



Fan groups, family, and Chinese tourists' purchase intentions to cultural products: A structural equation modeling approach based on dimensional innovation

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ABSTRACT

The popularity of traditional culture and social change has led to cultural products moving from niche to popular categories in the Chinese tourism market. In this context, understanding the social factors becomes crucial. This study aims to explore the effects of fan groups and family cultural capital on perceived congruity and their subsequent impacts on the purchase intentions of cultural products. Using the grounded theory approach, this study developed the dimensions of fan group involvement, family cultural capital, and perceived congruity. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was adopted to test the research model. The results illustrated that most of relationships among group involvements/family cultural capital, perceived congruity, and purchase intention were significant. The influences of interactivity in fan groups and family capital materiality on perceived congruity were greater than those of the other antecedents. Fan groups and families did not follow the same path in influencing behavioral intentions. It was found that group belonging and family cultural activity did not directly affect the purchase intention. Meanwhile, group belonging and family cultural resonance's effects on perceived symbolic congruity were insignificant. Similarly, family cultural activity had no significant impact on perceived self-image congruity. The results of bootstrap revealed that the most mediating effects in the model were significant. This study provides new insights to construct an innovative framework. It has developed dimensions of traditional consumer socialization agents in the field of consumer behavior, typically applied as observable variables in education studies. The findings highlight the importance of several social and psychological factors to enhance tourists' purchase intentions for cultural products. The conclusions offer practical recommendations for brands that attempt to incorporate traditional elements into their products and marketing strategies.

1. Introduction

Intangible cultural heritage represents a crucial part of collective identity and helps preserve the destination nation's cultural and ethnographic heritage (Zhang et al., 2023). Currently, young Chinese tourists are more inclined to pursue spiritual cultures associated with the traditional culture of past dynasties (Li et al., 2021), such as using traditional stationery, household items, and jewelry, wearing traditional clothing, taking photos during tours, and sharing them on social media platforms. The development of cultural products and social media has made remarkable progress in China, forming a "cultural fever" that has undeniably contributed to the growth of cultural tourism. Cultural products provide stable material support for cultural symbolism (Reed

et al., 2012). There is a threshold at which the culture spreads. When culture is attached to a product, it transcends the boundaries of cognition and is expressed at an easily understood level.

The growing awareness of culture has also attracted considerable interest from researchers (Wu & Kim, 2022). Numerous studies have been conducted in various areas, including product design (Li & Li, 2022), self-congruity (Guo et al., 2022), cultural identity and awareness (Satrio et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2023), perceived value (Lin et al., 2022), social media and engagement (Magno, 2017), social factors such as social identity (Zeqiri et al., 2022), and socialization agents (Tian et al., 2022). Additionally, empirical studies have reported that socialization agents, such as family, media, and peers, play significant roles in adolescents' fashion involvement (Su & Tong, 2020). Family, peers, and

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media are consistently recognized as crucial sources of interaction regarding consumer behavior related to clothing (Lachance et al., 2003). However, limited research exists on the impact of socialization on cultural consumer behavior. Traditional research typically regarded socialization agents like group peers and family as observable variables in education studies. Moreover, it is worth discussing whether the influence of socialization agents on individuals during adolescence will be awakened. That is, whether they will change their consumption behavior further by influencing their self-cognition after adulthood.

This study chose Han clothing for its popularity and representation to investigate Chinese tourists' purchasing or renting motivations. The Han nationality is the most populous ethnic group in China with a profound culture (Li et al., 2021). The enduring material stability of Han clothing reinforces its profound cultural symbolism. In China, the Han clothing market has exploded in recent years, and products with traditional cultural elements are becoming increasingly popular in many tourist spots. According to iiMedia Research, from 2015 to 2023, the market size of Han clothing in China surged from 190 million yuan to 14.47 billion yuan (iiMedia Research, 2023). By 2022, 54.7 % of the Chinese public said they had learned about Han clothing through social media (iiMedia Research, 2022). Young Chinese people are used to buying or renting Han clothing and taking photos during their journey. Due to the opportunity of traditional culture fever, the "Han clothing fever" will continue to heat up, resulting in the development of cultural products from niche to popular categories. Hence, to successfully capitalize on this trend, brands need to understand tourists' purchasing motivations to improve their product design and marketing campaigns.

Family, peers, and the media have been regarded as essential factors that cannot be ignored in individuals' socialization. Previous research has examined the family environment regarding the socialization factors that influence decision-making about holidays (Aleti et al., 2015). Further research has focused more on the influence of friends in the social media environment, considering two agents: like-minded peers and social media (Aleti et al., 2017; Bailey et al., 2023). The overarching objective of this study is to investigate and broaden our understanding of tourists' behavior from a socialization perspective. Specifically, this study compares the relative influence of family and group involvement on consumers' behavior. Furthermore, this study also aims to explore whether socialization's impact on purchase intention works through the formation of self-congruity, which has been mentioned as a critical cognitive process in clothing purchase decisions (Ceballos & Bejarano, 2017; La Rosa & Jorgensen, 2021). Therefore, the purposes of this study are twofold: (1) to develop the dimensions of socialization agents (group involvement and family cultural capital) and examine what socialization agents may play a relatively more significant role in the formation of self-congruity, and (2) to examine the mediating effect of self-congruity between socialization agents and individuals' behavior.

To this end, this study adopted the grounded theory approach to develop the original and targeted dimensions of fan group involvement, family cultural capital, and perceived congruity in tourism consumption behavior. We then presented our hypotheses and constructed a research model based on the socialization theory. Sequentially, SEM was employed to test the research model. Finally, we expanded the discussion and implications of the underlying mechanism regarding why Chinese tourists are urged to purchase cultural products on their trips.

2. Literature reviews and hypotheses development

2.1. Socialization theory and cultural behavior

Socialization is the process by which people communicate with others to develop skills and acquire knowledge that enables them to participate effectively as consumers in the marketplace (Ward, 1974). Conventional socialization involves acquiring social norms and values within familial relationships such as family members, colleagues, and friends (e.g., Kim et al., 2009; Mukhopadhyay & Yeung, 2010). In

addition, online social media has facilitated interactions within virtual groups, encompassing individuals with pre-existing connections and unfamiliar individuals (Kizgin et al., 2018; Lueg et al., 2006). Peer communication on social media may facilitate learning about consumer behavior, including information searching, involvement, and purchase intentions related to brands and products (Kizgin et al., 2024; Whang et al., 2021). The influence of peers on consumer socialization is generally recognized (Essiz & Mandrik, 2021; Zawadzka et al., 2023). Fan groups actively shape members' behavior as influential social entities. In particular, the role of peer communication in the online context has received considerable research attention (Ahuja & Galvin, 2003; Hu et al., 2016). However, most previous studies have investigated the impact of peer communication and group involvement on a single dimension, such as the number of peers (Ma et al., 2021; Oyedele & Goenner, 2023); this is insufficient to clarify the complexity of fan groups' impacts on the cultural experience.

The consumer socialization theory also provides a cognitive development perspective for comprehending the psychological process involved in socialization, viewing it as a consequence of several qualitative phases from infancy to adulthood (Kim et al., 2009). Regarding parent-child contact, researchers have discovered that communication between parents and children, as well as the overall family environment, exerts a noteworthy influence on the decision-making style of adults (Nguyen & Truong, 2021). Much socialization research has concentrated on children's cognitive processes concerning purchase decisions and parents' roles in developing these processes (Mishra & Maity, 2021). To a certain degree, this perspective fails to acknowledge the enduring and nuanced impact of the family environment and capital accumulation on children's adult cognition, attitude, and behavior (Wei et al., 2019). For instance, a family's cultural capital, including early exposure of children to calligraphy and parents' inclination toward traditional furniture, may enhance children's acceptance of cultural products as adults. Parents' cultural literacy also has specific restrictions on family life and education mode, which then affects the formation of the family atmosphere, thus affecting the socialization of individuals (Mo, 2020). To address these two gaps above, we aim to examine the influence of socialization agents on intentions pertaining to the experience of cultural product consumption from the perspectives of group involvement and family cultural capital.

2.2. Group involvement

Early studies described interactivity as a multidimensional social construct that captures characteristics such as group involvement (Van Dolen et al., 2007). The fan group typically relies on social media platforms for cultural activities, with engagement and interaction being significant characteristics of this fan group. Interest-based communities emerge organically and independently when certain users take the initiative to develop them while others actively seek out and join these communities. Individuals actively share their experiences with products or activities, swiftly spreading information and opinions within these communities through more impressive travel spots and better-service clothing rental shops. Individuals with shared interests have a greater propensity to establish social networks, creating new avenues for enhancing engagement. Individuals' engagement through fan groups can generate favorable perceptions (Osei-Frimpong & McLean, 2018).

Group involvement refers to the degree to which individuals perceive a group as participating in interactions, establishing a sense of belonging or immediacy within the group (Wang et al., 2015). Group engagement usually brings about individual perceived interactivity. Previous studies have found evidence that individuals' perceived interactivity and identification are closely related to how they identify themselves and further their behavior (Aleti et al., 2017; Hsu et al., 2018). Unlike brand communities' binary interactions (Elbedweihy et al., 2016), fan groups have emerged because of members' perceptions of similarity in interest and like-mindedness with social media influencers (Zhang & Li, 2022). Thus,

it is meaningful to explore the internal mechanism of fan group participation in cultural buying because of its spontaneity.

According to self-congruity theory, consumers are inclined to utilize goods or behaviors rich in functional value and symbolic meaning to express personal identities (Sirgy et al., 2008). Through the experience obtained via communicating with each other, consumers continue to improve their perceived value of products, and the resulting self-commodity congruity is more convenient for them to convey their personalities and values (Branaghan & Hildebrand, 2011). Furthermore, reliability, brand trustworthiness, or consumer-brand relationships can be perceived (Hashim et al., 2023; Veloutsou, 2015). High perceived group engagement leads to strong familiarity and impression of the objects discussed in the group (brand, product, or related information) (Chiang & Hsieh, 2011), which prompts a sense of intimacy between team members and the objects they are discussing. Several studies have demonstrated that consumer involvement in group buying has a significant impact on purchase intention (Sharma & Klein, 2016, 2020). Pursuing low prices is the main interest of these groups. Accordingly, we proposed the following hypotheses:

H1. Fan group involvement positively affects individuals' intention to purchase cultural products.

H2. Fan group involvement positively affects individuals' perceived congruity.

2.3. Family cultural capital

The family environment is essential in a child's understanding of persuasive intent, including shopping-related information (John, 1999). Several studies have indicated that children who grow up in a local area and have family members who produce local products are more likely to identify with and consume local products (Jung et al., 2020). As the basic unit of resident survival, the family can provide various types of family capital or resources, such as economic, cultural, and social. Cultural capital refers to an individual's innate or acquired cultural endowments and abilities, such as interests, aesthetics, habits, tastes, and lifestyles (Davies & Rizk, 2017). School education, other cultural practices, and family are the primary forms of cultural capital accumulation. An individual inherits cultural capital as predispositions from his/her parents. Parental cultural capital is positively related to the purchase intention of some ethnic and local products (Wei et al., 2019). Although existing research rarely directly studies the impact of family social capital on individuals' self-congruity, some studies have focused on the effects of family factors on self-concept formation in cultural and ethical consumption (Charry & Parguel, 2018). Prior studies have also reached a certain consensus on the role of cultural capital in understanding and predicting consumer behavior (Weinberger et al., 2017). For instance, objects possessing diverse cultural powers can shape individuals' beliefs and behavior (Zhou, 2022). Accordingly, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H3. Family cultural capital positively affects individuals' intention to purchase products.

H4. Family cultural capital positively affects individuals' perceived self-congruity.

2.4. Perceived congruity and purchasing intention

A core concept in psychological research is self-concept, which has profound implications for relevant research in other fields (Sirgy et al., 1991). Self-concept comprises an individual's cognition and emotional attitude toward oneself (Mudrick et al., 2016). Goods can be used as cultural tools to construct the self and world, and product material and symbolic attributes are closely related to self-concept. There are three clothing values: functional, symbolic (self-expression), and social (Upadhyay & Kamble, 2025). In terms of self-expression, people widely

consider clothing an effective tool for defining themselves (Phau & Lo, 2004). Individuals often consider clothing to be an extension of his or her personality. As a kind of clothing product, Han clothing not only contains its material attributes as a garment but also its symbolic attributes as a national symbol. In early related social psychology research, how consumers distinguish the id from the non-self through clothing has been studied (Pines & Aronson, 1983). Individuals improve their social self through consumption based on their cognition of environmental cues and social roles. Researchers suggested that self-congruity may affect customers' commitment to fashion products (Das, 2015), enhance brand loyalty (Sop & Kozak, 2019; Zhang, 2022), and positive WOM (Sicilia et al., 2016). In light of these findings, scholars have predicted that self-congruity in clothing will also affect behavioral intention (Hashim et al., 2023). Accordingly, we proposed the following hypothesis:

H5. Individuals' perceived congruity positively affects their intentions to purchase cultural products.

3. Grounded theorizing and research model

Although consumer socialization and perceived congruity are familiar concepts, there is no specific dimension division in the context of cultural buying. The existing scale needs to be more specific and targeted when measuring variables in the research model. Therefore, this study adopted the grounded theory method based on the preferences of young Chinese tourists and their socialization processes. Grounded theorizing has been used to study individual human behavior interactions between people and society. Formal interviews were conducted face-to-face or via WeChat voice communication. The researchers asked open questions according to the interview outline, and the interviewees could answer them freely. The interview questions mainly included: "Why did you purchase or rent Han national clothing (HNC) on your trip?", "What was the opportunity to start buying and wearing HNC?", "What factors do you consider when buying or renting an HNC?", "When you were a child or growing up? Was there an intense atmosphere of traditional culture?", "What is your parents' attitude towards your love of HNC?", "Do you share your experience of HNC with friends or on social media platforms?" and so on.

3.1. Procedure of grounded theorizing

Each in-depth interview was limited to 20–35 min. This study mainly screened consumers with high awareness of HNC and some experience in cultural consumption on one of their trips. Finally, 36,078 Chinese words were recorded in the text data for encoding. Among the 15 valid interviewees, there were three men and 12 women. The research team used a total of 13 interviews for the Nvivo 12.0 coding process and reserved two for testing theoretical saturation. The entire process can be divided into three stages: open, axial, and selective coding. The open coding stage extracted 118 conceptual nodes (n1-n118) and 27 first-order concepts (N1-N27). Table 1 lists some cases categorized and the coding process. Finally, the axial coding stage determined nine main second-order themes, as shown in Table 2.

This study adopted the stimuli-organism-response (S-O-R) model in the selective coding stage to construct relationships among second-order themes. The S-O-R model is a basic model to explain how the external environment affects individuals' emotional and cognitive states. The stimuli in the S-O-R model can be regarded as social capital and peer pressure, and consumer behaviors are predicted by emotional support linked to social capital and interactive communication under peer pressure (Huang, 2016). Social factors based on the implementation of user interaction have also been considered stimuli (Hu et al., 2016). In the S-O-R model, external stimuli from society and peers in the socialization process can be considered stimulus variables (S) (Erdogmus & Tatar, 2015). Organismic variable (O) generally includes affective and

Table 1
Some cases categorized and the coding process.

No.	First-Order Concepts	Conceptual Nodes	Interview Case Examples
N3	I would like to ask group members for their opinions.	n50, n51, n52, n53, n54, n55, n56	n51: If I know the shop, I can join the fan group to ask for feedback. The making period of Han clothing is very long. If you buy something inappropriate and don't like it, it is very troublesome; it is best to have buyer feedback. n53: We would discuss the design and fabric of each Han clothing and recommend each other. n87: When my mother was watching the poetry conference (a famous TV show in China), she told me about Yishu Wu (A student famous for her mastery of ancient poetry). She wore Han clothing, and when my mom and I watched the variety show together, we discussed it a little bit. n88: My mother always says that these traditional dresses look good on me, but she doesn't think the fabric is perfect, and she always asks me if I can buy pure cotton. n32: I think the design of Han clothing's skirt and top set will fit a little bit more into my image. n35: My body type aligns well with the beauty standards for women during the prosperous and mid-tang dynasties, so I think I suit Han clothing particularly well. My first Han clothing was a Ruqun (a typical traditional style) set. Also, I feel that Han clothing is quite good at hiding body imperfections.
N16	My parents discuss traditional Chinese culture with me.	n86, n87, n88, n89	
N20	I feel that HNC suits my figure.	n32, n33, n34, n35	

cognitive states (Eroglu et al., 2001). Some studies have considered perceived value as an organismic variable and evaluated it specifically through congruity when the consumer's perceived value is the degree to which the experience (including products and services) is consistent with the individual's value system or lifestyle (Han & Kim, 2020). Thus, perceived congruity can be regarded as an organismic variable in the S-O-R model. The response variable (R) represents a consumer's actual response. The actual response includes a variety of forms, from conscious to unconscious and from internal to external, where intention is the most dominant predictor of behavior. Therefore, the response variable in the S-O-R model can be considered as the behavioral intention of individuals toward HNC in conjunction with this study's theme.

3.2. Research hypotheses and model

According to grounded theory and the S-O-R model, fan group involvement and family cultural capital are external stimulus variables. Perceived congruity (self-image and traditional symbolic identity) is related to internal cognitive states triggered by external social factors, further affecting the response variable: behavior intention. Interaction is an essential feature of fan groups, which are usually based on social media platforms and allow individuals who share common aspirations and emotional identities to communicate with each other (Derbaix &

Table 2
Results of open coding and axial coding.

First-Order Concepts	Second-Order Themes
N1: We would discuss HNC shops in destinations. N2: I would be joining HNC groups and meeting at offline destinations. N3: I would like to ask group members for their opinions. N4: HNC is a way for the world to identify with. N5: I am part of the HNC group. N6: I would be wearing HNC with other group members on the road. N7: I have something in common with other members. N8: We have the similar taste in HNC. N9: My parents like to use Chinese furniture, porcelain, etc. N10: My parents like to collect old traditional objects. N11: My parents like to buy items that reflect traditional culture. N12: My family holds specific ceremonies on traditional holidays. N13: My parents would let me learn traditional Chinese arts. N14: When I was a child, my parents told me history stories. N15: My family is proud of the civilization of our nation. N16: My parents discuss traditional Chinese culture with me. N17: My parents are very much into traditional things. N18: I feel that wearing HNC makes me both gentle and knowledgeable. N19: I feel that wearing HNC gives me a classical beauty. N20: I feel that HNC suits my figure. N21: HNC reflects my aesthetic preferences. N22: I believe loving HNC is a recognition of traditional culture. N23: I agree that HNC has its historical meaning. N24: I agree that HNC is a carrier of Chinese culture. N25: I would like to recommend HNC to other traveling companions. N26: I would like to wear HNC on the road. N27: I would like to buy or rent HNC on the road.	Group interactivity (GIT) Group belonging (GBL) Group identity (GID) Family cultural materiality (FCM) Family cultural activities (FCA) Family cultural resonance (FCR) Perceived self-image congruity (PSIC) Perceived symbolic congruity (PSBC) Behavioral intention (BI)

Korchia, 2019). In contrast to mainstream culture, some fan groups, as sub-cultural groups, have the characteristics of group identity for sub-culture and cultural products. By the grounded theory approach, this study extracted three dimensions of fan group involvement (belonging, interactivity, and identity). Individuals in a fan group interact with other members, feel identity and belonging, and gradually form a sense of identity and confirmation of themselves (Mainolfi, 2020). The information shared in fan groups is often positive, strengthening emotional interest and integrating the depicted product with members' self-congruity. Accordingly, we extended Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 and then formulated the following hypotheses:

- H1a. Individuals' GIT positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H1b. Individuals' GBL positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H1c. Individuals' GID positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H2a. Individuals' GIT positively affects their PSIC.
- H2b. Individuals' GBL positively affects their PSIC.
- H2c. Individuals' GID positively affects their PSIC.
- H2d. Individuals' GIT positively affects their PSBC.
- H2e. : Individuals' GBL positively affects their PSBC.
- H2f. Individuals' GID positively affects their PSBC.

From the socialization perspective, family factors affect the formation of individual ideas, psychology, and behavior. Scholars have found that parent-child interaction and family atmosphere significantly affect children's decision-making (Zapf et al., 2022). Based on the grounded theory approach, it can be found that family influences individuals' perception imperceptibly, which is reflected in three aspects: emotional resonance, activity participation, and cultural material. Therefore, combined with the existing literature on family cultural capital, this study proposes the concept of family cultural capital, which refers to cultural assets constructed based on family cultural lifestyles, cultural atmospheres, interests, and hobbies in the living environment. The influence of family on purchase intention has been discussed in three dimensions: cultural materiality, cultural activities, and cultural resonance. Accordingly, we extended Hypothesis 3 and Hypothesis 4 and proposed the following hypotheses:

- H3a.** Individuals' FCM positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H3b.** Individuals' FCA positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H3c.** Individuals' FCR positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H4a.** Individuals' FCM positively affects their PSIC.
- H4b.** Individuals' FCA positively affect their PSIC.
- H4c.** Individuals' FCR positively affects their PSIC.
- H4d.** Individuals' FCM positively affects their PSBC.
- H4e.** Individuals' FCA positively affect their PSBC.
- H4f.** Individuals' FCR positively affects their PSBC.

Commodities are cultural tools for constructing the self and world. Product material and symbolic attributes will activate individuals' understanding of themselves; conversely, the activated self-concept will affect their perception of products or brands. In social psychology research, consumers are more likely to buy and wear clothing more consistent with their self-concept (Samala & Singh, 2019; Strubel & Goswami, 2022). This study defines the organism variable as individuals' perceived congruity, which refers to how they perceive the congruence between their self-concept and the material and symbolic attributes of cultural products. HNC contains both its material attributes as clothing and its symbolic attributes. Owing to the importance of clothing in self-construction and presentation, self-representation in self-concept is considered an essential concept closely related to clothing (Li & Yu, 2023). Some studies have suggested that individuals' perception of appearance is the primary motivation for their need for self-image consistency (Sung & Huddleston, 2018). About ethnic clothing, the Han people are often affected by complex historical issues, such as the bumpy history of China for thousands of years and cultural assimilation among different ethnic groups. Han Chinese people are anxious about the lack of their own ethnic identity when it comes to clothing. Consumption and experiential behavior are closely related to individuals' self-identity, and in pursuing self-congruity, people construct an ideal identity through their behavior (Fastoso & González-Jiménez, 2018; Zhang et al., 2022). For instance, people who perceive themselves as green consumers are more likely to purchase organic green products than ordinary consumers (Becerra et al., 2023). It has been argued that individuals' perceived product/brand consistency can positively influence their behavioral intention (Seric et al., 2020). Hence, we formulated the following two hypotheses:

- H5a.** Individuals' PSIC positively affects their BI to cultural products.
- H5b.** Individuals' PSBC positively affects their BI to cultural products.

Thus, we developed a research model for testing, as shown in Fig. 1.

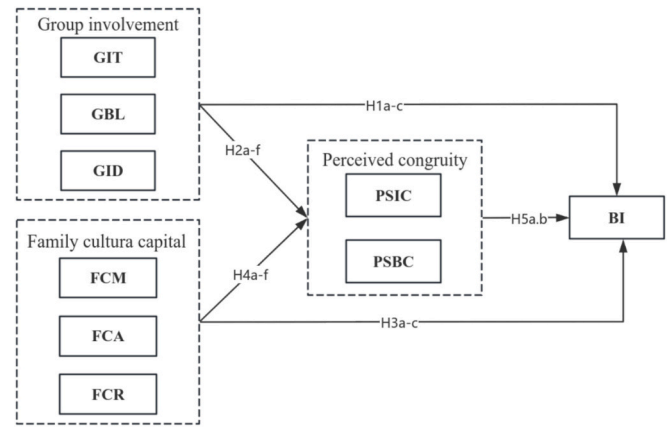


Fig. 1. Proposed conceptual model.

4. Methodology and measurement

4.1. Data collection and sample

We employed a survey to target consumers with HNC shopping experience during trips. According to Bao and Yang (2022), the snowball sampling method can be used to collect data because the number of HNC consumers is relatively low. The snowball sampling method typically recruits participants from a targeted population by leveraging existing participants to identify and refer additional eligible individuals (Hartmann, 2024). In this study, we first found some Han clothing enthusiasts in the Han clothing interest group on Douban.com (China's largest online interest community). We subsequently tasked them with identifying additional fans of Han clothing to serve as the initial sample for our survey. After removing participants with no HNC shopping experience or respondents owing to consistently identical responses for all questionnaire items, 374 valid questionnaires were collected from 1613 participants. Among them, 46.0 % were male ($n = 172$), and 54.0 % were female ($n = 202$). Respondents' ages ranged from those in their nearly 20s to 40s. The largest age group was 20–29, accounting for 55.1 % ($n = 206$).

4.2. Measures and measurement model

The scales of fan group involvement (interactivity, belonging, and identity) come from grounded theorizing and the scales used in previous studies (Bagozzi & Dholakia, 2006). All scales of family cultural capital and perceived symbolic congruity were derived from the grounded theorizing. There are mature scales for measuring tourists' perceived self-image congruity and behavioral intention (Chon, 1992; Mcknight & Chervany, 2002; Sirgy et al., 1997). All the variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale. ML estimation relies on the assumption of multivariate normality and is based on a large sample (Micceri, 1989). Therefore, the Bootstrap resampling approach (2000 samples) was used in this study to manage non-normality and relatively small samples in SEM (Nevitt & Hancock, 2001). In our study, all the original estimates were close to the mean value of Bootstrap, and all were within the 95 % confidence interval of Bootstrap, indicating that the parameter estimation was reliable. We employed SPSS 26.0 and Amos 24.0 to calculate the reliability of the variables and conduct confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The scale's reliability and validity were assessed utilizing a measurement model. In accordance with the recommendations of Chen and Zhang (2024), the outer loadings of items should exceed 0.708, and the value of composite reliability (CR) is required to surpass 0.708. These two indices can demonstrate high reliability. Convergent validity was assessed by the average variance extraction (AVE) value, which must exceed 0.5 (Chen & Zhang, 2024). Subsequently, if the correlation

coefficients between constructs are lower than the square root of AVE, the constructs exhibit high discriminant validity.

The results are presented in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively. Cronbach's alpha (α) for each construct was larger than 0.8, indicating that the variables had good internal consistency. The model exhibited an acceptable fit ($\chi^2/df = 769.618/369 = 2.086$, $p < 0.001$, CFI = 0.949, TLI = 0.940, IFI = 0.950, RMR = 0.031, RMSEA = 0.054). According to Yang et al. (2024), the overall fit met the conventional cut-off criteria. All CR values were higher than 0.7. Therefore, the scale is reliable. All AVE values are higher than 0.6, exceeding the threshold of 0.50. The square roots of each construct's AVEs were higher than the corresponding correlations, as shown in Table 5. Therefore, all constructs had sufficient discriminant validity.

4.3. The results of structural model

AMOS 24.0 was adopted to test the structural model. The overall fit measures of the structural model indicated that the fit of the model is acceptable ($\chi^2/df = 770.384/370 = 2.082 < 5$, CFI = 0.949, TLI = 0.941, IFI = 0.950, RMR = 0.031, RMSEA = 0.054). The model fit indices exceeded the 0.9 threshold, indicating that the proposed theoretical framework accurately captures the underlying data structure. RMR and RMSEA values below the threshold of 0.08, demonstrating a relatively small residual and suggesting an acceptable fit between the model and the observed data. Table 6 lists the results of path analysis from a fully-saturated model. Most hypotheses were supported, except for H2e, H4b, and H4f.

Regarding the three dimensions of group involvement, GIT had the most significant positive effect on both PSIC ($\beta = 0.266$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) and PSBC ($\beta = 0.224$, $p = 0.008 < 0.01$). Meanwhile, GID significantly positively affect PSIC ($\beta = 0.190$, $p = 0.008 < 0.01$) and PBSC ($\beta = 0.153$, $p = 0.030 < 0.05$). GBL significantly positively affected PSIC ($\beta = 0.189$, $p = 0.013 < 0.05$). However, GBL's effect on PBSC was insignificant ($\beta = 0.098$, $p = 0.180 > 0.05$).

Among the three dimensions of family cultural capital, FCM exerted the most significant positive effect on both PSIC ($\beta = 0.218$, $p = 0.005 < 0.01$) and PSBC ($\beta = 0.314$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$). FCA had a significant positive effect on PSBC ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$), while FCA's effect on PSIC was not significant ($\beta = -0.061$, $p = 0.251 > 0.05$). In comparison, FCR significantly positively influenced PSIC ($\beta = 0.169$, $p = 0.001 < 0.01$), while FCR had no significant impact on PSBC ($\beta = 0.091$, $p = 0.085 > 0.05$).

For the testing of direct effects, both GIT ($\beta = 0.152$, $p = 0.049 < 0.05$) and GID ($\beta = 0.192$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) had significant positive effects on BI, indicating that H1a and H1c were supported. Moreover, FCM ($\beta = 0.182$, $p = 0.014 < 0.05$) and FCR ($\beta = 0.158$, $p = 0.000 < 0.001$) directly affect BI, H3a and H3c were supported. However, GBL and FCA did not directly affect BI (GBL: $\beta = -0.029$, $p = 0.653 > 0.05$; FCA: $\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.801 > 0.05$). Therefore, H1b and H3b were not supported. In addition, both PSIC ($\beta = 0.188$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) and PSBC ($\beta = 0.244$, $p = 0.002 < 0.01$) positively affect BI.

4.4. Results of mediating effect test

This study performed a mediation analysis using the bootstrapping

Table 3
Results of model fit indices (FCA).

Indices	Criteria	Value	Conclusion
χ^2/df : Chi-square/degrees of freedom	<5	2.086	Good Fit
CFI: Comparative Fit Index	>0.9	0.949	Good Fit
TLI: Tucker-Lewis Index	>0.9	0.940	Good Fit
IFI: Incremental Fit Index	>0.9	0.950	Good Fit
RMR: Root Mean Square Residual	<0.08	0.031	Good Fit
RMSEA: Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	<0.08	0.054	Good Fit

Table 4
Statistics of construct items.

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
GIT	I like to communicate with other members.	0.884	0.903	0.904	0.758
	I often discuss HNC with other members.	0.865			
	I keep in touch with other members and meet offline destinations.	0.863			
GBL	I get along well with group members.	0.894	0.886	0.889	0.728
	I am a member of this group.	0.807			
	Friendships between members are important to me.	0.856			
GID	Members share similar values with me.	0.833	0.837	0.836	0.630
	I agree with the group's value.	0.779			
	I agree with the group's lifestyle.	0.767			
FCM	My parents like to use Chinese furniture and porcelain.	0.834	0.831	0.831	0.622
	They preferred to collect traditional objects.	0.790			
	They prefer to buy items from the traditional culture.	0.739			
FCA	My parents would hold specific ceremonies during traditional holidays.	0.700	0.860	0.868	0.689
	My parents would let me learn traditional Chinese art.	0.862			
	When I was a child, they told me about history stories.	0.913			
FCR	My parents are proud of our nation.	0.857	0.823	0.826	0.615
	My parents discuss traditional Chinese culture with me.	0.705			
	They are very much into traditional things.	0.783			
PSIC	Wearing HNC during trips reflects the kind of person I am.	0.783	0.913	0.913	0.679
	I think people wearing HNC are similar to me.	0.824			
	People like me also wear HNC.	0.807			
	Wearing HNC is consistent with who I am.	0.842			
	Wearing HNC is consistent with my desired self.	0.861			
	Loving HNC is a recognition of traditional culture.	0.866			
PSBC	The HNC has a historical meaning.	0.770	0.859	0.860	0.672
	The HNC is a carrier of Chinese culture.	0.820			
	I will buy or rent HNC during my trip.	0.811			
BI	I will continue to buy my favorite HNC during my trip.	0.743	0.849	0.851	0.588

(continued on next page)

Table 4 (continued)

Constructs	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE
	I tend to buy HNC others have recommended on the road.	0.721			
	I recommend that others buy my favorite HNC	0.789			

method to examine the mediating effects of PSIC and PSBC. Simultaneously, 2000 bootstrap samples were generated, and a 95 % confidence interval was applied to assess the significance of the mediating effects. In accordance with the bootstrapping standards, the assessment of indirect effects' statistical significance is predicated on the calculation of confidence intervals. The scholarly consensus maintains that an indirect effect is deemed significant when the confidence interval (typically at the 95 % level) excludes zero, thereby indicating that the indirect effect of the path is significant (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

The Bootstrap test results were detailed in Table 7 and Table 8. The results have shown that in the GIT \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI path, the indirect effect was 0.050 (S.E. = 0.027, 95 % CI = [0.010–0.119], $P = 0.010 < 0.05$), the direct effect was 0.152, indicating that PSIC partially mediated the relationship between GIT and BI. Similarly, in the GID \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI, FCM \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI, and FCR \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI paths, PSIC also played a complementary partial mediating role in these paths. Furthermore, the indirect effect in the GBL \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI path was 0.036 (S.E. = 0.024, 95 % CI = [0.003–0.100], $P = 0.026 < 0.05$), the direct effect was -0.029 ($p = 0.653 > 0.05$), indicating that PSIC fully mediated the relationship between GBL and BI. However, in the FCA \rightarrow PSIC \rightarrow BI path, neither the indirect nor direct effects were significant, demonstrating no significant moderating effect on PSIC in the relationship between FCA and BI. In terms of PSBC, in the FCM \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI, it has been observed that a partial mediation effect, with an indirect effect of 0.077 (S.E. = 0.039, 95 % CI = [0.020, 0.177], $p = 0.009 < 0.01$) and a direct effect of 0.182. This pattern of complementary partial mediation was similarly evident in the GIT \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI path. Moreover, in the FCA \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI path, PSBC played a fully mediating role with a significant indirect effect of 0.041 (S.E. = 0.015, 95 % CI = [0.007, 0.071], $p = 0.005 < 0.01$) and a non-significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.801 > 0.05$). It is worth noting that in the GBL \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI, GID \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI, and FCR \rightarrow PSBC \rightarrow BI paths, both indirect and direct effects were insignificant, suggesting that PSBC did not exhibit a significant mediating role in these paths.

5. Discussion and implications

5.1. Discussion of results

Although prior studies have discussed cultural buying (e.g., Huang et al., 2023; Schoolman, 2017; Yen et al., 2022; Yu et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023), our study examined it by emphasizing the role of individual socialization factors (fan groups and family) in particular and popular subculture. Recent scholarly investigations have increasingly examined social factors' effects on consumption behaviors within sub-cultural contexts, such as fan behavior in football culture (Fathy et al., 2022; Sercan & Oğuz, 2023). Social media has evolved into a trans-formative tool, offering consumers a dynamic virtual platform for interactive engagement and information exchange (Saha & Sahney, 2022). Social factors, such as peer influence and family communication, have been increasingly discussed by researchers within the context of social media platforms and shared interest groups, offering valuable insights into individuals' decision-making processes, such as decisions regarding eco-friendly consumption shaped by social norms (Essiz & Mandrik, 2021; Hoesan & Nuraeni, 2023; Xu et al., 2022). Simultaneously, these extensive studies highlighted the necessity of more targeted measurement scales across diverse cultural contexts. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing body of literature by addressing the lack of exploring quantitative approaches to examine the role of socialization agents in behavior within specific cultural contexts. This study had two

Table 6

Path coefficients and their significance.

Path(X \rightarrow Y)	Coefficient (β)	S.E.	C.R.	P-value	Conclusion
GIT \rightarrow PSIC	0.266**	0.092	3.040	0.002	H2a: supported
GBL \rightarrow PSIC	0.189*	0.071	2.471	0.013	H2b: supported
GID \rightarrow PSIC	0.190**	0.091	2.633	0.008	H2c: supported
GIT \rightarrow PSBC	0.224**	0.08	2.641	0.008	H2d: supported
GBL \rightarrow PSBC	0.098	0.061	1.340	0.180	H2e: rejected
GID \rightarrow PSBC	0.153*	0.079	2.166	0.030	H2f: supported
FCM \rightarrow PSIC	0.218**	0.093	2.780	0.005	H4a: supported
FCA \rightarrow PSIC	-0.061	0.05	-1.148	0.251	H4b: rejected
FCR \rightarrow PSIC	0.157**	0.06	2.889	0.004	H4c: supported
FCM \rightarrow PSBC	0.314***	0.083	4.009	0.000	H4d: supported
FCA \rightarrow PSBC	0.169**	0.045	3.213	0.001	H4e: supported
FCR \rightarrow PSBC	0.091	0.052	1.723	0.085	H4f: rejected
PSIC \rightarrow BI	0.188**	0.056	3.142	0.002	H5a: supported
PSBC \rightarrow BI	0.244**	0.081	3.140	0.002	H5b: supported
GIT \rightarrow BI	0.152*	0.076	1.965	0.049	H1a: supported
GBL \rightarrow BI	-0.029	0.056	-0.45	0.653	H1d: rejected
GID \rightarrow BI	0.192**	0.074	3.035	0.002	H1c: supported
FCM \rightarrow BI	0.182*	0.082	2.456	0.014	H3a: supported
FCA \rightarrow BI	0.012	0.041	0.252	0.801	H3d: rejected
FCR \rightarrow BI	0.158***	0.048	3.341	0.000	H3c: supported

Note(s): S.E. = Standard error; C.R. = Critical ratio.

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

*** $p < 0.001$.

Table 5

Discriminant validity.

Constructs	The square root of AVE								
		GIT	GBL	GID	FCM	FCA	FCR	PSIC	PSBC
GIT	0.871	1							
GBL	0.853	0.725**	1						
GID	0.794	0.555**	0.480**	1					
FCM	0.789	0.527**	0.417**	0.595**	1				
FCA	0.830	0.516**	0.472**	0.451**	0.501**	1			
FCR	0.784	0.455**	0.358**	0.400**	0.481**	0.328**	1		
PSIC	0.824	0.651**	0.599**	0.580**	0.575**	0.436**	0.500**	1	
PSBC	0.820	0.646**	0.566**	0.596**	0.639**	0.571**	0.483**	0.612**	1
BI	0.767	0.674**	0.556**	0.664**	0.677**	0.528**	0.561**	0.696**	0.714**

Note:

** $p < 0.01$.

Table 7

Bootstrap results on mediation effects with 95 % confidence intervals.

Path	Beta	S.E.	Bias-corrected 95 % CI		P	Type of Mediation
			Lower	Upper		
GIT → PSIC→BI	0.050*	0.027	0.010	0.119	0.010	CPM
GIT → PSBC→BI	0.055*	0.034	0.007	0.145	0.017	CPM
GBL → PSIC→BI	0.036*	0.024	0.003	0.100	0.026	FM
GBL → PSBC→BI	0.024 ^{ns}	0.022	-0.009	0.084	0.133	NM
GID→PSIC→BI	0.036*	0.021	0.006	0.090	0.012	CPM
GID→PSBC→BI	0.037 ^{ns}	0.027	0.000	0.119	0.051	NM
FCM → PSIC→BI	0.041*	0.024	0.008	0.108	0.011	CPM
FCM → PSBC→BI	0.077**	0.039	0.020	0.177	0.009	CPM
FCA → PSIC→BI	-0.011 ^{ns}	0.012	-0.041	0.007	0.201	NM
FCA → PSBC→BI	0.041**	0.022	0.010	0.102	0.005	FM
FCR → PSIC→BI	0.030**	0.015	0.007	0.071	0.005	CPM
FCR → PSBC→BI	0.022 ^{ns}	0.017	-0.001	0.066	0.065	NM

Note(s): FM: Full Mediation.

CPM: Complementary Partial Mediation; NA: Not Applicable; NM: No Mediation.

* $p < 0.05$.** $p < 0.01$.^{ns} = not significant.**Table 8**

Direct, indirect, and total effects.

Path	Direct Effects	Indirect Effect (PSIC)	Indirect Effect (PSBC)	Total indirect Effects	Total Effects
GIT → BI	0.152	0.050*	0.055*	0.105	0.256
GBL → BI	-0.029	0.036*	0.024 ^{ns}	0.060	0.030
GID→BI	0.192	0.036*	0.037 ^{ns}	0.073	0.265
FCM → BI	0.182	0.041*	0.077**	0.118	0.300
FCA → BI	0.012	-0.011 ^{ns}	0.041**	0.030	0.042
FCR → BI	0.158	0.030**	0.022 ^{ns}	0.052	0.210

Note(s):

* $p < 0.05$.** $p < 0.01$.^{ns} = not significant.

primary objectives: (1) to develop the original and targeted dimensions of fan group involvement and family cultural capital in the context of cultural consumption behavior, and (2) to identify the crucial socialization factors and the mechanism by which these social factors affect individuals' cultural behavior through perceived self-congruity. Thus, this study developed new dimensions and scales using the grounded theory approach to facilitate quantitative analysis. Subsequently, a research model has been constructed and verified by empirical analysis using SEM.

Regarding the first point, this study has developed the sub-dimensions of fan group involvement, family cultural capital, and perceived congruity by the grounded theory approach. As illustrated in section 4.2, this study has demonstrated that the constructs and scales were reliable and valid. As for the second point, this study elucidated several mechanisms between the constructs and drew the following conclusions.

First, some inner relationships among group involvement, family cultural capital, and perceived congruity have been indicated. Among group involvement, group interactivity plays a more critical role. This conclusion aligns with studies indicating that an increased frequency of group interaction can enhance individuals' perception of congruity in their self-image and symbolic representations (Ortiz et al., 2017). Moreover, group identity has positively affected perceived congruity, especially in the self-image dimension. These results concur with prior studies on apparel consumption (Nekmat & Ismail, 2019; Sharma et al.,

2020), which indicated that social acceptance is a crucial consideration in adolescents' clothing choices. A fan group is a valuable means to identify individuals with aesthetic and intellectual similarities. Additionally, it provides an alternative approach to examining positive interactions and the identities of individuals within the context of conformity to cultural products, cultural symbols, and themselves, potentially leading to behavioral intention. Family cultural materiality is a crucial factor in the three sub-dimensions of family cultural capital as it contributes to forming an individual's self-image and symbolic congruity. McDonnell (2023) reported a similar finding, believing that how objects shape belief and behavior depends on whether their cultural power manifests in direct or indirect ways. However, cultural materials' measurement and empirical analysis remain underdeveloped (Zhou, 2022). Thus, this study confirmed the suggestions of Mohr et al. (2020) and Rawlings & Childress (2021): better operationalize measurements of cultural materiality to deepen understanding through more rigorous empirical tests of mechanisms. The results of our study also suggested that the perception of the self and cultural symbolism can be influenced by cultivating a long material legacy within the household.

Second, fan group belonging is not a good surrogate indicator of perceived symbolic congruity. This result can be partly explained by the fact that young individuals in contemporary China exhibit greater independence (Xie & Madni, 2023). They sought to cultivate behavioral patterns, attitudes, and values to establish their personalities. The new generation of young Chinese people is more self-constructed and reluctant to be defined and circumscribed by the outside world. Individuals prefer group interaction to gain knowledge in the classrooms (Kumar et al., 2022). Our research extended this viewpoint from the education to the marketing field. Individuals' interaction helps them understand the symbolic significance of cultural products and maintain a sense of self-consistency rather than solely focusing on the psychological aspect of belonging to these products. This conclusion enhanced the adaptability of our model to interpret cultural behavior in the social media environment, specifically individuals' emphasis on self-independence in social interactions.

Third, cultural resonance within a family unit is crucial to the perception of self-image congruity. Interestingly, this factor had no statistically significant impact on the perception of symbolic congruity (Table 6). There are several possible explanations for these differences: (1) as a traditional Chinese costume, Han clothing is a direct carrier of the country's civilization (Fan and Ip, 2023), and this cultural diffusion from the top down results in a direct reflection of the cultural resonance in the minds of the younger generation in their image choices; and (2) in accordance with prior studies (e.g., Finkelstein & Rios, 2022), individuals are still partially aware of cultural products. Furthermore, the

symbolism of certain cultural products can be unclear, influencing tourists' level of resonance and confidence in a country's civilization. It is not solely dependent on their perceptions of the symbolic consistency; (3) individuals who engaged in a greater number of cultural activities during their formative years demonstrated more profound comprehension and affinity for traditional culture.

Besides showing significant main effects of fan groups and family on individuals' behavior, the present study revealed that these influences were partially mediated by perceived congruity. Specifically, we found that two sub-dimensions of perceived congruity partially mediated group interactivity and family cultural materiality's effects on behavioral intention. These results confirm McDonnell's (2023) work on theoretical insights about how cultural objects engage deliberative cognitive processes to shape behavior through empirical study. However, it is worth noting that the mediating effects of perceived symbolic congruity on the relation among group belonging, identity, family cultural resonance, and behavioral intentions were not significant. A similar situation happened in perceived self-image congruity's mediating role between cultural activity and behavior. High levels of self-image congruity seem to reduce positive cultural activities because individuals can better promote purchase behavior through perceived symbolic or other perceived value of cultural products. Thus, our study focused on the roles of perceived self-image and symbolic congruity, which are only two aspects of the broad concept of perceived congruity (Islam et al., 2019).

5.2. Theoretical and practical implications

According to the above empirical findings, there are several theoretical implications. First, this study enriches existing research on cultural buying from a socialization perspective. This study developed an organized framework to elucidate the factors and underlying mechanisms influencing tourists' inclination to purchase Han clothing, a prominent and popular cultural product in China. Second, it extends the understanding of individuals' socialization in decision-making in traveling contexts and meanings related to cultural products. Although socialization is not a new concept, empirical research on the mechanism of consumer socialization on purchase behavior has yet to form a mature dimension division and a theoretical framework. Significantly, the existing scale needs to be more targeted when measuring the characteristics of group interactivity and the family cultural atmosphere. Thus, the findings of this study have drawn more detailed dimensions: fan group involvement (interactivity, belonging, and identity), family cultural capital (cultural materiality, activities, and resonance), and perceived congruity (self-image and symbolic congruity). These reveal two social factors of consumers' intention to purchase cultural products and offer new insights into the social factors affecting purchase behaviors or intentions of consumers addicted to social media for future studies.

The findings of this study also provide practical implications for domestic brands that attempt to incorporate traditional culture and artistic styles into their products. First, the younger generation pursues individuality and personal values by purchasing goods, photographing, and posting content on social media platforms. As a thriving sub-cultural interest circle, fan groups have emerged as crucial avenues for this generation of consumers to explore the world's diverse cultures and engage in social interactions. As a result, merchants and brands should attach greater importance to endowing their brand image with a distinct personality and approaching young generations by disseminating content through fan groups.

Second, given the vital role of family cultural capital, especially cultural materiality, brands with traditional cultural elements can engage in cross-border cooperation with other art institutions (such as museums) and artists. A brand's image can create a deep impression on individuals and help them reconstruct their identity and recognition. Consequently, brands need to employ cultural activities to convey their

brand images and values, such as the brand story, development history, and craftsman spirit, to potential customers. It is common for these cultural activities to involve the entire family.

Finally, perceived congruity was reflected as the effective mediation. Therefore, while paying attention to the aesthetic effect of products, designers should understand the target consumers' needs. The incorporation of traditional elements in design extends beyond merely layering symbols. It involves integrating these elements into the brand's DNA, embracing innovative thinking and design, and uncovering traditional cultures' aesthetic and humanistic values.

5.3. Limitations and future research

This study had several limitations. First, the generalization of the research findings may have occurred in this study. The sample of this study was limited to users of Douban.com because of the pertinence of the research object. Although Douban.com is the largest online community in China, driven by interests (such as films, music, fashion, and lifestyles), consumers from different online fan groups and countries may have different attitudes toward cultural goods and activities. Additionally, the research focused on clothing, and it is essential to consider the heterogeneity of different subjects when generalizing the findings of this study to other categories.

There are still some limitations to consider when constructing this model. As a preliminary and exploratory study, when considering the stimuli, the roles of fan group participation and family cultural assets in the socialization process were explored exclusively from the socialization perspective. As a clothing product full of traditional cultural elements, the behavioral intention of Han clothing may be affected by multiple stimuli such as product factors (such as design, silhouette, and price) and marketing factors. Therefore, future studies could explore the impacts of different aspects of stimulating factors on the purchase intention of cultural products and consider the moderating effects of product attributes, brand characteristics, and other variables to improve the application of this research model.

CRedit authorship contribution statement

Chen Pang: Writing – original draft, Methodology, Investigation, Funding acquisition, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Xiaofen Ji:** Writing – review & editing, Conceptualization.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors certify that they have no affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.104994>.

Data availability

Data will be made available on request.

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