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Blurring production-consumption boundaries: Making my own luxury bag

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ABSTRACT

Leather crafting of leather wallets or bags exhibiting similar designs as prestige brands is an emerging hobby among fashion-forward Korean consumers. This study examines the motivations of this emerging craft consumer. Data collected using in-depth interviews and participant observations support the following observation. A conspicuous or materialistic orientation and traditional values of crafting drive consumer participation in leather crafting. The study's findings identify this group of people, labeled neo-craft consumers, as exhibiting Homo Faber (Bergson, 1983) and Homo Ludens (Huizinga, 1950) characteristics. Neo-craft consumers create a new type of consumer culture which blurs production and consumption boundaries.

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1. Introduction

In a consumer society driven by purchasing and using mass-produced goods, craft falls into the domain of either producing handmade products mainly associating with ethnic identity (e.g., local specialties and souvenirs on a small scale) or hobby that focuses on enjoying the process. Industrialization generally has replaced production by crafting in developed countries. Rising labor costs make handmade products uncompetitive. Crafting also does not mass produce easily due to quality control issues. Since the 1970s, Korea industrialization has impacted the craft business negatively. Consumers began to view craft products as inferior to machine-made products. Craftspeople were associated with the low social status that accompanies physical labor, low income, and a lack of social recognition of one's work.

In recent years, interesting changes in the craft culture are occurring. The number of craft workshops is increasing, and leather crafting is now an emerging hobby among fashion-forward Korean consumers. This trend parallels the expansion of leisure activities and the luxury goods market resulting from Korea's solid economic growth (Lee & Choi, 2014). One unique behavior relating to this new trend is that people join leather crafting workshops specifically to replicate high-end designer handbags, the so-called luxury brand bags. These leather craft workshops generally provide tutorials on copying luxury bags' designs and sources of quality materials. A participant's craft work potentially can equal in quality and design to the luxury bags. Leather crafting thus typically includes making a leather bag along with certain accessories, such as leather bracelets and cell phone cases.

Generally, in a modern society, work and play are considered separate domains. People work for their living (Marx, Engels, & Lothrop, 1902) and they engage in play through leisure activities. A leisure activity is done for its own sake and entails perceived freedom, choice, and pleasure. Consumption, contrary to production, falls under the domain of play rather than work, though consumption involves a wide range of goods from daily necessities to collectibles. Consumption particularly of fashion goods itself is an amusement which enables them to express their freedom and to release their stress from the wage labor (Ciulla, 2011). The leather crafting as a hobby is interesting; not only do people obtain such amusement that consumption provides but also the hobby entails the same labor in which vocational craftspeople engage.

Possibly, leather crafting's popularity is an expression of an animosity toward mass production and overly uniform products in an industrial society, or simply a desire to obtain unique and customized design bags. Such leather crafting is also a means of acquiring luxury leather goods at a fraction of the retail cost. Price alone does not account for the behavior. These individuals could more easily purchase counterfeit products if price is the only motivation. Why do craft consumers make a leather bag for themselves despite the physical labor and cost for the tutorial? The purpose of this study is to better understand the leather crafting culture, which combines crafting and consumerism. The study focuses on craft consumers who make leather bags because they want to create their own leather goods and intend to use the crafted products instead of luxury brand handbags.

This research takes the perspective of consumer culture theory (CCT) (Arnould & Thompson, 2005). CCT is the paradigm representing the theoretical perspectives that deal with consumers' lived experiences, including consumer choices, behaviors, and meanings, mediated by the marketplace and social arrangement. The perspective of CCT

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offers contextual understanding of the emerging group of craft consumers as producers of a new consumer culture. This study looks into how consumers creatively cope with the ideology of luxury consumption and how consumers interpret the nature of crafting in the context of materialistic marketplace culture driven by fashion change. The leather craft consumer takes on a different strategy of consumption in that they challenge the market arrangement of dividing producer and consumer. Although these craft consumers pursue what fashion proposes and they appreciate what industry offers, they want to find an alternative way of acquiring the same consumption objects.

2. Background

2.1. Leather crafting in a consumption society

Traditional craft consumers refer to consumers who base their craft on traditional skills and practices and make objects that express their creativity (Klamer, 2012). Although those who are making leather bags fall into the boundary of craft consumers, they are different from traditional craft consumers in that they join a craft workshop with the motivation of copying the bags that they would have purchased from prestige brands otherwise. Crafting is the act of combining the head and hands in close engagement with materials, knowledge, experiences, problem-finding and problem-solving, cooperation, and collaboration (Jakob, 2012).

Crafting's history is divisible into three broad periods. The first wave called the Arts and Craft Movement occurred after the 2nd World War and included a frugal mind, relating to making something yourself to reduce the cost of buying a product (Campbell, 2005; Jakob, 2012). The second craft movement emerged between the 1960s and 1970s with the English Hippies. This period had a specific political ethos, namely, to follow the laws of nature rather than simply producing aesthetic and quality hand-made products (Wagner, 2008). At the beginning of the 21st Century, crafting entered a third wave. People pursue unique beauty and aesthetics in contrast to globally homogenized production and passive mass consumption (Kim & Ra, 2008; Levine & Heimerl, 2008; Stevens, 2011). The recent popular leather crafting movement has put a new complexion on craft history in that these craft consumers make their own bags mimicking popular design from certain designer brands. This new movement suggests that consumerism now drives the crafting culture.

Consumption plays a pivotal role in delivering cultural and symbolic meanings to society. Not only consumers gain a consumption good, but also they acquire a symbolic function and meaning through the consumption (McCracken, 1986). Consumption experiences including shopping and use process help consumers define selves and relationships with others (Compeau, Monroe, Grewal, & Reynolds, 2016; Ferreira & Sacaraboto, 2016). For example, luxury brand handbags typically relate to status and wealth. Patrons of luxury products seek affirmation of their high self-esteem. Luxury goods, in this sense, fulfill a need for esteem which includes the human desire to be accepted and valued by others (Maslow, 1943). Luxury products serve as tangible evidence of success and wealth. Prior studies identify the relationship between conspicuous consumption and luxury consumption (Husband & Chadha, 2007; Vigneron & Johnson, 1999). Conspicuous consumption occurs when an individual displays wealth with expenditures on luxury goods and services (Freire, 2014; Podoshen, Li, & Zhang, 2011; Veblen, 2007; Wong & Ahuvia, 1998). Luxury brand handbags are highly visible and fit the profile of a typical conspicuous consumption product. Thus, handbags are a big portion of the luxury industry (Husic & Cicic, 2009). In particular, carrying luxury handbags considered symbolic by Korean consumers denotes social status, wealth, and success (Jung, Kim, Bang, Cho, & Kim, 2014).

Ironically, the big name brands in luxury handbag industry (e.g., Hermès, Louis Vuitton, or Gucci) began as small scale craft workshops in the early years (Kapferer, 2012). Exclusivity is the consumption

value that luxury goods provide and product scarcity often creates this condition (Kapferer, 2012; Park, Rabolt, & Jeon, 2008). Today, fashion conglomerates dominate the system of designing, producing, and marketing most luxury fashion goods. Only some components of a luxury bag require the hands of skilled workers called artisans during the manufacturing process. While the craftsmanship remains one main factor creating brand exclusivity, consumers no longer perceive these artisans' contributions as belonging to the craft business. Instead, the craft business either refers to indigenous craftspeople producing handmade products or souvenirs or as free-standing workshops or boutiques that produce unique products on a small scale. Market ideology provides the craftsmanship embedded in luxury products with certain sacredness compared to unknown brands or shops with a low prestige.

A new type of leather crafting (i.e., copying luxury bags) is increasingly popular in Korea. This phenomenon is now a melting pot where consumerism orientation, such as conspicuous consumption or materialism, is mixed with the traditional attributes of crafting, such as a frugal mindset (Campbell, 2005; Jakob, 2012). The reasons for making a leather bag seem to go beyond crafting as a hobby. The bags these people craft are important consumption objects in their everyday lives. Thus, for these craft consumers, consumerism joins the spirit of production through crafting. This paradox of the leather craft culture warrants further investigation.

2.2. Crafting as a human hobby

Crafting is a hobby intended for consumers. Hobbies involve different types of activities that people enjoy during their leisure time, such as collecting, making and tinkering, activity participation, liberal arts pursuits, and sports and games (Stebbins, 2015). Leather crafting falls under the making and tinkering sub-category. Other making and tinkering hobbies include scale modeling, dressmaking, and cooking. These hobbies involve using tools to create a final output, relating to *Homo Faber* or "man the maker" (Arendt, 2013; Bergson, 1983; Sennett, 2008). *Homo Faber* suggests a human nature and interest in creating tangible and intangible products. Employing leather crafting skills to make leather handbags requires working with a variety of tools including cutters, hammers, and pliers.

Crafting as a hobby also involves an aspect of play. Evidence that play is a human activity before culture appeared supports Huizinga's (1950) contention that human beings display elements of *Homo Ludens* or "playing man" and should not be typecast as only *Homo Sapiens* or *Homo Faber*. Five necessary and sufficient conditions are necessary for play: 1) free, 2) not ordinary, 3) absolutely different from typical life, 4) absolute and supreme order, 5) linked to no material profit (Huizinga, 1950). These five conditions are discussed later.

Crafting also relates to the therapeutic function. Since the 19th Century, evidence supports crafting helps improve perceptions, calm emotions, and improve physical treatment for mental health and rehabilitation (Bissell & Mailloux, 1981; Horghagen, Josephsson, & Alsaker, 2007; Taylor & Manguno, 1991). The literature supports craft's therapeutic effect; participating in common crafting activities (i.e., scrapbook or knitting) helps people with mental disabilities recover (Bang & Kim, 2010). This therapeutic function plays an important role because crafting offers outlets for stress reduction. Leather crafting creates a positive psychological effect on the person when making something by hand.

This study seeks to understand the new type of craft consumer culture in greater depth by delving into those paradoxical characteristics. This study aims to answer the following research question. Firstly, what drives consumer participation in leather crafting? In other words, what are the meanings of the process and the final outcome of leather crafting among fashion-forward craft consumers? Secondly, are leather crafting and consuming the crafted bags transformative experience? Do craft consumers experience any changes in their identity project or perception of consumption values or consumer behavior?

3. Methods

As the phenomena examined is emerging, qualitative methodology seems most appropriate (Woodside, 2010). A purposive sampling method was applied. Informants were selected based on specific criteria: 1) participation in leather crafting at least for a year and one-half; and/or 2) experience in making more than five leather bags. The data were collected via semi-structured, in-depth interviews (McCracken, 1988) with 7 informants (see Table 1). Interviews were held in-situ (i.e., leathercraft workplaces) to access their inner voices (Martin, 2010; Schank, 2000). The first interview with each informant lasted from 60 to 90 min. When the informant spoke comfortably, the interviews mostly consisted of follow-up questions to the informant's statement.

One researcher participated in leather crafting (for example making a leather bag and wallet). She spent 6 h per week for 10 weeks on the project. While participating in the workshop, she conducted short natural intimate interviews with the informants. During these two or three short additional interviews, the researcher tried to catch every small detail the informants were offering about their craft making experience. Table 1 also shows the number of leather bags made by each informant (pseudonyms). Informants had numerous experiences making leather accessories, cell-phone cases and trays. Interviews were recorded after each informant's agreement and then transcribed verbatim. These thick descriptions allow emic (respondent) and etic (researcher) interpretations of the informants' experiences (Belk & Costa, 1998). Transcripts and observations were analyzed by applying open coding and a focused coding method. Inter-coder reliability was measured by other researchers who participated in analyzing the data to confirm the extent that the independent coders who had evaluated the data reached the same conclusion (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002). Inter-coder reliability for the data was 83%, exceeding recommendations by Miles and Huberman (1994) for internal consistency.

4. Findings

From the analysis, three key themes emerge. Surprisingly, two paradoxical themes were identified: Homo Faber as a maker (Bergson, 1983) and Homo Ludens as a playing man (Huizinga, 1950). The following discusses the integrative nature of these two opposite themes.

4.1. Craft consumer as Homo Faber

The first theme emerging from the data relates to the concept of Homo Faber, "man the maker" (Bergson, 1983). Making handmade bags requires various tools and physical labor. The craft consumer achieves pleasure and a fulfilling experience from this act—attributes of Homo Faber. The study participants report a sense of pleasure from the physical labor and working with tools.

Table 1
Profile of the informants.

Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Experience with leather crafting	Number leather bags made
HY Son	27	Female	Student	1 year 8 months	7
B Choi	35	Female	Housewife (ex-consultant)	1 year 6 months	8
JY Kim	34	Female	Designer	10 years	A great many
JM Park	36	Female	Business woman	5 years	A great many
HJ Kim	38	Female	Employee	2 years	5
KH Choi	48	Female	Housewife	3 years	7
YS Moon	55	Male	Employee	3 years	8

I like all the process I must do when I make a [leather] bag. Um ... selecting and buying materials ... cutting with a big cutter, sawing the pieces of leather and so on. To be honest, I am tired, but I like this sense of tiredness ... this sense of labor ... During the construction, I did not think anything at all ... (omit) ... And I liked controlling all these materials with my hands.

[(JY Kim)]

The superordinate meaning of Homo Faber as an acting-being is a maker who changes their own fate and environment by working on something (Bergson, 1983). Human beings make tools (Bergson, 1983) to compensate for their own imperfections (Bergson, 1983; Kim, 2015). This facet of Homo Faber relates to well-being and self-sustainability. When working on a leather bag, craft consumers feel that they are engaged in something valuable, and they seek perfection through the crafting experience. This is because craft consumers feel in control of the entire process when making a leather bag and they work on the perfection of the design. On the contrary, they, at the workplace, follow instructions from their boss and are subject to evaluation of their performance, which lets them feel lack of control.

Actually, I often get scolded by my boss. When he does that, I feel really depressed. But no person can be perfect. Of course I'm not perfect so I am okay. After I have admitted my imperfections, I feel better. But I find my perfection when crafting a leather bag. This gives me comfort and satisfaction.

[(B Choi)]

The participant finds oneself working on the perfection through making bags by hand. Such experience helps participants overcome their sense of imperfection in a competitive society. Craft consumers find satisfaction and authentic meaning in life through crafting (Ferraro & Reid, 2013). In this context, leather crafting provides craft consumers with therapeutic merit (Horghagen et al., 2007; Taylor & Manguno, 1991). Like Homo Faber who is making and using tools to overcome the shortcomings of their own destiny, craft consumers psychologically experience perfection and fulfill the imperfect part in their profession through crafting.

4.2. Craft consumer as Homo Ludens

Informants also demonstrate Homo Ludens elements. Craft consumers like to play with a sense of beauty. They create one-of-a-kind glamorous handmade bags. Among the five necessary and sufficient conditions of play mentioned above, leather craft meets all five although the fifth facet regarding the linkage to material profit is somewhat questionable. Material benefit seems to exist because the craft consumer saves money by making a handbag that is the same design and quality as a luxury brand, but the cost is lower. This potential financial benefit seems to contradict the fifth condition of Homo Ludens. Unless craft consumers sell the handbag at a profit, the contradiction does not exist. Generally, crafters only make bags for personal use. Monetary saving they earn from crafting is only justification for expenditure on materials and the tutorial. Financial rewards are in their mental accounting rather than actual material profit. Leather crafting appears to satisfy all five conditions of play.

Do you know how much a Hermès Kelly bag with crocodile leather costs? It is almost \$100,000. But if I make this Kelly bag by hand, I can make it by spending \$2500. I can save big money. I should spend my own time making it, but I think that making a Kelly bag is still economic. Um ... But actually \$2500 is still a lot of bucks.

[(HY Son)]

Consumers pursue pleasure and fun via play in modern society, which leads to an increase in desire for leisure consumption. Homo Ludens gain pleasure and fun by vigorously acting and enjoying

intellectual activities (Han, 2007; Shin, 2009). Huizinga also contends that playing well makes one's life more creative and produces greater well-being (Huizinga, 1950). This concept of Homo Ludens surfaces in the interviews. JM Park states that participation in leather craft as a hobby increases her satisfaction with her life and she feels more enjoyment. Craft consumers investing their time in making a leather bag feel recharged and happy. Huizinga suggests that play is not an element in a culture, but rather an element of culture. For these study informants, the leather crafting culture surely embodies the facets of play.

Huizinga (1950) proposes the close connection between play and beauty. This connection emerges during the interviews. Many informants state that they find beauty and authenticity from their handmade bag, which brings them happiness and joy. A handmade bag made by leather crafting becomes an aesthetic object. They seem to find great playfulness in creating an aesthetic bag. This finding supports the Huizinga's proposition.

The handmade bag made by me through leather crafting becomes an aesthetic object. Seeing this beautiful object is one of my pleasures. I find beauty and authenticity from my handmade bag, which makes me feel happy and enjoyable.

[(JY Kim)]

4.3. When the Homo Faber meets the Homo Ludens

Study participants confess an identity transformation through the process of leather crafting. Plausibly, this transition is the result of a melding of the two paradoxical concepts: Homo Faber and Homo Ludens

4.3.1. Aestheticization: from "a" bag to "the" bag

Informants' perceptions of their handbags suggest a strong preference over luxury brands. Finished bags became highly aesthetic as well as treasured objects. The informants report major pleasure creating a handmade bag that compares favorably to similar factory-produced products. They emphasized that the same aesthetic value cannot be gained from a commercial product. Informants believe that only handmade articles deliver such virtue, giving the craft consumers pleasure and strong a sense of accomplishment.

I think that my handmade bag is more beautiful and glamorous than a mass production bag. I feel that my bag might even be alive. It is just different and bright even when I see it from a distance. My bag for which I selected the leather and designed for my own sake is real luxury. Do you know? When my bag is made with quality leather that I selected, it is better than a bunch of luxury bags that I have purchased before because my bag is bright rather than shabby. I think it is real luxury.

[(JM Park)]

Clearly, informants find their own handbags more beautiful and genuine due to the leather crafting. Previously, they purchased mass produced products and consumed socially defined symbols. Now, these crafters consume (i.e., make and use) their own handmade bags. Confirming previous studies, these informants believe the natural taste and the aesthetic value of handmade objects set them apart from mass produced goods (Campbell, 2005; Kim & Ra, 2008).

4.3.2. Identity change: from replicator to creator

Study results show a shift in craft consumer identity. Informants began leather crafting with the goal of mimicking a luxury bag due to their desire to possess such a bag. The informants did not want to buy a fake luxury bag even if a branded bag was too expensive. Alternatively, they decided to make handbags with the same luxury designs that they wanted to possess. After informants made these replications, their desires and preferences changed.

When I made the first bag, it was made to look exactly the same as the luxury brand bag. I used the same leather, color, ornament, and lining material to keep the same quality as the original bag. However, with the second bag, I started to play around with the original design. I have added a strap to a shoulder bag or vice versa, used a magnet instead of a buckle, made the clutch longer, so I can put the A4 sized paper in it, and I changed the material or color.

[(HJ Kim)]

As informants became more engaged in craftwork, their goals changed. Like HJ Kim, the other crafters started modifying style, material, or color to suit their personal tastes. Eventually, informants started making unique and novel leather bags instead of following the workshop tutorials. The longer they were involved in leather crafting, the more they wanted to change the design. As crafts consumers, they evolved from replication, modification, and finally creation of luxury handbags.

Craft consumers think that a leather bag serves as an extension of self (Ahuvia, 2005; Belk, 1988). Consumption of such bags makes them feel special. Surprisingly, the experience of leather crafting transformed their attitudes about luxury products. The informants previously felt that possessing new arrivals of luxury brands is critical, or they desired a luxury bag as a birthday gift. The informants thought that luxury bags should be stored in a dust bag to protect them from scratches and dust. In restaurants, they placed their bags on the next chair just like a friend. Since they started leather crafting, these behaviors have stopped. The informants no longer purchase luxury bags as a manifestation of conspicuous consumption. They now prefer the authenticity and uniqueness of handmade leather work. They become to apply new evaluation criteria. In some cases, images of luxury brands have deteriorated.

Actually brand image was the most important thing when I bought a luxury bag before. For example, I went out to buy a new arrival bag from Chanel as soon as I got a phone call. At that time I was sleeping, so I had no time to wash my face. I just went out to the Chanel store. When I went there, I couldn't find a bag with a golden ornament. There was only a silver ornament. Nevertheless, I bought it. Now I feel that my mindset to have a luxury bag has changed. With repeated crafting I naturally have a high standard for leather quality. So when I go to a luxury store now, I think of leather quality and reasonable price and compare it to quality. If the leather quality doesn't reach my standard, the item is less valuable.

[(HY Son)]

This finding supports Ferraro and Reid's (2013) contention that a focus on making goods encourages one to move away from hedonic consumption driven by only extrinsic reward and produces a decrease in desire for consumption. Leather craft consumers are avoiding hedonic and impulsive purchases of luxury items. Their expertise as craftspeople influences their criteria to evaluate luxury products.

5. Conclusion and discussion

5.1. The ambivalence of crafting alternative goods

Findings suggest that production includes the domain of consumers who participate in production both for economic reasons and for fun. Craft consumers find happiness and amusement participating in the production process. Afterwards, they have a finished good serving both utilitarian and hedonic needs. Both replications and original designs are handmade by craft consumers. Arguably these items are unique, priceless, and satisfy craft consumers with their beauty and artistry. The boundary of the juxtaposed concepts of Homo Faber as man the maker and Homo Ludens as a playing man blurs for this group. These craft consumers acquire satisfaction and feel accomplishment

by turning production into personal entertainment. They admire their artwork during the production process and use that process afterwards. Furthermore, two contrary concepts, namely, production and consumption occur for the same person. Findings suggest that the boundaries of consumption and production blur and integrate through the practice of craft activities and craft consumers simultaneously work and play during the process of making and using their own leather goods.

Craft consumers experience a novel value through practicing their craft skills and creativity. Although the insipient motive involves consumerist values, these consumers acquire great gratification by creating an aesthetic object that brings greater pleasure than higher priced merchandise provides. This phenomenon contradicts the dichotomous distinction between work for one's living (Marx et al., 1902) and play through consumption, particularly contradicting Ciulla's (2011) assertion that consumers spend money to avoid work alienation and get their happiness from consumption. Leather craft consumers perceive their bags' values as being higher than commercial luxury bags. They appreciate the value of their manual work, the passion they have for the work, and the genuine scarcity of their bag compared to a luxury brand products made by an unknown person and distributed widely in the marketplace.

5.2. Craft consumption as transformative experience

Leather craft consumers experience the transformative nature of consumption. As Elliot (2016) presents, consumer transformation through craft consumption is the interplay of cognitive and spiritual brainwork. Craft consumers' inner experiences of reflexivity including arriving at enlightenment, new insights and an empowerment epitomize the nature of consumer transformation (Elliot, 2016). Participants experience an attitude change toward luxury products via undertaking personal leather crafting. The longer they are involved in leather crafting, the greater is their desire to make their own customized bags. This change implies a major transition of consciousness toward luxury brands and luxury items. Although the informants do not deny that high-end products are aesthetically pleasing, a luxury goods pricing policy, slick marketing campaigns, and the social pressure from reference groups have less affect the craft consumers' beliefs and confidence. Learning how to create leather handbags has made the crafters more savvy consumers of luxury goods.

In this context, the craft consumers now consider quality and price rather than the brand image established by marketers as most important for evaluating consumption goods (Freire, 2014). The most interesting finding is that these consumers now believe that unique and handmade products are genuine luxury products and their past unconditional love for luxury branded products wanes. These craft consumers positively evaluate themselves and realize that they no longer had a great desire to purchase luxury bags. Further, some craft consumers who had negative perceptions of luxury brands changed their mindset after experiencing the process of making their bag. Now, they admit that the high pricing policy of luxury brands seems reasonable, as they came to appreciate the value of crafting effort. They reappraise the value of a luxury-branded item and now weigh the value and prices of high-end products higher.

The findings suggest another interesting shift in value perception. These consumers are less concerned with consumption's social meanings or the marketing messages that large corporations communicate. The evidence suggests a decrease in society's conspicuous symbols. Social function, such as prestige from consumption goods is no longer critical. Craft consumers appreciate the uniqueness of consumption goods and their lived experience of a creative activity as a more superior value. In a similar vein, consumer needs that involve consumption of leather goods shifts through crafting experiences. Craft consumption of leather bags involves need for self-actualization rather than need for esteem in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943). While premium brand consumption that includes purchasing and use process makes

consumers feel recognized and respected, the craft consumption that includes making and use process leads consumers to achieve their full potential through the creative activities.

This study reveals a new consumer cultural group (i.e., *neo-craft consumers*) where consumerism joins with the spirit of production by crafting. They craft creative objects with traditional skills and practice, yet this activity maintains a connection with consumerism unlike the traditional craft consumers who oppose consumerism. Companies should not dismiss this consumer group as outliers. Similar to this phenomenon, some corporations tend to center on shared value creation as their strategy with customization. This mass-customization strategy reflects the greatest desires of their customers. Offering an opportunity, such as an aesthetic creative activity, may lead to a new marketing paradigm. Focusing on co-creation through consumers' creative activities may appeal to people more than offering a simple option to choose. Participating in creative and crafting activities allows consumers to feel a greater sense of beauty, achievement and success and thus improves their quality of life.

Limitation of this study is the gender composition of informants. Only one male informant participated. The number of male craft consumers has gradually increased, which warrants future research on craft consumers in relevance to gender difference. Examination of other types of craft consumers will also be valuable. For example, male craft consumers are on the increase in woodwork from making furniture and a boat to building a house. As more consumers are engaged in creative and craft activities, deeper understanding of neo-craft consumers will offer theoretical implications of new consumer culture and practical implications for new marketing strategies.

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