

An analysis of the implications of brand equity improvements in the handicrafts industry

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this research is to determine the effect of electronic marketing on the value of handcrafted goods' brands. Brand equity and customers' aspirations to acquire handcrafted items are also investigated in this research. The skill, dedication, and creativity of long-standing customs are shown in handmade goods. Craftspeople have a unique set of abilities and a boundless enthusiasm for their craft that have been handed down through many generations. Numerous academics and business experts have stressed the significance of handcrafted things for society and the environment. These goods have received recognition for both their affordability and their environmental friendliness. The very creative handicraft sector produces a wide range of crafts. There are a number of reasons why suppliers and producers in rural areas are unable to market their goods and services at the moment. Building consumer loyalty to handmade goods' brands is the primary goal of this research.

Key words: Brand Equity, Craftsmen, E-Marketing, Customers, Handicrafts

INTRODUCTION

The rich cultural heritage of India is well-known. An important part of India's economy is the sale of handicraft items. An important driver of economic development, job creation, and foreign currency is the handmade goods industry. Among India's many economic sectors, handicrafts rank second in terms of job opportunities. Its dispersion covers almost every state in the nation. The customs and history of each state influence the unique handicrafts that are produced there. Every state's handicrafts are distinct in style, art, diversity, and originality. In order to adapt their strategies to the actual needs of the market, artisans must first have a geographical understanding of client expectations (Kashyap and Raut, 2006). Craftspeople must make items that cater to consumer tastes (Aithal, 2012). This has the potential to boost the value of the artisans' brands on a global scale.

Online marketing plays a crucial role in all sectors. Due to a lack of familiarity with cutting-edge marketing tools, disorganized businesses fall short in this area of e-marketing. In terms of visibility, the internet approach gives you more control than the old way and makes it easier for networks to form online. All the information you need to know about the quality of the items may be found in the marketing of handicrafts (Menon, 2010). According to Yang et al. (2001), customers have the freedom to browse the website whenever they need to.

Neither the financial nor the marketing results of the artisanal goods have met expectations. The ladies and men of the poorer socioeconomic sectors make these items, and they are kind to the environment.

To distribute the merchandise, e-marketing is necessary (Dash, 2011). By raising consumer awareness, online marketing will boost sales of handicrafts.

Resolving the shortcomings in the handicrafts sector via cost-saving strategies is crucial (Anandaraja and Asokan, 2008). According to Bhattacharjee (2012), the handicrafts industry has the potential to reach clients all over the world via e-commerce if entrepreneurs possess solid entrepreneurial abilities.

According to Bal and Dash (2010), developing nations have a high handicraft production rate. In order to come up with fresh ideas, artisans require the right set of abilities, expertise, knowledge, and enthusiasm (Campbell, 2005). According to Klamer (2012), craft fans tend to choose traditionally created items. Customers love the handmade goods because of the variety of artistic expressions that go into making them (Tian et al., 2001). The artisans who make these exquisite and unique goods are living in abject poverty. In addition, they are members of economically disadvantaged groups in India (Jena, 2007). Despite carrying on a rich cultural legacy, rural craftspeople often struggle to make ends meet (Nanda, and Samanta, 2018)

Definition of brand equity

Brand equity comes from consumer perceptions, experiences, and relationships. The handicrafts industry needs brand equity for several reasons. Customer trust and confidence in a creative, genuine, and culturally rich market depends on brand equity. A strong brand may improve the value and attraction of cultural and artisanal items.

Brand equity impacts expenditure and loyalty. Handcrafted and limited-production goods cost more in an industry where a well-known brand with good equity may justify premium pricing. Positive brand attitudes help business development by encouraging repeat purchases and customers for the brand.

Implications for handicrafts industry

Building long-term customer connections based on shared values, authenticity, and cultural heritage is key to improving brand equity in the handicrafts business. Handicraft brands may lead their niche and succeed in a competitive global market by investing in brand equity via smart marketing, quality assurance, and customer involvement.

Case studies

Few case studies related to the study are discussed below:

Fabindia: A popular Indian retail business, Fabindia sells ethnic apparel and handcrafted goods from rural craftsmen. Authenticity, sustainability, and fair trade have helped the brand build brand equity. Their backing of rural craftsmen and traditional workmanship appeals to shoppers seeking distinctive, culturally rich items.

Nkuku: UK-based Nkuku sells handcrafted homeware and lifestyle goods from African and Asian artists. The business prioritises sustainability, craftsmanship, and fair trade to benefit customers and craftsmen.

Review of Literature

Handmade brand equity advantages are assessed using essential components and interactions. This research investigates artisan brand equity and interactions. Recognition, perceived quality, brand associations, brand

loyalty, cultural heritage, authenticity, digital marketing, and sustainability matter. Poor people work in rural and urban crafts. The artists hurt nature. Most artists generate mass-market goods. Market constantly via middlemen. Entrepreneurs lost money. Marketing knowledge upgrades help the economy (Akilandeewari & Pitchai, 2016). Traditional crafts are mass-produced globally. Many international families deal with culture and money (Yang et al., 2018). Designers and marketers have traditionally valued client preferences (Gkartzonikas & Gkritza, 2019). Customers become increasingly important as corporate trends shift. Client-friendly goods boost market share and profit (Ahani et al., 2019). Academics and craftspeople research how perceived value impacts consumer behaviour (Berg & Lindström, 2021).

Previously, perceived value predicted marketability and customer happiness (Chae et al., 2020). In today's competitive economy, organisations must understand customer preferences (Arpah et al., 2023). Product quality, pricing, service, and satisfaction determine marketability (Gans & Stern, 2003). Homburg, Klarmann, and Schmitt (2010) suggest brand awareness boosts market performance for culturally and historically significant handcrafted goods. Swinker and Hines (2006) claim workmanship, authenticity, and traditional methods increase handcrafted goods' quality and brand value. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) suggest devoted customers recommend brands and are less price-sensitive. Brand equity, image, and purchase intent increase on social media. Guha, Mandal, & Kujur (2021) say Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube promote handicrafts. Quality and consumer usage make handicrafts popular (Mazur-Kajta, 2020). To maintain this unique heritage, policy and regeneration must be repeated (Väänänen & Pöllänen, 2020). Industrial production lacks traditional crafts' creativity and material-specific inventiveness (Strohmayer, 2021).

Core constructs and their relationships

Brand awareness is consumer familiarity. Trust and client preference build brand equity (Aaker, 1991). Consumers assess quality and advantages. Quality boosts brand loyalty (Zeithaml, 1988). Clients link brands with associations. Positive brand experiences may generate loyalty (Keller, 1993). Customer brand loyalty measures relationship. Word-of-mouth and repeat purchases build brand loyalty (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). Culture and authenticity drive handicrafts. They boost brand awareness and premium pricing (Cayla & Arnould, 2023). Customer engagement and awareness on social media and digital marketing improve brand equity (Guha, Mandal, & Kujur, 2021). Sustainable manufacturing may increase business image and quality since buyers choose eco-friendly products (Chang & Chen, 2023).

Critical analysis and comparison of previous studies

To understand brand equity, study these factors and their effects in different circumstances. Cultural storytelling boosts brand equity, argue Cayla and Arnould (2023). They claim handicrafts' heritage and uniqueness increase brand image and price. Guha, Mandal, and Kujur (2021) say social media increases brand awareness and engagement. Digital marketing boosts brand loyalty and audience growth, according to their findings. Chen and Chang (2023) studied brand equity and sustainability. Sustainable enterprises build brand equity via consumer trust and loyalty. Yang et al. (2023) said mass-produced goods and government

support for traditional crafts are handicrafts' socioeconomic challenges. They recommend government aid to save the company. These research boost handicrafts brand value. Cultural heritage, marketing, and sustainability are their priorities. Critical analysis of these studies illustrates brand equity components' complex interplay and helps industry research and applications.

Research gap

This research addresses key handcraft brand equity deficiencies. Research links cultural heritage with contemporary marketing, which are seldom combined. Cultural authenticity and online marketing may boost handmade brand equity, although few research have examined this. Although recognised, sustainability strategies' influence on handcrafted brand equity requires more study. Cultural preservation and craftsmen's economic concerns have been studied, not how sustainable practices might boost brand impression and loyalty.

The study overlooks handicraft brand equity's socioeconomic advantages, such as poverty reduction and community development. This research combines cultural heritage, digital marketing, and sustainability to boost handcraft brand equity.

Research problem

Handmade goods are not considered when compared to goods made by machines. A better marketing plan is needed to build the value of arts as a brand. A good study of marketing will give you a good idea of what people want in terms of arts. A lot of unorganized businesses, like the arts sector, do not have good advertising. There isn't an official marketing network in the arts sector, or it hasn't been built up yet. People who work in the arts industry don't know how to use internet marketing to sell their goods. The products are made in large quantities. But because they don't know enough about technology, this area can't keep up with their rivals (Nagori, 2012). A lot of the artists don't know much about internet marketing when it comes to quality shipping, packing, and customer service after the sale. Because of this, the study focused on how E-marketing can help build the arts industry's brand equity.

METHODOLOGY

Objective of the Study

To identify the relationship between the Determinants of E-marketing and Factors influencing Brand Equity in Handicrafts sector

Cultural Context

This research takes place within the rich historical and cultural milieu of the handicrafts sector. It delves into the ways in which cultural narratives, authenticity, and contemporary marketing tactics interact to shape customer perceptions and loyalty to brands.

Period of Study

From November 2022 to November 2023, the study covers a year, so data can be gathered during different market conditions and seasons. This continuous method helps us understand how brand equity changes over time and the things that affect it.

Rationale of the study

The questionnaire used a Likert 5-point scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This report draws on the authors' brand equity research of Tamil Nadu's handicrafts industry. Study samples come from Tirunelveli. Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli has a strong handcraft culture. A questionnaire is given to 400 clients from the state above for the research. Of 400 questionnaires issued, 367 (91.75%) were full, 21 (5.25%) were partial, and 12 (3.0%) were not returned. The sample size was 367. This study is empirical. Secondary data comes from reliable sources including books, newspapers, journals, and websites. Primary data is collected via basic random sampling. The study uses descriptive research. Statistical tools such as correlation analysis, KMO-Bartlett test, factor analysis, and regression analysis are used for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 demographic Background of Employees

Demographic Characteristics		N (Total = 367)	% of n
Age	Less than 25 years	45	12.3
	25 years – 50 years	192	52.3
	50 years & above	130	35.4
Gender	Male	202	55.0
	Female	165	45.0
Educational status	School level	61	16.6
	College level	306	83.4
Monthly income	Less than Rs. 25,000	42	11.4
	Rs. 25,000 - Rs. 50,000	80	21.8
	Rs. 50,000 - Rs. 75,000	159	43.3
	Rs. 75,000 & above	86	23.4

Source: Primary data
n - Number of respondents

Customers aged 50 and above make up 35.4% of the study's total, while only 12.3% fall into the "Less than 25 years" age bracket, as shown in table:1. The next largest age group is that of 25–50 years old, with 52.3% of the total. Customers under the age of 30 clearly do not exhibit much enthusiasm for handmade goods. Depending on their interests and traditions, middle-aged and older buyers prioritize handicrafts.

In this sample, women make up 45.0% of the clients and men 55.0%. In terms of educational attainment, 83.4% of the study's consumers have completed some college coursework, while 16.6% have completed merely high school.

In terms of monthly income, 43.3% of the sample earns between 50,000 and 75,000 rupees, with 23.4% of the consumers earning 75,000 rupees or more. Participants with incomes below Rs. 25,000 (11.4%) are underrepresented in the survey. The exorbitant price of the handicrafts makes it clear that they are only affordable to buyers with high incomes.

Hypothesis I

Null Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship among Factors influencing Brand Equity in Handicrafts sector

Table 2 Inter correlation matrix factors influencing brand equity in handicrafts sector

		BI	BQ	BA	BL	BAS
BI	Pearson Correlation	1	0.917**	0.993**	0.830**	0.892**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
BQ	Pearson Correlation		1	0.901**	0.824*	0.905**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			0.000	0.047	0.000
BA	Pearson Correlation			1	0.833*	0.824**
	Sig. (2-tailed)				0.030	0.000
BL	Pearson Correlation				1	0.854**
	Sig. (2-tailed)					0.008
BAS	Pearson Correlation					1
	Sig. (2-tailed)					

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Note: **BI** refers to Brand Image, **BQ** refers to Brand Quality, **BA** refers to Brand Awareness, **BL** refers to Brand Loyalty, **BAS** refers to Brand Association

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

The results in Table 2 show that there is a 0.917 correlation between Brand Image and Brand Quality, which means that there is a 92% strong positive association. The relationship is also significant at the 1% level, so we can reject the null hypothesis. A 0.993 correlation coefficient between brand image and brand awareness suggests a very good relationship ($r=99\%$), a statistically significant relationship ($p=0.01$), and the rejection of the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis is rejected due to the strong positive relationship ($r=0.830$) between brand image and brand loyalty, which accounts for 83% of the total. The relationship is also statistically significant at the 1% level. With a correlation value of 0.892, we can see that there is a strong positive relationship between brand image and brand association; moreover, this relationship is statistically significant at the 1% level, thus we can reject the null hypothesis.

There is a strong positive relationship between brand quality and brand awareness ($r=0.901$), which rejects the null hypothesis and suggests a 90% high level of correlation. The relationship is also statistically significant at the 1% level. With a value of 0.824, the correlation coefficient between brand loyalty and brand quality is 82% strong, and the relationship is statistically significant at the 5% level, rejecting the null hypothesis. With a value of 0.905 for the correlation coefficient, we can see that there is a 91% strong positive relationship between brand quality and brand association. This relationship is also statistically significant at the 1% level, thus we can reject the null hypothesis.

A strong positive association of 83% is shown by the correlation coefficient of 0.833 between brand awareness and brand loyalty; moreover, the relation is significant at the 5% level, rejecting the null hypothesis. With an r -value of 0.824, which implies an 82% strong positive link and a significance level of 1%, we can reject the null hypothesis and say that there is no relationship between brand awareness and brand association.

Brand Loyalty and Brand Association have a strong positive relationship ($r=0.854$), which rejects the null hypothesis and suggests a very significant relationship ($p=.001$).

Table 3 KMO and bartlett's test for determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.885
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3131.580
	df	105
	Sig.	0.000**

Source: Statistically analysed data

The amount of variation in the variables of 'Determinants of E-marketing in Handicrafts' that can be driven by underlying causes is shown by the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. The fact that KMO is so high at 0.885 shows that factor analysis fits the data well. To ensure that the variables are uncorrelated, Bartlett's sphericity test is used. At the 1% level of significance, the factor analysis is both fit and significant, since the P value is less than 0.01.

Table 4 total variance for determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	2.290	15.267	15.267
2	2.151	14.338	29.605
3	1.928	12.853	42.458
4	1.793	11.951	54.408
5	1.685	11.234	65.642
6	1.424	9.496	75.138

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Using Varimax rotation in Principal Component Factor Analysis, a six-factor structure was uncovered. In table 4 we can see that all the determinants of e-marketing in crafts have eigen values greater than 1, and that components 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 account for a total of 75.1328 percent of the variation. That is, out of a total of fifteen elements on the instrument, 25% are deleted.

Table 5 Principal component analysis of determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts

Particulars	Items	Component					
		1	2	3	4	5	6
Growth in retail chain	DEM15	0.955					
Convenient purchase	DEM7	0.949					
Quality and eco-friendly products	DEM12		0.892				
Rich in tradition and heritage	DEM9		0.837				
Highly export driven products	DEM10		0.589				
Effective communication	DEM5			0.704			
Skilled manpower	DEM14			0.674			
Unique varieties	DEM13			0.572			
Builds customer loyalty	DEM3			0.538			
Low investment	DEM11				0.767		
Low cost and Saves time	DEM1				0.701		
Customized products and services	DEM8				0.551		
Takes organization globally	DEM2					0.757	
Easy and direct access	DEM6					0.753	
Builds customer loyalty	DEM4						0.887

Source: Statistically analyzed data

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis
 a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations

Table 5 shows weak and cross loadings removed using six factor solution. The following suggests fifteen things on the components: two on component 1, three on component 2, four on component 3, three on component 4, two on component 5, and one on component 6. Strong and fitting loadings on component pieces.

One factor is ‘Growth in retail chain, and Convenient purchase’. The factors in factor one are positive factor loadings for Handicraft E-marketing Determinants. Factor two is ‘Quality and eco-friendly goods, Rich in history and legacy, and Highly export orientated items’. The factors in factor two are positive factor loadings for Handicraft E-marketing Determinants. Factor three is ‘Effective communication, Skilled labor, Unique variations and Builds client loyalty’. The factors in factor three are positive factor loadings for Handicraft E-marketing Determinants. Factor four is ‘Low investment, Low cost, Saves time, and Customized goods and services’. The factors in factor four are positive factor loadings for Handicraft E-marketing Determinants. Factor five combines ‘Takes organization internationally, and Easy and direct access’. The factors in factor five are positive factor loadings for Handicraft E-marketing Determinants. Sixth is ‘Builds client loyalty’. Positive factor loadings drive Determinants of E-marketing in Handicrafts in factor six.

Table 6 regression analysis- r square - determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.899a	0.839	0.834	2.923

Source: Statistically analyzed data

The determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts are the dependent variable, and the multiple correlation coefficient of the independent variables is R, which is 0.899, as shown in Table 6. When added together all the variances in the dependent variable, you get the R squared value. A good match is also shown by the R-squared value of 0.839 (83.9%) in the aforementioned result.

Table 8 regression analysis- significance- determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts

Particulars	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t ^a	Sig. ^b
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	35.654	1.656	-	21.524	0.000**
BI	0.885	0.132	0.254	6.726	0.000**
BQ	1.064	0.135	0.349	7.866	0.000**
BA	1.196	0.109	0.395	10.948	0.000**
BL	-0.187	0.132	-0.047	1.415	0.008**
BAS	0.111	0.120	0.037	0.927	0.005**

Source: Statistically analysed data

Note: ^aT-Statistic, ^bSignificance

a. Dependent Variable: DE

BI refers to Brand Image, BQ refers to Brand Quality, BA refers to Brand Awareness, BL refers to Brand Loyalty, BAS refers to Brand Association

At the 0.001 level of significance, Table 8 shows that the largest positive beta value for the Determinants of E-marketing in Handicrafts is 1.196. "Brand Awareness" is the most affected variable by determinants of e-marketing in the handmade goods industry.

The determinants of e-marketing in handicrafts have a positive impact and would raise the unit with beta values of 0.885 for brand image, 1.064 for brand quality, 1.196 for brand awareness, and 0.111 for brand association, all of which are significant at the 0.001 level. At the 0.001 level of significance, the beta value of Brand Loyalty (0.187) has a negative effect and would reduce the unit on Determinants of E-marketing in Handicrafts.

Conclusion

The survey reveals handicraft buyers' demographics and habits. Handcrafted products inspired by tradition and personal tastes take up a considerable market share among customers over 50. Younger customers, especially under 30, dislike these products. More women than men are clients. Many have attended college, indicating a quality-conscious client base. The survey understates lower income levels, underlining the challenge of affording handicrafts, which are largely accessible to the rich. The strong positive correlation between Brand Loyalty and Brand Association reveals how brand awareness and consumer loyalty affect purchases. E-marketing relies on brand awareness and quality, with high beta values affecting client choices. Brand equity enhancements in Tirunelveli's handicrafts business have promising results. Craftsmen, companies, and the local economy may profit from deliberate brand equity improvement. Improved brand image may boost customer trust and loyalty. As customers identify quality and trustworthiness with a strong brand, Tirunelveli's handicrafts sector will gain market share. This may increase sales and income for craftsmen and companies.

Effective branding can highlight the region's distinct cultural and artistic characteristics, enticing visitors and online shoppers. Broader exposure may help the handicrafts business expand and survive. A stronger brand may also promote local and worldwide relationships. A strong brand presence may attract investors, merchants, and distributors, allowing artists to exhibit their creations. Networking may share information, resources, and market opportunities. Brand upgrades may preserve traditional craftsmanship and cultural heritage by boosting demand for genuine and locally created items.

Limitations and Future Research

The study's limitation emphasis on small sample size may limit its worldwide applicability. Multinational studies or multiple cultural views might help researchers understand consumer behaviour and brand perceptions across markets. Although the present study improves our knowledge of brand equity in the handicrafts business, future research should take a more thorough and diversified approach. Researchers may help handicraft enterprises succeed in a competitive global market by studying new aspects including digital marketing tactics, cross-cultural differences, sustainability certifications, and longitudinal studies.

Acknowledgements

This work is based on the original data collected by the authors

Conflict of interests

The authors declare that no competing interests exist.

Author's contributions

Both the authors contributed equally to the theoretical development, analysis, interpretation and writing of the manuscript.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial or not-for-profit sectors.

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