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Understanding the self-concept of young consumers is crucial for apparel marketers because such consumers prefer to purchase products with images congruent with their self-images (i.e., one dimension of self-concept) (Runyan, 1988). Apparel marketers strive to attach target consumers' perceived self-images to products as a marketing strategy to spur a greater probability of being purchased (Ataman & Ulengin, 2003). Thus, commercial marketers need to understand the projected or ideal self-image of their consumers to increase product sales. Levy (1959, p. 119) contends that people prefer products that "have personal and social meanings in addition to their functions"; this notion is referred to as symbolic consumption and is partly related to hedonic consumption (Levy, 1959). Symbolic consumption is significant because of its strong connection with the self-concept of consumers who strive to enhance their sense of self by selecting products or brands that fit their self-image. From these studies, we presume that young consumers' actual/ideal self-images may influence their hedonic and utilitarian attitudes toward purchasing cool clothing. Thus:

- H1.* A positive actual self-image has a stronger effect on hedonic attitudes toward cool clothing than a negative actual self-image.
- H2.* A positive actual self-image has a weaker effect on utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing than a negative actual self-image.
- H3.* A positive ideal self-image has a stronger effect on hedonic attitudes toward cool clothing than a negative ideal self-image.
- H4.* A positive ideal self-image has a weaker effect on utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing than a negative ideal self-image.

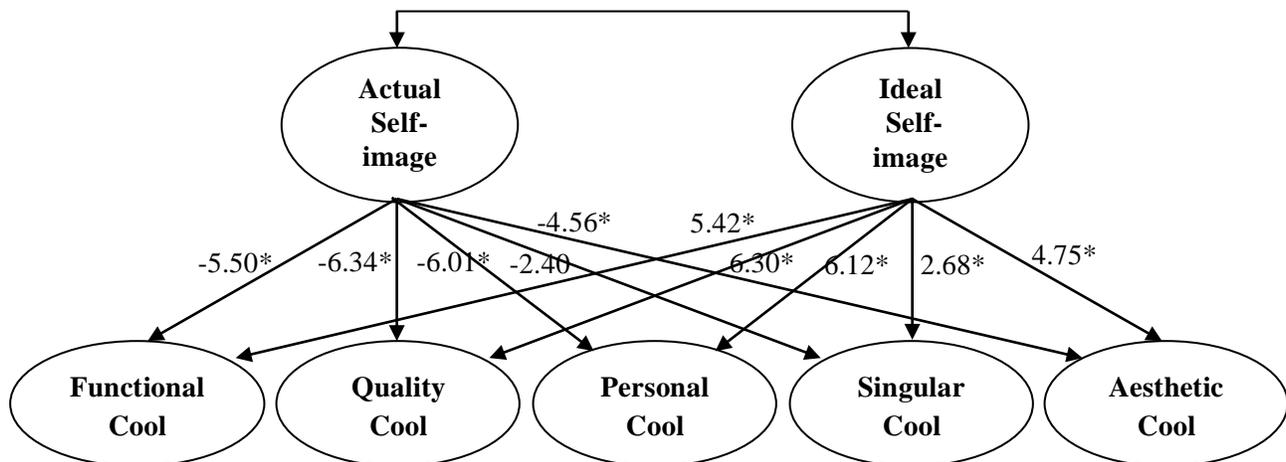
Previous studies (Goldsmith, Moore, & Beaudoin, 1999; Phau & Lo, 2004) have examined the relationships among innovativeness, self-concept, product image, and purchase decisions. For example, Goldsmith et al. (1999) show that innovators were more likely to have a favorable self-concept than noninnovators. Furthermore, fashion innovators tend to perceive themselves as more comfortable, pleasant, contemporary, and colorful than noninnovators (Goldsmith et al., 1999). As such, we expect innovativeness to have a moderating role in the relationship between actual/ideal self-images and hedonic/utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing. Thus:

- H5.* The positive effect of actual self-image on hedonic attitudes toward cool clothing is stronger for innovative young consumers than for noninnovative young consumers.
- H6.* The negative effect of actual self-image on utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing is stronger for innovative young consumers than for noninnovative young consumers.
- H7.* The positive effect of ideal self-image on hedonic attitudes toward cool clothing is stronger for innovative young consumers than for noninnovative young consumers.

H8. The negative effect of ideal self-image on utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing is stronger for innovative young consumers than for noninnovative young consumers.

This study examined not only the causal relationships among young consumers' actual self-image, ideal self-image, and hedonic/utilitarian attitudes toward cool products but also the moderating effect of innovativeness on those relationships. We used the six-item Domain Specific Innovativeness scale to distinguish innovators from non-innovators in the survey questionnaire. To measure actual/ideal self-images, we used Actual and Ideal Self-Concept scales. We also employed the measurement scale related to the concept of cool. College students enrolled in 11 different courses at a major U.S. university participated in main study. Single-and multiple-group SEM was conducted to test the hypotheses developed.

The results indicated that utilitarian attitudes toward cool clothing are negatively associated with young consumers' positive actual self-image, whereas hedonic attitudes toward cool clothing are positively related to young consumers' ideal self-image (see figure 1). Consumers with a positive ideal self-image seek a cool lifestyle in which their aspiration for novelty is reflected, and thus they put emphasis on hedonic values. Innovative young consumers with a positive ideal self-image desire to purchase cool products that reflect their uniqueness, exclusiveness, innovativeness, and novelty. Findings offer guidance to apparel marketers to determine which cool product, either hedonic or utilitarian, is congruent with their targeted young consumers' self-image combined with their innovativeness.



$$\chi^2 = 1287.44, df = 453, CFI = .81, RMSEA = .08 \quad *p < .05$$

Figure 1. Structural model

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