

Factors Influencing Consumers' Impulse Buying Behavior in Live Streaming E-commerce

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Abstract. With the rapid growth of live streaming e-commerce, impulse buying has become a common and influential consumer behavior in digital marketplaces. This study aims to systematically identify and analyze the key factors driving impulse purchases in live streaming contexts through a systematic literature review. The research synthesizes findings from academic journals, industry reports, and theoretical frameworks published between 2018 and 2024. Specifically, it addresses the central research question: What are the primary factors influencing consumers' impulse buying behavior in live streaming e-commerce, and how do they interact? Findings reveal that impulse buying in live streams is influenced by a combination of streamer characteristics, platform design features, consumer emotional states, and social influences. The study concludes that impulse buying in live streaming is a multidimensional phenomenon driven by technological, social, and psychological triggers. It contributes to the theoretical understanding of digital consumer behavior and offers practical insights for streamers and e-commerce platforms.

Keywords: Live streaming e-commerce, impulse buying, consumer behavior, digital marketing, literature review

1. Introduction

Live streaming e-commerce has emerged as a transformative force in the retail industry, integrating entertainment, social interaction, and instant purchasing into a seamless digital experience. Unlike traditional e-commerce platforms, live streaming offers dynamic real-time product demonstrations, authentic interactive communication between hosts and viewers, and exclusive limited-time promotions. These distinctive features create a compelling and immersive shopping environment, which is particularly effective at triggering impulse buying behaviors among consumers. Understanding the specific factors behind such behavior is critical for both academics seeking to advance digital consumer theory and practitioners aiming to optimize commercial outcomes.

This study conducts a systematic literature review to identify, analyze, and categorize the key determinants of impulse buying in live streaming settings. The research aims to address the following core questions: What are the main factors influencing impulse purchases in live streaming e-commerce, and how do these factors interact in shaping consumer decisions?

By synthesizing insights from existing studies, this paper aims to provide a coherent theoretical framework that connects various influencing elements and highlights meaningful gaps for future

research. The findings are expected to enrich the academic literature on digital consumer behavior and provide actionable insights to support the design of more effective and responsible live streaming marketing strategies.

2. Theoretical foundations of impulse buying in digital contexts

This chapter establishes the conceptual foundation for analyzing impulse buying within the specific environment of live-streaming e-commerce. It begins by defining the core construct.

Impulse buying is distinguished from planned purchasing as a sudden and often emotionally driven desire to make a purchase. This urge is largely unreflective and is frequently accompanied by a compelling sense of urgency and hedonic gratification. In digital contexts, such as live streaming, this behavior is precipitated by a complex confluence of online stimuli rather than traditional physical in-store factors [1].

To effectively frame the subsequent analysis, several key theoretical lenses are applied. The Stimulus Organism Response framework provides a foundational structure for understanding the process. It posits that various environmental stimuli, such as specific live stream features, directly affect the internal cognitive and affective state of the consumer, the organism. This altered internal state in turn drives the subsequent behavioral response, which in this context is the impulse purchase.

Flow Theory is particularly relevant for explaining the deeply immersive experience that successful live streaming can generate. When consumers achieve a state of flow characterized by deep concentration and enjoyment, their normal self-consciousness and critical evaluation tend to diminish. This reduced inhibition can create a fertile ground for impulsive purchases.

Furthermore, Social Influence Theory offers crucial insights. It explains how the real-time and communal nature of a live stream audience creates powerful forces such as conformity, social proof, and normative pressure. These social forces can significantly shortcut an individual's rational decision-making processes, making impulse buying a more likely outcome [2].

3. Key factors influencing impulse buying in live streaming e-commerce

Building upon the theoretical foundation established in Chapter 2, this chapter systematically categorizes and examines the primary factors identified in the literature as drivers of impulse buying in live streams. These factors are grouped into four interrelated clusters.

3.1. Streamer-related factors

The streamer acts as the central human agent and social catalyst in the shopping experience. Their credibility, perceived expertise, and prior reputation directly influence viewers' trust in the products they endorse, reducing perceived risk. Attractiveness and likeability foster parasocial relationships, making recommendations feel personal and persuasive. Most critically, interactivity and responsiveness—such as answering questions in real-time or addressing viewers by name—create a unique sense of social presence and personal connection, which is a potent trigger for impulsive decision-making that is largely absent in traditional e-commerce [3].

3.2. Platform and technological features

The design of the live streaming platform itself engineers conditions conducive to impulse buying. Real-time interaction capabilities, like live chat and instant polls, create a dynamic and engaging

atmosphere that sustains attention. Scarcity and urgency cues, including countdown timers, limited-stock announcements, and flash sales, evoke a fear of missing out (FOMO), prompting immediate action [4]. Moreover, the seamless integration and ease of the payment and checkout process, often requiring just one or two clicks, minimize the friction and time for second thoughts, effectively removing barriers between impulse and purchase completion. Visual marketing techniques are also widely applied to enhance product appeal and stimulate immediate desire [5].

3.3. Consumer psychological and emotional states

Consumers' internal affective responses are pivotal mediators. Live streaming is designed to generate high emotional arousal and pleasure through entertainment, drama, and excitement. This heightened state can overwhelm cognitive control. The perceived enjoyment and immersion in the live event can lead to a narrowed focus on immediate gratification [6]. Additionally, the fast-paced, information-rich stream can induce cognitive load and decision fatigue, making consumers more reliant on heuristics and more susceptible to impulsive choices as a mental shortcut [7]. The role of customer engagement and deal proneness further amplifies this tendency [8].

3.4. Social and environmental influences

The live streaming environment is a public, social spectacle. Social proof and herd behavior are powerfully at play; seeing a high volume of positive comments and real-time purchases validates the product and the buying decision, reducing individual uncertainty. Specific features that facilitate group buying dynamics or team discounts explicitly leverage social pressure and collaborative action to encourage purchases that individuals might not make on their own. Furthermore, the tone and content of audience comments and real-time feedback create a normative environment that can either encourage or discourage impulsive spending [9]. The influence of mukbang-style streams on overconsumption also highlights the power of social modeling [10].

4. Interactions and moderating effects among factors

The factors identified do not operate in isolation; instead, their combined effects and conditional moderators significantly shape consumer behavior. For instance, the impact of platform-triggered scarcity is significantly amplified when delivered by a highly credible and popular streamer. Similarly, the effect of social proof from other viewers is moderated by the consumer's current emotional state: highly aroused and engaged viewers are more susceptible to peer behavior than dispassionate observers.

Individual differences further moderate these effects. Demographic variables such as age, income, and shopping experience can influence susceptibility to different triggers. Deep-seated personal traits, such as impulsivity and self-control, as well as cultural background, affect how a consumer responds to the orchestrated stimuli of a live-streaming shopping session. The match-up between streamer, product, and consumer characteristics is another key moderating aspect [11]. Complex interactions among factors can be effectively analyzed through methods like DEMATEL-AISM [12].

5. Discussion

This chapter synthesizes the preceding analysis into a coherent whole. It proposes an integrated conceptual model illustrating how streamer, platform, psychological, and social factors converge

within the live streaming ecosystem to precipitate impulse buying behavior.

The discussion highlights the study's theoretical contributions by extending traditional impulse buying models to account for the unique, technologically mediated social interactions that define live streaming commerce.

From a practical standpoint, the analysis offers clear implications. For streamers and brands, it underscores the importance of cultivating authentic expertise and dynamic interactivity. For platform operators, it suggests design choices that balance sales conversion with ethical responsibility, perhaps by implementing features that encourage mindful consumption.

Finally, the discussion adopts a critical perspective, considering both ethical implications and consumer welfare. The potent combination of factors analyzed raises questions about potential exploitative practices, the fostering of compulsive buying behaviors, and the long-term financial and psychological well-being of consumers. Acknowledging these concerns is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and for informing future industry practices and regulatory considerations.

6. Conclusion

This literature-based study systematically identifies and organizes the key factors driving impulse buying in live streaming e-commerce into four interconnected clusters: streamer attributes, platform features, psychological states, and social influences. The dynamic interaction among these factors collectively creates an immersive and stimulating shopping environment that effectively promotes impulsive purchase decisions.

Theoretically, this review not only integrates multiple disciplinary perspectives but also proposes a holistic framework for understanding impulse buying within live streaming contexts. It extends traditional impulse buying theories by incorporating elements unique to a dynamic, interactive, and socially enriched digital setting. Practically, the findings suggest that streamers should intentionally enhance both their credibility and real-time interactivity to foster sustainable consumer relationships. Meanwhile, platform designers are encouraged to develop interface features that carefully balance persuasive intent with consumer protection measures. These could include, for example, introducing subtle "cooling-off" reminders before checkout or ensuring that time-limited purchase notices are displayed with full transparency and clarity.

Acknowledging its limitations, this study relies exclusively on existing literature. It lacks primary empirical data, which may affect the generalizability of its conclusions across diverse cultural contexts or differing platform ecosystems. Future research should therefore employ mixed methods or longitudinal empirical approaches to validate the proposed framework. Additional avenues include exploring cross-cultural differences in impulse triggers, examining the long-term effects of frequent impulse buying on consumer well-being and financial health, and investigating how emerging technologies such as augmented reality and artificial intelligence further shape impulsive consumption patterns. Finally, scholarly attention should also be directed toward developing potential regulatory guidelines and ethical frameworks that support a healthy, transparent, and responsible live streaming commerce ecosystem.

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