Research Article

A Study On The Factors Influencing Purchase Behaviour Of The Customers Towards Silk Sarees In Kancheepuram

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Studying the behavior of female consumers has become crucial. Consumers reign as the pivotal force in markets. Kanchipuram Silk boasts a rich historical legacy dating back to the early era of South India under the Pallavas. As a temple city and former capital of various South Indian dynasties, the silk handloom industry has thrived here, supported by royal patronage, elevating weavers to a prominent position in the social hierarchy. Businesses cannot operate without consumers. The rising costs of raw materials, particularly zari, emerge as a significant production hurdle, accompanied by challenges like working capital issues, increased use of counterfeit zari, and low wages. In marketing, the primary concern is the escalating prices of finished goods due to input cost hikes, followed by the influx of silk fabrics containing fake zari, unfair trade practices such as selling non-Kanchipuram products under its brand name, intermediary misconduct, lack of advertising, and the availability of cheaper alternatives. Understanding consumer behavior delves into their purchasing patterns, considering their roles as users, payers, and buyers. People's desires for products and services have dramatically expanded, leading to shifting attitudes and behaviors that can be sensitive to price fluctuations. To establish a study framework, various paradigms of thought that have influenced the discipline of consumer behavior need to be considered. ***Keywords:*** *Preference, Buying behavior, Silk sarees, women, Kancheepuram, Association.*

INTRODUCTION

Consumer preferences encompass expectations, likes, dislikes, motivations, and tendencies that steer purchasing decisions. These inclinations are influenced by various factors such as price, quantity, income, market selection, and demographic variables like age and gender. Preference is essentially the individual satisfaction and subjective taste of consumers regarding purchased items.

The resurgence of interest in traditional silk sarees symbolizes a reverence for our heritage. Wearing a saree carries a sense of respect, especially in comparison to other attire. Sarees hold a significant cultural position, offering a wide array of choices in the market. For comfort, cotton sarees are a primary choice, while the luxurious appeal and rich texture draw women toward silk sarees.

Silk, hailed as the "queen of fibers" owing to its exceptional qualities—natural hypoallergenic nature, recyclability, biodegradability, suitability for all seasons, strength, luxuriousness, and softness—has a history spanning thousands of years. In Tamil Nadu, the regions of Coimbatore, Kanchipuram, and Madurai boast silk sarees ideal for weddings, functions, and celebrations. Historical records indicate that the elite of society favored Rasipuram silk, distinguished by its temple border, as their classic attire. The pure silk sarees from our state epitomize our rich tradition and culture.

In Southern India, heavy silk sarees from Tanjore, Kumbakonam, and Kancheepuram in Tamil Nadu are renowned for their elaborate borders and vivid contrasts. Indian folklore often recounts rare auspicious markings found on revered figures like Rama, Krishna, Gautama Buddha, and Mahavira, aligning with this

tradition. Paramparapattu signifies a blend of traditional motifs and contemporary weaving styles, exemplifying this exclusive range of wedding sarees that showcase handcrafted practices in modern designs. VastrakalaPattu, established in 1970, pays homage to Mother Earth through stunning silk sarees that encapsulate the essence of our planet. According to Hindu mythology, Kanchi silk weavers trace their lineage back to Sage Markanda, revered as the master weaver of the Gods, who is said to have woven fabric from lotus fiber.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purchase behavior of customers towards silk sarees in Kancheepuram is influenced by various factors, yet an in-depth understanding of these factors remains inadequately explored. This study aims to identify and analyze the multifaceted aspects that significantly impact customer preferences and purchasing decisions concerning silk sarees in the Kancheepuram region. By examining variables such as cultural influences, economic factors, quality perceptions, marketing strategies, and evolving consumer trends, this research seeks to elucidate the intricate interplay among these factors. The lack of comprehensive research in this area necessitates a focused investigation to provide insights into the nuanced dynamics driving customer choices and behaviors regarding silk saree purchases in Kancheepuram. This study aims to fill this gap in the literature, ultimately contributing valuable knowledge for businesses, marketers, and stakeholders aiming to better cater to the preferences and needs of the consumers in this niche market.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
➢ To study the demographic profile of the respondents.
➢ To examine the association among the demographic variable related to the study

HYPOTHESES

H_a 1.There is an association between Communication mode and Working Region
H_a 2.There is an association between Dispute Reason and Working Region
H_a 3.There is an association between Policy Awareness and Working Region
H_a 4.There is an association between Cordial Relationship and Working Region
H_a 5.There is an association between Facilities Awareness and Working Region
H_a 6.There is an association between Welfare Facilities and Working Region
H_a 7.There is an association between Dispute Arisal and Working Region
H_a 8.There is an association between Effective feedback system and Working Region
H_a 9.There is an association between Participation and Working Region

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
• The research was limited to Kanchipuram city, so it might not be directly comparable to other areas.
• The conclusions were drawn solely from respondent-provided data, making it challenging to compare with other influencing factors.
• The findings are specifically relevant to the time frame of the study.
• Respondents' viewpoints are dynamic and subject to change over time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jose et al. (2013) highlighted tangible and intangible factors impacting store loyalty by investigating silk saree purchases in Bangalore. Their study aimed to uncover benefits associated with the brand, purchase patterns, and influencing factors. They surveyed 141 women post-saree purchase, integrating insights from various sellers. Quality and variety emerged as pivotal factors in Bangalore's clothing market, indicating traditional advertising's ongoing influence and the nascent stage of internet ads for silk sarees.
Pearl FafaBansah et al. (2015) explored branding's impact on consumer behavior among Textile Ghana Fabric users in Ho municipality. Their focus on brand equity—brand awareness, loyalty, and image—revealed branding alongside price, status, self-concept, and lifestyle as key drivers in fabric purchasing decisions.
LeenaJenefa and Ramesh Kaliyamoorthy (2014) emphasized the evolving retail landscape, necessitating unique, holistic approaches to retain customers through experiential innovation. They stressed that exceeding customer satisfaction to achieve delight is challenging amid rising expectations in a competitive market.
Lee Jungmin and Kim Jongjun (2020) discussed the shift towards environmentally friendly products in the clothing industry, emphasizing research into non-polluting textile manufacturing. They highlighted the growing recognition of natural fibers like cotton, silk, and ramie, alongside high molecular materials like chitosan and hyaluronic acid for their eco-friendliness and human-centric properties.
Voicu (2017) linked consumer preferences to long-term brand relationships, noting the tendency for preferences to narrow even with diverse options. Preferences encompass material attributes, brand elements, and warranties, influencing product choices.

Simamora (2014) underscored product attributes—quality, features, design, and after-sales service—as key considerations in consumer decision-making. Consumer evaluations and preferences evolve over time, driven by diverse product and brand attributes.

Kalaiyarasi (2014) integrated consumer buying behavior into strategic market planning, acknowledging the evolving, elastic nature of consumer attitudes and behaviors, especially concerning pricing. Marketers face challenges in understanding diverse consumer needs and behaviors, highlighting the necessity for tailored marketing strategies.

Mower, Kim, and Childs (2012) explored how external atmospherics like window displays and landscaping influence customer responses toward an apparel boutique. While these variables didn't directly affect pleasure or arousal, they influenced store liking and patronage intentions.

Sandeep Kumar, Prasanna Kumar, and SrinivasaNarayana (2016) delved into consumer perceptions, behavior, and lifestyle regarding apparel brands, emphasizing the importance of customer retention strategies. They suggested focusing on reasonable pricing, maintaining quality, loyalty programs, excellent customer service, and diverse advertising approaches for brand retention..

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this research involved utilizing a questionnaire survey method to gather primary data. A set of 12 survey items sourced from prior articles formed the basis of this questionnaire. It was structured into two sections: the first focused on capturing demographic information about the participants, while the second delved into their consumer buying patterns.

To ensure comprehensive data collection, personal interviews were conducted, employing a semi-structured format with a diverse range of questions. This approach facilitated rich interaction with respondents, fostering an environment where they could openly share their experiences. These personal interviews provided a nuanced understanding of consumers' perspectives regarding the factors influencing their purchasing behaviors.

The study specifically targeted women customers of silk sarees in Kanchipuram, forming the core of the study population.

For the survey, an online platform using Google Forms was utilized, enabling the implementation of a snowball sampling method, also known as chain-referral sampling. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen as it allows current respondents to refer and recommend new samples for research, aligning well with the study's objectives. Although 375 structured questionnaires were distributed, only 363 responses were received.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS
PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Table 1 Percentage Analysis

Age	No. of. respondents	Total Percentage
below 20	33	9.1
20-30	111	30.6
30-40	83	22.9
40-50	98	27
above 50	38	10.5
Total	**363**	**100%**
Marital Status	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
single	176	48.5
married	187	51.5
Total	363	100
Total	**363**	**100%**
Monthly Income	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
below 25000	60	16.5
25000-50000	114	31.4
50000-75000	132	36.4
above 75000	57	15.7
Total	**363**	**100%**
Present Status	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**

housewife	48	13.2
student	77	21.2
business	104	28.7
employee	90	24.8
professional	44	12.1
Total	**363**	**100%**
Reasoning For Selecting Silk Sarees	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
fabric	58	16
design	118	32.5
ethnicity	128	35.3
cost	59	16.3
Total	**363**	**100%**
Type Of Border Size	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
small	193	53.2
large	170	46.8
Total	**363**	**100%**
Type Of Border Style	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
double sized	177	48.8
single sized	186	51.2
Total	**363**	**100%**
Weight Of The Saree	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
light	182	50.1
heavy	181	49.9
Total	**363**	**100%**
Willingness To Pay For A Silk Saree	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
below 10000	74	20.4
10000-20000	123	33.9
20000-30000	115	31.7
above 30000	51	14
Total	**363**	**100%**
Whether Maintenance Is Easy	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
yes	177	48.8
no	186	51.2
Total	**363**	**100%**
Reason For Preferring Silk Sarees	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
as a status symbol	80	22
for cultural significance	198	54.5
for mental satisfaction	85	23.4
Total	**363**	**100%**
Colour Preferences	**No. of. respondents**	**Total Percentage**
dark	53	14.6
light	116	32
multicolour	134	36.9
doubleshaded	60	16.5
Total	**363**	**100%**

The table provides insights into respondents' preferences and demographics regarding silk sarees.
Age distribution among respondents shows a diverse range, with the majority falling within the 20-50 age groups. The highest percentage is between 20-30 and 40-50, suggesting a significant interest in silk sarees

within these age brackets. The interest seems relatively lower among respondents above 50, possibly indicating shifting preferences or market trends in that age segment.

Marital status reveals a nearly equal split between single and married respondents. This parity implies that both single and married individuals show substantial interest in silk sarees, presenting an opportunity for targeting both groups in marketing strategies or product offerings.

Monthly income distribution suggests a balanced interest across income brackets. While the largest segment lies within the 50000-75000 income range, there's a fair representation from below 25000 to above 75000 income groups, indicating a broad appeal for silk sarees irrespective of income levels.

Present status diversification showcases an intriguing pattern. Students and individuals engaged in business or employment show notable interest, possibly for personal wear or gifting purposes. The distribution among housewives and professionals is relatively lower, indicating a potential area for market growth or targeted engagement.

Reasons for selecting silk sarees vary among respondents, with ethnicity and design being the top reasons. This suggests a preference for the traditional and aesthetic aspects of silk sarees. Fabric and cost are also factors, albeit with comparatively lower emphasis, indicating a balance between quality and price sensitivity.

The type of border size and style preferences exhibit a near 50-50 split, indicating no distinct favoritism between large or small borders or double versus single-sized border styles. Similarly, the weight of the saree shows an almost equal preference between light and heavy, indicating diverse tastes among consumers.

Willingness to pay for silk sarees spans across different price ranges, suggesting that consumers are open to various price points based on their perceived value of the product. This flexibility provides opportunities for offering a range of silk sarees catering to different budget preferences.

Maintenance consideration is evenly divided between those finding maintenance easy and those who don't, suggesting that while silk sarees are appreciated, there might be differing opinions on the effort required to maintain them.

Reasons for preferring silk sarees showcase a strong inclination towards cultural significance, followed by mental satisfaction and the aspect of a status symbol. This insight indicates that the cultural and emotional aspects play a pivotal role in the selection of silk sarees for a majority of respondents.

Color preferences are diverse, with multicolor and light shades being the most preferred, followed closely by double shaded colors. This diversity suggests a varied taste among respondents, allowing for a wide range of color options to cater to different preferences in the market..

Table 2 Descriptive Statistic - Mean, Standard Deviation & Validity Measures

Statistic	X[1]	S.D.[2]	Var[3]	Skew[4]	SE[5]	Kurt[6]	SE[7]
Age	2.05	0.744	0.617	-0.019	0.128	-1.396	0.255
Marital status	1.52	0.5	0.25	-0.061	0.128	-2.007	0.255
Monthly Income	2.51	0.947	0.897	-0.065	0.128	-0.901	0.255
Present status	3.01	1.216	1.478	-0.064	0.128	-0.915	0.255
Reasoning for selecting silk sarees	2.52	0.947	0.897	-0.042	0.128	-0.902	0.255
Type of Border size	1.47	0.5	0.25	0.128	0.128	-1.995	0.255
Type of Border Style	1.51	0.501	0.251	-0.05	0.128	-2.009	0.255
Weight of the saree	1.5	0.501	0.251	0.006	0.128	-2.011	0.255
Willingness to pay for a silk saree	2.39	0.964	0.93	0.09	0.128	-0.956	0.255
Whether maintenance is easy	1.51	0.501	0.251	-0.05	0.128	-2.009	0.255
Reason for preferring silk sarees	2.01	0.675	0.456	-0.016	0.128	-0.794	0.255
Colour Preferences	2.55	0.934	0.872	-0.085	0.128	-0.855	0.255

Note: (1)X - Mean; (2) S.D. – Standard Deviation; (3) Var – Variance; (4) Skew – Skewness; (5) SE – Standard Error of Skewness; (6) Kurt – Kurtosis; (7) SE – Standard Error of Kurtosis.

Chi-square Test on Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree.

Table 3 Chi-Square Test on Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.521a	12	0.005
Likelihood Ratio	13.091	12	0.362
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.341	1	0.559
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.18.			

In order to test the association between Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree, chi-square is tested. Here the Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree have been measured in a nominal scale. By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is an association between Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P

value is 0.005 and therefore, the Alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the association do exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 12.521a.

Table 4 Cross Tabulation for Present Status and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

		Present status					Total
		housewife	student	business	employee	professional	
Willingness to pay for a silk saree	below 10000	7	22	17	17	11	74
	10000-20000	19	28	35	26	15	123
	20000-30000	13	22	37	32	11	115
	above 30000	9	5	15	15	7	51
Total		48	77	104	90	44	363

Chi-square Test on Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees

Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees.

Table 5 Chi-Square Test on Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.610a	8	0.019
Likelihood Ratio	11.302	8	0.185
Linear-by-Linear Association			
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.27.			

In order to test the association between Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees, chi-square is tested. Here the Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees have been measured in a nominal scale.
By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is an association between Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P value is 0.019 and therefore, the Alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the associations do exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 11.610a.

Table 6 Cross Tabulation for Age and Reason for preferring silk sarees

		Age					Total
		below 20	20-30	30-40	40-50	above 50	
Reason for preferring silk sarees	as a status symbol	5	27	15	26	7	80
	for cultural significance	15	65	51	46	21	198
	for mental satisfaction	13	19	17	26	10	85
Total		33	111	83	98	38	363

Chi-square Test on Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree.

Table 7 Chi-Square Test on Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.545a	9	0.048
Likelihood Ratio	8.392	9	0.495
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.499	1	0.221
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.01.			

In order to test the association between Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree, chi-square is tested. Here the Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree have been measured in a nominal scale.
By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is an association between Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P value is 0.048 and therefore, the Alternate hypothesis is accepted, and the association do exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 8.545a.

Table 8 Cross Tabulation for Monthly Income and Willingness to pay for a silk saree

		Monthly Income				Total
		below 25000	25000-50000	50000-75000	above 75000	
Willingness to pay for a silk saree	below 10000	9	20	29	16	74
	10000-20000	24	36	45	18	123
	20000-30000	17	45	39	14	115
	above 30000	10	13	19	9	51
Total		60	114	132	57	363

Chi-square Test on Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees
Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees.

Table 9 Chi-Square Test on Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.132a	12	0.292
Likelihood Ratio	14.111	12	0.294
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.27.			

In order to test the association between Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees, chi-square is tested. Here the Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees have been measured in a nominal scale.
By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is no association between Age and Reason for selecting silk sarees. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P value is 0.292 and therefore, the Null hypothesis is accepted, and the association do not exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 14.132a.

Chi-square Test on Age and Colour Preferences
Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Age and Colour Preferences.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Age and Colour Preferences.

Table 10 Chi-Square Test on Age and Colour Preferences

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.382a	12	0.342
Likelihood Ratio	13.466	12	0.336
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 1 cells (5.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.82.			

In order to test the association between Age and Colour Preferences, chi-square is tested. Here the Age and Colour Preferences have been measured in a nominal scale.
By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is no association between Age and Colour Preferences. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P value is 0.342 and therefore, the Null hypothesis is accepted, and the association do not exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 13.382a.

Chi-square Test on Age and Weight of the silk saree
Null Hypothesis: There is no association between Age and Weight of the silk saree.
Alternate Hypothesis: There is an association between Age and Weight of the silk saree.

Table 11 Chi-Square Test on Age and Weight of the silk saree

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.793a	4	0.435
Likelihood Ratio	3.811	4	0.432
N of Valid Cases	363		
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.45.			

In order to test the association between Age and Weight of the silk saree, chi-square is tested. Here the Age and Weight of the silk sareehave been measured in a nominal scale.
By applying chi-square test at 5 percent level of significance, it is observed that there is no association between Age and Weight of the silk saree. The p value should be less than 0.05. The P value is 0.435 and therefore, the Null hypothesis is accepted, and the association do not exist. The Pearson Chi-Square value is 3.793a.

CONCLUSION

The production of silk sarees has evolved, introducing fresh patterns, styles, and color blends. This industry lacks a centralized structure, allowing new players to enter. Established shops rely on their heritage, while newcomers emphasize designer sarees. In cities like Kancheepuram, women prioritize spending on clothing, valuing quality and variety, as studies confirm. Presently, consumers struggle to distinguish between authentic and dubious sarees, prompting the emergence of labels like 'silk mark.' Stores must prioritize establishing trust-based relationships as modern customers prioritize quality and reliability over mere discounts. Fostering such connections will attract more customers and cultivate store loyalty.

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