Video-Evoked Perspective Taking on Crowdfunding Platforms: Impacts on Contribution Behavior

Research-in-Progress

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Abstract

Crowdfunding has emerged as an important IS phenomenon and warrants attention from researchers and practitioners alike. In this paper, we investigate the influence of specific perspectives that are emphasized in product videos on donations and the pre-order behavior of supporters on crowdfunding platforms. We draw upon self-determination theory and transportation theory to show that videos emphasizing campaign creators and their product-building journey are more likely to draw higher donations while those emphasizing the customer's utility and benefits are likely to increase pre-order intentions. We further argue that individuals who take a creator's perspective are more resistant to the perceived project risks than those taking a customer's perspective. This stems from different motivations that are made salient through the two types of videos. Our study furthers research on contribution behavior in crowdfunding platforms and provides significant implications for the IS community.

Keywords: Crowdfunding, Perspective Taking, Video Advertisement, Self-determination Theory, Transportation Theory
Introduction

Crowd-funded markets have recently emerged as a viable alternative for sourcing capital to support innovative entrepreneurial ideas and ventures (Schwienbacher and Larralde 2010). Crowdfunding allows creators, i.e., people who develop projects, to appeal for funds directly from supporters or “backers” through online platforms (Gerber et al. 2012). The past few years have witnessed crowdfunding platforms gain unprecedented success. For instance, Kickstarter, the largest crowdfunding service provider which launched in 2009, has already collected over a billion dollars from 5.7 million backers and has successfully funded 59,211 projects. Some innovative products that emerged from crowdfunding platforms have become very popular post-launch. For example, Pebble, a smart watch, received funds worth $10,000,000, gaining more than 70,000 of its initial customers on Kickstarter. Even though crowdfunding has emerged as an important IS phenomenon in recent times, there is still a dearth of focused research on key aspects of crowdfunding. In our study, we seek to contribute to this emerging IS research on crowdfunding by investigating how various perspectives of the product video, an important and often mandatory artifact on campaign pages, influence the contribution behavior of supporters.

Marketers today are exploring newer ways to leverage the collective intelligence of the “crowd” via the Internet and social media in a bid to come up with better consumer-centric products (Hildebrand et al. 2013). Along similar lines, the rise of crowdfunding platforms has facilitated the incorporation of potential customers into the fundraising process of projects. Thus, for product creators, the crowdfunding platform is not only a means to collect money, but also a way to reach potential customers by preselling, getting early feedback, and attracting public attention. Burtch et al. (2013) even found that the process of a crowdfunding campaign has significant long-term benefits, pertaining to product success afterwards. Therefore, the contribution behavior in crowd-funded markets has already attracted some attention from researchers. For instance, prior studies have identified important factors that influence the supporter’s behavior, such as social information (i.e., other’s funding decisions) (Kuppuswamy and Bayus 2013), the creator’s personal network, project quality (e.g. presence of videos on the campaign page etc.) (Mollick 2014) and the creator’s participation in other’s projects (Zvilichovsky et al. 2013).

The present study departs from these prior studies by directing attention to a key piece of artifact that defines the focal product on the crowdfunding platform - the campaign video. On most crowdfunding sites, when people are exposed to a project campaign, they first encounter a video introducing the creator and his/her team, together with a textual product description, the founder’s profile, project goal, the goal progress, as well as the various types of rewards. While the campaign video is a mandatory feature on most crowdfunding sites and is generally the most frequently consumed artifact on these platforms, little is known about how the characteristics of the video impacts the contribution behavior of potential supporters. Videos, however, are known to affect a consumer’s behavior. For example, past research has shown that video advertisements positively influence people’s attitudes towards purchasing a product (Escalas 2004; Escalas 2007). Similar contexts also exist on crowdfunding platforms where campaign creators frequently present videos showing actors enjoying their products in different scenarios or emphasizing use cases of how customers would benefit from their product. In our study, we term such types of videos as customer’s perspective videos. Another typical way for campaign creators to showcase their project is to emphasize on the founding team, and their entire journey of ideating, designing and finally introducing the product. We call such videos to be creator’s perspective videos. Prior research has illustrated that thinking in another’s perspective might induce empathy, which promotes helping behavior (Batson et al. 1991; Batson et al. 1997; Krebs 1975). Therefore, these competing perspectives evoked by the two types of video might influence the backers’ behavior in different ways.

On crowdfunding platforms, financial donations and product pre-orders are two common ways of soliciting financial support from backers, which is crucial for campaign success. People could participate in the campaign either by donating a paltry without any material rewards or by paying a crowdfunding-price, which is typically lower than the future market price, in exchange for the product when it reaches the market. In our research, we term the former to be a case of donation and the latter to be a case of product pre-order. In this study, we draw upon self-determination theory and transportation theory to hypothesize how perspective-taking as described earlier affects the supporter’s donation amount and pre-order intention. We propose that when consumers see the founding team emphasizing themselves and on how they conceptualized and designed the product, they might be more likely to identify themselves as the
creator. Conversely, when consumers are exposed to a video emphasizing the customer’s utility and possible use cases, they might be more likely to regard themselves as the potential customer. We posit that when people take the creator’s perspective, their intrinsic motivations are activated, which leads to higher donation amounts compared with people who take the customer’s perspective. Further, we argue that their donation amount is less likely to be influenced by their perceptions of project risk. This is because intrinsically motivated individuals would derive their utility not from the final project outcome but from the very act of contribution (Andreoni 1990). On the other hand, when people take the customer’s perspective, they are more likely to form better evaluations of the product, which further leads to higher pre-order intention. However, we contend that this positive effect of a customer’s perspective on product evaluation is highly dependent on the perception of project risk, i.e., if they are suspicious that the project might fail they might lower their evaluations of the product, leading to a lower pre-order intention.

This research-in-progress paper is organized as follows. First, we briefly review literature on the business model of crowd-funding which provides the necessary premise for our research context. Next, we develop our theoretical model drawing upon self-determination theory, transportation theory and the perspective taking literature, based on which we develop our hypotheses. Next, we propose two lab experiments and one field study to empirically test our hypotheses. Finally, we conclude this paper with a discussion that summarizes our expected findings, contributions and limitations.

Related Literature

Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding refers to the process of sourcing financial capital from individuals who are willing to support a project campaign, which could be anything from an entrepreneurial venture to a purely non-profit initiative (Schwienbacher and Larralde 2010). Typically, a crowdfunding campaign involves three stages, i.e., preparing campaign material, marketing the project, and following through to the project goal (Hui et al. 2013). The preparation stage includes creating a project profile, which consists of a project title, an introduction video, a description of the planned use of funds, the funding goal, the campaign duration, and the reward descriptions. There are three main types of rewards. The first is donation styled rewards, which is highly dependent on the intrinsic motivation of the supporters e.g., a warm-glow effect or the satisfaction obtained from making the contribution (Andreoni 1990; Hemer 2011). The second one is pre-order rewards, i.e., selling products at a lower price than the future mark-up price of the product when it arrives at the market (Bradford 2012). The last one is patronage styled rewards, which is a token compensation for the contribution, often in the form of gifts or small products associated with the fundraiser, such as nominal perks and thank-you gifts (Burkett 2011). In this study, we focus on donation style rewards and pre-order style rewards, which are more closely related to video-induced perspective taking, as elaborated in the following sections.

One of the most novel aspects of crowd-funded markets is the nature of publicly observable dynamic indicators, e.g., fundraising progress, which are typically published by the platform owner (Burtch et al. 2011). Crowdfunding projects usually involve risk and uncertainty. If a project finally fails to reach its fundraising goal, the supporters could get their contribution amount back but not their promised rewards. Even on the dominant platform, Kickstarter, the success rate is only about 48% (Mollick 2014). Though some crowdfunding platforms allow projects to proceed with the money collected even if they did not reach their fundraising goal, creators may still fail to provide promised products and associated rewards within the stipulated time owing to insufficient financial support. Therefore, fundraising progress is an important indicator signaling project risk, which may further influence the supporter’s behavior.

There are a few other factors that may also influence contribution behavior significantly. For instance, Zvilichovsky et al. (2013) found that backing others’ projects is a rewarding strategy for project creators, i.e., projects created by active backers have higher success rates, attract more backers and collect more funds. Research also shows that in-project actions (such as postings, presence of videos or project updates) have a significant impact on the funding dynamics and success rate of crowdfunding projects (Mollick 2014). In this study, we extend this stream of literature by investigating how different perspectives evoked by these project videos affect the supporters’ donation amount and pre-order intention and how the fundraising progress plays a role in this process.
Transportation Theory and Perspective Taking

On crowdfunding platforms, campaign creators usually provide a short video introducing themselves and their project. The videos could be categorized into a creator’s perspective or a customer’s perspective depending on whether the video emphasizes the creator and the creation process or the utility and usage scenarios of the product. According to transportation theory, when people lose themselves in a story, their attitudes and intentions change to reflect that narrative. Transportation is a state in which the receiver experiences a feeling of entering a different world, one that is evoked by the narrative, because of empathy for the story characters. The imagination of the narrative is also bolstered by mental simulation and vivid imagery (Green and Brock 2000; Green and Brock 2002; Green et al. 2004). Therefore, we posit that if individuals are shown videos of the founding team introducing the creative ideas, and the product design and development process, they would be more likely to associate themselves with members of the founding team. Similarly, when people are exposed to a video showing how other customers would interact and derive utility from the product, they are more likely to regard themselves as potential customers.

On a related note to the above, perspective taking has also been studied as an important factor influencing consumer purchase behavior, as well as individual helping and pro-social behavior (Batson et al. 1991; Escalas 2004). A customer’s perspective is highly related to product evaluation and purchase intention. For example, advertisements that portray people enjoying themselves using the product in attractive surroundings make consumers feel “transported” into the situation, which leads to a positive mental simulation and better product promotion (Green et al. 2004). Phillips et al. (1995) asserted that such “consumption visions,” i.e. self-constructed mental simulations of future consumption, motivate consumption behavior because these visions involve the self-enacting and detailed product-related behaviors. In both social psychology and consumer research, mental simulation has been shown to improve attitudes towards advertisement and subsequent brand evaluations (Keller and McGill 1994). Similarly, perspective taking is also widely used in understanding pro-social and helping behaviors. For example, Batson and his colleagues have demonstrated significant positive correlations between empathy and altruistic behavior (Batson et al. 1991; Batson et al. 1997). Thus, in our context, individuals who are exposed to a creator’s perspective video might be more likely to empathize with the founding team leading to an increased altruistic behavior towards the project. Based on the above discussion, we predict that the perspective taking induced by different types of videos may accentuate the supporter’s donation amount or his pre-order intentions depending on the specific perspectives made salient.

Self-determination Theory

The self-determination theory (SDT) contends that motivation is not a unitary or bipolar construct which could be categorized as an intrinsic or extrinsic motivation (Deci and Ryan 1985; Deci and Ryan 2010; Ryan and Deci 2000a; Ryan and Deci 2000b). Rather, self-determination theory presents a spectrum of motivations. When intrinsically motivated, people engage in activities that interest them, and they do so freely, with a full sense of volition and without the necessity of material rewards or constraints. However, when extrinsically motivated, people actively seek for instrumental outcomes. Extrinsic motivations can be further subdivided into four regulatory perceptions, i.e., external regulations (e.g., participating in an activity to obtain a tangible reward), introjected regulation (e.g., feeling obliged to participate in the activity), identified regulation (e.g., being active to achieve a specific objective), and integrated regulation (e.g., acting because it is part of one’s identity or who he or she is). It has also been widely demonstrated that intrinsic motivation is highly related to contribution behaviors in different contexts, such as donation behavior (Grant 2008; Lacetera and Macis 2010) and knowledge contribution in online communities (Ma and Agarwal 2007; Wasko and Faraj 2005).

Previous literature has investigated a number of factors that motivates people to participate in crowdfunding projects. For example, Gerber et al. (2012) indicate that supporter motivations includes collecting rewards, helping others, being a part of a community or supporting a cause. Similarly, Mollick (2014) posits that the actual goals of supporters are extremely heterogeneous, i.e., individuals may invest in a crowdfunding project in order to support a cause that is viewed as important, or even as a political statement. Based on the definition of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, we map these motivating factors into different motivation types, as shown in Table 1.
Table 1. Mapping of Motivation in Crowdfunding Platform to SDT Spectrum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations to Contribute in Crowdfunding Platform</th>
<th>Motivation Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To help others (Gerber et al. 2012)</td>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support a cause (Gerber et al. 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contribute to a societally important mission (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy the satisfaction from observing the realisation and success of the project funded (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy being engaged in and interacting with the project's team (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To enjoy contributing to an innovation or being among the pioneers of new technology or business (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To show identification with founder team (Gerber et al., 2011)</td>
<td>Identified Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To show identification with project goal (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain recognition from others (Hemer, 2011)</td>
<td>Introjected Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To expand one's own personal network (Hemer 2011)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To attract future support from others (Zvilichovsky et al. 2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To signal identity (Mollick 2014)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To collect rewards (Gerber et al., 2012)</td>
<td>External Regulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To make a purchase with lower price (Bradford, 2012)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To gain equity or sales profit sharing (Belleflamme et al. 2013)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

In summary, based on transportation theory and self-determination theory, we posit that video-evoked perspective taking will influence supporter’s donation amount and pre-order intention via two mechanisms, i.e., level of self-determination and product evaluation. The following section expands on the development of these hypotheses.

Hypotheses Development

*Perspective Taking and Donation*

Previous literature shows that narratives can induce a sense of “transportation” (Green and Brock 2000; Green and Brock 2002) wherein the individual is mentally transported to the context of the narrative. Therefore, in prior research on pro-social behavior, participants are induced to take the perspective of a victim of misfortune, either by explicitly instructing them to do so (Batson et al. 1997; Petrova and Cialdini 2005) or by self-referencing (e.g., using “you” rather than third-person pronouns when referring to the people in need of help) (Batson et al. 1997; Hung and Wyer Jr 2009; Petrova and Cialdini 2005). The format of the stimuli could be either text and images, or online video advertisements as well (Green et al. 2004). Green et al. (2004) indicated that compared to text, video has a higher vividness or sensory richness, which could also induce stronger mental imagery and consequently better perspective-taking. Therefore, we posit that when individuals are exposed to a video showing the founders introducing the project and the product, they are more likely to view themselves as members of the founding team. However, when individuals are exposed to a video showing other customers enjoying the product, they are more likely to view themselves as potential customers.

In past literature, various factors have been identified that could affect helping behavior in general, such as a person’s liking for the potential beneficiary (Emmons and McCullough 2004), feelings of social or personal responsibility (Darley and Latane 1968) or the need to affirm his or her self-perception as a helpful person (Langer and Abelson 1972). More importantly, prior studies demonstrate that people tend to donate more if they take the perspective of people in need of help (i.e., their vicarious experience of the thoughts and feelings of another) since they form higher levels of empathy and identification (Aron and Aron 1986; Batson et al. 1991). Thus, in our context, we propose that people exposed to videos emphasizing the product development process and the founding team are more likely to view themselves as a members of the founding team, which lead to a higher donation amount. Therefore, we posit that
H1: Supporters exposed to a creator’s perspective video tend to donate more than supporters exposed to a consumer’s perspective video.

As discussed above, there are various factors that might mediate the effect of perspective taking on donation amount, such as empathy and identification (Aron and Aron 1986; Batson et al. 1991). In our study, we focus on the motivational consequences of perspective taking (Batson et al. 1987). According to self-determination theory, self-determination could be regarded a spectrum of different types of motivations, which could be measured as an index combining intrinsic motivations and the different types of extrinsic motivations (Deci and Ryan 2010; George et al. 2013). In this case, a low self-determination level indicates that a person is more extrinsically motivated and less intrinsically motivated. Conversely, a high self-determination level indicates that a person is more intrinsically motivated and less extrinsically motivated. Based on self-determination theory, Vallerand (1997) proposed that motivational processes mediate relationships between social factors and a range of cognitive, affective or behavioral outcomes. Vallerand (2007) further found that the degree of perceived intrinsic self-determination leads directly to positive outcomes. In our context, a creator’s perspective video will make the value of donor’s support more salient. It will make it easier for supporters to feel the joy of helping, supporting, and connecting to an entrepreneurial team. Thus, their donation behavior will be more self-determined. In contrast, people adopting the customer’s perspective might be more likely to think of the utility aspects of the product, making their extrinsic motivations more salient. If they are not able to receive extra rewards or benefits, they will be less likely to donate. Hence, we propose that

H1a: Self-determination mediates the effect of video-evoked perspective taking on donation amount.

**Perspective Taking and Pre-order**

Based on transportation theory, Escalas (2004, 2007) found that the narrative processing creates or enhances the self-brand connections because people generally interpret the meaning of their experiences by fitting them into a story. Advertisement-induced mental stimulation will have a positive effect on the attitude towards the advertisement as well as the brand evaluation, i.e., when consumers become “transported” into the situation via mental simulation or imagery, they are likely to have positive reactions to the experience they imagine and, subsequently, towards the product being promoted. However, imagery can enter into consumer judgments in at least two ways (Hung and Wyer Jr 2011). First, consumers might form a mental image of the product itself, independent of the context in which the product is considered. Second, consumers might construct a narrative-based image of themselves using the product in the sort of situation in which it is normally found. Compared to the creator’s perspective, it will be easier for the customer’s perspective videos to induce people to form a narrative-based image of themselves using the product. It will help consumers form mental images of future consumption visions, i.e., a visual image of certain product-related behaviors, which will positively influence their judgment and decision-making (Phillips et al. 1995), i.e., their overall product evaluation and purchase intention. Further, extant literature has shown that product evaluation is strongly and positively correlated with purchase intention (Chang and Wildt 1994; Grewal et al. 1998). Therefore, we propose that

H2: Supporters exposed to a customer’s perspective video tend to have higher pre-order intention than supporters exposed to a creator’s perspective video.

H2a: Product evaluation mediates the effect of video-evoked perspective taking on pre-order intention.

**Moderation Role of Risk**

As Mollick (2014) reported, on the dominant crowdfunding platform, Kickstarter, the project success rate is only about 48%. This risk of project failure might change people’s preference towards rewards, as well as their pre-order behavior. For example, Kahneman and Tversky (1979) propose the “certainty effect”, which says that people put much more weight on outcomes that are certain than on outcomes that are merely probable. People also tend to prefer a small but certain reward over a large but uncertain reward when the task is effort-intensive (Kivetz 2003). Therefore, risk is a key concern for crowdfunding participants when they are making decisions about donation or purchase.

According to SDT, individuals who see themselves as intrinsically motivated to engage in an effort-intensive activity are less likely to make the attribution that they are engaging in the activity to merely obtain some extrinsic incentives. Rather, they are more likely to attribute their participation to the enjoyment, satisfaction, and interest inherent in the effort activity (Deci and Ryan 1985). Therefore, supporters with higher intrinsic motivation are less likely to be influenced by the outcome of the project.
In other words, supporters with higher self-determination will be less sensitive to the project risk. On the contrary, supporters with higher extrinsic motivations participate in a campaign in exchange for tangible or intangible rewards, e.g., future discounts, recognition from others etc. If the project fails, their extrinsic motivations remain unsatisfied. Hence, supporters with lower self-determination tend to be more sensitive to risk when deciding on whether to make a contribution. Therefore, we posit that

H3a: There is an interaction effect between self-determination and perceived risk on donation amount, i.e., risk has a stronger effect on supporters with lower self-determination than supporters with higher self-determination.

Since crowdfunding projects are inherently uncertain, people's evaluation of the project would be determined by the product itself, as well as the project risk. Combining with the perspective taking literature, people adopting the customer's perspective are more likely to form a positive mental imagery of themselves using the product. Hence, they are more likely to evaluate the product based on utility, which will be significantly influenced by risk. Therefore, even though the customer's perspective video might be attractive, people's evaluation towards the product would drop dramatically if they could infer high risk from specific cues on the campaign page, such as the fundraising progress, as well as popularity cues, such as the number of other “backers” for the campaign. On the contrary, when individuals are exposed to the creator's perspective, they are more likely to evaluate the product based on the founding team’s journey of conceptualizing and building the project, which is less likely to be influenced by the risk of the final outcome. Therefore, we predict that

H3b: There is an interaction effect between perspective taking and perceived risk on product evaluation, i.e., risk has a stronger effect on supporters who are exposed to the customer's perspective video than supporters exposed to the creator's perspective video.

Methodology

We plan to conduct two lab experiments and a field study to empirically test our research model. The goal of experiment 1 is to demonstrate that perspective taking will have an impact on the supporter's donation behavior. In particular, we seek to show that the creator's perspective will make participants more self-determined to donate. In addition, we predict that participants with a higher self-determination would be less likely to be affected by their perceived risk. The goal of experiment 2 is to demonstrate that perspective taking will have an impact on the supporter's pre-order intention. Specifically, we aim to show that participants who are exposed to the customer's perspective video will form more favorable attitudes towards the product with a higher pre-order intention. However, we also predict that this positive evaluation is highly dependent on the participant's perceived risk. Thus, both the experiments follow a 2 (perspective: creator's vs. customer's) * 2 (risk: high vs. low) between-subject factorial design.

We manipulate perspective taking by creating different videos introducing the same product, but from different perspectives. A wireless portable charger has been chosen as our target product, since it is gender-neutral and is not likely to trigger a strong approach or avoidance tendency among participants. Two 2-minute videos will be prepared as our main stimuli for these experiments. For the creator's perspective, the video will emphasize on the founder introducing and interacting with their products, and calling for support at the end of the video (e.g., “Join us, let’s make this product a reality!”). For the customer's perspective, the video will present a consumer introducing and interacting with the product, and calling for consumer support at the end of the video (e.g., “Like it? Buy it!”). In order to rule out potential confounds associated with the construction of the video itself, we will keep most of the video content identical. In addition, we will conduct a pretest to ensure that the two versions of videos are equally attractive using objective data from eye tracking, i.e., by tracking the participants' pupils, we can verify if they have finished watching the whole video and whether their attention was allocated similarly across the two videos. We manipulate risk perceptions by specifying the fundraising progress as a cue on the video page. We posit that when half of the campaign period has passed, a 25% (of total fundraising goal) fundraising progress will indicate high risk while a 75% progress will indicate low risk. We would pretest to confirm that participants perceive these percentages to be significant cues. Next, four campaign pages (consisting of a project title, the video, a textual introduction, the fundraising goal, the campaign duration, a count of project backers and the funding progress) will be developed, keeping all content to be similar except for our treatment factors, i.e., the video and the funding progress. A pilot study will be conducted to demonstrate that our stimulus, i.e., video and funding progress works in practice.
Experiments 1 and 2 will follow the same procedure as follows. In each experiment, participants will be randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. Prior to the start of the experiment, they will read a short instruction about the crowdfunding platform and their tasks. In experiment 1, their task would be to decide how much they will donate to the project while in experiment 2, their task is to rate their liking of the project and decide on how likely they are to pre-order the product. Then, they will be left alone to inspect the project on the campaign page until they complete the task. On finishing, they will be asked to answer a survey to record demographic metrics. In both the experiments, we will conduct manipulation checks to verify whether our manipulation of perspective taking and perceived risk works. Perspective taking will be operationalized as a “tendency to view oneself as creator/customer” adapted from Hung and Wyer Jr (2009) and perceived risk is to be adapted from Son et al. (2006). In experiment 1, we will measure the level of self-determination and the donation amount, which serves as our main outcome variable. Self-determination will be measured based on the work by Vallerand (2007) and George et al. (2013), which is an index combining intrinsic motivation and the different types of extrinsic motivation. The specific items will be adapted from our literature review on crowdfunding motivations. In experiment 2 we will measure project evaluation with scales adapted from Escalas (2007). Pre-order intention, our main outcome variable, will be measured following past literature (Jiang et al. 2010; Li et al. 2002). Demographic information such as gender, age and salary will also be included as control variables. We plan to conduct ANOVA and moderated-mediation tests for our data analysis.

To improve on the external validity of our findings, we also intend to conduct a field study to provide supplementary support for our hypotheses. We will collect data on technology projects from Kickstarter.com and manually code the video type as either being customer’s perspective or creator’s perspective. Since Kickstarter supports the use of both donation style rewards as well as pre-order style rewards, we use the ratio of number of supporters who choose to donate to the number of those who choose to purchase as our main outcome variable. We expect to see that the creator’s perspective leads to a higher ratio than the customer’s perspective. The result would suggest that the creator's perspective might be a better way to sustain visitors, i.e., even if people have no purchase intentions, they might still support a project by donating a small amount of money out of intrinsic motivations.

Discussion

Our project has several key contributions. From a theoretical perspective, our study contributes to existing literature on crowdfunding by identifying an important factor that influences supporter behavior, i.e., video-evoked perspective taking. We find that a creator's perspective will lead to better donation performance while a customer's perspective will lead to a better pre-order performance for the project. In order to explain this phenomenon, we review and draw upon past findings in self-determination theory and transportation theory. We summarize motivations which drive supporters to participate in crowdfunding projects and posit that the positive effect of the creator’s perspective on donations is mediated by an intrinsic sense of self-determination. Since the creator’s perspective makes the intrinsic motivations more salient, this perspective is less likely to be influenced by the actual project outcome. We also explain the positive effect of the customer’s perspective on pre-order intentions based on transportation theory, i.e., people will develop more favorable attitudes towards a product when they are able to mentally simulate how they interact with it. However, we predict that this effect would be highly dependent on project risk.

Our study also has clear implications for practitioners. We show that the creator’s perspective is more suitable to attract unselfish contributions while the customer’s perspective is more effective at attracting future customers. Therefore, campaign creators could strategize video presentations to target these different objectives. For example, if individuals are interested in the product (e.g. those who land at the campaign page from search engine results), creators could provide them with the customer’s perspective video to increase probability of a pre-order. However, for people who might not be very interested in the product (e.g. who come from the crowdfunding platform itself), creators could provide them with a creator’s perspective video to increase probability of a donation. Besides, we emphasize that that individuals viewing the creator’s perspective video are more resistant to project risk and uncertainty. Thus, when the fundraising progress may not be going well, project owners could consider providing potential contributors with creator’s perspective videos to keep the cash-flow ticking.
For future research, one could investigate how a combination of the two perspectives within one video influences the supporter’s behavior, which is something that has not been examined in the present study. In addition, in our study, we investigate how perspective taking affects donation amount and pre-order intention separately. However, in a real setting, creators typically provide different types of rewards at the same time. Even with creator's perspective videos, the mere presence of pre-order style rewards on the campaign page might activate the supporter’s extrinsic motivations. It will certainly be interesting to investigate whether there is an interaction effect between perspective taking and the reward type.

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