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Hand as Offense, Craftsmanship Uniqueness: The Handmade Effect in Marketing

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Abstract

While standardized industrial products have become the mainstream in the market, handmade products have unexpectedly garnered fervent consumer enthusiasm. However, literature on handmade production is scattered across multiple disciplines, including management, art, and sociology, with contradictory findings that struggle to explain the emerging phenomenon of handmade production empowered by new technologies. The existing theoretical framework of the handmade effect primarily centers on the definition, classification, and impacts of handmade production; the psychological mechanisms of the handmade effect mainly include perceived naturalness, perceived uniqueness, perceived quality, perceived effort, perceived “love,” and psychological ownership; simultaneously, the handmade effect is also moderated by factors including product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics. Handmade production possesses unique theoretical significance and marketing value in the new business environment.

Full Text

Preamble

Handmade as a Competitive Edge: The Unique Craftsmanship Effect in Marketing

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Abstract: While standardized industrial products have become the mainstream in the market, handmade products have unexpectedly gained immense popularity among consumers. However, existing literature on handmade effects is scattered across multiple disciplines including management, art, and sociology, with contradictory conclusions that fail to explain emerging phenomena in the new technology-enabled landscape. The current theoretical framework of handmade effects primarily revolves around the definition, classification, and impact of handmade production; the psychological mechanisms mainly include perceived naturalness, perceived uniqueness, perceived quality, perceived effort, perceived “love,” and psychological ownership. Meanwhile, the handmade effect is also moderated by factors such as product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics. Handmade production holds unique theoretical significance and marketing value in the contemporary business environment.

Keywords: handmade, spirit of craftsmanship, perceived uniqueness, psychological ownership, consumer behavior

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1 Introduction

In the era of Industry 4.0, the rise of new quality productive forces has profoundly impacted industrial development through high-efficiency, low-cost, and highly flexible intelligent manufacturing technologies. Human involvement in production processes has continuously declined (Dong & Du, 2020), and manual production modes have gradually been replaced by mechanized mass production (Liu et al., 2021). Handmade production has been labeled as backward, inefficient, and rustic (Xu, 2022), seemingly incompatible with modern industrialized society. However, a new “anti-industrialization” wave has emerged in the current market, with handmade products attracting increasing consumer attention and acclaim.

Data shows that the global handmade product market reached \$830.4 billion in 2023. Meanwhile, the handmade e-commerce platform Etsy has experienced continuous user growth, with its gross merchandise sales officially exceeding \$2.5 billion in Q2 2020 (Droege, 2021). Traditional artisans such as Li Ziqi, Shougong Geng, and Grandpa Amu have gained massive followings both domestically and internationally. Various DIY handmade experience projects have become popular across urban streets, with activities like handmade scented candles, plaster doll painting, and tufting experiences emerging as new forms of leisure and stress relief. Companies like IKEA even actively facilitate user participation in product assembly. Furthermore, even tech brands unconnected to handmade production seek associations with it—for instance, the sentiment-driven smartphone manufacturer “Smartisan Technology” directly adopts a hammer (a craftsman’s favorite tool) as its brand logo to express reverence for artisanal craftsmanship. This demonstrates that human-dominated handmade products have not faded from the consumer market but have instead gained increasing favor in recent years (Fuchs et al., 2015). This raises the question: Why has handmade produc-

tion successfully “gone against the tide” amid the industrialization wave? And what has industrialization brought to handmade production?

The *Rites of Zhou: Artificers’ Record* states: “The wise create things; the skillful preserve them through generations—this is called craftsmanship.” In traditional agrarian societies, handmade production was the primary mode of production, referring to the process where makers select materials, design products, and craft them with their own hands (Campbell, 2005). The maker is the subject of handmade production, and those proficient in traditional manual methods are called artisans (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017). Transforming raw materials into finished products typically requires dozens of manual processes by one or more artisans. The meticulous refinement and pursuit of excellence by traditional artisans embody the “spirit of craftsmanship” that has gained widespread recognition and advocacy in recent years (Chen et al., 2022). In popular understanding, handmade products mainly refer to items crafted by highly skilled artisans using premium natural materials (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017), such as traditional jade carvings. More broadly, however, handmade products encompass any items dominated by human labor in production or processing, including not only artistic handicrafts but also DIY products, handmade daily necessities, and handmade foods.

Despite growing consumer affection for handmade products, current research in this field suffers from systemic deficiencies and contradictory conclusions. First, existing studies remain controversial regarding handmade effects, with most focusing on positive effects while neglecting negative ones. For example, handmade production is generally believed to enhance perceived quality (Fan et al., 2019) and stimulate perceptions of creativity (Magni et al., 2024), prompting consumers to pay premium prices (Liu et al., 2021). However, other research suggests handmade production may trigger negative associations like “small workshop” or “dirty and chaotic” (White et al., 2016), reducing quality recognition (Littrell et al., 1993). Second, existing research struggles to explain new market phenomena related to handmade production. For instance, as digital handicrafts gain popularity, few scholars have examined the market impact of digital sculptures, and existing handmade research has not deeply explored this area. Moreover, gaps exist between current handmade theories and reality regarding definitions and dimensions, with no consensus on whether emerging phenomena qualify as handmade. Examples include paintings created with digital stylus on electronic drawing tablets, virtual buildings constructed by users manipulating electronic devices in games like Minecraft, and “digital crafts” designed in virtual worlds.

In summary, although scholars have recognized the impact of handmade production on consumers, existing literature is fragmented across management, art, and sociology, lacking interdisciplinary synthesis. Research in this area remains nascent, with insufficient exploration of psychological mechanisms and unclear boundary conditions. Therefore, a systematic review and analysis of handmade research is urgently needed.

This study integrates multidisciplinary perspectives to organize the main concepts, classifications, effects, mechanisms, and boundaries of handmade production. We classify handmade production by production mode and technical professionalism to clarify its conceptual scope; explore both positive and negative effects and their mechanisms, including perceived naturalness, uniqueness, quality, effort, “love,” and psychological ownership; and identify boundaries across three dimensions: product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics. We also propose future research directions. This work will map the main research trajectory, further develop handmade effect theories, and provide practical guidance for managers in production method selection and marketing.

2.1 The Concept of Handmade Production

The meaning of handmade production typically has narrow and broad interpretations. The narrow definition refers to products primarily made by highly skilled artisans using premium natural materials, completely produced by human labor (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017), usually emphasizing artistic and unique qualities, such as traditional handicrafts. The broad definition encompasses any products made or processed by human labor rather than mass-produced by machines. Regardless of production complexity, skill level, or artistic/cultural value, as long as human participation significantly influences the final form, value, or uniqueness, the product can be considered handmade, including handmade foods and DIY products. Products merely conceived and designed by humans without any production involvement are generally not considered handmade. This study focuses on the broad scope of handmade production where human participation completes production or processing.

Unlike handmade-dominated production in traditional agrarian societies, most modern market products adopt hybrid manual-machine production modes as industrial technology evolves (Newman & Bloom, 2012). This poses significant challenges for distinguishing handmade from machine-made products. Scholars have conceptualized handmade production from different perspectives. Campbell (2005) emphasizes that the key difference lies in humans dominating and controlling machines during production, rather than machines dominating. However, since consumers cannot observe actual production processes, Fuchs et al. (2015) define handmade from an information disclosure perspective: production methods claimed as handmade or artisanal by manufacturers are considered handmade, while those claimed as machine-made are considered machine-made, regardless of actual production methods. This definition effectively resolves classification issues when both manual and machine methods are used (Fan et al., 2019; Frizzo et al., 2020; Song et al., 2023). As consumers increasingly participate in handmade processes (Norton et al., 2011), production subjects include both traditional producers and consumers. Therefore, Dong and Du (2020) define handmade as human-dominated processes from material selection to finished product, and machine-made as machine-dominated processes from material processing to finished product. Synthesizing previous research and highlighting the

essential difference between handmade and machine-made, this study adopts a definition emphasizing human importance and impact on product value: handmade primarily refers to processes where humans directly participate in and dominate product creation, manufacturing, or processing using hands and auxiliary tools with various materials and techniques, significantly influencing the final form or value. Handmade products range from daily necessities to artworks, including simple woven items or handmade foods, as well as complex jade carvings or metal crafts.

Furthermore, new consumption scenarios and production technologies drive the evolution of handmade concepts. From selling handmade goods via digital platforms like Etsy to small-scale automated production (e.g., Sole's customized 3D-printed shoes), handmade production thrives in various technical contexts (Rao & Gopi, 2016). Generative AI also provides richer design solutions for handmade products. This fusion of traditional craftsmanship with modern digital technology opens new possibilities for design and production, enabling more complex shapes, intricate details, and personalized customization. Although new technology-driven handmade production profoundly impacts creation and consumption methods, existing literature has yet to clearly define its concept, and its effects warrant deeper future investigation.

Due to the complexity of marketing strategies, whether specific products qualify as handmade requires definition within particular consumption contexts. Therefore, to comprehensively understand handmade characteristics and effects, beyond conceptual exploration, more detailed classification of handmade forms is necessary.

2.2 Classification of Handmade Production

Although existing research has explored handmade marketing effects, it typically uses crude classifications like machine-made versus handmade. Handmade classification suffers from overlapping categories and conceptual ambiguity, hindering field development. This study comprehensively reviews domestic and international research across management, art, and sociology to propose a preliminary classification. It covers not only traditional utilitarian handmade products but also incorporates various popular handmade categories, including handmade foods, experiential DIY products, and handmade intangible cultural heritage products (see Table 1).

Table 1 Classification of Handmade Production

| Dimension | Category | Description | Examples | References (Partial) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| Production Mode | Batch | Scale production according to certain standards | Handmade soap, traditional incense paste | Frizzo et al. (2020) |
| | Customized Hand-made | Adjusting product elements based on unique customer needs and preferences | Haute couture, custom cakes | Kim et al. (2023) |
| | Handmade DIY Products | Consumers personally participate in production | IKEA furniture assembly, tufting experience | Norton et al. (2011) |
| Technical Professionalism | High Technical Professionalism | Requires rich professional experience and exquisite craftsmanship skills | Intangible cultural heritage handmade products | Manfredi Latilla et al. (2019) |
| | Low Technical Professionalism | Requires only basic manual skills and experience | Handmade foods | Frizzo et al. (2020) |

2.2.1 Classification by Production Mode

Based on existing product production modes (Sunikka & Bragge, 2012), handmade production can be divided into batch handmade and customized handmade.

Batch handmade refers to scale production according to certain standards. Such products can be produced relatively quickly and cost-effectively, offering consistency and stability. Batch handmade products typically provide large quantities of similar styles to broadly meet consumer needs, such as handmade soaps and traditional incense paste.

In contrast, customized handmade refers to adjusting product elements based on customers' unique needs and preferences (Kim et al., 2023). Haute couture

and custom cakes are typical examples. Consumers have relatively high participation in customized handmade design and production, enabling self-expression through unique designs (Kim et al., 2023). Final products typically exhibit high exclusivity and personalization, commanding significantly higher prices than batch handmade products (Sunikka & Bragge, 2012). Consumers also show stronger preference for customized handmade products because they satisfy self-expression needs and convey taste, preferences, and social identity (Moreau et al., 2020). Purchasing customized handmade products can increase consumers' self-authenticity, thereby enhancing subjective well-being and behavioral well-being (Choi et al., 2022). As living conditions improve and personalized demands grow, customized handmade products are gaining increasing consumer favor.

Furthermore, as demand for uniqueness in customized handmade goods grows, handmade service products have emerged. Handmade services primarily involve businesses providing venues and batch-produced raw materials or semi-finished products for users to complete final products themselves. Consumers personally participating in the entire production process from design to finished product not only obtain unique personalized works but also gain creative pleasure and emotional value (Köcher & Wilcox, 2022). This model satisfies consumers' pursuit of personalized experiences while making them increasingly important in handmade processes (Norton et al., 2011). For example, consumers assembling IKEA furniture after purchase (Mochon et al., 2012) or popular tufting carpet-making experiences among young consumers. Although consumers' skill levels may not match professional artisans, participation in handmade processes enables them to perceive life meaning (de Bellis et al., 2023) and unique product value (Norton et al., 2011). Since consumers participate in both design and production, these service-providing products should also be considered handmade with high customization characteristics.

2.2.2 Classification by Technical Professionalism

Makers are the subjects of handmade production, playing crucial roles. Their technical skill level significantly influences handmade product value and quality.

Manfredi Latilla et al. (2019) define high technical professionalism handmade as requiring makers to rely on rich professional experience and exquisite craftsmanship skills. These skilled artisans are typically revered as craftsmen whose knowledge and techniques are difficult to replicate and disseminate, making products exclusive and unique (Manfredi Latilla et al., 2019). Consequently, high technical professionalism handmade products usually have higher commercial value (Newman & Bloom, 2012) and widespread public recognition, such as high-end custom jewelry. They also often possess high historical and cultural value (Zhang et al., 2023). For example, China's intangible cultural heritage "Yunjin wooden loom brocade weaving technique" requires artisans to undergo long-term training, possessing superb technical skills and rich design and weaving experience.

In contrast, low technical professionalism handmade refers to production requiring only basic manual skills and experience, where makers' skills do not typically add value. Hand-pounded ice powder and other handmade foods represent typical low technical professionalism products that retain handmade characteristics, enabling consumers to perceive naturalness and authenticity and increasing trust (Frizzo et al., 2020). However, such products' added value is usually lower than high technical professionalism handmade products. Existing research has not examined marketing effects across different technical professionalism levels, with only a few studies focusing on specific products like intangible cultural heritage handmade effects (Sofi et al., 2022; Zhang, 2018).

In summary, as machine production becomes widespread and new technologies develop, previous research methods that simply divided products into handmade and machine-made can no longer explain characteristics and phenomena in the handmade market. Based on handmade features, this study classifies handmade production across two dimensions—production mode and technical professionalism—incorporating various emerging handmade types to clearly define handmade scope. To deeply explore handmade marketing value and resolve past controversies, this study analyzes the double-edged sword effects of handmade production in the market from multiple perspectives.

3 Effects of Handmade Production

Handmade products typically carry special labels in sales, such as traditional, ancient method, handcrafted, and natural (Wilcox et al., 2024). Evolutionary psychology suggests that artifacts are extensions of human body and mind, which co-evolve with human society, making handmade goods intimately connected with human development (McLuhan, 1951). Currently, handmade production is regaining consumer and corporate attention (Droege, 2021), gradually becoming an important marketing tool. However, academic consensus on handmade marketing effects remains elusive, with scholars holding conflicting views on handmade impacts on products and brands. Therefore, this study systematically organizes handmade effects, exploring them through both positive and negative dimensions (see Table 2).

Table 2 The Double-Edged Sword Effect of Handmade Production

| Effect Type | Specific Manifestations | References (Partial) |
|------------------|--|--|
| Positive Effects | Emotional resonance, authenticity, creativity, self-expression, purchase intention, premium pricing, usage behavior, brand loyalty | Schroll et al. (2018); Frizzo et al. (2020); Magni et al. (2023); Mochon et al. (2012); Reich et al. (2018); Abouab & Gomez (2015); Zhang et al. (2023); Wu et al. (2017); Lunardo & Saintives (2013); Wilcox et al. (2023); Liu et al. (2021) |
| Negative Effects | Ownership infringement, quality stability risks, negative brand image | Song et al. (2023); White et al. (2016); Godfrey et al. (2022); Newman et al. (2014) |

3.1 Positive Effects of Handmade Production

First, existing research generally agrees that handmade products receive positive consumer evaluations (Dong & Du, 2020). Studies primarily explore four aspects: emotional resonance, authenticity, creativity, and self-expression. Regarding emotional resonance, consumers associate handmade products with human presence and labor behind them, as well as artisans' pursuit of excellence, generating emotional attachment and resonance that yields more positive evaluations (Schroll et al., 2018). For authenticity, consumers generally perceive handmade products as more natural and trustworthy than alternatives (Frizzo et al., 2020). For instance, consumers typically believe handmade yogurt contains more milk and handmade wool sweaters are more likely to use real wool (Abouab & Gomez, 2015). For creativity, consumers usually perceive higher creativity in handmade than machine-made products, viewing them as expressions of artisans' personal will requiring rich imagination, excellent judgment, continuous inspiration, and persistent, meticulous effort (Newman & Bloom, 2012). These impressions stimulate deep recognition of artisans' novel and unique creativity, yielding higher creativity evaluations (Newman & Bloom, 2012). For self-expression, when personally participating in handmade production, consumers gain self-affirmation, enhanced pride, and achievement, satisfying deep psychological needs while showcasing personal talents and skills to others, thereby improving product evaluations (Mochon et al., 2012; Troye & Supphellen, 2012).

Second, handmade production can stimulate stronger purchase intentions (Macías-Mañas et al., 2024) and command higher premiums (Droege, 2021). Research examines three aspects: craftsmanship spirit, natural preference, and cultural connotation. Regarding craftsmanship spirit, consumers associate

handmade products with artisans' positive social qualities (warmth, passion, pursuit of excellence), enhancing perceived added value (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017; Reich et al., 2018) and product valuation (Job et al., 2017). Handmade products embody artisans' thoughts, spirit, and diligent efforts; purchasing them expresses affirmation and appreciation beyond utilitarian value (Reich et al., 2018). For natural preference, handmade production generates positive sustainability effects across production, repair, recycling, and material selection (Eglash et al., 2020), stimulating positive perceptions of green, natural, and authentic qualities (Abouab & Gomez, 2015; Frizzo et al., 2020; Prados-Peña et al., 2024). As environmental awareness grows, handmade production satisfies sustainable consumption expectations, enhances product affection, and strengthens purchase intentions (Judge et al., 2020; Pieniak et al., 2009). For cultural connotation, handmade products differ fundamentally from industrialized, modern machine-made goods, serving as profound cultural expressions or symbols (Trivedi et al., 2023). Each culturally valuable handmade product carries rich cultural connotations, embodying a nation or region's traditional essence, historical accumulation, and collective wisdom (Zhang et al., 2023). When purchasing handmade products, consumers satisfy material needs while silently expressing cultural identity, strengthening presence in cultural communities, and gaining cultural recognition and belonging (He & Wang, 2015). Therefore, despite higher prices than machine-made alternatives (Koli, 2021), consumers recognize handmade products' unique charm and cultural value, maintaining strong purchase intentions (Droege, 2021). This pursuit and recognition of cultural value make handmade products stand out in the consumer market.

Third, handmade production encourages more positive product usage behaviors (Lee & DeLong, 2016). Handmade products typically receive higher evaluations and stimulate greater affection, leading consumers to use them more frequently (Lee & DeLong, 2016). During usage, consumers treat handmade products more delicately than machine-made ones (Wu et al., 2017). This stems from consumers' perception that handmade products require immense artisan effort and are difficult to produce (Norton et al., 2011). Consumers typically wish to avoid damaging perfect forms or betraying artisans' efforts, resulting in lower consumption enjoyment, more careful and cherishing usage, and greater product protection (Wu et al., 2017). Research using cupcakes found that even hungry consumers restrained consumption when facing exquisitely crafted handmade cakes, a phenomenon absent with automated batch-produced cakes (Wu et al., 2017). Moreover, when products are damaged, consumers often choose to retain rather than discard handmade products (Mugge et al., 2010).

Finally, handmade production enhances brand loyalty (Zare et al., 2020) and positive word-of-mouth intentions (Macías-Mañas et al., 2024). Handmade production's multiple symbolic meanings of naturalness and love (Fuchs et al., 2015; Hatcher & Tu, 2017) enable consumers to establish close connections with brands, enhancing brand affection and trust (Lunardo & Saintives, 2013) and boosting loyalty. Consumers stereotypically believe handmade brands consist-

tently provide high-quality products and services, stimulating unique affection and deep loyalty while encouraging repeat purchases (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Studies show consumers exhibit higher loyalty to handmade soda brands, willing to pay premiums and persist in purchasing despite changes in packaging size, type, and flavor (Zare et al., 2020). Consumers also give more positive evaluations to beloved brands and willingly recommend them (van der Westhuizen & Kuhn, 2023). Even when experiencing service failures or unsatisfactory products, affection for handmade brands effectively inhibits negative word-of-mouth 传播 (van der Westhuizen & Kuhn, 2023). Additionally, handmade products serve as potential tools for cross-cultural exchange, representing unique cultures with profound cultural significance and value (Lee & DeLong, 2016). Cultural identification, protection, and promotion visions lead consumers to view handmade brands as moral practitioners of cultural heritage (Wilcox et al., 2024). When consumers feel cultural resonance with handmade brands, they develop higher recognition and loyalty (Trivedi et al., 2023; Wilcox et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023), spontaneously promoting brands and driving sales and development (Lee & DeLong, 2016). This helps handmade enterprises build strong reputations and corporate images, laying solid foundations for long-term development. Thus, handmade production not only endows products with unique emotional value but also injects powerful positive energy into corporate word-of-mouth and brand building.

3.2 Negative Effects of Handmade Production

First, handmade production may also generate negative consumer evaluations (Song et al., 2023). Early research found that handmade production's difficulty in achieving standardized processes creates high defect risks (Liu et al., 2021), with consumers believing handmade products contain subtle variations and flaws (Littrell et al., 1993). Some consumers also view handmade as representing the past, primitive, and backward, contradicting modern technological society (Chatterjee, 2016), yielding lower evaluations. Additionally, the human element in handmade production reduces product evaluations. According to contagion theory, others can transfer personal traits to products through direct or indirect contact (Meng et al., 2022; White et al., 2016). This means handmade products often contain makers' emotions, attitudes, and values (Meng et al., 2022), making consumers feel their exclusivity and ownership are violated, hindering true self-expression (Argo et al., 2006). This sense of deprived control and psychological ownership creates discomfort (Song et al., 2023), leading to negative evaluations. Moreover, handmade products touched by others trigger negative associations like small workshop production, poor hygiene, and dirty environments (White et al., 2016), further deepening negative evaluations.

Second, handmade production may negatively impact purchase and usage behaviors (Song et al., 2023). Compared to machine-made products, handmade purchases involve quality stability risks, social evaluation pressure, and increased explanatory responsibility (Liu et al., 2021). These issues are perceived as po-

tential self-threats, weakening psychological security and leading to more conservative consumption strategies, reducing purchase intentions (Liu et al., 2021). Additionally, handmade production's special characteristics may require extra maintenance and care during usage (Godfrey et al., 2022), increasing usage costs, potentially reducing satisfaction, and decreasing usage and purchase. As handmade products become damaged during use, consumers may experience guilt, reducing usage experiences (Wu et al., 2017). The higher the perceived effort in handmade products, the stronger the negative emotions when damaged, potentially reducing usage and future purchases (Wu et al., 2017).

Finally, handmade production may negatively impact brand image (Newman et al., 2014). Although handmade demonstrates corporate efforts in environmental or cultural protection, such efforts sometimes create misunderstandings (Newman et al., 2014). Consumers may infer that firms view handmade merely as marketing tools for economic or green benefits rather than genuine commitment. Such over-marketing may lead consumers to believe resources are focused on marketing rather than product quality, negatively impacting corporate image and brand reputation (Newman et al., 2014). When consumers feel misled or deceived, they lose confidence not only in specific brands but also in other brands or entire industries, creating broader negative impacts on the handmade market. Therefore, firms should follow moderation principles when promoting handmade information, ensuring authentic and accurate communication of their love and commitment to handmade to maintain strong brand image and reputation.

In summary, handmade production exhibits double-edged sword effects in marketing. As a traditional production method, handmade has been assigned different value cognitions across economic development stages. Since the Industrial Revolution, handmade has been viewed as backward and inefficient (Chatterjee, 2016), with its non-standardized attributes causing quality instability, higher costs, and resource waste—stereotypes affecting consumer preferences. However, as economies develop and consumption concepts shift, increasing numbers of consumers reflect on modern industrial production's drawbacks, desiring escape from the fatigue of homogeneous commercial markets. Handmade production, with its nostalgic and human touch, satisfies consumer pursuits for humanized, personalized, and sustainable products, gaining growing affection. Additionally, differences in handmade conceptualization and insufficient classification in past literature have led to inconsistent conclusions. Previous studies often examined handmade effects through machine-made comparisons without specific definitions or classifications, typically considering only traditional handmade fully involving human design and production while neglecting machine- and technology-assisted handmade. Moreover, handmade categories are diverse, and consumer evaluations differ significantly across production modes and technical professionalism levels. Thus, past conceptual deviations have led to different conclusions about handmade impacts on consumers.

To deeply understand handmade marketing effects, clarify specific impacts on

consumers and firms, and enrich theoretical explanations, this study explores handmade effect mechanisms from multiple perspectives.

4 Mechanisms of Handmade Effects

As handmade production gains prominence in recent years, the return to traditional, hands-on creation has attracted researchers' attention. Through literature review, this study examines handmade marketing effects through six mechanisms: perceived naturalness, perceived uniqueness, perceived quality, perceived effort, perceived "love," and psychological ownership.

Perceived naturalness and uniqueness constitute consumers' attribute perceptions during handmade processes, jointly forming value perceptions. Perceived quality represents consumers' evaluations of actual attributes based on naturalness and uniqueness. Perceived effort and "love" reflect consumers' input perceptions and emotional experiences during handmade processes, which together with perceived quality form overall satisfaction. Psychological ownership represents consumers' emotional connection and possession feelings toward products. These six aspects cover different psychological and emotional factors consumers face with handmade production, jointly constituting the mechanism through which handmade influences consumer attitudes and behaviors.

4.1 Perceived Naturalness

Perceived naturalness refers to consumers' perception of natural traits in products or brands (Zhang & Yu, 2023; Abouab & Gomez, 2015). Natural products typically undergo minimal non-natural intervention during production, such as avoiding additives (Rozin, 2005; Scott et al., 2020). Product packaging design (Labbe et al., 2013) and firm size (Scekic & Krishna, 2021) influence naturalness perceptions. Handmade production as production method information can also stimulate perceived naturalness and affect consumer behavior (Frizzo et al., 2020). Consumers have stable preferences for naturalness and tend to purchase products perceived as natural (Zhang & Yu, 2023).

Generally, handmade products are perceived as more natural than machine-made ones (Frizzo et al., 2020), better satisfying consumer naturalness demands. Naturalness and authenticity are basic consumer expectations (Frizzo et al., 2020), with natural products viewed as safer, healthier, and more environmentally friendly (Lang & Rodrigues, 2022; Rahman et al., 2020; Scott et al., 2020), earning greater trust and preference (Lunardo & Saintives, 2013). Research shows contact with natural and sustainable handmade products stimulates sustainable consumption behaviors (Yu et al., 2024). Differences in perceived naturalness stem from consumers sensing more human contact in handmade products (Abouab & Gomez, 2015). Contagion theory suggests that contact with machines or synthetic additives during production increases contamination likelihood, reducing naturalness (Argo et al., 2006; Rozin, 2005). Compared to machine production, handmade production increases human contact, signaling

physical contact with natural sources (i.e., humans), better preserving natural attributes (Abouab & Gomez, 2015; Boisvert & Ashill, 2018), thereby satisfying naturalness preferences (Zhang & Yu, 2023) and increasing premium payment willingness (Abouab & Gomez, 2015; Moscato & Machin, 2018). However, research also notes that although handmade enhances naturalness, it often cannot guarantee standardized production environments and processes, potentially raising consumer concerns about human contamination (White et al., 2016), thereby affecting evaluations.

4.2 Perceived Uniqueness

Perceived uniqueness refers to consumers' cognitive assessment of how distinct a product is from similar alternatives (Reich et al., 2018). Uniqueness is not only a product characteristic but also an expression of consumer self-awareness. Consumers seek goods recognized by the public yet distinctly different to achieve unique self-concepts and satisfy individuality pursuits (Snyder & Fromkin, 1977). Products with perceived uniqueness strongly attract consumers and profoundly influence behavioral decisions (Cesareo et al., 2022).

First, the handmade process itself possesses unique attributes that stimulate perceived uniqueness and influence consumption decisions. Due to direct human involvement, each process and detail may vary with makers' attitudes, moods, or even weather. In consumers' eyes, every handmade product has subtle differences; simply labeling a product as handmade increases uniqueness perception (Littrell et al., 1993). Reich et al. (2018) further found that mistakes and flaws in handmade production can even increase uniqueness perception, as each flaw becomes evidence of handmade production, making products appear more different. This uniqueness fully satisfies consumer pursuits of scarcity and personalization (Reich et al., 2018). However, choosing uniquely handmade products may expose consumers to greater social evaluation pressure, perceived as self-threats that reduce purchase intentions (Liu et al., 2021). Meanwhile, excessive focus on uniqueness may lead consumers to neglect other product attributes, generating negative attitudes after use (Wu et al., 2020).

Second, artisans' professional skills and creativity enable consumers to perceive uniqueness. Artisans hold important positions in production, with their professional knowledge and exquisite skills endowing handmade products with exclusivity and uniqueness (Manfredi Latilla et al., 2019). Knowledge and skills retained in artistic or craft organizations are often difficult to transfer between individuals (Manfredi Latilla et al., 2019), making each handmade product carry unique personality and style, rendering each irreplaceable. Uniqueness confers luxury and scarcity traits, with purchase and use satisfying consumers' social status and self-identity needs (Chen et al., 2020), enabling higher market premiums (Sung et al., 2020). However, excessive uniqueness negatively affects second-hand market consumers' willingness to pay, hindering resale (Fuchs & Schreier, 2023). Additionally, uniqueness often requires extra maintenance and care during use (Godfrey et al., 2022), increasing usage costs.

Moreover, artisans' skills and creative concepts are deeply influenced by unique national or regional cultures. Handmade products are not only technically distinctive but also culturally unique, stimulating consumers' perceptions of historical and cultural value uniqueness (Zhang et al., 2023) and generating stronger purchase intentions (Zhang et al., 2023). However, handmade cultural uniqueness may accompany country-of-origin effects; for regions with poor origin images, this uniqueness may reduce market acceptance and hinder global promotion (Southworth & Ha-Brookshire, 2016).

4.3 Perceived Quality

Perceived quality represents consumers' subjective judgment of overall quality relative to expectations (Mitra & Golder, 2006). Consumers derive quality perceptions from internal and external cues (Zeithaml, 1988). Internal cues refer to physical components like beverage color and sweetness; external cues refer to non-physical elements like brand name and price (Zeithaml, 1988). Production method information constitutes an external cue influencing quality perceptions and consumer behavior.

When receiving handmade product signals, consumers naturally associate them with artisans' dedication and sweat. Handmade products are considered embodiments of artisans' excellence and craftsmanship spirit, representing relentless pursuit and commitment to quality. These cognitive associations stimulate positive emotional reactions, linking handmade with high quality (Fan et al., 2019; Koli, 2021), enhancing satisfaction and purchase intentions (Yang et al., 2023). However, as machine production develops and spreads, some consumers have long viewed handmade as backward and inefficient (Xu, 2022; Chatterjee, 2016), potentially reducing quality perceptions and generating negative evaluations.

Additionally, since handmade methods typically employ traditional techniques, consumers tend to view handmade products as crystallizations of traditional culture, generating more positive quality perceptions and evaluations (Wilcox et al., 2024). However, research also notes that excessive marketing of handmade information may trigger negative quality perceptions (Newman et al., 2014), inhibiting purchase and usage. Therefore, when promoting handmade products, firms should appropriately disclose cultural and quality efforts to enhance brand culture and environmental image while improving perceived quality.

4.4 Perceived Effort

Perceived effort refers to consumers' perception of producers' exerted effort (Dong & Du, 2020), representing an important mechanism through which handmade affects consumers and firms. The effort heuristic suggests that higher producer effort increases consumer product affection (Kruger et al., 2004).

The essential difference between handmade and machine-made lies in the effort degree embodied in products (Dong & Du, 2020). Based on experiential

knowledge of labor and production, handmade has always been viewed as human physical labor (Eglash et al., 2020). Consumers naturally believe that compared to machine-made speed and efficiency, handmade products require more time and effort (Fuchs et al., 2015). Therefore, learning a product is handmade easily triggers associations that humans invested more time and energy than machines in design and production (Wu et al., 2017), strengthening effort perceptions and yielding higher evaluations. Meanwhile, exquisite handmade products often remind consumers of artisans' excellent qualities—brilliant design concepts, focused work attitudes, craftsmanship spirit, and decades of dedication. Consumers' profound appreciation and respect for artisans enable them to perceive higher effort levels (Zhang, 2018). Even if quality doesn't significantly improve due to effort, consumers still highly evaluate and appreciate products after learning about extra time and energy invested (Kim & Labroo, 2011). Furthermore, when consumers personally participate in handmade product design and production, investing personal effort, they show higher affection, believing their involvement increases product value (Norton et al., 2011). Notably, while effort is typically considered a positive value signal (Kim & Labroo, 2011), excessive effort perception may create pressure and reduce usage (Wu et al., 2017). Therefore, although handmade embodies makers' effort and dedication, it doesn't guarantee consumers will always pay for extra effort.

4.5 Perceived “Love”

Fuchs et al. (2015) propose that perceived “love” refers to consumers' felt passion producers invest during manufacturing, comprising “love in the production process” and “love embodied in the product.” Specifically, “love in the production process” reflects producers' strong affection for products, evident in every manufacturing 环节; “love embodied in the product” is consumers' direct perception of love and warmth contained in products, making them not merely material objects but emotional transmissions (Fuchs et al., 2015). Handmade production can stimulate perceived “love,” influencing consumer attitudes and behaviors.

First, handmade production effectively reduces psychological distance between consumers and products by stimulating awareness of human presence behind them (Xie et al., 2021). Contagion theory suggests artisans' love and passion during production can “infect” their works like a virus, making consumers feel products contain deep love beyond material form (Fuchs et al., 2015). Scholars also interpret this as positive emotional transfer from producers to products; despite inevitable emotional loss during transmission, consumers still perceive emotional traces, triggering emotional resonance (Judge et al., 2020), enhancing product attractiveness and evaluations (Fuchs et al., 2015; Rauschendorfer et al., 2022). Meanwhile, in interactions between consumers and handmade brands (Macías-Mañas et al., 2024), consumers tend to believe brands choose handmade methods not only from craftsmanship recognition but also deep affection for traditional techniques, strengthening emotional identification and love when

understanding brand handmade philosophies (Macías-Mañas et al., 2024).

Additionally, this emotion can be transferred through gifting handmade products. Consumers believe giving handmade products not only conveys deep affection but also demonstrates uniqueness and cherish toward recipients (Fuchs et al., 2015). This effect intensifies when consumers co-create handmade products, increasing premium payment willingness (Norton et al., 2011). Finally, as a traditional method, handmade evokes nostalgia for intimate family and friends; combined with handmade products' unique charm, this greatly enhances emotional attachment and value recognition, stimulating purchase intentions and long-term usage (Lee & DeLong, 2016).

4.6 Psychological Ownership

Psychological ownership refers to individuals' mental state of perceiving tangible or intangible products as their own, including possession, identification, and efficacy feelings (Pierce et al., 2001). It differs from legal ownership (Song et al., 2023); consumers develop psychological ownership toward products they design, assemble, touch, or even haven't purchased (Liu & Fan, 2020). Psychological ownership further influences value judgments and consumption behaviors (Liu & Fan, 2020). It is an important mechanism through which handmade affects consumer behavior, though its specific processes remain controversial.

Research shows handmade production can trigger psychological ownership, positively influencing marketing effects (Liu et al., 2021). Liu et al. (2021), based on psychological imagery theory, note that in today's machine-made dominated market, handmade as anomalous production information stimulates process-oriented mental imagery, making consumers more sensitive and attentive to production processes. This process imagery increases product familiarity and, through cognitive processing, consumers' "investment" in products, thereby strengthening psychological ownership (Liu et al., 2021). Increased psychological ownership further generates more positive evaluations and psychological attachment (Kamleitner & Feuchtl, 2015), enhancing premium payment willingness (Liu et al., 2021).

However, other scholars argue handmade may generate lower psychological ownership, creating negative evaluations (Song et al., 2023). Contagion theory emphasizes that artisans' time, energy, and physical contact during production transfer personal traits to products (White et al., 2016). This process can serve as psychological ownership signals, establishing artisans' psychological ownership (Song et al., 2023). Since psychological ownership is generally considered limited, others' ownership signals erode consumers' psychological ownership (Kirk et al., 2018). Therefore, learning a product is handmade weakens consumers' psychological ownership (Song et al., 2023), leading to stronger negative attitudes and negative sales impacts (Song et al., 2023).

Beyond these mechanisms, future research could explore handmade's emotional symbolic meanings. Some scholars note handmade possesses romanticism

(Kurlinkus, 2014), associating with romance and warmth. Meanwhile, existing theoretical mechanisms contain contradictions requiring future verification. For example, Fuchs et al. (2015) note famous artisans' spirits can transfer to consumers through products (Fuchs et al., 2015), but cannot explain why consumers also like ordinary people's handmade products. Additionally, research shows consumers reduce evaluations and purchase intentions when learning products were touched by others (Morales & Fitzsimons, 2007). Future research should more deeply discuss existing mechanisms to identify contradiction causes and explain unexplained phenomena.

Thus far, this study has systematically elaborated and clarified handmade concepts and basic types, thoroughly reviewing and analyzing handmade effects on consumers and firms and their underlying mechanisms, providing preliminary theoretical references for future handmade effect research. To build a more comprehensive theoretical framework and provide targeted marketing solutions for firms in complex markets, this study examines handmade effect boundaries.

5 Boundaries of Handmade Effects

As production method information, handmade can influence consumer attitudes toward products and brands. However, effects vary across contexts. This study explores boundaries from three aspects: product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics.

5.1 Product Type

Even with identical production methods, different product types yield different marketing effects. Existing research has focused on how different handmade product types affect consumers, primarily concerning hedonic/utilitarian, privacy, luxury level, artistry, and stability dimensions.

First, hedonic versus utilitarian product differences affect handmade effects. Since handmade information typically conveys richer emotional signals (Rauschendorfer et al., 2022), handmade offers more significant advantages for hedonic than utilitarian products. When choosing hedonic products, emotional factors dominate, yielding higher evaluations; when purchasing utilitarian products, emotional factors receive less attention (Keinan & Kivetz, 2011), with consumers focusing more on technical professionalism and quality stability (Schroll et al., 2018), showing weaker handmade preferences and stronger preferences for standardized machine-made products.

Second, for privacy-related products, consumers prefer machine-made items. When purchasing intimate apparel or personal cleaning products, consumers unconsciously associate producers' direct contact during production with privacy and exclusivity violations, generating aversion and resistance (Morales & Fitzsimons, 2007). Third, product luxury level influences handmade attitudes. For ordinary low-luxury consumer goods, consumers prefer machine-made products with quality and cost advantages; for higher-end luxury goods, consumers

typically attribute higher value to handmade products (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017). Additionally, for artistic products, consumers prefer handmade demonstrating creativity. However, when core selling points relate to stability (e.g., mid-to-low-end automobiles), consumers prefer machine-made products (Kruger et al., 2004).

Thus, product type is an important boundary condition for handmade effects. Beyond existing findings, future research could explore more dimensions and details, such as maker information, primary tools, packaging design, and product-advertising consistency, to more comprehensively understand product type impacts on satisfaction and behavioral decisions, providing more targeted recommendations for product design, marketing, and promotion.

5.2 Consumption Context

Consumption context refers to the specific environment and background where purchase decisions occur, including physical environments, social environments, consumption timing, and motivations related to purchasing and using goods or services (Belk, 1975). Different contexts focus consumer attention differently, affecting product choices. This study summarizes context effects from physical environment and consumer motivation perspectives.

First, the physical consumption environment affects handmade marketing effects. In traditional atmospheres or contexts related to countryside and history, consumers more willingly choose handmade products with traditional and primitive characteristics, stemming from high consistency between handmade products and specific environments (Lee & Suk, 2010). For example, in small retail shops or rural stores, special environments strengthen identification with traditional techniques, making consumers more attracted to handmade products (Menon, 2010). Fan et al. (2019) also found traditional materials play important roles in enhancing handmade appeal; compared to modern machine-made plastic tablecloths, using cotton-linen tablecloths representing naturalness and tradition to display handmade products elicits more positive emotional reactions and quality evaluations. Additionally, compared to evaluating handmade products alone, when consumers face both handmade and machine-made products simultaneously with basically identical attributes, handmade uniqueness becomes less prominent, weakening marketing effects (Fan et al., 2019).

Second, consumer motivations affect handmade consumption decisions. Compared to function-dominated contexts, emotion-dominated contexts increase consumers' willingness to pay premiums for handmade products (Fuchs et al., 2015). For example, in gift-giving scenarios where emotional factors are paramount, handmade value is amplified. Meanwhile, handmade quality is often difficult to judge intuitively, requiring more time and effort (Job et al., 2017). Consequently, giving handmade gifts better expresses givers' attention and deep affection, demonstrating sincerity and thoughtfulness (Belk & Coon, 1993). Handmade gifts convey emotional care and warmth, strengthening

relationships between givers and recipients (Fan et al., 2024; Segev et al., 2013). Similarly, when purchasing souvenirs at tourist attractions, consumers may prefer handmade items with local characteristics to satisfy unique emotional needs.

Thus, handmade consumption contexts are complex, encompassing physical factors like store decor and product display, as well as consumption purposes and emotional expression needs, which may jointly influence experiences and decision processes. Beyond these factors, future research could explore more contexts like shared consumption, salesperson image, and brand crises.

5.3 Consumer Characteristics

Individual characteristic differences lead to different product evaluation standards (Jones et al., 2017). This study summarizes how individual differences in knowledge level, cultural background, and social responsibility affect handmade effects.

First, handmade products typically carry deep cultural symbolism (Trivedi et al., 2023); consumers' knowledge levels directly affect their recognition of cultural value. When consumers possess deep cultural understanding, they more likely connect handmade products with their cultural identity, generating strong cultural recognition and belonging, thus purchasing handmade products (Zhang et al., 2023). Knowledgeable consumers also have greater confidence in their value judgment abilities (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014), more actively purchasing recognized handmade products. Conversely, less knowledgeable consumers struggle to accurately judge value, leading to hesitation or abandonment (Bhattacharjee & Mogilner, 2014). Therefore, knowledge level differences significantly impact purchase decisions.

Second, consumers from different cultural backgrounds hold different handmade perspectives. Compared to collectivist societies, individualist societies' consumers more cherish creative and unique artisan-made products, assigning them higher valuations (Judge et al., 2020). For example, Judge et al. (2020) found individualist culture consumers value handmade products higher than collectivist culture consumers. Additionally, Lee and DeLong (2016) revealed significant differences in handmade popularity among youth across cultural backgrounds, with American youth more enthusiastic about handmade products than Korean youth, and handmade products more popular in the U.S. (Lee & DeLong, 2016).

Finally, consumers with stronger social responsibility prefer handmade products. Handmade serves as an effective signal of firms' social responsibility fulfillment; socially responsible consumers show positive attitudes toward similarly committed firms and brands, expressing support through purchases (Jones et al., 2017). Environmentally conscious consumers particularly enjoy purchasing handmade products to practice sustainable consumption (Koli, 2021). Handmade's use of natural materials connects it with environmental sustainability (Eglash et al., 2020). Additionally, since handmade primarily uses traditional

methods (Bhaduri & Stanforth, 2017), consumers concerned about cultural protection view firms using traditional handmade methods as moral practitioners of cultural preservation, yielding higher evaluations (Wilcox et al., 2024). Socially responsible consumers also spontaneously form impressions of firms' social responsibility based on various activities and practices, perceiving efforts and sincerity and making corresponding consumption choices, even when firms don't deliberately use handmade for CSR purposes (Xu et al., 2021).

Beyond knowledge level, cultural background, and social responsibility, future research could examine more diverse consumer characteristics. For instance, research shows women have higher participation willingness in handmade activities (Rezaei & Zakariaie, 2011), and feminist support makes them more likely to purchase handmade products by women to express gender equality support (Schnurr & Halkias, 2022). Therefore, characteristics like gender, personality, social status, and shopping group size (individual vs. with friends) warrant future attention.

In summary, product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics jointly influence handmade marketing effects. Product type dimensions like practicality, privacy, artistry, and luxury level are primary factors affecting perceptions and reactions. Consumption context dimensions like physical environment, social environment, timing, and motivation complicate choices. Consumer characteristics like knowledge level, cultural background, and social responsibility greatly affect acceptance and preferences. These factors moderate psychological mechanisms including perceived naturalness, uniqueness, quality, effort, "love," and psychological ownership, influencing marketing effectiveness. Therefore, firms should enhance perceived naturalness, uniqueness, and quality, strengthen perceived effort and "love" emotional investment, and establish psychological ownership to enhance market competitiveness. Through precise marketing strategies, firms can not only improve handmade marketing effects but also promote consumer recognition and inheritance of traditional crafts, achieving sustainable development.

6 Summary and Future Research Outlook

In the current business environment, both retro and innovative handmade products and services receive full recognition from modern consumer markets, with handmade marketing value and importance increasingly prominent. Brands proactively disclosing handmade information can significantly enhance consumer satisfaction, improve product evaluations, strengthen purchase intentions, and play crucial roles in shaping good product reputations and positive corporate images. Although scholars have conducted many exploratory studies, early research limited by professional perspectives and technological development levels focused only on production efficiency, no longer fully applicable to current new consumer markets and contradictory to existing literature conclusions. Therefore, with industrial technology advancement and changing consumer concepts, vast unexplored spaces remain in handmade

research.

To promote future handmade research development, this paper systematically organizes and summarizes handmade concepts, classifications, effects, mechanisms, and boundary conditions from interdisciplinary perspectives (see Figure 1 [Figure 1: see original paper]), aiming to provide effective theoretical support and references for subsequent research and guide managers in more precisely using handmade information to shape brand images, increase sales, and achieve long-term development goals.

Figure 1 Handmade Production Theoretical Framework

Future research can proceed along two main directions:

6.1 Research on Handmade Concepts and Impacts

As previously discussed, this study defines handmade concepts, classifies them by production mode and technical professionalism, and analyzes marketing effects from positive and negative perspectives. However, limited by increasing handmade categories and insufficient literature on handmade impacts, this study inevitably has deficiencies. Future research can explore handmade concepts and impacts more deeply in the following aspects.

First, future research should focus on technological development's impact on handmade methods, further updating and perfecting handmade conceptual scope. Existing research typically separates handmade and machine-made completely, exploring from single-method or completely separate comparative perspectives (Fuchs et al., 2015). In marketing practice, firms often only disclose the most sales-enhancing production method information. However, modern market handmade products are often jointly produced by humans and machines. With industrial development, handmade concepts have become more inclusive, making redefinition important. More complexly, with AI and digital technology rapid development, future consumption environments will become more diversified, with increasing digital and intelligent products entering production and life. The rise of generative AI and digital virtual handmade products further enriches handmade connotations, requiring conceptual scope expansion to cover AI-assisted physical and digital virtual handmade products. Therefore, future research can focus on emerging market phenomena, further exploring handmade definitions, classifications, and effects of different handmade types.

Second, future research can explore handmade impacts on consumer prosocial behaviors. Existing research mainly focuses on traditional consumer behaviors like purchase and usage (Frizzo et al., 2020; Macías-Mañas et al., 2024). Future research can expand horizons, paying more attention to social behaviors, particularly charitable donation and other prosocial behaviors. Zhou et al. (2019) note that enhancing warmth perception effectively promotes prosocial behavior; handmade stimulates emotional reactions (Rauschendorfer et al., 2022), making

consumers feel love and warmth (Fuchs et al., 2015). Therefore, handmade may promote prosocial behavior by stimulating warmth perception. Additionally, handmade's unique traditional methods and natural raw materials may awaken consumers' deep nostalgia, which effectively increases charitable intentions and behaviors (Zhou et al., 2012). Exploring potential relationships between handmade and prosocial behavior can provide new perspectives, showcasing handmade's unique social value.

Furthermore, future research should continue exploring handmade negative effects. After early research on handmade's backward production efficiency, recent handmade booms have led scholars to widely focus on positive effects (Fan et al., 2019; Frizzo et al., 2020; Fuchs et al., 2015). Only 极少数 studies consider negative marketing effects from psychological ownership and security perspectives (Liu et al., 2021; Song et al., 2023). However, negative effects extend beyond these. For example, some bakeries use handmade as a gimmick for expensive but low-quality products, causing consumer dissatisfaction. In service failure scenarios, consumers may develop psychological resistance to handmade-labeled products. Another example: the famous fast-food chain "Micun Mixed Rice" was listed as provincial intangible cultural heritage but actually sold pre-made rather than freshly cooked dishes, causing huge social media controversy. The gap between consumers' high expectations for handmade-related products like intangible cultural heritage and actual production methods may also negatively affect consumers. Future research can more deeply investigate handmade's negative effects and corresponding solutions to promote healthy handmade market development.

6.2 Research on Handmade Mechanisms and Boundaries

Although existing research has examined handmade mechanisms from perspectives like perceived naturalness, uniqueness, and "love," and discussed boundaries from product type, consumption context, and consumer characteristics, theoretical research still has deficiencies, with many important factors unexamined. This study suggests future research can more deeply investigate handmade mechanisms and boundaries in four aspects.

First, future research can explore handmade effect mechanisms from risk perception and psychological resistance perspectives. Many consumers still view handmade as relatively special, with potential instability and risks (Liu et al., 2021). In shared consumption contexts, consumers' preference for risky products increases (Ran et al., 2022), helping reduce risk perception and increase purchase intentions. Additionally, consumer handmade acceptance may differ across economic development levels. In less developed countries or regions, consumers may associate handmade with alienation, oppressive work, harsh environments, and primitive lifestyles (Chatterjee, 2016), generating psychological resistance and rejecting handmade products and advertisements.

Second, future research can examine impacts of handmade tool advancements

on consumers and producers. Handmade tools have evolved from relying solely on human hands to using simple auxiliary tools like hammers, to current digital media input devices like mice, smart styluses, and drawing tablets. As technology advances, handmade auxiliary tools continuously update. While these emerging tools promote handmade creation and dissemination, they may also have negative effects. For example, digital media input devices and other smart tools may blur consumers' judgments between handmade and machine-made, increasing contact with machines and other non-natural entities during production, weakening naturalness perceptions. Therefore, future research can explore smart auxiliary tools in internet and metaverse virtual scenarios, comparing marketing effects of such products with traditional handmade to promote handmade application and development in new technology contexts.

Third, future research can examine maker information impacts on handmade effects. Some handmade products, like high technical professionalism crafts by famous masters, often indicate maker names or addresses to demonstrate value and uniqueness. However, marking strangers' names on final products may also weaken psychological ownership, creating negative effects (Song et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the name effect suggests individuals show stronger preferences for letters matching their names (Nuttin Jr, 1985). For example, consumers tend to purchase stocks with same initials as their names (Knewton & Sias, 2010). The name effect influences economic decisions and consumption behaviors (Bao & Cai, 2021); consumers may prefer products made by artisans with name features similar to theirs. Additionally, special maker identities (e.g., disabled artisans) may stimulate purchase intentions, as consumers can express support for vulnerable groups through handmade consumption. Therefore, future research can further examine how indicating maker names, addresses, and identities affects purchase decisions and usage behaviors.

Finally, future research can examine differences between different brand types like time-honored brands versus emerging brands in handmade marketing. Ke & Wang (2021) found that compared to younger emerging brands, time-honored brands with long histories typically possess generationally inherited products, techniques, or services. This indicates higher fit and consistency between time-honored brands and traditional handmade production, potentially generating stronger purchase intentions for time-honored handmade products. Given different brand characteristics, time-honored and emerging brands may require different marketing strategies for handmade products. For example, time-honored brands should focus on cultural fit while appropriately conducting cross-category extensions to "activate" brands; emerging brands need to emphasize national style and trendy charm in product promotion to enhance brand awareness (Ke & Wang, 2021; Xu & Fan, 2022).

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