

From DIY to buy: The impact of short video marketing generated by makers on consumers' purchase intentions

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Introduction. The retail landscape has witnessed a significant trend towards handmade products, evidenced by the success of platforms like Etsy and brands such as Lush and Hermes (Hsu & Ngoc, 2016; Letzel et al., 2020). While large corporations showcasing handmade products thrive, entrepreneurial Makers - individuals who physically create tangible or intangible items with their hands - face considerable challenges, often struggling to sustain their enterprises beyond the first year (Clayton & Spletzer, 2009; Main, 2022). This issue is particularly concerning within the retail sector, where small businesses dominate the landscape and are the most popular domain for entrepreneurial ventures (Guidant Financial, 2023; National Retail Federation, n.d.).

The success of corporate giants in this sector can partially be attributed to substantial marketing investments - a disparity accentuated by the slim marketing budgets of the average small retail business, typically around four percent of its revenue (Koen, 2023; Lesonsky, 2019). Marketers have observed a great return on investment yielded by short video marketing (SVM), with video content receiving higher engagement across all social media platforms (Bonnaci, n.d.; Oentoro, 2023). SVM has also been linked to increased sales, with over 70% of customers attributing their purchases to watching a marketing video (Bonnaci, n.d.; Oentoro, 2023; *The State of Video Marketing*, 2023). The increasing demand for video content from businesses underscores the importance of SVM (Bonnaci, n.d.; Oentoro, 2023; *The State of Video Marketing*, 2023).

Additionally, research indicates that consumers are drawn to handmade items due to attributes such as trust, artistry, uniqueness, environmental friendliness, quality, and a perceived infusion of love (Fuchs et al., 2015; Hidayati et al., 2019; Hsu & Ngoc, 2016; Letzel et al., 2020). Notably, Fuchs et al. (2015) delved into love as a driving force behind purchasing handmade goods, as consumers believe these products show care compared to machine-made alternatives. Research has also spotlighted consumers' willingness to pay a premium for handmade products (Fuchs et al., 2015). Makers may use SVM to show how the product was created and convey these attributes to consumers, impacting their purchase intentions. Given its cost-effectiveness, particularly for small businesses, SVM – typically less than two minutes – represents a crucial area of study (Oentoro, 2023).

However, no research has yet explored how SVM, showing the production of handmade apparel (i.e., featuring a Maker), affects consumers' purchasing intentions. The custom apparel market is growing significantly, with an annual growth rate of over 10% (*Custom Made Clothes Market Report Overview*, 2024). However, the trend of wearing personalized apparel is not limited to company logos. This is evident in the numerous listings by Makers on Etsy for handmade custom embroidered crewnecks that feature names or portraits of beloved pets.

Theoretical Framework. To determine how SVM showcasing the production of handmade products impacts consumers' purchase intentions, the study adopted the Stimulus, Organism, Response (S-O-R) model (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). The S-O-R model explores how short videos featuring a Maker (stimuli) are perceived by consumers (organism) and their likelihood to purchase the product (response). The retail literature has previously adopted the S-O-R Model to examine the impact of online product review videos (Agrawal & Mittal, 2022).

Methods. This one-factor (SVM), two-level (i.e., SVM with and without makers) experimental study was conducted through a questionnaire comprising 19 items. Each stimulus included a 15-second video featuring identical background music showcasing the same product – an embroidered crew neck. However, one stimulus depicted a maker embroidering the crew neck, while the other showcased the styled crew neck without the Maker's involvement. After viewing the video, participants evaluated the product's qualities: trust, artistry, love, uniqueness, environmental friendliness, and quality. The measurement items used a 5-point Likert scale. Face validity was measured along with an exploratory factor analysis. All constructs were assessed to meet the required Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.70. The study was conducted with a sample of 129 individuals from the United States. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions.

Results. Two multiple regressions were conducted using the stepwise method to analyze the variance in purchasing intention, one involving the presence of a Maker and the other without. The Maker stimuli regression revealed three significant predictors ($R^2 = 0.53$, $F(3, 63) = 23.1$, $p < 0.01$): love ($\beta = 0.42$, $p < 0.001$), along with sustainability ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.007$) and artistry ($\beta = 0.26$, $p = 0.010$). In contrast, the no Maker regression indicated two predictors ($R^2 = 0.58$, $F(2,63) = 42.4$, $p < 0.01$): love ($\beta = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$) and quality ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$).

Findings. This study utilized the S-O-R model to investigate the impact of a SVM on consumer purchasing behavior of apparel items, specifically examining the differentiation between content with and without Makers. The study examined how trust, artistry, love, uniqueness, environmental friendliness, and quality - attributes associated with handmade products - are influenced by SVM. The findings corroborate previous research indicating love as a distinguishing attribute of handmade products (Fuchs et al., 2015) and revealed its significance in mass-produced products. However, trust and uniqueness did not exhibit significant effects. Notably, this study highlights Makers' influence on consumer purchasing intentions by strategically leveraging key factors in SVM creation. When creating SVM, Makers should emphasize love and emotion, highlight craftsmanship, and enhance consumers' sustainability perception by featuring themselves in the content to compete with mass-produced alternatives. To continue to enhance differentiation from mass-produced products, Makers should focus more on including content that details the quality of their products. A limitation of this research was that many participants indicated they were unsure of or did not consider the embroidered crewneck, as shown in the video, handmade. Future research should examine SVM that shows a Maker creating an apparel item made from scratch to understand better consumer perceptions of handmade apparel (e.g., pattern making to market).

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