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## The Analysis of Hedonic Lifestyle Impact on Irrational Purchasing Behavior with Social Acknowledgement as a Moderating Variable

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### Abstract

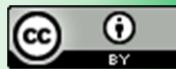
This study aims to examine the critical role of social acknowledgment in moderating the relationship between hedonic lifestyles and irrational buying behavior, particularly in the context of luxury products among Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z in Indonesia. The research objective is to assess how social acknowledgment influences the extent to which individuals with hedonic lifestyles engage in irrational purchasing. The method involves purposive sampling, collecting 256 valid responses. The results reveal that while a hedonic lifestyle significantly impacts irrational purchasing decisions, social acknowledgment amplifies this effect, leading individuals to engage in more impulsive and excessive buying behavior. These findings highlight the importance for marketers and corporate policymakers to consider status-oriented and socially acknowledged marketing strategies to effectively target these consumer groups. The implications suggest that social acknowledgment can be a powerful driver in luxury product consumption, emphasizing the need for marketing approaches that resonate with consumers' desires for social recognition.

**Keywords:** hedonic lifestyle, social acknowledgment, buying behavior

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## INTRODUCTION

The existence of globalization and modernization affect countries across the globe, including Indonesia. Unconsciously, people are slowly or directly affected by a hedonic lifestyle which is a bad and luxurious lifestyle. Many people know hedonism, but in fact, they do not realize that they are already trapped in this lifestyle. Hedonism is a view of life declaring that pleasure in enjoying everything is the life goal of humans in this world. Hedonism can be mostly found in society members, not only in students, youngsters, or university students, but also in almost all societal levels. A hedonic lifestyle is an individual motivation to behave based on the principle of pleasure (Pratminingsih et al., 2003). Hedonism is a doctrine arguing that pleasure is of the utmost importance in life. Hedonism is a lifestyle to please or a lifestyle becoming the ultimate goal of obtaining self-pleasure and happiness. Most people describe the lifestyle of "hedonism" as a consumptive behavior or consumerism resulting in negative impacts on the believers of this lifestyle (Untara & Ahnjong, 2022).

Concerning the hedonistic lifestyle, irrational buying behavior can occur when individuals with a hedonistic lifestyle choose to purchase products or services that give them immediate pleasure, improve happiness, or fulfill hedonistic wishes although the decisions might not be related to the available obtained benefits or benefits which are really required (Firmansyah & Burhanudin, 2023; Ong et al., 2022). Individuals adopting irrational buying behavior can be motivated by the desire to express identity, fulfill hedonic wishes, or increase their social status through luxurious or expensive goods (Indriana, 2022; Muawaliyah & Saifuddin, 2023). Irrational buying behavior occurs more frequently in society. This behavior is marked by consumers' tendency to make a purchase that is not always based on logical or rational consideration but is affected by other factors instead, e.g. emotion, desire, and social impacts (Mulyono & Rusdarti, 2020). The most important factor of irrational buying behavior is a "hedonistic lifestyle" (Fadhilah, 2023). A hedonistic lifestyle is indicated by a tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain (Sulistiyawati & Zainuna, 2023). Within consumer behavior contexts, a hedonistic lifestyle can motivate individuals to make excessive or impulsive purchases to fulfil their desire and pleasure (Fadhilah et al., 2023; Firmansyah & Burhanudin, 2023).

Regarding hedonistic aspects of consumption, it is known that there are emotional characteristics of consumers when purchasing products and positive impacts originating from the action of purchasing (Tarka et al., 2023). There is a need for the hedonic intrinsic of individuals to experience adventures and happiness sought when buying. Consequently, hedonic buying results in irrational and impulsive impact when buying. Therefore, consumer focus on hedonic consumption experience should improve impulsive buying because the action gives and motivates consumer's positive feelings and the desired emotion (Kousi et al., 2023; Moldes et al., 2023) which often become triggers of compulsive buying (Gerhard et al., 2020; Pomfret et al., 2021). Hedonic doctrine teaches that life means obtaining the most happiness or pleasure. A hedonic lifestyle tends to attack teenagers because teenage is the period of searching for self-identity (Deftarani et al., 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). Obviously, there are things motivating or driving teenagers to behave like following a hedonic lifestyle to achieve desires related to fun, freedom, and life pleasure (Utomo et al., 2023; Gentzler et al., 2021). Motivation to keep fulfilling the needs of a hedonic lifestyle makes teenagers feel threatened because of the need to keep updated to the hedonic lifestyle, which is dynamic, following the trends of the era.

Hence, the existence of a hedonic buying experience by consumers occurring in retail contexts is often accompanied by irrational and impulsive thoughts related to happiness, adventure, and emotion which is sought during the buying experience (Kousi et al., 2023). The hedonic buying experience is often observed in offline and online stores, when consumers spend their money without restricting

themselves, indicating irrationality and lack of financial responsibility (Claricini et al., 2023; Yastuti & Irawati, 2023). Currently, advertising is under scrutiny since the information aspect has become an important discourse in business, especially in the branding process. Effective advertising activities are viewed as being capable of affecting consumption tendencies in society. Repeat buying is one of the goals of advertising. Effective advertising will also change the public's knowledge regarding the availability and characteristics of a product (product knowledge). In advertising, producers or advertisers can choose either one or both media to deliver their desired messages. The aforementioned media are above-the-line media and below-the-line media. Above-the-line media are advertising using primary media such as electronic media or printed media. The utilization of above-the-line media has benefits in reaching a big number of audiences.

However, this also causes additional expenses that must be spent by advertising companies. Despite costing more expense, the existence of above-the-line media has an important role in advertising campaigns. Furthermore, advertising and promotion can affect consumer decisions. Persuasive and informative advertising can provide information on the superiority, unique features, and benefits that can be obtained. Consumers tend to choose products that have strong messages and are relevant to their needs. Promotions, such as discounts or special offers, can also become determining factors in making buying decisions. Good advertising can create a positive brand image in consumer's minds. Through consistent advertising which focuses on brand values, companies can affect consumer's perceptions concerning the quality, reputation, or values of their products. Consumers tend to choose brands that have strong and reliable images. Advertising and promotion can also play an important role in building relationships between brands and consumers. Through advertisements creating emotional bonding or containing messages that are relevant to consumer values, companies can affect consumer loyalty to the brand. Consumers tend to choose brands that they regard to be close and related to their identity.

Moreover, advertising and promotion can also impact consumer behavior in terms of accelerating buying decisions. By providing relevant and interesting information, advertising and promotion can accelerate the process of product research and selection. Consumers can feel more convinced and motivated to make a purchase. Advertising contributes to the literature on branding, advertising of luxury products, lifestyle, and functional branding as well as offers practical implications for the managers of luxurious product brands (Zhao et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the choice of luxurious brands in this result is based on respondents' purchasing ability with price adjusted to the results of data existing in Surabaya city and Jakarta city. The luxurious goods intended and discussed in this study are the ones based on The Corator where the goods are referred to as a type of accessible luxurious goods. The intended brands in this study are specified as listed: (1) Tory Burch, (2) Coach, (3) Michael Kors, (4) Longchamp, (5) Kate Spade, and (6) Dell'est. The existence of a hedonic style is also supported by social acknowledgment related to irrational buying behavior. In the current society, socialization and social interaction have important roles in shaping our behaviors and attitudes (Li et al., 2023). Individuals are often involved in hedonic behaviors, such as buying luxurious goods or holding a large-scale party to obtain acknowledgment or validation from their social circles (Firmansyah & Burhanudin, 2023; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Sulistyowati & Zainuna, 2023). In several cases, this social acknowledgment can be a strong motivator for irrational consumer behavior.

Social acknowledgement plays an important role in triggering hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. Buying activity is initiated by desires which are rational, namely related to the function of the product of the needs of the product (utilitarian value). However, there are other values which can also affect individuals' buying behavior, namely emotional values which are often called hedonic. When

individuals purchase something, pleasure and indulgence (hedonic aspects) will be the things to be focused on, in addition to the use obtained from the products (Kousi et al., 2023). This research utilizes Hedonic Treadmill theory which explains that someone's happiness tends to return to a certain point although he/she experiences positive or negative events. Within the context of hedonic lifestyle and the purchase of luxurious goods, this theory is applicable to explain why consumers may feel necessary to keep purchasing the luxurious goods, although the happiness effects due to the previous purchase deteriorates over time (Coviello et al., 2014; McCullough, 2017).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Hedonic Treadmill Theory**

Hedonic Treadmill Theory, first explained by Brickman and Campbell in their contemporary discussion regarding hedonic adaption, originates from an article entitled "Hedonic Relativism and Planning the Good Society". They introduced the slogan "the hedonic treadmill" (Brickman et al., 1978). This theory revolves around the core in which the hedonic treadmill is a concept that someone's happiness level, after ups and downs as responses to positive or negative life events, at last, tends to return to the starting point of the experiences. Even though hedonic adaptation plays a role in subjective prosperity, many other factors are also important (Diener et al., 2006). In irrational buying behavior motivated by the desire for social acknowledgment, someone may feel satisfied or happy for a certain time after obtaining the acknowledgment. However, for long-term happiness, individuals should consider other factors in their lives, such as quality interpersonal relationships or personal achievement which may have deeper and more continuous impacts on their prosperity. Hedonic Treadmill Theory and the concept of social acknowledgment are interrelated within the context of irrational buying behavior, particularly in how individuals strive to achieve and maintain happiness or satisfaction in their social lives (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005).

### **Hedonic Lifestyle and Irrational Buying Behavior Variables**

A hedonic lifestyle is a life approach in which individuals seek the most satisfaction and pleasure (Fadhilah et al., 2023). They tend to focus on positive aspects and life pleasures, often prioritizing self-indulgence, instant gratifications, and positive experiences before logical and rational considerations (Pulungan & Syamsuri, 2022). Hedonism may appear in various life aspects, including recreational activities, luxurious goods consumption, traveling, food and beverages, entertainment, etc. (Muawaliyah & Saifuddin, 2023; Ong et al., 2022). Meanwhile, irrational buying behavior refers to a buying decision that is not based on rational, logical, or analytical considerations. People involved in irrational buying behavior are likely to make impulsive decisions or are affected by emotional factors, such as motivation to fulfill immediate wishes or to overcome social pressure (Park & Nicolau, 2018). They may be tempted by appealing advertisements, sales offer, or impacts of friends or celebrities advertising certain products (Good & Hyman, 2021; Hedhli et al., 2021). As a result, they may not thoroughly consider the real needs, the quality, the long-term values, or the financial impact of the purchase. However, it is important to be reminded that not all individuals having hedonic lifestyles or getting involved in irrational purchase behavior have the same behavioral patterns. Individual factors, individual values, education, and life experience also play a role in shaping individuals' buying behavior and lifestyle. Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be concluded as follows:

**H1: Hedonic lifestyle has a significant positive effect on irrational buying behavior.**

## Social Acknowledgement Moderate's Interconnectivity between Hedonic Lifestyle and Irrational Buying Behavior

Social acknowledgement plays a role in shaping individual behaviors. Human beings have inner needs to be accepted and acknowledged by other people within their social environment. When someone feels accepted and acknowledged by other people, the acceptance and the acknowledgement can give the feelings of satisfaction, comfort, and improve their self-esteem (Kumar & Paul, 2018). Within the context of hedonic lifestyle, individuals with hedonic lifestyle tend to seek social acknowledgement through appearance, ownership of luxurious goods, or a consumptive lifestyle (Muawaliyah & Saifuddin, 2023). They may think that owning luxurious goods or following latest trends will make them look successful, awesome, or appreciated by other people (Beneke & Zimmerman, 2014; Hwang & Han, 2014). In attempts to gain the social acknowledgement, the individuals may be tempted to make impulsive or irrational purchase without critically considering the values, the long-term benefits, or the financial consequences of the purchase (Pena-Garcia et al., 2020; Šliburytė & Vaitiekė, 2019).

The role of social acknowledgement as a moderator suggests that its impact on individuals can vary, influenced by several key factors. First, the strength of the need for social acknowledgement plays a significant role; individuals who have a stronger desire to be acknowledged by others may be more susceptible to irrational buying behavior. These individuals are more likely to be tempted by social pressures and more motivated to purchase prestigious or popular goods to gain recognition (Guy et al., 2015; Swani & Milne, 2017). Second, the social context in which individuals are immersed also affects how social acknowledgement moderates the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. For example, in environments that value overconsumption or material wealth, the influence of social context may intensify, leading to greater irrational buying tendencies (Tuan et al., 2019). Lastly, individuals with higher self-awareness and emotional quotient are often better equipped to manage their need for social acknowledgement. These individuals are more likely to consider their desires within a broader context, reducing the likelihood of falling into irrational buying behavior merely to gain social approval (Arshi et al., 2023; Lim et al., 2020).

In addition, it is important to be reminded that hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior can be affected by other factors including education, individual values, life experience, and the independence level in making decisions. These factors can also moderate the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. Overall, social acknowledgement can play a significant role in moderating a relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. The existence of those roles is not absolute but varied across individuals and affected by various different personal and social factors. Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis can be concluded as follows:

H2: Social acknowledgement significantly moderates the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior.

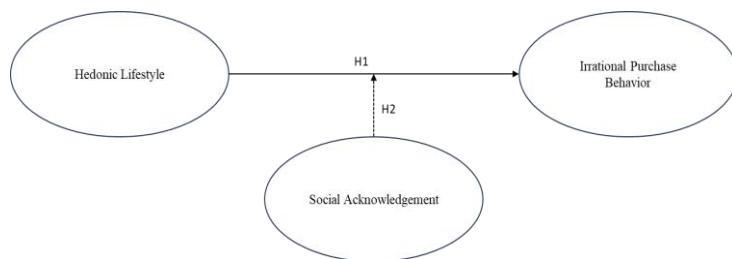


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

## METHODS

The research utilized a quantitative approach (Albert, 2024) to explore the relationship between hedonic lifestyle, social acknowledgment, and irrational buying behavior. This method was chosen to allow for the collection of structured primary data and the application of statistical analysis to test the hypotheses and examine the connections between the variables. The research was conducted among generations X, Y, and Z in two major cities in Indonesia, Jakarta and Surabaya. These cities were selected based on the 2018 cost-of-living survey by the Central Agency of Statistics, which identified them as the most advanced and economically significant cities in the country.

Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The questionnaire was developed to measure three key variables: hedonic lifestyle, social acknowledgment, and irrational buying behavior. The measurement scales used were adapted from previous research, ensuring the reliability and validity of the data collected. The study involved 260 respondents who were users of luxury goods, providing a robust sample for analysis. The indicators used to measure hedonic lifestyle included activities, interests, opinions, attitudes, manners, actions, curiosity, openness to change, self-enhancement, entertainment, fun, and consumption of life.

To ensure that the data collected was suitable for testing the research hypotheses, the study employed a purposive sampling technique. This approach was selected to target specific respondents who were relevant to the study's focus on luxury product consumption. The questionnaire also included indicators for social acknowledgment, such as recognition, general disapproval, family disapproval, accepted feeling, being considered more positive, good impression, and obtaining approval or acknowledgment. These indicators were designed to capture the nuances of social acknowledgment and its impact on consumer behavior.

Statistical analysis was conducted to assess the interconnections between hedonic lifestyle, social acknowledgment, and irrational buying behavior. For irrational buying behavior, the indicators included transactional behavior, referential behavior, preferential behavior, explorative behavior, interest in seeking information, considering to buy, interest in trying, wanting to know products, and wanting to own products. The analysis aimed to prove the existence of effects and interactions between these variables, supporting the theoretical framework of the study. By employing this quantitative approach, the research was able to draw conclusions about the influence of hedonic lifestyle and social acknowledgment on irrational buying behavior, particularly within the context of luxury fashion products.

## RESULT

This study distributed 260 questionnaires in two biggest cities in Indonesia, namely Jakarta and Surabaya, with a proportional ratio of questionnaire distribution percentage of 50:50. Fifty percent was distributed to the city of Jakarta and the rest was distributed to the city of Surabaya, resulting in 130 respondents in each city. Based on the returned questionnaire, it was known that the response rate was 98.46% with a total of 256 respondents who were collected and eligible to be part of inclusion criteria. In the validity testing, this study employed a method called Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). The testing was conducted to see whether the arranged indicators based on certain variables were able to represent the variables. CFA-related testing can be seen in Table 1 where none of the values of factor loading of operational items are less than 0.7. Hence, it can be stated that the construct validity was reached. Next, this study conducted convergent validity testing aimed to see the correlation level between latent and construct variables where the data were deemed valid when having an Average

Variance Extracted (AVE) value of more than 0.5 ( $>0.5$ ). Based on Table 1 below, it can be seen that the overall data of AVE exceed 0.5. Therefore, it can be stated that the convergent validity was fulfilled.

Table 1. Validity Testing

Variable	Operational Item	Factor Loadings	AVE
Hedonic Lifestyle	GHD1	0.712	
	GHD2	0.747	
	GHD3	0.821	
	GHD4	0.788	
	GHD5	0.829	
	GHD6	0.820	
	GHD7	0.818	
	GHD8	0.812	
	GHD9	0.860	0.631
	GHD10	0.850	
Irrational Purchase Behaviour	GHD11	0.817	
	GHD16	0.759	
	GHD17	0.802	
	GHD18	0.761	
	GHD19	0.756	
	GHD20	0.740	
	GHD21	0.788	
	IPB1	0.760	
	IPB10	0.822	
	IPB11	0.841	
Social Acknowledgement	IPB2	0.813	
	IPB3	0.823	
	IPB4	0.805	0.662
	IPB5	0.781	
	IPB6	0.815	
	IPB7	0.810	
	IPB8	0.824	
	IPB9	0.849	
	SA1	0.814	
	SA2	0.843	
Social Acknowledgement	SA3	0.884	
	SA4	0.833	0.753
	SA5	0.885	
	SA6	0.881	
	SA7	0.881	

$R^2$  coefficient measure serves to describe how strong independent variables in explaining dependent variables, in this study it refers to how strong hedonic lifestyle explains irrational purchasing behavior.  $R^2$  test is better when the coefficient is very close to number 1. The result of  $R^2$  is shown in following Table 2.

Table 2. R Square

R Square	R Square Adjusted
0.730	0.727

Based on the result in the table, it is visible that the independent variable represented by hedonic lifestyle can explain the dependent variable represented by irrational purchase behavior with a value of 0.730 which means approximately 73%. The result of the correlation test in table 3 also demonstrates that hedonic lifestyle has a relation to irrational purchase behavior with a value of 0.512 or 51%. It means that hedonic lifestyle has a close relationship to irrational purchase behavior. Both hedonic lifestyle and social acknowledgement concurrently have an impact on irrational purchase behavior. Social acknowledgement moderates the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational purchase behavior by as much as 0.198 or 19.8% which means that the impact is not too significant. The result of the significance test of this study can be further seen in the following Figure 2.

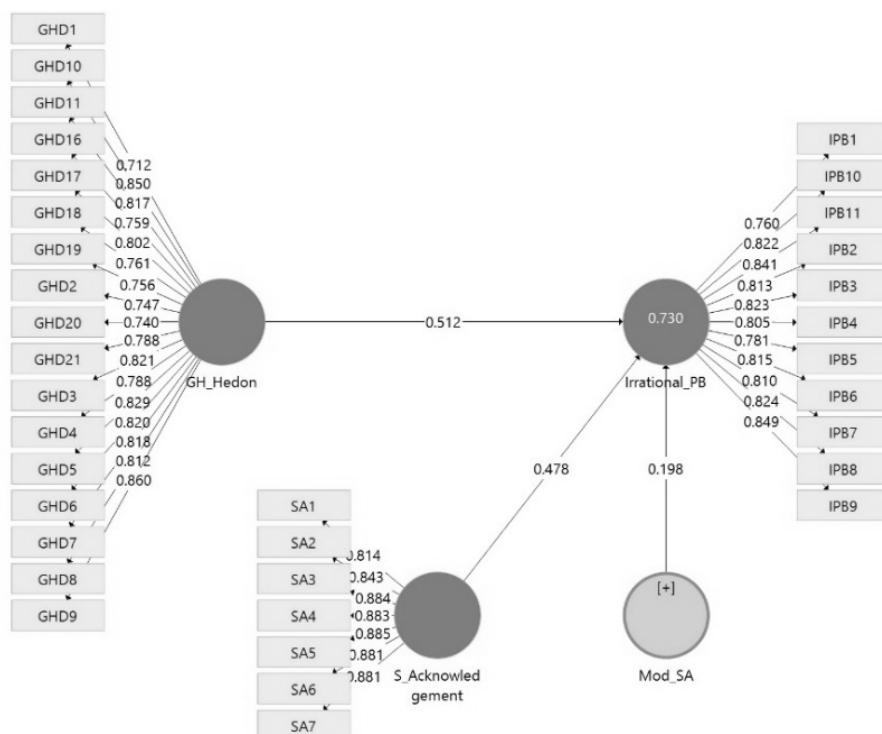


Figure 2. Significance Test

Furthermore, this study conducted a moderation test, and the result is displayed in Figure 3 below. In Figure 3, the result of the moderation effect demonstrates that there is a difference in the moderation effect in each city. In Jakarta, the value was 9.18, which means that social acknowledgement can moderate the variable of hedonic lifestyle well at a low level of hedonic lifestyle. However, the opposite effect was observed in Surabaya, with a value of 7.53, which demonstrates that social acknowledgement can moderate the variable of hedonic lifestyle well at a high level of hedonic lifestyle.

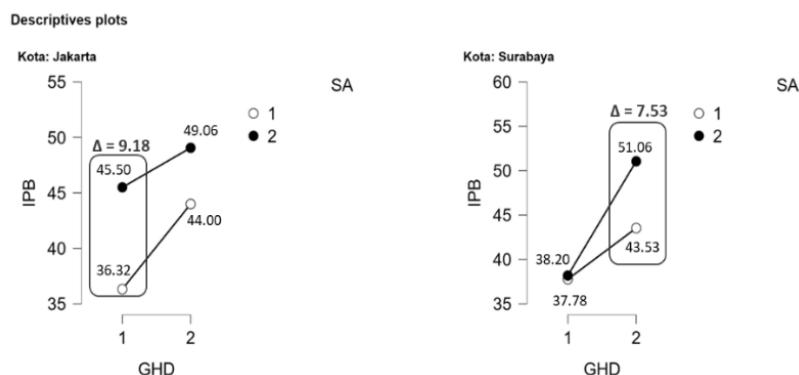


Figure 3. Moderation Test (2-way ANOVA)

## DISCUSSION

The research conducted in Jakarta and Surabaya, Indonesia provides significant insights into the factors that affect irrational purchasing behavior. The study utilizes rigorous testing methods, such as CFA and analysis of convergent validity, to establish the reliability of its findings. The findings emphasize the considerable influence of hedonic lifestyle on illogical purchasing behavior, suggesting that those who prioritize pleasure-seeking and satisfaction in spending are more prone to making irrational buying choices. Emotional fulfillment tends to take precedence over rational considerations when making a purchase. Additionally, the research recognizes social acknowledgment as another significant aspect. Social norms and peer influence significantly impact consumer behavior as individuals aim to gain approval and recognition through their buying decisions.

The influence of social recognition on impulsive buying behavior is clear, but its moderating impact on the connection between hedonistic lifestyle and impulsive conduct differs between Jakarta and Surabaya. The variations in moderation effects between these two locations suggest the existence of unique cultural and contextual variables. Social recognition in Jakarta appears to better control hedonistic behavior in contexts where hedonic tendencies are low, possibly due to a greater societal focus on conformity and seeking approval. In Surabaya, social acknowledgment effectively moderates hedonic tendencies in settings of higher indulgence, indicating a complex relationship between cultural norms and individual behaviors. Individuals adopting irrational buying behavior can be motivated by the desire to express identity, fulfill hedonic wishes, or increase their social status through luxurious or expensive goods (Indriana, 2022; Muawaliyah & Saifuddin, 2023).

Irrational buying behavior occurs more frequently in society. This behavior is marked by consumers' tendency to make a purchase that is not always based on logical or rational consideration but is affected by other factors instead, emotion, desire, and social impacts. The results indicate that irrational purchasing behavior in Indonesia is influenced by a combination of personal preferences, societal standards, and cultural factors. Understanding these processes is crucial for developing specific treatments to encourage more rational consumption habits and reduce the adverse effects of impulsive purchasing behavior.

## CONCLUSION

This study successfully proves that there is a relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. The research analysis demonstrates that there is a positive relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. It means that the higher the level

of hedonic lifestyle is, the higher the irrational buying behavior is. This study is also able to prove that social acknowledgement was able to moderate the relationship between hedonic lifestyle and irrational buying behavior. This study utilized Hedonic Treadmill Theory in studying the impact of the psychological element in the form of social acknowledgment on irrational buying behavior. With the given specified details of the result, it can be stated that social acknowledgement in Surabaya city will be able to shape irrational buying behavior dominantly, strongly, and effectively when in a high level of hedonic lifestyle. However, this finding is reversed in Jakarta city as social acknowledgement will be able to make irrational buying behavior well in a low level of hedonic lifestyle.

## **LIMITATION**

Based on this research, the author is fully aware that this study is far from being perfect. Hence, the author opens a discussion space and welcomes suggestions and feedback for improvement within the academic member or civitas academica related to the topic of this study. For the company, this research is expected to serve as a reference for marketing management to decide policies. In addition, the result of this research can be feedback for PT Rhema Cipta Karya Gemilang (Rhema Advertising) in doing future Out-of-Home-Media (OHM) marketing by creating business model innovation such as B2B (Business to Business) in which the activities or the business transactions are done between the same business entities and/or making business model innovation by using B2G (Business to Government) mechanism, in which the business model innovation can be done with governmental agency stakeholders. For future research, is expected to enrich the theoretical framework by viewing from a different theory or adding other appropriate variables, choosing different but similar research objects to enable describing the condition of other objects and serving as comparison and increasing the scope to a wider range of generalization. The next research is expected to be done longitudinally or in the long term of time and continuously so that the research result will be in accordance with the ongoing changes occurring to the object or the subject of the research.

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