

Preferences, buying  
behaviour and  
preferred platforms  
for handmade home  
decor in ...



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## RESEARCH PROPOSAL

Title: Handmade home décor retailing: A study to understand the preferences, buying behaviour and preferred platforms for handmade home décor in the Australian context.

### **TITLE OF THE STUDY**

Handmade home décor retailing: A study to understand the preferences, buying behaviour and preferred platforms for handmade home décor in the Australian context.

### **CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND**

Home décor or decoration is defined as the art and science of making an internal and external space more attractive and functionally useful for its residents while decorating it with various designer elements such as color, style of furniture, floor design etc. (Decor 2018). To understand why and how consumers purchase home décor it is important to study home décor as an expression of uniqueness (Gullestad 2013; Lynn & Harris 1997; Madigan & Munro 1996). The desire to own unique products that only a few others possess is reflected in acquiring hard to obtain products such as one-of-a-kind pieces of art or antiques (Lynn & Harris 1997; Madigan & Munro 1996). Product uniqueness is important to consumers but they are unable to constantly satisfy their desire for uniqueness due to the standardized design and widespread distribution of large quantities of identical merchandise (Ritzer 2005; Simonson & Nowlis 2000; Snyder & Fromkin 2012). Handmade products offer uniqueness as well as a sense of owning an item which is one of its kind. Thus, handmade home décor increases uniqueness and diversity

of product offerings in the marketplace and can be an option for retailers to dive into.

Consumers who have a high need for uniqueness consider rarity of home décor as an important factor (Simonson & Nowlis 2000; Snyder & Fromkin 2012). This rarity in product assortment also helps retailers differentiate themselves amongst others (Ainslie & Rossi 1998; Simonson 1990). Mass production tends to lessen rarity and this leads to the perception of a diluted marketplace (Bickle et al. 2006; Madigan & Munro 1996). Nevertheless there is a possibility for diversity to be offered in the marketplace although an overlap of products exists among retailers (Bickle et al. 2006).

Consumers shopping behaviour for home décor is influenced by product attributes such as origin, context of purchase, design elements and how these factors influence the identification of the most attractive option (Bickle et al. 2006). Consumers evaluate the value (perceived and actual) of home décor items owned or desired before making a purchase as an important cognitive task (Bickle et al. 2006). Since, handmade products are not mass produced they are perceived of high value than regular products. Therefore, handmade home décor products have the opportunity to penetrate the market given the current scenario of consumer behaviour and lack of diversity in the marketplace. They also provide the consumer with a wider and more unique variety of choices in design.

Furthermore, a study on handmade marketing showed that amongst all handmade products, homewares are the most sought after and most important category and are typically the products that are used to enhance

individuality (Luutonen 2009). Consumers had purchased gifts to be used at home and their buying decisions were influenced by their personal style while design, quality, colours and individuality were crucial as well. When it came to price and practicality, the later topped the list of most important factor (Luutonen 2009).

### **Home Décor consumers' shopping behaviour**

When consumers utilize and combine products from different multi-channel retailers it is recognized as shopping behaviour (Bickle et al. 2006). The act of browsing retail channels help consumers begin the elimination process as they learn about choices (Ainslie & Rossi 1998). This type of shopping activity facilitates flexibility which in turn helps to make a unique combination of choices from a vast variety of option in the marketplace (Bickle et al. 2006). This also helps consumers to become aware of a larger array of choices and at the same time giving retailers an equal chance to sell their products on different platforms without fearing to lose out on any one type of consumer.

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