Geographical Indication of Handloom Products and its Influence on Consumer Purchase Behavior

ABSTRACT
Handloom productsrepresent an emotional significance in addition totheir utilitarian function.Itremindsus of the artistic skills and cultural uniqueness that exist in our nation.GI registrations have been granted to the handloom segment to protect the artists and maintain the authenticity of weaving.Due to a lack of knowledge about GI tag handloom products, consumers often face a dilemma when deciding whether or not to buy handloom productswhen other power-loomed fabrics are available.This study addresses the research gap by examining the factors contributing to consumers' willingness to buy Champa's silk handloom products with GI tags.People generally associate the Champaregion with the production of kosha silk.This study has brought in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a base to develop a theoretical model for determining the intention to buy handloom products with GI tags. 197 individuals answered the survey questionnaire. The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) evaluates the behavioral characteristics of customers while making purchases. The models were evaluated using the SmartPLS4 software. The findings showed that price veracity and consumer trust considerably positively impact attitude. The handloom products with GItags build potential trust among consumers on handloom products.Handloom store retailers should take the initiative to make consumers aware of the authenticity of their products, which prominently include GI certification labels on handloom items.

Keywords: *Handloom Industry, Geographical Indication (GI), Theory of Planned Behavior(TPB), Purchase Behavior,Champa Handloom.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In India, the textile sector has been an economic mainstay for many years. The handloom industry is primarily rural-based commercial activities operated with primitive manual looms and is a decentralized cottage industry. It has a notable contribution to the growth of the country's economy that precedes the agriculture sector when considered for catering to livelihood in the rural zone of India. As the e-commerce market proliferates in the country, the handloom sector is also stepping into online platforms for its sustainability and growth (Singh P., Yadav M., Baral S. K.,2023).The craftsmanship of weavers in India's handloom fabrics is a glimpse into the richness of Indian culture.The handloom industry plays a significant role in the national economy because of its unique qualities, such as the ability to cope with short production cycles, maintain high-quality standards, foster innovation, and cater to the requirements of export markets (Mukhopadhyay, 2022). GIcertificates have been granted to various businesses and sectors in India, including agriculture, handicrafts, textile, and manufactured goods.The protection of GI in handicraft goods is of the utmost significance since it not only helps workers make a living by ensuring that their work is unique but also protects the authenticity of the handicrafts altogether. Any manufacturer can use a GI label within the defined area because it specifies the region of origin for the product(Verma & Mishra, 2018).Discerning the authenticity of handloom fabric poses a significant challenge for consumers, particularly those who prefer traditional fabrication methods. The situation becomes even more difficult because competing products use power looms that closely resemble handloom products.The handloom products are of higher quality than the imitated handloom products,even though the imitated handloom products have a similar appearance (Lalitha & Vinayan, 2019).GI potentially solves this issue by differentiating handloom fabrics from similar fabrics.The TRIPS agreement has placed more emphasis on geographical indications, which fall under intellectual property. GI functions as a legal mechanism that establishes a formal link between a product and the specific geographic region in which it is produced. This association enhances the product's reputation and thus brings advantages to all organizations involved(Sharma, 2019). GI isrecognized for its ability to improve the distinctiveness and authenticity of a product, allow manufacturers to command higher prices, and serve as a means of differentiating their goods from counterfeit alternatives (Aggarwal et al., 2014).
Numerous research studies have focused on demographic factors that influence consumers' intentions to buy products labeled with the GI mark. There is a scarcity of research that has focused on developing frameworks about consumer response towards GI labels in the context of buying

handloom products.The present study aims to fill this research gap by investigating the significant aspects contributing to consumers' willingness to buyChampa's Kosa silk handloom products with GI tags.A theoretical model for predicting the intent to buy handloom items with GI tags has been developed in this study using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Indian Handloom Textile: A Heritage of Richness

Since the beginning of time, various regions of India have significantly emphasized the handloom industry. Every Indian state has its unique history, and the handloom textiles produced there are renowned for their uniqueness.Indian handlooms have been valuable in bringing some regional specialties to the forefront of international fashion, including Pashmina in Kashmir, Kalamkari in Andhra Pradesh, Bandhani in Gujarat, and Muga silk in Assam (Kumar et al., 2021).This industry has persisted because of the practice of passing knowledge down through the generations.Indian handlooms offer a wide range of weaves, textures, and designs, from delicate pastels to sturdy bedspreads and from simple to complex, from intricate fabrics to mass-produced items for daily use (Vyshnavi & Suja, 2017).The manufacture of handlooms in India has the dual purpose of promoting environmentally sustainable practices and generating job opportunities, particularly in rural areas (Pargai& Jahan, 2016It is now time to think that the process of creating a new product involves more than just luck or sporadic inspiration. In today's environment of rapid global change, innovative companies are the ones that bring about constant innovation. Whether they realize it or not, successful innovators employ a repeatable thought process to find new markets, products, and customers in order to strategically manage change (Baral, S.K., 2015). This industry is prominent in the Indian economy, employing the most people after agriculture, and requires little capital investment (Maulik & Agarwal, 2014).Historical records indicate that the handloom textile industry in India is acknowledged as one of the most ancient business sectorsglobally. The textile industry was a major economic driver for many communities.Varanasi is one such example; it was the textile industry's regional hub from the Mahabharata era through the reigns of the Nandas, Mauryas, and Sungas(Pandey,2005).Following independence, the government closely monitored the handloom industry since it represented all decentralized operations (Devi, 2013).

2.2. The Allure of Chhattisgarh's Champa Handloom Fabrics

The manufacture of Tussar silk has given Janjgir-Champa recognition that extends beyond India and throughout the world.Many people in rural areas of this state rely on handloom weaving for their living, and the Janjgir-Champa district, in particular, is known for its abundant tasar silk weaving and sales equipment. Several government programmes aim to help these people (Peters & Bajpai, 2017). The material consists of the most peculiar silkworm. The process of extracting and weaving Kosa silk sarees poses significant challenges. The duration of the process ranges from three to five days. The durability of Kosa silk is exceptional. This particular silk is regarded as one of the most impressive in the world (Mishra & Mohapatra, 2020).Five hundred beneficiaries produce silk on 520 hectares of land with a Saja/Arjuna plantation, which is available to makecocoons.Currently, the district provides 45 lakh silk (Premanand & Shridhar, 2021).

2.3. Harnessing Geographical Indication for Handloom Heritage

Historically, products have been identified for trading motives based on their geographical origin. The purpose of geographical indications is to provide precise details on the source of a product andits quality attributes. Certain geographical regions or localities possess unique natural and human characteristics that are exclusive to those areas,and these factors affect the product's quality, as shown by the symbol of its geographical origin. It safeguards consumer interests in premium goods and local producers' concerns regarding increased economic returns and the preservation of cultural heritage (Vinayan, 2012).Many people started paying attention to the Pochampally Ikat brand when it became the first Indian handloom product to achieve GI designation under the GI Act in 2004 (Das, 2009).The Kota Doria fabric was conferred a GI in 2005because of its unique regional artistry. Later, the Champa silk fabric was alsogranted a GI in 2010.The handloom mark is an effort by the Indian government to give all handloom goods a common identity. It can promote hand-woven goods and give consumers confidence that what theybuy is authentically made in India. Recognizing the importance of preserving the priceless handloom artifacts and passing them on to future generations, a digital repository of handlooms similar to the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library may be established (Mukhopadhyay, 2022).

2.4. Consumer Consciousness Towards Geographical Indication

Dhamotharan & Selvaraj (2013) found that consumers are increasingly aware of the quality attributes associated with various commodities available in the market. Consequently, they purposefully make decisions to choose things that closely correspond to their interests and preferences.Recent data

indicates a significant surge in consumer demandfor GI food items due to many factors.The study of Perrea et al. (2015) provided evidence that there is a widespread awareness of GI and a tendency to pick products associated with GIs, which can be attributed to the high reported consumption frequencies.Prathap & CC (2022) concluded that a decrease in insufficient information accessibility might stimulate the desire to acquire traditional handloom.The product diagnosticityspecified by the GI mark ensures that consumers are adequately informed about the product. Consumers are more likely to buy high-quality goods if they have a favorable opinion of their quality, the degree to which they trust it,and when they feel that the information disparity has been reduced.Basole (2015) examined the situation where a proprietor of a sari retail business located situated in the renowned tourist destination hub of Sarnath acknowledged that they were selling power loom fabric as handloom fabric, claiming it to be handcrafted. The proprietor noted that customers often struggle distinguishing between the two fabric types.Albayrak &Ozdemi(2012) stated that traditional handicraft brand manufacturing is facing new challenges due to rising customer demands for products with higher safety and quality standards in developed countries. Therefore, GI certification is crucial for establishing the reputation of conventional handicraft goods on the global market and safeguarding them from counterfeit goods.Agarwal & Luniya (2009) identified that customers are highly aware of the uniqueness of hand-woven doria patterns, although their understanding of Geographical Indications is significantly limited.

2.5. The Theory of Planned BehaviourConcept

The TPB has been widely employed in academic research to comprehensively analyze and forecast human behaviors, owing to its significant explanatory capacity. This theory proposes that someone's propensity to participate in certain behaviors may be primarily anticipated based on three key elements that shape individuals' behavior: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991).Consumers' perspectives on an action are reflected in their attitudes towards it as harmful or beneficial. When itis based on the idea that doing the desired activity may lead to several positive consequences, they will develop favorable attitudes toward their behavior of choice (Ajzen, 2020). Subjective norms are a person's opinion about the degree of social pressure to engage in a particular behavior. Individuals who hold considerable importance in our lives, such as parents, spouses, friends, and coworkers, are given priority, and their viewpoints are highly regarded. Perceived behavioral control pertains to an individual's perceived capacity to execute the intended behavior effectively.There is a higher probability that a person will effectively participate in a desired behaviorwhen they possess the requisite resources and opportunities.A person's willingness to show the desired behavior is highly correlated with attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioralcontrol.This is because high levels of all three factors are related to high levels of intention (Ajzen, 1991).

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Toexamine the willingness of consumers to purchase GI-labeled Champa silk handloom fabrics, and
2. To analyze the key determinants that impact the consumer's decision to purchase GI-labeled handloom fabrics.
3.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: Consumers' attitudestoward GI-labeled handloom products are positively influenced by qualityconsciousness.

H2: Consumers' attitudestoward GI-labeled handloom products are positively influenced by price veracity.

H3: Consumers' attitudestoward GI-labeled handloom products are positively influenced by consumer trust.

H4: Consumers' attitudestoward GI-labeled handloom products are positively associated withconsumers' purchase intention.

H5: The willingness to buy handloom items labeled with Geographical indications is favorably influenced by subjective norms.

H6: The willingness to buy handloom items labeled withGI is favourably influenced by the perceivedbehavioural control.

5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a purposive sampling technique.A well-organized survey questionnaire was distributed amongpotential handloom consumersof Chhattisgarh state.A Likert scale was used to structure the questionnaire, where a score of 1 indicates strongly disagree, and a score of 5 indicates

strongly agree.The study sample initially comprised 250 individuals selected from the target group. Of them, 197 individuals answered the survey questionnaire, meeting the minimum criteria for conducting relevant statistical data analysis (Kennedy, 2022).The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) assesses the behavioral characteristics of consumers while initiating purchases. The models were evaluated using the SmartPLS4 software.

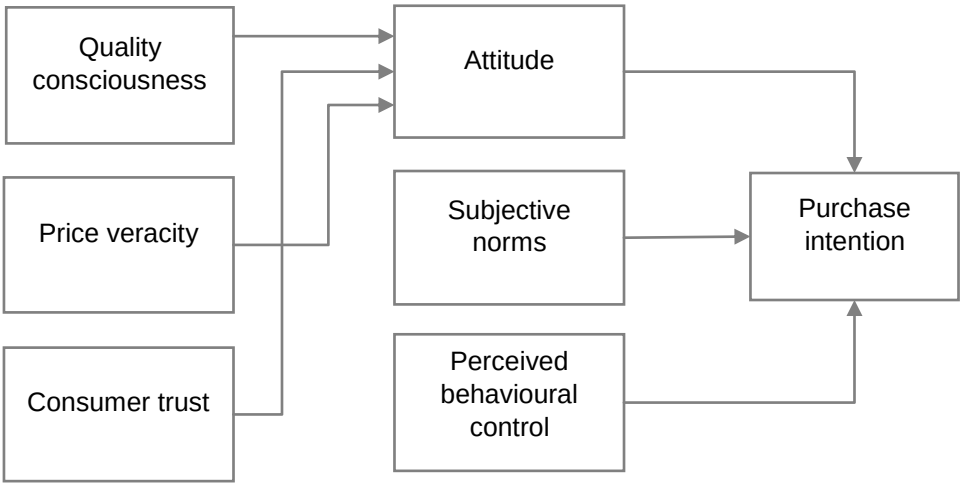

Fig.1: TheTPB research model
Source: Authors' compilation

6. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The descriptive data pertaining to the profiles of the respondents are shown in Table 1. Among the 197 persons surveyed, 75 (38.1%) identified as male, while 122 (61.9%) identified as female. 91 (46.2%) identified as aged between 18-25 years, 49 (24.9%) as between the ages of 26 and 35 years, 22 (11.2%) as between the ages of 36-45 years, 27 (13.7%) identified as aged between 46-55 years, and 8 (4%) were above 55.The monthly income of respondentswas categorized into different income levels where 45 (22.8%) respondents had an income of 10,000or less, and 37 (18.8%) had an income between 10,001 and 20,000. 28 (14.2%) respondents hadan income of 20,001-30,000, 15 (7.6%) had an income of 30,001-40,000, 24 (12.2%) had an income of 40,001-50,000, and lastly, 48 (24.4%) respondents had an income of more than 50,000.

Table 1. Demographic profile

Variables		Numbers	Percentage
Gender	Male	75	38.1
	Female	122	61.9
Age	18 – 25	91	46.2
	26 – 35	49	24.9
	36 – 45	22	11.2
	46 – 55	27	13.7
	Above 55	8	4
Monthly income	10,000 and less	45	22.8
	10,001 – 20,000	37	18.8
	20,001 – 30,000	28	14.2
	30,001 – 40,000	15	7.6
	40,001 – 50,000	24	12.2
	More than 50,000	48	24.4
Total		197	100

Source: Authors' compilation

6.1. Assessment of Measurement Model

The study items were assessed for reliability and validity using PLS 4.0. The assessment of item reliability encompasses two distinct measures, namely Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. For the purpose of establishing the instrument's reliability and validity, a series of tests were conducted to assess its convergent and discriminant validity. All items with factor loadings over 0.70 in the PLS

assessment model are considered good predictors (Cockcroft & Russell, 2018). The result shows factor loadings of all items with values around 0.8 and 0.9. Since Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for each scale were above 0.70, we can say that they are all reliable, which was around 0.9, as depicted in Table 2. The square roots of AVE established the convergent validity of all items employed in the research with scores equal to or greater than 0.70, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of the measurement model

Constructs	Items	Factor loadings	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	AVE
ATT	ATT1 ATT2 ATT3	0.944 0.949 0.921	0.932	0.934	0.956	0.880
PBC	PBC1 PBC2 PBC3	0.940 0.949 0.939	0.937	0.939	0.960	0.888
PI	PI1 PI2 PI3	0.886 0.943 0.951	0.918	0.919	0.948	0.859
CT	CT1 CT2 CT3	0.934 0.928 0.914	0.916	0.916	0.947	0.856
PV	PV1 PV2 PV3 PV4	0.879 0.902 0.874 0.904	0.912	0.915	0.938	0.792
QC	QC1 QC2 QC3 QC4	0.950 0.906 0.919 0.931	0.945	0.947	0.960	0.859
SN	SN1 SN2 SN3	0.946 0.965 0.966	0.957	0.962	0.972	0.920

Source: Authors' compilation

Three methods were used to evaluate the reflective constructs and show discriminant validity. The first is aheterotrait-monotrait method, the second is afornell-larcker method, and the third method is cross-loading.

Table 3. Heterotrait-Monotrait measurement for discriminant validity

	ATT	PBC	PI	CT	PV	QC	SN
ATT							
PBC	0.768						
PI	0.668	0.620					
CT	0.563	0.515	0.437				
PV	0.582	0.632	0.677	0.496			
QC	0.557	0.602	0.503	0.680	0.683		
SN	0.608	0.632	0.679	0.534	0.552	0.403	

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 3 is about the HTMT method, where all the values are below 0.8, which passed the discriminant validity criteria because threshold values should be lower than 0.85 or 0.9. If it is above 0.9, then there is a validity issue in the construct items.

Table 4. Fornell Larcker measurement for discriminant validity

	ATT	PBC	PI	CT	PV	QC	SN
ATT	0.938						
PBC	0.718	0.943					
PI	0.616	0.575	0.927				
CT	0.522	0.477	0.400	0.925			
PV	0.538	0.586	0.619	0.452	0.890		
QC	0.524	0.566	0.468	0.633	0.633	0.927	
SN	0.575	0.600	0.640	0.499	0.519	0.384	0.959

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 4 shows that each construct correlates more with itself than any other construct, which is the square root of its AVE. Here, ATThas a higher correlation with ATT itself, and all their below constructs are smaller in value. Likewise, it follows the same for other constructs.

Table 5. Cross-loadings of items

	ATT	PBC	PI	CT	PV	QC	SN
ATT1	0.944	0.661	0.574	0.430	0.511	0.486	0.506
ATT2	0.949	0.675	0.579	0.574	0.539	0.513	0.561
ATT3	0.921	0.683	0.582	0.459	0.462	0.474	0.549
PBC1	0.668	0.940	0.565	0.435	0.599	0.498	0.579
PBC2	0.701	0.949	0.543	0.501	0.551	0.583	0.559
PBC3	0.660	0.939	0.515	0.412	0.501	0.521	0.557
PI1	0.612	0.605	0.886	0.410	0.576	0.470	0.506
PI2	0.560	0.508	0.943	0.322	0.565	0.415	0.616
PI3	0.544	0.489	0.951	0.381	0.581	0.418	0.654
CT1	0.474	0.453	0.360	0.934	0.411	0.588	0.478
CT2	0.496	0.437	0.373	0.928	0.431	0.586	0.471
CT3	0.478	0.435	0.376	0.914	0.412	0.581	0.435
PV1	0.462	0.493	0.541	0.422	0.879	0.571	0.463
PV2	0.484	0.543	0.565	0.417	0.902	0.552	0.478
PV3	0.451	0.536	0.540	0.398	0.874	0.610	0.417
PV4	0.515	0.513	0.557	0.377	0.904	0.525	0.485
QC1	0512	0.539	0.451	0.616	0.614	0.950	0.369
QC2	0.451	0.503	0.414	0.575	0.592	0.906	0.370
QC3	0.496	0.534	0.436	0.573	0.576	0.919	0.331
QC4	0.480	0.522	0.432	0.580	0.562	0.931	0.353
SN1	0.561	0.564	0.595	0.493	0.480	0.376	0.946
SN2	0.561	0.604	0.663	0.457	0.543	0.379	0.965
SN3	0.530	0.555	0.577	0.487	0.464	0.346	0.966

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 5 depicts that each item exhibits a greater outer loading on its own construct compared to any other constructs. Here, the items of ATT constructs have a higher value of their own construct compared to the other constructs. Likewise, it follows the same for other constructs.

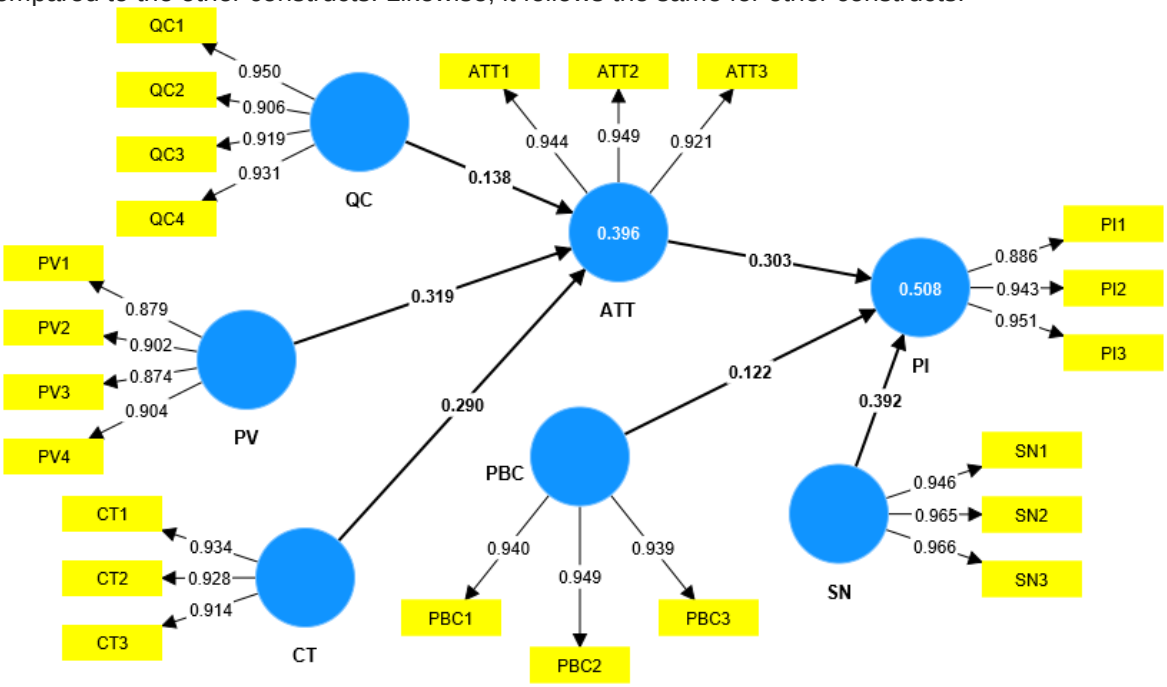

Figure 2. Measurement of the TPB model
Source: Authors' compilation

6.2. Coefficient of Determination Assessment

This model's explanatory power may be quantified by calculating the R-square statistic which is equivalent to the amount of variation that can be assigned to each of the model's endogenous variables (Shmueli &Koppius, 2011).

Table 6. Coefficient of determination

	R-square	R-square adjusted
ATT	0.396	0.387
PI	0.508	0.500

Source: Authors' compilation

Table 6 shows that the R-square values are between 0 and 1, which fulfilled the measurement criteria, and the greater value depicts higher explanatory power. Here, PI has a higher R-square value, indicating great explanatory power.

6.3. Assessment of Structural Model

A structural model assessment was carried out to test the relationships of 6 hypotheses. Table 7 displays the outcomes of the hypotheses.

Table 7. Hypothesis results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path coefficient	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistics	P value	Decision
H4	ATT -> PI	0.303	0.285	0.146	2.076	0.038	Accepted
H6	PBC -> PI	0.122	0.129	0.125	0.974	0.330	Rejected
H3	CT -> ATT	0.290	0.284	0.103	2.825	0.005	Accepted
H2	PV -> ATT	0.319	0.321	0.112	2.844	0.004	Accepted
H1	QC -> ATT	0.138	0.143	0.114	1.209	0.227	Rejected
H5	SN -> PI	0.392	0.404	0.087	4.530	0.000	Accepted

Source: Authors' compilation

The above table shows that four hypotheses are accepted as they have a favorable association with specified variables. The path coefficient values discovered that the items of CT and PV attributes greatly influence ATT constructs, impacting purchase behavior. Furthermore, SN attributeshave a significant influence on PI.These results indicate that the GI tag positively impacts handloom consumers.

7. CONCLUSION

The outcomes of this research analysis are aligned with the TPB approach because attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are the three essential components of the theory of planned behavior that significantly influence customers' purchasing decisions. The results imply that in the future, consumers will continue to purchase GI-labeled handloom products if they have a high degree of these attributes.This study shows that price veracity (0.319) and consumer trust (0.290) considerably positively impactattitude. Consumers place high importance on cost considerations when purchasing handloom fabrics due to their high price, which may be a possible reason for this phenomenon. The handloom products with GI build a potential trust among consumers on handloom products. Theseattitudes of price veracity and consumer trust greatly influence purchase intention. The subjective norms with a coefficient of 0.392 emerged as the following significant determinant of the purchase intention for GI-certified Champa silk handloom products.It was hypothesized that consumers are more influenced to purchase certified clothing from premium fabrics. However, the study's findings contradicted this assumptionas it was determined that quality consciousness did not have a substantial impact. Also, an insignificant correlation was discovered between perceived behavioral control and purchase intention.

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