

The Influence of Live-Streaming Sales Language on Consumer Decision-Making from an Emotional Value Perspective

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Abstract. In recent years, with the development of e-commerce platforms and the proliferation of short videos and the internet, live-streaming commerce has emerged as a new marketing approach. Generation Z has also moved beyond purely functional consumption, increasingly gravitating towards personalized spending that delivers positive experiences and emotional fulfilment. Based on this, this paper employs the concept of emotional value to explore how the language used in live-streamed sales influences consumer decision-making. This study, grounded in emotional consumption theory and incorporating the customer value model, analyses consumers' purchasing behaviour, habits, and preferences. It aids in understanding the relationship between emotional value and consumer decision-making, while also contributing to practical applications within the live-streaming e-commerce sector. On this basis, it can be concluded that live-streamed sales are fundamentally driven by emotional value, employing multiple methods to create immersive experiences that prompt rapid user decision-making. Furthermore, emotional value influences both consumers' immediate and future purchasing behaviour. This provides a theoretical foundation for relevant e-commerce models and indicates that corporate marketing must balance rational information with emotional experiences. This approach assists brands in building consumer loyalty and securing a differentiated competitive advantage.

Keywords: Emotional value, Live-streamed sales, Consumer decision-making, Linguistic strategies.

1. Introduction

Recently, the surge in popularity of e-commerce platforms coupled with the rise of short videos has led to an increasing number of people placing orders within live-streaming sessions. Consequently, the market for live-streaming sales has expanded significantly, representing one of its key defining characteristics. Compared to traditional advertising, the language employed in live-streamed sales can directly translate sales pitches into an emotional response and atmospheric setting that resonates with users, thereby triggering a strong urge to purchase among potential buyers. In other words, it is not merely the goods themselves that are treated as objects to be sold; increasingly, consumers seek

to derive a sense of pleasure and emotional connection from the shopping experience itself. From the perspective of “emotional value”, it becomes easier to understand why live-streaming language exerts such a profound effect on consumers' psychological state.

In fact, while some understanding exists regarding certain functions of emotional value, existing research has predominantly focused on the format, mechanics, and operational rules of live-streaming e-commerce itself. It has paid scant attention to the specific content of streamers' discourse, its emotional value, or the precise mechanisms through which it influences consumer decisions—let alone the interplay between emotional value and consumer decision-making. In reality, no such organisation has been undertaken. Emotional value can influence consumer trust, reduce decision-making costs, and may fundamentally alter purchasing behaviour.

Building upon the foregoing, this paper will examine the influence of live-streaming language on consumer decision-making from the perspective of emotional value, addressing the following four research questions: Firstly, how does the language employed in live-streaming sales convey emotional value. Secondly, how consumers perceive and respond to the emotional value conveyed through live-streaming language. Thirdly, how emotional value influences consumers' purchasing decisions. Fourthly, whether differences exist in the effectiveness of linguistic emotional value across different platforms, products, and consumer groups.

A literature review approach is employed to systematise relevant research findings, encompassing the following aspects: Part Two examines the current state of live-streaming commerce; Part Three explores its theoretical foundations; Part Four analyses the linguistic characteristics and classification of live-streaming commerce; Part Five investigates the mechanisms underlying the conversion of linguistic emotional value in live-streaming commerce; Part Six presents research findings and offers recommendations.

2. The current state of live-streaming e-commerce

At present, live-streaming commerce has become a force to be reckoned with across all sectors. To analyse its current state and future trajectory, one must note that China's e-commerce live-streaming has experienced near-explosive growth over recent decades. Against the backdrop of the internet era, technological advancements, increasingly sophisticated network infrastructure, and rising smartphone penetration have collectively fuelled the burgeoning growth of e-commerce live-streaming.

Simultaneously, live streaming stands out for three reasons: having low cost, high interactivity, and wide audience range. There is not much requirement in terms of physical places as well as monetary costs for online streaming since there is only a low barrier of entry to join the industry. Secondly, another character is its interactivity: throughout live stream transmissions, people in real time will write commentaries containing many questions about the subject being talked about, and the presenters answer directly. The broad scope typifies online streaming, for which there is no limit of time or space as imposed by the internet, so long as it can be broadcast where one has access to the Internet. As opposed to traditional marketing communication that is more powerful and effective in influencing large masses and audiences due to less time consumption and financial cost and thus may appear more suitable, but with other weaknesses including a great deal of money and time commitment, and temporal and spatial limitations which prevent the best efforts from being truly harnessed [1].

It cannot be denied that livestream sales have achieved outstanding results during a short period. Nevertheless, the industry as a whole is not mature enough and many problems remain such as serious overgeneralization, false advertisements, higher consumer decision-making costs, lack of

supervisory rules, and no proper legislation to monitor those types of activities. The most eye-catching problem is tax avoidance through evasion that was seen on a large scale by Tier One live host' Host W '. In December 20th, 2021, Zhejiang province in Hangzhou city, Chinese tax authorities found out that host' Host W 'evaded huge amount of taxes through illegal activities. Therefore, they fining the Tier One host some amount of money [2].

3. Theoretical basis

3.1. The theory of emotional consumption

With the advancement of socio-economic development and the evolution of consumer attitudes, the focus of consumer attention has shifted away from a product's functional attributes and price considerations. Instead, consumers now prioritise the cultural connotations, symbolic significance, and emotional connections embedded within the product. This aligns with the third stage of consumer behaviour development proposed by marketing guru Philip Kotler, namely "emotional consumption". The evolving demands of contemporary consumers have shifted from merely "paying for products" to "paying for emotional experiences". What truly matters now is deriving spiritual fulfilment and achieving emotional resonance throughout the purchasing journey. For physical retailers, establishing an emotional connection with consumers, bridging the spatial divide, and resonating with shoppers' sentiments may well be the very heart of contemporary marketing endeavours. The 2023 Annual Report on the Status of Consumer Rights Protection in China, released by the China Consumers Association, indicates that emotional consumption has become a significant driving force in decision-making among today's younger demographics. This trend is particularly pronounced among Generation Z, women, and highly educated individuals, who are generally drawn to unique, niche products and items offering a sense of solace [3].

3.2. The theory of experiential consumption

The most crucial aspect of emotional consumption lies in experiential value. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, once fundamental physiological and safety requirements are satisfied, individuals develop higher-level needs: belongingness and love, esteem, and ultimately self-actualisation [4]. Traditional consumer behaviour has always prioritised value for money. However, within the context of the emotional economy, users increasingly favour shared interaction. This stems from their desire to experience immersive sensations firsthand, rather than passively accepting offerings. They aspire to be active participants or co-creators within the entire consumption process. Ultimately, for scenario-based marketing across the entire enterprise, the core consideration lies in whether it can deliver a genuine experience to consumers. It is precisely this shift in focus that has driven such changes in user behaviour, thereby enabling traditional brick-and-mortar supermarkets to retain their foothold despite the competitive pressure from e-commerce brands.

3.3. Theory of purchase decision-making

Firstly, on the one hand, at the individual level, identity attributes centred on work and personalised consumption driven by individual differences have garnered significant attention. On the other hand, to a certain extent, due to the cyclical fluctuations brought about by economic development and the era-specific pressures stemming from the demands of daily life, individuals invariably experience varying degrees of powerlessness. This, in turn, fosters an awakening of self-awareness, giving rise to a need to vent negative emotions, release pent-up feelings, or alleviate stress through the

consumption of emotionally resonant goods or services. Secondly, shifts in brand perception have become particularly pronounced. Whereas previously many consumers prioritised brand quality and reputation when making purchasing decisions, under this emotional economy they are less concerned with whether a brand delivers superior consumer experiences. Instead, they increasingly evaluate whether a brand embodies their lifestyle and personal taste, favouring those with a distinctively niche appeal. Moreover, when consumers make choices, particular emphasis is placed on brand values and positioning aligning with the emotional state consumers currently inhabit. To a certain extent, product pricing also corresponds to consumer sentiment. During the product selection process—such as when reaching the “confirmation of choice” stage or comparing alternatives—consumers place even greater emphasis on these factors [5].

3.4. Customer value model

In Parasuraman's Customer Value Model, value is not confined to a single dimension but comprises multiple factors. Initially, it centres on functional value – that is, whether the product fulfils its primary purpose or resolves specific practical issues. However, in such a fiercely competitive environment, relying solely on this factor is clearly insufficient to sustain long-term appeal. Subsequently, greater emphasis has been placed on service value. Beyond the inherent superiority of the product itself, what matters more are the experiences consumers encounter during the purchasing process. For instance: To understand how promptly businesses respond to customers; To gauge the level of friendliness demonstrated by businesses during customer interactions; To ascertain the reliability of a business's after-sales service. And so forth. These factors directly influence the subjective perceptions of the end consumer. Consequently, psychological value and social value have also gradually gained prominence. Consumers seek emotional, social and psychological comfort and fulfilment through a single purchase or consumption experience, thereby extending their self-identity and relationships into broader spheres. By constructing their consumption behaviour, they realise value within their inner selves. When these values coalesce to achieve resonance, they further cultivate consumer faith and loyalty towards the brand, thereby providing a more effective impetus for the enterprise's development [6].

3.5. Value co-creation theory

Value creation is no longer a finished product solely generated and delivered by the enterprise to consumers, but rather something jointly produced through interaction with consumers. On the one hand, it provides an illustration in that consumers start from being relatively inactive recipients of a final product, then become active supporters, and later value co-producers whose feedback, advice and experience helps to directly impact a business's products across various phases; during the value creation interaction journey, enterprises may engage the role as producer of the product in question, organizer of collaborative partnership, as well as integrator of resources and services together establish open platforms and communication channels so that consumers could easily become part of the ecosystem. As participants co-created value, they also need to be aware of emotional fulfillment and cultivate relationships with consumers. The value offered goes beyond mere customer satisfaction; there should also include validation and appreciation so that consumers would internalize and begin to love themselves more deeply. When customers engage in co-creation, there will not only be value in the form of transaction in the traditional sense where a company sells products or services, but additional value as well that creates more lasting levels of customer

satisfaction and loyalty while also driving innovation inside an organization to boost competitive advantages [7].

4. Characteristics and classification of live streaming language

4.1. Characteristics of live streaming language

Live streaming talks for themselves have distinctive traits that set them apart such as interactivity, high emotional resonance, colloquial mode and intimacy, immediacy, high degree of flexibility, quality of narrative, and contexture [8].

Live-streaming put emphasis on real-time interaction in which, instead of the hosts talking one way, they exchange with questions, comments and bullet screens from viewers. And, they are promptly responding to consumers so as to enhance consumers' experience as well as consumers' participation. When purchasing things, viewers can be especially valued by hosts, just like directly conversing with them.

To spur consumers into becoming more excited and agitated, streamers rely on inflection, their facial expressions, and their words to juice up the live stream; they will shout something like "Hurry up and grab one before it is gone!" or "Those are only the last ten, darling!" to create an atmosphere of competition or to build the perceived scarcity among the viewers.

Unlike text-based language in traditional advertisements, hosts utilize Mandarin, regional dialects, colloquialism and internet slang to bond with their audience within live-streaming channels; TikTok user account 'Chen Yuanyuan Super Cute' for example, boasts more than 15 million followers. In her live-streams, host Chen Yuanyuan usually teaches users how to use their makeup. despite lacking mainstream support in her earlier years, as long as she amassed a decent following using a wittily funny commentary and praise-worthy cosmetics skills, Chen would begin to take on live streaming duties. Reiterating how she treated her audience like 'my princesses' and upholding her signature witty accent became her key differentiator for audience followers, while at the same time keeping constant vigilance over the products provided along with robust customer service afterwards.

The host makes constant adjustments to the pace, style, and diction, under the influence of situation factors, audience feedback, and live data, making the work have much more "on-the-spot improvisation" energy.

Presenters use stories and simulating scenarios of product uses to create associations for the goods so that people develop a desire to possess them for themselves.

Broadcaster must change their script whenever needed based on situation or audience reaction, as well as how their products sell during the livestream. This type of "on-the-spot improvisation" brings a sense of excitement and prediction to the livestream.

4.2. Classification of live streaming languages

Live streaming language can be categorised into promotional language, emotive language, informative language, entertaining language, and interactive language.

Promotional language employs scarcity tactics within live-streaming sessions, such as limited-time offers and instant discounts upon purchase, to stimulate consumer orders.

Emotional language plays the sentiment card, employing affectionate nicknames, encouragement, and praise to forge an intimate rapport with the audience. The most common examples include 'family members...' and 'babies...'

Leveraging expertise to bolster product credibility, the host ingeniously resolves commercial and intellectual challenges through 'live streaming + knowledge'. By delving into cultural dimensions and appealing to audiences' thirst for learning and nostalgia from multiple angles, Fan Deng Reading achieves both visual appeal and profound substance. Eschewing mindless spectacle, the livestreams sell books while imparting knowledge, seamlessly integrating book sales with intellectual enlightenment and life wisdom, and life wisdom, frequently incorporating famous quotations. This elevates a physical book beyond mere commodity status, transforming it into an entity imbued with spiritual value. It prompts listeners to contemplate the deeper meanings behind the text, allowing books to nourish the inner world like supplements, filling the void in people's lives. Such knowledge-oriented live-streaming hosts should emphasise rational consumption, adhering to the principle of purchasing only what is needed. They must advise consumers to make choices based on their actual requirements and financial circumstances. This approach not only enhances the depth and quality of the live-stream itself but also significantly boosts user trust and loyalty, fostering a stable and sustainable sales effect over the long term [9].

Entertainment-oriented acts rely on comedic routines or singing and dancing to amuse audiences, incorporating selling points to encourage patrons to pay for the enjoyment.

Ultimately, interactive language employs techniques such as posing questions and conducting prize draws to capture users' attention, encouraging them to remain in the live stream.

5. The mechanism by which live-streamed sales language translates into emotional value

5.1. EKB model

The EKB model, namely the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell model, was proposed by J.F. Engle, D.T. Kollat and R.D. Blackwell in the 1970s, as detailed in Consumer Behaviour. It examines consumer purchasing behaviour from the perspective of the entire purchasing decision process. Within the EKB model, consumer decision-making can be categorised into five stages: problem recognition, information gathering, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase evaluation. Under the influence of external stimuli, consumers gain fresh insights into their existing needs through sensory perception and memory, proactively seeking out information about products that interest them. When faced with available alternatives, they must decide whether to purchase based on pre-established personal evaluation criteria or judgement standards, taking into account their own circumstances (such as gender, age, educational background, and other factors), thereby completing the entire purchasing process. Post-purchase evaluations, reflecting satisfaction or dissatisfaction with purchased goods after use, play a crucial role in regulating subsequent consumer behaviour. In essence, this process involves first recognising a problem, then seeking information, followed by evaluating alternative solutions, subsequently influencing purchasing decisions, and finally shaping post-purchase behavior [10].

5.2. The dual-process model: a coexistence of reason and emotion

The theory proposes that there are 2 systems involved in human information processing—the systematic processing (or central route) and heuristic processing (or peripheral route). The former tends to utilize logic analysis, evaluate evidence, and draw reasonable inferences on previous arguments and is more appropriate for long and deliberate decision making whereas the latter uses the intuitive and emotional reactions to outside stimuli, the visual cues from ads on TV, the gestures

of the host and emotional expressions on the screen of a show. It forms the basis of making quick and effortless cognitive judgments.

In a live streaming setting, emotional input prompts individuals to activate their heuristic processing mechanisms and feel an overwhelming need to make a purchase very quickly. They do not take the time to use systematic processing to thoroughly figure out if the price they pay matches up with the value received. Heuristic processing leans more towards utilizing instinct rather than being guided by logical reasoning such as when someone uses systematic processing by arousing consumer emotions, and triggering urgent action using external cues from the hosts—such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and behavior—or by adding limited time opportunities and alerting of flash sales, the degree of consumers' cognitive effort can be easily reduced. Consumers will immediately grasp how urgent it is to snap up great deals and how tightly managed is the timing in the live streaming environment. Their heightened vigilance towards what they order also will enhance. What is more, it is this approach that can accelerate consumer decisions and engage them in live-streaming sessions, thus bringing about some level of instantaneous satisfaction and pleasure. Emotional value and heuristic processing embedded in atmosphere and speech act styles within live-streaming rooms motivate impulsive and interactive behaviors of consumption. Throughout the whole process of consumption, the interplay between rational factors and emotional ones can be noticed: on one hand, people make decisions in terms of the demands for concrete benefits and economic earnings; on the other hand, emotions are still functioning there.

5.3. S-O-R model

The SOR model aims at explaining how environmental stimuli influence people's emotional and behavioral reactions. Stimulation (S) refers to the driving factors both within and outside individuals which motivate behavior; Organism (O) denotes the cognitive and emotional reactions of an individual toward the same stimulations as described previously, which includes cognition and emotion experience; Response (R) is the perceptible demonstration of people's behavior [11]. The model includes consumer actions initiated by their inner thought process and impacted by outside events, information, situation and inter-personnel dynamics. And this model has been applied in many fields like marketing, consumer behavior, information system user behavior and more. And some researchers used the SOR model to explore different types of platforms and then examine the effect on users buying impulse behavior. Other than that, they also explored platform form. Social commerce user behavior mechanisms refer to exploring what influences social commerce users to use and share content. Subsequent research used the SOR model to probe post-purchase review information absorption process including cognition, value recognition and practice engagement. The SOR model was also employed for studying how team knowledge transmission and sharing affected via communication and collaboration features sharing within social media platforms. In general, the SOR model is a theoretical framework used to explain how individuals generate their own sensations or behaviours in response to environmental stimuli. Applying the SOR model to research on knowledge disconnection behaviour reveals the underlying response mechanisms of such conduct. It reshapes individuals' subjective perceptions regarding their knowledge acquisition and interaction processes, deepening their understanding of the relationship between knowledge disconnection and reconnection. Simultaneously, it guides individuals towards more effective knowledge action and value-driven knowledge utilisation.

For live-streamed sales, presenters take advantage of how their voices, expressions, and tone, and inviting language, can work well to engage their audience on an emotional level, with words like 'last ten items, darlings—first come, first served!' to provoke a feeling of pleasure or identity,

pushing them to order on the spot or take part in live streams. For instance, at the end of the live stream, when the host reaches the flash sale stage, potential buyers may announce loudly: 'Last ten items left, darlings—first come, first served!' or 'only ten items left! First-come-first-served!' At this point, people feel that they are all welcome, and they enjoy being part of the Double Eleven midnight gala. Influenced by emotions, consumers could make decisions more quickly. This instance abides by the host's linguistic information first influences consumer's emotional perception which further leads to consumer's purchase decision pattern of SOR model. Thus it concludes that, people who is affected by emotions have heuristic processing, will judge easily from emotional point.

6. Conclusion

In summary, live-streamed sales are driven by emotional value as their fulcrum. Through their verbal delivery, facial expressions, interactive engagement, time-limited promotions, and scenario simulations, presenters immerse users within the virtual live-streaming environment, fostering a profound sense of participation, identification, and enjoyment, thereby prompting swift purchasing decisions. The EKB model indicates that emotional value not only determines whether a purchase occurs in the present moment, but also exerts a retroactive influence on the stages of problem recognition and information gathering, thereby shaping consumers' future purchasing behaviour. The dual-processing model indicates that in live-streaming scenarios, heuristic processing predominates, characterised by its capacity to enable individuals to arrive at decisions rapidly and involuntarily. Emotional cognition and affective feedback serve to explain the behaviours they elicit. This provides robust theoretical support for e-commerce shopping platforms that employ immersive live-streaming and adopt a preachy promotional approach by their hosts. In other words, the key to successful live-streamed sales lies not only in functional and rational factors, but equally in recognising the role of emotional drivers and immersive experiences. This underscores the importance for businesses to balance providing rational information with delivering appropriate emotional experiences in their daily marketing activities. By doing so, they can cultivate long-term consumer loyalty within their brand management and achieve a distinct competitive advantage.

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