

Research on the Impact of Customer Experience on Customer Stickiness in The Context of E-Commerce Live Streaming

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Abstract: With the rapid development of the digital economy, live-streaming e-commerce, as an emerging business model, is facing practical challenges of insufficient customer stickiness. Existing research has mainly focused on the influence of pre-purchase and during-purchase customer experiences on customer behavioral stickiness, while neglecting comprehensive studies on the impact of full-cycle customer experience—including pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages—on both psychological and behavioral customer stickiness. Based on the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory and using empirical analysis, this study explores the influence mechanisms of customer experience throughout the full purchase cycle on psychological and behavioral stickiness. The findings reveal that customer experience at each stage of the purchase cycle has a significant positive impact on both psychological and behavioral stickiness. Perceived value plays a mediating role in this relationship. Social presence—the perception of others' existence—positively moderates the relationship between customer experience and perceived value, particularly in the pre-purchase and post-purchase stages. However, its moderating effect on the relationship between customer experience during the purchase and perceived value is not significant.

Keywords: E-commerce live streaming; Customer experience; Customer stickiness; Perceived value; Social presence.

1. Introduction

The Chinese government has issued several policy documents, such as the Opinions on Promoting High-Quality Development of Service Consumption and the Opinions on Promoting High-Quality Development of Rural E-commerce, which provide institutional support and outline a broad development blueprint for the e-commerce industry. Under the impetus of these policies, live-streaming e-commerce has rapidly emerged as a novel marketing model and entered a phase of widespread adoption, often referred to as the “era of national live streaming.” According to the 53rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, as of December 2023, the number of live-streaming users in China reached 816 million, accounting for 74.7% of the total internet users [1]. This vast user base offers strong potential consumer momentum for live-streaming e-commerce. Consequently, how to enhance the customer experience during interactions with live-streaming sessions and platforms, and how to strengthen customer stickiness, have become pressing issues that need to be addressed in the current development of live-streaming e-commerce.

Customer experience refers to the subjective perceptions and feelings generated throughout a customer's entire interaction with a company's products, services, or brand, encompassing pre-consumption expectations, experiences during consumption, and post-consumption evaluations [2]. From the perspective of the full customer purchase cycle—which spans from initial awareness of a product to the completion of purchase and subsequent usage or service enjoyment—customer experience can be categorized into three stages: pre-purchase experience, purchase experience, and post-purchase experience [3]. Existing academic research has primarily focused on examining the impact of pre-purchase and purchase-stage experiences on customers' psychological and behavioral responses. On the

psychological level, studies have explored constructs such as trust and loyalty [4, 5]; behaviorally, such experiences influence outcomes including continued usage intention and purchase intention [6, 7].

Customer stickiness is reflected in both psychological attachment to a website and the tendency toward continued engagement behavior [8]. Most scholars regard it as an external manifestation of customer loyalty, advocating for its evaluation through indicators such as visit frequency and purchase frequency [9–12]. Other researchers emphasize psychological stickiness, suggesting that it, together with behavioral stickiness, constitutes the bond between customers and products [13]. Academic discussions on the influencing factors of customer stickiness have largely focused on behavioral stickiness, proposing that website content, trust, and related factors play a significant role [14–16]. A smaller body of literature has also identified influences on psychological stickiness, such as product information quality and platform technological capabilities [13].

In summary, research on livestreaming in e-commerce remains in its early stages and exhibits several limitations. Existing studies predominantly focus on customer loyalty and purchase intention, while insufficient attention has been paid to the concept of customer stickiness. Moreover, current research tends to emphasize the impact of pre-purchase and mid-purchase experiences on behavioral stickiness, neglecting the influence of customer experiences at different stages of the purchase cycle on both psychological and behavioral stickiness. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence mechanism of pre-purchase, mid-purchase, and post-purchase customer experiences on psychological and behavioral stickiness within the context of e-commerce livestreaming, from a full customer journey perspective. The research seeks to provide theoretical support for effective livestream marketing strategies.

2. Theoretical Deduction and Research Hypotheses

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

The Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) theory is widely used to explain how external environmental factors influence individual behavior [17]. Within this framework, S (Stimulus) refers to external environmental factors that can induce changes in consumer behavior; O (Organism) represents the responding subject, namely the consumer; and R (Response) denotes the reaction of the individual after being influenced by external stimuli through internal perception. Elements such as advertising and word-of-mouth function as stimuli that affect consumers' psychological states (e.g., attitudes, beliefs, and cognition), thereby generating internal responses (e.g., satisfaction, purchase intention) or external behaviors (e.g., actual purchasing actions) [18].

Grounded in SOR theory, this study conceptualizes customer experience as the external stimulus that triggers psychological changes in the organism—specifically, perceived value—which in turn influence internal responses (psychological stickiness) and external responses (behavioral stickiness). The proposed research model is illustrated in Figure 1.

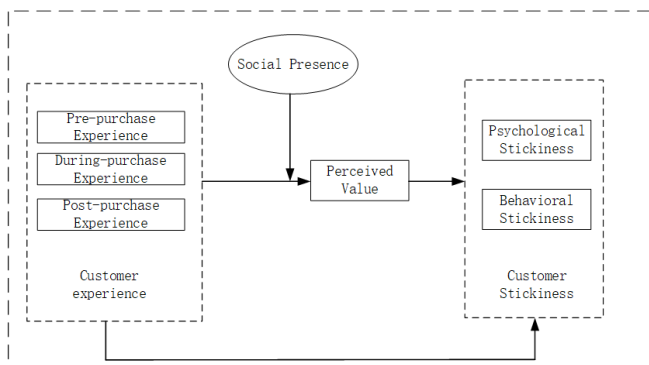


Figure 1. Research Model

2.2. Research Hypotheses

2.2.1. The Impact of Customer Experience on Customer Stickiness

Customer experience, as an external stimulus, can trigger psychological responses in consumers and significantly influence customer stickiness. A pleasant shopping experience enhances the likelihood of customers developing long-term relationships with the live-streaming platform and hosts, thereby increasing stickiness [19]. Conversely, negative customer experiences may have a strong impact on customers' attitudes and behaviors, potentially altering their purchasing decisions and reducing their buying intentions [20]. Experiences at all three stages—pre-purchase, during-purchase, and post-purchase—can exert a notable effect on customer stickiness.

From the perspective of psychological stickiness, pre-purchase experiences can attract customers, stimulate purchase intentions, and influence the degree of emotional dependence on the live-streaming room [13]. During the purchase process, the lower the time and effort cost perceived by customers, the more favorably they view the live-streaming session [21]. In the post-purchase stage, high-quality after-sales service enhances product assurance, deepens trust in the live-streaming room, and reduces the likelihood of switching to other platforms or hosts.

From the behavioral stickiness perspective, a better pre-purchase experience increases the length of time customers are willing to spend in a live-streaming session [12]. For instance, when streamers take the lead in testing or using products during the live broadcast, it encourages customers to stay longer and fosters purchase intentions [22]. A positive experience during the purchase phase results in higher visit frequency, while an excellent post-purchase experience enhances customer retention and may even promote word-of-mouth marketing, encouraging relatives and friends to make purchases.

Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Customer experience has a positive effect on customer stickiness.

H1a: Customer experience has a positive effect on psychological stickiness.

H1b: Customer experience has a positive effect on behavioral stickiness.

2.2.2. The Impact of Customer Experience on Perceived Value

Perceived value refers to consumers' subjective evaluation of products or services [23], encompassing utilitarian value, social value, and emotional value. Utilitarian value reflects the extent to which a product or service is perceived as being worth its cost; social value refers to the recognition one receives from others; and emotional value involves internal emotional responses. Customer experience is closely related to perceived value, as a positive experience can significantly enhance customers' perceived value.

In the context of e-commerce livestreaming, high-quality customer experience may provide customers with a strong sense of utilitarian, social, and emotional value. Conversely, negative experiences can directly result in negative emotions [24], thereby reducing perceived emotional value. Negative consumption experiences, such as purchase failure, not only impose financial costs but also lead to emotional losses—such as anxiety, frustration, and regret [25].

Based on the above analysis, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2: Customer experience has a positive effect on perceived value.

2.2.3. The Impact of Perceived Value on Customer Stickiness

Perceived quality, defined as the utilitarian value recognized by customers, has been shown to have a positive effect on customer stickiness [8]. Conversely, negative experiential perceptions can significantly influence customers' psychological decision-making processes and behavioral responses [26].

In the context of e-commerce live streaming, perceived value plays a pivotal role in the development of customer stickiness. The higher the perceived value, the stronger the customer's psychological and behavioral attachment to the live streaming platform and specific streaming rooms. A high level of perceived value fosters customer preferences, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeated visits and purchases. On the other hand, negative perceptions—such as disappointment or dissatisfaction—can lead to aversion toward the live streaming room, diminished purchase intentions, or even active avoidance, such as blocking the room and ceasing to purchase its products.

The extent to which customers derive value from their experience significantly influences their psychological

stickiness. High perceived value contributes not only to the formation of favorable customer attitudes but also to the development of behavioral stickiness, thereby reinforcing long-term engagement [27].

Based on the above analysis, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Perceived value positively influences customer stickiness.

H3a: Perceived value positively influences psychological stickiness.

H3b: Perceived value positively influences behavioral stickiness.

2.2.4. The Mediating Role of Perceived Value

Perceived value serves as a critical variable in reflecting customers' psychological responses during the purchasing process. Within the context of e-commerce live streaming, customer experiences across all stages of the purchasing journey—whether in the pre-purchase stage (e.g., livestream layout and design, the host's appearance and behavior, promotional activities), the during-purchase stage (e.g., operational procedures, payment methods), or the post-purchase stage (e.g., product quality assurance, after-sales service)—can stimulate a range of psychological reactions in customers. These reactions lead to the perception of utilitarian, social, and emotional value, which in turn drives customer responses, including the desire and behavior to revisit the livestream or make repeat purchases. This process ultimately contributes to the formation of customer stickiness.

Based on the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: In the context of e-commerce live streaming, perceived value mediates the relationship between customer experience and customer stickiness.

2.2.5. The Moderating Role of Social Presence

Social presence refers to an individual's perception of the presence of others during mediated interactions. In the context of e-commerce live streaming, customers can perceive the presence of streamers, customer service representatives, other viewers, and after-sales personnel, and experience a sense of interaction with them. When users perceive a high level of social presence, they are more likely to view the seller as approachable and warm, which enhances their perceived value [28]. Accordingly, in e-commerce live streaming scenarios, customers experiencing high social presence are more inclined to translate positive customer experiences into greater perceived value.

Customers can experience high levels of social presence across all stages of the purchasing process—pre-purchase, during-purchase, and post-purchase. During the pre-purchase and during-purchase stages, customers often engage in communication with streamers, online customer service, or other viewers in the livestream room, receiving positive emotional feedback that enhances their sense of social presence [29]. A strong sense of social presence can also increase the perceived attractiveness of the streamer, which in turn positively influences perceived value [30]. In the post-purchase stage, interactions with delivery personnel and after-sales service providers further reinforce the perception of others' presence, thereby increasing social presence.

The higher the level of social presence, the better the customer experience, and the stronger the relationship between customer experience and perceived value. Therefore, social presence is expected to positively moderate this relationship in the context of e-commerce live streaming.

Based on the above analysis, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: In the context of e-commerce live streaming, social presence positively moderates the relationship between customer experience and perceived value.

3. Empirical Study

3.1. Questionnaire Design

The objective of this questionnaire is to collect recent shopping behavior data from users of e-commerce live streaming platforms. The questionnaire is divided into two main sections: the first focuses on measuring the four core variables—customer experience, customer stickiness, perceived value, and social presence; the second collects basic demographic information such as gender and age.

The questionnaire items are adapted from well-established measurement scales in existing domestic and international literature, and have been modified to suit the specific context of e-commerce live streaming, ensuring relevance and validity within this research framework. All constructs are measured using a five-point Likert scale, where scores from 1 to 5 represent responses ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

Specifically:

Customer experience is measured using a 20-item scale adapted from Arnould and Caroline [31–32]; Perceived value is measured with a 3-item scale based on Wang Juan's instrument [33]; Social presence is measured using a 3-item scale adapted from Mu Chunyan's work [34].

3.2. Data Collection

During the data collection phase, this study employed an online questionnaire distributed via popular social media platforms such as WeChat, QQ, and Weibo. To enhance the representativeness of the sample, the questionnaire was widely disseminated through extensive sharing. The formal distribution period began on March 10, 2024, and lasted for 15 days. A total of 325 responses were collected. After a rigorous screening process, 38 responses from participants who had never watched e-commerce live streaming and 7 evidently invalid responses were excluded. Ultimately, 280 valid responses were retained, resulting in an effective response rate of 86.15%.

3.3. Sample Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the sample, including gender, age, occupation, income level, weekly viewing frequency, and monthly purchase frequency, were analyzed using SPSS 27.0. The composition of the sample closely aligns with the consumer profile described in the Online Survey Report on Customer Satisfaction in Livestreaming E-commerce Shopping by the China Consumers Association [35]. A large proportion of the sample consisted of young people, students, and corporate employees, indicating the sample's representativeness.

Specifically, 52.5% of the respondents were female and 47.5% were male, reflecting a relatively balanced gender distribution with a slight female majority. Respondents aged 18–25 accounted for the largest group at 28.21%, while those aged 56 and above represented the smallest proportion at 5%. Students and white-collar/general office workers were the two largest occupational groups, with 75 and 72 respondents respectively, accounting for 26.79% and 25.71%. The largest

income segment was the RMB 5,001–10,000 range, comprising 22.50% of respondents.

3.4. Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's α coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire. As shown in Table 1, the Cronbach's α values for pre-purchase experience, during-purchase experience, post-purchase experience, social presence, perceived value, and behavioral stickiness all exceeded 0.80. The α coefficient for psychological stickiness was above 0.70. These results indicate that the reliability of the questionnaire data meets acceptable academic standards.

Table 1. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Analysis

Dimension	Cronbach's α	Number of items
Pre-purchase Experience	0.909	8
During Purchase Experience	0.867	6
Post-purchase Experience	0.874	6
Social Presence	0.829	3
Psychological Stickiness	0.789	3
Perceived Value	0.807	3
Behavioral Stickiness	0.882	4

3.5. Validity Analysis

To assess the validity of the measurement model, this study examined the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) for each construct. The results showed that all CR values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating high internal consistency among the measurement items within each latent variable, and

confirming that these items collectively explain the underlying construct effectively.

Furthermore, all AVE values were greater than 0.50, demonstrating satisfactory convergent validity. Additionally, the square root of the AVE for each construct was higher than the correlations between that construct and all other constructs, confirming that the measurement scales exhibit strong discriminant validity.

3.6. Regression Analysis

As shown in Table 2, in Model M1, the standardized regression coefficients (β) for customer experience and perceived value are 0.482 ($t = 8.711, p < 0.01$) and 0.257 ($t = 4.621, p < 0.01$), respectively. These results indicate that both customer experience and perceived value have a significant positive effect on customer stickiness, thereby supporting Hypotheses H1 and H2.

In Model M2, the β values for customer experience and perceived value are 0.394 ($t = 6.481, p < 0.01$) and 0.232 ($t = 3.812, p = 0.000 < 0.01$), respectively, suggesting that customer experience and perceived value significantly and positively influence psychological stickiness. Therefore, Hypotheses H1a and H3a are supported.

In Model M3, customer experience and perceived value exhibit β values of 0.464 ($t = 7.938, p < 0.01$) and 0.226 ($t = 3.854, p < 0.01$), respectively, indicating that both variables significantly and positively affect behavioral stickiness. Thus, Hypotheses H1b and H3b are supported.

In Model M4, the β value for customer experience is 0.592 ($t = 12.185, p < 0.01$), indicating a significant positive relationship between customer experience and perceived value. Therefore, Hypothesis H3 is supported.

Table 2. Regression Analysis

Independent Variable	Customer Stickiness	Psychological Stickiness	Behavioral Stickiness	Perceived Value
	M1	M2	M3	M4
	$\beta(t)$			
Customer Experience	0.482**(8.711)	0.394**(6.481)	0.464**(7.938)	0.592**(12.185)
Perceived Value	0.257**(4.621)	0.232**(3.812)	0.226**(3.854)	
R ²	0.467	0.358	0.405	0.362
Adjusted R ²	0.451	0.339	0.387	0.346
F	29.695	18.898	23.02	22.059

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

This study further investigated the relationships among pre-purchase experience, during-purchase experience, post-purchase experience, perceived value, and customer stickiness (including psychological stickiness and behavioral stickiness). The empirical results demonstrate that pre-purchase experience, during-purchase experience, and post-purchase experience each exert a significant positive influence on customer stickiness, encompassing both psychological and behavioral dimensions.

3.7. Mediation Effect Analysis

This study employed the Bootstrap method to test mediation effects following the three-step procedure. The number of bootstrap samples was set at 5,000, and mediation testing was conducted at the 95% confidence level. A mediation effect is considered statistically significant if the confidence interval (CI) of the indirect effect does not include zero.

Table 3. Bootstrap Mediation Effect Analysis

Pathway	Effect Value	Standard Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
Customer Experience → Perceived Value → Customer Stickiness	0.230	0.066	0.104	0.364
Customer Experience → Perceived Value → Psychological Stickiness	0.223	0.073	0.091	0.370
Customer Experience → Perceived Value → Behavioral Stickiness	0.237	0.080	0.093	0.404

As shown in Table 3 the confidence intervals for the mediation effects across all tested paths do not contain zero, indicating the presence of significant mediation effects. Specifically, for the path Customer Experience → Perceived Value → Customer Stickiness, the unstandardized indirect effect is 0.230, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.104, 0.364], which excludes zero. This confirms the significance of the mediating role of perceived value, thus supporting Hypothesis H4.

3.8. Moderation Effect Analysis

As shown in Table 4, the regression coefficient (β) of customer experience in Model M6 is positive and statistically significant. Moreover, the interaction term between customer experience and social presence yields a β value of 0.132 ($t = 2.719$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that social presence significantly and positively moderates the relationship between customer experience and perceived value. These results provide empirical support for Hypothesis H5.

Table 4. Moderation Effect Analysis Results

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable: Perceived Value		
	M4	M5	M6
	$\beta(t)$		
Customer Experience	0.592**(12.185)	0.559**(11.565)	0.552**(11.549)
Social Presence		0.183**(3.732)	0.218**(4.350)
Customer Experience × Social Presence			0.132**(2.719)
R ²	0.362	0.393	0.409
Adjusted R ²	0.346	0.375	0.390
F	22.059	21.960	20.802

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$

This study further examined the moderating role of social presence in the relationship between customer experience (pre-purchase experience, during-purchase experience, and post-purchase experience) and perceived value. The interaction terms between pre-purchase experience × social presence ($\beta = 0.172$, $p < 0.01$) and post-purchase experience × social presence ($\beta = 0.127$, $p < 0.01$) were found to be statistically significant, indicating a positive moderating effect in both the pre-purchase and post-purchase stages. However, the interaction term for during-purchase experience × social presence was not significant, suggesting that there is no moderating effect during the purchase phase.

4. Conclusion and Implications

4.1. Research Conclusion

First, customer experience has a positive impact on customer stickiness. From the perspective of the entire purchase cycle, customer experience encompasses pre-purchase information gathering, during-purchase actions, and post-purchase service feedback, collectively shaping the customer's overall perception of the product or service. Pre-purchase experience influences purchase intentions, during-purchase experience affects purchase decisions, and post-purchase experience determines repurchase behavior and word-of-mouth communication. A high-quality, comprehensive customer experience enhances customer stickiness, bringing stable customer traffic and market share to live streaming platforms and businesses.

Second, perceived value plays a mediating role in the process by which customer experience influences customer

stickiness. Information search before the purchase, operational experience during the purchase, and after-sales services all impact customer perceived value. When perceived value is high, customers are more likely to trust and rely on the business psychologically, forming a sense of recognition and belonging, which enhances psychological stickiness. Simultaneously, customers are more likely to engage in repeated visits and purchases from the platform and live streaming rooms, which strengthens behavioral stickiness.

Third, social presence positively moderates the relationship between pre-purchase experience and perceived value, as well as between post-purchase experience and perceived value. Before the purchase, customer interaction with the host or other customers enhances feelings of participation and belonging. After the purchase, communication with after-sales staff or other customers leads to a higher sense of social presence, moderating the effect of post-purchase experience on perceived value. In contrast, the moderating effect of social presence on the relationship between during-purchase experience and perceived value is not significant. This may be because, during the purchase stage, customers focus more on the convenience of the specific operational process of purchasing products and do not require as much interaction with the host or other customers.

4.2. Managerial Implications

First, optimize customer experience to enhance customer stickiness. Pre-purchase, improve live streaming layout and configuration, design the live room appropriately, optimize visual information, conduct promotions, and offer low-priced products to attract customers. During the purchase, simplify the shopping process, shorten the steps for placing an order in the live stream, and provide diverse payment methods such as

WeChat Pay and Alipay to facilitate quick decision-making for customers. Post-purchase, ensure product quality control, strengthen after-sales services, and address returns and exchanges promptly.

Second, focus on customer psychology to improve perceived value. Capture customers' focus on cost-effectiveness by emphasizing the practical value of the product throughout all stages, from pre-sale to post-sale. Establish emotional connections by offering limited-edition or live-stream exclusive products and sharing brand stories that resonate emotionally with customers. Encourage customer involvement in decision-making to enhance their perception of social value.

Third, create an interactive atmosphere to enhance social presence. Pre-purchase, ensure that the host and communication team pay attention to real-time comments, answer questions promptly, and introduce topics to stimulate customer interaction. Post-purchase, ensure that the after-sales service team actively communicates with customers and provides clarification and assistance.

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