

A STUDY ON COGNITIVE APPRAISAL AND PURCHASE BEHAVIOUR OF CONSUMERS OF TRADITIONAL SILK SAREES

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of cognitive appraisal on consumer attitudes and purchase behaviour toward traditional silk Sarees, with particular reference to their cultural and symbolic significance.

Theoretical framework: The study is based on cognitive appraisal theory, which explains how consumers evaluate products through perceptions such as cultural value, authenticity, quality, and price fairness. These evaluations influence emotional responses and purchase intentions.

Design/methodology/approach: A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire from 100 consumers who had purchased or intended to purchase traditional silk Sarees. The collected data were analysed to understand the impact of cognitive appraisal dimensions on purchase behaviour.

Findings: The findings indicate that cognitive appraisal significantly influences emotional attachment and purchase decisions. Perceived cultural value and product authenticity were found to be the most influential factors, followed by quality perception and price fairness.

Originality/value: The study contributes to consumer behaviour literature by integrating cognitive appraisal theory with the consumption of traditional and culturally significant products.

Keywords:

Consumers, Cultural value, Quality, Silk Sarees Purchase Intention.

INTRODUCTION:

Traditional silk sarees represent a distinctive category of products where consumption is strongly linked with cultural meaning and emotional value. Unlike ordinary apparel, silk sarees are associated with rituals, celebrations, social status and heritage continuity. Therefore, the purchase decision is not purely economic but psychological in nature.

Consumers interpret such products through cognitive evaluation. Cognitive appraisal refers to the mental process through which individuals assess an object based on beliefs, values and relevance to personal identity. When purchasing traditional silk sarees, buyers evaluate cultural appropriateness, authenticity and symbolic importance along with price and quality.

Although many studies have examined consumer preference for textiles, limited research has analysed the psychological mechanisms behind purchase behaviour of culturally symbolic products. This study attempts to fill this gap by analysing the influence of cognitive appraisal on consumer purchase behaviour toward traditional silk sarees.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Richard S. Lazarus (1991), Lazarus proposed that individuals do not respond directly to stimuli, instead they interpret and evaluate situations before emotional reactions occur. The evaluation process includes goal relevance, congruence, coping ability and responsibility. In consumption, a product is first cognitively assessed for its meaning and usefulness, which then produces emotional attachment or rejection. This theory forms the psychological base for understanding how consumers interpret traditional products such as silk sarees before deciding to purchase.

Klaus R. Scherer (2001), Scherer explained that emotions arise from sequential appraisal checks including novelty, pleasantness and goal significance. When applied to consumer products, individuals experience pride, prestige or attachment after evaluating symbolic products. Traditional attire, especially heritage clothing, often generates affective responses due to cultural meaning rather than functional need. Thus appraisal leads to emotional bonding which influences buying intention.

Kotler & Keller (2016)

They classified cultural factors as the most powerful determinant of consumer behaviour. Cultural norms, rituals and traditions shape buying patterns, especially for ceremonial products. Silk sarees are typically purchased during marriages and festivals, making cultural value a major purchase determinant.

Research Gap:

Most prior studies explain what consumers prefer in silk sarees but not how they psychologically evaluate them before purchase. Particularly, the role of cultural symbolism and authenticity perception in forming purchase intention has not been sufficiently examined. Hence, the present study investigates cognitive appraisal as a determinant of purchase behaviour.

Needs for the Study:

Traditional silk sarees represent more than apparel; they symbolize heritage, identity and social prestige. Institutions such as **Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation** produce culturally significant silk garments that are typically purchased during weddings, festivals and rituals. However, changing lifestyles, modernization and the availability of synthetic substitutes have altered consumer decision-making patterns. Therefore, a systematic study is required to understand how consumers mentally evaluate traditional silk sarees before purchasing them.

Scope of the Study:

This study examines the buying behaviour of consumers toward traditional silk sarees by focusing on the psychological evaluation that takes place before purchase. The research is confined to heritage silk sarees, particularly those produced and marketed through recognized traditional sources such as **Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation**, which are generally purchased for ceremonial and cultural occasions rather than daily use. The study does not consider synthetic or fashion sarees, as the objective is to understand behaviour toward culturally significant textile products.

Objectives of the Study:

1. To identify cognitive appraisal factors influencing purchase behaviour
2. To examine the relationship between cognitive appraisal and purchase intention
3. To analyse the role of cultural and symbolic value in decision making

Hypotheses:

H1: There is a Positive Relation between Cultural value and Price fairness influences on Purchase behaviour.

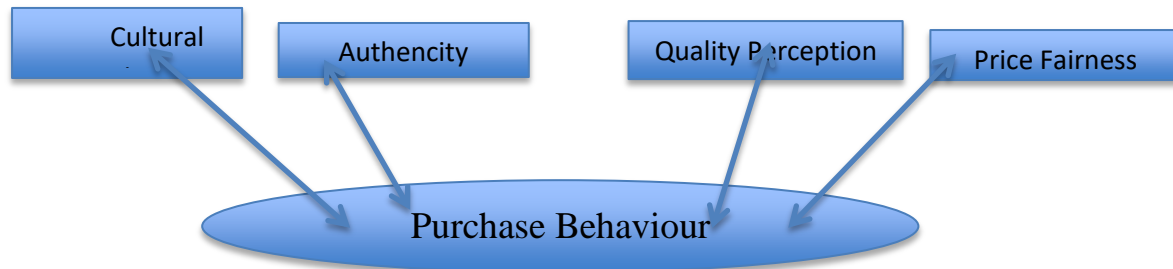
H2: There is a Positive Relation between Authenticity and Quality perception positively influences purchase behaviour.

Conceptual Framework:

The model proposes that consumers evaluate traditional silk sarees through four appraisal dimensions cultural value, authenticity, quality perception and price fairness which together influence purchase behaviour.

Independent Variables: Cultural Value, Authenticity, Quality Perception, Price Fairness

Dependent Variable: Purchase Behaviour. **Conceptual Model**



Research Methodology:

The present study adopted a descriptive research design to examine the influence of cognitive appraisal on the purchase behaviour of consumers toward traditional silk sarees. The descriptive approach was considered appropriate as the study aims to understand consumer perceptions, attitudes and behavioural responses rather than manipulate variables. The sample for the study consisted of 100 consumers who had either purchased or expressed intention to purchase traditional silk sarees. Respondents were selected using convenience sampling from retail outlets and silk saree showrooms. This sampling technique was used due to accessibility and availability of relevant respondents familiar with the product. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The instrument contained statements measuring cultural value, authenticity, quality perception, price fairness and purchase intention. All responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagrees to strongly agree. The collected data were analysed using statistical techniques such as percentage analysis, mean score analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis to examine relationships between cognitive appraisal variables and purchase behaviour.

Data Analysis and Results:

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha Values)

Sl. No	Construct (Variable)	No. of Items	Cronbach’s Alpha	Interpretation
1	Cultural Value	5	0.86	Reliable
2	Authenticity Perception	5	0.82	Reliable
3	Quality Perception	5	0.79	Reliable
4	Price Fairness	5	0.76	Reliable
5	Purchase Behaviour	5	0.88	Reliable
Overall Scale	—	25	0.84	Acceptable Reliability

Note: Alpha values > 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency.

Source: Primary data analysis

The reliability of the measurement scales was examined using *Cronbach’s alpha*. The alpha values for all constructs were found to be greater than 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire items used in the study. Descriptive analysis revealed that the majority of respondents purchased traditional silk sarees primarily for weddings, festivals and ceremonial occasions. Among the cognitive appraisal dimensions, cultural value received the highest mean score, suggesting that consumers attach strong traditional and symbolic importance to silk sarees during the purchase decision process.

Correlation analysis indicated a positive relationship between all cognitive appraisal variables and purchase behaviour. This shows that higher perception of cultural value, authenticity, quality and price fairness increases the likelihood of purchase intention.

Regression analysis further confirmed the predictive influence of these variables. Cultural value emerged as the strongest predictor of purchase behaviour, followed by authenticity and quality perception, while price fairness showed a comparatively lower yet statistically significant effect on purchase decisions.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS:

The findings of the study indicate that traditional silk sarees are perceived by consumers as symbolic and culturally meaningful products rather than purely functional apparel. Consumers evaluate these sarees based on their relevance to cultural traditions, social acceptance and ceremonial appropriateness. When the product aligns with cultural expectations, it creates emotional attachment, which in turn increases the likelihood of purchase. Therefore, purchase decisions are influenced more by psychological relevance than by simple economic comparison, supporting the applicability of cognitive appraisal theory in the context of culturally significant product consumption.

From a managerial perspective, marketers and retailers should focus on promoting heritage value, craftsmanship and authenticity certification instead of competing primarily on price. Communicating the cultural story and traditional significance of silk sarees can enhance consumer trust and encourage long-term loyalty. From an academic perspective, the study contributes to consumer behaviour literature by extending cognitive appraisal theory to traditional textile markets and provides a conceptual basis for future research on heritage and culturally embedded products.

Limitations:

However, the study has certain limitations. The sample size was relatively small and respondents were selected using convenience sampling, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Further, the research was confined to a limited geographical area and may not represent diverse consumer behaviour across regions.

Scope for Future Research:

Future studies may expand the sample coverage, examine the influence of digital marketing on traditional apparel purchase behaviour, compare modern and traditional clothing preferences, and apply advanced statistical techniques such as structural equation modelling for deeper behavioural insights.

CONCLUSION:

The study confirms that cognitive appraisal significantly influences consumer purchase behaviour toward traditional silk sarees. Among the appraisal dimensions, cultural value and authenticity emerged as the most influential factors, while quality perception and price fairness showed comparatively moderate impact. The findings indicate that consumers purchase traditional silk sarees not merely for functional usage but for symbolic meaning, emotional attachment and social acceptance. Hence, psychological evaluation plays a more dominant role than economic considerations in the decision-making process, emphasizing the importance of cultural relevance in heritage textile markets.

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