

Sustainable Handicrafts in the Digital Era: A Systematic Literature Review on Consumer Buying Behavior and Environmental Concerns

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Abstract

The global handicraft industry is undergoing a transformation driven by digital marketing and increasing environmental awareness. This Systematic literature review (SLR) explores the intersection of digital marketing, consumer buying behavior, and environmental concerns in promoting sustainable handicraft products. The study aims to synthesize existing research on how digital marketing strategies influence consumer preferences, decision-making, and demand for eco-friendly handicrafts. Influencer marketing, e-commerce platforms, social media, and online sustainability campaigns are just a few of the major topics that this analysis finds by examining academic publications from reliable sources. The elements that influence consumer interest in sustainable handicrafts are also examined, such as environmental responsibility, cultural appreciation, and ethical consumption. Due to the research, internet marketing not only makes products more visible and accessible, but it also helps consumers and sustainable craftspeople build stronger relationships. However, issues including market competitiveness, greenwashing, and authenticity concerns continue to be major barriers. By providing information that helps firms, marketers, and governments maximize their digital strategies for promoting environmentally responsible handicrafts, this analysis helps to the growing conversation on sustainable consumerism. Future studies will examine modern technologies like blockchain and artificial intelligence to improve trust and transparency in sustainable handicraft markets.

Keywords: Sustainable Handicrafts, Digital Marketing, Consumer Buying Behavior, Environmental Awareness, Ethical Consumption, Online Shopping, Eco-Friendly Products.

Introduction

Products made by hand are essential for maintaining cultural legacy, advancing economic growth, and encouraging sustainability. Traditional handwoven crafts, such as those made from palm leaves, reflect a society's way of life and are influenced by climate and local resources (Elsamanoudy et al., 2024). Through eco-friendly tourism and innovative business ventures, cultural heritage presents financial prospects. In conservation activities, women encounter sociocultural barriers, resource scarcity, and marginalization (Surti et al., 2024). Products made by hand are essential for maintaining cultural heritage and fostering economic growth and sustainability. These traditional crafts, including beekeeping, sculpture, carpentry, and pottery, are significant components of intangible cultural heritage. They offer potential for youth economic empowerment and can create new income sources while ensuring cultural preservation (Knapik & Król, 2023; Ariffin et al., 2023). The protection of intangible cultural heritage, including traditional handicrafts, is vital for transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. Different inheritance patterns, such as family and master-apprentice models, have evolved in response to changing cultural ecologies. To ensure the sustained growth of traditional handicrafts, a modern mentoring model and clear economic interest divisions are recommended (Yang et al., 2022). Handicraft products are essential for maintaining cultural heritage and promoting economic growth and sustainability. Innovation in traditional handicrafts is essential for achieving competitiveness and sustainable development (Shafi et al., 2022). A hybrid approach combining conventional methods and machine learning can better predict consumer behavior in purchasing sustainable products (Chen,

2024). The growing consumer shift towards sustainable products driven by environmental concerns. Factors influencing green purchasing decisions include perceived benefits, product quality, and environmental awareness. The association between pro-sustainable orientation and green purchasing decisions is mediated by consumers' environmental concerns (Lopes et al., 2024).

Digital marketing has revolutionized traditional markets, particularly benefiting handicraft artisans. The crafts sector faces challenges from technological advancements and globalization, with digitalization playing a transformative role in shaping its future (Kofler & Walder, 2024). The shift towards digital marketing has led to more personalized, efficient, and ethically aware practices, with AI and blockchain technologies enhancing customer interaction and security (Kobets et al., 2024). Digital marketing has revolutionized traditional markets, providing new opportunities for artisans and small businesses to reach global audiences. E-commerce has transformed retail marketing, breaking down geographical barriers and enabling seamless online purchasing. For handicraft SMEs, digital marketing offers potential for increased consumer engagement, though challenges in skills and technology adoption remain (Thamrin et al., 2023). Innovative strategies, such as NFT digital twins, can help preserve and sustain traditional craftsmanship like Miao silver, expanding use scenarios and commercial value in the metaverse era (Wang & Lau, 2023).

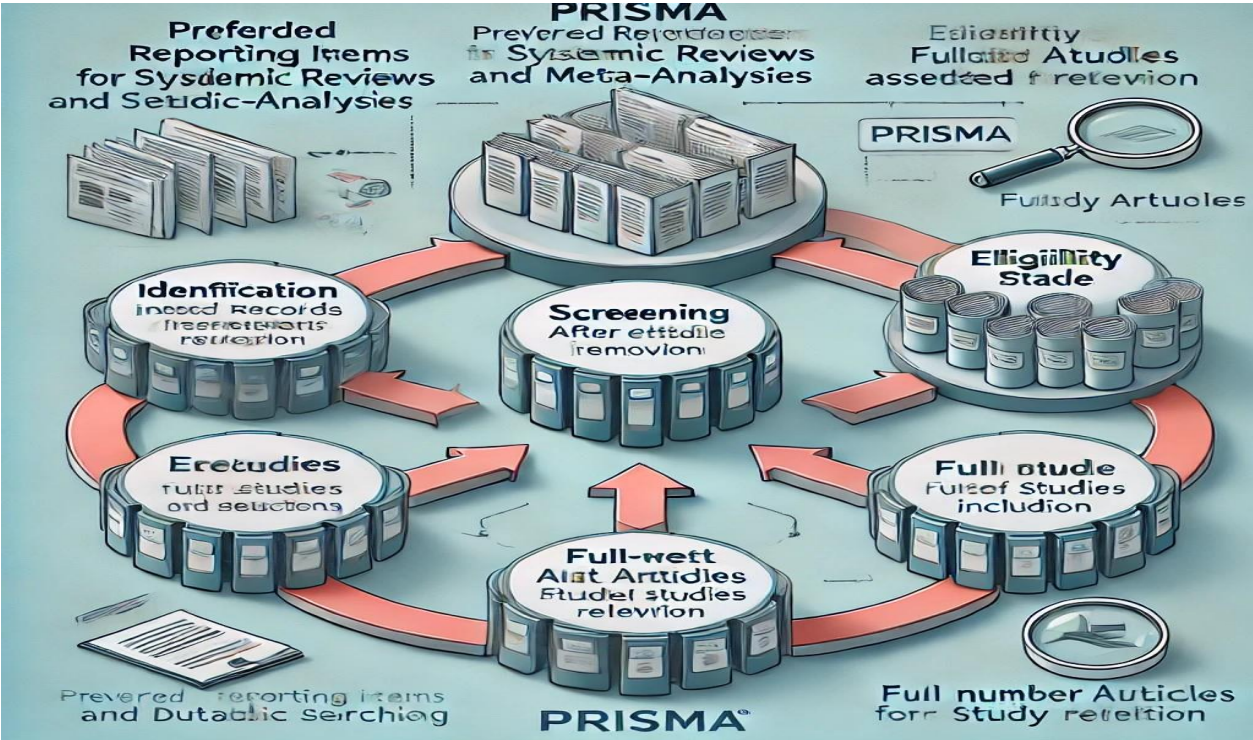
Despite growing interest in sustainable consumerism and digital marketing, limited research explores their combined impact on handicraft purchases. Existing studies primarily focus on sustainability in handicrafts or digital marketing in mainstream retail, overlooking how digital platforms shape consumer behavior towards eco-friendly handicrafts. While social media, e-commerce, and influencer marketing play a crucial role in promoting sustainability, their effectiveness in influencing consumer demand for artisanal products remains underexplored. This study bridges the gap by systematically reviewing how digital marketing strategies impact consumer preferences, environmental concerns, and purchasing decisions for sustainable handicrafts, offering insights for marketers, artisans, and policymakers.

Research Objectives

1. To examine how digital marketing tactics—such as influencer marketing, e-commerce, and social media—affect customer purchasing decisions for eco-friendly handicrafts.
2. To examine the impact of environmental concerns on customer choices and choices regarding eco-friendly handicraft purchases.
3. Using digital marketing channels to determine the opportunities and constraints of promoting sustainable handicrafts.
4. To offer tactical advice on how to use digital marketing to increase demand for ecologically friendly handicrafts to legislators, artists, and marketers.

Methodology

Current study follows a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to analyze how digital marketing affects consumer purchasing behavior for sustainable handicrafts, considering environmental concerns. A comprehensive search was conducted across reliable scholarly databases including Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, and Emerald Insight, using relevant keywords like "Sustainable Handicrafts," "Digital Marketing," "Consumer Buying Behavior," and "Environmental Concerns." The inclusion criteria focused on conference proceedings, peer-reviewed journal articles and reports from the business released in the last ten years (2014–2024). We reviewed with 320 Articles out of these 80 Literature are using in this research. Studies that did not specifically address handicrafts or sustainability in a digital marketing context were excluded. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) framework was applied to ensure a structured review process. Data was gathered thematically to find important structures, gaps, and new information. This methodology contributes significant insights to the expanding subject of sustainable consumer behavior by ensuring a comprehensive, objective examination of the literature.



PRISMA Group (2020) *PRISMA 2020 flow diagram for systematic reviews*

Literature Review

a) Sustainable Handicrafts and Consumer Behavior

The complex relationship between consumer behavior and sustainable product choices. Consumers in both developed and developing countries show interest in sustainable consumption, influenced by corporate social responsibility initiatives (Mahadeva et al., 2024). Businesses are adapting their marketing strategies to meet evolving consumer demands for environmental and social responsibility (Anjorin et al., 2024). These findings underscore the need for education, practical measures, and aligned marketing strategies to foster truly sustainable consumer choices and drive positive change. Visual trends play a significant role in sustainable product choices, with environmentally aware consumers showing a preference for eco-friendly options. However, a paradox exists as consumers continue to use non-reusable plastics despite environmental awareness (Baviskar et al., 2024). Sustainable consumer behavior and its impact on traditional handicrafts and retail innovation. This indicate that creative tourism and handicraft activities are gaining popularity, with consumers showing interest in experiential and cultural value (Lőrincz et al., 2023). The growing importance of sustainable consumer behavior in tourism and handicrafts. Research indicates that the epidemic of COVID-19 has led to increased environmental awareness and desire to spend money on eco-friendly goods (Dangelico et al., 2022). Design thinking approaches are proposed as A structure for the sustained development of traditional handicrafts, emphasizing innovation, cultural preservation, and local value (Li et al., 2019). Marketers can use feeling and thought, tangibility, habit formation, social influence, and individual self to promote sustainable consumer behaviour (White et al., 2019). Sustainable Handicrafts and Consumer Behavior are outlined in Table 1.

Authors	Practices
Mahadeva et al. (2024)	Consumer behavior in developed and developing countries is influenced by corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
Anjorin et al. (2024)	Businesses are modifying marketing strategies to align with consumer demand for environmental and social responsibility.
Baviskar et al. (2024)	Despite environmental awareness, a paradox exists where consumers continue using non-reusable plastics.
Lőrincz et al. (2023)	Creative tourism and handicraft activities are gaining popularity due to their experiential and cultural value.

Dangelico et al. (2022)	The epidemic of COVID- 19 increased awareness towards environment and consumer readiness to pay for sustainable products.
Li et al. (2019)	Design thinking can be used to support the long-term growth of traditional handmade goods, focusing on innovation and cultural preservation.
White et al. (2019)	Emotions, self-identity, tangibility, social influence, and habit building can all be used to promote sustainable consumer behaviour.

b) Significance of Digital Marketing in Consumer Engagement

The tourism and hospitality industries, AI and machine learning are transforming marketing approaches by revealing distinct patterns of consumer behavior and preferences (Cunha et al., 2024). The evolving role of digital marketing in fostering consumer engagement through innovative techniques such as short videos, emojis, big data analytics, and AI-driven strategies, emphasizing the importance of adapting to new technologies and consumer preferences in the digital age. Emojis are symbols in digital marketing conversations have a beneficial impact on Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions and customer engagement (Duffett & Maraule, 2024). Digital marketing plays a crucial role in consumer engagement, with various channels and strategies influencing buying decisions. Organic marketing practices, such as search engine optimization, social media posts, and user-generated content, positively impact consumers' behavioral engagement, partially mediated by psychological engagement (Asante et al., 2022). Consumer purchasing decisions are greatly influenced by digital marketing channels, such as social media, email marketing, online advertising, and website search engines; this effect is moderated by electronic word-of-mouth, or eWOM (Kurdi et al., 2022). In the hotel industry, digital consumer engagement components like acknowledgement, curiosity, correspondence, customer satisfaction, allegiance, and intentions to return influence hotel income (Boiko et al., 2023). The literature on digital consumer engagement frequently makes reference to the User and Gratification Theory, with Asian countries contributing significantly to research in this field (Saikia & Bhattacharjee, 2023). However, further research is needed in contexts such as Africa, Australia, and specific industries like automotive and telecommunications to offer a more thorough comprehension of the part that digital marketing plays in customer interaction. Significance of Digital Marketing in Consumer Engagement is outlined in Table 2.

Authors	Practices
Cunha et al. (2024)	By exposing patterns in customer behaviour, artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are revolutionising marketing in the tourism and accommodation industries.
Duffett & Maraule (2024)	When used in digital marketing, have a favourable impact on Generation Z consumers' purchase intentions and customer engagement.
Asante et al. (2022)	Organic marketing practices (SEO, social media, user-generated content) impact behavioral engagement, mediated by psychological engagement.
Kurdi et al. (2022)	Digital marketing channels (online ads, social media, email) affect buying decisions, with eWOM moderating the impact.
Boiko et al. (2023)	Digital consumer engagement (recognition, interest, communication, experience, loyalty) affects hotel income.
Saikia & Bhattacharjee (2023)	The User and Gratification Theory is widely used in digital engagement studies, especially in Asian research.

c) Environmental Concerns and Buying Decisions

Despite growing environmental concern, some consumers may not fully recognize the importance of changing consumption habits, with routine and past experiences potentially limiting the influence on behavior (Junior et al., 2018). the complex interplay of factors influencing green purchasing decisions. Environmental concern emerges as a crucial mediator between consumer knowledge and green purchase intentions (Gazi et al., 2024). Factors such as eco-label credibility and convenience of purchase modify the relationship between intention and actual behaviour (Kim & Lee, 2023). Companies can leverage these insights by producing high-end environmentally friendly goods, explaining their advantages, and resolving financial issues (Lopes et al., 2024). The significant influence of environmental concerns on consumer purchasing behavior. Environmental concern positively impacts green purchase intentions, especially among younger consumers (Balaskas et al., 2023). Environmental concerns significantly influence consumer purchasing behavior, with studies showing a positive correlation between environmental awareness and green buying intentions. This link is mediated by elements

including perceived efficacy, personal significance, and consumer environmental awareness (Stojanova et al., 2021). Environmental Concerns and Buying Decisions is outlined in Table 3.

Authors	Practices
Junior et al. (2018)	The impact of environmental concerns on behaviour is limited by routine and previous experiences.
Gazi et al. (2024)	The correlation between consumer understanding and aspirations to make green purchases is mediated by environmental concern.
Kim & Lee (2023)	The link between intention and actual behavior is moderated by simplicity of buying and trustworthiness of the eco-label.
Lopes et al. (2024)	Companies can create premium eco-friendly products, communicate benefits, and address cost concerns.
Balaskas et al. (2023)	Environmental concern significantly impacts green purchase intentions, particularly among younger consumers.
Stojanova et al. (2021)	Green buying behaviour is mediated by consumer knowledge, perceived efficacy, personal relevance, and environmental awareness.

d) Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Marketing for Sustainable Handicrafts

Digital marketing plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable businesses, particularly for rural entrepreneurs and traditional handicraft producers. It enhances competitiveness by leveraging e-commerce platforms and social media to access global markets. Adoption may be hampered by issues like unequal digital infrastructure and low levels of digital literacy in rural areas (Samsudin et al., 2024). To address digital adoption challenges, a two-tier approach using Natural Language Processing for global analysis and country-specific SME requirement analysis can help identify suitable digital solutions, promoting growth and sustainability in the digital era (Telukdarie et al., 2024). Digital marketing presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainable handicraft businesses. While it offers potential for increased visibility and sales, many small enterprises struggle with implementation due to skill gaps and technological barriers (Thamrin et al., 2023). The digital economy enables sustainable practices through smart cities, renewable energies, and sustainable consumption, but also poses challenges like e-waste and energy consumption (Rosário & Dias, 2023). Innovation is crucial for traditional handicraft companies to remain competitive and achieve sustainable development, with a need for more research on measuring incremental innovation in this sector, while digital marketing offers substantial opportunities for sustainable handicraft businesses, overcoming technological and skill-related challenges is essential for successful implementation and long-term sustainability (Shafi et al., 2022). Digital marketing presents both challenges and opportunities for sustainable handicraft businesses. While it can enhance competitiveness and market access, many traditional craftspeople lack the necessary skills and technology (Vaculčíková et al., 2020). Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Marketing for Sustainable Handicrafts are outlined in Table 4.

Authors	Practices
Samsudin et al. (2024)	Digital marketing boosts sustainability for rural entrepreneurs and handicraft producers; challenges include poor digital infrastructure and literacy.
Telukdarie et al. (2024)	A two-tier approach using NLP and SME requirement analysis can help address digital adoption challenges for sustainable growth.
Thamrin et al. (2023)	Digital marketing offers opportunities for visibility and sales, but skill gaps and tech barriers hinder implementation.
Rosário & Dias (2023)	The digital economy supports sustainability through smart cities and renewables but raises concerns like e-waste and energy use.
Shafi et al. (2022)	Innovation is key for traditional handicraft companies; overcoming skill and tech barriers is crucial for sustainability.
Vaculčíková et al. (2020)	Digital marketing aids competitiveness and market access, but many traditional craftspeople lack skills and technology.

Conceptual Framework

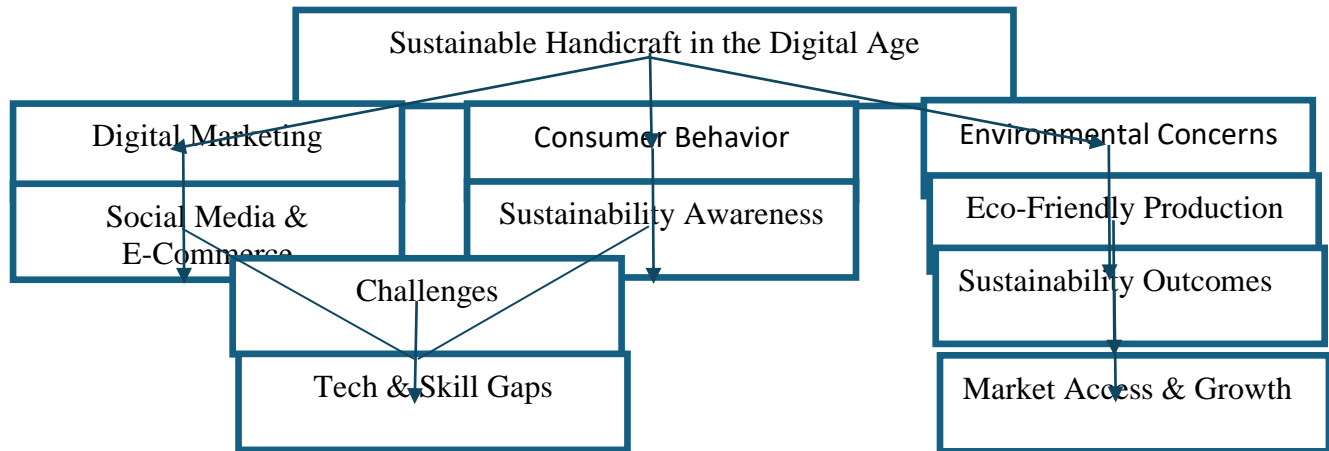


Fig. 01

The conceptual framework illustrates Fig.01 how consumer behavior, digital marketing, and environmental concerns influence sustainable handicraft in the digital age. While social media and e-commerce enable digital marketing to reach a broader demographic, there are drawbacks, such as a lack of technological expertise. Eco-friendly production is driven by environmental concerns, while consumer behavior affects sustainability awareness. Better market access and company expansion are two examples of sustainability outcomes that are influenced by these factors. In addition to highlighting the need for innovation and capacity-building, the framework also underlines the opportunities and problems associated with digital adoption. The sustainability and competitiveness of traditional handicrafts in the changing digital context are improved by addressing these factors.

Challenges and Future Research Directions

High costs for production, constrained market access, and digital illiteracy are some of the issues facing sustainable handicrafts. Due to financial and technological limitations, many craftsmen find it difficult to implement digital marketing. In addition, striking a balance between affordability and environmental responsibility is still crucial. Future studies should examine how to improve artists' digital literacy, creative business plans for growing their markets, and the effects of digital change on the environment. It can be instructive to look at consumer preferences for eco-friendly handicrafts and how government regulations support sustainable methods. In the digital age, a multidisciplinary strategy that incorporates marketing, sustainability, and technology may support the handicraft industry.

Discussion

The research emphasises the transformative role of digital marketing in influencing consumer purchasing decisions for eco-friendly handicrafts. Influencer marketing, e-commerce, and social media platforms significantly impact consumer behavior by increasing awareness and accessibility. Social media fosters direct engagement between artisans and consumers, while e-commerce platforms enhance global reach. Environmental concerns also play a crucial role, with sustainability-conscious consumers preferring handcrafted products that align with ethical and ecological values. However, challenges such as digital illiteracy, technological constraints, and uneven digital infrastructure hinder the full adoption of digital marketing in the handicraft sector. Despite these limitations, digital channels present vast opportunities for promoting sustainable handicrafts, such as targeted advertising, storytelling techniques, and collaborations with sustainability advocates. Addressing these challenges requires strategic interventions, including training programs for artisans, government support for digital inclusion, and policy incentives to encourage eco-friendly production. Policymakers, marketers, and artisans must work collectively to optimize digital marketing strategies, ensuring broader consumer reach while maintaining the authenticity of traditional crafts. Additionally, integrating sustainability messages into marketing campaigns can strengthen consumer trust and drive long-term demand. By leveraging digital platforms effectively, the handicraft sector can enhance market visibility, improve economic viability for artisans, and contribute to environmental sustainability. Therefore, a well-structured approach to digital marketing can foster a thriving market for sustainable handicrafts while addressing consumer expectations and ecological concerns in the digital era.

Conclusion

This study systematically reviewed the impact of digital marketing and environmental concerns on consumer buying behavior in the sustainable handicrafts sector. Findings indicate that digital marketing tactics, including influencer marketing, e-commerce, and social media, have a significant influence on consumers' decisions to buy eco-friendly handicrafts. Effective digital strategies enhance product visibility and customer engagement, fostering greater adoption of sustainable products. Additionally, environmental concerns significantly influence consumer preferences, with growing awareness driving demand for ethically produced handicrafts. However, while digital marketing presents vast opportunities, challenges such as technological barriers, digital literacy gaps, and market competition limit its effectiveness. The research also highlights the potential of digital platforms in expanding market access, particularly for artisans in rural areas. Nonetheless, constraints such as inconsistent digital infrastructure and affordability of online marketing tools hinder optimal adoption. To overcome these challenges, strategic interventions, including training programs for artisans, investment in digital literacy, and government support for sustainable e-commerce initiatives, are essential. Policymakers should encourage sustainable production through regulatory incentives, while marketers must leverage storytelling and transparency to enhance consumer trust. Artists, in turn, should adopt innovative branding strategies to differentiate their products in a competitive digital marketplace. Ultimately, integrating digital marketing with sustainability efforts can boost demand for eco-friendly handicrafts, ensuring long-term viability for artisans while promoting responsible consumerism. This study underscores the need for a collaborative approach between stakeholders to fully utilise the possibilities of digital platforms in fostering a sustainable handicraft industry in the digital era.

Limitations of the Study

- The study's depth of analysis and capacity to identify current market trends and new digital marketing tactics may be constrained by its primary reliance on secondary data from the body of existing literature.
- Consumer behavior and environmental concerns vary across regions and cultures, making it challenging to generalize findings universally without considering localized influences.
- The rapid evolution of digital marketing tools and platforms means that some insights may become outdated quickly, requiring continuous updates and further empirical validation.
- Limited focus on the perspectives of artisans and policymakers restricts a comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face in adopting digital marketing for sustainable handicrafts.

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