

# Interpretations of Status Expression in the Purchase Intention of Traditional Silk Apparel as Luxury from Thai Female Consumers

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## Abstract

This study examines value-based motivations shaping female consumers' intentions to purchase traditional Thai silk apparel using a quantitative survey conducted in Bangkok. Structural equation modelling assessed the effects of social value ( $\beta = 0.252, p < 0.05$ ), functional and epistemic value ( $\beta = 0.708, p < 0.01$ ), and conditional value ( $\beta = 0.069, p = 0.07$ ) on luxury purchase intention. The results indicate that functional and epistemic values exert the strongest influence, suggesting that craftsmanship, product quality, cultural meaning, and personal significance are key drivers of purchase intention. The conditional value was not statistically significant, implying that situational factors play a limited role. The four value dimensions were also significantly interrelated, supporting the internal coherence of perceptions of luxury value. These findings point to a shift toward a more subtle, emotionally grounded form of cultural luxury among Thai silk consumers, where authenticity, heritage appreciation, and refined self-expression increasingly outweigh conspicuous displays. In practice, the findings guide designers and textile stakeholders by emphasising the strategic roles of cultural storytelling, craft communication, and value-based positioning in Thailand's evolving luxury market.

**Keywords:** status expression; purchase intention; Traditional Thai silk; buying behaviour; female consumers

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary views of luxury extend beyond price and exclusivity to encompass emotional value, identity construction, and culturally embedded meaning (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Han & Kim, 2020). Consumers increasingly use luxury goods to express both their current and aspirational identities, framing consumption as a form of self-definition (Donvito et al., 2020). Within this shift, Thai traditional silk and craft-based apparel are gaining prominence as culturally authentic forms of exclusivity, supported by a textile and garment sector that remains a significant contributor to the national economy through strong production capacity, artisanal heritage, and established value chains (Thailand Board of Investment, n.d.). Recent industry estimates place the Thai silk market at approximately THB 3 billion, with an annual growth rate of approximately 7.5%, indicating its sustained commercial relevance (Bhandari, 2026). Moreover, Thailand exported silk products worth approximately USD 5.46 million in 2024, indicating sustained engagement in the global silk market (Trading Economics, n.d.). Although the existing literature on international studies tends to associate Asian luxury consumption with social comparison and external validation (Eng & Bogaert, 2010; Akarsu et al., 2024), new trends in Thailand suggest a more sophisticated reality. The subtle reasons to purchase conventional luxurious clothes based on cultural appreciation, self-pride, and silent elegance are not fully present in the available studies (Kaolawanich et al., 2020; Perera et al., 2021). The appeal of locally manufactured premium products is often overlooked, and attention is focused on international luxury brands (Stepien, 2018; Donvito et al., 2020). Given Thailand's position as a major ASEAN economy with a strong textile heritage (Charungkiattikul & Joneurairatana, 2021), it provides a relevant setting for examining evolving value perceptions in luxury consumption. Thai silk has gained renewed prominence within sustainability and cultural-luxury discourses centred on authenticity, craftsmanship, and heritage, yet empirical research on Thai consumers' perceptions and purchase intentions remains limited. Field observations and interviews at OTOP fairs 2023 – 2024, ICONSIAM Craft Zone events, and direct interactions indicate that purchases are concentrated among consumers aged 30 – 62 years. This group demonstrates higher repeat purchasing, spending capacity, and a preference for Thai silk garments and gifts, consistent with global and Asian reports that identify consumers in their early thirties to late fifties as the core luxury-buying segment due to income stability and heritage interest (Deloitte, 2023; D'Arpizio et al., 2025). Despite this relevance, limited research has examined how social, functional, epistemic, and conditional values shape

purchase intentions toward Thai silk as a cultural luxury. This study, therefore, tests the influence of these value dimensions among female consumers aged 30 – 60, addressing the gap at the intersection of cultural meaning, artisanal heritage, and luxury positioning.

## 2. Objectives

1) To examine how Thai female consumers interpret social value in the context of the purchase intention of traditional Thai silk apparel as a form of luxury.

2) To investigate the role of functional and epistemic values in shaping the purchase intention of luxury Thai silk clothing.

3) To explore the impact of conditional value on consumers' luxury purchasing intentions.

4) To assess the combined influence and interrelationships of social, functional, epistemic, and conditional values on the purchase intention of traditional Thai luxury silk apparel.

## 3. Literature Review

The idea of luxury in fashion has long been shaped by an item's rarity, its visual impact, and the meanings people attach to it. While previous research defined luxury largely in economic terms, such as price premiums and exclusivity (Wang, 2021), more recent studies suggest that luxury also encompasses emotional, experiential, and cultural dimensions (Thomsen et al., 2020; Elgebali & Zaazou, 2023). Brun & Castelli (2013) argue that luxury items are distinguished by their ability to express both personal identity and social significance. Historically, luxury goods have been associated with excellent quality, high prices, unique designs, sensory appeal, and scarcity (da Cunha Brandão & Barbedo, 2023); the functional features of these products have often been considered the most valuable aspects (Stepien, 2018)

### 3.1 Understanding Luxury Fashion Consumption through Artisanal & Craft Silk

In Southeast Asia, particularly in emerging economies such as Thailand, luxury is no longer confined to imported designer brands but increasingly encompasses local products that integrate heritage with high perceived value (Patichol et al., 2014; McAleer & Mao, 2017). This transformation signals a shift in luxury consumption, reflecting cultural authenticity and artisanal tradition rather than global brand prestige alone. Thai silk garments exemplify this locally grounded luxury, combining meticulous craftsmanship with strong cultural symbolism (Sawasdee et al., 2015). Whereas international luxury brands derive status from global

recognition (Collins & Weiss, 2015), Thai silk apparel gains value through provenance, skilled handweaving, and its association with national identity, social respectability, and cultural continuity. Its material authenticity, artisanal origin, and symbolic national relevance distinguish Thai silk from mass-produced luxury fashion items (Patichol et al., 2014). In Thailand, silk prices typically range from THB 600 – 800 for basic colours and patterns, around THB 1,200 for simple designs, and up to THB 5,000 – 20,000 for complex, time-intensive pieces. Tailored or custom services incur an additional cost of approximately THB 2,000 – 10,000 depending on the tailor's or fashion house's reputation. Such price variation reinforces perceptions of exclusivity and supports classifying Thai silk as a luxury product in the domestic market, particularly among consumers who equate higher prices with craftsmanship and cultural value. Research consistently identifies exclusivity, craftsmanship, heritage, and emotional resonance as the core attributes shaping luxury perceptions (Sjostrom et al., 2016; Tu et al., 2022). Luxury goods, therefore, extend beyond functional utility, appealing to deeper emotional and psychological motivations (Danziger, 2005; Daswani & Jain, 2011; Becker et al., 2018; Akarsu et al., 2024). Their symbolic meaning further strengthens consumer attachment (Thani & Sharma, 2021; Wang, 2021). From this perspective, Thai silk apparel can be understood as a form of cultural luxury grounded not only in quality and rarity but also in the heritage, rituals, and cultural narratives that it embodies.

### 3.2 Value Dimensions in Luxury Consumption

Wiedmann et al. (2009) conceptualised luxury value perception as a multidimensional construct encompassing economic, functional, social, and personal components (Wiedmann et al., 2013). Among these, social value is particularly influential in cultural contexts where group identity and social harmony are emphasised (Hennigs et al., 2012). Luxury products are frequently perceived as symbolic and conspicuous goods that signal wealth, prestige, and elevated social standing (Donvito et al., 2020). Prior research showed that ownership of luxury items communicates economic success and facilitates acceptance into both existing and aspirational social groups (Husić-Mehmedović & Čičić, 2009; Kang & Park, 2016; Punchibandara, 2017; Akarsu et al., 2024). From an impression management perspective, consumption is shaped by cognitive and emotional motives to construct and maintain a favourable social identity (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2014; Ye et al., 2015). Accordingly, purchasing visible luxury goods allows consumers to express identity while reinforcing social visibility and prestige (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Akarsu et al., 2024). In Thailand, this is strongly reflected in the

continued use and gifting of luxury Thai silk garments as markers of respect, achievement, and social recognition during culturally significant events and ceremonies. This behaviour is reflected as conspicuous consumption, often shaped by reference groups and serves as an external signal of social rank and exclusivity (Elgebali & Zaazou, 2023). Status consumption further magnifies social value by fulfilling emotional needs related to appreciation and feelings of elation (Athwal et al., 2019; Agarwal & Kumar, 2025). The cultural relevance of Thai silk strengthens the social value dimension, as the selection of regional weaving techniques, patterns, and heritage becomes part of how the wearers express their identity and obtain social validation.  $H_1$  Social value has a significant influence on purchase intention for luxury Thai silk garments. Consumers' luxury purchases are shaped not only by social validation but also by functional considerations. The tangible benefits associated with luxury goods often derive from meticulous craftsmanship, durability, and reliable performance, which together constitute functional value (Athwal et al., 2019; Han & Kim, 2020; Supriyadi et al., 2020; Huang, 2023; Wang, 2021). Luxury consumers therefore tend to prefer products that combine superior quality with versatile utility, allowing them to fulfil practical requirements alongside emotional aspirations (Grigorian & Petersen, 2014; Sawasdee et al., 2015; Akarsu et al., 2024). This alignment reinforces the view that perceptions of functional excellence play a decisive role in shaping consumer satisfaction and purchase decisions (Thomsen et al., 2020; Elgebali & Zaazou, 2023). For Thai silk apparel, perceived functional value derives from hand-loom durability, tailored fit, and the prestige of natural fibres and traditional craftsmanship, all of which support acceptance of premium pricing. Epistemic value, in contrast, reflects consumers' desire for novelty, curiosity, and exclusive experiences (Ting et al., 2016; Wang, 2021). This motivation is closely linked to variety-seeking behaviour (Hansen, 1976) and to the attraction of innovative and distinctive luxury products (Brun & Castelli, 2013; Donvito et al., 2020). Thai silk exemplifies this dimension through its diverse weaving techniques, experimental dyeing practices, and strong provincial craft identities, offering consumers the opportunities for cultural exploration and sensory novelty. Luxury perceptions, however, remain fluid and shaped by consumers' personal and social contexts (Brandão & Magalhães, 2023). Prior studies emphasise that uniqueness and scarcity are central to luxury appeal, as they stimulate curiosity and reinforce product distinctiveness (Heine & Phan, 2011; Hennigs et al., 2012; Pencarelli et al., 2019; Thomsen et al., 2020). In Thailand, the consumption of traditional silk garments varies across provinces, influenced by local aesthetic preferences and

the cultural or ceremonial contexts in which such attire is worn (Patichol et al., 2014; Seo & Buchanan-Oliver, 2015). These variations highlight how cultural and demographic factors can shape the role of uniqueness in luxury purchasing behaviours (Naumova et al., 2019). By shaping emotional engagement and behaviour, both functional and epistemic values exert a powerful effect on consumers' intentions to purchase luxury Thai silk garments (McAleer & Mao, 2017; Han & Kim, 2020; Akarsu et al., 2024).  $H_2$  Functional and epistemic values have a significant influence on purchase intention for luxury Thai silk garments.

### 3.3 Conditional Value and Contextual Influences in Luxury Thai Silk Consumption

Conditional value refers to the benefits consumers derive when specific situations influence their purchase decisions (Mason et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2025). It is inherently contextual, arising from anticipated or unanticipated external factors that make a product more salient at the point of purchase (Essiz & Senyuz, 2023). In Thailand, this effect is closely tied to cultural practices in which luxury purchases are embedded in the traditions of respect, ceremony, and social participation. Buying handcrafted silk for religious events, formal occasions, or traditional celebrations illustrates how conditional value operates in everyday life (Patichol et al., 2014). Thai silk garments are valued not only for their quality and craftsmanship but also for their cultural meaning, linking consumption to heritage, community, and shared identity. Rather than emphasising individual display, Thai consumers often integrate traditional and modern values in ways that reinforce social cohesion and continuity (Chotiudompant, 2013; Takeshi et al., 2017). Luxury purchases, such as Thai silk, therefore, function within a social framework that combines functional utility with symbolic significance, reflecting prevailing cultural norms and expectations (Patichol et al., 2014; Charungkiattikul & Joneurairatana, 2021). These cultural expectations amplify conditional value, making the consumption of Thai silk situationally important and symbolically appropriate during key life and societal events. The conditional value mindset also aligns closely with sustainable consumption patterns (Akarsu et al., 2024), as Thai consumers demonstrate a pronounced appreciation for authentic craftsmanship, the use of natural fibres, and traditional dyeing techniques (McAleer & Mao, 2017). These eco-conscious attributes enhance intrinsic product value and increase its appeal in specific contexts, particularly among environmentally responsible consumers (Bardhan & Bhattacharya, 2022). Conditional value may also be reinforced by situational cues, such as promotional incentives or limited-time offers, that create favourable conditions for luxury purchases (Dubois et al., 2021; Wei, 2022). Moreover,

the fundamental human need for social belonging underpins conditional value (Liu et al., 2021; Mundel et al., 2021), as individuals seek acceptance and stability within their social networks (Wang, 2017; Liu et al., 2021). Consumers frequently favour regional artisanal silk because its distinctive weaving techniques, colours, and motifs symbolise provincial identity. Such textiles operate not merely as functional goods but also as cultural markers that reinforce a sense of belonging and encode place through shared traditions, collective memory, and historically grounded production practices (Prathumnet et al., 2010; Kettle, 2019; Sudo, 2021). Accordingly, the value of Thai silk arises from the intersection of situational relevance, cultural symbolism, environmental preference, and regional identity, strengthening its status as a heritage-based luxury product in the Thai market. From this perspective, conditional value emerges through the interaction between situational context and social belonging needs (Rohkrämer & Schulz, 2009; Crisp, 2010; Wang, 2017), shaping consumers' intentions to purchase luxury Thai silk garments.  $H_3$  Conditional value has a significant impact on Thai females' intention to purchase luxury Thai silk garments. Taken together, these arguments suggest that Thai consumers perceive handmade silk as a multidimensional product shaped by personal aspirations, social contexts, and cultural identities. Building on this foundation, the present study examines the relative influence of perceptions of social, functional, epistemic, and conditional values on purchase intention toward traditional luxury fashion. A conceptual framework integrating these four value dimensions is therefore proposed to guide the analysis of consumers' intentions to purchase traditional Thai silk apparel (Figure 1).  $H_4$  Social value, functional value, epistemic value, and conditional value all influence the purchase intention of traditional Thai luxury silk apparel, and these values are coherent with one another.

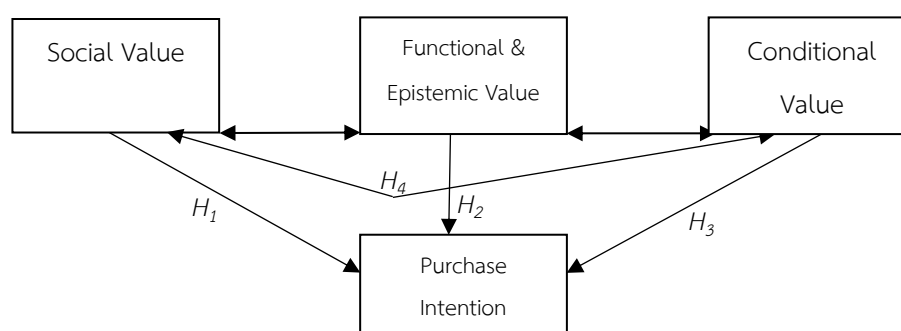


Figure 1 the Suggested Framework with 4 hypotheses

## 4. Research Methodology

### 4.1 Methodological Approach

This study employs a hypothesis-testing approach, grounded in existing theories, to investigate the impact of social recognition, functional and epistemic values, and the aesthetic condition on Thai consumers' intentions to purchase artisanal Thai silk clothing. Creswell (2014) highlights that this approach is suitable for testing hypotheses grounded in past research. To this end, a quantitative method was employed to examine relationships among the key concepts (Lim, 2024). The study also adopts a descriptive approach to understand and explain Thai consumer behaviour toward handmade luxury garments, following Blasco-Arcas et al. (2022), who argue that descriptive research helps reveal consumer traits within specific contexts. Survey data were collected to capture consumers' views broadly and to support detailed analysis, including structural equation modelling (SEM).

### 4.2 Data Processing & Collection

The study employed purposive sampling to ensure that participants had prior engagement with Thai traditional silk apparel. Only consumers who had purchased, used, or considered purchasing Thai silk garments for personal use, cultural occasions, or gifting were included. In contrast, those unfamiliar with Thai silk or without prior purchasing experience were excluded. Data collection was conducted in two stages to strengthen sample validity. First, a pilot screening interview was implemented to identify suitable participants and enhance data reliability (Kenny, 2019). Brief interviews assessed whether consumers had purchased locally produced silk within the previous six months, their typical expenditure per meter or garment, and their familiarity with silk types, techniques, or patterns. Respondents were also asked whether they perceived Thai silk as a luxury product. Additional questions captured different value orientations, including social, functional, epistemic, and conditional considerations linked to silk consumption. Only customers actively shopping at the time were approached. These screening interviews were conducted intermittently between June 2024 and May 2025 at major retail and craft venues, including OTOP Impact Muang Thong Thani, Old Siam Plaza, and the SACIT Fair. In total, 720 female consumers aged 32 – 62 were interviewed, of whom 631 met the full eligibility criteria.

A structured questionnaire containing 41 items was administered to assess value-related dimensions-social, functional, epistemic, and conditional-along with personal satisfaction and preferred ways of wearing or displaying silk garments. The instrument was

reviewed and refined with the assistance of a professional Thai-language teacher, and a pilot test with 20 customers was conducted to ensure clarity and comprehensibility (Ghauri & Grønhaug, 2005). Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. However, most participants responded in Thai, and some incorporated English expressions, particularly those with overseas experience. All responses were translated into English and verified by bilingual experts to ensure translation accuracy (Ruvio & Shoham, 2007). A total of 630 questionnaires were returned, of which 629 were complete after data screening, and 423 usable responses were retained for analysis. All respondents were female, predominantly aged 40 - 65, with diverse occupations and income levels. This profile aligns with prior findings that women in this demographic represent a major segment of luxury consumers (Schade et al., 2016). Descriptive statistics supporting the structural equation modelling are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive Information of female Thai consumers toward traditional silk apparel as a luxury

| Attributes             |                                 | Frequency | Percent | Cumulative % |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------|
| Age                    | Less than 30                    | 42        | 9.90    | 9.90         |
|                        | 31 - 35                         | 56        | 13.20   | 23.10        |
|                        | 36 - 40                         | 108       | 25.50   | 48.60        |
|                        | 41 - 45                         | 121       | 28.70   | 77.30        |
|                        | More than 45                    | 96        | 22.70   | 100.00       |
| Total                  |                                 | 423       | 100.00  |              |
| Educational Background | Non/ or Associate Degree        | 21        | 5.00    | 5.00         |
|                        | Bachelor's Degree only          | 220       | 52.00   | 57.00        |
|                        | Master Degree                   | 123       | 29.00   | 86.00        |
|                        | Doctoral Degree                 | 59        | 14.00   | 100.00       |
| Total                  |                                 | 423       | 100.00  |              |
| Salary/Income Monthly  | Less than 25,000 THB*           | 32        | 7.60    | 7.60         |
|                        | 25,001 - 30,000 THB             | 78        | 18.40   | 26.00        |
|                        | 30,001 - 40,000 THB             | 103       | 24.30   | 50.30        |
|                        | 40,001 - 50,000 THB             | 121       | 28.70   | 79.00        |
|                        | More than 50,000 THB            | 89        | 21.00   | 100.00       |
| Total                  |                                 | 423       | 100.00  |              |
| Profession/Job         | Unemployed/Retired/Not Specific | 82        | 19.30   | 19.30        |
|                        | Employee at Private Company**   | 130       | 31.00   | 50.30        |

|                                                                 | Attributes                                                                 | Frequency  | Percent       | Cumulative % |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
|                                                                 | Government Officer                                                         | 160        | 37.00         | 87.30        |
|                                                                 | Owned Business                                                             | 30         | 7.20          | 94.50        |
|                                                                 | Freelance/Self-Employed/<br>Influencer                                     | 23         | 5.50          | 100.00       |
|                                                                 | <b>Total</b>                                                               | <b>423</b> | <b>100.00</b> |              |
| <b>Consumption of Thai<br/>Silk Apparel (for<br/>Gift/ Use)</b> | Bought at least once within 4<br>months at the time of the interview       | 226        | 53.40         | 53.40        |
|                                                                 | Bought at least twice within 4<br>months at the time of the interview      | 120        | 28.40         | 81.80        |
|                                                                 | Bought at least the third within 4<br>months at the time of the interview  | 49         | 11.60         | 93.40        |
|                                                                 | Bought at least the fourth within 4<br>months at the time of the interview | 12         | 2.80          | 96.20        |
|                                                                 | Bought at least four times within 4<br>months at the time of the interview | 16         | 3.80          | 100.00       |
|                                                                 |                                                                            |            |               |              |
|                                                                 |                                                                            |            |               |              |
|                                                                 | <b>Total</b>                                                               | <b>423</b> | <b>100.00</b> |              |

*As the study examines perceptions of Thai silk apparel as a form of luxury consumption, greater emphasis is placed on consumers' purchasing power. \* Includes professions in banking, private education (teachers and university lecturers), PR and marketing, and hospitality sectors. \*\* Includes public-sector occupations such as public-school teachers, university lecturers and staff, and government service employees.*

### 4.3 Variable Measurement and Statistical Analysis

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed using AMOS software. SEM was selected for its ability to handle latent constructs and assess both measurement and structural models simultaneously (Fatta et al., 2019). The SEM analysis followed a sequential procedure. First, data screening was conducted to address missing values, identify outliers, and assess normality before modelling. Second, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) examined the measurement structure and retained only factors with strong, meaningful loadings. After the measurement model demonstrated satisfactory validity and fit, the structural model was tested to evaluate the hypothesized relationships and the significance of path coefficients. Model fit was assessed using established indices, including  $\chi^2/df$ , CFI, AGFI, and RMSEA, in line with SEM reporting standards (Kline, 2010; Hair et al., 2021). Table 2 presents the statistical results for the variables.

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics (SEM)

| Question                                                                                                                                                                                                               | N   | Min. Scale | Max. Scale | $\bar{x}$ | SD    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| SV1: Wearing apparel made from Thai traditional or craft silk makes me feel part of the high-end or upper social class.                                                                                                | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.86      | 1.026 |
| SV2: Wearing Thai traditional or craft silk apparel makes me feel connected to social groups, communities, or clubs.                                                                                                   | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.48      | 0.938 |
| SV3: My relatives, friends, and superiors have influenced my intention to purchase Thai traditional or craft silk apparel.                                                                                             | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.69      | 0.982 |
| SV4: Thai artisan or craft silk is associated with refined taste, high cultural value, and social standing, which makes it meaningful to me                                                                            | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.68      | 0.981 |
| FEV1: Wearing Thai silk apparel tailored to my size satisfies my sense of privilege and aligns with my sustainable taste.                                                                                              | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.71      | 1.084 |
| FEV2: Wearing Thai traditional silk in daily life makes me feel more connected to traditional elegance, enhancing my sense of uniqueness in luxury consumption.                                                        | 423 | 1          | 5          | 3.11      | 1.014 |
| FEV3: Buying rare silk fabrics (e.g., made with new techniques, colours, or patterns) makes me feel proud and enhances my self-image.                                                                                  | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.49      | 1.007 |
| FEV4: I care about the quality of silk when purchasing, especially where it is made, the use of natural dyes, and the meaning behind the fabric's motifs. These elements give me meaningful stories to tell and share. | 423 | 1          | 5          | 3.19      | 1.025 |
| CV1: I prefer to buy traditional silk at department stores or craft fairs rather than online because the in-person experience offers more value, such as interacting with sellers and showcasing my luxury taste.      | 423 | 1          | 5          | 1.81      | 0.878 |

| Question                                                                                                             | N   | Min. Scale | Max. Scale | $\bar{x}$ | SD    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|------------|------------|-----------|-------|
| CV2: I prefer to buy expensive silk in specific settings, as it makes me feel wealthier and suits special occasions. | 423 | 1          | 5          | 2.16      | 0.962 |

**Remark:** SV = Social Value; FEV = Functional & Epistemic Value; CV = Conditional Value.

To explore the underlying structure of the data, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted to assess the construct validity of the measurement items and reduce dimensionality. EFA was applied to the ten original items related to perceived value in the context of Thai silk apparel.

This analysis produced a refined nine-item model grouped into three distinct value categories: social, functional-epistemic, and conditional (see Table 3). Factor loadings above 0.70 were retained as they represented a strong threshold for construct interpretation (Hair et al., 2021). Internal reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with 0.60 as the minimum threshold for exploratory studies (Streiner, 2003; Ponterotto & Ruckdeschel, 2007). The social value construct consisted of four items that measured perceptions of social class, high-end class, group identification, social influence, and social standing. The social value construct showed strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha of 0.796. Similarly, the functional-epistemic value construct, reflecting aspects of traditional elegance and uniqueness, cultural craftsmanship, rarity, and prestige expressionism, also demonstrated reliable internal coherence ( $\alpha = 0.787$ ). The conditional value dimension included two items reflecting situational advantages, such as a preference for in-person shopping and the symbolic value of the price. This construct showed a slightly lower alpha ( $\alpha = 0.595$ ), yet it remained within the acceptable range for early-stage scale development (Kainth & Verma, 2011). Purchase intention was measured using two items: (IB1) "I am likely to purchase luxury Thai silk clothes," and (IB2) "I would recommend others to buy Thai silk clothes." All participants responded to the survey items using a 5 point Likert scale, with one indicating "strongly disagree" and five indicating "strongly agree." The analytical approach adopted in this study provides a strong foundation for addressing the research questions and deepens our understanding of how personal, social, and cultural factors influence consumers' intentions to purchase luxury Thai silk garments.

Table 3 Factor Analysis

| Value                        | Items                                                                                                                                                           | Factor |       |       | Alpha Test | Alpha Test 2 |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|------------|--------------|
|                              |                                                                                                                                                                 | 1      | 2     | 3     | 1          |              |
| Social Value                 | SV1: Wearing apparel made from Thai traditional or craft silk makes me feel part of the high-end or upper social class.                                         | 0.703  | 0.322 | 0.128 | 0.772      | 0.796        |
|                              | SV2: Wearing Thai traditional or craft silk apparel makes me feel connected to social groups, communities, or clubs.                                            | 0.701  | 0.182 | 0.249 |            |              |
|                              | SV3: My relatives, friends, and superiors have influenced my decision to buy Thai traditional or craft silk apparel.                                            | 0.501  | 0.289 | 0.249 |            |              |
|                              | SV4: Thai artisan or craft silk is associated with refined taste, high cultural value, and social standing, which makes it meaningful to me                     | 0.621  | 0.229 | 0.080 |            |              |
| Functional & Epistemic Value | FEV1: Wearing Thai silk apparel tailored to my size satisfies my sense of privilege and aligns with my sustainable taste.                                       | 0.412  | 0.738 | 0.164 | 0.787      | 0.759        |
|                              | FEV2: Wearing Thai traditional silk in daily life makes me feel more connected to traditional elegance, enhancing my sense of uniqueness in luxury consumption. | 0.359  | 0.552 | 0.347 |            |              |
|                              | FEV3: Buying rare silk fabrics (e.g., made with new techniques, colours, or patterns) makes me feel proud and enhances my self-image.                           | 0.126  | 0.492 | 0.125 |            |              |
|                              | FEV4: I care about the quality of silk when purchasing, especially where it is made, the use of natural dyes, and the meaning behind the                        | 0.092  | 0.396 | 0.087 |            |              |

| Value             | Items                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Factor |       |       | Alpha Test | Alpha Test 2 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-------|-------|------------|--------------|
|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 1      | 2     | 3     | 1          |              |
|                   | fabric's motifs. These elements give me meaningful stories to tell and share.                                                                                                                                     |        |       |       |            |              |
| Conditional Value | CV1: I prefer to buy traditional silk at department stores or craft fairs rather than online because the in-person experience offers more value, such as interacting with sellers and showcasing my luxury taste. | 0.147  | 0.100 | 0.697 | 0.595      | 0.595        |
|                   | CV2: I prefer to buy expensive silk in specific settings, as it makes me feel wealthier and suits special occasions.                                                                                              | 0.418  | 0.377 | 0.421 |            |              |

## 5. Research Finding

Pre-study field observations and informal interviews were conducted during OTOP Mid-Year and end-of-year fairs and cultural craft events between 2023 and 2024 indicated that the majority of active, repeat, and gift-purchase consumers of traditional Thai silk apparel were aged 32 - 62. Therefore, this age range informed the study's sampling framework and respondent inclusion criteria.

### 5.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A descriptive analysis was conducted of the 423 valid survey responses. This sample size is more than sufficient for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), as 423 valid responses across 12 measurement items provide an approximate respondent-to-item ratio of 35 : 1. This far exceeds the commonly cited minimum of 200 participants and is well above the realistic 10 : 1 and reliable 20 : 1 ratio for reliable SEM estimation (Kline, 2010; Hair et al., 2021). The demographic profile of this study showed that most participants fell within the most common age groups, with 36 - 40 years old the most common (25.50%) and 41 - 45 years old the next most common (28.70%). More than half of the feedback (52%) held a bachelor's degree and reported earning more than 40,000 THB per month, accounting for up to 28.70% of their total income. Employment status was led by government officers (37.00%), followed closely by company officers (31.00%). These figures are consistent with prior research

indicating that, in Thailand, luxury clothing attracts both middle- and higher-income consumers, particularly those in professions that require greater public visibility and frequent participation in formal events (Hashim et al., 2019).

## 5.2 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) Analysis

Following the established procedure, the selected nine collected variables were included in the structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis to examine the influence of three latent constructs on purchase intention (Figure 2). The model demonstrated a good overall fit:  $\chi^2 (36) = 127.82$ ,  $p < 0.001$ , with a relative chi-square value ( $\chi^2/df$ ) of 3.55. Although some early SEM literature suggested a stricter threshold of  $\chi^2/df < 2$ , more recent methodological studies consider values below 5 as acceptable for complex behavioural models (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Schumacker & Lomax, 2016). The fit indices further confirmed model adequacy, with the Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) = 0.94, the Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) = 0.95, and the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.98, all exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.90. The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.062, which falls within the acceptable range of below 0.08 (O'Boyle & Williams, 2011; Hung & Lin, 2015; Goretzko et al., 2023).

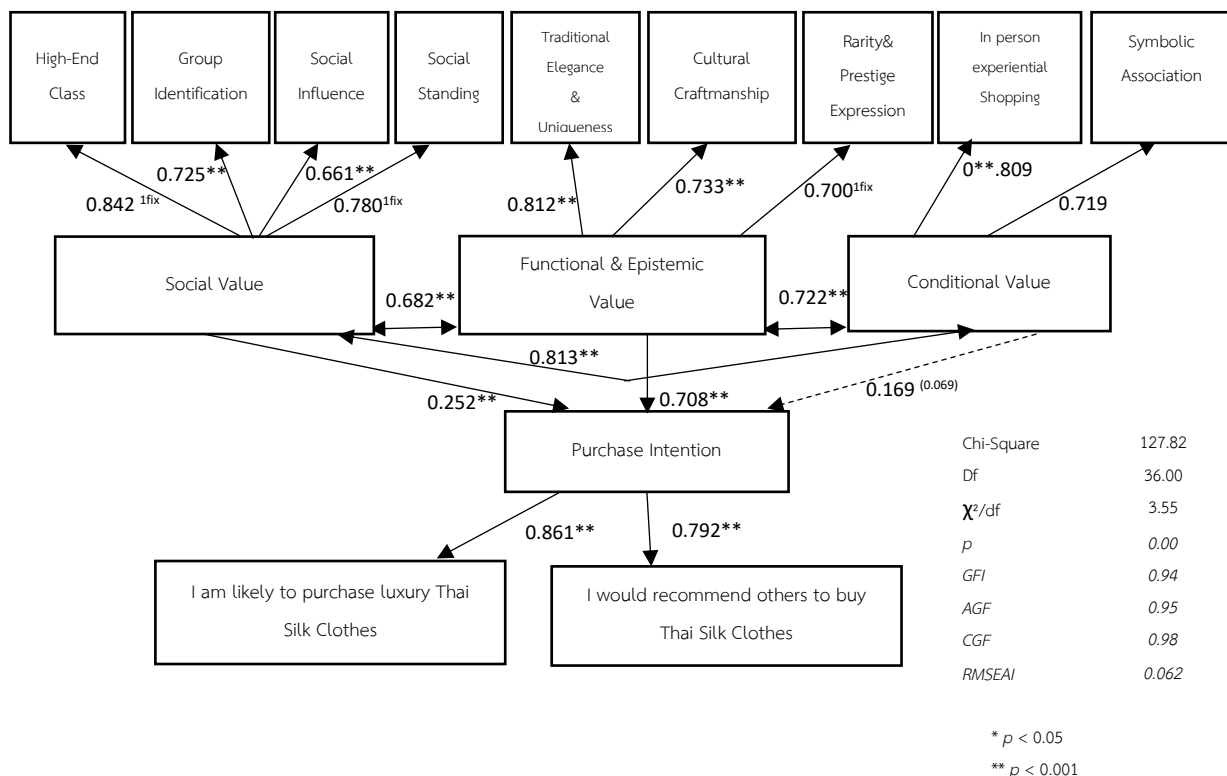


Figure 2 The analytical results derived from SEM

These results suggest that the model demonstrates an acceptable fit, supporting construct validity and justifying further hypothesis testing. Hypothesized Relationships

illustrate the paths and relational structure. The model tested the following hypotheses:  $H_1$ ,  $H_2$ ,  $H_3$  : whether social value, functional and epistemic value, and conditional value, respectively, have a significant impact on the intention to purchase;  $H_4$  : Social, functional, epistemic, and conditional values are interrelated. As shown in the SEM path coefficients table (Table 4),  $H_1$  was supported ( $\beta = 0.252$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), suggesting that social affiliation and peer validation do play a role in Thai female consumers' preferences for luxury Thai silk garments.  $H_2$  has the most significant path coefficient ( $\beta = 0.708$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that functional and epistemic values shape consumers' purchase intention for Thai traditional silk. When buyers see real, practical value, such as a good fit, lasting quality, or alignment with their sustainable lifestyle, and find deeper meaning in the fabric's cultural background and craftsmanship, they are much more likely to want to purchase it.

Table 4 SEM Path coefficients

| Path                                                                             | Coefficient ( $\beta$ ) | P     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| Social Value → High-end class                                                    | 0.842                   | 1 fix |
| Social Value → Group Identification                                              | 0.725                   | **    |
| Social Value → Social Influence                                                  | 0.661                   | **    |
| Social Value → Social Standing ( <i>Cultural Sophistication &amp; Elegance</i> ) | 0.78                    | 1 fix |
| Social Value → Functional & Epistemic Value                                      | 0.682                   | **    |
| Social Value → Purchase Intention                                                | 0.252                   | *     |
| Social Value → Conditional Value                                                 | 0.813                   | **    |
| Functional & Epistemic Value → Traditional Elegance & Uniqueness                 | 0.812                   | **    |
| Functional & Epistemic Value → Cultural Craftsmanship                            | 0.733                   | **    |
| Functional & Epistemic Value → Rarity & Prestige Expression                      | 0.7                     | 1fix  |
| Functional & Epistemic Value → Purchase Intention                                | 0.708                   | **    |
| Functional & Epistemic Value → Conditional Value                                 | 0.722                   | **    |
| Conditional Value → In-person experiential Shopping                              | 0.809                   | **    |
| Conditional Value → Symbolic Association                                         | 0.719                   | **    |
| Conditional Value → Purchase Intention                                           | 0.169                   | 0.069 |

Remark: \*means  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* means  $p < 0.001$ ; 1 fix means loading fixed to 1 for construct identification

In contrast,  $H_3$  was not supported ( $p = 0.069$ ); a weak, non-significant effect of conditional value suggests that situational factors, such as the shopping environment or occasion, do not strongly motivate consumers to purchase Thai silk. Finally,  $H_4$  was confirmed. The interrelations between the three value constructs were all statistically significant, with

strong correlations observed between social toward functional and epistemic value ( $\beta = 0.682$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Social and Conditional value ( $\beta = 0.813$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and conditional functional and epistemic value ( $\beta = 0.722$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This suggests a more complex dynamic in which personal significance can be shaped or strengthened by social connection, even when outward displays of status are subtle. The findings offer valuable insights into changing luxury tastes in Thailand, particularly the growing emphasis on private, internal value rather than visible expression, as well as on cultural appreciation, national traditions, and sustainable consumption in luxury. Table 5 presents the summary of the tested hypotheses.

Table 5 The results of the Hypotheses Test

| Hypotheses                                                                                                                                                                                              | Result    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <i>H<sub>1</sub> Social value has a significant influence on purchase intention for luxury Thai silk garments.</i>                                                                                      | Supported |
| <i>H<sub>2</sub> Functional and epistemic values have a significant influence on purchase intention for luxury Thai silk garments.</i>                                                                  | Supported |
| <i>H<sub>3</sub> Conditional value has a significant influence on purchase intention for luxury Thai silk garments.</i>                                                                                 | Rejected  |
| <i>H<sub>4</sub> Social value, functional value, epistemic value, and conditional value influence the purchase intention of traditional Thai luxury silk apparel, and are coherent with each other.</i> | Supported |

## 6. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings suggest that the purchase intention for such items is shaped more by intrinsic value, including quality, craftsmanship, and cultural meaning, than by external or situational triggers. The strong, statistically significant effect of functional and epistemic value ( $\beta = 0.708$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) indicates that Thai consumers are highly motivated by tangible product attributes, such as fit, material integrity, sustainability, and the deeper knowledge or cultural pride gained from wearing Thai silk. These findings align with prior research linking artisanal luxury to self-expression and authentic cultural storytelling (Vigneron & Johnson, 2004; Chan et al., 2021). Social value also plays a meaningful role in shaping purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.252$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Wearing Thai silk appears to offer consumers a sense of belonging to high-status groups, cultural sophistication, and community identity. These results reinforce the view that in collectivist societies such as Thailand, group affiliation and social signaling continue to influence luxury consumption, though perhaps in more subtle ways than traditionally assumed (Eastman et al., 1999; Shukla et al., 2015). The path from social value

to functional-epistemic value was also strong ( $\beta = 0.682, p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that consumers influenced by peer recognition or cultural standing are more likely to internalise the product's craftsmanship and meaning. By contrast, conditional value did not significantly predict purchase intention ( $\beta = 0.069$ ), challenging assumptions that situational or event-based motivations strongly influence luxury consumption in collectivist contexts (Sheth et al., 1991). This finding suggests that Thai consumers engagement with traditional silk does not follow the promotion-sensitive or impulse-driven patterns often observed in Western luxury markets. Instead, silk purchasing is more closely linked to cultural continuity, ceremonial use and long-term ownership. Thai consumers commonly associate silk garments with identity, respectability, and social appropriateness, particularly during religious events, weddings, and national celebrations. Decisions, therefore, appear guided less by temporary incentives and more by the product's perceived dignity and symbolic value. In addition, generational transmission and familial encouragement shape confidence in craftsmanship and reinforce culturally grounded consumption habits. This orientation toward heritage and symbolic continuity likely explains why conditional value failed to predict purchase intention, unlike studies in which luxury demand is responsive to short-term promotional or situational cues. This observation is consistent with studies indicating that consumer decisions in collectivist Asian cultures are more influenced by social harmony, cultural continuity, and respect for tradition than by situational benefits or impulse buying (Triandis, 2001; Shavitt & Cho, 2016). Such luxury items may be consumed not only as sources of personal gain but also as markers of cultural identification, family symbolism, and ritual compulsion. Research on the consumption of cultural products in Thai and Southeast Asian settings shows that perceived authenticity, cultural symbolism, and traditional artisanship have a strong impact on purchase actions, diminishing the effectiveness of short-term promotional factors (Dangprapai et al., 2020; Chan et al., 2021; Chartprasert & Deedenkeeritisakul, 2022). In the Thai context, silk garments function as cultural artefacts that sustain collective identity and continuity, thereby reducing the explanatory relevance of conditional value in predicting purchase intentions. This suggests that market-oriented models of luxury consumption may not fully capture the decision-making processes surrounding culturally embedded fashion products such as Thai silk. Instead, the findings underscore the importance of contextualised perspectives that recognise the roles of heritage, identity, and cultural symbolism in shaping consumption in tradition-oriented markets. The results indicate that Thai women who

purchase traditional silk are less influenced by situational factors such as retail environments, social events, and promotional stimuli. Rather, their decisions are guided by enduring motivations linked to emotional fulfilment, cultural belonging, and the symbolic meanings attached to garments. This pattern aligns with a broader shift toward forms of “quiet luxury,” sustainability, and slow fashion, where authenticity, heritage, and refined elegance are valued over overt displays of status (Collins & Weiss, 2015; Ritch, 2020; Domingos et al., 2022; Taylor et al., 2024). It also highlights a fundamental distinction between handmade, culturally meaningful goods and mass-market luxury products, which often rely more on brand recognition than cultural or artisanal value. While conventional luxury consumption often centres on social display and exclusivity, handmade products such as Thai silk reflect a different kind of value rooted in cultural continuity, craftsmanship, and ethical sustainability. For many buyers, these garments function not only as fashion items but also as personal artefacts that preserve identity and carry emotional or even intergenerational significance. The findings show that multiple value dimensions shape consumers’ relationships with luxury Thai silk, with functional and epistemic values exerting the strongest influence on purchase intention, social value remaining relevant but secondary, and conditional value showing a limited effect. Purchase decisions, therefore, appear driven more by the product’s intrinsic qualities than by shopping context or location. This pattern diverges from traditional theories of conspicuous consumption in collectivist cultures, which emphasise the stronger role of situational and social display motives (Eastman et al., 1999). This is more closely aligned with the newly described concept of subtle or quiet luxury (Berger & Ward, 2010). These patterns suggest that Thai luxury consumption is driven more by functional value, emotional resonance, and cultural meaning than by social pressures or situational triggers. For Thai silk stakeholders, this implies that long-term engagement is best achieved through heritage storytelling, communication about craftsmanship, and artisan–consumer connections rather than short-term promotional tactics. Emphasising cultural symbolism and sustainable local production can therefore strengthen appeal among consumers seeking authenticity and deeper value beyond visible prestige.

## 7. Application of research results to enhance the organisation's competitiveness

This study offers valuable insights for OTOP producers, such as local fashion brands, particularly for young designer SMEs and artisanal entrepreneurs, as well as cultural policymakers. The strong influence of functional and epistemic values ( $H_2$ ) shows that buyers prioritise quality, heritage, and personal meaning. Organisations can gain a competitive edge by focusing on craftsmanship, natural materials, and cultural storytelling, which at the national level supports Thailand's transition toward value-added cultural industries rather than mass production. The role of social value ( $H_1$ ), associated with refined taste and cultural identity, suggests that subtle prestige remains important. Positioning Thai silk as a symbol of “quiet luxury” rooted in tradition can attract modern consumers seeking authenticity while strengthening Thailand's cultural branding internationally. Finally, the confirmed interrelation among all value dimensions ( $H_4$ ) supports integrated strategies that blend product excellence, cultural pride, and social connection. These findings can guide product design, branding, and artistic marketing across both private and public sectors toward the design and strategic management and contribute to the long-term competitiveness of Thailand's creative economy.

## 8. Research Recommendations

This study examined genuine buyers of Thai traditional silk apparel through in-person screening at selected fairs and retail venues in Thailand. Although sampling was open to all active shoppers, respondents were predominantly women aged 36 and above, reflecting the group most visibly engaged with Thai silk as a luxury in Thailand today. Consequently, younger and male perspectives, which may differ in how they perceive silk as luxury, remain underrepresented. Although data were collected in real purchase settings, the venues were limited to Bangkok and the surrounding areas, where attitudes toward silk, price sensitivity, and cultural associations may differ from those in other regions of Thailand. Therefore, differences in silk preferences, event-related meanings, and regional shopping habits may influence perceptions of value. In addition, the cross-sectional design captured views at only one point in time. Future research could deepen this understanding by examining the emotional, symbolic, experiential, economic, and ethical dimensions of luxury consumption, particularly in relation to traditional or artisan-made products.

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