper connection with the brand, which is rooted in engagement, trust, and satisfaction. The philosophy of consumers is increasingly shaped by the ease of access to digital platforms and the level of engagement they can have with online businesses.

The core of managing the philosophy of consumers involves understanding the needs and expectations of customers and how businesses can fulfill them through digital interactions. This includes not only offering quality products and services but also creating a trustworthy and engaging online environment that encourages repeat purchases and brand loyalty.

Engaging the Consumer in the Digital Space

As highlighted in the study, customer engagement on online platforms is pivotal in influencing purchase intention. Online customers today are not passive; they engage with digital content and platforms in multiple ways, from browsing and liking posts to sharing opinions and interacting with customer service. Therefore, online businesses must create environments that foster interaction, engagement, and ultimately conversion.

Trust and Security: In the digital marketplace, consumers need to feel secure when interacting with a brand, whether they are browsing, making a purchase, or providing personal information. Ensuring website security through encryption, clear privacy policies, and secure payment systems is an essential component of establishing trust. If consumers feel that their data is safe and the website is reliable, they are more likely to engage with the brand and make repeat purchases.

Engaging and Responsive Website Design:

An engaging, well-designed, and responsive website plays a crucial role in consumer satisfaction. Websites should be easy to navigate, visually appealing, and responsive on mobile devices to facilitate a seamless shopping experience. Features like product recommendations, easy checkout processes, and fast-loading pages enhance user satisfaction and foster a sense of trust, encouraging repeat visits and purchases.

Fostering Purchase and Repurchase Intentions

The study's findings emphasize that online businesses need to continuously assess consumer demands and develop strategies to encourage repeated purchases. It is no longer enough to just attract a customer once; businesses must focus on retaining them over time. Here are several strategies to achieve this:

Personalization: Online businesses can personalize the shopping experience by leveraging customer data to offer tailored recommendations, targeted promotions, and personalized messages. By understanding individual preferences and behaviours, businesses can create more meaningful and relevant experiences for their customers, which increases the likelihood of purchase and repurchase.

Customer Loyalty Programs: Loyalty programs that offer rewards for repeat purchases can encourage customers to return. These programs can include discounts, exclusive access to sales, or points that can be redeemed for future purchases, which incentivize customers to engage more frequently with the brand.

Consistent Communication: Consistent and engaging communication through email marketing, social media, or personalized notifications helps to keep the brand at the forefront of the consumer's mind. These channels can be used to inform customers about new products, promotions, or content that may interest them, thus creating an ongoing relationship with the brand.

Brand Awareness and Competitive Advantage

Beyond purchase intentions, managing consumer philosophy through engagement also has a significant impact on brand awareness. The more consumers engage with a brand online—through reviews, social media, or recommendations—the more visible and recognized the brand becomes. This increases brand awareness, which is essential for building a strong market presence. Furthermore, in today's digital landscape, the competition is fierce, and businesses must continually evaluate and adapt their strategies to stay relevant. The study highlights that

the management of customer engagement and brand awareness can provide a competitive advantage. Brands that can create sustained engagement are more likely to build long-term relationships with their customers and differentiate themselves from competitors.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Jammu and Kashmir have a wide range of geographical indications for their distinctive and well-known ethnic and regional products. However, a lack of information about intellectual property rights prevents the state from valuing and recognizing geographical indications appropriately. Furthermore, the Government and supporting organizations and bodies' myopic perspective does not provide a suitable incentive for registering new categories of products under geographical indication. As a result, a huge number of Jammu and Kashmiri ethnic and regional items continue to fall prey to unscrupulous marketers who sell counterfeit products under the name "Kashmir Made". The current study adds significantly to the existing knowledge on developing purchase intention through customer engagement among customers through online digital media platforms. The study has certain drawbacks, including the following:

1. The study's sample was confined to Jammu and Kashmir-based entrepreneurs, firstly study tells the relationship between the attributes of social media platforms, customer, and their impact on customer engagement in the context of artisans.
2. This research is limited to the handicrafts and handloom sector of Jammu and Kashmir, and the research is based on only categories mentioned by the Jammu and Kashmir government; other categories are not considered to continue developing the model. new scale items applicable to other product categories in different regions must be identified.
3. The adoption of more product categories and location-specific measures might lead to a better understanding of customer engagement. This study gives an early insight into the intricate relationships between customer engagement and purchase intention through brand awareness.
4. Replicating the conceptual framework of customer engagement in multiple sectors will raise confidence in the generalizability of study findings and provide a better and deeper understanding of the hypothesized relationship in the digital environment.
5. The study is developed for software work where we implement some critical methods and techniques. All these techniques are successfully implemented on the software platform. This

platform is very useful and helpful for implementing all of the techniques easily. They first proceeded to delete all null values, which is called data cleaning.

6. The study is limited to Jammu & Kashmir, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions with different socio-economic and cultural contexts. Regional focus may hinder applicability across diverse consumer bases and digital ecosystems (Rashid & Laskar, 2024).

7. The study may involve a limited number of respondents (customers, artisans, or digital users), which can affect the statistical power and accuracy of findings. Limited sample diversity may not fully capture variations in personal and demographic factors influencing engagement (Verma et al., 2025).

8. Data collected through surveys or interviews might be subject to social desirability or recall bias, influencing the authenticity of insights. Self-reported customer engagement metrics can be biased and require triangulation with behavioral data (Ahmed & Fatima, 2023).

9. Social media algorithms, trends, and consumer behaviors are constantly evolving, which may render some findings time-sensitive. Rapid technological changes in digital media can limit the long-term applicability of static research findings (Sharma & Bose, 2024).

10. The study may adopt a cross-sectional design, limiting its ability to capture changes in engagement or brand awareness over time.

Cross-sectional studies may not reveal causality or evolving consumer-brand relationships (Kumar, Singh, & Nair, 2023).

5.6 Recommendation/Suggestion

1. Handicraft and handloom businesses in Jammu & Kashmir should tailor content according to platform-specific user behaviour (e.g., reels on Instagram, live stories on Facebook, and testimonials on YouTube).
2. Invest in AI-based tools for content automation and personalization to improve real-time engagement and analytics. Social media platform design and content specificity are critical for meaningful engagement in traditional sectors (Sharma & Bose, 2024).
3. Leverage local artisans, cultural influencers, and niche content creators to narrate authentic brand stories. Build digital communities or brand tribes around themes like “Craft Revival” or “Eco-Culture” to deepen long-term engagement. Influencer

marketing positively affects perceived authenticity and drives engagement, especially in traditional markets (Kumar, Singh, & Nair, 2023).

4. Segment audiences based on demographics (age, gender, region), psychographics (values, lifestyle), and digital behavior to deliver targeted content and offers.
5. Use big data analytics and machine learning models to refine segmentation and predict future consumer behavior.
6. Personalization based on user behaviour leads to more sustained engagement and higher conversion in handloom markets (Verma et al., 2025).
7. Introduce augmented reality (AR) experiences for trying products virtually and virtual tours of artisan villages/workshops. Virtual exhibitions can become a sustainable model for showcasing and selling handicrafts globally.
8. The use of immersive technologies like AR and VR enhances digital engagement and product understanding (Chatterjee & Dey, 2023).
9. Conduct digital marketing training programs for artisans and SHGs (Self-Help Groups) to improve their platform navigation and content creation skills.
10. Establish regional digital hubs to provide infrastructure and ongoing mentorship for artisans. Capacity-building through digital literacy plays a pivotal role in empowering local producers and scaling engagement (Rashid & Laskar, 2024).
11. Measure and Monitor Customer Engagement Metrics
12. Use metrics like Click Through Rate (CTR), Conversion Rate, and Engagement Rate. Implement AI dashboards to optimize campaigns and provide predictive insights.
13. Real-time analytics empowers brands to adapt campaigns dynamically for better outcomes (Ahmed & Fatima, 2023).
14. Develop tailored digital content on platforms like Instagram and Facebook that emphasizes storytelling, cultural heritage, and artisan identity. Use interactive features like polls, reels, and live videos to foster emotional and cognitive engagement.
15. Social media attributes such as content richness, responsiveness, and interactivity significantly enhance customer engagement in artisanal and traditional sectors (Singh & Kaur, 2024).

16. Segment target audiences based on individual differences such as social media behaviour, need for uniqueness, and opinion leadership.
17. Incorporate influencer collaborations to target marketing mavens and engage audiences with a high need for evaluation. Personal traits like marketing mavenism and critical thinking increase engagement, particularly in niche markets like handlooms (Verma et al., 2025).
18. Measure different levels of engagement (likes, shares, comments, participation in campaigns) and correlate them with metrics of brand awareness to optimize strategy.
19. Create user-generated content campaigns to reinforce brand identity and emotional ties.
20. Customer engagement through digital platforms significantly contributes to higher levels of brand recall and brand loyalty, especially in traditional product categories (Ahmed & Fatima, 2023).
21. Customize digital campaigns based on demographic segments (age, gender, education, location). For instance, use visually rich and emotional storytelling for older audiences, while adopting fast-paced, gamified content for Gen Z.
22. Demographic variables such as age and education level moderate the relationship between digital engagement and purchase intentions in the artisanal sector (Rashid & Laskar, 2024).

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire – Quantitative Study

I am Sakshi Beri, a Ph.D. research Scholar at Mittal School of Business, Lovely Professional University. Currently, I am working towards my PhD work titled, “Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir. I would appreciate it if you could take some time to help me with your response. Your response will be kept strictly confidential and to be used only by me for research purposes.

Quantitative Questionnaire

1. Select your Gender:

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. Select your age group

- a. Adolescents
- b. Middle
- c. Senior

3. Select your income group.

- a. ₹50,001 – ₹1,00,000
- b. ₹1,00,001 – ₹2,00,000
- c. Above ₹2,00,000

4. Assign a rank from 1 to 4 (1 highly preferred to 4, least preferred) for the following **Social Media** platforms preference to follow handicraft and handloom business pages.

Platforms	Rank
Facebook	
Instagram	
WhatsApp	
Others	

5. Assign a rank from 1 to 4 (1 highly preferred to 4, least preferred) for the kind of **Art and Crafts** you like to buy from online social media platforms, handicraft, and handloom business pages.

Art and Craft Forms.	Rank
Handicrafts	
Handlooms	
Accessories	
Others	

6. According to you, how important is it for you to follow the attributes (factors) mentioned below associated with business pages or brands on social media.

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	less Important
Content					
Information					
Authenticity					
Designing					
Branding					

7. Give your opinion on **Attributes** to follow handicraft and handloom business pages on social media platforms.

Factors	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Important	less Important
Pictures					
Videos					
Products /Services					
Story highlights					

8. Kindly rate the following statements that determine **Platform Design** attributes for customer engagement towards handicraft and handloom business pages based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1—strongly disagree, 2—disagree, 3—neutral, 4—agree, 5—strongly agree).

S No.	Platform Design Items	Degree of Relevance				
		1	2	3	4	5
1.	I follow handicraft and handlooms pages, which seem to be attractive in terms of their looks (aesthetic).					
2.	I follow handicraft and handloom pages that are original or verified.					
3.	I like to follow pages on social media that are only related to handicrafts and handlooms.					

4.	I prefer spending most of my time browsing only handicraft and handloom brands or business pages on social media.					
5.	I am always interested in browsing business pages or brands on social media that are easy to use (browse).					
6.	I usually prefer business pages, which are usually good at responding to errors.					

9. According to your preference, assign importance to the **Content** related to handicrafts and handlooms posted by the business pages or brands on social media.

Content		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	The information or content available on handicraft and handloom brands and pages makes me follow them.					
2	I like to follow business pages that provide information about new trends.					
3	I follow business pages with the latest pictures and videos of celebrities wearing collections on social media.					

4	I like to follow business pages that do promotions (sponsored ads) of handicraft and handloom brands, or pages on social media.					
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10. Kindly give a rating for the following statements that determine attributes of handicraft and handloom **products** available on social media business pages for customer engagement based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree).

Product		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I usually get information about handicraft and handloom products through social media business pages.					
2	I like the reviews of handicraft and handloom products available on the brands' and businesses' pages on social media.					
3	I prefer the knowledge about new products from social media, handicraft, and handloom business pages or brands.					
4	I prefer brands of handicraft and handloom products that fulfil my requirements or needs.					
5	I usually prefer to purchase handicraft and handloom products that are recommended by experts.					
6	I feel good when I use handicraft and handloom products.					

7	I prefer recommendations about handicraft and handloom products from my friends.					
8	I prefer the recommendations on handicraft and handloom products from my relatives or family.					
9	I mostly give preference to good-quality handicraft and handloom products.					

11. Kindly rate the following statements that determine **Personal Factor** attributes for customer engagement towards handicraft and handloom business pages based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1—strongly disagree, 2—disagree, 3—neutral, 4—agree, 5—strongly agree).

PERSONAL FACTOR		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I like to spend most of my time browsing only handicraft and handloom brands or pages on social media.					
2	I have a keen interest in handicraft and handloom brands or pages on social media.					
3	I only trust handicraft and handloom brand pages that are available on social media.					

4	I usually get suggestions to follow handicraft handloom pages from social media.					
5	I get the knowledge about handicraft handloom products, brands, and pages from social media.					
6	I get the awareness about handicraft and handloom pages and brands from social media.					
7	I like to encourage my friends and family to purchase handicraft and handloom products.					
8	I feel a personal connection with handicraft and handloom brands and pages.					
9	I feel good when I buy handicraft and handloom products from social media.					

12. Kindly give a rating for the following statements that determine **Customer Engagement** towards handicraft and handloom business pages based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree).

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Reaction (likes comment)	1	2	3	4	5
1	I prefer to follow handicraft and handloom brands or pages on the basis of the reactions by followers or customers on these pages.					

2	I like to give ratings to handicraft or handloom brands or business pages on social media.				
3	I like handicraft or handloom brands' pages on the basis of the number of likes and shares on them.				
4	I prefer to follow handicraft and handloom brands or pages based on several followers.				
5	I prefer to purchase handicraft and handloom products from brands' pages based on the reaction (number of likes) to them.				
6	I follow handicraft and handloom brands' pages based on reviews or comments on them.				
7	I like to review (comment) on handicraft and handloom posts on social media business pages and brands				
8	I like a brand's pages based on the number of views and comments on handicraft and handloom posts (products) on social media.				
9	I like to purchase handicrafts and handlooms based on comments on the product posts available on the brand's social media pages.				
10	I like to comment and give ratings about handicraft and handloom products after purchasing them from social media pages.				

13. Kindly give a rating for the following statements that determine **Brand Awareness** towards handicraft and handloom business pages based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree).

BRAND AWARENESS		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I am more conscious about handicraft and handloom brands.					
2	I get awareness of different handicraft and handloom brands from social media.					
3	I feel that handloom brands available on social media are more reliable.					
4	I quickly recognize the logo or symbol of handicraft and handloom brands available on social media.					
5	Characteristics or features of branded handicraft and handlooms pages come to my mind quickly.					
6	I can easily recognize my preferred handicraft and handloom brand from the other competing brands on social media.					
7	I mostly have a high intention to buy branded handicraft and handloom products from social media.					

14. Kindly give a rating for the following statements that determines the **Purchase Intention** of followers or customers towards handicraft and handloom business pages based on dimensions related to social media on a five-point rating scale (1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- neutral, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree).

Purchase Intention		Degree of Relevance				
S No.	Items	1	2	3	4	5
1	I have a strong will to buy handicraft and handloom products from social media pages.					
2	I get the best options available on social media to purchase handicraft and handloom products from these brands' pages.					
3	I get attracted to buy branded handicrafts and handlooms from online social media pages.					
4	I mostly have an Impulse online purchase orientation towards handicrafts and handloom products.					
5	I give preference to brands that have quality while purchasing handicrafts and handlooms from social media pages.					
6	I give preference to brands that have quality while purchasing handicrafts and handlooms from social media pages.					
7.	I will buy original handloom and handicrafts products through social media pages.					
8.	I trust handicraft and handlooms brands which are available on social media while purchasing.					

Appendix 2

Questionnaire Qualitative

I am Sakshi Beri, a PhD research Scholar at Mittal School of Business, Lovely Professional University. Currently, I am working towards my PhD work titled “Digital Media Initiative of Customer Engagement: A Study on Handicraft and Handloom Sector of Jammu & Kashmir”. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw your participation from this study at any time. The survey will take only 15 minutes to complete. There are no risks associated with participation in this study. The survey collects no identifying information from any respondent. All of the responses in the survey will be recorded anonymously.

Qualitative Questionnaire

1. Why do you prefer online shopping for handicrafts and handlooms through social media platforms?
2. What are your preferred criteria of handicrafts and handlooms do you deal in?
3. Which social media platform do you prefer the most for handicraft and handloom business? (Fernandes and Moreira, 2019).
4. What is your opinion about handicraft and handloom business? (Bauer et al., 2020a)
5. Why do you think online handicraft and handloom shopping helps in more customer engagement? (Mustafa & Karimi, 2021)
6. Why would you like to sell handicrafts and handlooms through social media platforms? (Mahapatra et al., 2021).
7. According to you, the selling and buying of handicrafts and handlooms through social media platforms can give short-term or long-term growth to any business. (Kim and Castelli, 2021)
8. What kind of platform design do you use for handicraft and handloom pages or business? goods (Eigenraam et al., 2018).
9. What kind of content do you post on your social media about handicraft and handloom pages, and why so? (Meera and Vinodan, 2022).
10. What constraints have you encountered in the handicraft and handloom business