



## Popularity As A Mediator Between Perceived Value, Unique Design, and Balinese Women's Jewelry Preferences

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### ABSTRACT

The increasing use of imitation jewelry among Balinese women during traditional ceremonies reflects shifting consumer preferences influenced by economic considerations and aesthetic trends. This study examines the mediating role of popularity in the relationship between perceived value, design uniqueness, and consumer preferences for imitation jewelry. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey of 119 Balinese women who have used imitation jewelry in traditional activities. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that perceived value and design uniqueness significantly influence consumer preferences and product popularity. Popularity also has a significant effect on consumer preferences and partially mediates the relationships between perceived value, design uniqueness, and preferences. Among the predictors, design uniqueness demonstrates the strongest direct effect on preferences. These findings highlight the importance of integrating cultural aesthetics, perceived value, and social influence strategies to enhance market acceptance of imitation jewelry in Bali. The study contributes to the literature on consumption value theory by incorporating popularity as a social mediating mechanism in cultural product consumption.

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### INTRODUCTION

The imitation jewelry industry in Indonesia, especially in Bali, has experienced rapid development in line with changing consumer tastes and advances in production technology. Imitation jewelry is now able to display visual qualities that resemble real gold at a much more affordable price. This condition encourages an increase in the number of imitation jewelry MSME actors spread across various districts in Bali. Data shows that this sector absorbs a large amount of labor and contributes to the growth of the region's creative economy. In addition to economic factors, the development of increasingly innovative designs has also strengthened the competitiveness of imitation jewelry products. Thus, the imitation jewelry industry has great potential to continue to grow amidst competitive market dynamics.

In the context of Balinese culture, jewelry has a symbolic meaning that is closely related to traditional and spiritual values. Balinese women use jewelry not only as an accessory, but also as a complement to traditional clothing in various religious activities and traditional ceremonies. The phenomenon that has

emerged in Balinese society today shows a shift in perception of the value of jewelry, especially due to the significant increase in gold prices in recent years. This can be seen from the following Fig 1.

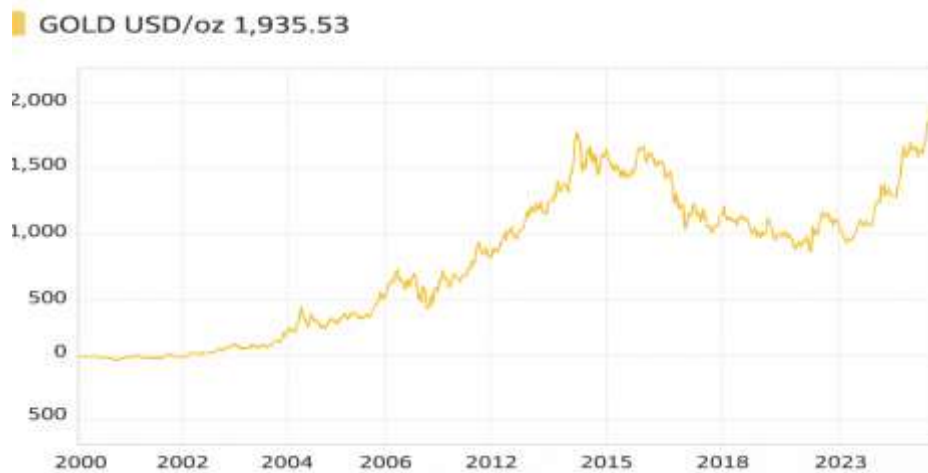


Figure 1: Gold Price Rise

The significant increase in gold prices in recent years has been one of the driving factors for the shift in the use of gold jewelry to imitation jewelry. Data shows an increase in imitation jewelry sales in several major districts in Bali. This phenomenon indicates a change in people's consumption behavior, especially Balinese women. These changes are an important basis for examining the factors that influence consumer preferences for imitation jewelry.

In the context of imitation jewelry in Bali, the perception of value is reflected in how women weigh between aesthetic value, uniqueness of design, cultural suitability, and a more affordable price than real gold. Faux jewelry with a gold-like appearance and good color fastness not only meets aesthetic needs, but also builds confidence (Giurlani et al. 2018). However, consumer perceptions of jewelry quality are still diverse (Kebundinar, 2025). This was developed through the findings of Li, Y. and Li, J. (2022), Vo et al. (2022), and Putri & Miran (2023) showing that the perception of value has a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences, where products that provide greater benefits than the costs incurred tend to be preferred. Similar things are put forward by Petravičiūtė et al. (2021) and Chang et al. (2024) who affirm that the higher the perception of value, the stronger the tendency of consumers to choose the product. However, the results of research by Li et al. (2021) reveal that not all dimensions of value perception have a significant effect on consumer preferences or purchase intentions. In the context of innovative products, the dimensions of social value and quality value have been proven to not significantly affect consumer preferences. In addition, research by Cao, N. et al. (2025) shows that there is a negative gap between value perception and preferences, where although perceived value is measured, its influence on preferences is indirect and depends on factors such as brand love, trust, engagement, and generational identity.

According to Sutarti (2018), the uniqueness of product design reflects the features that make the product look more attractive, sturdy, practical, and valuable. Tehuayo (2018) shows that the uniqueness of design can arouse consumer interest in making purchases. Meanwhile, according to Rahmawati (2025), the uniqueness of design is a distinguishing factor in jewelry products that reflect the identity and character of the product through aesthetic elements, shapes, colors, and materials that are not commonly found in other products.

This is in line with the research of Li, Y. and Li, J. (2022) which found that design aesthetics have a significant influence on consumer preferences for cultural and creative products at the Palace Museum

of China. Attractive and aesthetic designs are proven to increase buying interest because they provide high emotional and symbolic value. Calderon et al. (2020) also show that the uniqueness of design creates a sense of exclusivity and satisfies the psychological need to appear different, which has a positive effect on consumer preferences. Research by Li et al. (2021) supports this by stating that the uniqueness and innovation of products have a significant impact on consumer evaluation and purchase intention, because unique designs provide emotional and social satisfaction. Similarly, Selim & Kohardinata (2020) assert that different designs reflect high brand values and encourage repurchase interest, while Saputra et al. (2021) found that distinctive product designs have a significant effect on consumer preferences in the silver craft industry in Bali. However, different results were found by research by Sastra et al., (2024) showing that the design uniqueness variable does not have a significant effect on consumer buying interest. In addition, the results of research by Handayani and Yusuf (2021) who explained that designs that are too unique are actually considered impractical and difficult to mix and match, thus reducing purchase interest. These differences in results indicate the need to consider other factors that can bridge the relationship between product characteristics and consumer preferences. Recent studies indicate that the relationship between product characteristics and purchasing decisions can be strengthened by social factors acting as mediating mechanisms. Empirical evidence from Rachel et al. (2025), Robert et al. (2022), and Yuya et al. (2024) demonstrates that popularity enhances social recognition, strengthens brand image, and fosters consumer trust, ultimately influencing purchasing decisions. However, existing studies predominantly examine popularity in general consumer contexts and rarely integrate it simultaneously with perceived value and design uniqueness within culturally embedded consumption settings.

Furthermore, prior research shows inconsistent findings regarding the direct effects of perceived value and design uniqueness on consumer preferences, suggesting the presence of unexplored mediating mechanisms that could explain these relationships. Despite this, popularity has not been systematically positioned as a mediating variable linking both functional (value perception) and symbolic (design uniqueness) attributes to consumer preferences, particularly in culturally rich contexts.

This gap is especially relevant in Balinese society, where consumption behavior is strongly influenced by social recognition, cultural conformity, and symbolic meaning. In such a context, popularity may function not only as a marketing outcome but also as a social validation mechanism that shapes consumer preferences.

Therefore, this study offers novelty by: 1) Integrating popularity as a mediating variable between perceived value, design uniqueness, and consumer preferences; 2) Simultaneously examining functional and symbolic product attributes within a single model, and 3) Contextualizing the model in Balinese cultural consumption, where social acceptance plays a critical role.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Theory of Consumption Value**

The grand theory used in this study is the Theory of Consumption Value (TCV) developed by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991). This theory is very relevant to explain the role of popularity mediation on the perception of value and uniqueness of design on the preferences of Balinese women consumers in using imitation jewelry when carrying out traditional activities. . There are three main principles, namely: consumption behavior is influenced by various consumption values, the amount of contribution of each value varies according to certain situations, and each value is independent or not interdependent (Ali et al., 2019).

### **Consumer Preferences**

Consumer preference is an individual's tendency or preference towards a product compared to other alternative products. Preferences reflect the level of consumer preference formed through the evaluation process of various product attributes that are relevant to their needs and expectations. Kotler and Keller (2016) state that consumer preference is an attitude formed after consumers conduct a thorough evaluation of various product choices available in the market. These preferences are fundamental in

purchasing decision-making because they show which products are considered the most capable of providing the best value for consumers.

Irawati et al. (2014) explain that consumer preferences arise at the alternative evaluation stage in the purchase decision process, where consumers compare product attributes such as quality, design, price, and benefits. Lutfiani (2017) added that preferences are the result of experiences, perceptions, and social influences that shape consumers' tendencies towards a certain brand or product. Thus, preferences are influenced not only by rational factors, but also by emotional and social aspects.

In the context of imitation jewelry shows in Bali, the preferences of female consumers are greatly influenced by the suitability of products with the cultural and symbolic values inherent in traditional activities. Jewelry is judged not only by its aesthetic function, but also by its ability to reflect cultural identity and social status. Therefore, Balinese women's preference for imitation jewelry reflects a blend of functional, emotional, and social values. The indicators of consumer preference in this study refer to several expert opinions. Simamora (2013) stated that consumer preferences can be measured through product characteristics, design appeal, product quality, and product suitability with needs. Lemon and Verhoef (2023) added indicators in the form of product variety, uniqueness, trust in the brand, and quality consistency. Meanwhile, Camilleri (2023) emphasizes indicators of ease of access, value of benefits, quality, and affordable prices. These indicators were used to measure the level of Balinese women's preference for imitation jewelry in this study.

#### ***Perception of Value, Uniqueness of Design to Consumer Preferences***

Perceived value is a consumer's subjective assessment of the benefits obtained from a product compared to the sacrifices made to obtain it. Zeithaml (1988) defines value perception as a consumer's thorough evaluation of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given. Monroe (1990) asserts that the perception of value is formed from the balance between the perceived benefits and the costs that must be paid by the consumer. Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed the concept of value perception through the PERVAL scale which includes four main dimensions, namely functional value, emotional value, social value, and price value. Functional value is related to product quality and performance, emotional value is related to the positive feelings it evokes, social value is related to social acceptance, and price value reflects the fit between quality and cost incurred. These four dimensions are relevant in assessing the perception of the value of imitation jewelry.

In the imitation jewelry industry in Bali, the perception of value is formed from visual quality that resembles gold, color fastness, design suitability with local culture, and more affordable prices. Giurlani et al. (2018) stated that imitation products that are able to present high aesthetic value can increase consumer confidence. However, Kebundinar (2025) shows that consumer perceptions of the quality of imitation jewelry are still diverse, thus affecting the level of preference. Various empirical studies show the relationship between value perception and consumer preferences. Li and Li (2022) found that value perception has a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences for cultural and creative products. Vo et al. (2022) show that value perception increases preference through the emotional and functional benefits of the product. Petravičiūtė et al. (2021) stated that high value perception increases consumers' tendency to choose a brand. Research by Chang et al. (2024) proves that value perception has a significant effect on consumer loyalty and preference in the eco-friendly hospitality industry. Putri and Miran (2023) also found that value perception has a positive effect on consumer preferences in the tourism sector. However, Li et al. (2021) found that not all dimensions of value perception have a significant effect on preferences, thus opening up opportunities for further research.

The uniqueness of the design is a characteristic of the product that distinguishes it from other products through elements of aesthetics, creativity, and innovation. Kotler and Keller (2016) state that design is the totality of features that affect the appearance, taste, and function of products for consumers. Bloch (1995) added that a unique design is able to create an emotional experience and increase the appeal of the product. According to Sutarti (2018), the uniqueness of the design reflects the uniqueness of the

product which makes it look more attractive, valuable, and different. Rahmawati (2025) states that the uniqueness of the design on jewelry reflects the identity of the product through unusual shapes, colors, and motifs. In the Balinese context, the uniqueness of the design is often realized through the integration of traditional motifs and modern touches. The Theory of Uniqueness put forward by Tian et al. (2001) explains that individuals have a need to appear different, so they tend to choose products with unique designs. Products with distinctive designs are able to meet the psychological needs of consumers to express their identity. This makes the uniqueness of the design an important factor in shaping consumer preferences. Various empirical studies support the influence of design uniqueness on consumer preferences. Li and Li (2022) found that design aesthetics have a significant effect on consumer preferences. Calderon Urbina et al. (2020) show that unique design creates a sense of exclusivity that enhances preferences. Li et al. (2021) stated that innovation and design uniqueness increase consumer evaluation and purchase intention. Nico Selim and Kohardinata (2020) found that unique designs increase consumer repurchase interest. Wayan and Abiyoga (2021) also show that product design has a significant effect on consumer preferences in the silver craft industry in Bali. However, Sastra et al. (2024) found that design does not always have a significant effect, so it needs to be studied further.

The indicators of design uniqueness in this study refer to Kotler and Keller (2016), Bloch (1995), and Handaru et al. (2017), namely design creativity, aesthetics, originality, cultural motifs, innovation, and product identity. Based on the study, the hypotheses proposed are:

H1: Perception of value has a positive and significant effect on Balinese women's preferences in using imitation jewelry.

H2: The uniqueness of the design has a positive and significant effect on the preferences of Balinese women in using imitation jewelry.

### ***Perception of Value, Uniqueness of Design to Consumer Popularity and Preferences***

Popularity is the level of recognition, attention, and acceptance of a product by the wider community that is formed through consumer experience, social recommendations, and media exposure. According to Keller (2013), popularity is closely related to the level of awareness and positive associations attached to a product or brand in the minds of consumers. Popular products tend to be easier to remember, trust, and choose than lesser-known ones.

Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that popularity is formed through the process of marketing communication, word of mouth, and repeated use by consumers. In the digital age, popularity is increasingly influenced by social media, online reviews, and influencer recommendations. Products that appear and are talked about often will build a positive social perception, thereby increasing the symbolic value of the product.

In the context of imitation jewelry in Bali, popularity is formed through the use of jewelry by traditional figures, local public figures, and the dissemination of information through social media. Faux jewelry that is considered to have an attractive design and high value tends to be used and recommended more often, thus increasing its level of popularity. This popularity then plays a role in influencing Balinese women's preferences in choosing jewelry for traditional activities.

A number of studies show an important role of popularity as a mediating variable. Kim and Kim (2021) found that product popularity mediates the relationship between product quality and consumer preferences. Wang et al. (2022) state that popularity reinforces the influence of perceived value on consumer attitudes and preferences. Meanwhile, Pratama and Dewi (2023) show that product popularity is able to mediate the influence of product design on consumer interests and preferences.

The popularity indicators in this study refer to Keller (2013), Kotler and Keller (2016), and Wang et al. (2022), namely the level of product recognition, frequency of use by other consumers, social recommendations, media exposure, and popular image in the social environment. Based on theoretical studies and previous research, the hypotheses proposed are:

H3: Perception of value has a positive and significant effect on the popularity of imitation jewelry.

H4: The uniqueness of the design has a positive and significant effect on the popularity of imitation jewelry.

### ***Consumer Popularity and Preferences***

Popularity has an important role in bridging the relationship between value perception and consumer preferences. A high perception of value indicates that consumers value a product as having comparable or greater benefits compared to the sacrifices made. Products that are perceived as high-value tend to be more readily accepted, recommended, and widely used by consumers, thus increasing their popularity rate. The popularity that forms then reinforces consumer preferences because popular products are often associated with quality, trust, and social acceptance.

Rachel et al. (2025) explain that popularity plays a role in shaping consumers' initial perceptions and increasing the likelihood of preference formation. The results of their research show that brand popularity is able to mediate the influence of price, quality, and trust on consumer purchasing decisions or preferences. This suggests that the perception of good value does not always directly affect preferences, but is often reinforced through the popularity of the product in the social environment of consumers.

Research by Robert P.G. et al. (2022) provides theoretical and empirical evidence that popularity cues can change consumer preferences through quality inference and social inference. In the study, it was explained that the perception of high value can increase the popularity of products, and that popularity ultimately strengthens consumer preferences. Consumers tend to consider popular products as products that have better quality and are socially accepted, so they are preferred over less popular products.

Similar results were also found by Yuya Liu and Xiangyu Luo (2024) in the context of sales through live streaming. This study shows that streamer popularity mediates the relationship between value perception and consumer purchase intent. Popularity serves as a social signal that reinforces the perception of product value and encourages consumers to make a purchase. These findings confirm that popularity is a strategic factor that strengthens the influence of value perception on consumer preferences.

Based on the theoretical description and the results of previous research, it can be concluded that popularity has a role as a mediating variable in the relationship between value perception and consumer preferences. Based on theoretical studies and previous research, the hypotheses proposed are:

H5: Popularity has a positive and significant effect on Balinese women's preference for using imitation jewelry.

### **The Role of Popularity Mediation on Consumer Preferences**

Rachel et al. (2025) authors discuss the mechanisms by which popularity shapes initial perceptions and increases possible consumer preferences. The results of this research study found that brand popularity can mediate the influence of price as well as quality and trust on purchasing decisions or consumer preferences. Another study by Goedgebure et al. (2022) provides theoretical & empirical evidence that a single cue of popularity can change preferences through quality or social inference, where the perception of high value can increase the popularity of the product, and that popularity in turn reinforces consumer preferences. Yuya et al. (2024) this study discusses the factors that affect consumer purchase intent in the context of sales through live streaming. The results show that streamer popularity mediates the relationship between value perception and consumer purchase intent (consumer preference), so popularity is an important factor that can increase value perception and drive purchases.

The uniqueness of the design is one of the important factors that distinguish a product from competitors and is able to attract the attention of consumers. Products with unique, creative designs, and strong visual characteristics tend to be easier for consumers to recognize and remember. The uniqueness of the design not only provides aesthetic value, but also creates social appeal that can increase the popularity of the product. The popularity that is formed then plays a role in strengthening consumer preferences for the product. Yan Wang et al. (2022) examined the relationship between the need for uniqueness and consumer preference and popularity as a mediating variable. This research was conducted on students and young workers in major cities in China. The results show that the need for uniqueness encourages consumers to choose products with different designs, which further increases the popularity of the product. Popularity then amplifies consumer preferences as popular products are considered more valuable and socially accepted. Research by Pande Bagus et al. (2024) also found that popularity is able

to mediate the influence of unique designs on consumer preferences or purchase intentions. This study provides theoretical support that innovation and technology are important factors in shaping design uniqueness. Products with innovative designs and strong visual characters tend to be more recognizable, more frequently recommended, and have a higher level of popularity in the market. The uniqueness of the design combined with its popularity creates a strengthening effect on consumer preferences. Consumers are not only attracted to different designs, but are also influenced by the extent to which those designs are accepted and used by others. Thus, popularity serves as a social mechanism that reinforces the influence of design uniqueness on consumer preferences.

Based on the theoretical study and the results of the previous research, the hypotheses proposed in this study are:

H6: Popularity can mediate the influence of value perception on consumer preferences.

H7: Popularity can mediate the influence of design uniqueness on consumer preferences.

The following is the framework of this research:

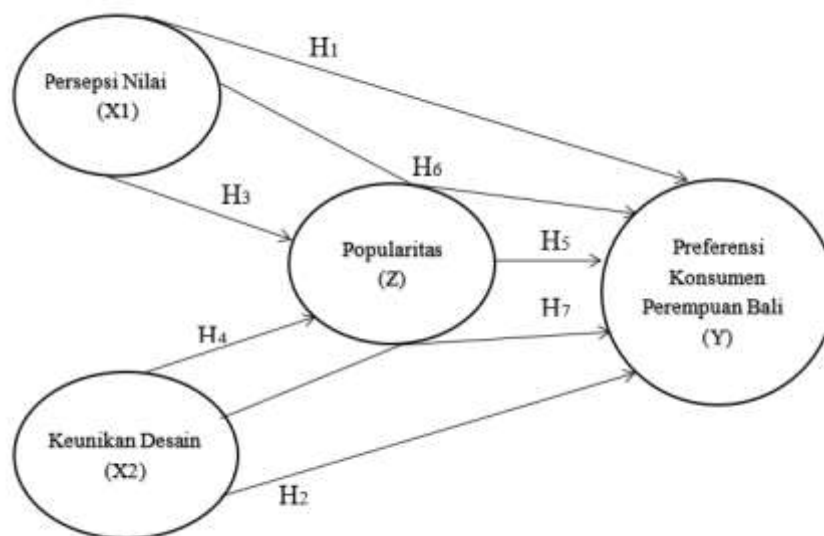


Figure 2 : Research Concept Framework

## **METHOD**

This research was conducted in Bali Province with consideration of the strong traditional activities and the high use of imitation jewelry by Balinese women. The study population is all Balinese women who use imitation jewelry in traditional activities, with a population number that cannot be determined definitively. The research sample was set as many as 119 respondents who were selected using the purposive sampling technique, with the criteria of Balinese women who have used or are using imitation jewelry in traditional activities. The data collection method was carried out through the distribution of questionnaires to respondents, either directly or through online media, using a five-point Likert scale to measure respondents' perception of the research variables. The data obtained are primary data supported by secondary data from literature studies in the form of books and scientific journals. The data analysis technique used was inferential analysis with the Partial Least Square (PLS) approach using SmartPLS software to test the direct and indirect influence between research variables.

## **RESULTS**

### **Respondent Characteristics**

This study involved 119 Balinese female respondents who had used imitation jewelry in traditional activities. All respondents were female (100%), in accordance with the focus of the research on Balinese women's preferences. The majority of respondents were in the age range of 26–35 years (38%), followed by 18–25 years old (24%), 36–45 years old (21%), and over 46 years old (18%). This shows

that the use of imitation jewelry is dominant at productive age who actively participate in social and customary activities. Based on occupation, respondents were dominated by entrepreneurs (39%), civil servants (21%), private employees (18%), and civil servants (15%). The rest are students (5%) and do not work (2%). This variety of work suggests that the use of imitation jewelry is not limited to specific economic groups.

In terms of the intensity of use, as many as 62% of respondents stated that they used imitation jewelry very often during traditional activities and 35% stated that they used it often. This indicates that imitation jewelry has been widely accepted in the Balinese cultural context.

**Table 1. Respondent Characteristics**

<i>Yes</i>	<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Number (People)</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
1	Gender	Women	119	100
		Male	0	0
2	Age	18–25 years old	28	24
		26–35 years old	45	38
		36–45 years old	25	21
		>46 years old	21	18
3	Jobs	Student/Student	6	5
		ASN	18	15
		Entrepreneurship	46	39
		PNS	25	21
		Private Employees	21	18
		Not working	3	2
4	Intensity of Use of Faux Jewelry	Very often	73	62
		Frequent	42	35
		Quite often	4	3

Source: Prepared author,2025

### **Evaluation of Measurement Models (Outer Model)**

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) was carried out to assess the validity and reliability of the research construct. In this study, all constructs are reflective, so the outer model test is carried out through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability test which includes Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability.

#### **Convergent Validity Test**

The convergent validity test aims to find out the extent to which the indicator is able to reflect the measured construct. Convergent validity is assessed based on loading factor values and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The results of the analysis showed that all indicators in the variables Perception of Value (X1), Design Uniqueness (X2), Popularity (Z), and Consumer Preference (Y) had a loading factor value above 0.70. This shows that each indicator is able to explain its construct well. In addition, the AVE value for the entire variable is above 0.50, which means that more than 50% of the indicator's variance can be explained by latent constructs. Thus, all variables have met the criteria of convergent validity.

#### **Discriminant Validity Test**

The validity of the discriminator is tested to ensure that a construct has a clear difference from other constructs. The test is carried out by looking at the square root value of AVE and comparing it with the correlation between constructs (Fornell-Larcker Criterion). The test results showed that the square root value of AVE of each variable was greater than the correlation between other constructs. This shows that each variable has a good ability to distinguish itself from other constructs, thus meeting the criteria for discriminant validity.

### Reliability Test

Reliability tests are carried out to determine the internal consistency of the construct. The tests were conducted using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. The results of the analysis showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70. This indicates that all constructs in this study are reliable and have good internal consistency. Based on the results of the validity and reliability testing, it can be concluded that the measurement model (outer model) in this study has met all evaluation criteria, so it is feasible to continue at the evaluation stage of the structural model (inner model).

**Table 2. Evaluation Results of Measurement Model (Outer Model)**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Range Loading Factor</i>	<i>AVE</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Composite Reliability</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
<i>Value Perception (X1)</i>	0,72 – 0,85	0,61	0,82	0,87	Valid & Reliable
<i>Design Uniqueness (X2)</i>	0,74 – 0,88	0,65	0,84	0,89	Valid & Reliable
<i>Popularity (Z)</i>	0,71 – 0,86	0,60	0,80	0,86	Valid & Reliable
<i>Consumer Preferences (Y)</i>	0,73 – 0,89	0,67	0,85	0,90	Valid & Reliable

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

### Evaluation of Structural Models (Inner Model)

The evaluation of the structural model (inner model) aims to test the relationships between latent variables in the research model and assess the predictive ability of the model as a whole. In the Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) approach, the internal model evaluation was carried out through testing the R-Square ( $R^2$ ), Q-Square ( $Q^2$ ), and path coefficient significance through the bootstrapping method.

### R-Square value ( $R^2$ )

Table 3 shows the R-Square value ( $R^2$ ) used to measure how much ability exogenous variables are able to explain endogenous variables. Based on the results of the analysis: Popularity **variables (Z)** are explained by Perception of Value (X1) and Design Uniqueness (X2); The **Consumer Preference variables (Y)** are described by Perception of Value (X1), Design Uniqueness (X2), and Popularity (Z).

Table 3. R-Square ( $R^2$ ) Value of Endogenous Variable

<i>Endogenous Variable</i>	<i>R-Square (<math>R^2</math>)</i>	<i>Categories Power Explain</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
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<i>Popularity (Z)</i>	0,52	Moderate	Perception of Value and Uniqueness of Design can explain 52% variation in Popularity
<i>Consumer Preferences (Y)</i>	0,63	Strong	Perception of Value, Design Uniqueness, and Popularity can explain 63% of the variation in Consumer Preferences

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

The R<sup>2</sup> value indicates that the model has good predictive capabilities because independent variables are able to explain the variation of the dependent variables substantially.

### Q-Square Value (Q<sup>2</sup>)

Table 4 shows the Q<sup>2</sup> value used to measure the predictive relevance model. If the value of Q<sup>2</sup> > 0, then the model has relevant predictive capabilities. Based on the results of the calculation of the Stone-Geisser Q-Square, the value of Q<sup>2</sup> shows a positive result (> 0), so the model is declared to have good predictive relevance and is suitable for use to explain the relationship between variables in this study.

Table 4. Q-Square (Q<sup>2</sup>) Predictive Relevance Value

<i>Endogenous Variable</i>	<i>Q-Square Value (Q<sup>2</sup>)</i>	<i>Predictive Relevance Category</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>Popularity (Z)</i>	0,34	Moderate	The model has a pretty good predictive ability in explaining Popularity
<i>Consumer Preferences (Y)</i>	0,41	Strong	The model has a strong predictive ability to explain Consumer Preferences

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

### Path Coefficient Test

Figure 3 shows the data analysis in this study using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS software. This method is used to test the relationship between latent variables, both direct and indirect influences through mediation variables. The research model consists of the perception of the value and uniqueness of design as independent variables, popularity as a mediating variable, and consumer preferences as bound variables. The test is carried out through two stages, namely the evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and the evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The following is a model of this study.

Popularity As A Mediator Between Perceived Value, Unique Design, and Balinese Women's Jewelry Preferences

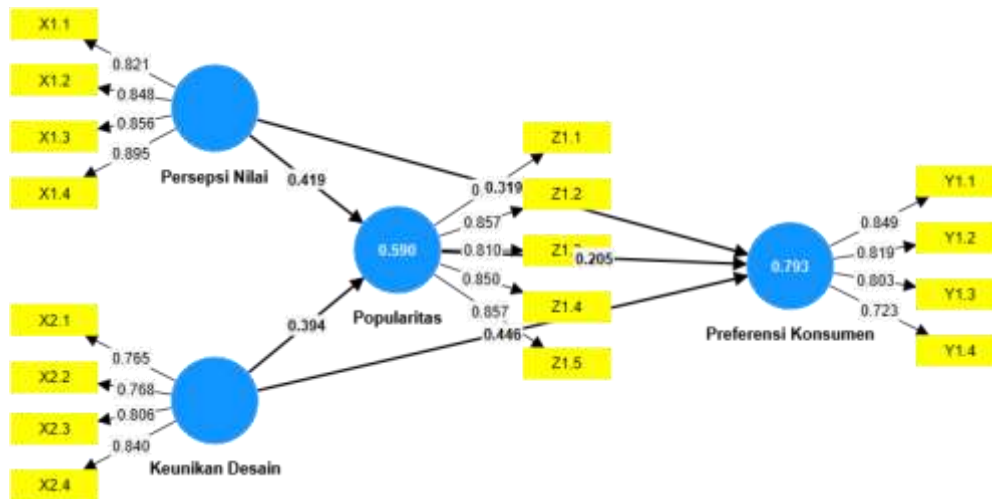


Figure 3. Hypothesis Test

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Table 1. Results of the Analysis Path Test

Hyp	Relationships Between Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Average (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Remarks
H1	Perception of Value → Consumer Preferences	0.319	0.309	0.110	2.899	0.004	Significant
H2	Design Uniqueness → Consumer Preferences	0.446	0.458	0.102	4.359	0.000	Significant
H3	Perception of Value → Popularity	0.419	0.425	0.109	3.853	0.000	Significant
H4	Design Uniqueness → Popularity	0.394	0.392	0.112	3.533	0.000	Significant
H5	Popularity → Consumer Preferences	0.205	0.204	0.075	2.750	0.006	Significant
H6	Perception of Value → Popularity → Consumer Preferences	0.086	0.086	0.038	2.246	0.025	Significant Mediation
H7	Design Uniqueness → Popularity → Consumer Preferences	0.081	0.080	0.039	2.062	0.039	Significant Mediation

Source: SmartPLS Output, 2026

Hypothesis testing was carried out using the bootstrapping method by looking at the path coefficient value ( $\beta$ ), t-statistical value ( $> 1.96$ ), and p-value ( $< 0.05$ ). The results of the analysis showed that all the relationships between variables in the research model had a positive influence and Based on Table 5.X, the test results show that all direct influence hypotheses (H1–H5) have a p-value of  $< 0.05$  so that they are declared significant. This proves that the perception of value and uniqueness of design has a positive effect on consumer popularity and preferences, and popularity also has a significant effect on consumer preferences.

In addition, indirect influence testing showed that popularity was able to mediate the relationship between value perception and design uniqueness to consumer preferences (H6 and H7). Thus, popularity plays a role as a partial mediating variable in this research model.

## ***Discussion***

### ***The Effect of Value Perception on Consumer Preferences (H1)***

The results of the study showed that the perception of value had a positive and significant effect on the preferences of Balinese women consumers in using imitation jewelry during traditional activities. These findings indicate that the higher the consumer's perception of the benefits obtained compared to the sacrifices incurred, the higher their tendency to choose imitation jewelry. Value perception reflects consumers' evaluation of visual quality, durability, cultural suitability, and product price.

The results of this study are in line with the theory of value perception put forward by Zeithaml (1988) which states that consumer decisions are strongly influenced by the comparison between benefits and costs. These findings also support the research of Li and Li (2022) and Vo et al. (2022) who stated that value perception has a significant influence on consumer preferences and attitudes. In the context of Balinese women, imitation jewelry that is able to provide aesthetic and symbolic value at an affordable price will be preferred for use in traditional activities. Thus, H1 in this study is acceptable.

### ***The Influence of Design Uniqueness on Consumer Preferences (H2)***

The results of the study show that the uniqueness of design has a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. These findings show that creative, innovative, and distinctive imitation jewelry designs are able to increase Balinese women's interest and liking for these products. The uniqueness of the design is a differentiating factor that provides emotional value and identity for consumers.

These results support the product design theory put forward by Bloch (1995) which states that design has an important role in creating consumers' emotional responses. In addition, these findings are in line with the research of Calderon Urbina et al. (2020), Li et al. (2021), and Pande Bagus et al. (2024) which found that unique designs have a significant effect on consumer preferences and purchase intentions. In the Balinese context, jewelry designs that raise elements of local culture but remain modern are able to increase the attractiveness and preferences of Balinese women. Therefore, H2 is declared accepted.

### ***The Effect of Value Perception on Popularity (H3)***

The results of the study show that the perception of value has a positive and significant effect on the popularity of imitation jewelry. These findings indicate that products that are perceived to have high value tend to be more recognizable, more often recommended, and more widely used by consumers. Positive value perception encourages the dissemination of information from word of mouth and increases product exposure in social environments.

These findings are in line with research by Robert P.G. et al. (2022) who stated that the perception of high value can increase the popularity of products through quality and social inference. In addition, Kim and Kim (2021) also found that products with good value are more widely accepted by consumers. In the context of imitation jewelry, aesthetic value and affordable prices drive the product to become popular among Balinese women. Thus, H3 is acceptable.

### ***The Effect of Design Uniqueness on Popularity (H4)***

The results of the study show that the uniqueness of the design has a positive and significant effect on the popularity of imitation jewelry. This shows that a unique design and strong visual character are able to attract consumer attention and increase the level of product recognition. Products with different designs tend to be easier for consumers to remember and talk about.

These findings support the theory of the need for uniqueness put forward by Tian et al. (2001), where consumers tend to choose products that are able to distinguish themselves from others. The results of this study are also in line with the research of Yan Wang et al. (2022) and Pande Bagus et al. (2024)

who stated that unique designs are able to increase the popularity of products. In the context of Balinese imitation jewelry, designs with distinctive cultural motifs are able to expand the social acceptance of the product. Therefore, H4 was accepted.

#### ***The Influence of Popularity on Consumer Preferences (H5)***

The results of the study show that popularity has a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. These findings suggest that popular products tend to be more trusted and preferred by consumers. Popularity serves as a social cue that reflects the acceptance and quality of the product in the eyes of consumers.

These results are in line with Keller (2013) who stated that popularity is closely related to brand awareness and positive associations. In addition, these findings support the research of Rachel et al. (2025) who stated that popularity can increase preferences through mechanisms of trust and social conformity. In a Balinese society that upholds the value of togetherness, popularity has a strong influence in shaping Balinese women's preferences. Thus, H5 is acceptable.

#### ***The Role of Popularity Mediation on the Influence of Value Perception on Consumer Preferences (H6)***

The results of the study show that popularity is able to mediate the influence of value perception on consumer preferences. This means that the perception of value not only affects preferences directly, but also indirectly through the increase in popularity of the product. The perception of high value drives products to become more popular, and that popularity further strengthens consumer preferences.

These findings are in line with the research of Rachel et al. (2025) and Yuya Liu and Xiangyu Luo (2024) who stated that popularity acts as a mediator between value perception and purchase intent. In the context of imitation jewelry, a good product value will increase social acceptance, thus strengthening the preferences of Balinese women. Therefore, H6 was declared accepted.

#### ***The Role of Popularity Mediation on the Influence of Design Uniqueness on Consumer Preferences (H7)***

The results of the study show that popularity is able to mediate the influence of design uniqueness on consumer preferences. The uniqueness of the design increases the popularity of the product, which in turn reinforces consumer preferences for imitation jewelry. This suggests that a unique design will have a greater impact on preferences when supported by a high level of popularity.

These findings support the research of Yan Wang et al. (2022) and Pande Bagus et al. (2024) who stated that popularity reinforces the influence of unique designs on consumer preferences. In the context of Balinese women, imitation jewelry with cultural designs that are popular in the social environment will be preferred for use in traditional activities. Thus, H7 in this study is acceptable.

## **DISCUSSION**

This study aims to analyze the influence of value perception and design uniqueness on Balinese women's preferences in using imitation jewelry during traditional activities, with popularity as a mediating variable. The results of the study show that the perception of value and uniqueness of design has a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. In addition, the perception of value and uniqueness of design has also been shown to have a significant effect on popularity, while popularity has a significant effect on consumer preferences. These findings also prove that popularity can act as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between value perception, design uniqueness, and consumer preferences.

The influence of value perception on preference shows that Balinese women tend to choose imitation jewelry if the product is considered to be able to provide benefits that are comparable to the costs incurred. The perception of value is formed from the aspects of visual quality that resemble gold, product durability, and more affordable prices. These findings confirm that consumer decisions are not

only influenced by cultural factors in the use of traditional jewelry, but also by rational economic considerations, especially as a result of rising gold prices that encourage consumers to look for more efficient alternatives.

The uniqueness of the design was also found to have a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. This shows that imitation jewelry with creative, innovative designs, and reflecting elements of local culture is able to increase consumer interest and liking. In the context of Balinese culture, jewelry is not only an aesthetic accessory, but also part of a symbol of identity and conformity in traditional fashion. Therefore, the unique design provides emotional and social value that can strengthen Balinese women's preferences in choosing imitation jewelry.

The results of the study also show that the perception of value and uniqueness of design have a significant effect on product popularity. Products that are perceived to have high value and attractive designs tend to be easier to recognize, recommend, and use by other consumers, thus increasing their level of popularity. These findings indicate that individual assessments of products can develop into social recognition through community interaction and the dissemination of information through digital media.

Furthermore, popularity has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on consumer preferences. Popular products tend to be considered more trustworthy, quality, and socially acceptable. Popularity is a social signal that strengthens consumer confidence in choosing products, especially in Balinese society which has a collective culture and a tendency to consider social opinions.

The results of the mediation test showed that popularity was able to mediate the influence of value perception and design uniqueness on preferences. This means that the perception of value and unique design not only increases preferences directly, but also indirectly through the popularity of the product. Thus, popularity acts as a social mechanism that reinforces the influence of value and design evaluation in shaping consumer preferences. The practical implications of this study show that imitation jewelry businesses need to improve product quality and value, develop designs that are characteristic of local culture, and optimize social media-based promotions to strengthen consumer popularity and preferences.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that the perception of value and uniqueness of design has a positive and significant effect on the preference of Balinese women in using imitation jewelry during traditional activities. The perception of value and uniqueness of design also has a positive and significant effect on the popularity of imitation jewelry. Popularity has been proven to have a significant influence on consumer preferences and is able to mediate the influence of value perception and design uniqueness on Balinese women's preferences. This shows that popularity plays an important role as a social mechanism that reinforces consumer preferences. Thus, all hypotheses in this study are acceptable. The practical implications of this study show that imitation jewelry businesses need to improve the perception of product value through visual quality, durability, and appropriate price, as well as develop designs that are unique and reflect Balinese culture. Additionally, marketing strategies that focus on increasing popularity through social media, consumer recommendations, and local public figures need to be optimized to reinforce consumer preferences. Theoretically, this study contributes by expanding the study of consumer behavior through the role of popularity as a mediating variable in the relationship between value perception, design uniqueness, and consumer preferences. Further research suggests adding other variables such as trust, brand image, or social influence to gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences. In addition, future research could use more diverse data collection methods, such as interviews or observations, as well as expand the research area beyond the Province of Bali. Business actors are expected to use the results of this research as a basis for designing more effective product and marketing strategies to increase the competitiveness of imitation jewelry.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the results of the research, the recommendations that can be given are as follows. First, imitation jewelry business actors in Bali are advised to increase the perception of product value through improving visual quality, durability, and better use of materials so that consumers feel that the benefits obtained are proportional to the price paid. Second, design innovation needs to continue to be developed by raising elements of local Balinese culture so that products have a strong uniqueness and identity and are able to increase consumer interest in using traditional activities. Third, popularity-based marketing strategies need to be optimized through the use of social media, digital promotion, and collaboration with public figures or local influencers to increase product recognition levels and expand market reach. Fourth, business actors are advised to build relationships with consumers through good service and encourage word-of-mouth recommendations as an effort to strengthen product popularity. Finally, further research is suggested to add other variables such as brand image, consumer trust, and social influence in order to understand the factors that influence consumer preferences for imitation jewelry to be more comprehensive.

## **RESEARCH LIMITATION**

This research has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the study was only conducted on Balinese women who used imitation jewelry in traditional activities, so the generalization of the findings was limited to specific cultural and regional contexts. Second, the number of samples used is relatively limited and obtained through purposive sampling techniques, so there may be biases in respondent representation. Third, this study only examines the perception of value, design uniqueness, and popularity as determinants of preference, so it does not fully describe the complexity of other factors that can influence consumer behavior. In addition, the data used is cross-sectional, so it has not been able to capture changes in consumer preferences over time.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

Based on these limitations, further research is recommended to expand the scope of the research area to other regions in Indonesia or to different consumer segments to increase the generalization power of the findings. Future research could also use more representative sampling techniques as well as larger sample counts. In addition, other variables such as brand image, consumer beliefs, social influences, lifestyle, or religiosity factors can be added to obtain a more comprehensive model. Longitudinal approaches or mixed methods can also be considered to provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of consumer preferences for imitation jewelry.

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