

Reframing Traditional Craft through Recognition and Certification: A Multidimensional Analysis of Ushikubi Tsumugi in Contemporary Japan

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the current state and potential revitalization of Ushikubi Tsumugi, a traditional silk textile produced in Shiramine, Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture. Despite its designation as a national traditional craft, Ushikubi Tsumugi faces dual challenges: declining production and limited consumer engagement. The research adopts a three-pronged approach. First, it analyzes the institutional definitions and certification systems established by both the local producers' cooperative and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. Second, it presents findings from an original survey targeting Ishikawa residents ($n = 900$), focusing on how identity attributes—such as gender, age, marital status, and occupation—influence recognition, ownership, emotional receptivity, and gift-giving intention. Third, it discusses how traditional crafts may be sustained through cultural branding and policy support. The results reveal a tension between institutional legitimacy and market accessibility. While emotional receptivity to Ushikubi Tsumugi is high—especially as a gift—ownership remains low, and willingness to give is cautious. The study concludes that reviving traditional industries requires not only technical preservation but also strategic adaptation. Recommendations include product diversification, improved distribution, cultural storytelling, and enhanced intergenerational engagement. These findings contribute to broader discussions on sustainable cultural heritage in contemporary consumer society.

Keywords: Ushikubi Tsumugi, Traditional crafts, Certification system, Consumer perception, Gift-giving behavior, Cultural branding, Regional revitalization.

INTRODUCTION

Ushikubi Tsumugi is a traditional silk pongee textile produced in the Shiramine district of Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture. Its origins can be traced back to the aftermath of the Heiji Rebellion in 1159, when surviving warriors of the defeated Minamoto clan brought weaving techniques to what is now known as Ushikubi Village [1]. Over the centuries, Ushikubi Tsumugi developed a distinctive identity based on its rugged appearance, exceptional durability, and highly artisanal production process.

The fabric is made from double cocoons (tamamayu), which produce short silk fibers that, when hand-reeled, create a naturally uneven, slubbed texture. This characteristic “knotty” surface is not only aesthetically unique but also contributes to the fabric’s renowned strength—so much so that it has been colloquially called “nail-pulling pongee” (kuginuki tsumugi), referencing its reputed toughness. The entire production process involves 14 traditional steps, including

cocoon selection, hand-reeling, twisting, thread beating (itohataki), dyeing (traditionally using indigo or sukumo fermentation methods), warping, and hand-weaving [1] [2].

By the late 19th century, Ushikubi Tsumugi was widely distributed throughout Japan and reached its peak production around 1935[3]. However, the industry began to contract significantly in the postwar period due to several structural challenges: the declining popularity of traditional garments, reduced demand for silk, and an aging population of artisans with few successors. The construction of the Tedorigawa Dam in the 1970s forced the relocation of several workshops, further disrupting the continuity of the craft tradition [3].

Today, there are only five active Ushikubi Tsumugi production companies, and all of them are concentrated in the Shiramine district [4]. While this spatial centralization reflects the preservation of cultural heritage, it also exposes the industry to geographic and demographic vulnerabilities. The scale of production has diminished, and the market for Ushikubi Tsumugi remains limited and fragile, especially among younger consumers unfamiliar with traditional textiles.

In response to this prolonged contraction, local producers and affiliated organizations have taken steps to formally define and certify Ushikubi Tsumugi as a culturally and technically distinct product. The Ushikubi Tsumugi Production Cooperative has developed quality standards and a certification system, issuing official seals to fabrics that meet specific criteria [5]. These criteria include the use of traditional materials and techniques that align with historically grounded definitions of authenticity. Such institutional efforts aim to differentiate Ushikubi Tsumugi from imitations and to promote trust in its quality and cultural value.

However, little academic attention has been paid to how these definitions are constructed, institutionalized, and perceived by the public. In particular, the social and economic implications of certification schemes—who defines what counts as “authentic” and for what purpose—remain largely unexplored. Furthermore, while certification may reinforce artisanal legitimacy, it is unclear whether these systems are effective in reviving market demand or expanding consumer recognition.

To address these gaps, this study has three main objectives. First, it examines the conceptual and institutional definitions of Ushikubi Tsumugi, focusing on how local actors have structured its meaning through certification systems, including those established by the production cooperative.

Second, it explores consumer awareness, emotional acceptance, and latent gift-related potential based on an original questionnaire survey conducted among residents of Ishikawa Prefecture. This analysis investigates how identity attributes—such as gender, age, marital status, and occupation—shape recognition of Ushikubi Tsumugi, ownership, emotional receptivity, and willingness to give it as a gift.

Third, the study considers how traditional industries facing simultaneous declines in both production and consumption might be revitalized through cultural branding, tourism-based strategies, and regionally grounded policy initiatives. This multidimensional approach aims to

support practical recommendations while contributing to a theoretical understanding of traditional craft sustainability in contemporary Japan.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a two-pronged methodological approach: (1) qualitative institutional analysis of certification systems related to Ushikubi Tsumugi, and (2) quantitative survey analysis based on consumer responses from residents of Ishikawa Prefecture.

Institutional Analysis of Certification Systems

The first component of the study analyzes the significance, structure, and limitations of two certification systems that define Ushikubi Tsumugi as a traditional craft. The first system is the national certification designated by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), which classifies Ushikubi Tsumugi as a Dentō Kōgeihin (traditional craft) under specific legal and technical criteria. The second system is the independent certification scheme managed by the Ushikubi Tsumugi Production Cooperative, which issues official seals for items that meet the cooperative's own standards concerning materials, techniques, and authenticity.

Through documentary analysis and institutional comparison, this study identifies the similarities and differences between the two systems and evaluates their respective influences on the sustainability of the Ushikubi Tsumugi industry. Special attention is given to the criteria used for certification, the governance structure, symbolic value, and perceived legitimacy. The analysis also discusses potential shortcomings of the current systems, such as rigidity, lack of consumer understanding, and limited adaptability to modern market conditions.

Survey Design and Analytical Methods for Consumer Perception of Ushikubi Tsumugi

The second component of the methodology is a quantitative consumer survey conducted among residents of Ishikawa Prefecture. The survey aimed to assess local recognition of Ushikubi Tsumugi and examine how demographic attributes relate to consumer behavior, especially regarding gift-giving.

The survey was conducted over a ten-day period from October 10 to October 20, 2024. It collected 900 valid responses through online distribution channels. Respondents were asked about the following variables:

- Awareness of Ushikubi Tsumugi
- Ownership status
- Gender
- Age group
- Marital status
- Willingness to give or receive Ushikubi Tsumugi as a gift

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and cross-tabulation methods to identify relationships between demographic variables and gifting behavior. The results are used to interpret the effectiveness of current recognition strategies and to suggest new directions for promotion and consumer outreach.

ANALYSIS

Certification Structure and Institutional Challenges of Ushikubi Tsumugi

Ushikubi Tsumugi is a traditional silk textile produced in the Shiramine district of Hakusan City, Ishikawa Prefecture. It is characterized by its powerful texture and high durability, created through the use of irregularly slubbed silk threads known as "fushi-ito." Currently, the name "Ushikubi Tsumugi" is formally defined by the Ushikubi Tsumugi Production Cooperative based on its internally established "Ushikubi Tsumugi Textile Inspection Regulations" and "Certified Textile Inspection Standards." Only products manufactured within Hakusan City that meet these technical requirements are permitted to bear the name [6] [7].

At the core of this institutional framework lies a multilayered inspection and labeling system managed by the cooperative. All products undergo internal inspection by the cooperative. Additionally, 10% are randomly selected for external verification by the Kanazawa Weaving Inspection Office [5]. This dual internal-external quality control structure ensures robust product authenticity. Products that pass inspection are stamped with certification marks from both the cooperative and the Kanazawa office, as shown in Figures 1 and 2, guaranteeing authenticity both visually and institutionally.



Figure 1: A sample of certification marks from Kanazawa Office [5]



Figure 2: A sample of certification marks from the cooperative [5]

In addition, certified products are accompanied by two documents: a "Certificate of Inspection" and a "Ushikubi Tsumugi Guarantee Certificate." As illustrated in Figures 3 and 4, these documents are provided upon purchase. Notably, the guarantee certificate includes the notation "Intangible Cultural Property of Ishikawa Prefecture," formally underscoring Ushikubi Tsumugi's status as a high-value traditional craft [5]. These certifications not only provide consumers with assurance when purchasing luxury or gift items, but also enhance the cultural appeal of the product as a regional heritage asset.

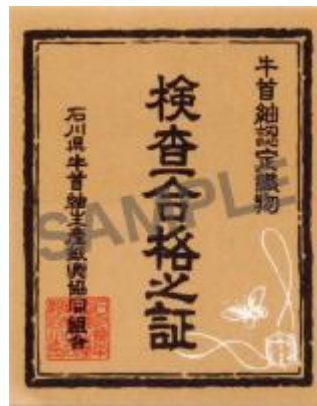


Figure 3: A sample of Certificate of Inspection [5]



Figure 4: A sample of Ushikubi Tsumugi Guarantee Certificate [5]

Moreover, products that meet national requirements are granted the Traditional Craft Certificate Seal issued by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI). Under the 1974 Traditional Craft Industries Promotion Act, METI designates products as "traditional crafts" if they satisfy five criteria: use in daily life, primarily handcrafted production, use of traditional techniques and materials, and production by a significant number of artisans within a specific region [8]. This certification system provides cultural and symbolic value while also supporting regional industries and promoting artisanal branding. In the case of Ushikubi Tsumugi, the national and cooperative certification systems operate in parallel, as seen in Figure 5, enhancing both product credibility and brand recognition.

However, there are critical perspectives on the effectiveness of such certification systems. National certification provides symbolic value but has limited influence on consumer awareness unless accompanied by active marketing efforts [9]. Furthermore, overly rigid institutional frameworks can hinder compatibility with modern lifestyles and markets, potentially reinforcing the perception that traditional crafts are outdated [10]. In the case of Ushikubi Tsumugi, while strict certification enhances trust, it also poses a dilemma by limiting flexibility to accommodate diverse contemporary consumer needs.



Figure 5: A sample of traditional crafts Certificate for Ushimuki Tsumugi from METI [5]

For example, products like summer-weight Ushikubi and summer obi deviate slightly from traditional weaving structures and may not qualify for METI's traditional craft designation. In response, the cooperative has introduced a separate category called "Certified Textiles," as shown in Figure 6, which subjects these products to alternative inspection and certification [5]. This flexibility is commendable, but such products remain outside the scope of national brand recognition, such as METI's certificate seals.



Figure 6: A sample of Certified Textiles [5]

All certified products must also carry a standardized label in compliance with the Household Goods Quality Labeling Act, ensuring transparency in content and handling. Furthermore, the name "Ushikubi Tsumugi" was registered as a regional collective trademark in 2007, offering protection under intellectual property law.

However, while the system ensures technical legitimacy and visible quality assurance, its rigidity may hinder flexible adaptation to the increasingly diversified needs of today's consumers. The emphasis on "tradition" may unintentionally narrow points of contact with emerging consumer segments, particularly in terms of product development, pricing, and design variation. To examine how these institutional characteristics affect market penetration,

the following section presents cross-tabulation analyses of consumer awareness and receptivity across demographic attributes.

In conclusion, the certification system of Ushikubi Tsumugi is supported by a multilayered institutional framework involving geographic origin, technical authenticity, quality control, and trademark protection. This framework helps secure legitimacy and brand value as a traditional craft. However, it simultaneously raises concerns about how to balance the preservation of tradition with the need for contemporary flexibility and market responsiveness.

Analysis of Recognition, Ownership, and Gifting Attitudes toward Ushikubi Tsumugi

This section analyzes the results of the questionnaire survey with a focus on respondent awareness of Ushikubi Tsumugi. Figure 7 presents a cross-tabulation of responses to the question, "Have you heard of Ushikubi Tsumugi?" by demographic attributes such as gender, age group, marital status, and occupation. In the figure, darker bars represent the percentage of respondents who answered "Yes," indicating awareness, while lighter bars represent those who responded "No." This design enables a visual grasp of recognition trends across attributes. First, in terms of gender, 42.6% of male and 40.2% of female respondents answered "Yes," indicating only a minor difference. Thus, gender does not appear to be a major factor influencing awareness of Ushikubi Tsumugi.

In contrast, a clear trend is observed when comparing age groups. Only 30.7% of respondents in their 40s were aware of Ushikubi Tsumugi, while awareness rose to 42.3% among those in their 50s and 54.7% in their 60s. This age-related increase in awareness may reflect greater opportunities for older individuals to engage with traditional crafts through local events or media, as well as accumulated cultural exposure over time.

Marital status also showed some variation. Among unmarried respondents, 34.3% reported awareness, while the figure rose to 45.0% among married respondents. In addition to age-related differences, this may be attributable to greater involvement in gift-giving practices or household consumption patterns among married individuals.

More pronounced differences were observed across occupational categories. Full-time company employees reported an awareness rate of 39.1%, rising to 49.3% among those in managerial positions. Public servants, educators, and nonprofit organization staff exhibited the highest recognition, at 56.1%. These findings suggest that those in stable employment or roles with strong community engagement are more likely to be aware of Ushikubi Tsumugi. In contrast, awareness was lower among part-time workers (30.1%), temporary or contract workers (29.4%), and self-employed individuals (37.1%). Notably, the category of "students" was excluded from this analysis due to a lack of valid responses.

In the "unemployed" category, 53.0% of respondents reported being aware of Ushikubi Tsumugi. This group likely includes a significant number of retirees, which aligns with the aforementioned age-related pattern.

In summary, gender does not significantly affect awareness of Ushikubi Tsumugi, whereas age and occupation are key variables. Awareness tends to be lower among younger respondents and those in non-regular employment. This suggests the need for targeted outreach and

cultural engagement strategies tailored to these demographic groups. Bridging the generational gap and responding to differences in media and cultural contact across lifestyles will be essential for sustaining traditional crafts and expanding their market reach.

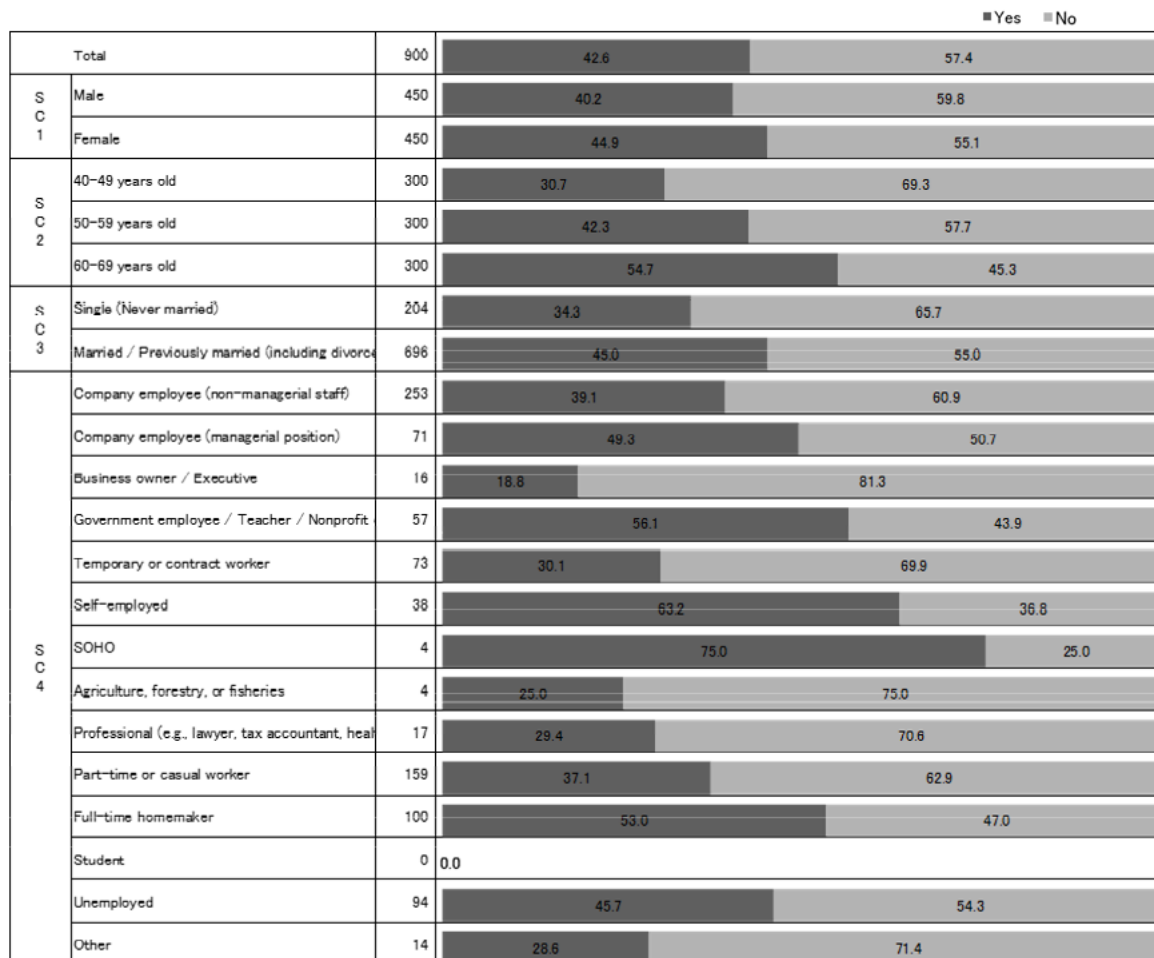


Figure 7: Responses to the question [Have you heard of Ushikubi Tsumugi]

Figure 8 illustrates the results of a cross-tabulation based on the question, “Do you own any item made with Ushikubi Tsumugi (a traditional silk fabric)?” Responses are broken down by demographic attributes such as gender, age group, marital status, and occupation. In the figure, darker bars indicate respondents who answered “Yes” (i.e., they own such an item), while lighter bars indicate “No” responses. This allows for a visual understanding of the actual experience of owning Ushikubi Tsumugi products across different population segments.

With regard to gender, ownership rates were very low for both males (5.6%) and females (4.2%). Age group comparisons show similarly modest levels: 6.9% for those in their 40s, 6.0% for those in their 50s, and 4.3% for those in their 60s. Compared to awareness levels presented in Figure 6, these results reveal a significant gap between recognition of Ushikubi Tsumugi and actual ownership.

Marital status showed minor variation, with 6.3% of unmarried respondents and 3.9% of married respondents reporting ownership, but both figures remained below 7%. Occupation-

based results indicated that self-employed individuals (12.5%), business owners or executives (9.9%), and those without employment (11.8%) had relatively higher ownership rates, exceeding 10%. However, most other occupational groups had ownership rates below 5%. Notably low figures were found among public servants, teachers, and nonprofit workers (1.8%), as well as among temporary or contract workers (2.7%) and part-time workers (0.0%), reflecting marked occupational disparities in ownership experience.

Ownership was also nonexistent among students (0.0%) and full-time homemakers (0.0%), likely due to a combination of factors such as age, income level, and limited access to distribution channels.

Overall, the results indicate that ownership of Ushikubi Tsumugi products is extremely limited across the population. Even among those aware of the product, only a small minority have actually purchased or received such items. This suggests that barriers such as high price points, narrow product applications, limited retail access, and lack of promotional outreach may be contributing factors. While certain groups show somewhat higher ownership rates, a broader market penetration will likely require a reevaluation of product strategy, distribution, and communication efforts.

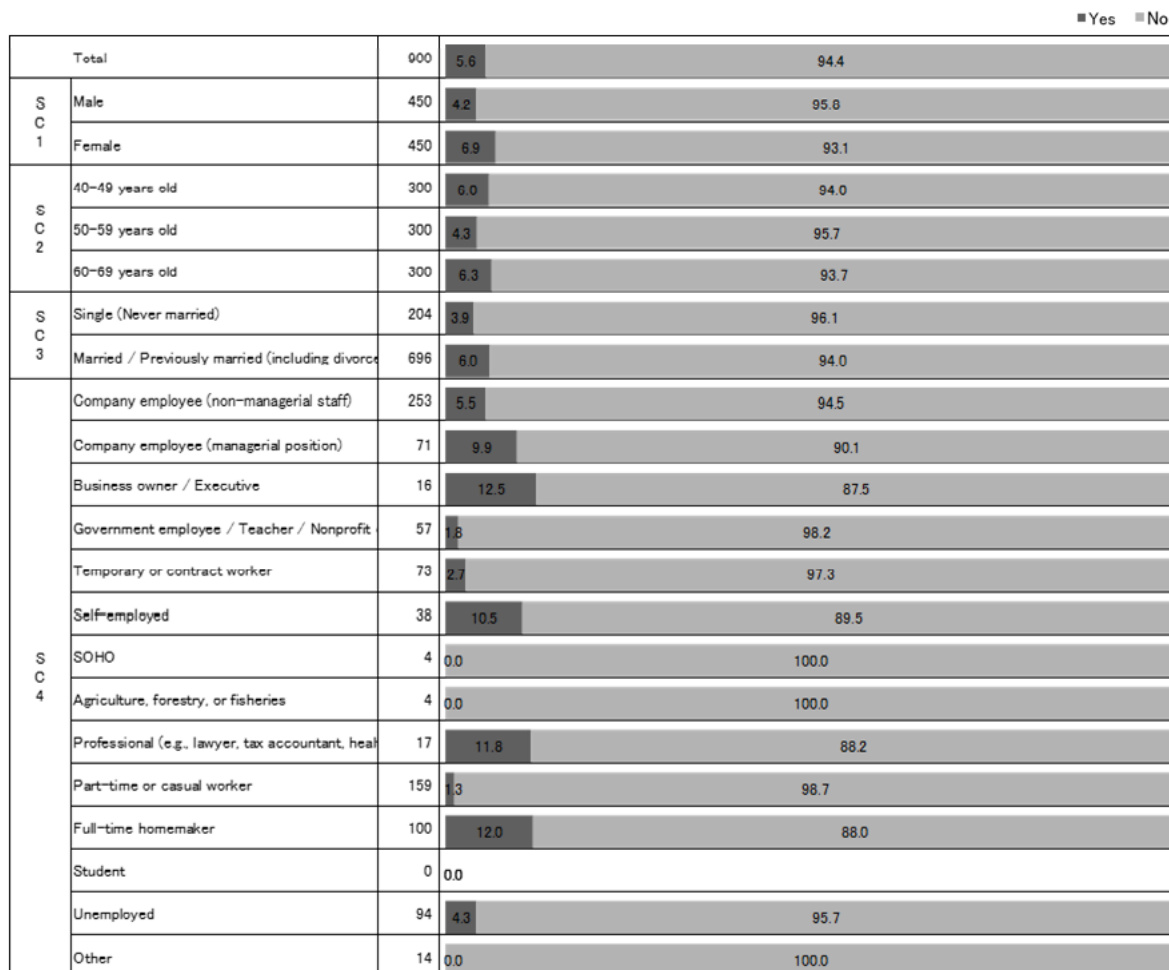


Figure 8: Responses to the question [Do you own any item made with Ushikubi Tsumugi]

Figure 9 shows the results of a five-point scale question: “If you received a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi, how happy would you feel?” The responses are cross-tabulated by gender, age group, marital status, and occupation. Percentages are shown for each score from 1 (least happy) to 5 (very happy), with color-coded segments that allow for a visual comparison of emotional acceptance across attributes.

With respect to gender, the combined percentage of those selecting score 4 (somewhat happy) and score 5 (very happy) was 66.2% for men and 61.8% for women, indicating high acceptance in both groups. No meaningful difference was found by gender, suggesting that emotional responses to such a gift are not significantly influenced by this attribute.

Age group comparisons revealed more distinctive patterns. Respondents in their 60s exhibited the highest proportion for score 5 (21.7%) and the highest combined score for 4 and 5 at 72.4%. This was followed by respondents in their 50s (61.3%) and 40s (58.2%), indicating that emotional positivity increases with age. Older respondents tend to express stronger appreciation for traditional crafts when received as a gift.

In terms of marital status, the proportion selecting score 5 was nearly identical between single (21.2%) and married (22.2%) respondents. The combined percentage of scores 4 and 5 was slightly higher among married individuals (64.9%) than singles (60.6%), but the difference was marginal. Marital status appears to have limited influence on gift receptivity.

More prominent differences emerged across occupational categories. Government employees, teachers, and nonprofit workers had the highest positive evaluations, with 72.1% selecting score 4 or 5. Similarly high ratings were observed among unemployed respondents (71.5%), those in agriculture, forestry, or fisheries (100.0%), and SOHO workers (75.0%), suggesting that older or locally rooted individuals express stronger emotional receptivity. In contrast, contract and temporary workers (16.3% for score 5) and part-time workers (18.4%) showed noticeably lower enthusiasm, with a higher proportion of responses falling within the neutral or lower categories (scores 1–3).

In particular, non-regular employment groups such as part-time and contract workers reported lower positive responses, with less than 20% selecting score 5. This may reflect economic factors, weaker brand familiarity, or a lack of understanding regarding the cultural or material value of Ushikubi Tsumugi products.

In summary, emotional acceptance of receiving a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi is generally high across most attributes, especially among older respondents and those in community-oriented professions. Compared to the lower levels of awareness and ownership observed in previous figures, this question revealed a notable latent gift demand. These findings suggest that future marketing efforts should emphasize the appeal of Ushikubi Tsumugi products as meaningful gifts, while also creating touchpoints for younger and less culturally connected audiences.

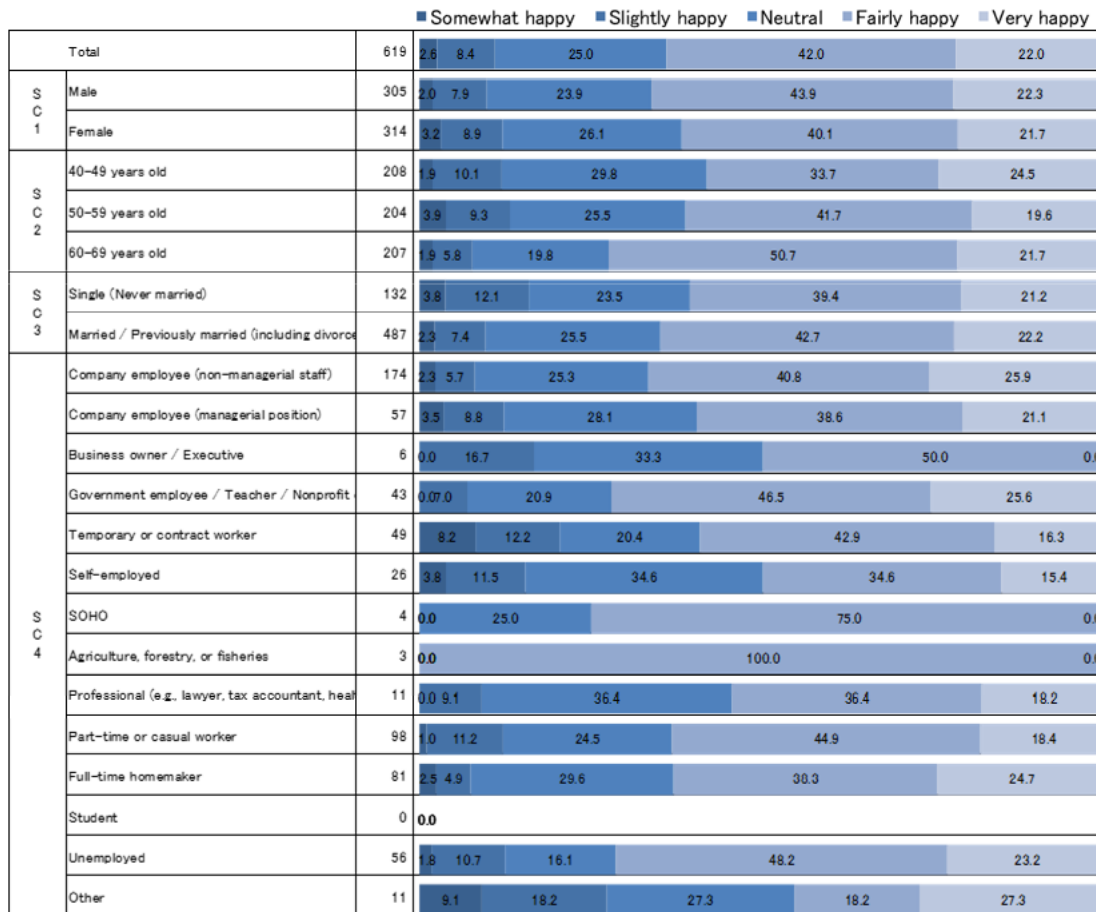


Figure 9: Responses to the question [If you received a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi as a gift, how happy would you feel]

Prior to presenting the questions on emotional receptivity, such as willingness to receive or give Ushikubi Tsumugi products as gifts, respondents were shown an illustrative photograph of a sample Ushikubi Tsumugi bag. This visual aid was intended to provide a shared understanding of the product's appearance and design. Following this, individuals who indicated that they would "definitely not want to receive" or "definitely not want to give" such an item were excluded from the subsequent cross-tabulation analyses. As a result, the sample size for the five-point scale evaluations is lower than the initial 900 respondents, focusing only on those with at least some degree of openness or interest in the product.

Figure 10 presents the results of the question, "How likely would you be to give a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi as a gift?" Participants responded on a five-point scale (1 = not at all likely, 5 = very likely), and the results are cross-tabulated by gender, age group, marital status, and occupation. The figure uses color-coded segments to illustrate variations in willingness across demographic attributes.

Across the total sample, 47.7% of respondents selected either score 4 or 5 (somewhat likely or very likely), indicating a moderate level of gift-giving intention. Compared to the results of the previous figure—where respondents evaluated how happy they would be to receive such a gift—this result reflects a slightly more cautious stance.

Regarding gender, 50.5% of men and 44.8% of women selected score 4 or 5, indicating that men showed slightly higher willingness to give. However, negative responses (scores 1–2) remained low in both groups, suggesting that gender does not significantly influence gift-giving intention.

Age group comparisons show that willingness increases with age. Respondents in their 60s recorded the highest score 4 + 5 total at 54.6%, compared to 41.8% for both the 40s and 50s groups. This trend suggests that older individuals may perceive greater value in traditional crafts as gifts.

Marital status appears to have a modest influence. Married respondents showed greater willingness (49.5%) compared to unmarried respondents (40.4%), likely reflecting differences in the frequency and context of gift-giving within family or social networks.

Occupational differences were more pronounced. Full-time company employees (non-managerial staff) showed relatively high willingness at 55.2%, followed by managerial staff (49.1%) and public sector workers (45.0%). In contrast, lower willingness was observed among temporary or contract workers (44.7%), part-time workers (42.2%), and unemployed individuals (30.0%). These findings may be shaped by factors such as income level, perceptions of product affordability, or sense of personal connection to the product.

It is worth noting that certain occupational categories with small sample sizes—such as SOHO workers (100.0%), agriculture/fisheries workers (66.7%), and professionals (60.0%)—exhibited high willingness scores. However, these results should be interpreted with caution due to limited sample counts.

Overall, while there is a meaningful proportion of respondents who express interest in giving a Ushikubi Tsumugi bag as a gift, the percentage is slightly lower than that of those who would be happy to receive one. This suggests the presence of psychological or practical barriers related to cost, availability, or occasion appropriateness. For future marketing efforts, it may be effective to focus on lowering these barriers by developing products with gift-friendly pricing, designs, and packaging, thereby enhancing the accessibility of Ushikubi Tsumugi as a thoughtful and culturally significant gift.

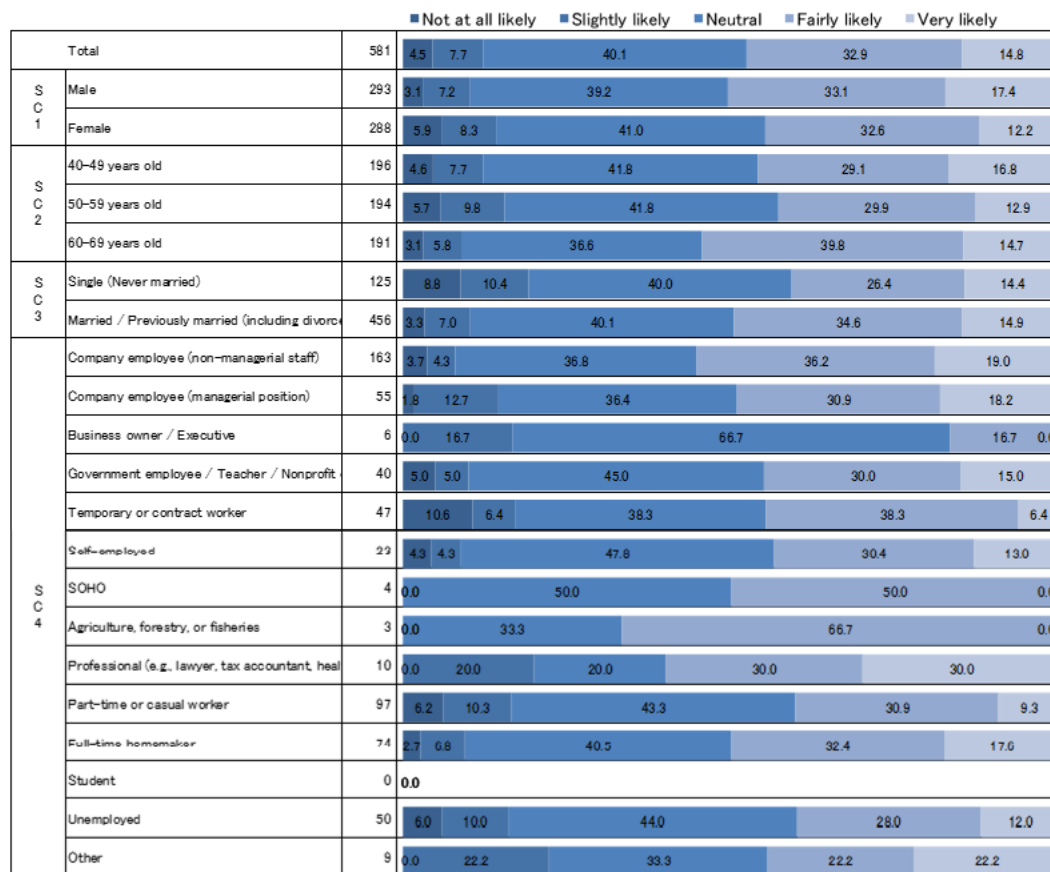


Figure 10: Responses to the question [How likely would you be to give a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi as a gift]

This section has analyzed four key survey items related to Ushikubi Tsumugi—awareness, ownership, emotional response to receiving it as a gift, and willingness to give it as a gift—by demographic characteristics including gender, age, marital status, and occupation.

The results reveal that age and occupation play a significant role in awareness, with higher recognition among older individuals and those in more community-embedded professions. In contrast, awareness was markedly lower among younger and non-regular employment groups, indicating gaps in cultural and informational exposure.

Ownership levels were extremely low across all attributes, even among those who were aware of the product. This suggests the existence of substantial barriers to purchase, including price, limited accessibility, and unclear use occasions.

In contrast, emotional receptivity toward receiving a bag made with Ushikubi Tsumugi was generally high, especially among older age groups. This indicates a positive perception of the product in gift contexts, regardless of actual ownership.

However, the intention to give such a bag as a gift was slightly more restrained. While a significant portion expressed willingness, the decision to give appeared to involve more

cautious deliberation, possibly influenced by practical concerns such as cost, recipient suitability, and appropriateness of occasion.

In sum, although awareness and ownership remain limited, Ushikubi Tsumugi demonstrates strong potential as a culturally meaningful and emotionally valued gift. Future strategies should focus on reinforcing its identity as a gift item and reducing practical and psychological barriers to gifting, particularly among younger and underexposed populations.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study set out to clarify the current challenges and potentials surrounding Ushikubi Tsumugi, a traditional silk textile from Ishikawa Prefecture, by analyzing its institutional definitions, consumer perceptions, and possible policy directions. Through a multidimensional approach combining documentary analysis and original survey data, several key findings and implications emerged.

First, the institutional framework defining Ushikubi Tsumugi—particularly the dual-layered certification system involving both the producers' cooperative and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)—has contributed to a high degree of technical legitimacy and quality assurance. However, the rigidity of these certification schemes may also constrain innovation in design and adaptation to contemporary lifestyles. While these systems offer symbolic and cultural value, they risk alienating younger or unfamiliar consumers by emphasizing procedural authenticity over accessibility. Moreover, despite the high level of craftsmanship involved, artisans working in Ushikubi Tsumugi production often earn less than 200,000 yen per month [11]. This highlights a critical structural issue: the economic sustainability of traditional crafts remains tenuous, even as their cultural value is institutionally celebrated.

Second, the cross-tabulation analysis of the questionnaire survey revealed sharp disparities in awareness and ownership across demographic groups. Recognition of Ushikubi Tsumugi was significantly higher among older age groups, married individuals, and those in stable or community-oriented occupations, such as public service. In contrast, ownership was uniformly low across all groups, even among those who expressed awareness. This points to structural barriers such as price, distribution limitations, and lack of day-to-day utility.

Third, a more nuanced picture emerged from the survey questions regarding emotional responses. A substantial proportion of respondents—regardless of their familiarity with the textile—reported that they would feel happy to receive a Ushikubi Tsumugi bag as a gift. This indicates strong emotional receptivity and latent potential as a gift item, particularly among older individuals and those in culturally rooted occupations. However, willingness to give such a gift was relatively lower, reflecting the complexity of gifting behavior, which involves not only emotional but also economic and social considerations.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while Ushikubi Tsumugi retains symbolic and emotional appeal, especially as a gift, it struggles to translate this cultural capital into everyday market transactions. To revitalize traditional industries like this one, policy and marketing strategies must move beyond preservationist narratives. Instead, efforts should be made to:

- Develop product lines that are affordable, gift-oriented, and contextually flexible;
- Diversify retail and communication channels, including digital platforms;
- Enhance cultural storytelling in ways that resonate with younger generations;
- Provide educational and experiential opportunities that bridge generational and occupational gaps.

From a broader perspective, this case study contributes to the literature on traditional craft sustainability by demonstrating how institutional frameworks and consumer identity intersect to shape cultural value and market potential. However, the study also faces certain limitations. These include its geographic focus on Ishikawa Prefecture and its reliance on self-reported perceptions. Notably, the scarcity of peer-reviewed academic research on Ushikubi Tsumugi reflects a broader structural issue: the near absence of specialized researchers focusing on this textile tradition. As a result, much of the contextual information had to be drawn from online sources and gray literature, such as local government publications and association websites. While these sources offer valuable insights, their limited academic depth may affect the comprehensiveness of certain analyses. At the same time, the lack of scholarly attention may itself be symptomatic of the textile's low public recognition, further underscoring the need for systematic academic engagement. Future research should address this gap by fostering interdisciplinary and comparative studies across regional craft industries, ideally supported by longitudinal data and peer-reviewed materials.

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