

A Study on Customer Perceptions towards Kalamkari Products in Andhra Pradesh

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore the customer perceptions of Kalamkari products. Kalamkari is a traditional textile art form that is gaining popularity globally. A customer perception refers to how customer view a certain product based on their own conclusion. These conclusions are derived from a number of factors, such as price and overall experience. A marketing concept that encompasses a customer impression, awareness or consciousness about a company or its offerings. Customer perception is typically affected by advertising, reviews, public relations, social media, personal experience and other channels. Perception is one of the objects studied by the science of customer behaviour. Analysing the work of scientists studying the customer behaviour, it is possible to make a conclusion that perception is presented as one of personal factors, determining customer behaviour. A survey-based research approach was used to collect data from 385 customers drawn from unknown population who have purchased Kalamkari products in the past. The study highlights that while customers are highly satisfied with the design, customization and safety of Kalamkari products whereas promotional activities and product quality is a significant concern. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Kalamkari manufacturers and retailers focus on products quality while also considering customer preferences. In terms of promotion, customers stated that they were not aware of Kalamkari products, and thus, there is a need for better marketing and promotion of these products. In conclusion, this research paper recommends that Kalamkari manufacturers and retailers focus on promoting the unique features of these products while also considering product quality.

Keywords: Kalamkari, customer perceptions.

Introduction:

Kalamkari is a traditional Indian craft that involves the use of hand-painted or block-printed textiles with natural dyes. The term "Kalamkari" comes from two words - "kalam," meaning pen or brush, and "kari," meaning work or craft. This craft has a long and rich history in India, dating back to the ancient civilizations of the Indus Valley and the Mughal Empire. Kalamkari has a rich history that is intertwined with the history of India itself. The craft was practiced by artisans who would create intricate designs using natural dyes and handmade brushes. These designs were used to decorate clothes, temple hangings, and even tents used by the Mughal emperors. Today, Kalamkari has evolved to include new techniques and materials, but it remains rooted in its traditional heritage. Modern Kalamkari products include clothing, home décor items, and accessories. Many contemporary designers have incorporated Kalamkari into their collections, blending

Today, Kalamkari continues to be practiced in various parts of India, including Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in Kalamkari products among consumers worldwide. This has led to an increase in the number of businesses offering Kalamkari products both online and offline. With the increasing competition, it is essential for businesses to understand the customer perceptions of

Kalamkari products and the factors which influence the customers to buy kalamkari products. A customer perception refers to how customer view a certain product based on their own conclusion. These conclusions are derived from a number of factors, such as price and overall experience. Customer perception is typically affected by advertising, reviews, public relations, social media, personal experience and other channels. Perception is one of the objects studied by the science of customer behaviour. Analysing the work of scientists studying the customer behaviour, it is possible to make a conclusion that perception is presented as one of personal factors, determining customer behaviour.

Consumer perception refers to how consumers view and interpret a company's products, services, brand, and overall image. The way consumers perceive a company can have a significant impact on its success or failure. This is because consumer perceptions influence their purchasing decisions, and ultimately, their loyalty to a brand.

Marketing is the process through which companies determine what products and services to offer, how to distribute them, how to price them, and how to promote them. Consumer perceptions play a critical role in this process. For instance, companies must consider how consumers perceive their products and services when determining what to offer, how to price them, and how to promote them.

Branding refers to the use of symbols, names, and other identifying features to differentiate a company's products and services from those of its competitors. Building a strong brand requires businesses to invest significant resources in building brand name recognition and associating certain positive qualities with their brands. When consumers perceive a brand positively, they are more likely to trust it and be loyal to it.

To understand consumer perceptions and preferences, businesses often conduct market research. This allows them to gain insight into how and why consumers make the choices they do, which is essential to providing products and services that will be in demand and promoting those products and services effectively.

Customer perception is important because it affects customer satisfaction, which is a critical factor in customer loyalty. Customers compare their expectations prior to a purchase with their perception of the product or service after the purchase. If their perception of the product or service falls short of their expectations, they may be dissatisfied and unlikely to return. On the other hand, if their perception exceeds their expectations, they are likely to be satisfied and become repeat customers.

There are several factors that influence customer perception, including the actual outcome of the product or service, the process of consumption, and all the interactions involved. Other factors may include how other customers or influential groups perceive the product or brand, the degree to which the marketing campaign addresses important issues, and the responsiveness and service quality of any affiliates.

Literature review:

Kalamkari Based Studies:

In their study, Gilow and Barnard (1991) discussed the downfall of Kalamkari, highlighting the entry of the European cotton industry in the 18th century as the major reason for the decline of this art form. The rise of the batik industry and the loss of market for Kalamkari worked cloth were also contributing factors. Das (1992) noted that Kalamkari was given different names by different parts of the world, with the Portuguese calling it "Pintado," the Dutch naming it "Sit," and the English referring to it as "Chintz." Chisti and Jain (2000) found less evidence of a parallel development in the tradition of narrative hangings for courts and temples in South India while recording the evolution and dispersal of dye-painted trade goods. Unnikrishnan (2001) defined Kalamkari products as eco-friendly and discussed the preference for different designs and innovation in the art by modern-day textile manufacturers. Prakash (2003) defined Kalamkari as a famous art of expression that uses vegetable styles on cotton fabric and bamboo sticks for painting purposes. Sinha (2007) focused on the techniques used to embellish temple cloth and wall hangings, describing the lengthy and complicated production process of Kalamkari. Bhatnagar (2011) opined that Kalamkari craftsmen these days are only too eager to reach out to

readily available artificial dyes for quick and easy production of temple cloth due to restrictions on the craft for many years and the influx of cheap chemical dyes. Hashmi (2012) explained the constraints faced by the handicraft sector, including lack of education, low capital, and poor exposure to new technologies. Ghouse (2012) discussed the importance of successful handicraft marketing and identified market awareness and poor infrastructure as major export-related problems. Sharma (2015) recommended making Indian folk art forms commercial and providing training on technology for profitable running. Divakala (2016) studied the journey of Kalamkari art work from temple cloth to textile craft, exploring its contemporary status and future scope in fashion markets. Yogapriya G (2019) conducted a workshop to impart knowledge of hand-printed Kalamkari art to interior design students, which resulted in students appreciating the intricate details of the art form. Ramya Sri (2019) presented the process of Kalamkari and the market trends in prints while conducting a qualitative study to understand the evolution of Kalamkari art and the artisans' lifestyle and standard of living.

Based on the studies and articles provided, it can be concluded that the decline of Kalamkari art can be attributed to various factors such as the entry of European cotton industry, lack of sharing of trade secrets, the rise of the batik industry, and the preference for synthetic dyes over natural ones. The unorganized nature of the handicraft sector, poor infrastructure, lack of education, low capital, and poor exposure to new technologies also contributed to the downfall of the craft. However, with the introduction of training on technology and governmental support, Kalamkari can be sustained as a medium of textile fashion. There is no study conducted on the customer perceptions on kalamkari products.

Studies on customer perceptions:

In a study conducted by G. Kandus (2011), the correlation between mobile phone brand and users' security practices was examined. It was found that users exhibit different behavior in various characteristics depending on the brand of their mobile phone. Therefore, there is a categorization of areas where users lack security awareness, which can assist phone manufacturers in improving their phones' security, preferably transparently for the user.

In another study by R. Martínez Gras and E. Espinar Ruiz (2012), the relationship between information and communication technology and Spanish adolescents was analyzed. Through qualitative methodology, the researchers studied the characteristics of teenagers' access and usage of technological devices, as well as the purpose that motivates their utilization of these devices.

They found that there is an under-utilization of these devices for teaching and learning purposes. W. N. Muhanna and A. M. Abu-Al-sha r (2009) investigated the attitudes of Jordanian university undergraduate and graduate students towards the use of cell phones as learning tools in the classroom. It was found that undergraduates are more favorable towards the use of cell phones in the learning environment than graduates. Finally, N. Azad and M. Safaei (2012) presented an empirical study on factors influencing customers' purchasing intentions for cellular phones in the capital city of Iran, Tehran. The study found positive relationships between exclusive name and quality perception, exclusive name and word-of-mouth advertisement, quality perception and fidelity, word-of-mouth advertisement and brand name, and brand name image and brand name. The study concludes that customers tend to select their products based on the brand name.

Methodology:

Primary data is collected through a structured questionnaire. They rated each variable based on the agreement level on likert scale of one to five (1-strongly disagree and 5-strongly agree). Variables of the research were items/attributes influencing the student's career choice. These career choices are the variables that could be a part of individual's career choice making process or that could direct an individual's career decisions. 38 variables were identified for the present study through literature review and experts opinions.

1. Factor analysis:

Factor analysis for variables of customer perceptions:

To determine whether the factoring approach is adequate, sample adequacy measure KMO and Bartlett's test is used.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.720
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5955.023
	df	338
	Sig.	.000

0.5 are preferable. From the above table when the data is subjected to factor analysis, KMO value is 0.720 which is an acceptable value.

Table 3: Total variance and Eigen values

Total Variance Explained									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	16.607	43.701	43.701	16.607	43.701	43.701	7.116	18.727	18.727
2	2.286	6.017	49.718	2.286	6.017	49.718	3.728	9.812	28.539
3	1.953	5.139	54.857	1.953	5.139	54.857	3.519	9.262	37.800
4	1.205	3.171	58.028	1.205	3.171	58.028	3.377	8.888	46.688
5	1.026	2.699	60.727	1.026	2.699	60.727	3.189	8.392	55.080
6	1.013	2.666	63.393	1.013	2.666	63.393	3.159	8.313	63.393

21 items were grouped into 6 factors, through exploratory factor analysis and are presented below. Eigen values greater than .5 were considered for the study.

Table 4: rotated component matrix

Rotated Component Matrix ^a						
	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
The quality of fabric on which Kalamkari prints are made is high	.714			.623		
The prices of Kalamkari products are uniform irrespective of the location of the store (city/town/village)					.620	.472
Customization is possible for Kalamkari products(products as per customer demands like colour, fabric and etc)				.718		
Discounts/Offer are available on Kalamkari products which influences purchasing decision.			.635			
Price of the Kalamkari products is satisfactory		.653		.608		

The prices of Kalamkari products are affordable.		.632		.563		
Kalamkari designs are very much attractive and appealing.				.695		
The availability of Kalamkari products in handicrafts exhibitions and tradeshow leads to impulsive buying.					.743	
The Kalamkari products are available in wide variety of designs.				.683		
Kalamkari products are available in different price ranges	.430		.317		.446	
The availability of Kalamkari products is very high in cities.			.570		.310	.268
High quality Kalamkari products are available.	.622	.579		.365	.339	
The demand for Kalamkari products is more in metros when compared to villages				.386	.680	
Kalamkari products are eco friendly and safe.				.289	.284	.691
The retailers are charging high prices by offering through e-commerce websites		.601	.575		.271	
The access to Kalamkari products is similar irrespective of the regions(cities, towns and villages)			.272		.519	.408
The Kalamkari products are not harmful.			.238	.240		.583
Customers in cities prefer online buying rather than direct buying.			.542	.231	.492	
The Kalamkari products are advertised through print and electronic media.	.244		.537		.284	
Kalamkari products last longer when compared to synthetic fabrics.	.753		.600	.230		
The promotion of Kalamkari products drives the people to buy the product.		.219	.725	.258		
Bargaining power of customers is high for Kalamkari products		.715		.284		
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.						
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.						
a. Rotation converged in 10 iterations.						

Table 5: Factor extraction

No	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	FACTOR 1 : Attractiveness and customization						
	Customization is possible for Kalamkari products(products as per customer demands like colour, fabric and etc)				.718		
	Kalamkari designs are very much attractive and appealing.				.695		
	The Kalamkari products are available in wide variety of designs.				.683		
2	FACTOR 2: Safety						
	Kalamkari products are eco friendly and safe.						.691
	The Kalamkari products are not harmful.						.583
3	FACTOR 3 : pricing						
	Price of the Kalamkari products is satisfactory		.653				
	The prices of Kalamkari products are affordable.		.632				
	The retailers are charging high prices by offering through e- commerce websites		.601				
	Bargaining power of customers is high for Kalamkari products		.715				
4	FACTOR 4 : Availability						
	The prices of Kalamkari products are uniform irrespective of the location of the store (city/town/village)					.620	
	The availability of Kalamkari products in handicrafts exhibitions and tradeshow leads to impulsive buying.					.743	
	Kalamkari products are available in different price ranges					.446	
	The demand for Kalamkari products is more in metros when compared to villages					.680	
	The access to Kalamkari products is similar irrespective of the regions(cities, towns and villages)					.519	
5	FACTOR 5: Advertising and promotion						
	Discounts/Offer are available on Kalamkari products which influences purchasing decision.			.635			
	Customers in cities prefer online buying rather than direct buying.			.542			
	The Kalamkari products are advertised through print and electronic media.			.537			
	The promotion of Kalamkari products drives the people to buy the product.			.725			
6	FACTOR 6 : product quality						
	The quality of fabric on which Kalamkari prints are made is high	.714					
	High quality Kalamkari products are available.	.622					
	Kalamkari products last longer when compared to synthetic fabrics.	.753					

Factor analysis result is presented in the table above. Factor “product quality” appeared to be the most important factor in purchasing decisions of kalamkari products in Andhrapradesh followed by “pricing”, “advertising and promotion”, “attractiveness and customization”, “availability” and “safety”

Factors influencing the purchasing decisions of customers towards kalamkari products are grouped into 6 factors where product quality is considered to be the most influencing factor. Cumulative per cent appeared to be 63.393 for all the groups extracted. The results of the study are in favour of product quality. The quality of the product is an important factor that influences customer perceptions. In the case of Kalamkari products, customers value the uniqueness and intricacy of the designs, which is a reflection of the craftsmanship involved. Customers also appreciate the use of natural dyes and the eco-friendliness of the product. Therefore, businesses that offer high-quality Kalamkari products with unique designs and sustainable practices are likely to attract and retain customers.

Recommendations:

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed for Kalamkari manufacturers and retailers:

1. **Improve Product Quality:** Enhance quality control measures to ensure that Kalamkari products meet or exceed customer expectations. Focus on using superior materials and craftsmanship to enhance durability and longevity.
2. **Enhance Promotional Activities:** Develop effective marketing strategies to increase the visibility and reach of Kalamkari products. Utilize various channels such as social media, exhibitions, and collaborations to create awareness and generate interest among potential customers.
3. **Highlight Unique Features:** Emphasize the unique aspects of Kalamkari products, such as the traditional hand-painted designs and cultural significance. Educate customers about the craftsmanship involved and the heritage associated with these products.
4. **Customer-centric Approach:** Continuously gather feedback and insights from customers to understand their evolving preferences and needs. Adopt product offerings and customization options accordingly to enhance customer satisfaction.

Conclusion:

This research paper provides valuable insights into customer perceptions of Kalamkari products. The study highlights that while customers are highly satisfied with the attractiveness design, customization and safety of Kalamkari products whereas promotional activities and product quality are the significant concerns. By prioritizing product quality, addressing promotional concerns, and considering customer preferences, they can enhance customer satisfaction and establish a stronger foothold in the market. By doing so, they can better cater to the needs and expectations of their customers and enhance their overall satisfaction with Kalamkari products. The implications of this study extend to marketers and businesses operating in the realm of traditional textile art forms, guiding them in meeting customer expectations and ensuring sustainable growth.

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