

Analysis of the Influence of Superstitious Behavior and Self-Esteem on Consumer Preferences in Home Purchase Decisions

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of superstitious behaviour and self-esteem on consumer preferences in home purchase decisions. The purpose of this study is to understand how superstitious behaviour and self-esteem affect the consumer decision-making process when choosing a house. A total of 243 respondents participated in this study, with 216 respondents providing valid answers. Data were collected using an online questionnaire, which was divided into two parts: respondent demographics and key factors related to superstition, self-esteem, and home purchase preferences. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares (PLS). The results showed that superstitious behaviour and self-esteem had a significant effect on home purchase preferences. Specifically, individuals with higher levels of superstitious beliefs tend to consider symbolic aspects, such as luck, in home purchase decisions. In addition, high self-esteem is associated with a preference for choosing a house that reflects personal values and social status. This study contributes to the understanding of factors that influence consumer preferences in home purchase decisions, as well as providing insights for marketers and policy makers in the property sector.

Keywords: Superstitious belief behaviour, self-esteem, home purchasing preferences, consumer decision making, symbolic consumption.

1. Introduction

The decision to purchase a house is one of the most important economic decisions in an individual's life, considering the large investment value that must be spent and its impact on financial stability and long-term quality of life. Research conducted by Kramer and Block (2007) shows that beliefs in superstitions can have a significant influence on the level of consumer satisfaction and on decisions taken under conditions of uncertainty. One form of decision that is full of risk is buying a house, because this process involves many factors that are not fully predictable (Agarwal et al., 2016). In this context, Fortin et al., (2014) found that superstitious beliefs of the Chinese community also influence the dynamics of the property market in North America which has a fairly high concentration of immigrants. The study revealed that houses with address numbers ending in the number 4 were sold at a discount of 2.2%, while houses ending in the number 8 were sold at a price 2.5% higher than market value. Research conducted by Agarwal et al., (2016) shows that

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older individuals, those who are more frequently involved in traffic accidents, and consumers who purchase new apartments, tend to have a stronger preference for address numbers that are considered lucky.

Therefore, although the decision to buy a house is often considered a rational process based on economic considerations, such as price, location, and physical condition of the property, in practice, the decision is also greatly influenced by emotional, psychological, and cultural factors that are invisible. Two of the factors that are rarely discussed but have a significant influence are superstition and self-esteem. Superstition is part of a traditional belief system that is still strongly embedded in various societies. In certain cultures, especially Asian societies, certain numbers, building directions, or other symbolic elements are believed to bring good luck or bad luck (Rehm, Chen, & Filippova, 2017). For example, the number 8 is often considered lucky, while the number 4 is avoided because it is associated with the meaning of death in Chinese pronunciation. In Malaysia, the practice of Feng Shui or the rules of house direction according to local beliefs are often an important consideration in choosing a property (Hassan et al., 2021). In Indonesia, there are still many forms of superstition that are symbolic and irrational. Some of them include the prohibition of sitting in front of the door because it is believed to hinder one's marriage, the prohibition of opening an umbrella inside the house because it is considered to bring bad luck, and the assumption that a house in a "skewer" position can hinder the smooth flow of fortune. These beliefs fall into the category of superstitious beliefs, which are generally understood as irrational beliefs about certain objects, actions, or situations that are believed to be able to influence an event, even though they have no logical causal relationship (Damisch et al., 2010).

Superstitious beliefs refer to the belief that certain events can be influenced by certain actions that have no logical connection. The purpose of these actions is to attract good luck or avoid bad luck. Different groups and cultures view these superstitious beliefs in different ways, reflecting differences in their traditions and values. In a business context, companies often consider this aspect of superstition and understand the related practices in the countries in which they operate. Basically, no human community is completely free from the influence of superstition. Superstitious beliefs can be considered an integral part of a society's folklore or even as an honored part of their cultural heritage (Poulston & Bennett, 2012). These beliefs often develop in contexts of uncertainty, where individuals feel the need to rely on certain symbols, rituals, or signs to control the outcome of an event (Risen, 2016). Superstitious beliefs are not only formed as passive belief systems, but are also reflected in the actual behavior of individuals when faced with uncertainty or pressure in decision making. In psychological and social contexts, these beliefs develop from irrational understandings of cause-and-effect relationships, which are often not supported by logic or empirical evidence, but are still believed because they are reinforced by tradition and cultural

experience (Lindeman & Aarnio, 2007). Foster and Kokko (2008) explain that superstitious behavior can emerge as an adaptive response to uncertainty, where individuals feel the need to perform symbolic actions to gain control over situations that they cannot fully predict or understand. This means that superstitious beliefs are not just abstract concepts, but also encourage the emergence of concrete behaviors, such as avoiding certain numbers, choosing the direction of the house according to Feng Shui, or performing rituals before making important decisions. This shows that superstitious behavior is an active manifestation of a belief system that is formed and maintained through social and cultural processes in society.

Superstitious beliefs are not only passive as cognitive constructs, but also transform into real behavior in everyday life. This is what is called superstitious belief behavior, namely specific actions carried out based on these beliefs. One example is avoiding houses with certain numbers, arranging furniture according to Feng Shui principles, or refusing to buy property facing a direction that is considered unlucky. In this context, behavior is a concrete manifestation of the belief system that is believed. A study by Damisch et al. (2010) found that superstitious actions can increase self-confidence and self-control in individuals, thus providing a psychological effect that strengthens the behavior. In the housing market, for example, belief in Feng Shui elements has been shown to influence property preferences and purchasing decisions, as shown by studies by Rehm, Chen, & Filippova (2017) and Hassan et al. (2021). This scientifically non-logical belief remains a real consideration in home purchasing decisions. This shows that consumer preferences are not only formed from objective information, but also from subjective values that are culturally embedded. In some cases, superstition can even affect the market value of a property, as found in a study by Hassan et al. (2021), where Feng Shui practices and cultural symbolism played a significant role in consumers' perceptions of home value. These studies also show that symbolic and spiritual factors remain relevant in modern economic decisions, including in the property market. Thus, behavior is a form of realization of beliefs that are deeply rooted in social and cultural values.

On the other hand, self-esteem reflects an individual's perception of their value and worth. Németh (2008) explains that consumers, including in the context of property purchases, tend to use symbolic products or assets as a form of expression of their identity and aspirations. According to Sirgy (1982, cited in Németh, 2008), the choice of symbolic products such as housing reflects the consumer's self-identity. Symbolic consumption theory, individuals with high self-esteem tend to choose housing that represents their status, achievements, and self-image (Sirgy, 1982). Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem are more likely to seek external validation, including from inherited social or cultural norms, such as superstitious beliefs (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008). Consumers with low self-esteem may be more susceptible to external influences, such as advertising and recommendations from others, in the decision-making process. Research shows

that individuals with low self-esteem tend to be more influenced by social norms and the expectations of others in choosing products (Keller & Lehmann, 2006). Research by Kahn and Dhar (2006) shows that superstitious beliefs can influence consumer decisions in unexpected ways, often leading to irrational choices.

The relationship between self-esteem and superstitious beliefs in the context of housing preferences has not been widely studied simultaneously. In addition, in Indonesia, research on the behavior of superstitious beliefs and self-esteem on consumer preferences in home purchases is still limited, making this increasingly interesting to study. The novelty of this study lies in its approach that combines psychological (self-esteem) and cultural (superstitious beliefs) aspects in understanding consumer preferences in home purchases. Most previous studies have only focused on one dimension separately. The integration of the two can provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the property market, especially in societies that still uphold traditional values.

By analyzing how these two factors influence housing preferences, this study not only contributes to the marketing and consumer behavior literature, but also provides practical insights for developers, property agents, and city planners. A deeper understanding of the non-economic factors in home purchase decision making can help in designing more contextual, culturally sensitive, and emotionally effective marketing strategies.

2. Literature Review

Superstitious Belief Behavior. Superstitious beliefs include various forms of beliefs, such as belief in spirits, astrology, miracles in holy books, illusion phenomena, palmistry, amulets or rituals, as well as myths about extraterrestrials or fear of black cats, all of which are related to certain psychological concepts (Rudski, 2003). Meanwhile, Damisch et al. (2010) argue that superstition is an irrational construction of the mind, which is often applied in everyday life because it is believed to bring good luck.

Superstitious beliefs or superstitions are beliefs in cause-and-effect relationships that are not supported by logical reasoning or empirical evidence, but are still believed because they are reinforced by cultural, social, or psychological factors (Lindeman & Aarnio, 2007). In the context of consumer behavior, this belief is often reflected in the form of symbolic actions that aim to reduce uncertainty in decision making, including in buying a house. For example, choosing a house number, the direction of the building according to Feng Shui, or avoiding unlucky numbers such as "4" in Chinese culture.

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Fortin et al., (2014) research shows that houses with the number “4” in their address are sold at an average discount of 2.2%, while houses with the number “8” are sold at a premium of up to 2.5% in areas with high concentrations of ethnic Chinese. This study shows that superstitious beliefs not only influence attitudes, but also have a real impact on economic behavior and market prices. A similar phenomenon is also found in various Asian countries where perceptions of numbers and symbolic elements also shape property purchase decisions (Agarwal et al., 2016). According to Mayo and Mallin (2014), superstitious behavior refers to the extent to which individuals engage in rituals that are believed to bring good luck or good fortune. Individuals who believe in superstitious beliefs tend to exhibit behaviors related to these superstitions more often. The level of belief in superstition varies from individual to individual, which then results in different forms of superstitious behavior. Fluke et al. (2014) argue that superstitious behavior can increase the possibility of avoiding bad luck, such as accidents, or attracting good luck, such as getting satisfactory results.

Superstitious beliefs, which include beliefs in certain numbers or symbols that influence purchasing decisions, have the potential to influence consumer preferences in buying a house. Based on research by Fortin et al. (2014), there is evidence that consumers are more likely to choose a house with an address number that is considered lucky. This superstitious belief can be seen as a psychological response to the uncertainty that arises in making property purchase decisions, which involve large financial and social aspects (Foster & Kokko, 2008). Therefore, the hypothesis in this study is:

H1: Superstitious belief behavior influences consumer preferences in home purchase decisions.

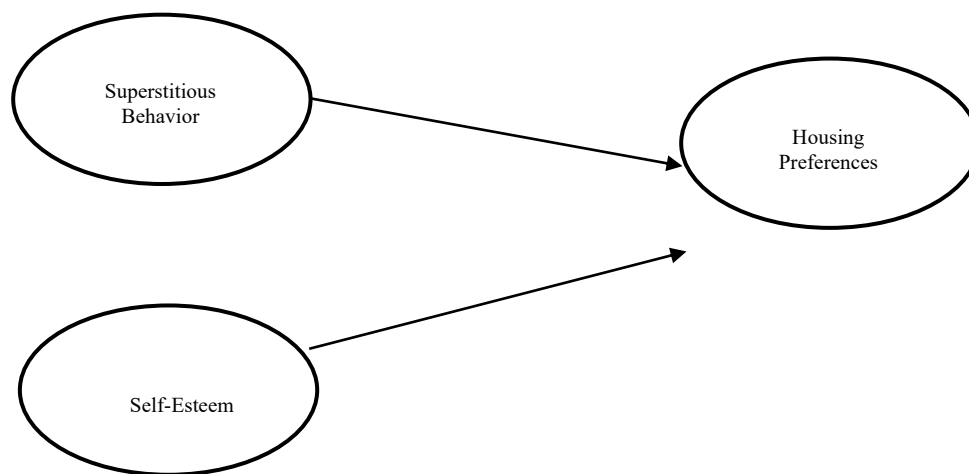
Self-Esteem. Zhao et al. (2017) explained that self-esteem is related to self-confidence, ability to adjust, and self-confidence. Self-esteem has a significant impact on consumption behavior (Banister & Hogg, 2004). In general, self-esteem reflects an emotional assessment of one's self-worth, also known as self-worth or self-image. Positive self-esteem encourages individuals to have strong self-confidence and values and make better decisions in stressful situations (Santrock, 2011, in Seema & Kumar, 2013). Coates et al. (2013) stated that where we live plays an important role in shaping a sense of belonging and self-identity, as well as providing social pride. Household property and related features are seen as indicators of personal status and success, whether it is owned by oneself or others. Therefore, an individual's self-esteem will influence their preferences in choosing a house.

Jain and Saini's (2012) research shows that self-concept plays an important role in shaping consumer preferences for products that reflect who they are or who they want to appear to others. Németh (2008) suggests that consumers, including in the context of property purchases, tend to

choose symbolic products or assets as a way to express their identity and aspirations. Sirgy (1982, cited in Németh, 2008) states that the choice of symbolic products, such as housing, is a reflection of the consumer's self-identity. Based on the findings of these studies, self-esteem plays a role in influencing a person's consumption behavior, as well as encouraging individuals to have personal values and beliefs that can support decision making. Thus, the hypothesis in this study is:

H2: Self-esteem influences consumer preferences in home purchasing decisions.

Figure 1. Research Framework



3. Research Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with the aim of testing the influence of superstitious beliefs and self-esteem on consumer preferences in home purchasing decisions. This study also applies Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis based on Partial Least Squares (PLS), which is suitable for testing theoretical models with complex latent indicators. The population in this study were all individuals who have preferences for home purchases. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, namely the selection of samples based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Respondent criteria include: (1) Having a preference for a dream home (either based on location, shape, price, or symbolic value). (2) Age 21 years and over. (3) Expressing interest or plans to buy a house in the near future. Data were collected using an online questionnaire that measured the research variables. Each item was

measured using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach using SmartPLS software. The analysis process can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Evaluation of Outer and Inner Criteria

Item	Cut off Value
<i>Convergent Validity</i>	
Loading Factor	>0,5
Discriminant Validity	
Cross Loading	Loading value > other cross loading values
<i>Construct Reliability & Validity</i>	
Cronbach Alpha	>0,6
Composite Reliability	>0,7
AVE	>0,5
Goodness of Fit Index Inner Model	Small $\geq 0,1$ Medium $\geq 0,25$ Large $\geq 0,36$.

To determine whether the hypothesis is accepted or rejected, a p-value with a significance level of 10% is used. If the p-value is less than 0.1, then the hypothesis is accepted and shows an effect. Conversely, if the p-value is greater than 0.1, then the hypothesis is rejected and no effect is detected.

4. Finding and Discussion

The questionnaire was filled out by 216 respondents who met the criteria and were used as samples in the analysis of this study. After data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method based on Partial Least Square (PLS), a number of findings were obtained that showed the relationship between the research variables. These results were then analyzed further to answer the problem formulation and test the previously formulated hypotheses.

For convergent validity, the indicator used is the loading factor value with a minimum limit of 0.5. The test results show that the loading factor value ranges from 0.67 to 0.985, which means that all indicators meet the criteria and can be categorized as "Good". Furthermore, discriminant validity is evaluated through cross loading, with the provision that the indicator loading value against its own construct must be higher than the cross loading value against other constructs. Based on the

test results, this criterion is declared "Fulfilled" and thus it can be concluded that the discriminant validity has been met properly.

In the aspects of construct reliability and validity, there are three indicators tested, namely Cronbach Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The Cronbach Alpha values obtained range from 0.694 to 0.902, exceeding the minimum limit of 0.6, which indicates good internal consistency. The Composite Reliability value is in the range of 0.825 to 0.919, exceeding the threshold of 0.7, so the construct reliability can be said to be very good. Meanwhile, the AVE value is in the range of 0.567 to 0.71, exceeding the minimum value of 0.5 which indicates that the latent variable is able to explain more than 50% of the indicator variance.

Finally, the Goodness of Fit Index for the inner model shows a value of 0.35. Based on the assessment criteria, this value is included in the Medium category, because it is between the range of 0.25 to 0.36. Overall, the test results in this table indicate that the research model has met the validity and reliability criteria needed for use in further analysis.

Table 2. Path Coefficient

	<i>Original Sample</i> <i>(O)</i>	<i>P Values</i>	Ket
PRL $\square$ PREF	0.159	0.09	Significant
HD $\square$ PREF	0.135	0.073	Significant

Hypothesis 1. The hypothesis in this study states that superstitious belief behavior influences consumer preferences in home purchasing decisions. The results of testing the parameter coefficients indicate that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, with a p-value of 0.09 at a significance level (α) of 0.1. Because the p-value is below the specified significance threshold, hypothesis one (H1) in this study is declared accepted. Superstitious belief behavior refers to certain actions or rituals carried out by individuals with the belief that they can bring good luck. Wann et al. (2013) found that sports fans who have a high level of attachment to their teams tend to view superstitious practices as important and have a major impact on match results. In addition, Fluke et al. (2014) explained that superstitious or superstitious actions function as psychological mechanisms to increase a sense of control over uncertain outcomes, both to avoid bad events such as accidents and to obtain positive results, such as academic success. These variations in levels of superstitious beliefs and behaviors reflect the diversity of individual preferences, especially when faced with major decisions such as purchasing a home, which are laden with symbolic and emotional meaning.

The results of this study are also in line with the research of Damisch et al. (2010), which found that belief in superstitious practices such as lucky charms, lucky numbers, or certain rituals can provide a sense of control and positive confidence in the face of uncertainty, including in making important decisions such as buying a house. Consumers who believe in superstitious elements will give more meaning to the house not only as a functional asset, but also as a space that has symbolic and spiritual value. Furthermore, Poulston and Bennett (2012) in their study of feng shui in property purchasing behavior, revealed that many consumers associate luck factors or spiritual energy with location, direction of the house, and architectural design. In this context, superstitious behavior can influence perceptions of home value and create unique preferences that are not always rational, but are very influential emotionally and psychologically. These beliefs reflect the belief that superstitious aspects can bring good luck or prevent bad luck, making them an important consideration in housing preferences. The implication of these findings in the context of property marketing is the need for developers and marketers to understand the cultural values and symbolic beliefs of potential buyers, especially in markets that still uphold local traditions and beliefs. Marketing strategies that are sensitive to this superstitious dimension can increase the appeal of housing products to certain market segments.

Hypothesis 2. The second hypothesis (H2) in this study states that self-esteem has an influence on consumer preferences in home purchasing decisions. Based on the results of testing the parameter coefficients, it was found that there was a significant relationship between the self-esteem variable and consumer preferences in home purchasing. The p-value obtained was 0.073, which is below the 10% significance level ($\alpha = 0.1$). Thus, the H2 hypothesis is accepted, which means that self-esteem statistically influences consumer preferences in making home purchasing decisions. High self-esteem motivates individuals to develop their own beliefs and values, and make the right decisions, especially in stressful situations (Santrock, 2011 in Seema & Kumar, 2013). Coates et al. (2013) also stated that the place of residence and the environment around us play an important role in shaping a sense of social identity and self-pride. Ownership of property and the elements in it are often seen as symbols of personal status and achievement, both for oneself and for others. Theoretically, this is consistent with the development of the self-esteem model in the purchasing process. For example, a study by Barbot et al. (2024) developed a model of purchase self-esteem antecedents, showing that involvement in a purchase strategy such as choosing a dream home can increase consumer self-esteem through a sharp authentic pride mechanism. This relationship emphasizes the importance of psychological elements in property selection, not just functional or economic aspects. Furthermore, the concept of self-congruity introduced by Sirgy (1982, cited in Németh, 2008) states that consumers feel more satisfied and confident when buying products that reflect their self-image. In addition, the results of Sehra et al. (2022) showed that psychological factors, including self-esteem, play a role in impulsive property purchase decisions among the

younger generation in India. This supports the idea that self-esteem is not only related to rational decisions, but also to the emotional aspects of home buying.

5. Conclusion

This study aims to analyze the influence of superstitious behavior and self-esteem on consumer preferences in home purchase decisions. Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that both factors have a significant influence on home purchase preferences. The results show that superstitious behavior, which often involves certain rituals that are considered to bring good luck, contributes to home purchase decisions. An increase in perceptions of superstitious elements indicates a relationship between these beliefs and the choice of housing chosen by consumers. This is in line with previous research findings showing that superstitious factors can influence consumer preferences in the context of property purchases.

Furthermore, self-esteem has also been shown to have a significant influence on consumer preferences in home purchases. Consumers with higher self-esteem tend to choose homes that can enhance their self-image and social status. These results support the theory that a house is not just a place to live, but also a symbol of identity and prestige. Therefore, home buyers often consider symbolic and functional aspects in choosing their homes.

The practical implications of these findings suggest that property developers and marketers can pay attention to both factors, namely superstitious behavior and self-esteem in designing more effective marketing strategies. Developers can tailor their marketing messages to include elements that appeal to consumers based on their superstitious beliefs, and offer property products that align with their target market's aspirations and self-image.

This research provides new insights into how psychological and social factors may influence property purchase decisions. However, further research is needed to explore more deeply the relationship between superstitious beliefs, self-esteem, and home purchase preferences, and to test these findings across different cultural and geographic contexts.

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