

# EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF CELEBRITY BRAGGING TYPES ON CONSUMER PURCHASE INTENTIONS: UNVEILING THE ROLES OF SELF-PRESENTATION AND SELF-CONGRUITY

KHÁM PHÁ TÁC ĐỘNG CỦA CÁC KIỂU KHOE KHOANG CỦA NGƯỜI NỔI TIẾNG ĐẾN Ý ĐỊNH MUA HÀNG CỦA NGƯỜI TIÊU DÙNG: VAI TRÒ CỦA YẾU TỐ THỂ HIỆN BẢN THÂN VÀ PHÙ HỢP BẢN THÂN

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## ABSTRACT

As the internet celebrity economy thrives, companies prioritize celebrity endorsements. Celebrities often boast about luxurious lifestyles on social media, showcasing exclusive vacations and luxury products, yet scientific knowledge on how such bragging influences purchase intentions remains limited. This study examines the effects of celebrity bragging and humblebragging on purchase intention regarding luxury foreign products. The samples would be gathered using the convenience sampling technique, with the data gathered through online questionnaires shared in social media accounts, with respondents up to 296 people. The analysis method that would be implemented was the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), using the SmartPLS 4.0 software. The results reveal the following: (1) Bragging negatively impacts purchase intention, while humblebragging has a positive effect. (2) Furthermore, the influence of bragging types on purchase intention is mediated by consumer self-presentation and self-congruity. Both bragging types enhance willingness to purchase through self-presentation; while bragging negatively and humblebragging positively affect purchase intention through the mediation of self-congruity. The study offers new insights into consumer behavior towards luxury products, presenting a fresh viewpoint on how individuals perceive and interact with celebrity content on social media. Our findings expand and deepen the existing literature on bragging on social media, thus, providing valuable practical implications for businesses to either utilize or avoid bragging and humblebragging in their marketing efforts.

**Keywords:** Bragging, humblebragging, self-presentation, self-congruity, purchase intention.

## TÓM TẮT

Khi nền kinh tế của các người nổi tiếng trên Internet phát triển mạnh mẽ, các công ty đang ưu tiên cho việc ủng hộ của người nổi tiếng. Những người nổi tiếng thường tự hào về cuộc sống xa hoa trên mạng xã hội, những kỳ nghỉ độc quyền và sản phẩm xa xỉ, tuy nhiên kiến thức khoa học về cách khoe khoang này ảnh hưởng đến ý định mua hàng vẫn còn hạn chế. Nghiên cứu này điều tra các tác động của việc khoe khoang thẳng thắn và khoe khoang khiêm tốn của người nổi tiếng đối với ý định mua hàng liên quan đến các sản phẩm xa xỉ nước ngoài. Mẫu sẽ được thu thập bằng kỹ thuật lấy mẫu thuận tiện, với dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua bảng câu hỏi trực tuyến được chia sẻ trên các tài khoản mạng xã hội, với số người trả lời là 296 người. Phương pháp phân tích sẽ được triển khai là Mô hình phương trình cấu trúc (SEM), sử dụng phần mềm SmartPLS 4.0. Kết quả cho thấy: (1) Việc khoe khoang thẳng thắn ảnh hưởng tiêu cực đến ý định mua hàng, trong khi khoe khoang khiêm tốn có tác động tích cực. (2) Hơn nữa, sự ảnh hưởng của các loại khoe khoang đối với ý định mua hàng được trung gian qua sự tự thể hiện bản thân và sự tự phù hợp với bản thân của khách hàng. Cả hai kiểu khoe khoang đều thúc đẩy ý định mua hàng thông qua sự tự thể hiện bản thân; trong khi khoe khoang thẳng thắn tác động tiêu cực thì khoe khoang khiêm tốn lại ảnh hưởng tích cực đến ý định mua hàng dưới sự điều tiết của sự tự phù hợp bản thân. Nghiên cứu mang đến những hiểu biết mới về hành vi tiêu dùng đối với các sản phẩm xa xỉ,

cung cấp góc nhìn mới về cách cá nhân nhận thức và tương tác với nội dung mà người nổi tiếng đăng trên mạng xã hội. Kết quả nghiên cứu mở rộng và làm sâu sắc thêm lý thuyết hiện có về việc khoe khoang trên mạng xã hội, từ đó cung cấp những hàm ý thực tiễn có giá trị cho doanh nghiệp trong việc sử dụng hoặc tránh sử dụng khoe khoang thẳng thắn và khoe khoang khiêm tốn trong chiến lược tiếp thị của họ.

**Từ khóa:** Khoe khoang thẳng thắn, khoe khoang khiêm tốn, tự thể hiện bản thân, tự phù hợp bản thân, ý định mua hàng.

## 1. Introduction

Social media is an online communication tool that made a huge impact on society (Hermanda et al., 2019). Celebrities can present themselves and manage their image through sharing messages with audiences on their social platforms. They could also act as the third party that recommends and describes the products through the social media contents, which could influence the consumers' opinions, behaviors, and attitudes towards a product (Uzunoğlu and Misci Kip, 2014).

In recent years, there has been a notable surge in luxury consumption and spending (Chang et al., 2016). According to Bain and Company (2014), the global number of luxury consumers has seen a significant increase over the past 25 years, growing from approximately 90 million in 1995 to 330 million by the end of 2013. The same report forecasts that around 10 million new customers enter the luxury market each year, projecting a total of 400 million luxury consumers by 2020 and 500 million by 2030. Additionally, the personal luxury goods market was valued at €260 billion in 2018, with expectations that this figure will continue to rise, reaching €365 billion by 2025 (Bain and Company, 2018).

With a potential audience of 4,89 billion (Statista, 2023) there is no better place than social media to brag about luxury foreign products. The luxury foreign products can be representative of their perceived premium quality, recognizable style, reputation, and/or limited accessibility. Because of these attributes, luxury foreign products as

possessions help to shape the owner's identity by bridging the inner self and external world (Hung et al., 2011). Therefore, it's not surprising that people care about celebrities showing off their luxury, expensive foreign products on the Internet.

What makes this situation intriguing is how people choose to show their pride. They often do it in one of two ways: either by "bragging" or "humblebragging" (Chen et al., 2020). This choice adds a layer of complexity to how the audience reacts when they observe celebrities showcasing their luxury foreign products through either bragging or humblebragging on social media. It plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' varying attitudes (Feng et al., 2023) and ultimately influences their purchase intentions regarding luxury foreign products.

Bragging, which is an aggressive type of self-praise (Luo and Hancock, 2020), usually incorporates face-threatening dispositional statements. It refers to posts that directly emphasize an individual's social status or desirable possessions, with obvious self-enhancement intention (Scopelliti et al., 2015). While humblebragging is a newly examined form of self-praise or show-off. The humblebragging is "a distinct and pervasive form of self-presentation" (Sezer et al., 2018)

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Although bragging can highlight the social symbolism of luxury foreign products, some studies have shown that bragging can be interpreted by social media users as boasting and showing off. In contrast, humblebragging conveys the luxuriousness of products through complaining and is a more effective strategy (Paramita et al., 2021). Previous studies have predominantly focused on either bragging or humblebragging in isolation, there's a notable gap when it comes to comparing bragging and humblebragging. A few have ventured into studying both, but they often employed different mediating variables: trustworthiness, malicious envy (Feng et al., 2023), self-expression (Bian and Forsythe, 2012), reviewer likability, benign envy (Chen et al., 2020). These studies primarily investigated their impact on brand attitude (Feng et al., 2023) and brand evaluation (Ren and Guo, 2021) in the context of hotel reviews and travel. Building upon this existing research, this study extends the exploration of bragging and humblebragging to the domain of luxury products. Self-presentation and self-congruity are critical in shaping how consumers perceive themselves and how they wish to be perceived by others. Luxury products often serve as symbols of status and prestige, allowing consumers to signal their social identity. Investigating self-congruity—how well a product aligns with an individual's self-image—can illuminate why consumers are drawn to specific foreign luxury brands. Consumers increasingly curate their self-presentation through social media and other platforms. Analyzing how consumers use luxury products to enhance their self-presentation can provide valuable insights into their purchase intentions. The influence of self-presentation and self-congruity may vary across different cultural contexts. As

foreign luxury brands expand into new markets, understanding these mediating factors can help brands tailor their messaging to align with local consumers' values and cultural norms, enhancing their market appeal. Significantly, no prior research has delved into the influence of self-presentation and self-congruity as mediators affecting consumer purchase intentions toward foreign luxury products.

In particular, other studies focus on the context of the US or China - countries that have developed social media such as papers by (Ren and Guo, 2021). Meanwhile, Vietnam has recently emerged as a country with a high rate of social media development. According to statistics from Statista, Vietnam is the 12th country in the world in terms of the highest growth rate of social network users from 2021 - 2026 with 71.29 million users by 2026 the number is estimated at 81.63 million. With high spending and consumption needs and rising living standards, they are also interested in luxury foreign products.

This study contributes to a deeper comprehension of the impact of celebrities' bragging and humblebragging on social media on consumers' intention to purchase luxury foreign products through mediating effects of self-presentation and self-congruity. The study can contribute novel insights into consumer behavior regarding luxury products, offering a fresh perspective on how individuals perceive and engage with celebrity content on social media. By providing detailed guidance on how businesses can leverage or avoid bragging and humblebragging strategies in their promotional efforts, the research can provide practical implications for marketing and product promotion.

## 2. Literature review and hypothesis development

### 2.1. Literature review: *The Stimulus Organism Response Theory (S-O-R Theory)*

The S-O-R Theory, as expanded by (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), is used as the theoretical framework in this study. The S-O-R (Stimulus - Organism - Response) psychology model is a behavioral approach through specific situations that impact psychology, giving rise to behavioral responses to situations. The SOR model (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974) focuses on exploiting the relationship between external influences on the subject and forming a response. According to (Mehrabian and Russell, 1974), the S-O-R model follows a positive approach that includes actions such as the desire to explore, remember and interact with the brand. The S-O-R model is an approach to psychology through the study of specific situations and environments. (Moon et al., 2017) suggest that S-O-R allows researchers to take a closer look at the psychological and socio-emotional influences on a behavior.

The S-O-R theory has been frequently applied in consumer behavior research (Changa et al., 2011). (Percy and Rossiter, 1992) investigated the impact of captions from celebrities' posts on social media. Earlier research has demonstrated that bragging and humblebragging through reviews can operate as an influence that changes consumers' views when they choose hotels for traveling (Chen et al., 2020). The context when consumer seeing post serves as a platform for consumers' affective and cognitive states to be reflected and particular behavioral responses to be generated (Manganari et al., 2009).

Moreover, previous study has suggested that consumers' responses can often be

reflected through purchase intention (Zhu et al., 2020). Thus, this research examines purchase intention as consumers' reactions in the context of purchasing luxury products after being influenced by celebrities' bragging and humblebragging. We will create a context in which consumers' intention to purchase luxury products will be influenced through the influence of bragging or humblebragging posts from celebrities on instagram. Therefore, this S-O-R theory is suitable for this research.

#### 2.1.1. *Bragging vs Humblebragging*

Bragging can be described as a form of self-presentation marked by an excessive focus on one's achievements or possessions. This type of self-presentation, often perceived as aggressive (Luo and Hancock, 2020), involves boasting about social status, material items, or significant accomplishments, with a clear intention to project a positive image (Scopelliti et al., 2015).

On the other hand, humblebragging is “a distinct and pervasive form of self-presentation”. This unique form of self-presentation – called “humblebragging” – allows braggers to gain admiration from others while simultaneously mitigating people's tendency to view them as arrogant (Steinmetz et al., 2017). Users believe that by presenting their achievements as problems, they can indirectly draw attention to their positive qualities while fostering empathy and connection with others (Sezer et al., 2018).

#### 2.1.2. *Self-presentation*

Self-presentation, also known as impression management, is the use of behaviors to intentionally regulate the impressions that observers have of oneself (Goffman, 2023). The goal of self-presentation is to present a positive image to others and make a desired impression on them

by directing the flow of personal information (Bhutto et al., 2019). This may include how they dress, communicate, and present themselves to create specific impressions, depending on their goals and the specific situation (Bian and Forsythe, 2012). The act of self-presentation on social media represents a form of personal branding, where individuals take control of how they present themselves in the virtual world (Johnson, 2018). This is essentially the construction of a social media self (Scolere et al., 2018; Jin and Ryu, 2020).

### 2.1.3. *Self-congruity*

Self-congruity refers to the alignment between the image of a product and a consumer's perception of themselves. This perception includes individual beliefs about various aspects of their identity, including social standing, gender, academic achievements, and so forth (Lee and Lee, 2015). Consumers often seek products or brands that resonate with their image, seeking a sense of congruence between their perception and the image associated with the product. Research suggests that a higher degree of self-congruity translates to higher purchase likelihood (Das, 2015).

### 2.1.4. *Purchase Intention*

Consumer purchase intention, which refers to their likelihood of buying a specific product, plays a crucial role in predicting their ultimate buying behavior. Several factors influence this intention, including individual personality traits, product characteristics (both inherent and external), and the context in which the product is consumed (Shi et al., 2021). When a celebrity is well-known and trusted by the public, it makes people feel more confident about buying the things they promote (Ayeh, 2015).

### 2.1.5. *Celebrities*

Celebrities, as described by (Driessens, 2013), are typically renowned figures in fields such as acting, singing, art, modeling, and sports, among others. Through their professional talents showcased in various media formats, they amass considerable social influence. Their positive portrayal in traditional media outlets and engagement in social interactions contribute to their widespread recognition and appeal among certain social groups (Turner, 2006).

## 2.2. *Hypothesis Development*

### 2.2.1. *Bragging, Humblebragging, and Consumer Purchase Intention*

Previous research suggests that bragging can be an effective impression-management tool (Alfano and Robinson, 2014). For instance, boasting about a new Rolex watch will have a positive impact on perceived status. However, bragging to enhance yourself can have disadvantages because the audience may infer negative qualities. Publicly bragging about pro-social behaviors may lead people to infer selfish motives, weakening perceptions of generosity as helping by the braggart (Berman et al., 2015).

On the other hand, many consumers are aware of the social risks of bragging and thus turn to alternative strategies such as humblebragging. To circumvent the negative consequences of bragging, people tend to mask their brags in such a way to appear humble (e.g., by masking the brag in humility) (Doty, 2019). Humblebragging refers to bragging masked in the form of a complaint. The disguise of complaints provides a remedy to brags by concealing the self-presentation.

Particularly on social media, where social motivation is prominent, celebrities' boasting behavior can impact how consumers perceive

them about cognition and emotion toward the celebrity. Consumers are also likely to buy products presented by celebrities due to the bandwagon and halo effects (Shi et al., 2021). Moreover, studies have shown that advertisements featuring celebrity presentations lead to faster information processing, improved product evaluations, and increased purchase intention, compared to advertisements without them. Bragging exhibits a negative influence on consumer purchase intentions, humblebragging serves to enhance them. Being consistent with these literature, the hypotheses are proposed:

H<sub>1a</sub>: Celebrities' bragging has an influence on consumer purchase intention

H<sub>1b</sub>: Celebrities' humblebragging has an influence on consumer purchase intention

### 2.2.2. *The mediating effects of self-presentation*

Self-presentation refers to how individuals present themselves in social settings, to shape others' perceptions of themselves (Khan, 2020). Consumers who care about their image and how they present themselves are often motivated to buy foreign luxury products. The ability of foreign luxury products to symbolize social categorization and group affiliation can strengthen social images, stimulating self-presentation attitudes (Bian and Forsythe, 2012). When celebrities engage in straightforward bragging or humblebragging on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter, they offer a model for how individuals may present themselves publicly. Celebrity boastful posts, when viewed by consumers, act as reflections of consumers' emotional and cognitive states, eliciting specific behavioral responses (Manganari et al., 2009). As the purchasing process involves an interaction between advertised product information and consumers' self-image (Knoll and Matthes,

2016), it is likely that consumers will adjust their attitudes under the influence of celebrities. Consumers may imitate these behaviors, incorporating them into their own self-presentation strategies (Escalas et al., 2003). Those who are more focused on their image and self-presentation are often driven to purchase luxury brands as they symbolize prestige, social status, and an elevated image (Wilcox et al., 2009). Therefore, the self-presentation of consumers is likely to be shaped by both straightforward bragging and humblebragging behaviors exhibited by celebrities. Therefore, we propose the following:

H<sub>2a</sub>: The effect of celebrity's bragging on consumer purchase intention is mediated by self-presentation

H<sub>2b</sub>: The effect of celebrity's humblebragging on consumer purchase intention is mediated by self-presentation

### 2.2.3. *The mediating effects of self-congruity*

Consumers seek products that align with their image, a phenomenon known as self-congruity (Das, 2015). Research suggests consumers favor products congruent with their image (Ericksen' and Sirgy, 2018). Especially when a celebrity prominently displays their luxurious lifestyle, showcasing expensive clothing, luxury products consumers who perceive themselves as affluent and high-status may find a strong alignment between the products' image and their own self-image. This alignment enhances their intention to purchase luxury fashion products endorsed by the celebrity, as they see the endorsement as reflective of their desired high-status image (Ericksen' and Sirgy, 2018). Hence, we propose the following:

H<sub>3a</sub>: The effect of celebrity's bragging on consumer purchase intention is mediated by self-congruity

H<sub>3b</sub>: The effect of celebrity's humblebragging on consumer purchase intention is mediated by self-congruity

### 3. Research method

#### 3.1. Research design: *Experimental approach*

According to (Chiswick et al., 2005), the experimental method has been widely utilized in the study of consumer behavior, offering a robust means of exploring cause-and-effect relationships with a deliberate narrow focus, leading to more decisive findings compared to methods like observations or surveys. In this approach, researchers design experiments where they manipulate one or more independent variables to observe the effects on dependent variables. Researchers typically randomly assign participants to experimental and control groups to compare outcomes. Beyond just creating new theories or verifying existing ones, experimental research in consumer behavior can also delve into the underlying causes of phenomena and define their limits (Morales et al., 2017). Experimental research is considered the most effective approach for examining causal hypotheses as it can confidently establish the initial three criteria for causality: association, temporal sequence, and non-spuriousness (Chambliss and Schutt, 2018).

#### 3.2. Sampling

A non-probability sample was chosen. To pre-check the questionnaire to complete it, to determine the practical significance of the research topic, or when we want a rough estimate of the problem, we also choose convenience sampling. An online survey was conducted and participants were randomly assigned to one of two groups: those exposed to bragging scenarios and those exposed to humblebragging scenarios. We recognize the limitations of using this sampling technique

and will treat it as a constraint in our study. Its key strengths lie in its efficiency and cost-effectiveness, as it allows us to easily identify and recruit willing participants. To mitigate bias and enhance generalizability, we have also ensured a sample size of over 350 participants. Therefore, while non-probability sampling may have limitations in terms of generalizability, it remains a valuable approach for our specific research context.

#### 3.3. Data collection

To develop an online experimental approach involving Vietnamese consumers, this study utilizes data collected through a self-administered online questionnaire using Google Form. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the two experimental conditions. We included an attention check question, which asked participants to select the response "A+" for the question: "Which brands are you most interested in?" Individuals who lack concentration or fail to read the question carefully. After removing outliers and incomplete surveys, 296 out of the 350 administered questionnaires were deemed suitable for data analysis.

#### 3.4. Data analysis

We inputted the data into IBM SPSS 29 and performed data processing, including descriptive statistics, reliability statistics, ANOVA Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). We used ANOVA to examine the significant difference in the average between groups of values, depending on whether the variance between these groups is different or not. EFA was conducted using principal component analysis with varimax rotation. EFA was conducted to identify a subset of variables extracted from the larger pool of variables used in the survey. Subsequently, SmartPLS 4.0 software was utilized to conduct VIF and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in order to test hypotheses.

### 3.5. Measurement

Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the two experimental conditions. Bragging and humblebragging was captured by asking participants “To what extent do you think this person is bragging?” and “To what extent do you think the person is trying to appear humblebragging?” were adapted from Ovul (Sezer et al., 2018) and using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = not at all, 5= very much.

Self-presentation and self-congruity were measured using four items for each, adapted from (Swani and Labrecque, 2020) and (Ibrahim and Najjar, 2007) respectively. Purchase Intention was adapted from (Jetten et al., 2004). The measures for items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 “strongly disagree” to 5 “strongly agree”.

### 3.6. Questionnaire design

First, we have to choose one celebrity to design the questionnaire form. We listed the names of the 10 celebrities with the most interaction on social media of different genders, excluding those who had received negative publicity from Buzzmetrics and attached their photos and required participants to choose their bias. The result showed that the person who received the highest scores to represent celebrities was Thuy Tien. Then we processed photos of the celebrities showcasing luxury foreign products as described earlier, and used Canva app to combine these photos with captions. In each instance, Thuy Tien shared her post on Instagram, featuring a luxurious Dior handbag, accompanied by captions that reflected bragging or humblebragging about the said luxury foreign bag. We recruited 350 participants from Facebook, a popular platform, and randomly assigned the participants to one of the two scenarios. The study procedure was as follows. First, the participants were asked to click any of two

numbers 1 or 2, one is a bragging situation, two is a humblebragging situation. There’s a picture of the celebrity named Thuy Tien sharing her luxury Dior bag with a caption suitable for each scenario. In the bragging scenario, she said: “Take a stroll around the city with a new Dior handbag. Tonight's dinner is not only about delicious food but also about style and sophistication” (Figure 1). In the humblebragging scenario, the content emphasized the celebrity’s superiority via complaints: “Today, I picked a new handbag from Dior. I'm afraid people will give me too much attention if I use this standout Dior handbag when going out for lunch. Sometimes, I feel more comfortable using ordinary items” (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Bragging scenario



Figure 2: Humblebragging scenario

## 4. Results and discussion

### 4.1. Pilot study

Firstly, 96 people took part in the pilot study and were not chosen for the formal study in the second stage. We conducted a pilot study to determine the appropriate stimuli for formal experiments. To eliminate confounding variables and ensure good validity and reliability, we used real celebrities as the experimental dataset. A pretest with 96 participants recruited from Vietnam was conducted to validate our experimental manipulations. The pilot test had a between-subjects design where participants were randomly assigned to view one of two scenarios. Participants were then asked to rate how much self-presentation, self-congruity and to what extent the celebrity masked bragging and humblebragging. Pilot study helps eliminate ineffective information and complete the best survey while minimizing errors.

The poster in this study reflected the focal identity. A pilot test demonstrated that the poster portrayed realistic respondent experiences (measured using two items on a Likert 5 scale: “To what extent do you think this person is bragging?” and “To what extent do you think the person is trying to appear humble?”;  $M$  (bragging) = 3,98,  $SD$  = 0,825;  $M$  (humblebragging) = 4,08,  $SD$  = 0,787). This is important because we wanted to ensure that participants did not perceive the poster as derogatory or stereotypical.

### 4.2. Main study

#### 4.2.1. Descriptive statistics

As for the official survey, we conducted a nationwide survey with similar survey conditions within 4 weeks. We recruited 350

participants from Facebook, a popular platform, and then using Google Form randomly assigned the participants to one of the two scenarios. After removing incomplete questionnaires, a final sample of 296 responses remained. Specifically, 133 respondents (44,9%) chose bragging scenarios and 163 respondents (55,1%) chose humblebragging. Participants were a variety of ages but mostly people from 18 to 24 years old (70,6%) who come from Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi - big cities in Viet Nam.

In terms of research sample description, female accounts predominantly (213 respondents equivalent to 72%) as compared to male (28%). Regarding the age criterion, approximately 209 respondents age from 18 to 24 while the lowest number of participants are over 45 years old. There are about 126 respondents from 18-24 years old and their incomes are less than 5 million dong. Lastly, there are about 243 respondents from Da Nang City, more than 80% and others come from Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City. Considering the research sample description by proposed variables, respondents tend to answer at a high level (mean value almost above 3) for most items.

#### 4.2.2. ANOVA

We use the results from the Welch test. With a Sig (self-presentation) test result of  $0,029 < 0,05$ , mean is 3,9680, Std is 0,7570. With a Sig (self-congruity) test result of  $0,006 < 0,05$ , Mean is 3,6135, Std is 0,8629. This suggests that there is a difference in consumer' self-congruity among different types of celebrities' bragging. With a Sig (purchase intention) test result of  $0,000 < 0,05$ , Mean square is 3,4394, Std is 0,9362.

Although we conducted our analysis with the flexibility of a 10% significance level ( $\alpha = 0,10$ ) due to the exploratory nature of the research, the actual test results from the Welch test demonstrate strong significance well below the conventional 5% threshold. For self-presentation (Sig = 0,029), self-congruity (Sig = 0,006), and purchase intention (Sig = 0,000), the results indicate robust evidence of differences between the two types of celebrity bragging. Therefore, there exists a difference between consumers' purchase intention in two types of celebrities' bragging.

4.2.3. Measurement validity and construct reliability

Cronbach's alpha of all of the latent variable's purchase intention ( $\alpha=0,881$ ), self-presentation ( $\alpha=0,855$ ), and self-congruity ( $\alpha=0,811$ ) met the minimal criteria of 0,7, which is acceptable (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The composite reliability of these constructs is between 0,7 and 0,92. Therefore, we maintained these constructs. All of the latent constructs had adequate average variance extracted (AVE) higher than 0,5, indicating that they had convergent validity (Hair et al., 2014).

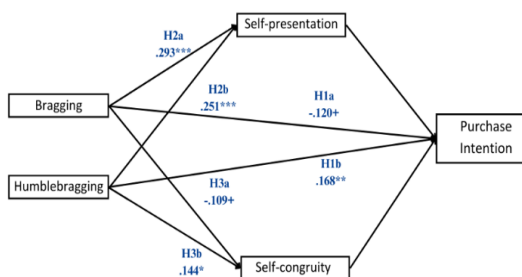
4.2.4. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)

The result of the EFA for KMO index is 0,822 (between 0,05 and 1) meeting the requirements, Sig. value being smaller than 0,001, and the cumulative percent of extraction exceeds 71,963%. Factor loadings of items are also higher than 0.8. They mean that the sample is appropriate for EFA analysis, variable correlations exist and each latent variable only produces one component.

4.2.5. Variance Inflation Factors (VIF)

The results show that all VIFs are around 1,0-2,659, which are below the 3,0 cut-off. The PLS Algorithm results indicate that multicollinearity is not a problem. (Hair et al., 2019).

4.2.6. Structural Equation Modeling testing (SEM)



Note: + p < .10; \* p < .05; \*\* p < .01; \*\*\* p < .001. We used Total effects in reporting the results.

Figure 3: Structural Equation Modeling Result

**The effect of humblebragging and bragging of celebrities on luxury foreign products purchase intention**

The relationship between humblebragging and purchase intention was highly significant and positive ( $\beta = 0,168$ ,  $p < 0,01$ ). On the other hand, the relationship between bragging and purchase intention was also significant but negative ( $\beta = -0,120$ ,  $p < 0,10$ ). The results show that bragging types of celebrities directly affect customers on luxury foreign product purchase intentions. Bragging has a negative effect on consumer purchase intention while humblebragging increases consumer purchase intention, these results support H1. These findings were in line with previous findings (Chen et al., 2020) regarding positive impact of humblebragging on user brand evaluation and purchase intention. However the result was different from findings of (Feng et al., 2023) indicated that compared with bragging,

humblebragging was more likely to elicit malicious envy and lower levels of trust in an influencer, resulting in negative attitudes toward the luxury brand endorsed to decrease purchase intention. The results also showed that the influences of celebrity bragging and humblebragging on consumers' purchase intention were significantly different.

### **Mediating effect of self-presentation and self-congruity in humblebragging and bragging on luxury foreign products purchase intention**

#### *Mediator variable - self-presentation:*

There is a favorable connection between humblebragging and self-presentation ( $\beta = 0,251$ ,  $p < 0,001$ ). Similarly, bragging has a strong impact on self-presentation ( $\beta = 0,293$ ,  $p < 0,001$ ). Meanwhile, self-presentation has a positive impact on purchase intention ( $\beta = 0,153$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ). Hence, self-presentation has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between bragging and humblebragging to purchase intention.

We also confirmed the mediating effect of self-presentation on the link between bragging/humblebragging and purchase intention by employing bootstrapped confidence intervals (CIs) based on the recommendations of Preacher et al., (2007) with 5.000 bootstrapped samples. The bootstrapped CIs did not include zero: bragging: indirect effect = 0,16, 90% CI = [0,11; 0,22]; humblebragging: indirect effect = 0,11, 90% CI = [0,07; 0,16]. This provides additional robust support for H<sub>2a</sub> and H<sub>2b</sub>.

#### *Mediator variable - self-congruity:*

Humblebragging has a strong impact on self-congruity ( $\beta = 0,144$ ,  $p < 0,05$ ), and there is a significant relationship between self-congruity and purchase intention ( $\beta = 0,683$ ,  $p < 0,001$ ). Hence, self-congruity has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between humblebragging and purchase intention.

While self-presentation has a positive mediating effect on the relationship between bragging and purchase intention, self-congruity create a negative effect when the results show that bragging has a negative connection with self-congruity ( $\beta = -0,109$ ,  $p < 0,10$ ), and there is a significant relationship between self-congruity and purchase intention. It is proved that self-congruity still has a partial mediating effect on the relationship between humblebragging and bragging on luxury foreign products purchase intention.

The mediating effects of self-congruity on the relationship between bragging/humblebragging and purchase intention were also confirmed by employing 5.000 bootstrapped samples with the results of the bootstrapped CIs not including zero: 0,03, 90% CI = [0,003; 0,07], and 0,05, 90% CI = [0,02; 0,09] respectively, supporting H<sub>3a</sub> and H<sub>3b</sub>.

We explored the mediating role of self-presentation and self-congruity. In participants with activated self-presentation, bragging and humblebragging both have a positive effect on purchase intention. However, when self-congruity was activated, participants in bragging situations led to a decrease in purchase intention whereas humblebragging fosters a positive impact. That is, celebrity bragging types affect purchase intention by activating consumers' self-presentation and self-congruity. The results supported H<sub>2</sub>, H<sub>3</sub>. Notably, as we mentioned, while bragging directly affects purchase intention negatively, its influence becomes positive when mediated through self-presentation. There was no study research about bragging on purchase intention under the mediating of self-presentation. Hence our findings extend and enrich the literature on self-presentation had mediating effects in the positive role of bragging.

## 5. Conclusion

### 5.1. Theoretical implications

Most previous studies investigated their bragging or humblebragging impact on brand attitude and brand evaluation (Chen et al., 2020) in the context of hotel reviews and travel (Ren and Guo, 2021). Building upon this existing research, our study extends the exploration of bragging and humblebragging to the domain of luxury foreign products. Firstly, our research suggests that celebrity's bragging and humblebragging are significantly different in their ability to impact consumers' purchase intention, we found that compared to humblebragging, bragging negatively impacts purchase intention, these findings were in line with previous findings (Chen et al., 2020) regarding positive impact of humblebragging on user brand evaluation and purchase intention. However, the divergence from (Feng et al., 2023) whose study suggested that humblebragging may result in negative attitudes toward luxury brands, presents a key area for theoretical consideration. A potential explanation for this discrepancy could lie in the cultural or contextual factors influencing consumers' perceptions of humblebragging. Where Feng et al. (2023) found a decline in purchase intention, it may be that the manner or context in which the humblebragging occurred triggered negative reactions due to perceived inauthenticity or insincerity. Our findings, by contrast, suggest that under certain conditions, humblebragging can be interpreted more favourably, possibly due to variations in how consumers assess the credibility of the celebrity or the brand's positioning. Second, the S-O-R theory has been frequently applied in consumer behavior research (Changa et al., 2011). Thus, in this research, we create a context in which consumers' intention to purchase luxury

products will be influenced by the influence of bragging or humblebragging posts from celebrities. This suggests a novel contribution to S-O-R Theory. Third, instead of only considering self-presentation and self-congruity as independent mediator like previous studies did (Steinmetz et al., 2017), we have found a better mediator of self-presentation and self-congruity under celebrity bragging types effects. We have explored a better understanding of the situations where self-presentation has a strong impact on self-congruity leading to increase purchase intention.

### 5.2. Managerial implications

While bragging remains prevalent in influencer campaigns, we demonstrate its potential to backfire, negatively impacting consumers' purchase intention. Conversely, humblebragging, often infused with humor and relatability, attracts audience attention on social media. Therefore, leveraging celebrities' humblebragging in marketing campaigns may prove a strategically sound approach to connecting with consumers. Secondly, our results also suggest managers consider the significance of appropriately matching the product with the celebrity image. This means that the celebrity image should be similar to the product image to activate consumer self-congruity, thereby promoting purchase intention when a celebrity posts their luxury products on social media. Thirdly, enterprises should consider promoting purchase intention by activating consumer self-presentation. Different activation of consumers' self-presentation increases their willingness to buy products mentioned by celebrities. Therefore, celebrity's bragging products might describe themselves for benefits, such as personal charisma or perfect image in public places, to activate the self-presentation. Likewise,

companies using celebrity bragging types to activate the self-presentation, might encourage consumers to purchase by providing information on product core functions to meet their diverse needs.

### **5.3. Limitations and future research**

This research also has some limitations. Firstly, the non-probability sampling technique is quick and easy to apply, especially when dealing with time, budget, or access constraints. However, it has several limitations, particularly its susceptibility to bias, leading to reduced generalizability. Since participants are selected based on convenience or judgement, the sample may not represent the entire population accurately. In this study, the sample is mostly from Da Nang, Ho Chi Minh, and Ha Noi, further limiting its generalizability. Future research should aim for a larger, more diverse sample from different regions in Vietnam. Despite its limitations, this method is practical for our research context, though future studies should address these gaps in the literature.

Secondly, this study lays a solid foundation by examining the mediating role of self-presentation and self-congruity.

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However, the real world exhibits rich complexities beyond a single model. Exploring additional moderating variables like consumer cultural background, involvement level, communication channels, and consumption context is crucial. Cultural values, personal engagement with products, different communication methods, and specific purchase contexts can all influence how self-presentation and self-congruity interact. Exploring these aspects allows for a more nuanced understanding of the phenomenon, catering to specific demographics and situations.

Lastly, while our study only focused on celebrities, the combined influence of utilizing both celebrities and influencers on consumer purchase intention warrants deeper investigation. This is because today's marketing landscape features collaborations between celebrities and influencers, leveraging the unique strengths of both. Celebrities offer broad reach and recognition, while influencers boast authenticity and engagement with specific niches.

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