

Consumer Impulse Buying in Live streaming Marketing: From the Perspective of "People-Product-Place" Theory

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Abstract

Amid the wave of the digital economy, live streaming marketing has emerged as a significant driver of incremental consumption, with consumer impulse buying behavior within this context holding substantial commercial value. This paper aims to comprehensively review and evaluate existing literature on consumer impulse buying behavior in live streaming marketing, thereby mapping out the research trajectory, key themes, and emerging trends. This paper indicates that existing studies have established a relatively complete theoretical framework. At the theoretical level, research predominantly employs the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model as a foundational analytical framework, further conducting multi-level theoretical analyses by integrating concepts such as social presence theory. Regarding influencing factors, analyses of the "people-product-place" system reveal that the live streaming host, the atmospheric setting, and the product itself are critical elements in fostering impulse buying; simultaneously, drawing on SOR theory, researchers have systematically identified "stimulus" factors—spanning host characteristics, live streaming scene attributes, and the social environment—that trigger impulse purchases. Furthermore, the study deconstructs the mechanisms at play, specifically examining the mediating and moderating roles of consumer emotional responses, cognitive levels, and personal traits in the relationship between "stimuli" and "impulse buying."

Keywords: Digital Economy, Live Streaming, Impulsive Buying, People-Product-Place Theory, SOR Model

Introduction

In the era of the digital economy, the consumer environment has undergone fundamental changes. The rise of e-commerce has transformed consumers' traditional purchasing processes and shopping environments. Compared with traditional brick-and-mortar stores, e-commerce overcomes temporal and spatial constraints and substantially reduces consumers' information search costs through various tools and mechanisms, such as personalized search

recommendations and user feedback. These features shorten the purchasing process and improve decision-making efficiency (Xu et al., 2024). Consequently, an increasing number of researchers have focused on online impulsive buying in e-commerce environments, thereby enriching the theoretical foundations of consumer behavior research.

Among the various e-commerce models, live streaming commerce has emerged as a rapidly growing business format. Consumers' shopping experiences are no longer limited to the static product images and online reviews characteristic of traditional e-commerce but have become more diverse, interactive, and engaging. Against this backdrop, live streaming marketing has gained considerable momentum, opening up new avenues for research into impulsive buying. By creating highly interactive and immersive shopping environments, live streaming marketing facilitates the integration of streamers' personal characteristics and charisma, the multidimensional and intuitive presentation of products, and the engaging participation of audiences. This reconfiguration of People–Product–Place stimulates consumers' sensory experiences and emotional responses, thereby triggering impulsive buying (Chen et al., 2022). Live streaming environments have increasingly become prominent and active settings for consumer impulsive buying. Accordingly, reviewing and conducting an in-depth analysis of impulsive buying in live streaming marketing has become an important direction in contemporary consumer behavior research.

Although the existing literature has generated substantial insights into consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce, several gaps remain. First, existing studies have identified a wide range of influencing factors, but these factors remain fragmented across different research streams. Previous research has examined streamer characteristics, product characteristics, social interaction, promotional strategies, platform features, and live streaming environments, yet these factors are often investigated separately. As a result, a comprehensive understanding of how people-, product-, and place-related factors jointly shape consumer impulsive buying remains limited. An integrated classification of these factors is therefore needed to clarify the broader structure of the existing literature.

Additionally, the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer impulsive buying have not yet been sufficiently synthesized. Existing studies have examined a variety of cognitive, affective, social, and experiential mechanisms, including perceived value, perceived scarcity, pleasure, arousal, social presence, emotional attachment, and flow experience. However, these mechanisms are frequently examined independently rather than being systematically connected to the external stimuli that activate them. Consequently, there remains a need to clarify how live streaming-related stimuli are transformed into internal psychological states and subsequently translated into impulsive buying through a coherent explanatory framework.

Specifically, this review pursues four research objectives. First, it systematically identifies and synthesizes the major factors influencing consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce. Second, it categorizes these factors from the perspectives of streamers, products, and live streaming contexts based on the People–Product–Place framework. Third, it examines the psychological mechanisms through which live streaming-related stimuli influence consumer impulsive buying by integrating the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework with complementary theoretical perspectives. Finally, it identifies major

theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps in the existing literature and develops a future research agenda for advancing research on consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce.

Accordingly, this review addresses the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the major factors influencing consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce identified in the existing literature?

RQ2: How can the factors influencing consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce be systematically categorized from the People–Product–Place perspective?

RQ3: Through what psychological mechanisms do live streaming-related stimuli influence consumer impulsive buying, and how can these mechanisms be explained through the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework and complementary theoretical perspectives?

RQ4: What are the major theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps in the existing literature, and what directions should future research pursue?

By addressing these questions, this review contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it provides a structured synthesis of the fragmented antecedents of consumer impulsive buying by organizing them around the People–Product–Place theory. Second, it connects external live streaming stimuli with consumers' internal psychological mechanisms through the S–O–R framework while incorporating complementary theoretical perspectives, thereby providing a more integrated explanation of impulsive buying in live streaming commerce. Third, by identifying theoretical, methodological, and contextual gaps, the review develops a future research agenda that may guide subsequent empirical and theoretical research in this rapidly evolving field.

Definition of Impulsive Buying

The Concept of Impulsive Buying

Early research conceptualized impulsive buying as an unplanned purchase, generally classified as a form of unplanned purchasing behavior. Subsequent studies established that impulsive buying represents a psychologically distinct type of behavior. It refers to a consumer's sudden, strong, and persistent urge to purchase something immediately. Such an urge is more spontaneous than deliberative and often disrupts the consumer's ongoing behavioral flow. Compared with deliberative purchasing, impulsive buying is more emotional and irrational (Rook, 1987).

Impulsive buying is often accompanied by emotional responses and involves an unplanned purchase made without careful consideration, frequently giving rise to intense emotional conflict. As the conceptualization of impulsive buying has become more refined, an increasing number of researchers have focused on its influencing factors and underlying mechanisms, further enriching and advancing research in this field.

Impulsive Buying in Live streaming Marketing

In the era of the digital economy, retail formats have undergone a significant transformation, evolving from brick-and-mortar stores to e-commerce and subsequently to live streaming commerce. This transition has continuously reshaped consumers' purchasing processes and

decision-making pathways, while also substantially altering the triggering mechanisms and influencing factors of impulsive buying across different retail formats.

Research on impulsive buying in brick-and-mortar retail environments has primarily focused on physical stimuli, such as in-store product displays, store atmospherics, and sales personnel. The emergence of e-commerce gave rise to online impulsive buying, with related research focusing more on the effects of digital information, including online product presentation, personalized recommendations, and online reviews. In recent years, the rapid development of live streaming commerce, which combines the characteristics of social media, real-time interaction, and entertainment, has introduced novel shopping environments that stimulate consumers' impulsive buying (Zhang et al., 2024).

As retail shopping has evolved from offline stores to online shopping and then to live streaming commerce, impulsive buying, as a central concept in consumer behavior research, has undergone changes in both its manifestations and underlying drivers in response to evolving shopping contexts. In particular, the underlying logic of People–Product–Place has progressively shifted across these retail formats. Traditional retail was characterized by physical spatial constraints, whereas e-commerce emphasized the availability of a wide variety of products. In contrast, live streaming commerce places people at the center of the shopping experience, integrating products and the shopping environment around the streamer. This approach facilitates the establishment of trust with consumers and enhances interactive experiences (Suo, 2021).

Within the classic Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, the sources of stimuli, consumers' internal psychological mechanisms, and resulting purchasing behaviors differ across these three retail formats. In traditional retail environments, impulsive buying relies primarily on physical sensory stimuli, whereas online impulsive buying is largely facilitated by algorithms and convenience. Impulsive buying in live streaming commerce, by contrast, is characterized by social and entertainment-related attributes, resulting in increasingly diverse underlying mechanisms. Consequently, impulsive buying in live streaming commerce has gradually become a prominent research topic in consumer behavior. Building on the existing literature, this paper provides an in-depth analysis of the factors influencing consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing and further clarifies the mechanisms through which these factors operate, thereby offering insights for future research in this field.

Theoretical Basis

“People–Product–Place” Theory

As a novel marketing approach characterized by high levels of immersion and interactivity, live streaming marketing can influence consumers' cognition, emotions, and behaviors through distinctive consumption contexts, thereby promoting impulsive buying. The People–Product–Place framework, which has evolved from retail research as an analytical model (Dong & Rehman, 2025), can continuously evolve and adapt to emerging retail formats such as live streaming commerce. It provides a useful framework for examining how the three fundamental elements—people, products, and places—and their interrelationships influence impulsive buying in the context of live streaming marketing.

Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) Model

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model is one of the classic theoretical models used to examine consumer behavior and has been widely applied in live streaming marketing research. The S–O–R framework proposes that external environmental stimuli influence an individual's internal organismic states, which subsequently generate behavioral responses. In the context of live streaming marketing, Stimulus (S) primarily refers to various environmental cues within the live streaming environment, while Organism (O) represents the internal psychological states activated by these cues. Response (R) refers to consumers' resulting impulsive buying intentions or behaviors (Lin et al., 2023). By identifying different sources of stimuli and examining how they influence consumers' emotional and cognitive states before ultimately leading to impulsive buying, researchers can systematically unpack the underlying mechanisms of this complex consumer behavior.

Social Presence Theory

Given the complexity and distinctive characteristics of live streaming marketing environments, researchers have drawn on various theoretical perspectives beyond the classic S–O–R framework to examine consumer impulsive buying in greater detail. Social Presence Theory is one such perspective. Social presence refers to consumers' subjective perception of a sense of intimacy, connection, and interaction with other consumers or streamers. During live streaming sessions, interactions through live-streaming comments and other forms of real-time engagement can enhance consumers' perceptions of social presence and consequently influence their impulsive buying. In addition, social presence as a driving factor plays an important role in shaping consumers' purchase trust and compliant consumption behavior (XIE et al., 2019). Therefore, Social Presence Theory provides an important theoretical foundation for examining consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing. In addition, some studies have examined consumer purchase impulses from the perspective of Emotional Contagion Theory, focusing on how streamers' emotional expressions influence consumers' purchase impulses. From the perspective of Flow Theory, researchers have investigated how interactivity and entertainment in live streaming environments immerse consumers in the live streaming shopping experience and weaken their rational defenses, thereby promoting impulsive buying. Other studies have drawn on Persuasion Theory, particularly the Source Credibility Model, to examine how streamers' expertise and credibility enhance the persuasiveness of their recommendations and subsequently trigger consumers' impulsive buying (Lou & Yuan, 2019). These theoretical perspectives complement Social Presence Theory and the S–O–R framework, thereby further enriching the theoretical foundations for understanding consumer impulsive buying in live streaming commerce.

Factors Influencing Consumer Impulsive Buying in Live streaming Marketing*Influencing Factors from the “People–Product–Place” Perspective*

People: the driving role of streamer characteristics and consumer interaction. People represent the core element of live streaming marketing and primarily encompass streamers and consumers. First, streamers serve as a critical link between products or services and consumers by facilitating communication and interaction between the two parties. The expertise and credibility of streamers are key factors determining consumers' purchasing decisions in live streaming environments. Streamers with a high level of expertise can provide consumers with high-quality and informative product-related content through their professional knowledge and capabilities, thereby reducing perceived risk and increasing

consumers' impulsive buying intentions. Similarly, highly credible streamers can convey a sense of honesty and integrity, enabling consumers to develop trust in the streamer and consequently increasing the likelihood of impulsive buying (Tran et al., 2025).

During live streaming sessions, streamers can take advantage of the real-time interactive nature of live streaming by actively engaging with consumers through immediate responses, live connections, and other interactive practices. Such interactions can effectively enhance consumers' sense of participation. They can also maintain consumers' full immersion and sustained attention, reduce deliberative judgment, and consequently promote impulsive buying (Joo & Yang, 2023). In addition, through long-term exposure to a streamer's live streams, consumers may develop a one-sided and imagined interpersonal relationship with the streamer, known as a parasocial relationship. This emotional connection can increase consumers' trust in the streamer and their willingness to accept the products recommended by the streamer. As a result, consumers' psychological defenses may be reduced, increasing the likelihood of impulsive buying. Overall, streamer characteristics and consumer interaction play an important driving role in shaping consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing.

Product: the catalytic role of product characteristics and presentation. In live streaming marketing, Product represents the core object of the transaction. Product type, attributes, price, and methods of product presentation within the live streaming environment can all exert important influences on consumer impulsive buying. Compared with utilitarian products, hedonic products are more likely to appeal to consumers, evoke emotional responses, and enhance sensory experiences. These characteristics are also highly compatible with the entertaining and high-arousal atmosphere of live streaming environments, making hedonic products more likely to trigger impulsive buying (Zhao et al., 2025).

When a streamer's personal style is congruent with the attributes of a product—for example, when a fashion streamer recommends products that possess fashionable characteristics—the persuasiveness of the recommendation can be enhanced. This congruence can increase consumers' perceived value and consequently raise the likelihood of impulsive buying. In addition, streamers frequently employ scarcity-based marketing techniques, such as limited-time discounts and limited-quantity offers, to stimulate consumers' impulsive buying. Quantity scarcity and time scarcity created by limited-time discounts and limited-quantity promotions can generate a sense of urgency and fear of missing out. Such negative emotional states may encourage consumers to make impulsive purchases to avoid potential future regret (Yin & Yu, 2009). Therefore, when consumers attend to products during live streaming sessions, product characteristics and presentation methods can serve as important catalysts for impulsive buying.

Place: the immersive effects of live streaming contexts and technological empowerment. **Place** refers to the consumption environment or setting in which purchasing takes place. Live streaming marketing, supported by e-commerce platforms, can create distinctive consumption environments and use modern information technologies to construct highly engaging and vivid shopping contexts that attract consumers to enter live streams, watch product demonstrations, and make purchases. For example, the visual design of the live streaming environment, sound effects, and the streamer's speech rhythm can collectively

create a highly arousing and positive emotional atmosphere. Such contextual characteristics may weaken consumers' self-control, making them more likely to engage in affective consumption (Rathee & Rajain, 2019).

Real-time scrolling comments, the continuously increasing number of purchasers, and the growing number of likes following purchases can also generate a strong sense of social presence and immersion among consumers. This sense of social presence may induce consumers' conformity tendencies and lead to imitative purchasing behavior (Liu et al., 2022). Group effects may subsequently emerge, creating a wave of purchasing activity and generating implicit purchasing pressure among consumers, thereby facilitating impulsive buying.

At the same time, live streaming technologies themselves constitute an important component of Place. For example, technologies such as AR virtual makeup try-ons and VR property viewing can enhance consumers' immersive experiences. Technological empowerment reduces the psychological distance between consumers and products and enhances the overall shopping experience in live streaming environments, thereby increasing the likelihood of consumer impulsive buying.

Factors Influencing Consumer Impulsive Buying from the SOR Perspective

Independent Variables

In live streaming marketing, research on the antecedents of impulsive buying has primarily focused on streamer characteristics, social interaction, marketing stimuli, and platform-related factors. Streamer characteristics typically include expertise, credibility, and attractiveness (Guo et al., 2021). Social interaction in live streaming marketing can take various forms, including real-time comment interactions, streamers' immediate responses, and conformity effects. Marketing techniques employed by streamers, such as limited-time discounts, limited-time and limited-quantity promotions, and personalized recommendations, can stimulate consumers' impulsive buying. At the same time, different live streaming platforms may exert different influences on consumers' purchasing decisions. Promotional factors such as limited-time discounts, flash sales, and coupons, as well as platform trustworthiness and payment convenience, can affect consumers' purchasing decisions to varying degrees (Gong & Liu, 2025).

Internal Psychological Mechanisms

In the context of live streaming shopping, most studies have examined consumers' internal psychological mechanisms as mediating variables. These mechanisms primarily encompass cognitive, affective, social, and trait-related pathways. Consumers' cognitive responses generally include perceptions of product value, perceived scarcity, and perceived risk (Chen & Zhang, 2023). Affective responses are mainly reflected in pleasure, arousal, and emotional attachment. Social pathways primarily involve social presence, sense of belonging, and identification. In addition, many scholars have examined consumers' impulsive buying tendencies and self-control as individual-level traits that may influence impulsive buying behavior.

Moderating Variables

Given the complexity of live streaming marketing contexts, researchers have also considered the moderating effects of various factors during live streaming sessions, including consumer characteristics, product characteristics, and contextual factors (Iyer et al., 2020). Consumer characteristics, such as gender, age, income, and cultural background; product characteristics, such as product type, price level, and brand awareness; and contextual factors, such as motivations for watching live streams and time pressure, may moderate consumers' impulsive buying behavior.

Outcome Variables

Most researchers have treated impulsive buying as the outcome variable to establish a complete S–O–R framework. Some studies, however, have extended their focus to the consequences of impulsive buying, including positive outcomes such as increased customer loyalty and negative outcomes such as post-purchase regret (Luo et al., 2021). These perspectives have further enriched the understanding of consumer impulsive buying in the context of live streaming marketing.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions

Conclusions

This paper reviews the existing literature on consumer impulsive buying and examines the theoretical perspectives applied to consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing. It further systematically analyzes and synthesizes the factors influencing consumer impulsive buying from the perspectives of the People–Product–Place framework and the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework. The review reveals that most existing studies on consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing are grounded in the S–O–R framework, with particular attention given to the internal psychological mechanisms underlying consumers' impulsive buying. Other theoretical perspectives, such as Social Presence Theory, have been incorporated as complementary perspectives, further enriching the theoretical understanding of impulsive buying in live streaming environments.

Second, from the perspective of the People–Product–Place framework, existing research highlights streamers, products, and contextual atmospheres as three core elements. To effectively stimulate consumers' impulsive buying intentions and improve sales performance in live streaming marketing, businesses need to capitalize on streamer characteristics, identify consumer needs and provide targeted product recommendations, and create engaging and immersive shopping environments.

Finally, within the S–O–R framework, existing studies have systematically examined the antecedent variables, mediating variables, and moderating variables involved in the mechanisms underlying consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing. Some studies have further extended their analysis to the consequences of impulsive buying, thereby broadening the scope of outcome variables and providing a more comprehensive understanding of consumer impulsive buying in live streaming environments.

Managerial Implications

Leveraging streamer characteristics. To attract and retain consumer attention, businesses should make full use of streamers' individual characteristics in live streaming marketing by

highlighting their expertise, credibility, and attractiveness. Streamers can use industry-specific terminology to establish a sense of authority and enhance the professionalism of their knowledge communication. User testimonials, including positive purchasing feedback displayed through on-screen interactions and live comments, can be used to strengthen credibility. In addition, personalized and humanized interactions can create a sense of intimacy and enhance streamer attractiveness.

Improving the quality of product information. Providing product information that is professional, useful, and vivid can enhance consumers' perceived quality of product information and thereby facilitate impulsive buying. When introducing products, streamers can enhance the professionalism of product information by emphasizing quality assurance and after-sales services and by inviting industry experts or public figures to provide recommendations. The usefulness of product information can be improved through comprehensive demonstrations of product details and functions using on-screen interactions. In addition, storytelling and emotionally engaging communication can strengthen consumers' emotional resonance with products and enhance the vividness of product information.

Creating immersive shopping experiences. Consumers may develop a strong sense of immersion while watching live streams. Therefore, creating multidimensional and immersive shopping experiences is also important for facilitating impulsive buying and improving sales performance. Technologies such as augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) can be used to enhance consumers' sense of presence during the shopping experience. Businesses can also take full advantage of the interactive nature of live streaming by incorporating diverse communication mechanisms, such as live comments, direct voice or video connections, and virtual gifting, to enhance consumers' overall shopping experience.

Future Research Directions

Although substantial research has been conducted on consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing, several limitations remain. First, existing studies have predominantly relied on the S-O-R framework to examine impulsive buying, which may constrain the theoretical perspectives used to explain its underlying mechanisms and limit the breadth and depth of theoretical understanding. Moreover, much of the existing theoretical innovation has focused on introducing additional antecedent or moderating variables, while the dominant research paradigm remains largely quantitative. Qualitative research and experimental approaches have received comparatively limited attention. Finally, as this paper primarily adopts a literature review approach, it does not incorporate original case studies or empirical data analysis, which may limit the depth of empirical validation.

Future research could introduce new variables and integrate or explore additional theoretical perspectives to expand the understanding of consumer impulsive buying in live streaming marketing. For example, drawing on Source Characteristics Theory, researchers could further examine streamer characteristics by investigating the effects of additional attributes, such as streamer entertainment and interactivity, on consumer impulsive buying. Future studies could also focus on the effects of social presence, examining how factors such as platform sociality, live-comment activity, and streamer responsiveness influence consumer impulsive buying.

In addition, future research could move beyond conventional approaches to examining isolated influencing mechanisms and employ qualitative methods to investigate the interactions among different influencing factors. Such research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex causal relationships between antecedent variables and outcome variables. Finally, future studies should incorporate case evidence or empirical data to further test theoretical propositions and hypotheses. Experimental methods, as well as innovative approaches such as neurophysiological methods, could also be employed to provide a more comprehensive examination of the mechanisms underlying consumer impulsive buying in live streaming environments.

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