CONSUMERS' VIEWS ON HANDICRAFT PREFERENCES: A CASE STUDY ON CHANNAPATNA TURNS WOOD LAC WARE HANDICRAFTS

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation has given Indian consumers the opportunity to choose from a wide range of products. Indian Handicrafts are unable to make their desired market impact on the consumers due to competition with the industrial products. The research is a case study about the preferences of domestic consumer for handicraft, done for the turn-wood lac-ware of Channapatna. Channapatna is a small township tucked between two metropolitan towns of Mysore and Bengaluru of Karnataka, India. It is well known for the handicraft of turn-wood lac ware like toys, home decorative and corporate gifts and so on. The paper consolidates the choices made by the consumers and analysis of the preferences. The data were collected through a questionnaire in Bengaluru and analysed to interpret the possibility of preferences in handicraft. The paper intends to give a market perspective to designers for their handicraft interventions.

KEYWORDS: Channapatna Turn-Wood Lacware, Expectations, Uniqueness & Handicraft Préférences

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INTRODUCTION

Channapatna is a township in the district of Ramnagaram, flanked by the two biggest metropolitan cities Bengaluru and Mysore of Karnataka, India. It is known for its hand crafted wooden toys and is also popularly known as “Gombegala Ooru” or Toys Town in vernacular lingo. The products are unique and exotic in their own way. The handicraft specializes in wood turning and lac- colouring that is eco-friendly and bright. The soft wood from *Hale* tree (*Wrightia Tinctoria*), is turned to achieve smooth, rounded edges and symmetrical products, which make them safe and child-friendly. The products range from toys like dolls, planes, trucks, telephones, complete kitchen sets, jigsaw puzzles and a host of other items. The other categories comprise of household items, napkin holders, car seat covers, Incense stick holders, candle stand and lot of costume jewellery items(CMC, 2013)(William, 2011) and so on.

Due to the impact of globalisation the domestic market of the handicraft has been on a decline. (Srivastav, 2016). Government of India has developed multiple plans to make innovation in product and its designs to lure domestic consumers. The paper is a case study to understand the consumers of handicraft. A questionnaire was administered in the city of Bengaluru, a prominent metropolitan city which has access to handicraft market.

SAMPLE

A questionnaire was designed and administrated among 300 consumers. Out of which 284 were received and the response rate works out (94.66 percentage). A convenient sampling technique was adopted, since the

universe was too wide and anyone could be the consumer of the product. However, the respondents were traced and questionnaire shared in and around shopping malls, stores like Fab India, Soma, and other Handloom and handicraft related outlets situated in Bengaluru. Approximately 116 males and 168 females ranging in different age group and professional backgrounds had responded to the questions. Out of 40.8 percentages were male and 59.2 percentage were female. Similarly, 13.7percentage were in the age group of 21-30 yrs.; 40.8 percentage were in the age group of 31-40 years; 30.6 percentages belongs to 41-50 years; 14.8percentage were above 50 years. The occupation of the respondents indicates that there were 21.8 percentages were Homemaker; 3.9 percentages were student and 74.3percentage were employees. The questionnaire was analysed on the following context and evaluated through Likert scale and analysed in the software SPSS.

- Preferences in Handicrafts
- Channapatna Lac Turn ware Preferences

Preferences in Handicraft” were ascertained based on sub headers

Views on Handicraft

The Views on handicraft were ascertained based on four variables such as “Handicraft represent their states”; “Handicraft is a piece of art”; “Handicraft is Livelihood and entrepreneurship” and “Handicraft is another competitive market product”. The respondents were asked to indicate their opinion on a 5 point scale, such as Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree and Strongly Agree. The mean and Standard deviation was calculated based on the response and the ranks were assigned accordingly. It appeared that the first preference is given for “Handicraft represents their states”. It is followed by “Handicraft is a piece of art” and “Handicraft is another competitive market product”. Least preference is given for “Handicraft is Livelihood and entrepreneurship”.

Influencing Factor for Buying Handicrafts

The influencing factors for buying handicraft were ascertained based on six variables such as “to help artisans, it is a unique product, to uplift tradition and heritage, only as a souvenir/memento and less in price.” The first preference is given for “less in price”. It is followed by “to help artisans” and “only as a souvenir/memento”. Least preference is given for “it is unique product”.

Intention towards Purchase of Handicrafts

The Intention towards purchase of handicrafts was ascertained based on four variables such as “Its unique”; “As heritage value”; “As philanthropy” and “As a utility”. The first preference is given for “As philanthropy”, followed by “As a utility” and “As a heritage value”. Least preference is given for “Its unique”.

Preferences in Design

The Preferences in design were ascertained based on five variables such as “to have new designs every season”; “to have dexterous artisanal work”; “to aesthetically appealing”; “to have novelty in design” and “to have a variety of choice. The first preference is given for “to aesthetically appealing”. It is followed by “to have new designs every season” and “to have dexterous artisanal work”. Least preference is given for “to have novelty in design”.

Channapatna Turn-Wood Lac-Ware Preferences

The factors used to evaluate consumers' preferences in Channapatna turn wood lac-ware and their results are as below:

Intention of Buying

The Intention of buying was ascertained based on four variables such as "economic pricing", "Eco friendliness", "colourful look" and "shape". The first preference is given for "its colourful look". It is followed by "for its shape" and "for its economic pricing".

Non Preference

The Non Preference of the Channapatna turn –wood lac-ware was ascertained based on three variables such as "as it lacks freshness and fun", "as I already have similar looking products" and "as the other craft clusters also has the same products" The first preference is given for "it lacks freshness and fun". It is followed by "as the other craft clusters also have the same products".

No Alternative

No alternative was ascertained based on nine variables and the same has been coded. The variable code and description were shown in the Table 1

Table 1: No Alternative

S. No.	Variable Code	Description
1	P31	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware Toys or Home Decorative as currently available
2	P32	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware Corporate gift or novel item which is not available
3	P33	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware unique Designs
4	P34	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware more colour
5	P35	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware with texture
6	P36	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware strictly traditional
7	P37	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware which is innovative in form and formal in appearance
8	P38	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware innovative but still in touch with traditional look
9	P39	Prefer to buy a Channapatna lacware innovative and doesn't matter if it's in touch with traditional look

The results identified from this category indicate that the seven variables were disagreed by the respondents expect "innovative and doesn't matter if it's in touch with traditional look" and "with texture". These two variables were agreed by the respondents. The first preference is given for "it lacks freshness and fun". It is followed by "with texture". The least preference was indicated for "unique Designs"

Uniqueness

The uniqueness were ascertained based on ten variables which are "innovation in form aesthetically used for novel products", "old forms new utility", "old designs and old forms", "Industrial over handicraft", "economical over classy", "repetitive designs", "innovative & functional", "repetitive & functional", "innovative & functional don't matter" and "repetitive & functional don't matter.". However the first preference is given for "repetitive & functional don't matter".

It is followed by “repetitive designs”. The least preference was indicated for “old forms new utility”

Expectation

The expectation was ascertained based on seven variables and the same has been coded. The factors are “Consumer should be provided more ranges in form and appearance”, “Symmetric form makes new design look repetitive,” “Symmetric form has been explored adequately”, “Eccentric forms in lathe would bring excitement in design”, “The craft should penetrate new markets like corporate ware”, “The craft should explore new designs for better market”, and “The craft should explore new techniques of wood lathe”. The first preference is given for “Consumer should be provided more ranges in form and appearance”. It is followed by “Symmetric form makes new design look repetitive”.

Analysis of Findings

Consumers’ choice gave a mixed reaction about the preferences in handicraft. It can be deduced that the consumer has already some pre-conceived notion about handicraft and does not expect any uniqueness about the products.

The basic accepted ideas about handicrafts by the consumers that affect their buying decisions are believes that handicrafts are “less in price” or would buy one “to help artisans or as a philanthropic endeavour” because it may not be much utility oriented except as “as a souvenir/memento”. Consumers felt that they would buy more if the craft item has more utility than being a decorative souvenir or a short term product-like an inexpensive toy. Handicrafts stand for heritage value to people and adding a utility could be a bonus. The feature that impacts the customer about handicraft in first sight is “aesthetic appeal” which means it should have either “new designs” every time or and “dexterous artisanal work”. Here, it may be deduced that handicraft purchase is more of impulse buying. (Dash, 2015), (Kundu, 2013).

The juxtaposition of thought in consumer mind can be understood, when the novelty and uniqueness were less in preference, whereas expected new design and dexterous work were expected. In the light of the fact that handicraft is impulse buying, whilst uniqueness and novelty is not expected, whereas new designs and dexterity of work is preferred it can be deduced that the consumers are unable to gauge the possibility of novelty or uniqueness that the craft can produce without seeing the final product.

In Channapatna turn-wood lac-ware, the current reasons of purchasing the product by consumers appears to be “its colourful look”, followed by “its shape” and “its economic pricing”. However, the reasons for not purchasing them states “it lacks freshness and fun”, “the other craft clusters also have the same products”, presenting that the products lack novelty and uniqueness. In addition it is understood that the product is preferred if the consumer is “provided more ranges in form and appearance”, since the form has are symmetric and “Symmetric form makes new design look repetitive”.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis can be concluded with the few concepts that since handicraft purchase is driven by impulse buying, either it needs to be re-designed in the context of necessity or bring about uniqueness and novelty in design that is unexpected. In reference to the Channapatna the novelty can be achieved in form. The primary study done of the crafts of turn-wood lac-ware of Channapatna, projects the reasons that could make a handicraft product, market viable and also provides idea triggers for designers to understand the research areas for turn wood lac-ware of Channapatna.

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