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EXPLORING THE EFFECT OF ANCHOR CHARACTERISTICS ON IMPULSE BUYING AMONG GENERATION Z IN LIVE STREAMING ON SHORT-FORM VIDEO APPS

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Abstract: *Social commerce and live streaming shopping, particularly through social media channels and short-form video apps (e.g., TikTok), have gained substantial popularity among Generation Z. In the context of live streaming, anchor—individuals who present and promote products—play a pivotal role in influencing consumer behaviours. Despite their importance, the specific characteristics of anchor that influence Generation Z's impulsive buying intentions in live streaming on short-form video apps remain unexplored. This study, utilizing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, aims to address this gap by examining the impact of anchor characteristics—namely attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—on Generation Z's impulsive buying intentions. A purposive sampling method was used to collect data from 272 Malaysian Generation Z individuals who have experience with live streaming shopping on short-form video apps. The analysis reveals that the attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness of anchor significantly affect consumer arousal and their intention to make impulsive purchases. This study is valuable to scholars and marketers as it provides insights into the attributes that make anchor effective in engaging Generation Z audiences, helping to refine marketing strategies and optimize live streaming practices.*

Keywords: *Generation Z, Anchor, Arousal, Impulsive Buying, Live Streaming*

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Introduction

In today's digital age, shopping via social commerce, particularly through live streaming on social media, has gained popularity, especially among Generation Z, with short-video apps like TikTok leading the trend. Generation Z frequently uses social media in their daily lives. Beyond using social media for entertainment, Generation Z also engages in online shopping and business activities. The evolution of social media has created new opportunities, particularly in the realm of social commerce (Huwaida et al., 2024). Recently, short-form video apps such as TikTok have become particularly popular among Generation Z worldwide, including in Malaysia. According to Statista (2023), 35.61% of TikTok users in Malaysia are aged between 19 and 25. Short-form video apps like TikTok have gained significant traction among Generation Z, profoundly influencing their shopping decisions (McAlone, 2023).

Social commerce, a growing trend rooted in social media, has established new avenues for businesses and customers to interact (Lin et al., 2017), which include live streaming shopping. The live streaming commerce, initially booming in China, increasingly gains traction worldwide (Wang et al., 2021), including in Malaysia. Live streaming commerce is an platform that allows retailers to interact with customers and promote their goods in live video (Sun et al., 2020). The live-streaming shopping platform can give the viewer a better shopping experience. However, they might also lead to impulsive buying (Li et al., 2022). As live-streaming shopping rapidly grows, numerous vendors are adopting live-streaming shopping platforms (Zhang & Tang, 2023), such as those on short-form video apps like TikTok.

Due to the trend it is essential for e-tailers using live streaming platforms to adopt effective strategies to ensure success. Given the significant growth of live streaming commerce within social commerce on short-form video apps and considering Generation Z's strong preference for online shopping, e-retailer must strategically leverage this trend to remain competitive. This is because anchor play a pivotal role in the promotion and sale of goods and services, making their approach and characteristics essential to the efficacy of live streaming commerce. Goel et al. (2023) assert that anchor characteristics—such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—positively impact consumers' purchasing intentions by influencing their emotional state. This indicates that emotion plays a crucial role in influencing consumer purchase decisions, including the urge to buy impulsively (Goel et al., 2023).

However, there is limited research on how anchor characteristics—such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—affect Generation Z’s perceived arousal and impulsive buying intention, specifically on short-form video apps. Given the rise in online shopping, the S-O-R model has been utilized to explore online impulse buying (C. C. Chen & Yao, 2018). To better understand how these anchor characteristics influence Generation Z's impulse buying, particularly through arousal, this study employs the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model. It aims to investigate the impact of these characteristics on the emotional states of perceived arousal and impulsive buying intention among Generation Z during live streaming on short-form video apps. This research is significant for both scholars and e-retailers as it enhances the understanding of consumer behaviour and refines marketing strategies. It provides deeper insights into how emotional responses, particularly arousal, mediates the relationship between various anchor traits (attractiveness, expertise, trustworthiness) and impulsive buying intention.

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Literature Review

The S-O-R Model, introduced by Mehrabian & Russell (1974), elucidates the relationship between environmental stimuli and approach or avoidance behaviours, with emotional states serving as mediators (Donovan et al., 1994). This model is extensively employed in consumer behaviour research (Islam et al., 2018; Ming et al., 2021). By applying the S-O-R model, this study aims to investigate how anchor characteristics—such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—function as environmental stimuli that impact Generation Z's perceived arousal. In turn, these emotional states expected to influence impulsive buying intentions. This approach provides a framework for understanding the psychological mechanisms underlying consumer responses to live streaming commerce, particularly within the context of Generation Z's shopping behaviours.

Live streaming commerce encompasses the integration of e-commerce activities and transactions within a live streaming environment. This innovative approach utilizes live streaming platforms to create an interactive and immersive cyber space that combines real-time interaction, online transactions, entertainment and more (Xu et al., 2020). In live streaming, the characteristics of the anchor are pivotal due to their substantial impact on engaging with viewers and promoting products. The anchor, who serves as the face and voice of the live stream, is responsible for presenting and explaining products to the audience. Their role extends beyond mere product demonstration; they must effectively communicate the value and benefits of the products, address viewer inquiries, and create an interactive and dynamic shopping experience. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of anchor traits such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness on consumer buying behaviours. For instance. Previous study, Chan et al., (2022) found that anchor attractiveness and trustworthiness significantly influence consumer purchase intentions. This is particularly relevant for Asian consumers, who are more likely to engage with attractive anchor, as they are perceived to provide information more accurately. Then, Liu (2022) discovered that anchor characteristics such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise have a substantial impact on consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviours, as they can alter consumers' emotional states. This study highlights the importance of anchor characteristics in influencing consumers' positive emotions, such as enthusiasm, inspiration, and excitement (C. C. Chen & Yao, 2018). These emotional states, in turn, play a crucial role in shaping purchasing decisions.

H1: There is a significant relationship between anchor attractiveness and perceived arousal
H2: There is a significant relationship between anchor expertise and perceived arousal
H3: There is a significant relationship between anchor trustworthiness and perceived arousal

Previous literature suggests that consumers' positive emotions play a critical role in stimulating impulse buying (Yi & Jai, 2020). In other words, positive emotions such as enthusiasm, exhilaration, and energy influence consumer approach or avoidance behaviours such as impulsive buying intentions. Impulsive buying intention refers to a sudden and urgent desire to make a purchase immediately (Rook, 1987). Previous study Lamis et al., (2022) found that arousal is the most significant factor influencing impulse buying. This is because impulse buying typically occurs when buyers experience a strong urge or heightened arousal to make a purchase. Beyond the direct relationship between perceived arousal and behaviour, emotional states also mediate the effect of environmental stimuli on approach or avoidance behaviours (Donovan et al., 1994). Previous study Xu et al. (2020), found that anchor characteristics, particularly attractiveness, significantly impact perceived arousal, leading to consumer excitement and impulsive consumption. Hence, the Anchor characteristics such as

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attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness are crucial in influencing consumers' positive emotions and purchase decisions, as viewers may feel excited or exhilarated when they see an attractive, knowledgeable, and trustworthy anchor, leading to impulsive buying intentions.

H4: There is a significant relationship between perceived arousal and impulsive buying intention
H5a: Perceived arousal mediates the relationship between anchor attractiveness and impulsive buying intention
H5b: Perceived arousal mediates the relationship between anchor expertise and impulsive buying intention
H5c: Perceived arousal mediates the relationship between anchor trustworthiness and impulsive buying intention

Methodology

This study utilized a self-report online questionnaire administered via Google Forms for data collection. Considering Malaysia's multicultural context, the survey was developed in two languages: English and Malay. The translation approach employed a collaborative and iterative method Douglas & Craig (2007) to ensure the clarity and relevance of the measurement items for all participants. Data were gathered through a purposive sampling methodology, where participants were selected based on their ability to provide the specific information required (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

In this study, a total of 350 surveys were distributed via social media platforms, resulting in 302 respondents who completed the questionnaire (response rate of 86.29%). After excluding 30 straightlining responses, the final sample consisted of 272 responses (90.07% usable rate). This sample was derived from Malaysian Generation Z individuals aged eighteen to twenty-five who had experience with live streaming on short-form video applications.

Figure 1 is this study's research framework, which is based on the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model. This model is instrumental in explaining both direct and indirect relationships between anchor characteristics—namely attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—and the resulting perceived arousal and impulsive buying intentions. By integrating these elements, the model provides a comprehensive understanding of how anchor traits influence consumer behaviours in live streaming commerce. Then, the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) is employed to analyse the intricate relationships between multiple dependent and independent variables (Hair Jr et al., 2022). This method, implemented using SmartPLS 4, facilitates the examination of complex interactions and the assessment of path coefficients. By utilizing PLS-SEM, the study aims to gain insights into how anchor characteristics influence consumer emotional states and impulsive buying tendencies, thereby elucidating the underlying mechanisms driving these relationships.

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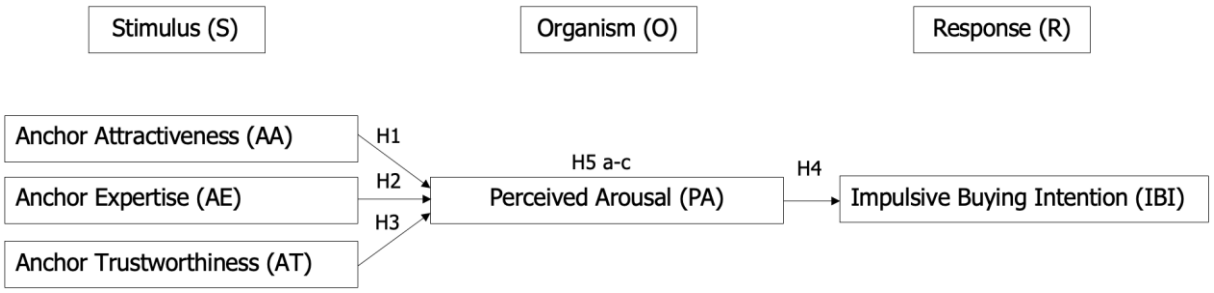

Figure 1: Research Framework

Result and Discussion

According to Table 1, which details the demographic profiles of respondents, the sample consists of 272 individuals, predominantly female, with 225 females compared to 47 males. This gender disparity indicates a significant predominance of female respondents within the sample population. Regarding educational background, a substantial majority, 92.6%, hold a bachelor's degree, highlighting the high level of educational attainment among the respondents. Additionally, a notable proportion, 44.9%, report having more than one year of experience with live streaming on short video applications.

Table 1: Demographic Profiles of Respondents

Variable		Frequency	（%）
Gender	Female	225	82.7
	Male	47	17.3
Level of Education	Bachelor's degree	252	92.6
	Diploma/pre-university	17	6.3
	Master's degree or above	3	1.1
Experience with live streaming on short video applications (e.g., TikTok Live)	1 - 3 month	45	16.5
	6 - 12 month	32	11.8
	Less than 1 month	73	26.8
	More than 1 year	122	44.9

To address the potential issue of Common Method Variance (CMV) in this study, Harman's single-factor test was conducted. CMV can arise when self-report questionnaires are used among the same respondents (Chang et al., 2010). According to Kock (2015), the ideal result of Harman's single-factor test is that no single factor should account for more than 50% of the total variance. In this study, Harman's single-factor test revealed that a single factor explained 36.76% of the variance. This result suggests that CMV is not a significant concern, as the variance explained by a single factor is well below the 50% threshold. Consequently, this analysis supports the reliability and validity of the study's findings by minimizing the potential impact of CMV on the research outcomes.

To ensure convergent validity, we performed measurement model analysis using SmartPLS 4, which involved estimating item loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). As detailed in Table 2, the item loadings for all measurement items exceeded 0.5, meeting the criterion suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981). This indicates that each item is a sufficiently strong indicator of its corresponding construct. The CR values, reflecting the

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internal consistency of the measurement model, ranged from 0.925 to 0.948 across all variables, significantly surpassing the recommended threshold of 0.70, as suggested by Hair Jr et al. (2017). This high level of CR demonstrates strong consistency among the items within each construct. Similarly, the AVE values ranged from 0.711 to 0.822, exceeding the benchmark of 0.5, as suggested by Hair Jr et al. (2017). These results collectively indicate strong convergent validity, confirming that the constructs effectively capture the intended variance in the items.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Construct	Items	Loading	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Anchor Attractiveness	AA 1	0.850	0.925	0.711
	AA 2	0.841		
	AA 3	0.850		
	AA 4	0.845		
	AA 5	0.830		
Anchor Expertise	AE 1	0.865	0.936	0.746
	AE 2	0.890		
	AE 3	0.904		
	AE 4	0.820		
	AE 5	0.836		
Anchor Trustworthiness	AT 1	0.846	0.948	0.783
	AT 2	0.911		
	AT 3	0.876		
	AT 4	0.900		
	AT 5	0.890		
Perceived Arousal	PA 1	0.883	0.938	0.790
	PA 2	0.900		
	PA 3	0.880		
	PA 4	0.891		
Impulsive Buying Intention	IBI 1	0.895	0.933	0.822
	IBI 2	0.915		
	IBI 3	0.909		

Then, to confirm discriminant validity, we estimated cross-loadings and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT). Table 3 presents the cross-loadings, which serve as a more liberal method for assessing discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). The results indicate that items exhibit high correlations with their respective constructs while showing low correlations with other constructs, suggesting that each item is distinctly related to its own construct (Hair Jr et al., 2017). HTMT is a foundational method for testing discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). According to Henseler et al. (2016), values below the threshold of 0.85 are considered indicative of good discriminant validity. As shown in Table 4, the HTMT values are all below this critical level. These results provide strong evidence that the study's constructs are sufficiently distinct from one another, confirming that there are no issues with discriminant validity.

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Table 3: Cross-loading Analysis

	UBI	AA	AA	AE	AT
IBI 1	**0.895**	0.500	0.299	0.302	0.250
IBI 2	**0.915**	0.436	0.291	0.273	0.251
IBI 3	**0.909**	0.464	0.286	0.239	0.252
AA 1	0.450	**0.883**	0.308	0.346	0.334
AA 2	0.474	**0.900**	0.375	0.294	0.369
AA 3	0.446	**0.880**	0.300	0.297	0.359
AA 4	0.459	**0.891**	0.315	0.388	0.405
AA 1	0.265	0.314	**0.850**	0.327	0.380
AA 2	0.273	0.277	**0.841**	0.335	0.336
AA 3	0.306	0.352	**0.850**	0.296	0.343
AA 4	0.276	0.318	**0.845**	0.402	0.405
AA 5	0.237	0.277	**0.830**	0.181	0.320
AE 1	0.243	0.292	0.316	**0.865**	0.417
AE 2	0.298	0.318	0.304	**0.890**	0.393
AE 3	0.226	0.314	0.280	**0.904**	0.370
AE 4	0.281	0.354	0.370	**0.820**	0.472
AE 5	0.245	0.336	0.317	**0.836**	0.441
AT 1	0.279	0.399	0.391	0.479	**0.846**
AT 2	0.202	0.351	0.370	0.367	**0.911**
AT 3	0.218	0.320	0.372	0.420	**0.876**
AT 4	0.234	0.361	0.357	0.379	**0.900**
AT 5	0.292	0.398	0.385	0.498	**0.890**

Table 4: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) Analysis

	IBI	PA	SA	SE	ST
IBI					
PA	0.571				
SA	0.360	0.403			
SE	0.332	0.409	0.405		
ST	0.304	0.449	0.463	0.527	

Table 5: Structural Model Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Std error	T-Value	Std beta	Result
H1	AA -> PA	0.057	3.406**	0.196	Supported
H2	AE -> PA	0.060	3.057*	0.185	Supported
H3	AT -> PA	0.073	3.291**	0.241	Supported
H4	PA -> IBI	0.053	9.693**	0.515	Supported

Note: **P < 0.01, *P < 0.05

Table 5 presents the results of the structural model analysis, indicating that hypotheses H1, H2, H3, and H4 are all supported. Specifically, for H1 (T=3.406**) is supported. Anchor attractiveness has a significant impact on Generation Z's perceived arousal. This finding aligns with Xu et al. (2020), who identified a significant relationship between anchor attractiveness and consumer perceived arousal. Physical attractiveness, such as beauty and good looks, has a substantial impact on Generation Z's positive emotions (Chen & Wu, 2024), including excitement. This is because an attractive anchor can attract more viewers and increase their

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interest and attention towards the anchor (Chen & Wu, 2024). This heightened attention and interest lead to increased arousal among viewers, making them more excited.

Furthermore, H2 (T=3.057*) is supported. Anchor expertise has a significant impact on Generation Z's perceived arousal. In live streaming, an anchor's expertise is important because viewers are eager to get professional information and knowledge from experienced individuals. The expertise of the anchor greatly affects the delivery and acceptance of information by consumers (Liu et al., 2022). If Generation Z perceives that the anchor provides useful and knowledgeable information about products and is professional in certain aspects (Xiang et al., 2016), it will generate excitement. In other words, the perception of an anchor's expertise stimulates positive arousal in viewers, making them more engaged and enthusiastic.

Additionally, H3 (T=3.291**) is supported. Anchor trustworthiness has a significant impact on Generation Z's perceived arousal. When viewers perceive an anchor as trustworthy and sincere, they are more likely to trust the products being promoted. This trust leads to increased customer contribution behaviours on online platforms (Hsu, 2023), influenced by the positive emotions experienced by consumers. In other words, trustworthiness facilitates purchase decisions (Malak et al., 2021), with excitement further amplifying this effect. Therefore, if Generation Z perceives an anchor as trustworthy and sincere, they are likely to engage more enthusiastically in live streaming shopping and exhibit a higher propensity for making purchase decisions.

The H4 (T=3.291**) is supported. Perceived arousal has a significant impact on Generation Z's impulsive buying intention. The feeling of arousal energizes customers, boosts consumer engagement, and ultimately heightens their purchase intention (Bues et al., 2017). This indicates that perceived arousal generated among Generation Z during live streaming shopping experiences makes them excited, leading to increased consumer engagement and a heightened urge to purchase items not originally on their shopping list.

Table 6: Mediation Analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Std error	T-Value	Std beta	Confidence Interval		Result
					Lower Limit	Upper Limit	
H5a	AA -> PA -> IBI	0.032	3.158*	0.101	0.041	0.169	Supported
H5b	AE -> PA -> IBI	0.033	2.863*	0.095	0.034	0.162	Supported
H5c	AT -> PA -> IBI	0.039	3.211**	0.124	0.046	0.201	Supported

Note: **P < 0.01, *P < 0.05

Based on the mediation analysis presented in Table 6, these findings indicate that perceived arousal plays a crucial mediating role in the relationship between anchor characteristics—such as attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—and impulsive buying intention. This study aligns with previous research Xu et al. (2020), which identified a significant relationship between anchor attractiveness and consumer perceived arousal and impulsive buying behaviours. In addition to attractiveness, this study demonstrates that the expertise and trustworthiness of an anchor significantly impact consumers' positive emotions, such as excitement, energy, and enthusiasm. These emotions, in turn, influence their impulsive buying intentions. This supports the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model, which posits that emotional states serve as mediators in the relationship between environmental stimuli and approach or avoidance behaviours (Donovan et al., 1994).

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Conclusion

This study has utilized the S-O-R (Stimulus-Organism-Response) model to provide an in-depth analysis of the role of perceived arousal in shaping impulsive buying intentions among Generation Z during live streaming shopping events. By integrating the S-O-R framework, the research underscores how anchor characteristics—specifically attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness—serve as crucial determinants in influencing consumer behaviour. The analysis reveals that these attributes significantly enhance viewers' excitement and emotional engagement, thereby increasing their likelihood of making impulsive purchases.

The study highlights the pivotal role of positive emotional responses in consumer behaviours within the context of live streaming commerce. The real-time interaction and dynamic nature of live streams create an environment where emotional responses can be significantly heightened. When viewers experience strong arousal or excitement during a live stream, they are more likely to make impulsive purchases driven by these positive emotions. Successful anchor, who create a lively and engaging atmosphere, are therefore more likely to evoke such emotional responses, making consumers more prone to impulsive buying decisions.

Consequently, e-retailers should be strategic in selecting and training anchor to ensure they embody qualities that elicit positive emotional responses from viewers. This involves not only choosing the anchor with desirable characteristics but also equipping them with the skills to engage effectively with the audience and create a compelling shopping experience. By doing so, e-retailers can strengthen the emotional connection between the anchor and the consumer, ultimately leading to increased sales.

In summary, the characteristics of anchor—including attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise—are essential in shaping consumers' emotional states and influencing their purchasing intentions. Understanding and leveraging these dynamics enables e-retailers to develop effective strategies that capitalize on the growing trend of live streaming commerce, thereby meeting the expectations of Generation Z consumers.

However, the study has limitations, such as the sample being restricted to Malaysian consumers. To address this limitation, future research could explore similar phenomena in other countries to validate and extend the findings. Additionally, future studies could investigate other factors, such as promotional tactics, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer buying behaviours in the context of live streaming shopping.

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