

Received: 31 October 2024 Accepted: 7 November 2024  
Doi: <https://doi.org/10.33182/tbm.v2i2.3469>

# The Influence of Image Similarity on Impulsive Buying Behavior of Hanoi Youth

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## *Abstract*

*The study delved into the intricate relationship between image congruence and consumer behavior, particularly focusing on impulse buying behavior among young adults. Through a comprehensive theoretical framework, it explored the impact of various types of image congruence, such as lifestyle, ideal image, actual image, and ideal social similarity, on emotional value, perceived quality, and ultimately, impulse buying behavior. The research employed a rigorous methodology, including exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses, to validate the proposed constructs and hypotheses. Key findings revealed that lifestyle and actual image similarity positively influence perceived value, whereas ideal image similarity impacts emotional value. Perceived value and perceived quality were identified as significant predictors of impulse buying behavior. The study's implications extend to both academia and industry, providing insights into the role of image congruence in consumer behavior and offering practical guidance for marketers in enhancing brand-customer connections. Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges limitations, particularly in exploring ideal social similarity, prompting avenues for future research in this domain.*

**Keywords:** *Impulsive buying behavior; Perceived value; Perceived quality; Lifestyle similarity; Actual image similarity*

## 1. Introduction

An important role in building a strong brand image and connecting with customers, especially in today's fiercely competitive market. Capturing consumers' attention and creating a trustworthy emotional connection is undeniable. In particular, in this context, the visual similarity between the consumer and the brand becomes a decisive factor in the shopping process and purchase decision. Consumer self-image includes: Actual self-image congruence, Ideal self-image congruence, Social self-image congruence, and Self-image congruence ideal social body. [1] Celebrity brand trust belongs to the emotional component of celebrity brand equity, confirming the sequential cause-and-effect relationship between research concepts based on the stimulus-subject-response model. response (S-O-R). The authenticity of a brand in the eyes of consumers [2] is a crucial factor determining the impression in consumers' memory, the fit between consumers and the brand. Particularly, the alignment of lifestyle and brand impacts brand loyalty. [3] In this regard, consumer attitudes act as a mediator

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influencing the relationship between brand lifestyle fit and purchase intention. However, despite being a significant factor, understanding how image congruence influences shopping behavior remains largely unexplored. In this context, research on the role of image congruence in shopping behavior becomes essential and meaningful. Therefore, this study aims to explore and analyze further the influence of image congruence on shopping behavior, especially the role of shopping behavior as a crucial intermediary variable. However, while these studies provide valuable insights into the influence of social image congruence on impulse shopping behavior, there are still notable knowledge gaps that need further investigation. Specific mechanisms through which social image congruence affects impulse purchasing behavior have yet to be explored. Additionally, the role of social media platforms and online platforms in shaping perceptions of social congruence and its impact on impulse shopping behavior needs further consideration. With the increasing popularity of social commerce and direct-to-consumer platforms, understanding how these digital environments facilitate social influence and impulse shopping behavior is crucial for both academia and the industry.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH MODEL**

### **2.1 Cognitive – Emotion – Behavioral Intention Model**

The Perception-Emotion-Intention-Behavior (PEIB) model is a theoretical framework that acknowledges human behavior is influenced by the interaction of cognitive processes, emotions, and behavior. This model has been applied to various fields such as addictive behavior, self-regulation, perception, and social cognition. [4]The Interaction of Person-Affect-Cognition-Execution (I-PACE) model provides an updated and comprehensive framework for understanding behaviors. The model emphasizes that consumer behavior goes through three stages: perception - emotion - behavioral intention. [5]Perception and emotion directly influence behavior, with emotional factors potentially serving as intermediaries in the relationship between perception and behavior.

### **2.2. Research model**

#### **2.1.1. Impulsive buying behavior**

Impulse buying behavior is a spontaneous shopping behavior that is not planned in advance but often arises from random stimuli or immediate purchase intentions. In the perception-emotion-behavior model, perception and emotion play crucial roles in driving impulse buying behavior. For marketers, understanding factors such as advertising, product experiences, and customer emotions can help them develop effective marketing strategies to stimulate impulsive purchasing behavior. [6]Impulse buying behavior stems from managing impressions in collective culture. [7]Brand factors directly impact positive psychological factors. Brand factors have a direct positive effect on online impulse buying behavior. Psychological factors do not have a direct positive impact on online impulse buying behavior, and psychological factors directly impact online impulse buying behavior through the intermediary of brand factors.

#### **2.1.2. Life style similarity:**

Consumer lifestyle is an integral part of their identity. In the relationship between consumers and brands, similarity in lifestyle also plays a crucial role in enhancing consumer commitment and loyalty. [8, 9]Alignment with an ideal lifestyle positively influences consumer purchasing



decisions. Lifestyle similarity can create a strong connection between [2] [10] consumer emotions, sentiments, and brands, thereby driving the shopping decision process and building brand equity. [1] Fashion lifestyle significantly influences the perceived value of luxury fashion brands. [10] Meanwhile, [11] similarities or differences in CEO lifestyle and organizational culture provide profound insights into the potential positive impacts of lifestyle similarity on perceived quality.

**Hypothesis H1a:** Lifestyle similarity positively influences emotional value.

**Hypothesis H1b:** Lifestyle similarity positively influences perceived quality.

### 2.1.3. Ideal Image Similarity:

Ideal image similarity can be considered a form of need, a sense of lack. Consumers have ideal images in their psyche, and they are drawn to those real-life values. [12] Fit with the ideal image influences consumer purchasing decisions when buying directly, customer perception quality [13], [8] positively influences marketing activities and enterprise motivation perception [14], [15] consumer attitudes toward retailers. Additionally, [16] similarity with the ideal image can reduce the negative impact of inconsistency with oneself, [17] helping users quickly in shopping decisions and brand prioritization. [18] Focusing on the role of self-image in consumer behavior, where psychological and social factors influence user self-image, and how these factors interact with consumer purchasing decisions. The relationship between self-image and consumer behavior. An ideal self-image combines attributes that one desires to have [19] [20] Indicates that ideal fit is the degree of similarity between consumers' ideal images and the image or personality of the brand. Researchers have proposed that the purchase and consumption of publicly consumed products are more influenced by consumers' ideal fit than their actual fit. [21] Similarity in appearance with the avatar has influenced the intention to purchase virtual products, and this relationship is entirely moderated by fit and flow of the avatar. This study also shows that the intention to purchase virtual products can influence the intention to purchase real products [22]. Similarity is an intermediary factor between destination advertising and visit intentions. [23] Consumer brand homogeneity positively affects brand love, attachment, and support intention. Furthermore, brand attachment and love mediate the relationship between brand homogeneity and brand support.

**Hypothesis H2a:** Ideal image similarity positively influences emotional value.

**Hypothesis H2b:** Ideal image similarity positively influences perceived quality.

### 2.1.4. Actual image similarity

Actual image similarity means the brand has an image or personality that aligns with how consumers perceive themselves. [24] Actual image similarity impacts brand loyalty, [25] positively influences the formation of perception and perceived value [26], [27], significantly affects purchase intention, consumer satisfaction, and loyalty to the brand [28] [29]. This underscores the importance of understanding and leveraging the alignment between personal image and brand image to positively impact consumer shopping behavior and loyalty. [19] Self-Actual image similarity is the correlation between the brand's image or personality and the consumer's self-image or how they perceive themselves, representing the degree of alignment between the consumer's real image and the brand's image or personality [20]. [30] Consumer evaluations of publicly consumed brands are more influenced by the similarity

between the brand image and the ideal self-image of consumers than the actual self-image [31]. [32] Consumers express their identity by choosing brands with personalities that match their own. The symbolic personality of a brand has been seen as a tool for consumers to express themselves [33]; [34]; [35]). [36] Reveals that self-congruence is a strong predictor of satisfaction. When there is high compatibility between the brand's personality and the consumer's self-perception, this tends to have a more favorable impact on brand preference, brand loyalty, attitude toward the brand, brand evaluation, purchase intention, and consumer satisfaction with the brand.

**Hypothesis H3a:** Actual image similarity positively influences emotional value.

**Hypothesis H3b:** Actual image similarity positively influences perceived quality.

### 2.1.5. Ideal Social Similarity:

Ideal social similarity is a concept in social psychology and human relationships, referring to the similarity between individuals in values, beliefs, goals, and lifestyles that they consider ideal or desirable. This similarity often stems from sharing core values and perspectives, which can manifest in various aspects of life such as family views, religion, politics, education, and personal or professional goals. [37] Similarity with ideal social circles plays a crucial role, influencing the relationship between individuals and organizations. [38] [39] It plays an important role in influencing impulse buying behavior. [40] The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory can be used to explain the influence of ideal social similarity on impulse buying behavior, showing that the presence of others in the social environment can stimulate impulsive reactions, leading to spontaneous and unplanned purchases.

**Hypothesis H4a:** Ideal social similarity positively influences emotional value.

**Hypothesis H4b:** Ideal social similarity positively influences perceived quality.

### 2.1.6. Perceived Value

Perceived value is defined as the overall assessment of consumers regarding the convenience of a product based on the perception of what is received and what is given up. Perceived value is the interaction between consumers and products [41]. Perceived value influences perceptual benefits [42], consumer trust mediates the relationship between perceived value and consumers' willingness to continue purchasing. [43] Perceived value positively influences consumers' intention to participate in online group buying, further emphasizing the impact of perceived value on consumer behavior, especially in the context of group buying activities. [44, 45] The role of perceived value as a key determinant in online shopping. This demonstrates that consumers' perception of value strongly influences their impulse buying decisions in the online shopping environment. In the context of social commerce, consumers care about satisfying benefits and emotional value [46]. Perceived value evaluates the comparison between consumers' perceptions of time and money; they are not simply buying goods, but rather buying stories.

**Hypothesis H5:** Perceived value positively influences impulse buying behavior.

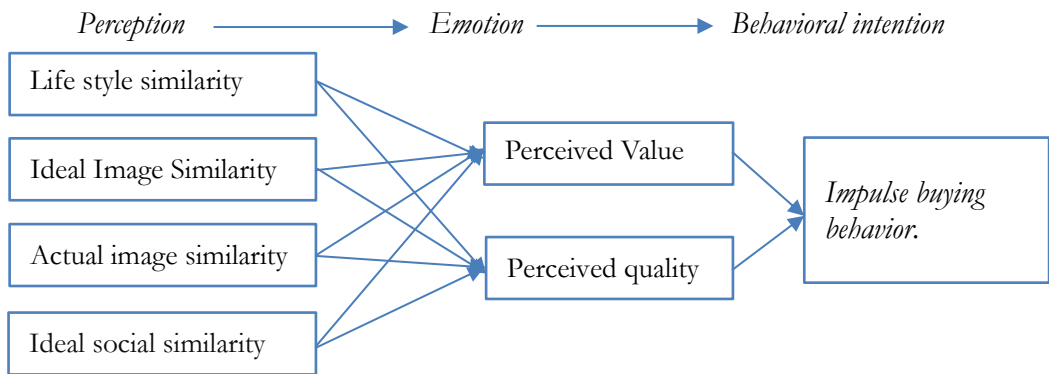


### 2.1.7. Perceived Quality:

Perceived quality is the quality of a product/service based on consumers' perceptions. It is the criterion from the subjective perspective of the evaluator, not based on principles of specifications, processes, etc. It is consumers' objective evaluation of the overall excellence or superiority of the product [47]. Perceived quality plays a role in enhancing brand attachment for consumers [48], positively impacting consumer attitudes [49, 50], and impulse buying behavior.

**Hypothesis H6:** Perceived quality positively influences impulse buying behavior.

**Figure 1.** Research Model



### 2.2. Research Methodology:

**Research Scale:** Constructed based on the premise of previous studies.

**Sample Survey:** The authors utilized a random sampling method, with a questionnaire consisting of 35 main questions, requiring a minimum sample size of 175 [51]. Through the survey process, the authors obtained responses from 417 participants who are young adults in the Hanoi area. **Data Processing:** The authors processed raw data by cleaning and encoding it. Subsequently, they employed SPSS26 software for descriptive statistics, assessing the reliability of the scale, and using Amos20 software to test the research model.

### 3. RESULT RESULTS

#### 3.1. Scale validation

##### 3.1.1. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) and Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

**Table 1.** Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Alpha

| Symbol (Observed variables) | Items        |              |              |              |              |              |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                             | 1            | 2            | 3            | 4            | 5            | 6            |
| IS5                         | .840         |              |              |              |              |              |
| IS4                         | .840         |              |              |              |              |              |
| IS2                         | .835         |              |              |              |              |              |
| IS1                         | .823         |              |              |              |              |              |
| IS6                         | .806         |              |              |              |              |              |
| IS3                         | .788         |              |              |              |              |              |
| LS4                         |              | .827         |              |              |              |              |
| LS6                         |              | .826         |              |              |              |              |
| LS3                         |              | .814         |              |              |              |              |
| LS5                         |              | .807         |              |              |              |              |
| LS2                         |              | .784         |              |              |              |              |
| LS1                         |              | .739         |              |              |              |              |
| SS5                         |              |              | .843         |              |              |              |
| SS3                         |              |              | .826         |              |              |              |
| SS2                         |              |              | .814         |              |              |              |
| SS4                         |              |              | .796         |              |              |              |
| SS1                         |              |              | .696         |              |              |              |
| RS2                         |              |              |              | .817         |              |              |
| RS3                         |              |              |              | .805         |              |              |
| RS5                         |              |              |              | .761         |              |              |
| RS4                         |              |              |              | .736         |              |              |
| RS1                         |              |              |              | .733         |              |              |
| RV4                         |              |              |              |              | .831         |              |
| RV5                         |              |              |              |              | .821         |              |
| RV3                         |              |              |              |              | .755         |              |
| RV1                         |              |              |              |              | .747         |              |
| RV2                         |              |              |              |              | .731         |              |
| RQ4                         |              |              |              |              |              | .923         |
| RQ1                         |              |              |              |              |              | .866         |
| RQ2                         |              |              |              |              |              | .860         |
| RQ3                         |              |              |              |              |              | .843         |
| <b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>     | <b>0.924</b> | <b>0.915</b> | <b>0.861</b> | <b>0.849</b> | <b>0.847</b> | <b>0.899</b> |
| <b>Eigenvalue</b>           | <b>7.261</b> | <b>3.649</b> | <b>3.031</b> | <b>2.853</b> | <b>2.504</b> | <b>2.063</b> |

Source: Data verified at SPSS26 software

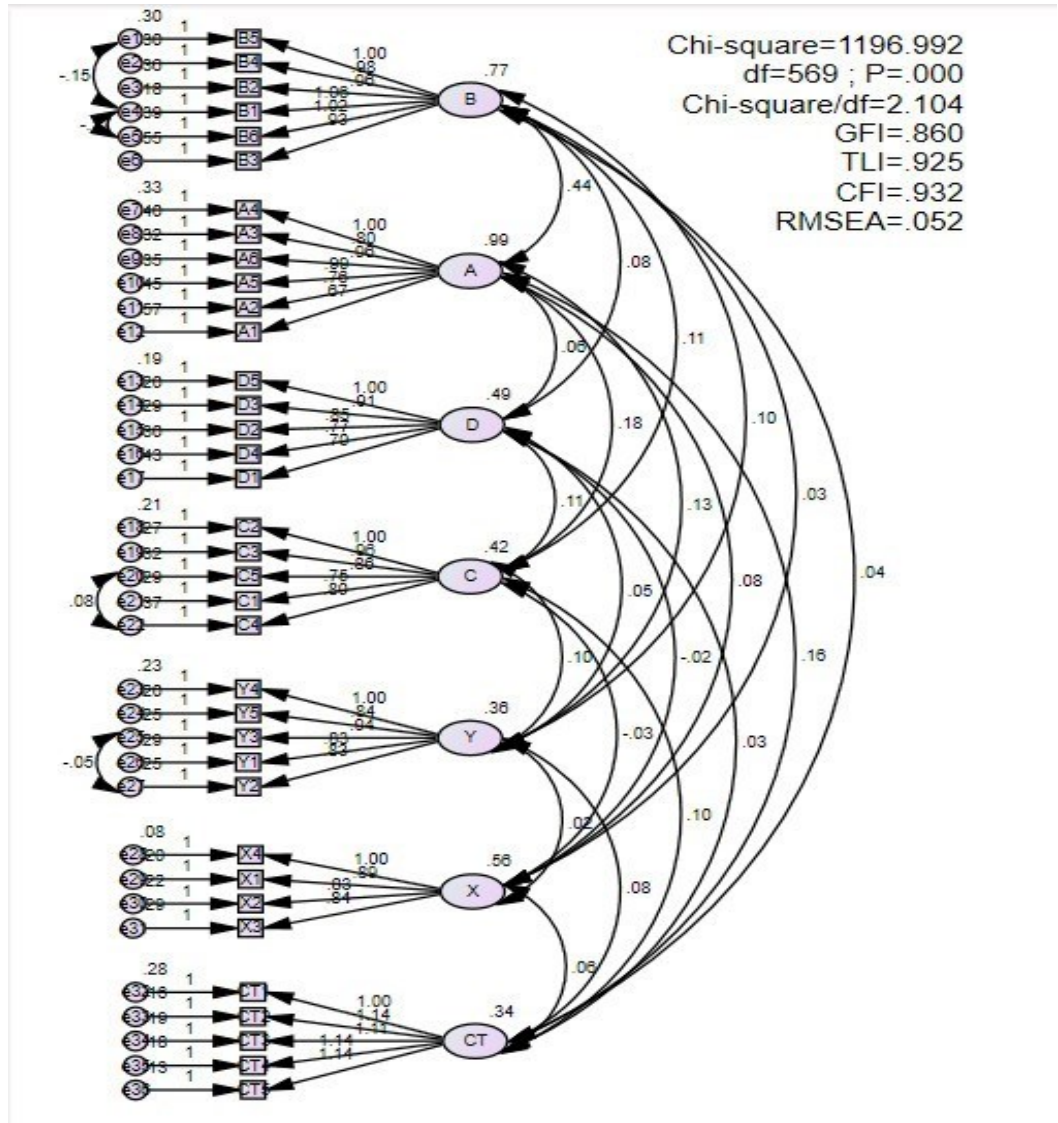
The results of the EFA indicated a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy of 0.86, which exceeds the recommended threshold of 0.5, and a significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with a p-value of 0.000, indicating appropriateness for factor analysis. Six factors were extracted based on eigenvalues greater than 1, accounting for a cumulative variance of 68.904%. The researcher aimed to select observed variables of high quality, thus a factor loading threshold of 0.5 was utilized instead of selecting loadings based on sample size. The results of the rotation matrix revealed that 31 observed variables were grouped into 6 factors, with all variables exhibiting factor loadings exceeding 0.5 and no cross-loadings observed. Cronbach's Alpha reliability analysis demonstrated that all scales met the



requirement for internal consistency, with coefficients greater than 0.7. Thus, the scales achieved satisfactory reliability.

### 3.1.2. Confirmatory factor analysis for the scale (CFA)

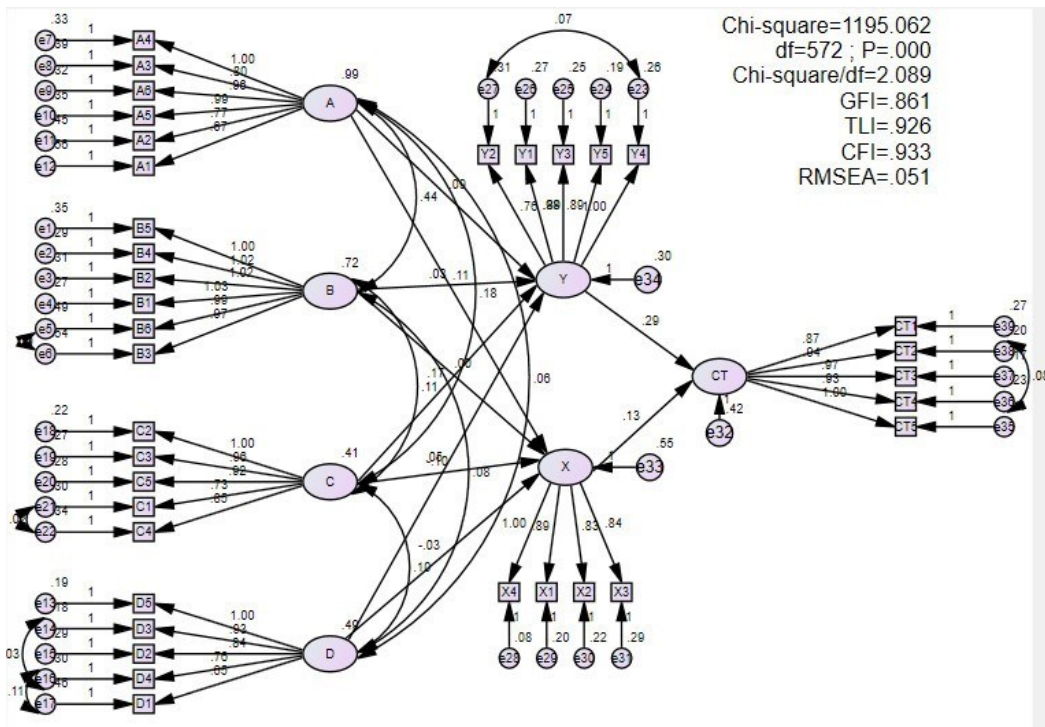
Figure 2. Results of CFA for the measurement scales



Source: The data was analyzed using Amos20 software

The results indicate that, overall, this model has a Chi-square value of 1196.992 with 569 degrees of freedom and a p-value of 0.000. The relative Chi-square statistic CMIN/df is 2.104 (< 3), indicating a good fit. Other fit indices such as CFI = 0.932 (> 0.9), GFI = 0.860 (> 0.8), TLI = 0.925 (> 0.9), and RMSEA = 0.052 (< 0.06) meet the requirements [52, 53]. Therefore, this model fits the survey data well.

Figure 3. SEM Results for the standardized research model



Source: The data was analyzed using Amos20 software

The results of the structural equation modeling (SEM) research model (Figure 4) show that the research model has 572 degrees of freedom with a Chi-square value of 1195.062. The relative Chi-square statistic  $CMIN/df = 2.089 (< 3)$ , indicating a good fit. Other fit indices such as  $CFI = 0.933 (> 0.9)$ ;  $TLI = 0.926 (> 0.9)$ ;  $GFI = 0.861 (> 0.8)$ ;  $RMSEA = 0.051 (< 0.06)$ ;  $PCLOSE = 0.267 (> 0.05)$ , meet the requirements [52, 53]. Based on these statistical indices, it can be concluded that the model is appropriate for the survey data.

Table 2. Results of testing the relationships between research hypotheses

| Relationship | Hypothesis | Estimate<br>standardization | SE    | CR     | P            | Hypothetical<br>results |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------------|-------|--------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Y <--- A     | H1a        | 0.158                       | 0.039 | 2.37   | 0.018        | Accepted                |
| X <--- A     | H1b        | 0.142                       | 0.049 | 2.177  | 0.029        | Accepted                |
| Y <--- B     | H2a        | 0.044                       | 0.044 | 0.675  | <b>0.5</b>   | <b>Rejected</b>         |
| X <--- B     | H2b        | -0.002                      | 0.056 | -0.03  | <b>0.976</b> | <b>Rejected</b>         |
| Y <--- C     | H3a        | 0.19                        | 0.055 | 3.107  | 0.002        | Accepted                |
| X <--- C     | H3b        | -0.088                      | 0.07  | -1.481 | <b>0.139</b> | <b>Rejected</b>         |
| Y <--- D     | H4a        | 0.061                       | 0.047 | 1.06   | <b>0.289</b> | <b>Rejected</b>         |
| Y <--- D     | H4b        | -0.027                      | 0.06  | -0.48  | <b>0.631</b> | <b>Rejected</b>         |
| Z <--- Y     | H5         | 0.249                       | 0.066 | 4.374  | 0            | Accepted                |
| Z <--- X     | H6         | 0.142                       | 0.047 | 2.73   | 0.006        | Accepted                |

\*Estimate: estimated value; SE: standard deviation; CR: critical value

Source: The data was analyzed using Amos20 software.





Comments: The parameter estimation results indicate that hypotheses H1a, H1b, H3a, H5, and H6 ( $p < 0.05$ ) are accepted, while hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H3b are rejected.

Specifically, the recognized hypotheses are:

**H1a:** Ideal image similarity has a positive impact on emotional value.

**H1b:** Lifestyle similarity has a positive impact on perceived quality.

**H3a:** Actual image similarity has a positive impact on emotional value.

**H5:** Perceived value positively influences impulse buying behavior.

**H6:** Perceived quality positively influences impulse buying behavior.

### **3.2. Conclusion and research implications:**

#### **3.2.1. Conclusion:**

The study proposed hypotheses to examine the relationship between celebrity image similarity and impulse buying behavior among young people. It also investigated the impact of Perceived Value and Perceived Quality on impulse buying behavior. The results indicate that Lifestyle similarity positively influences perceived value, which is consistent with previous research [2] [10]. Lifestyle similarity also positively affects perceived quality, aligning with the findings of previous studies [11, 13]. Actual image similarity has a positive impact on perceived value [26]. Perceived value directly influences impulse buying behavior [43-45] [46]. Perceived quality directly affects impulse buying behavior [49, 50].

#### **3.2.2. Research Implications:**

This study contributes to understanding the impact of image similarity on impulse buying behavior. By applying the C-A-C model to integrate Perception - Emotion - Impulse buying behavior, the study explored the relationship between lifestyle similarity, actual image similarity, perceived value, and impulse buying behavior. The results indicate that the higher the level of image similarity, the higher the perceived quality.

#### **3.2.3. Managerial Implications:**

Based on the findings of this study, managers can recognize the importance of understanding and applying lifestyle and actual image similarity factors in marketing and advertising strategies to positively influence customer shopping experiences. Enhancing lifestyle and actual image similarity between the brand and customers can increase customers' perceived value of the product/service. This may lead to more positive impulse buying decisions. Therefore, managers may consider developing marketing and advertising strategies to create a more convenient and appealing shopping environment for customers, thereby enhancing business effectiveness and customer satisfaction.

In the context where businesses use celebrities to advertise products or services, creating similarity in lifestyle and actual image between celebrities and customers can bring many benefits. By ensuring that the image of the celebrity reflects the values, lifestyle, and aspirations of the target audience, businesses can create a strong and reliable connection between the celebrity and the brand. Specifically, partnering with celebrities whose lifestyle

and actual image align with the target audience can generate empathy and trust from customers. This can increase understanding and acceptance of the product or service, as well as create attraction and stimulation for impulse buying behavior. This helps businesses optimize the use of celebrities as brand representatives, enhance interaction and communication with customers, and ultimately drive sales.

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### **3.3. Research Limitations:**

The study developed a research model and proposed factors in image similarity; however, it has not yet found the level of appropriateness of ideal social similarity, ideal image similarity to the research model.

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