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Research on the Influence of Anchors' Characteristics on Consumers' Impulse Buying from the Perspective of Emotional Contagion

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1. INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In recent years, due to its real-time interaction and immersive entertainment, e-commerce live broadcasting has been rapidly promoted in the Internet consumer market, which market size is expected to exceed 26 billion yuan in 2025 ^[1]. With the rapid growth of the scale of e-commerce live broadcasting, a large number of people swarm into this industry, the types of anchors become more diversified, consumers' attention is more dispersed, and the characteristics of anchors gradually become an important factor affecting consumers' shopping decisions ^[2]. Therefore, e-commerce anchors and e-commerce enterprises have explored strategies to strengthen the characteristics of e-commerce anchors in order to stimulate their desire to buy to the maximum extent. At the same time, the increasingly diversified consumer psychology also put forward more requirements for anchors. Therefore, it is necessary to further study the subdivision of the characteristics of e-commerce anchors.

Compared with traditional e-commerce, e-commerce live streaming has more impulsive consumption. Impulse buying refers to an individual's immediate purchase response after perceiving strong external stimuli without the prior purchase intention to buy a certain or a certain type of product ^[3]. According to a survey conducted by China Consumers Association, 44.1% of consumers believe that they have made impulse buying in live streaming shopping ^[4]. But at present, few scholars have analyzed the influence of anchor characteristics on consumers' impulse buying behavior. Most studies on anchor characteristics focus on the analysis of purchase intention or behavior, while those on impulse buying behavior are more focused on the overall stimulus of broadcast room ^[5]. In addition, some scholars have found that audience behavior in broadcast room can also significantly affect consumer perception, resulting in a herd effect. In fact, other viewers can not only play part of the role of anchors, but also influence consumers' judgment on the ability and quality of anchors through group evaluation. But the number of viewers may have a regulating effect on the stimulation of anchors' characteristics on consumers, but now there is little discussion on this point.

Therefore, this study will conduct a more micro-level analysis of the relationship between anchors' characteristics and consumers' impulse buying behavior. Our research questions are as follows: (1) which characteristics of anchors will stimulate the generation of consumer attitudes and purchasing decisions? (2) And whether audience activity in the broadcast room has any effect on these effects?

2. THEORY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

Based on the Stimuli-Organism-Response (SOR) model and the emotional contagion theory, the hypotheses and research framework are proposed herein (Figure 1).

The data set is derived from 327 effective results of questionnaires aimed at Chinese e-commerce live streaming consumers. In this study, SEM method was adopted for hypothesis testing and path analysis.

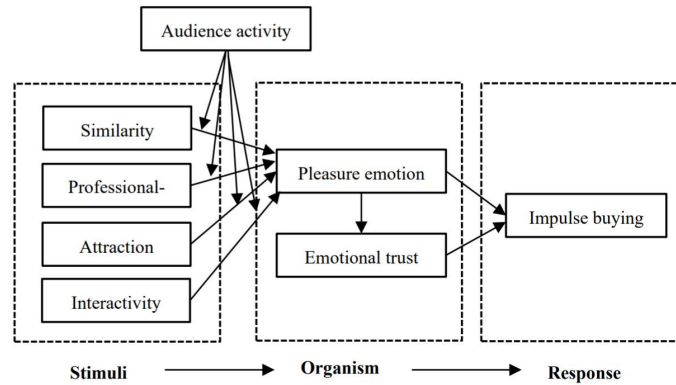


Figure 1. Study model

3. RESULTS AND MAJOR FINDINGS

This study observed some valuable and interesting findings: (1) The similarity, professionalism, attraction and interactivity have a significant positive impact on pleasure emotion, thus stimulating consumers' impulse buying behavior. Among them, attraction is the greatest influence on pleasure emotion, followed by similarity. (2) Pleasure emotion plays a significant role in mediating similarity, attraction, professionalism and impulse buying behavior. (3) audience activity negatively moderates the relationship between anchor attraction, similarity and pleasure emotion, while the moderating effect on anchor's professionalism and interactivity is not significant. In the broadcast room with high audience activity, consumers are less influenced by the similarity and attraction of anchor. Obviously, bullet screen is used to conduct frequent real-time interaction among consumers. Which will distract consumers' attention from e-commerce anchor and replace part of the attractiveness and similarity of anchors to meet consumers' demand for interest and resonance when watching live broadcasts. Therefore, anchors should pay attention to the guidance of the audience discussion of bullet screen.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS

Our research not only enriches the research on the relationship between anchors' characteristics and consumers' impulse buying behavior, but also emphasizes the moderating role of the audience activity, and promotes the theoretical exploration of emotional contagion. From a management perspective, anchors not only need to further improve their work skills, but also need to build more attractive live broadcast room according to their own characteristics to attract the attention of consumers and stimulate them to buy products, which is particularly important for the live broadcast rooms with low audience activity. In addition, we only analyzed the questionnaire data, and the empirical results may be limited.

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