

Self-Transcendence and Purchase Decision of Ethnic Accessories: Mediating Role of Perceived Customer Design Thinking

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Abstract

The rapid digitalization of the marketplace has created both opportunities and challenges for cultural heritage products, particularly ethnic accessories. While digital platforms expand market access, they also increase the risk of cultural commodification, where traditional meanings are reduced to aesthetic values. This study aims to examine the influence of self-transcendence on purchase decisions for ethnic accessories and to investigate the mediating role of Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) within the framework of Consumer Culture Theory (CCT). A quantitative explanatory research design was employed using a purposive sampling technique. Data were collected through an online survey involving 407 consumers of the Subeng Klasik brand in Indonesia. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. The results demonstrate that self-transcendence has a positive and significant effect on PCDT ($\beta = 0.430$, $p < 0.001$) and purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.313$, $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, PCDT significantly influences purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.343$, $p < 0.001$). The mediation analysis reveals that PCDT partially mediates the relationship between self-transcendence and purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.147$, $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that consumers who possess stronger values of universalism and benevolence are more likely to appreciate authentic cultural design processes and subsequently make purchasing decisions toward ethnic accessories. The study contributes to the extension of Consumer Culture Theory by introducing PCDT as a cognitive-emotional mechanism that bridges abstract cultural values and tangible economic behavior. Practically, the findings suggest that cultural heritage brands should emphasize authentic storytelling and empathetic design strategies to enhance consumer engagement and sustainable purchasing behavior in the digital era.

Keywords: Consumer Culture Theory (CCT), Self-transcendence, Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT), Purchase Decision, PLS-SEM, Cultural Heritage.

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1. Introduction

The rapid digitalization of the modern global market presents a paradox for cultural heritage products. On one hand, the digital era provides unprecedented access to global consumers (Poier et al., 2022; Quaye, 2021; Steenkamp, 2020), on the other it poses the threat of cultural hollowness, wherein traditional cultural products are often reduced to mere aesthetic commodities stripped of their spiritual and historical meanings. In the contemporary marketplace, consumer preferences are deeply intertwined with cultural identity, as individuals increasingly seek products that resonate with their cultural heritage and authentic values (Chen & Wei, 2023; Hwang et al., 2020; Jadhav, 2024). When cultural symbols and traditional elements are meaningfully integrated into product design and marketing, they not only enhance consumer emotional experiences but also significantly elevate perceived value and purchase intentions (Colombage & Galahitiyawe, 2020; Essiz & Senyuz, 2024; Zong et al., 2023). Therefore, mitigating superficial cultural commodification requires a deeper understanding of the psychological and cultural drivers that connect consumers to ethnic products. Within this context, the psychological value of self-transcendence emerges as a critical determinant of consumer behavior. Self-transcendence, characterized by values of universalism and benevolence, directs individuals to look beyond selfish interests and promotes pro-social and culturally supportive behaviors (Guo et al., 2023; Prince et al., 2020; Vighnesh et al., 2023).

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Various previous studies have explored consumer psychological values in the context of cultural consumption. Recent empirical evidence shows that self-transcendence values characterized by universality and virtue positively influence consumers' intentions to purchase domestic or environmentally friendly products by activating their personal norms (Qotrunnada et al., 2023; Zhao & Huang, 2024). Furthermore, in the realm of ethnic fashion and cultural accessories, self-focused emotions stemming from the expression of cultural identity have proven to act as a strong catalyst in shaping actual purchase decisions (Duong et al., 2023). From a design perspective, design thinking has also been fundamentally recognized as a deep sensemaking practice driven by empathy, exploration, and the materialization of aesthetic experiences (Eklund et al., 2022).

Although various studies have highlighted the importance of the value of self-transcendence, there remains a significant research gap in the current literature regarding how this abstract spiritual need is effectively translated into tangible economic actions in the digital space. To fill this gap, this research offers novelty by expanding the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) framework (Arnould et al., 2021) thru the introduction of Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT). This study provides a new theoretical structure that demonstrates how PCDT acts as a cognitive-emotional mediator bridging the relationship between consumers' spiritual needs and purchasing behavior.

To fill this gap, this research offers novelty by expanding the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) literature thru the introduction of Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) as a crucial variable. The novelty of this study lies in the use of PCDT as a cognitive-emotional mediator that bridges the relationship between consumers' abstract spiritual needs (self-transcendence) and concrete economic actions (purchase decisions) in the digital market. This research provides a new theoretical framework by demonstrating how consumers actively recognize and evaluate brand efforts in connecting ancient traditions with modern needs.

Based on this background, this study aims to explore how intrinsic consumer values, particularly self-transcendence, influence the purchase decisions of ethnic accessories. Additionally, this research aims to empirically test the mediating effect of Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) as a strategic brand evaluation tool in bridging internal psychological needs and purchasing behavior. This research specifically focuses on consumers of the Subeng Klasik brand in Indonesia in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) provides a foundational framework for understanding modern consumption, positing that buying behavior transcends utilitarian transactions to become a profound socio-cultural practice where individuals actively construct their identities and express their values through culturally significant goods (Arnould et al., 2021). In the contemporary digital landscape, traditional and cultural heritage products face the ongoing threat of cultural hollowiness, where deep cultural meanings are often diluted into mere aesthetic commodities (Hungara & Nobre, 2021; Patsiaouras, 2022). Mitigating this issue requires integrating cultural adaptation into digital marketing strategies, allowing brands to maintain authenticity and cultural significance while enhancing market competitiveness. Within the CCT framework, this adaptation acts as a critical sensemaking mechanism.

Design thinking, traditionally viewed as an organizational problem-solving tool, fundamentally functions as a profound sensemaking practice characterized by empathy, exploration, and the materialization of aesthetic experiences (Eklund et al., 2022). When consumers evaluate ethnic accessories, Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) refers to consumers' perceptions regarding the extent to which a brand applies design thinking principles, including empathy, user understanding, experimentation, creativity, and solution-oriented innovation, in the development of products and customer experiences. Unlike traditional design-related constructs that primarily evaluate product outcomes, PCDT focuses on consumers' evaluation of the underlying design process employed by the brand.

PCDT differs conceptually from perceived brand authenticity, which emphasizes the genuineness and credibility of a brand's cultural representation. It also differs from design quality, which evaluates the aesthetic and functional performance of a product. Furthermore, PCDT is distinct from customer co-creation because it does not require direct customer participation in the development process. Instead, PCDT captures consumers' perceptions of how effectively a brand understands user needs and translates cultural values into meaningful contemporary product solutions. Within the context of cultural heritage products, consumers increasingly evaluate not only what brands produce but also how those products are designed and culturally interpreted. Therefore, PCDT represents a cognitive-emotional evaluation mechanism through which consumers assess a brand's ability to bridge traditional cultural meanings and modern consumer expectations. This study positions PCDT as a unique construct that explains how consumers transform abstract cultural values into concrete purchasing behavior.

Rooted in psychological value theory, self-transcendence encompasses universalism and benevolence, directing individuals to prioritize broader collective well-being, cultural preservation, and pro-social behaviors over selfish interests (Barton & Hart, 2023). Prior empirical analyses prove that consumers driven by self-transcendence values demonstrate a significantly higher intention to purchase domestic, environmentally friendly, and culturally authentic products (Goswami et al., 2025). The purchase decision itself is an integration process where consumers combine knowledge, attitudes, and emotional responses to evaluate alternatives (Ridwan, 2022). Based on the CCT framework, this study constructs a theoretical analysis model of consumers' purchase decisions toward ethnic accessories from two main perspectives: the internal psychological driver (self-transcendence) and the external cognitive-emotional bridge (perceived customer design thinking). This research extends the current CCT literature by demonstrating how perceived customer design thinking mediates the relationship between consumers' abstract spiritual needs and tangible economic actions. Accordingly, this paper provides a useful theoretical structure to explain how these dimensions interact in shaping the purchase decisions of cultural heritage products, specifically focusing on the Subeng Klasik brand in the digital era.

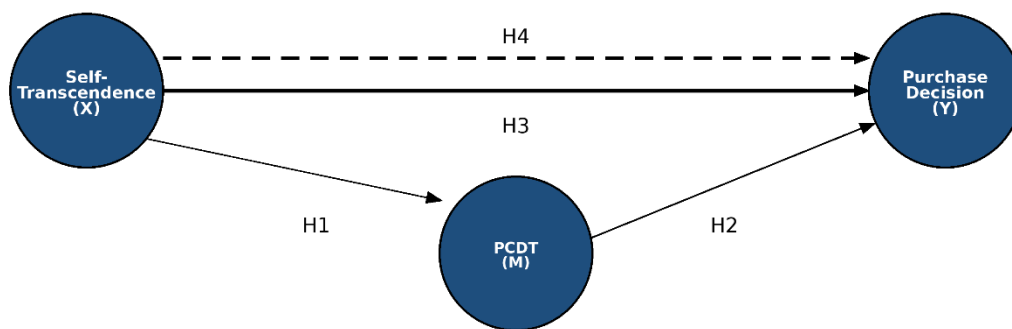


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

2.1 Hypothesis Development

H1. Self-transcendence has a positive and significant impact on Perceived Customer Design Thinking. Factors values play a foundational role in shaping consumer behavior and preferences toward cultural and domestic products. Self-transcendence, characterized by universalism and benevolence, directs individuals to look beyond selfish interests and prioritize culturally supportive behaviors (Pratesi et al., 2021). In the context of cultural heritage products like ethnic accessories, consumers evaluate brands based on their empathetic and authentic creative processes. Design thinking is fundamentally recognized not merely as a problem-solving tool, but as a profound sensemaking practice driven by empathy and aesthetic experience (Eklund et al., 2022). Consumers possessing strong self-transcendence values are inherently more sensitive and receptive to this authentic sensemaking process. Because they value cultural preservation, they are more likely to positively evaluate Perceived Customer Design Thinking, viewing it as a meaningful practice that respects ancient traditions.

H2. Perceived Customer Design Thinking has a positive and significant impact on the purchase decision. In the digital era, the visual and narrative elements of a product play a critical role in consumer decision-making. The action of designing and integrating traditional cultural symbols into modern accessories links sensory systems with sensemaking, creating functional and emotional value for consumers (Eklund et al., 2022; Liu & Zhao, 2024). When customers have a favorable experience and perceive a high level of design thinking, they perceive the actual value of cultural products to be higher, which directly drives their purchasing decisions (Liu & Zhao, 2024). The empathetic design approach serves as an interactive bridge that meets consumers' psychological expectations.

H3. Self-transcendence has a positive and significant impact directly on the purchase decision. Consumer decisions to purchase domestic and cultural products are heavily driven by internal values. Individuals with high self-transcendence are intrinsically motivated to support local artisans and preserve cultural heritage, translating their internal moral compass into tangible preferences for heritage brands. Empirical tests have confirmed that individuals with self-transcendence values have a significantly higher intention and actual decision to purchase domestic and culturally significant products (Nguyen et al., 2023) compared to those driven by self-enhancement.

H4. Perceived Customer Design Thinking mediates the relationship between self-transcendence and the purchase decision. While self-transcendence provides the essential internal motivational drive for cultural consumption, these

abstract spiritual needs require a tangible bridging mechanism to manifest as concrete economic actions in the digital market. Consumer evaluations encompass both cognitive and emotional elements. Perceived Customer Design Thinking serves as this crucial cognitive emotional mediator. Consumers driven by self-transcendence actively seek out brands that demonstrate empathy and cultural authenticity. Once they perceive this thoughtful sensemaking process integrated into the product, their heightened emotional engagement directly catalyzes their purchase decision (Eklund et al., 2022).

3. Methods

3.1 Research Design and Participants

This study employed an explanatory quantitative research design to examine the relationships between self-transcendence, Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT), and purchase decisions for ethnic accessories (Hair et al., 2019). The target population comprised consumers of the Subeng Klasik brand residing in Indonesia. A purposive sampling technique was utilized to ensure that all respondents had prior exposure to or knowledge of the brand's products, yielding a valid final sample of 407 respondents (Campbell et al., 2020). Data were collected cross-sectionally through a structured online questionnaire administered via Google Forms.

3.2 Data Collection Procedure

In accordance with ethical research standards, formal permission was granted by the management of the Subeng Klasik brand to conduct this survey among their consumer base prior to the distribution of the questionnaire. Furthermore, voluntary informed consent was explicitly obtained from all participants before they proceeded with the data collection instrument. Participants were assured of their anonymity, and it was clarified that their responses would be strictly treated as confidential and utilized solely for academic research purposes.

3.3 Measurement Instruments

The research questionnaire consisted of three latent constructs: Self-Transcendence (ST), Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT), and Purchase Decision (PD). All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”). The Self-Transcendence construct was adapted from Schwartz’s Theory of Basic Human Values, particularly the dimensions of universalism and benevolence, which have been widely used to assess individuals’ orientation toward collective well-being, cultural preservation, and prosocial behavior. The construct was operationalized through seven indicators reflecting consumers’ concerns for cultural sustainability, social responsibility, and appreciation of cultural heritage products (Schwartz et al., 2012).

The Purchase Decision construct was adapted from the consumer behavior literature, which conceptualizes purchase decisions as a process of consumer evaluation and consideration leading to actual purchasing behavior. Seven indicators were used to measure respondents’ willingness to purchase, preference for ethnic accessories, confidence in their purchase decisions, and intention to recommend the products to others (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) construct was conceptualized as consumers’ perceptions of a brand’s ability to apply empathy, cultural understanding, creativity, and user-oriented innovation in the product development process. Given that PCDT is a relatively novel construct, its measurement items were adapted from the design thinking and human-centered design literature and subsequently contextualized to the cultural heritage product setting. The scale consisted of seven indicators that measured consumers’ perceptions of the extent to which a brand successfully integrates traditional cultural values with the needs of modern consumers through empathetic and innovative design practices (Brown, 2008; Eklund et al., 2022).

To ensure the appropriateness of the instrument within the Indonesian cultural context, all measurement items underwent translation and back-translation procedures. Subsequently, the instrument was evaluated by three experts in consumer behavior, cultural marketing, and design management to assess content validity and the conceptual equivalence of each item. Prior to the main survey, a pilot test involving 30 consumers of ethnic accessories was conducted to ensure the clarity, readability, and comprehensibility of all questionnaire items.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. Although the sample size of 407 respondents exceeded the minimum requirements for covariance-based SEM (CB-SEM), PLS-SEM was selected because the primary objective of this study was to develop a predictive model and extend existing theory rather than merely confirm an established theory. Furthermore,

this study introduces Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) as a relatively novel construct within the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) framework. Therefore, PLS-SEM was considered more appropriate for exploratory model development and mediation analysis.

PLS-SEM also offers several methodological advantages, including its ability to handle complex models involving multiple latent constructs, accurately estimate mediation effects, and support prediction-oriented research objectives. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022) and Sarstedt et al. (2021), the analysis was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model), which included assessments of indicator reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity, and internal consistency reliability. The second stage involved the evaluation of the structural model (inner model), including the assessment of path coefficients, bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 subsamples, coefficients of determination (R^2), effect sizes (f^2), collinearity diagnostics using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), and predictive relevance (Q^2).

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile Respondents

The demographic and behavioral profiles of the 407 respondents, comprising Subeng Klasik consumers in Indonesia, are summarized in Table 1. The sample is predominantly female (82.06%) and concentrated within the productive age groups of 22–27 years (43.49%) and 28–37 years (41.28%). Economically, the majority of the respondents fall into the middle-to-upper income brackets, with 94.59% earning between 1 and 20 million IDR monthly. The respondents' occupations are primarily private sector employees (39.80%) and entrepreneurs (36.12%). In terms of consumer behavior, Instagram serves as the leading source of fashion inspiration (26.78%). Notably, the majority of consumers prioritize "Unique Design" (37.10%) as their key purchase criterion and predominantly wear these ethnic accessories for special or formal events (59.95%). This behavioral context underscores the relevance of design thinking and cultural authenticity in driving their purchase decisions.

Table 1. Demographic and Behavioral Profile of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Count (n=407)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	73	17.94%
	Female	334	82.06%
Age	17–21	4	0.98%
	22–27	177	43.49%
	28–37	168	41.28%
	> 40	58	14.25%
Monthly Income	1 to 10 million IDR	207	50.86%
	11 to 20 million IDR	178	43.73%
	21 to 50 million IDR	15	3.69%
	> 50 million IDR	7	1.72%
Occupation	Private Sector Employee	162	39.80%
	Entrepreneur	147	36.12%
	Freelance	38	9.34%
	State Office	28	6.88%
	Others	32	7.86%
Fashion Inspiration Platform	Instagram	109	26.78%
	Pinterest	73	17.94%
	TikTok	69	16.95%
	YouTube	55	13.51%
	Facebook	51	12.53%
	Other's Platform	50	12.29%
Key Purchase Criteria	Unique Design	151	37.10%
	Material	91	22.36%
	Price	84	20.64%
	Brand	81	19.90%
Usage Occasion	Special, Formal Events	244	59.95%
	Daily	163	40.05%

4.2 Outer Model Evaluation

The measurement model (outer model) was assessed to establish the construct validity and reliability of the research instrument. The evaluation was based on two main criteria: convergent validity and internal consistency reliability. The convergent validity was tested by the outer loading values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) as shown in Table 2. The analysis results show that all measurement items of the three constructs, namely Self-Transcendence (X), Perceived Customer Design Thinking (M), and Purchase Decision (Y), have outer loadings greater than the recommended threshold value of 0.70. Furthermore, the AVE values of all constructs were higher than the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50. This confirms the convergent validity of the constructs.

Internal consistency reliability of the measurement model was assessed by Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). The analysis shows that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values above the threshold of 0.70. The values are 0.734 for Perceived Customer Design Thinking and 0.702 for Self-Transcendence and Purchase Decision. The assessment of the measurement model as a whole shows that the research instrument has convergent validity and internal consistency reliability that are very satisfactory.

Table 2. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

Constructs	Items	Outer Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Self-Transcendence (X)	X1	0.797	0.702	0.817	0.528
	X2	0.769			
	X3	0.769			
	X4	0.815			
	X5	0.816			
	X6	0.743			
	X7	0.720			
Perceived Customer Design Thinking (M)	M1	0.793	0.734	0.833	0.556
	M2	0.841			
	M3	0.768			
	M4	0.816			
	M5	0.801			
	M6	0.818			
	M7	0.794			
Purchase Decision (Y)	Y1	0.756	0.702	0.817	0.527
	Y2	0.782			
	Y3	0.798			
	Y4	0.781			
	Y5	0.833			
	Y6	0.802			
	Y7	0.823			

Finally, discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations to ensure that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. As presented in Table 3, all HTMT values range from 0.474 to 0.524. Because these values are substantially below the conservative threshold of 0.85, discriminant validity is well established.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

Constructs	1	2	3
1. Perceived Customer Design Thinking (M)	-	-	-
2. Purchase Decision (Y)	0.524	-	-
3. Self-Transcendence (X)	0.474	0.511	-

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

To avoid biasing of the path coefficients, the model was tested for potential collinearity problems before testing the hypotheses. The VIF values of all the relationships in the inner model were between 1.000 and 1.226 (see Table 4). All VIF values are much lower than the conservative threshold of 3.0 suggesting that collinearity is not an issue in this study. The explanatory power of the model was assessed by the coefficient of determination (R-Square) and effect sizes (f-Square). The R-Square value of Perceived Customer Design Thinking is 0.185. Furthermore, the model explained 30.8% of the variance of the Purchase Decision construct (R-Square = 0.308). The predictive power of the model was assessed using the PLSpredict procedure, validating the predictive capacity of the structural model.

Table 4. Structural Model Assessment

Construct Relationship	VIF	f-Square	R-Square	Q-Square Predict
Perceived Customer Design Thinking (M)			0.185	0.087 – 0.142
Self-Transcendence (X) → M	1	0.226		
Purchase Decision (Y)			0.308	0.107 – 0.152
Self-Transcendence (X) → Y	1.226	0.116		
Perceived Customer Design Thinking (M) → Y	1.226	0.139		

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The hypotheses were tested by a bootstrapping procedure (5,000 subsamples) to assess the statistical significance of direct and indirect (mediating) effects. The hypothesis testing results are shown in Table 5. The results show that Self-Transcendence has a positive and significant direct influence on Perceived Customer Design Thinking ($\beta = 0.430$, $T = 10.901$, $p < 0.001$), therefore supporting H1. Similarly, Perceived Customer Design Thinking has positive and significant effect towards Purchase Decision ($\beta = 0.343$, $T = 7.883$, $p < 0.001$). This provides support to H2. The direct relationship between Self-Transcendence and Purchase Decision is also positive and statistically significant ($\beta = 0.313$, $T = 7.198$, $p < 0.001$), confirming H3. Finally, the specific indirect effect was examined to test the mediating role of Perceived Customer Design Thinking. The results show a significant indirect path from Self-Transcendence to Purchase Decision via Perceived Customer Design Thinking ($\beta = 0.147$, $T = 6.438$, $p < 0.001$). This means that the direct effect (H3) is significant in addition to the indirect effect. Therefore, it can be concluded that Perceived Customer Design Thinking is a partial mediator in this theoretical framework. Thus, H4 is strongly supported.

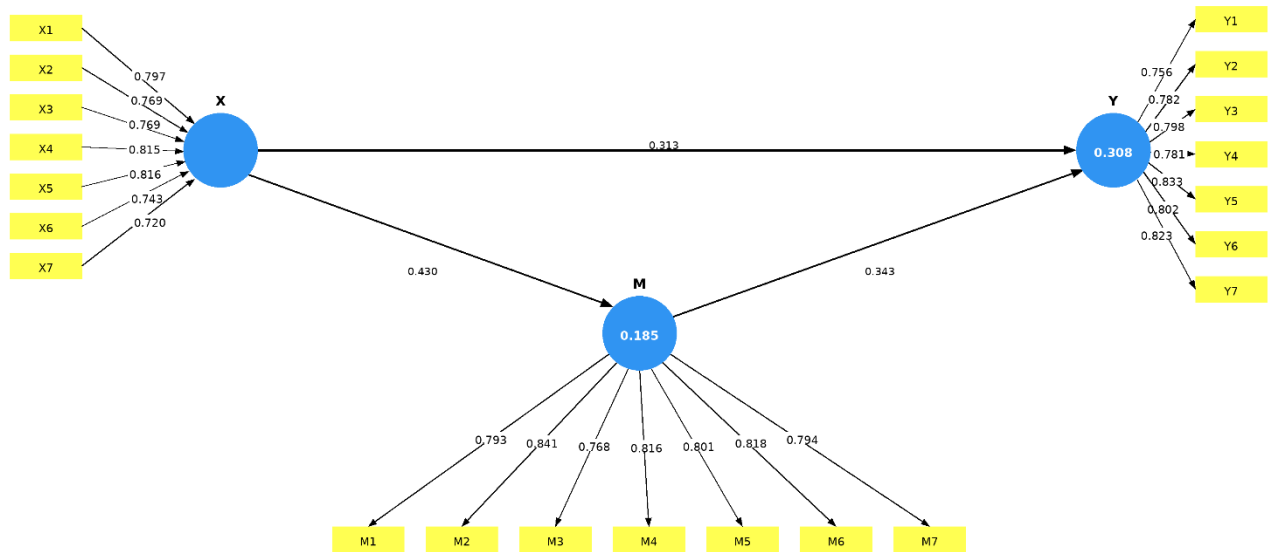


Fig. 2. Structural Model

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Results (Direct and Indirect Effects)

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	Original Sample (β)	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1	Self-Transcendence (X) \rightarrow PCDT (M)	0.430	0.039	10.901	< 0.001	Supported
H2	PCDT (M) \rightarrow Purchase Decision (Y)	0.343	0.044	7.883	< 0.001	Supported
H3	Self-Transcendence (X) \rightarrow Purchase Decision (Y)	0.313	0.044	7.198	< 0.001	Supported
H4	Self-Transcendence (X) \rightarrow PCDT (M) \rightarrow Purchase Decision (Y)	0.147	0.023	6.438	< 0.001	Supported

4.5 Discussion

The purpose of this study is to propose a theoretical model based on Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) to explore the factors influencing the purchase decision of ethnic accessories of consumers in the digital age (Arnould et al., 2021). The empirical findings successfully confirm all the working hypotheses. It shows that self-transcendence is an important driver of both Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT) and purchase decisions, with PCDT playing an important mediating role as a partial mediator. The findings indicate that self-transcendence has a significant positive direct effect on Perceived Customer Design Thinking (H1, $\beta = 0.430$) and a positive direct effect on the actual purchase decisions (H3, $\beta = 0.313$) as direct effects. Self-transcendence, with its focus on universalism and benevolence, serves as an inner moral compass, intrinsically motivating individuals to engage in actions that promote cultural preservation (Qotrunnada et al., 2023; Zhao & Huang, 2024). Consumers guided by these values are much more receptive to authentic cultural stories and have a greater tendency towards domestic consumption decisions (Duong et al., 2023; Yingqing et al., 2024; Zhao & Huang, 2024). As a result, they place great value on design work that is empathetic and culturally adapted, and that successfully translates values held internally into material preferences for domestic and heritage products. Also, this research confirms that Perceived Customer Design Thinking has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions (H2, $\beta = 0.343$) and it partially mediates the relationship between self-transcendence and purchase decisions (H4, $\beta = 0.147$).

However, in the contemporary digital environment, traditional products are often confronted with cultural hollowness, where their profound cultural meanings are reduced to aesthetic commodities (Hungara & Nobre, 2021). However, consumers' cognitive-emotional bridge is vital when they assess ethnic accessories and perceive a high level of design thinking, such as the conscious translation of traditional symbolism into modern metaphor designs by brands like Subeng Klasik. This design process essentially functions as a deep sensemaking practice which enhances the perceived actual value of the products and directly triggers concrete economic actions (Eklund et al., 2022). These results have important theoretical and practical implications. This research theoretically extends the CCT framework within the digital marketing context by providing a quantitative model to map the interaction between internal value systems and external product evaluations (Arnould et al., 2021). It provides a new conceptual framework for understanding how abstract spiritual needs are transformed into concrete economic behaviours in the digital marketplace. The findings provide practical insights for practitioners in the creative industry and MSMEs. Brand practitioners can use empathetic design and authentic storytelling strategically to combat superficial cultural commodification and to increase consumer emotional resonance (Goswami et al., 2025). By emphasising quality craftsmanship and showing how traditional motifs can be adapted to modern lifestyles, self-transcendent and ethical fashion consumers will be powerfully attracted, thus maximising market conversions. There are some limitations of this study that provide directions for future research, but also some important contributions. First, the use of cross-sectional survey data limits the ability to make firm causal

inferences over time. The second limitation is the sample's heavy concentration on consumers of a particular brand Subeng Klasik in the Indonesian market, which may limit the generalisability of the findings across other product categories. Future research could broaden the scope of the research to include a wider range of cultural heritage products such as traditional textiles or culinary heritage (Ridwan, 2022), and utilise longitudinal designs to follow up on the development of consumer perceptions of design thinking. Also, the addition of possible moderating variables such as digital marketing engagement or brand trust would provide a more holistic view of the cultural consumption ecosystem.

5. Conclusion

This study successfully explains the mechanism underlying consumers' purchase decisions toward ethnic accessories in the digital era by integrating Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) with the concepts of self-transcendence and Perceived Customer Design Thinking (PCDT). The findings demonstrate that self-transcendence has a positive and significant effect on both PCDT and purchase decisions. Furthermore, PCDT significantly influences purchase decisions and partially mediates the relationship between self-transcendence and purchase decisions. These results indicate that consumers who possess strong values of universalism and benevolence are more likely to appreciate authentic and culturally meaningful design processes, which subsequently encourage purchasing behavior. The study contributes to the development of CCT by highlighting PCDT as a cognitive-emotional mechanism that translates abstract cultural and spiritual values into concrete economic actions.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the use of a cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to establish causal relationships over time. Second, the sample was limited to consumers of a single ethnic accessory brand, namely Subeng Klasik, which may reduce the generalizability of the findings to other cultural heritage products and market contexts. Third, the model explains 30.8% of the variance in purchase decisions, indicating that other relevant factors influencing consumer behavior were not included in the present study.

Future research is encouraged to expand the scope of investigation by examining different categories of cultural heritage products, such as traditional textiles, handicrafts, or culinary products, across broader geographical settings. Researchers may also employ longitudinal or mixed method approaches to gain deeper insights into changes in consumer perceptions and purchasing behavior over time. In addition, incorporating variables such as brand trust, perceived authenticity, digital marketing engagement, consumer ethnocentrism, or cultural identity may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that shape purchase decisions for cultural heritage products in the digital marketplace.

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