



Research Paper

# Influence Mechanism of Impulse Purchasing Behavior of Live E-commerce Consumers—Based on SOR Theory

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**ABSTRACT:** To achieve sustainable development in live e-commerce based on SOR theory, visibility and preferential promotion are chosen as independent variables. Pleasurable emotion functions as the mediator variable to create a theoretical model of the influence mechanism on consumer impulsive purchasing behaviors. An empirical study was conducted using 229 valid questionnaires, which were analyzed with SPSS 26 and AMOS 24. The study found that live e-commerce visibility and preferential promotions have a significant and positive impact on consumers' pleasant emotions and impulsive purchasing behaviors. Furthermore, pleasant emotions partially mediate the relationship between visibility and consumer impulsive purchasing behaviors, as well as between preferential promotions and consumer impulsive purchasing behaviors. Therefore, suggestions are made to provide a theoretical basis and decision-making reference for the sustainable development of live e-commerce.

**KEYWORDS:** Live Commerce; Impulse Purchasing Behavior; Pleasurable Emotions; SOR Theory

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## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, live commerce has experienced rapid growth. In the first half of 2023, major live e-commerce platforms collectively achieved a total sales volume of 1.27 trillion yuan, with over 110 million live streaming sessions, more than 70 million products sold, and over 2.7 million active streamers [1]. As of June 2023, the user base for live e-commerce in China reached 526 million [2], signifying its evolution into a mainstream consumption pattern. Previous studies have consistently shown that impulse purchasing behavior is widespread [3]. Notably, scholars such as Xiong Suhong have highlighted that impulse shopping is fundamentally a pursuit of pleasurable shopping experiences; regardless of whether online or offline, external stimuli often prompt consumers to make impulsive purchases. Empirical findings suggest that impulsive purchases can account for up to 80% of total sales in certain scenarios [4]. However, consumers' impulse purchases also present new opportunities for customer base expansion. Three critical research questions emerge: first, how can live streaming e-commerce effectively stimulate consumers' impulse purchasing behavior? Second, what are the key factors influencing such behavioral outcomes? Third, what is the underlying influence mechanism? To address these questions, this study adopts the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory as an analytical framework, aiming to provide theoretical foundations and practical strategies for the sustainable development of live streaming e-commerce.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Live E-Commerce and its Characteristics

Live e-commerce is a method by which merchants promote and sell goods through real-time live broadcasting. It is characterized by high interactivity, entertainment, authenticity, and visibility [5]. This approach aims to enhance consumers' shopping experiences and improve merchants' sales efficiency. In recent years, live e-commerce has emerged as a new business model and has attracted considerable attention from researchers. Zhang Baosheng and other scholars contend that real-time interactions between streamers and consumers, authentic product displays, and the entertainment aspect of live broadcasts can bolster consumers' trust and their perception of the broadcast's usefulness, thereby increasing their willingness to purchase [6]. Ma et al. found that both light-hearted and humorous live broadcasts—featuring streamers' professional product introductions and

consumers' social interactions on the platform—significantly influence purchasing decisions [7]. Through empirical research, Liu Yang and others discovered that interactivity, authenticity, entertainment, and visibility in live shopping evoke varying degrees of emotional reactions and perceived trust in consumers, ultimately affecting their purchasing behavior [5]. Sun Kai et al. examined the effects of promotion intensity, streamer characteristics, and live broadcast activities in the context of live commerce, noting their impact on consumers' emotional responses (such as pleasure and arousal), which can lead to impulse shopping [8]. Combining existing research and comprehensively analyzing the characteristics of live commerce, this paper selects visibility and discount promotions as independent variables from the elements of live commerce to study their impact on consumers' impulse buying behavior.

## **2.2 Consumer Impulse Buying Behavior**

Clover defined impulse purchasing as an unplanned buying activity [9]. Stern classified impulse buying into four types: (1) pure impulse buying, driven by irrational emotional surges; (2) reminder impulse buying, triggered by product-related memory cues; (3) suggestion impulse buying, initiated by external recommendations uncovering latent needs; and (4) planned impulse buying, which arises when promotions or emotional stimuli deviate one from intended purchase goals [10]. Weinberg et al. emphasized that impulse buying results from emotional arousal in specific situations, lacking rational control [11]. Rook noted that such behavior is typically driven by strong, immediate urges that lead to quick decisions without deliberation, often resulting in emotional dissonance and negative outcomes [12].

In the context of livestream e-commerce, this study defines impulse buying as a spontaneous, unplanned purchase driven by emotional stimuli experienced during a livestream, particularly when no prior purchase intent existed.

## **2.3 Consumer Sentiment**

According to Bagozzi et al., emotions are internal affective states triggered by environmental stimuli and arise from physiological and psychological interactions. These emotions often manifest behaviorally and influence individuals' coping mechanisms or affirmation responses [13]. Currently, scholars primarily use two dimensions to refine emotion research. Phillips et al. divided emotions into two categories: positive and negative [14]. Russell et al. categorized emotions into two dimensions: arousal and pleasure [15]. Chen Hui et al. found that emotionally positive experiences in virtual environments significantly increase consumers' desire to buy [16].

Referring to emotion theory, this article defines pleasant emotion as the positive emotional experience consumers have when facing current external stimuli, such as happiness, joy, satisfaction, and other emotional reactions. Using pleasant emotion as an intermediary variable, we deeply explore the mechanism of its role and path in live commerce to explain consumers' impulse purchasing behavior.

## **2.4. SOR Theory**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model proposes that environmental stimuli (S) trigger internal emotional and cognitive changes within the organism (O), which subsequently influence behavioral responses (R) [17]. Widely utilized in consumer behavior research, the S-O-R model offers a structured framework to explain how external factors impact internal states and behaviors. Guo et al. applied the S-O-R model to illustrate how livestreaming features (e.g., real-time interaction, visual appeal, professional service) enhance perceived value and diminish perceived risk, thereby boosting cross-border purchase intentions [18]. Zhou et al. confirmed that visual marketing stimuli (e.g., aesthetics, entertainment, authenticity) significantly impact impulse buying through the mediating effects of pleasure and arousal [19]. Pan et al. discovered that product displays, personalization, and promotional strategies in livestreaming considerably influence purchase intention, with user stickiness serving as a full mediator [20].

This study constructs a research model based on the S-O-R theory, in which visibility and promotional incentives serve as external stimuli (S), pleasure represents the internal state (O), and impulse buying behavior constitutes the response (R).

## **2.5 Hypothesis**

### **2.5.1 Hypothesis of the relationship between visibility and pleasant emotions**

Visibility refers to the use of media to effectively communicate information related to a product or service to consumers visually. Adelaar believes that good visualization affects consumer emotion perception significantly [21]. Parboteeah et al. showed that visually appealing websites make consumers feel more pleasant and users enjoy browsing the website more, which in turn affects consumers' online impulse purchasing [22]. Zhang Wei et al. noted that the visually appealing product graphics displayed on mobile shopping websites can make consumers feel more engaged, increase the time spent browsing products, and evoke a sense of pleasure [23].

E-commerce live broadcasts, through real-time video, allow consumers to see the streamer's comprehensive three-dimensional display of the product. This not only provides detailed attributes and methods of use but also presents the streamer's experience and dynamic responses, which enhances the consumer's sense of instant gratification. Simultaneously, high visibility brings vividness to the product display, making the consumer viewing experience more pleasurable and increasing their willingness to stay in the live broadcast room. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is proposed:

**H1:** The visibility of live e-commerce positively and significantly affects consumers' pleasant emotions.

### **2.5.2 Hypothesis on the relationship between visibility and impulsive buying behavior**

Liu et al. believe that website visual appeal is an important factor affecting consumers' instant gratification and online impulse purchases [24]. Zhao Hongxia and others have verified through empirical research that marketing models with effective visual experiences can stimulate consumer needs, and the effect of online product display is positively related to consumers' impulse purchases [25]. Liu Yang et al. believe that dynamic visibility on live shopping platforms can cause consumers to have emotional reactions and positively impact consumers' impulsive buying behavior [5]. When consumers find products that suit their needs, they will unconsciously develop buying motives. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is proposed:

**H2:** The visibility of live e-commerce positively and significantly affects consumers' impulsive buying behavior.

### **2.5.3 Hypothesis on the relationship between discount promotions and pleasant emotions**

Discount promotions are an important marketing tool in live e-commerce, encompassing a limited number of popular products on sale, limited-time special price rush activities, and the issuance of coupons or gifts. Blattberg et al. pointed out that the core of preferential promotion lies in its time-limited nature, meaning promotional activities are conducted only within a specific period. Its distinctive feature is that it prompts consumers to make quick purchase decisions within a limited timeframe [26]. Xu Anfeng et al. believe that discount promotions in live broadcasts can attract consumers' attention and stimulate their sense of pleasure [27]. Wang Qiuzhen et al. found that the higher the price discount, the stronger the consumer's perceived pleasure in their study of online group purchasing [28]. Therefore, hypothesis 3 is proposed:

**H3:** Live e-commerce discount promotions positively and significantly affect consumers' pleasure.

### **2.5.4 Hypothesis on the relationship between discount promotions and impulsive purchasing behavior**

Discount promotions are a crucial marketing method for merchants to increase product sales. Most consumers' impulsive purchasing behavior is easily influenced by preferential promotions. He Junhong proved through experiments that in mobile shopping, sales promotion can induce pleasant emotions in consumers, thereby promoting their purchase behavior [29]. Wang Chenghui et al. confirmed that consumers tend to produce strong positive emotional responses, such as excitement and thrill, when faced with external incentives like price discounts and time pressure. This can significantly enhance consumers' immediate perception of the goods' value, causing them to lose their rational judgment to a certain extent, and subsequently induce impulsive purchasing intentions [30]. Zhou Xing and other scholars refined promotions into three forms: limited time, limited quantity, and general discounts. They found that in the online shopping environment, merchants' limited-time discount promotion strategies are particularly effective, significantly stimulating consumers' impulse buying behavior [31]. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is proposed:

**H4:** Live e-commerce merchants' discount promotions positively and significantly influence consumers' impulse buying behavior.

### **2.5.5 Hypothesis on the relationship between pleasurable emotions and impulsive purchasing behavior**

Pleasurable emotion refers to the degree of delight, pleasure, and satisfaction an individual exhibits under the stimulation of the external environment. Meng Lu et al. concluded that webcasting can bring a strong visual sensory impact, allowing consumers to experience the pleasure of browsing and enhancing their willingness to buy [32]. Zhang Wei et al. found that a significant reason for consumers to engage in impulsive buying behavior is that they are stimulated by the external environment during the browsing process, which in turn triggers their inner pleasant emotions. This emotion dominates the consumer decision-making process [23]. Fan Wenfang et al. pointed out that when consumers browse and shop on e-commerce platforms, the pleasurable feelings generated internally will deepen their perception of the website and enhance their sense of consumption participation, and the existence of such pleasurable emotions often prompts online consumers to exhibit impulsive purchasing behavior [33]. Therefore, hypothesis 5 is proposed:

**H5:** Consumers' pleasure emotions positively and significantly affect their impulsive buying behavior.

### 2.5.6 Hypothesis of the mediating role of pleasurable emotions

In live e-commerce, rich and diverse product information is presented, and limited-time discount promotions can evoke pleasure in consumers. This pleasurable emotion will prompt consumers' impulse purchases; that is, the stronger the pleasurable emotion consumers experience during the shopping and browsing process, the more they will be stimulated to make impulsive purchasing behaviors [8]. Chen Jie et al. confirmed that both the website dimension and the consumer's own dimension significantly affect online consumers' shopping pleasure, which in turn affects consumers' willingness to repeat purchases and impulse purchases [34]. Guo Yanping et al. empirically analyzed that consumers' pleasant emotions play a partial mediating effect between online shopping situational factors and impulse buying behavior [35]. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 are proposed:

**H6:** Pleasant emotion has a mediating effect between visibility and impulsive purchasing behavior.

**H7:** Pleasant emotions have a mediating effect between discount promotions and impulsive purchasing behavior.

### 2.6 Theoretical Model

This paper focuses on consumers of live e-commerce shopping as the research object. Combining SOR theory with previous research on factors influencing consumer impulsive purchasing behavior, it deeply analyzes the influence mechanism of impulsive purchasing behavior in the live e-commerce environment. Visibility and discount promotions are selected as independent variables, pleasurable emotions as mediating variables, and impulsive buying behavior as dependent variables to construct a theoretical model (Figure 1).

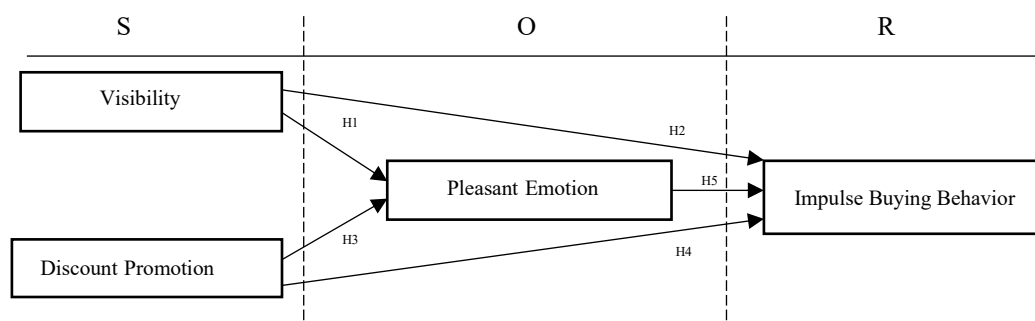


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Live Commerce Consumers' Impulse Purchasing Behavior

## III. RESEARCH DESIGN

### 3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire primarily consists of scale questions to measure the research variables and questions related to demographic information. For visibility, we referred to studies by Treem [36], Dong W [37], Dong [38], etc., and designed 3 questions. For discount promotion, we referred to studies by Huangfu Yanqiu [39], Lin Tong [40], etc., and designed 3 questions. For pleasure, we referred to studies by Koo [41], and designed 3 questions. For impulse buying behavior, we referred to studies by Rook [12], Chen [42], etc., and designed 4 questions. The scale questions utilize a Likert five-point scale. The demographic information includes the gender, age, education level, average monthly disposable income, and purchase intention of the research subjects.

### 3.2 Questionnaire Distribution, Collection, and Data Analysis

This study employed convenient sampling for data collection. The Wenjuanxing platform was used to design the questionnaire, and the questionnaire link was shared via WeChat, QQ, RedNote, and other social media platforms, inviting live e-commerce consumers to complete the online survey. A total of 294 questionnaires were collected. After excluding questionnaires with no live e-commerce shopping experience, a standard deviation less than 0.5, and a completion time less than 30 seconds, 229 valid questionnaires were obtained, resulting in an effective response rate of 77.89%.

Among the valid questionnaires, women constituted a slightly larger proportion (57.2%), which aligns with the typical live e-commerce user profile. The age distribution of live shopping users is broad but leans towards youth, with the majority aged 18-30 (78.6%). High school education and above represents the main educational background (87.8%), with undergraduate degrees accounting for a larger proportion (45.9%). The highest proportion (62%) reported a monthly disposable income of more than 2,000 yuan. Frequent purchases and occasional purchases accounted for 34% and 66%, respectively. This information indicates that the sample is representative.

### 3.2.1 Common method bias test

The Harman single factor test was used to perform factor analysis on 13 items. Using unrotated principal component analysis, two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 were extracted. The cumulative percentage of variance explained by these two factors was 58.67%, with factor 1 explaining 49.98% of the variance, which is less than 50%. Therefore, the data in this paper did not exhibit serious common method bias.

## IV. RESULT

### 4.1 Reliability and Validity Testing

Confirmatory factor analysis was used to test the scale's reliability and validity. Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient and composite reliability (C.R.) were used to assess scale reliability, while convergent validity (AVE) and discriminant validity were used to assess scale validity.

The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  coefficient for each variable was greater than 0.8, indicating suitability for factor analysis. The C.R. value for each variable was also greater than 0.8, suggesting good internal consistency reliability of the scale. Factor loading and average variance extracted (AVE) were used to test convergent validity. The standardized coefficients of factor loading were greater than 0.6 and were significant at the 0.01 level. AVE was greater than 0.5, which indicated that each variable of the scale had good convergent validity (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Test

Variable	Question	unstandardized coefficient	standard error	Z-Value	Standardized coefficient	Cronbach's $\alpha$	CR	AVE
Visibility	VA1	1			0.821	0.837	0.846	0.647
	VA2	1.045	0.084	12.387	0.771			
	VA3	1.345	0.101	13.281	0.820			
Discounts and Promotions	PD1	1			0.765	0.807	0.810	0.599
	PD2	0.931	0.086	10.874	0.775			
	PD3	0.973	0.089	10.942	0.781			
Pleasant Emotion	HAP1	1			0.820	0.808	0.813	0.594
	HAP2	1.162	0.091	12.817	0.816			
	HAP3	0.823	0.080	10.229	0.667			
Impulse Buying Behavior	BI1	1			0.755	0.817	0.821	0.534
	BI2	0.938	0.099	9.443	0.662			
	BI3	1.073	0.097	11.031	0.775			
	BI4	1.075	0.104	10.385	0.727			

The square root of AVE for each variable was greater than the Pearson correlation coefficient between that variable and other variables, indicating good discriminant validity of the scale (Table 2).

Table 2. Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Impulse buying behavior	Pleasure	Discounts and promotions	Visibility
Impulse buying behavior	<b>0.731</b>			
Pleasure	0.721	<b>0.771</b>		
Discounts and promotions	0.698	0.764	<b>0.774</b>	
Visibility	0.692	0.739	0.769	<b>0.804</b>

### 4.2 Model Fit Test of the Research Model

The model fit indicators were calculated using AMOS 24 (Table 3): RMSEA=0.032, GFI=0.961, AGFI=0.940, CFI=0.999, IFI=0.999, TLI=0.998. The values of all fit indicators met the requirements, indicating a relatively good fit between the data and the model.

Table 3 Model fitting test

Fit index	$\chi^2/df$	SRMR	RMSEA	GFI	AGFI	IFI	CFI	TLI
Reference value	<3.000	<0.080	<0.080	>0.900	>0.900	>0.900	>0.900	>0.900
Test value	1.032	0.032	0.012	0.961	0.940	0.999	0.999	0.998

### 4.3 Hypothesis Testing

AMOS 24 was used to test the hypotheses. The path analysis results (Table 4) showed that the P values corresponding to hypotheses H1-H5 were all less than 0.05, confirming that these hypotheses were supported.

Table 4. Model Path Test Results

Hypothesis	Path	Unstandardized coefficient	Standard error	Z-value	P value	Standardized coefficient	Result
H1	visibility→ pleasant emotion	.316	.046	6.863	***	0.507	Supported
H2	Visibility→ Impulsive buying behavior	.204	.064	3.208	0.001	0.310	Supported
H3	Discounts and promotions → Pleasant emotion	.430	.062	6.930	***	0.534	Supported
H4	Promotions → Impulse buying behavior	.228	.085	2.666	0.008	0.268	Supported
H5	Pleasant emotions → Impulse buying behavior	.369	.131	2.810	0.005	0.350	Supported

Note: \*\* Denotes significance at the  $p < 0.05$  level; \*\*\* Denotes significance at the  $p < 0.001$  level.

### 4.4 Hypothesis testing for mediating effects

Bootstrapping test of mediating effects was conducted using AMOS 24 with 1000 iterations of sampling and 95% confidence interval (CI), and the results (Table 5) show that the 95% confidence intervals of the two mediating effect paths do not include 0. Therefore, the pleasurable emotions generated by consumers have a partial mediating effect in the live e-commerce visibility and impulsive buying behavior of consumers, and in the promotional offers and impulsive buying behavior all have partial mediating effects, and hypotheses H6 and H7 are valid.

Table 5. Mediation Effect Test

Path	Effect Size	Z-value	95% Confidence Interval	
			Bias-Corrected	Percentile
Visibility → pleasant emotion → impulse buying behavior	0.117	2.127	(0.023, 0.246)	(0.013, 0.228)
Discounts and promotion → pleasant emotion → impulse buying behavior	0.158	2.324	(0.035, 0.310)	(0.022, 0.281)

## V. CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Main research findings

Based on the SOR theory, a theoretical model of impulsive purchasing behavior in live e-commerce was constructed, and a practical approach was proposed. During the live commerce process, consumers exhibit impulsive purchasing behaviors, which are significantly and positively affected by factors such as visibility, discount promotions, and pleasurable emotions. During live broadcasts, product information, diverse promotional activities, and strong pleasurable emotions will induce impulsive purchasing behavior in consumers.

This study explains the influencing mechanism of impulse buying behavior in live e-commerce. Pleasant emotions play a partial mediating role between visibility and impulsive purchasing behavior, as well as between discount promotions and impulsive purchasing behavior. In live e-commerce, streamers introduce products to consumers through real-time video broadcasting. Consumers can obtain detailed information about product attributes and usage, and learn about the streamer's usage experience. This dynamic display method brings

pleasant emotions to consumers and prompts them to make impulse purchases. When streamers offer lower prices or more benefits than the daily prices of goods through preferred promotions in the live broadcast room, consumers will perceive greater value from shopping in the live broadcast room. This perceived benefit triggers consumers' pleasure, leading to impulsive purchases.

## **5.2 Research deficiencies and prospects**

### **5.2.1 sample selection**

In terms of sample selection, the use of convenience sampling affects the representativeness of the sample to some extent. Future research should employ random sampling methods to expand the sample range and improve the accuracy and reliability of the study.

### **5.2.2 Variable selection**

Based on the SOR theory, only variables related to live e-commerce features (visibility, discount promotions) and emotional variables (pleasure) were chosen to study consumer impulsive purchasing behavior. Future research can select more variables such as impulsivity traits, perceived value, and immersive experience. Moreover, live streaming e-commerce features can encompass various dimensions, including usefulness, interactivity, and streamer traits, to more comprehensively explore the mechanism of consumer impulsive purchasing behavior.

### **5.2.3 Research objects**

Regarding the research subjects, this paper focuses on consumers who watch live broadcasts and exhibit impulsive purchasing behavior, thereby reflecting the overall trends in impulsive purchasing behavior in live e-commerce. However, internet celebrity live broadcasts, celebrity live broadcasts, and merchant broadcasts each have their own emphasis. Internet celebrity live broadcasts prioritize low prices and limited-time strategies, while celebrity live broadcasts attract audiences through personal popularity and influence. Merchant broadcasts provide detailed and professional product introductions while simultaneously shaping corporate image and reputation. Future research can further refine the classification of live webcasts to explore the influence of different types of live broadcasts on consumers' impulse purchasing behavior.

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