

Anchor Characteristics and Online Purchase Intention : A Study Based on SOR Framework

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Abstract: With the rapid development of China's e-commerce industry, live e-commerce has become an important driving force for online consumption. The live streaming industry has attracted the attention of the industry and even young people awaiting employment. Based on the situation of live broadcast e-commerce, this study crawls 100 data from TikTok live broadcast platform, combining SOR model and social presence theory, discussing the influencing mechanism of anchor characteristics on consumers' purchase intention, and constructs a theoretical model. The results show that the professionalism, attractiveness and the fan stickiness of the anchor can positively promote the social presence of consumers in the process of live broadcasting. Social presence will positively affect consumers' purchase intention. This study has certain theoretical and practical significance. It not only makes up for the stickiness of fans in the existing research gap, but also uses new data acquisition methods ; at the same time, it provides targeted opinions for anchors, merchants and platforms, which is beneficial to improve the operational effectiveness and promote the vigorous development of the live broadcast e-commerce industry.

Keywords: e-commerce live broadcast, anchor characteristics, social presence, consumer purchase intention

1. Introduction

China's live streaming e-commerce industry has flourished in recent years, continuously fueling growth in online retail and driving the overall consumer market. According to the *High-quality Development Report of Live E-commerce Industry (2022-2023)* [1].released in 2024, the penetration rate of live e-commerce industry has reached 37.8 %, with its user scale accounts for 54.7 % of the total netizens, which has gradually become the mainstream consumption mode. Tik Tok's live e-commerce has opened up the "VALUE" business methodology, through the viewer retention rate (Volume), interaction rate (Activated), follower growth (Linked), product selection optimization (Upgrade), start-up time (Engaged) to achieve refined operations. At the same time, Tik Tok selected "Person of the Year" through online number, sales, new fans, and likes. According to the *China Network Performance (Live and Short Video) Industry Development Report (2023-2024)* [2], China's current anchor account has exceeded 180 million, but more than 90 % of the anchor's annual income is less than 5000. The anchor industry has a low threshold and a large income gap. The flow dividend and the trend of the times attract more and more young people and even middle-aged and elderly groups to join the anchor industry, but the live broadcast effect is inseparable from

the anchor business ability and personal charm. Therefore, in order to promote the healthy development of the live broadcast e-commerce industry, it is of great significance to clarify the internal logic of the anchor's characteristics for consumers' purchase intention.

The academic community has a certain foundation for the research on the antecedents of the purchase intention of live e-commerce, mainly focusing on product characteristics [3,4,5], platform factors [6], barrage characteristics [7,8], live broadcast atmosphere [9], consumer perception [10,11,12], and anchor characteristics. In terms of the characteristics of the anchor, the existing research shows that the professionalism [13,14,15], entertainment [16,17] and responsiveness [15,17,18] of the anchor will have an impact on consumers' online purchase intention. In the consumption situation of live e-commerce of agricultural products, He Helin [14] found that interactivity, professionalism and attraction will make consumers have a stronger sense of social presence and improve the purchase of agricultural products. Zhang Dan and Chen Qiuyan [19] believe that popularity, personal image, professionalism, interactivity and empathy will positively affect consumer cognition and consumer emotion, and ultimately enhance purchase intention. Although the existing research is rich, the attention to anchor stickiness is very limited. Anchor stickiness represents the ability of the anchor to transform fans into customers, which is one of the important characteristics of the anchor to drive traffic. When Xu Xin and Yang Yan [20] investigated the impact of social presence on purchase intention, they found that anchor stickiness played a mediating role. On the whole, it is necessary to discuss the influence of anchor stickiness on the purchase intention of live broadcast e-commerce. In addition, in terms of research methods, more than 90 % of the studies chose the questionnaire survey. For example, Yu Shanshan and Sun Minggui [21] collected data by issuing questionnaires to prove that the professionalism, interaction, popularity and word-of-mouth value of the anchor will positively affect consumers' purchase intention by positively affecting happy emotions and evoking emotions. However, the questionnaire is greatly affected by the sampling method, and the second-hand data obtained by data crawling can more objectively analyze the impact of these characteristics on purchase intention.

SOR theory and social presence are used by most studies in the discussion of purchase intention. Based on this, this study continues to choose SOR theory to build a model, and constructs an online purchase intention model with anchor characteristics as independent variables and social presence as intermediate variable. In this study, 95 live data of Douyin "Fashion District" at 20 : 00 on February 8 were obtained by data crawling. Through SPSS, the multiple linear regression model is constructed. Finally, this study draws the following conclusions : different anchor characteristics will have a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention at different levels through social presence.

This study has theoretical value and practical value. At the theoretical level, first of all, this study explores the characteristics of fan stickiness in the characteristics of anchors, supplements the relevant research on the characteristics of anchors, and helps to systematically construct the index system of anchor characteristics. Secondly, different from the previous research methods of issuing questionnaires, this paper enriches the research methods of purchase intention. Through data crawling, we can get more objective conclusions and verify the "anchor trait-social presence-purchase intention" model in the existing research. In addition, the results of this study are mainly focused on the "fashion area", which expands the effective scenarios applicable to the characteristics of anchors. At the practical level, the results of this study can provide reference for relevant anchors, businesses and enterprises to help them invest resources more targeted, accurately formulate live broadcast strategies, and improve operational efficiency.

2. Literature Review

2.1. SOR Theory

SOR (Stimuli-Organism-Response) theory, also known as the stimulus-organism-response theory. The prototype of the SOR module is the SR model, which was proposed by John B. Watson and his team at the beginning of the 20th century. With the development of psychology, scholars pay more attention to individual psychological response and modify it to the SOR model. Scholars believe that individuals are stimulated by the external environment, through some psychological processes, and finally produce different behaviors, such as avoidance and approach. Due to the good causal explanation of the SOR model, it has been widely used in other humanities and social sciences. In the field of marketing, scholars use SOR theory to construct consumer psychology and behavior models, and believe that consumers make psychological reactions and motivations after being stimulated by the outside world, so as to explain their behaviors. For example, Zhou Tao and Chen Kexin [22] applied the SOR model to study how emotional support, informational support, and service quality affect users' usage and sharing behaviors. Ji Man and Zhuo Xiangzhi [23] explored the influence of product characteristics and situational characteristics on consumers' purchase intention under the SOR model.

With the development of e-commerce, SOR theory is gradually applied to the field of live e-commerce. Scholars believe that external stimuli in live broadcast will affect the inner fluctuations of online users, thus affecting users' online behavior, such as customers' purchase intention. Based on the SOR model, Xu He and other scholars [24] explored the impulse buying factors of online clothing consumers. Studies have shown that the interaction of anchors, live entertainment, opinion leaders, price discounts, visibility, business services, and value-added content can positively affect clothing purchase intentions by stimulating consumers' perceived pleasure and perceived arousal. Based on the SOR theory, Li Lianying and Cheng Ke [25] developed the purchase intention model for fresh agricultural products. They found that task fit, interactivity and subjective norms will have a positive impact on consumers' perceived usefulness, thus promoting purchase intention.

The above research has laid a certain theoretical foundation for this paper. This study will use the SOR model to explore the influence mechanism of anchor characteristics on consumers' purchase intention in the context of live e-commerce. First of all, the anchor attracts consumers with its professional competence and personal charm, and becomes a stimulating factor affecting consumers' psychological activities. Secondly, consumers' online situation and interaction represent their cognitive and emotional responses. Finally, driven by the sense of social presence, consumers have a willingness to buy.

2.2. The Antecedents of Live E-commerce Purchase Intention

The academic research on the antecedents of consumer purchase intention of live e-commerce is relatively mature. The existing research mainly focuses on product characteristics, platform factors, barrage characteristics, consumer perception and anchor characteristics. Scholars believe that these driving factors will stimulate the consumers' psychological state of consumers, such as perceived usefulness [4], perceived value [5], psychological distance [3], etc., thereby stimulating purchase.

The factors of product characteristic include the appearance, quality, price, and origin of the product itself. Teng Yanjiao and Nie Xiaomin [4] measured the content quality, price discount and return flexibility of the products. Research shows that these product factors will positively affect perceived usefulness, and then positively affect purchase intention. Xu Min [5] and other scholars added the factor of product quality, believing that it will affect the purchase intention by affecting the functional value perceived by consumers. In the context of agricultural product consumption, Li Xia

and other scholars [3] found that the image of origin will affect the purchase intention through consumers' pleasure and arousal perception, and this process is also regulated by psychological distance.

Platform factors include the display mode and operation mode of the platform. Tian Bingjie and Yao Yang [6] argue that the personalized recommendation of the e-commerce live broadcast platform plays an indirect role in promoting the user's purchase intention. Among them, the user's perceived practical value, hedonic value, price value and social value will play an intermediary role in this process.

The live broadcast feature is the situational factor of the live broadcast room. Lin Qiaoyan [9] and other scholars divided the live broadcast atmosphere into interpretation atmosphere, entertainment atmosphere and safety atmosphere. Based on the SOR model, the research shows that the live broadcast context and product characteristics will have a positive effect on the purchase intention of online consumers through the mediating variable of perceived pleasure. Some scholars have paid attention to the barrage factors in live broadcast. Wang Yi and other scholars [8] summarized the characteristic factors of the barrage as the quantity, quality and valence of the barrage. Studies have shown that these factors will positively promote purchase intention by affecting consumers' flow experience. Liang Ni [7] believes that the entertainment, interactivity, usefulness and visibility of barrage information will have an impact on purchase intention. At the same time, perceived pleasure and perceived trust play a mediating role.

Consumer perception is the level of consumers' psychological feelings, including value perception, usefulness perception, trust perception and so on. Zhao Yanfei and Ma Zhiyun [12] constructed a three-dimensional model including professional perception of anchors, practical perception of commodities, and clinical perception of live broadcast rooms. The research results show that the perception of these three dimensions will positively promote purchase intention through trust perception. Chen Ting and Peng Rongsheng [11] put forward flow experience and emotional trust when studying the situation of live broadcast of tourism e-commerce, which are the mediating and moderating factors of the quality of live broadcast interaction affecting purchase intention. Chen Juan and Zhang Chaoran's research [10] shows that product involvement, perceived function, perceived emotion and perceived trust positively affect customers' purchase intention.

In terms of the characteristics of the anchor, some scholars believe that the professionalism [13,14,15], interactivity [13,14,16], attraction [13,14] and entertainment [16,17] of the anchor will have an impact on consumers' online purchase intention.

Consumer / live stickiness is also one of the characteristics of anchors, which represents the ability of anchors to transform fans into customers, and is also one of the important characteristics of anchors to drive traffic. Through the analysis of large sample data of live broadcast, Jiang Liqun and other scholars [26] found that consumer stickiness is an important intermediary factor in the process of presence affecting purchase behavior. Xu Xin and other scholars [20] proved the mediating role of customer stickiness by supplementing. The higher the social presence of consumers, the more likely it is to increase customer stickiness, thereby increasing purchase intention. On the whole, it is necessary to discuss the stickiness of anchors on the influence of purchase intention.

3. Hypotheses Development

3.1. Anchor Characteristics and Social Presence

Different e-commerce anchors have different personal characteristics and will have different performances in their live broadcast. This article divides the characteristics of e-commerce live broadcast anchors into professionalism, attractiveness, and fan stickiness.

3.1.1. Professionalism and Social Presence

The professionalism of the anchor refers to the experience of the anchor in attracting traffic in the past live broadcasts or published works. If the anchor has more live broadcasts or works in the past, the longer the precipitation time, the more likely the anchor is to accumulate more experience in harvesting attention and obtaining traffic. Experienced anchors are more likely to know how to add points to the live broadcast to catch the audience's attention and make the audience feel more immersive. For example, the resident anchors of some live broadcast platforms can attract the help of fans by inviting guests. They know more about the traffic password of the live broadcast and improve the residence rate of the live broadcast room. The professionalism of the anchor will make consumers feel the presence of communicating with experts in the interaction with them [27]. It can be seen from this that the traffic experience accumulated by the anchor will enable him to understand how to stimulate the audience's interest and enhance the audience's sense of presence. Therefore, this study believes that the professionalism of the anchor will enhance the social presence of consumers.

Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is put forward :

H1 : The professionalism of the anchor has a positive impact on the social presence of the live audience.

3.1.2. Attraction and Social Presence

The attraction of the anchor refers to the ability of the anchor to gain more attention, praise and fans in the live broadcast or work through his own display of his personal charm and content quality. First, in the live broadcast, the attraction is often displayed through the anchor's live broadcast style, external image, etc. The more personal characteristics and memory points the anchor has, the more attractive it is. The higher the attraction of the anchor, the easier it is for the audience to immerse themselves in the live broadcast, and the higher the sense of presence. Second, if the anchor is attractive and connects it with the product, the initial impression of the product will be better, and the audience is more willing to participate in the interaction of the live broadcast, thus increasing the sense of presence. The internal and external beauty of online celebrities will appeal to consumers, stimulate a sense of trust, intimacy, and social presence. It also can make consumers willing to stay in the live room [13]. It shows that the attraction of the anchor will stimulate the audience's love and worship, and increase the sense of presence. Therefore, this study believes that the attractiveness of anchors will enhance consumers' social presence.

Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is put forward :

H2 : The attraction of the anchor has a positive impact on the social presence of the live audience.

3.1.3. Fan Stickiness and Social Presence

Fan stickiness refers to the ability of the anchor to transform fans into customers. Media-related studies have shown that there is a link between audience stickiness and social presence [28]. If the higher the stickiness of an anchor's fans, it means that the anchor can more efficiently transform the audience in the live studio into customers. Customers are more inclined to choose products with guaranteed quality when purchasing. However, online products cannot be truly felt, so customers will judge through some measurable indicators. In the Tik Tok live broadcast, the purchase fan group is a group that has long followed the anchor's purchase, and this indicator represents the anchor's fan stickiness. If the anchor has more purchase fan groups, it means that the quality of the anchor's products is more likely to be guaranteed. Therefore, an anchor with a higher number of fans is more likely to be trusted by consumers, thus stimulating consumers' interest in live streaming and enhancing the sense of presence in the live streaming process. It shows that the anchor's fan stickiness

will affect the degree of consumer trust to a certain extent. Therefore, this study believes that the attractiveness of anchors will enhance consumers' social presence.

Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is put forward :

H3 : The anchor's fan stickiness has a positive impact on the social presence of the live audience.

3.2. Social Presence and Consumer's Willingness to Buy

Social presence arises from the concept of psychology and is gradually applied to the field of online consumption. Dai Jianping believes that the social presence in the consumption situation includes three dimensions : familiarity, warmth and intimacy of interaction with people. First, in the e-commerce live broadcast, the characteristics of the anchor will arouse the interest of consumers and enhance the sense of presence. If the consumer's social presence is stronger, it means that the more likely it is to be immersed in the live broadcast, the higher the degree of excitement, and thus stimulate the consumer's purchase tendency. Secondly, after consumers generate social presence in interaction, they can increase consumers' trust in anchors and merchants, and consumers' perceived trust will promote consumers' willingness to purchase [29]. From this point of view, the social presence of consumers will affect the purchase intention to a certain extent. Therefore, this study believes that the social presence generated by consumers will promote consumers' purchase behavior.

Based on the above analysis, the hypothesis is put forward :

H4 : Consumers' social presence has a positive impact on purchase intention.

4. Data

4.1. Data Collection

In this paper, the data comes from the Douyin live broadcast fashion area. We choose the top 100 live broadcast data at 8 : 00 p.m. on February 8, 2025 as the sample. In order to ensure that the data is more objective and scientific, the samples with short start time of live broadcast and missing key data are first eliminated. Secondly, SPSS software was used to further screen the data samples, delete the missing values, and finally 95 samples were obtained through data cleaning.

4.2. Variable Explanation

Explained variable : consumer purchase intention. Consumer purchase satisfaction is the direct result of purchase intention. In this study, the "word-of-mouth with goods" accumulated by each anchor in Douyin live broadcast is used as a quantitative indicator to measure consumers' purchase intention. The word-of-mouth with goods ranges from 0.0 to 5.0, and most of them are concentrated between 4.0 and 4.9.

Explanatory variables : anchor characteristics (professionalism, attraction, fan stickiness). The professionalism is measured by the number of days since the earliest works of the anchor are released. The attraction is measured by the number of likes received by the anchor. Fan stickiness is measured by the number of fans of the anchor.

Mediator variable : social presence. According to the research of Xu Xin and Yang Yan[20], in the context of live broadcast e-commerce, social presence is mainly manifested in the emotional communication, interactive participation, attention response and other psychological perception between anchors and consumers. For this reason, the social presence in this study is measured by the calculation result of the formula of "average live point like ratio + average live audience ratio". Among them, the average live point praise ratio and the average live audience ratio are measured by the normalized results of the average live point praise number and the average live audience number.

Control variables : control variables include anchor gender, anchor age and other indicators.

Table 1: Basic information statistical results.

Category	Variable	Index	Max	Min	Median	Average	Standard deviation
Anchor characteristics	Professionalism	Days of work	2530.000	21.000	563.000	702.063	557.939
	Attraction	The number of likes (ten thousand)	7171.000	0.030	4.300	146.860	767.226
	Stickiness of fans	The number of fans (ten thousand)	574.000	0.001	0.458	9.918	60.317
Social presence	Social presence	The average number of live likes (ten thousand)	47.000	0.009	0.318	1.859	5.998
	Social presence	The average number of live viewers (ten thousand)	1.000	0.014	0.086	0.130	0.165
Purchase intention	Purchase intention	The word-of-mouth with goods	4.900	4.100	4.700	4.683	0.208
Control variables	Sexuality	male/female	1.000	0.000	0.000	0.053	0.224
	Age	Whether to fill in	1.000	0.000	1.000	0.537	0.501

Table 2: Linear regression analysis showed.

Category	Path			Beta	T	P	Result of hypothesis test
H1	Professionalism	→	Social presence	0.201	3.249	0.002**	Support
H2	Attraction	→	Social presence	0.167	2.813	0.006**	Support
H3	Stickiness of fans	→	Social presence	0.759	12.689	0.000**	Support
Control variables	Sexuality	→	Social presence	0.015	0.249	0.804	Support
Control variables	Age	→	Social presence	0.034	0.546	0.586	Support
H4	Social presence	→	Purchase intention	0.212	2.097	0.039*	Support

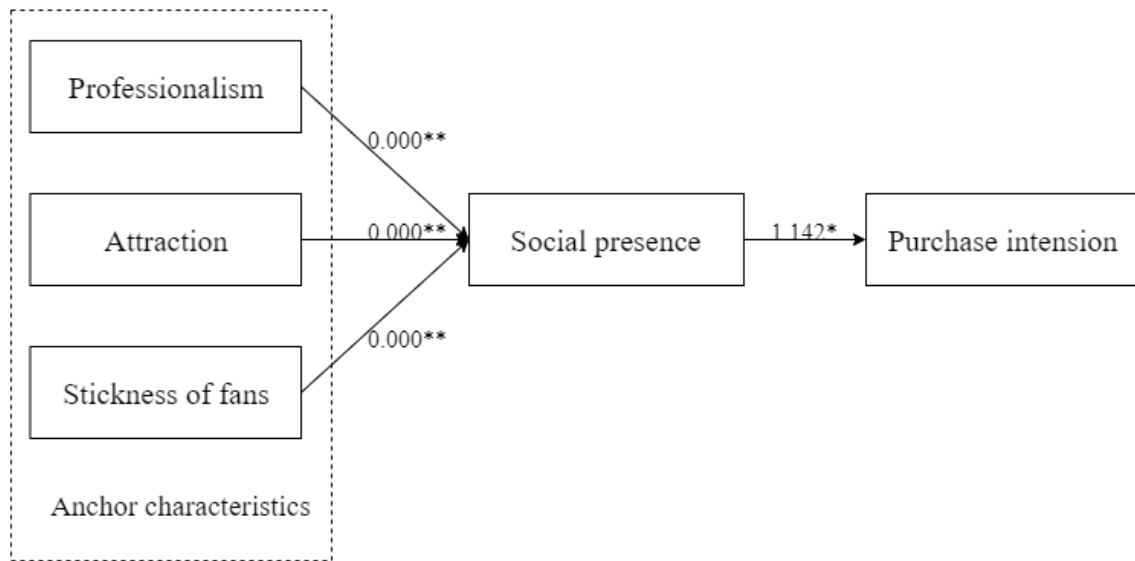


Figure 1: Model construction and results.

4.3. Robustness test

In order to ensure the robustness of the model, this study uses variable substitution, using the number of fans of the anchor instead of the number of days of work, to measure the professional experience of the anchor. That is to say, we use the number of fans to measure the degree of professionalism, the number of likes to measure the attraction, and the number of fans to measure the stickiness of fans. After the substitution, the three independent variables still have a significant impact on social presence. In summary, we believe that the construction of the model is relatively stable.

5. Results and discussion

The results of the hypothesis are shown in table 1 and figure 1, and the above assumptions are supported.

First, the professionalism of anchors has a significant positive impact on social presence ($\beta=0.201$, $p<0.01$). This study believes that the reason may be that the more professional anchors have more experience. They know more about how to catch the audience's attention through special ways, stimulate the audience's interest, and create a consumer's immersive feeling. The stronger the social presence of consumers.

Second, the attractiveness of anchors has a significant positive impact on social presence ($\beta=0.167$, $p<0.01$). This study believes that there may be two reasons : first, the more personal the anchor, the more attractive it is, the more consumers can feel kindness and trust, so consumers are immersed in it and enhance the sense of social presence. Secondly, the attraction of the anchor to consumers will often be projected on the interest in the product. Consumers are more willing to stay in the live broadcast room and wait for the explanation of the product, which also enhances their sense of social presence.

Third, the anchor's fan stickiness has a significant positive impact on social presence ($\beta=0.759$, $p<0.01$). This study believes that the reason may be that consumers often judge the credibility and product quality of the anchor through the historical data of the anchor itself when shopping online.

Fan stickiness represents the fan group that has long followed the anchor to buy, and is a reference for the quality of the anchor product. The audience is more willing to pay attention to the anchors with better historical data, so as to stay in the live broadcast room and stimulate the sense of social presence.

Fourth, social presence has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchase intention ($\beta=0.212$, $p<0.05$). This study believes that the reason may be that the social presence generated by consumers in the interaction between live broadcasts will lead to an increase in their trust in merchants and products, and thus more willing to buy the products of the live broadcast.

6. Conclusions and implications

Based on the SOR model and the theory of social presence, this paper constructs a model of the influence mechanism of anchor characteristics on consumers' purchase intention. The results show that : First, the professionalism, attraction and fan stickiness in the characteristics of the anchor will have a positive impact on the social presence of consumers in the live broadcast . Second, social presence will positively affect consumer' purchase intention. The research results of this paper have both theoretical and practical significance.

At the theoretical level, first of all, this paper extends the study of the characteristics of the anchor to the stickiness of fans and reveals the influence mechanism of the stickiness of the anchor fans. Existing studies have focused on the influence of anchor characteristics, but few studies have examined the influence of fan stickiness on consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, this paper broadens the research scope of e-commerce anchor characteristics and makes up for the research gap. At the same time, this paper introduces social presence as an intermediate variable to refine the influence mechanism of fans' stickiness on consumers' purchase intention. Secondly, previous studies on fan stickiness are mostly used as mediating variables or moderating variables. This paper takes fan stickiness as an independent variable to explore its impact on social presence, which enriches the related research of fan stickiness and provides a new research perspective. Third, most of the previous studies on e-commerce purchase intention choose questionnaire survey, and this paper collects data by crawling. The novel research method not only verifies the conclusions of previous studies more objectively, but also puts forward new ideas.

At the practical level, the results of this study can provide reference for relevant anchors, businesses and enterprises. To this end, this paper puts forward the following suggestions :

Anchors need to enhance their professionalism. First of all, the anchor needs to be familiar with the platform rules, product release specifications, advertising laws, etc., which can avoid mistakes in the live broadcast process. Secondly, the anchor can interact with the audience to understand the needs of consumers, pay more attention to the selection of products, choose better quality products according to the target audience, and create a live word-of-mouth. Then, the anchor can learn live streaming skills by watching other popular live broadcasts. By learning to improve the interactive skills, communication skills, external image and emotional management in the live broadcast, we can increase the stop rate in the live broadcast room. Finally, analyze the live broadcast data in a timely manner, find out the problems and optimize them as much as possible.

Anchors need to enhance their own attractiveness. Anchors need to clarify their own live style, or humorous or professional authority, so as to properly create live attraction points within the platform rules. In the form of live broadcast, you can add a variety of interactive forms, such as questions and answers, red envelopes, sweepstakes, etc., to increase the fun of the live broadcast room. On the image packaging, the anchor can create a unique appearance through dress, hairstyle and makeup, while paying attention to language expression and establishing emotional connection with the corresponding audience.

The anchor needs to enhance the stickiness of fans. First of all, product quality is a key link in consumer stickiness. After the quality of products and services is guaranteed, the anchor will also accumulate a responsive customer base. Secondly, live streaming can establish feedback mechanisms, such as questionnaires, online customer service, etc., collect customer opinions and suggestions in a timely manner, and continuously optimize to improve customer satisfaction. Finally, the live studio can also improve customer retention through activities such as member discounts, points systems, and limited-time snapping.

For merchants, they can first provide detailed product information for the anchor to help the anchor introduce the goods more accurately in the live broadcast. Secondly, businesses can promote the product according to the style characteristics of the anchor, rather than blindly selecting the anchor with large traffic and many fans. Finally, the price strategy and time-limited discount of the live broadcast room can not be separated from the discussion and formulation of the business and the anchor to promote the purchase.

For the platform, first of all, through online courses, live lectures and other forms, we can popularize platform rules and advertising laws and other related knowledge to anchors and merchants. At the same time, the platform should also strengthen supervision to ensure that live broadcasts are carried out within the rules. Secondly, the platform can also establish a feedback mechanism to solve the technical problems encountered in the live broadcast process in a timely manner, such as stalling, audio and video out of sync, etc. In addition, the platform can set up corresponding support plans according to the style of the anchor. For example, providing feature labels, professional certification, personalized push, etc., to attract more audience attention.

This article also has some limitations. First, the data of this study is mainly through the “Douyin-Fashion Zone” and there are some limitations of sample data sources. The data can be collected from various aspects through questionnaire survey. Secondly, there are many driving factors of consumer purchase intention in live e-commerce. This paper only analyzes the influence of the professionalism, attraction and fan stickiness of the anchor. Future research can explore and deepen other antecedents. Thirdly, this paper only selects objective factors such as age and gender as control variables, which is limited. In the future, psychological factors can be selected as moderating variables, such as consumer cognition and emotion, to further explore the relationship between variables at different levels.

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