

CHINA BROADCASTER'S SOCIAL PRESENCE AND AD CONTENT PERSUASIVENESS: MEDIATION ROLE OF AROUSAL AND EMOTION

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Abstract: *This research explores the intricate dynamics between broadcasters' social presence and the persuasiveness of advertising content in driving impulsive purchasing behavior within China's live-streaming industry. By applying the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) and Emotional Response Theory, this study investigates how cognitive and emotional processes mediate the relationship between persuasive advertising and consumer behavior. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews to provide a comprehensive understanding of the factors that contribute to impulsive purchases in the live-streaming environment. Focusing on key urban centers like Beijing and Shanghai, the findings highlight the critical role of social presence, product relevance, and promotional offers in shaping consumer decisions, with arousal and emotion serving as significant mediating factors. The results contribute to the theoretical understanding of consumer behavior in digital contexts and offer practical insights for marketers and advertisers operating in the rapidly evolving Chinese digital landscape.*

Keywords: *Broadcaster's Social Presence, Ad Content Persuasiveness, Impulsive Purchasing Behaviour, Arousal, Emotion*

Introduction

Over the last several years, there has been a significant shift in consumer behaviour in the global digital environment, characterised by the quick and widespread adoption of live-streaming platforms (Mai, 2022). The live-stream sector in China has seen a significant shift, emerging as a powerful and important entity within the digital ecosystem. Live streaming has transformed from a simple means of entertainment into a potent marketing and e-commerce platform, enabling real-time content production and engagement. In this changing environment, the influence of suggestive advertising on impulsive buying behaviour has become a crucial area of study, offering valuable insights into the complexities of consumer decision-making in the Chinese live-streaming market.

The appeal of live streaming stems from its ability to captivate consumers in a dynamic and participatory manner (Mai, 2022). Viewers do not just watch material passively; they actively engage by leaving comments, like and sharing, and giving virtual gifts, so creating a feeling of community and connection. Within this particular framework, broadcasters possess substantial authority as they carefully choose and present material, promote goods, and direct audience engagement. The persuasive power of suggestive advertising in live streaming has attracted significant interest as it treads the delicate balance between informative engagement and impulsive customer behaviour.

This research utilises well-established academic theories, namely the Elaboration Likelihood Model and Emotional Response Theory, to understand the occurrence of suggestive advertising and impulsive purchase behaviour in the China live-stream business (Mai, 2022). These theoretical frameworks provide a perspective for analysing the cognitive and emotional processes that influence impulsive purchase choices. The ELM theory explains the two cognitive processing pathways, central and peripheral, that viewers follow while assessing persuasive communications. On the other hand, Emotional Response Theory emphasises the significant influence of emotions on consumer behaviour.

This research adopted a mixed-methods strategy, which included the combination of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews as a special element (Mai, 2022). The quantitative aspect included the use of standardised questionnaires sent to a varied sample of participants in Beijing and Shanghai, which are China's two most advanced cities. The surveys collected quantitative data on important aspects, such as the social presence of broadcasters, the persuasiveness of advertising material, the relevancy of products, the effectiveness of promotional officers, audience engagement, and impulsive purchasing behaviour. The qualitative component involves conducting in-depth interviews with industry experts, consumers, broadcasters, and marketers to explore the intricate experiences and perspectives related to suggestive commercials and impulsive purchases.

This research seeks to get a full understanding of how suggestive advertising impacts impulsive purchase behaviour in the dynamic digital environment of live-streaming by combining quantitative findings with qualitative narratives (Mai, 2022). By concentrating on Beijing and Shanghai as study sites, we can take into account regional disparities in live-streaming practices and consumer behaviour.

Background of Study

Live streaming has become a significant and powerful phenomena in digital communication and entertainment, with an especially strong presence in China (Hou et al., 2020). This research examines the complex and diverse world of live streaming in China, investigating its impact on marketing and consumer behaviour. It specifically focuses on impulsive buying triggered by persuasive advertising during live broadcasts.

Live streaming in China has seen remarkable expansion in recent years, transitioning from a specialised online activity to a prominent presence in the digital economy (Hou et al., 2020). The live-streaming sector in China is flourishing, providing a dynamic platform for broadcasters or streamers to engage with their followers in real-time via video broadcasts. These broadcasts cover a wide range of subjects, such as gaming, fashion, beauty, lifestyle, and e-commerce, offering content producers and consumers a diversified and captivating platform.

The distinctive allure of live streaming in China is in its participatory character and the perception of instantaneity it provides. Viewers have the opportunity to engage in debates, pose inquiries, and get immediate feedback from presenters, so promoting a feeling of community and interconnectedness (Hou et al., 2020). The combination of this interactive nature and the influential power of advertising has facilitated the incorporation of suggestive advertising tactics into live feeds.

A notable characteristic of live-streaming in China is the prevalence of charismatic and socially interactive presenters (Hou et al., 2020). These broadcasters exhibit different levels of social presence, including their capacity to build a connection with their listeners, display genuineness, and evoke emotional reactions. The level of social presence during live streaming plays a crucial role in determining the success of broadcasters, since it directly impacts viewers' engagement, trust, and loyalty.

In this context, marketers have acknowledged the potential of live-streaming as an influential marketing tool (Hou et al., 2020). Live-stream programming has increasingly embraced suggestive advertising, which employs persuasive tactics to tempt viewers into making hasty purchasing choices. Advertisers intentionally partner with broadcasters to seamlessly include product placements, endorsements, and promotional offers, taking use of broadcasters' social impact to shape consumer behaviour. This research focuses on the mediating factors of arousal and emotion, which play a crucial role in capturing the underlying psychological processes that lead to impulsive purchases as a result of suggestive advertising inside live broadcasts. Arousal refers to the increased vigilance and stimulation caused by persuasive material, whereas emotion comprises a range of sensations, including longing, anticipation, enthusiasm, and contentment. Consumer choices and behaviours may be greatly influenced by emotional reactions, which may result in impulsive purchases.

The live-streaming industry in China is a constantly changing and vibrant environment, where the interaction between captivating broadcasters, advertising-like content, emotional stimulation, and impulsive buying behaviour provides an excellent opportunity for study (Hou et al., 2020). This research seeks to elucidate the complex interconnections among these factors, so enhancing our comprehension of consumer behaviour dynamics in the context of live-streamed content in China's digital age.

Problem Statement

Initially, the difficulty pertains to the constantly changing characteristics of live-streaming platforms in China (Wang et al., 2022). These platforms exhibit dynamic algorithms, new trends, and evolving user preferences. Effectively deploying suggestive advertising campaigns is a significant challenge for marketers as they navigate this always changing landscape. Consequently, there is a pressing want for research that clarifies the workings of this environment and offers insights into how advertising may adjust their plans to stay relevant and influential.

Furthermore, the efficacy of suggestive advertising relies on the level of social presence shown by the broadcaster, which is a subjective variable influenced by several characteristics such as charisma, genuineness, and audience rapport (Wang et al., 2022). Decoding the methods to recognise, interact with, and use the influence of charismatic broadcasters to encourage spontaneous purchases poses a daunting task. Marketers and marketers must navigate the complexities of broadcaster-audience interactions and the illusive quality of social presence.

Moreover, the incorporation of compelling information into live streaming requires a sophisticated comprehension of audience involvement (Wang et al., 2022). Viewers may actively engage, inquire, and promptly provide comments due to the interactive aspect of live broadcasting. Nevertheless, unravelling the intricate connection between engagement and intrusion is a substantial obstacle. Ensuring an optimal equilibrium is crucial, as an excessive level of intrusion might result in viewer resistance or negative reactions, so compromising the efficacy of suggestive advertising.

An essential difficulty is identifying the mediating factors that influence arousal and emotion (Wang et al., 2022). While the goal of suggestive advertising is to create strong emotions and anticipation that encourage impulsive purchases, it is challenging to achieve this delicate equilibrium. The difficulty is two-pronged: marketers must assess the magnitude of emotional reactions while taking into account the unique emotional states of viewers. Furthermore, the act of gathering and quantifying these reactions in real-time within the context of live broadcasting adds an additional level of intricacy.

Research Objectives & Research Questions

- RO 1:** To examine the impact of broadcasters' social presence on impulsive purchasing behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 2:** To determine the impact of the persuasiveness of advertising content on impulsive purchasing behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 3:** To identify the impact of product relevance on impulsive purchasing behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 4:** To examine the impact of promotional offers on impulsive purchasing behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 5:** To determine how viewer engagement on impulsive purchasing behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 6:** To identify the impact of arousal as a mediating factor in the relationship between broadcasters' social presence, persuasiveness of advertising, product relevance, promotional offers, viewer engagement and impulsive purchase behaviour in China live-streams industry
- RO 7:** To examine the impact of emotion as a mediating factor in the relationship between broadcasters' social presence, persuasiveness of advertising, product relevance,

promotional offers, viewer engagement and impulsive purchase behaviour in China live-streams industry

- RQ 1:** What is the impact of broadcasters' social presence on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 2:** What is the impact of the persuasiveness of advertising content on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 3:** What is the impact of product relevance on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 4:** What is the impact of promotional offers on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 5:** What is the impact of viewer engagement on impulsive purchasing behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 6:** What is the impact of arousal as a mediating factor in the relationship between broadcasters' social presence, persuasiveness of advertising content, product relevance, promotional offers, viewer engagement, and impulsive purchase behaviour in the China live-streams industry?
- RQ 7:** What is the impact of emotion as a mediating factor in the relationship between broadcasters' social presence, persuasiveness of advertising content, product relevance, promotional offers, viewer engagement, and impulsive purchase behaviour in the China live-streams industry?

Significance of Study

Theoretical Significance:

In theory, this work makes a substantial contribution to the current knowledge base in several ways (Vom Brocke et al., 2020). Initially, it enhances our comprehension of customer behaviour within the China live-stream business, a vibrant and developing digital landscape. This research examines the complex connections between broadcasters' social presence, the persuasiveness of advertising material, the relevancy of products, promotional offers, audience engagement, arousal, emotion, and impulsive purchase behaviour. This research presents a sophisticated framework that enhances existing ideas on consumer behaviour by clarifying these relationships.

The research has significant management implications that extend to marketers, advertisers, and live-streaming platforms in the Chinese live-stream business (Ma, 2021). Marketers may use research information to create advertising strategies that are more successful and smart. To increase customer involvement and stimulate spontaneous buying, they may synchronise message, product placement, and promotional offers with viewer preferences and habits. Advertisers may use the discoveries to develop more influential advertising material customised for the live-streaming setting. Comprehending the significance of social presence, audience engagement, and emotional reactions empowers advertisers to enhance their tactics for advertising in order to achieve maximum effect and return on investment. Applying the findings from research may improve the viewing experience on live-streaming platforms. They have the ability to create functionalities and resources that are in line with the preferences of viewers, so promoting a more engaging and gratifying atmosphere. Furthermore, via the development of a more knowledgeable strategy towards incorporating advertising, platforms may maintain viewer confidence, resulting in heightened user retention and long-lasting viability.

The study's policy implications are related to the ethical and regulatory aspects of the digital marketing field (Mogaji et al., 2020). Considering the possible influence of suggestive advertising on impulsive purchasing behaviour, politicians and industry regulators may feel compelled to scrutinise current standards and restrictions. They may prioritise guaranteeing openness, safeguarding consumer welfare, and upholding authenticity in advertising to shield customers from deceitful strategies. Moreover, comprehending the intricacies of impulsive buying might have an impact on policy choices for safeguarding consumers, setting rules for internet advertising, and preventing deceptive tactics. This research has the potential to serve as a basis for the development of responsible advertising regulations and self-regulation within the sector.

Literature Review

The widespread use of live streaming in China has introduced a digital age marked by immediate engagement, amusement, and integration with online commerce (Si, 2021). This literature study explores the changing environment of live-streaming in China, with a specific emphasis on its importance in the wider field of digital marketing. The review specifically examines the theoretical basis and empirical evidence that support the study's inquiry into the influence of suggestive advertising on impulsive buying behaviour in the Chinese live-streaming business.

In China, live streaming has emerged as a significant cultural and commercial phenomena, attracting a vast number of viewers who actively participate in a wide range of material available on various platforms (Si, 2021). The fast expansion of China's digital infrastructure, along with its technologically proficient population and the need for immediate engagement, are the key reasons contributing to its rapid rise. The live-stream business has emerged as a very profitable field, where individuals known as broadcasters or streamers build and nurture fan networks, and generate revenue by leveraging their influence via advertising, virtual gifts, and e-commerce collaborations (Loang, 2023). The study of consumer behaviour in live streaming has garnered considerable attention due to its deviation from conventional online purchase practices. During live streaming, viewers do not just watch passively; instead, they actively engage in debates, provide comments, and establish social relationships. The interactive dynamics have fundamentally changed how consumers engage, making it crucial to comprehend how viewers react to suggestive advertising in this setting.

In the live-stream sector in China, the social presence of broadcasters is a significant independent variable (Si, 2021). This notion refers to a broadcaster's ability to create and maintain emotional ties and relationships with their audience. Broadcasters that have a strong social media presence have the ability to create trust, establish credibility, and encourage audience participation (Loang and Ahmad, 2024). By fostering a devoted following, broadcasters enhance the impact of their endorsements and product suggestions. The broadcaster's authenticity and relatability to viewers may have a substantial impact on impulsive purchase activity, since viewers see them in such a manner.

The effectiveness of advertising material in live streaming is a crucial independent variable that is the main focus of this research (Si, 2021). It evaluates the efficacy of advertising messages in convincing viewers to engage in certain activities, such as impulsive purchases. The language, graphics, tone, and calls to action used in advertising material are essential elements of this variable. Compelling advertising has the ability to elicit emotional reactions and increased excitement, which are both linked to impulsive purchasing choices.

Product relevance is a crucial independent factor in the realm of live-streamed advertising (Si, 2021). It explores the correlation between the promoted product or service and the content of the live broadcast. An analysis was conducted to assess the extent to which the advertised product aligns with the broadcaster's specific target audience, knowledge, and the context of their live-streaming activities. Products that are closely aligned with live-stream content and viewers' interests have a greater chance of attracting viewers' attention and influencing their impulsive purchasing behaviour.

The inclusion of promotional offers, exclusive deals, discounts, or time-limited promotions during live streaming is a notable independent factor (Si, 2021). This research evaluates the impact of various incentives and offers on viewers' impulsive purchasing choices. The allure and convenience of such ads may generate a feeling of immediacy and longing, prompting viewers to act on impulse. This variable recognises the influential impact of incentives in motivating customer behaviour.

Viewer engagement is a crucial factor that quantifies the extent to which viewers interact and actively participate in live streaming (Lin et al., 2021). This variable encompasses measures such as viewing count, user comments, likes, shares, virtual gifts, and viewer engagement time. Elevated levels of viewer engagement indicate a responsive and engaged audience that is more inclined to react to suggestive advertising prompts. Viewer engagement is a measure of how likely the audience is to be receptive to impulsive purchase proposals.

Arousal plays a crucial role as a mediator in the connection between independent factors and impulsive buying behaviour (Iyer et al., 2020). This refers to the increased physiological and psychological arousal caused by provocative advertising in live streaming. Exposure to compelling information elicits heightened enthusiasm, attention, and physiological reactions, including a raised heart rate, among viewers. Arousal acts as a route via which the persuasive effect of independent variables, such as the persuasiveness of advertisement material, is transmitted to affect impulsive purchase behaviour. This emphasises the significance of emotional arousal as a preliminary factor in impulsive decision-making.

Emotion serves as a key intermediary factor that encompasses various sentiments and emotional reactions triggered by persuasive advertisements in real-time broadcasts (Iyer et al., 2020). These emotional reactions include desire, anticipation, satisfaction, excitement, and several other sensations. Emotion serves as a mediator in the relationship between independent factors (such as social presence, product relevance, and promotional offers) and impulsive purchasing behaviour. Viewers' emotional experiences have a considerable impact on their purchasing choices, since intense emotional states may lead to impulsive behaviour. Thus, emotions play a crucial role in directing the influence of the independent factors on impulsive purchase behaviours.

Underpinning Theory

Elaboration Likelihood Model:

The Elaboration Likelihood Model, developed by Petty and Cacioppo in the 1980s, offers a robust theoretical framework for comprehending the persuasive mechanisms in the context of suggestive advertising within the China live-stream industry (Phung et al., 2023). ELM posits that individuals engage in one of two distinct cognitive processing routes when exposed to

persuasive messages: central and peripheral routes. These routes represent various levels of cognitive elaboration and systematic processing.

In live-streamed advertising, the central route corresponds to deep systematic processing (Gao et al., 2021). Viewers in this route critically evaluate content and its relevance to their needs and desires. Independent variables such as the persuasiveness of advertising content and product relevance align with the central route as they directly impact viewers' cognitive elaboration and systematic evaluation. For instance, highly persuasive advertising content may prompt viewers to engage in the central route, leading to a thoughtful and rational assessment of the advertised product or service.

Conversely, the peripheral route involves shallow heuristic processing, where viewers rely on peripheral cues and heuristics to form judgments (Gao et al., 2021). Variables such as broadcasters' social presence, promotional offers, and viewer engagement can trigger peripheral route processing because viewers may be influenced by peripheral cues such as broadcaster-likeability or the presence of incentives. For instance, a charismatic broadcaster may invoke peripheral route processing, potentially triggering impulsive purchases based on heuristic and emotional reactions.

Within the context of this study, ELM provides a nuanced understanding of how different variables in a live-streaming environment may operate through these two processing routes to influence impulsive purchasing behaviour (Gao et al., 2021). Viewers may adopt varying degrees of cognitive elaboration based on the interplay of these independent variables. Consequently, the model enriches the research's comprehension of the cognitive and persuasive processes that underlie consumer behaviour in the China live-stream industry.

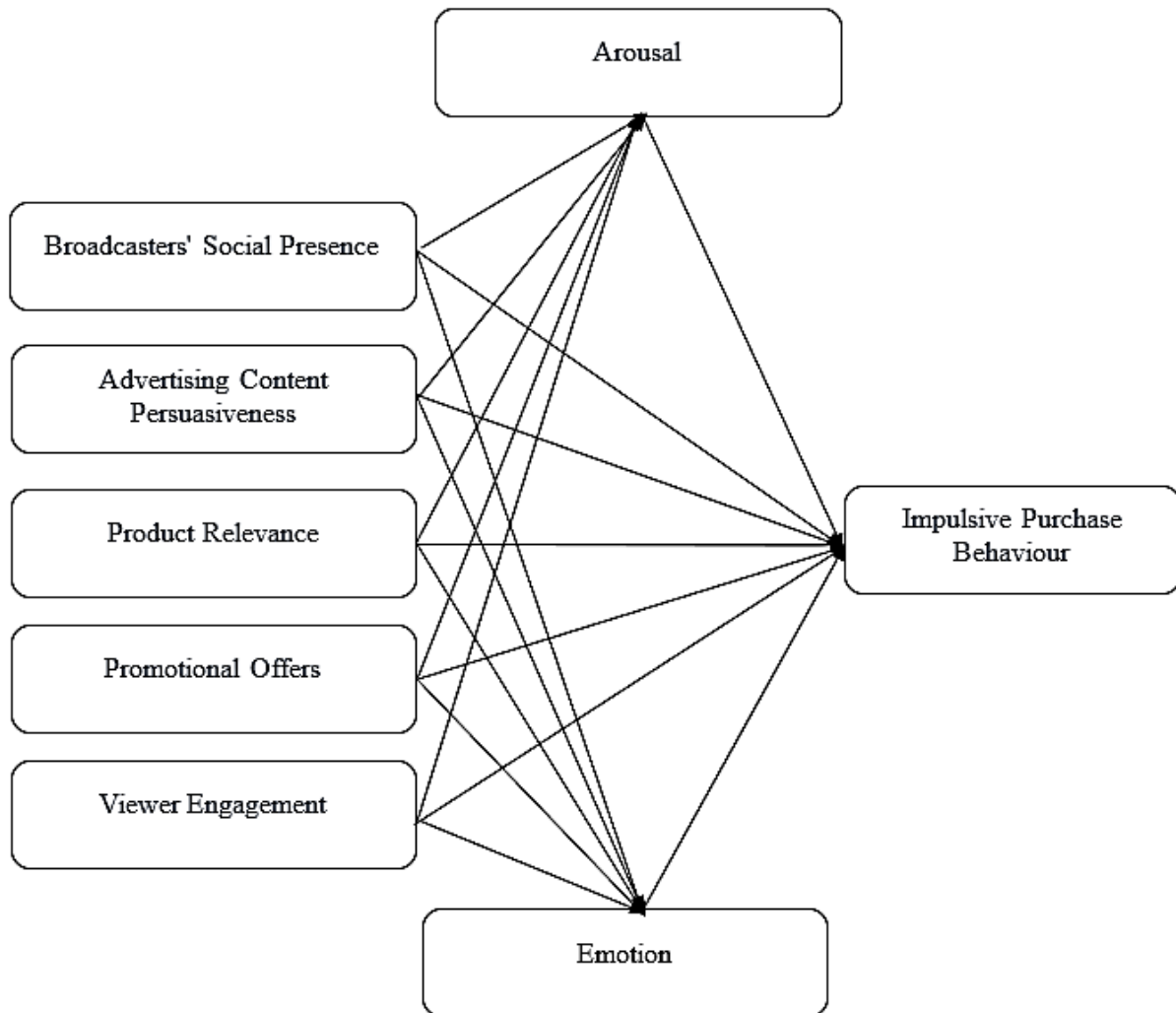
Emotional Response Theory:

Emotional Response Theory is a fundamental aspect of psychology and consumer behaviour research (Tanrikulu, 2021). It is crucial in examining how emotions mediate the connection between independent variables and impulsive purchase behaviour in the China live-stream industry. This idea argues that emotions are not only subjective perceptions but are influential catalysts for human behaviour (Suresh & Loang, 2024). Viewers may experience a variety of emotional reactions, including desire, excitement, anticipation, and fulfilment, when they are exposed to advertising material that suggests certain things. These emotional reactions are crucial for comprehending the reasons behind viewers' impulsive buying behaviour during or after live streaming.

For example, a promotional offer shown in a live broadcast might elicit emotions of anticipation and desire, motivating viewers to make spontaneous purchasing choices (Syci, 2021). The Emotional Response Theory presents a conceptual framework to investigate how several independent factors, such as social presence, product relevance, and promotional offers, elicit and moderate emotional responses that later impact impulsive buying behaviour (Dong & Loang, 2023). This research recognises the significant influence of emotions on customer behaviour and offers a complete understanding of the emotional processes at play in the China live-stream market by adding Emotional Response Theory. This highlights the notion that emotions are not peripheral but fundamental to the investigation of impulsive buying behaviour in this dynamic digital environment, enhancing the comprehension of consumer behaviour. This theoretical framework emphasises the emotional foundations of impulsive purchasing choices,

providing insight into the complexities of customer reactions to persuasive advertisements in live-streamed material.

Conceptual Framework



Hypothesis Development

Hypotheses Relating to Independent Variables (IVs) and Dependent Variable (DV):

Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a positive relationship between Broadcasters' Social Presence and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a positive relationship between Advertising Content Persuasiveness and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): There is a positive relationship between Product Relevance and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): There is a positive relationship between Promotional Offers and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Hypothesis 5 (H5): There is a positive relationship between Viewer Engagement and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Mediating Hypotheses:

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Arousal mediates the relationship between Broadcasters' Social Presence, Advertising Content Persuasiveness, Product Relevance, Promotional Offers, Viewer Engagement, and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Hypothesis 7 (H7): Emotion mediates the relationship between Broadcasters' Social Presence, Advertising Content Persuasiveness, Product Relevance, Promotional Offers, Viewer Engagement, and Impulsive Purchase Behaviour in the China live-streams industry.

Methodology



Research Design:

Cross-Sectional Descriptive Study: The research design for this study is cross-sectional and descriptive. It seeks to capture a snapshot of the current state of the Chinese live-streams industry in the two major cities, Beijing and Shanghai. This design allows for examining variables of interest, such as suggestive advertising and impulsive purchasing behaviour, within a specific time frame.

Sampling:

Stratified Random Sampling: Given the regional focus on Beijing and Shanghai, a stratified random sampling approach will be employed (Li et al., 2022). These two cities represent distinct geographical, cultural, and economic contexts within China. Within each city, strata are defined based on key demographics such as age, gender, and income levels. This stratification ensured that the sample was representative of a diverse population of live-stream viewers and participants in these urban areas.

Data Collection Methods:

Quantitative data will be gathered by distributing structured questionnaires to a substantial number of individuals living in Beijing and Shanghai (Kong et al., 2021). The questionnaires were specifically crafted to gather data on the independent factors, mediating variables, and dependent variables specified in the research. The use of close-ended questions, Likert-scale items, and multiple-choice questions enabled the methodical collecting of data. Utilising standardised measurements and scales guarantees the ability to compare and rely on the results. In-depth semi-structured interviews will be conducted with industry experts, consumers, broadcasters, and marketers who are based in Beijing and Shanghai to collect qualitative data (Kong et al., 2021). These interviews provide a chance to delve into the intricate experiences and perspectives associated with suggestive advertising and impulsive buying behaviour in the specific settings of these two prominent cities. Participants were invited to contribute their perspectives and ideas via the use of open-ended questions.

Conclusion

Conclusively, this research has thoroughly investigated the influence of suggestive advertising on impulsive buying behaviour in the ever-changing China live-stream market, with a specific emphasis on the cities of Beijing and Shanghai (Del Mastio, 2021). The study results and insights elucidate the complex interaction of factors that influence consumer behaviour in the digital environment, offering useful contributions to both academia and business. The Elaboration Likelihood Model and Emotional Response Theory were used as fundamental frameworks to guide the study of the cognitive and emotional processes that underlie impulsive purchase choices. A comprehensive comprehension of the phenomena was attained by using a mixed-methods approach that included quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

Quantitative analysis revealed significant relationships between independent variables: broadcasters' social presence, advertising content persuasiveness, product relevance, promotional officers, viewer engagement, and impulsive purchase behaviour (Ming et al., 2021). The results emphasise the influential impact of suggestive advertising and the significance of cognitive elaboration in the decision-making process of viewers. The interviews provided qualitative insights that enhanced our understanding by emphasising the significant influence of emotional reactions, such as desire, anticipation, and gratification, in mediating the connection between independent factors and impulsive purchase behaviour. The participants' tales shed light on the intricate details of the live-stream sector in Beijing and Shanghai, offering a qualitative perspective that complements the quantitative results.

Within the dynamic realm of digital marketing and e-commerce, the discoveries of this research provide practical insights for advertisers, broadcasters, and platform operators seeking to use the possibilities of suggestive advertising (Angeloni & Rossi, 2021). Strategies that increase Social Presence may greatly influence impulsive purchase behaviour by maximising the persuasiveness of advertising content, ensuring the relevance of the product, successfully using promotional officers, and fostering viewer engagement.

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