

## The Impact of Livestreamer's Reputation on Impulsive Purchase Behavior on E-Commerce Through Parasocial Relationships



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**ABSTRACT:** This study explores the impact of reputation (Reput) on Impulsive Purchase Behavior (IPB), with a focus on the mediating role of Parasocial Relationship (PR). Using a survey method, data were collected through questionnaire surveys, yielding 386 valid responses. Structural equation modeling (SEM) with 5,000 bootstrapping iterations was used to test the proposed hypotheses. The findings reveal that Reputation directly and positively influences both Parasocial Relationships and Impulsive Purchase Behavior. Additionally, the Parasocial Relationship acts as a mediator in the relationship between Reputation and Impulsive Purchase Behavior. The research has contributed some theoretical and practical implications for e-commerce businesses.

**KEYWORDS:** Purchase behavior; e-commerce; perception

**JEL codes:** L81; L14; C91

### 1. INTRODUCTION

With the rapid growth of e-commerce, livestream shopping has emerged as a dominant trend, particularly in Vietnam. According to AccessTrade Vietnam, livestream commerce is projected to account for up to 20% of total e-commerce sales by early 2026, with approximately 2.5 million livestream sales sessions per month and participation from over 50,000 sellers (Bang Son. 2024). This transformation not only reshapes consumer purchasing behaviors but also presents both opportunities and challenges for businesses seeking to capitalize on this trend.

One crucial aspect of livestream shopping is the concept of parasocial relationships between viewers and livestreamers. A parasocial relationship refers to a one-sided psychological connection wherein viewers develop a sense of familiarity and trust with the livestreamer, despite the absence of direct, reciprocal interaction (Nguyen, B. V., et al. 2024). Prior studies indicate that livestreamer attributes, such as attractiveness and credibility, significantly influence consumer purchasing decisions. Specifically, an engaging and reputable livestreamer can elicit strong emotional responses from viewers, fostering trust and increasing the likelihood of impulsive purchases (Nguyen, B. V., et al. 2024).

Impulsive purchasing behavior, characterized by unplanned and spontaneous buying decisions, is often triggered by external stimuli such as promotions, product appeal, or the persuasive influence of the seller. In the livestream shopping context, real-time interaction and the perceived intimacy of the parasocial relationship can heighten consumers' susceptibility to impulsive purchases (tcct. 2024). Notably, when a livestreamer possesses high credibility, viewers are more likely to trust their product recommendations and make immediate purchasing decisions (Kinh Te Va Du Bao. 2024).

Although previous studies have examined various factors influencing online shopping behavior, there remains a research gap regarding the specific impact of livestreamer reputation on impulsive purchasing behavior through parasocial relationships. Therefore, this study aims to explore and elucidate the interplay between livestreamer reputation, parasocial relationships, and impulsive buying behavior in the e-commerce landscape. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights for businesses in selecting and collaborating with livestreamers and formulating effective marketing strategies in an increasingly competitive e-commerce environment.

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## **2. LITERATURE REVIEWS AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1. Basic concepts**

#### **2.1.1. Impulsive purchase behavior on e-commerce**

In the modern context, with the development of e-commerce and social networks, impulse buying behavior has shifted to the online environment (Zhang et al., 2018). According to (Feng et al., 2024), online impulse buying is defined as a spontaneous shopping behavior when consumers experience the urge to buy while browsing the web.

From the above concepts, it can be seen that impulsive buying behavior is a purchase behavior that occurs without prior planning, often motivated by the immediate appeal of the product., including the intersection of psychological, emotional, cognitive, and contextual factors.

#### **2.1.2. Livestreamer's Reputation**

According to Chen, N and Yang, Y (2023), Social Media Influencers (SMI) are individuals or organizations that build a distinct image on social media platforms to attract a large number of followers. Besides, reputation is often defined as the extent to which individuals or organizations are judged on their ability, achievements, and appeal in a particular field (Fombrun et al, 2003).

So, the concept of livestreamer's reputation can be seen as the perceived credibility, expertise, and appeal of a livestreamer within a specific online community, shaped by audience judgments regarding their consistency, trustworthiness, engagement quality, and past performance in livestream commerce or content creation

#### **2.1.3. The S-O-R theory**

The Stimulus-Organism-Response theory model introduced by Mehrabian and Russell (1974) is a psychological model used to understand how external stimuli affect internal psychology through specific situations. SOR is considered a famous model in the world and is widely applied in research on purchasing decisions including impulsive buying behavior. The model studies external stimuli that interact with individuals and affect their internal states, thereby leading to changes in individual emotions and perceptions. Internal factors play an intermediary role in linking stimuli and response behavior together.

#### **2.1.4. Impulse Consumption Theory**

The Impulse Consumption Theory helps explain why consumers make impulse buying decisions based largely on emotions and environmental stimuli. In e-commerce, especially livestreaming, factors such as attractive promotions, interaction with the host, and social factors all contribute to increasing the likelihood of impulse buying. Understanding this theory helps businesses optimize their marketing strategies to promote shopping behavior, while also helping consumers become more self-aware and in control of their purchasing decisions.

### **2.2. Hypotheses**

#### **2.2.1. Livestreamer's reputation and impulsive purchase behavior**

A popular streamer with a strong reputation tends to influence purchasing decisions, as consumers associate their credibility with the authenticity and value of the product (Hoffner & Bond, 2022). Livestreamer reputation has a significant impact on impulsive purchasing, and the moderating effect of perceived power has also been confirmed (Kong, S et al., 2023). Other findings confirm that the reputation of a company or an individual has a positive influence on customer satisfaction and commitment, which in turn leads to increased impulse buying behavior in e-commerce (Su, L et al., 2016).

**H1: Reputation positively affects consumers' impulsive purchase behavior through e-commerce platforms.**

#### **2.2.2. Livestreamer's reputation and parasocial relationships**

The list reflects the perceived trustworthiness and reliability of a transmitter (Kim & Lennon, 2013). According to Kim et al. (2013), reputation has a significant positive effect on consumer emotions and a significant negative effect on perceived risk. Livestreamer reputation has a significant effect on customer-livestreamer interactions (Kong, S và cộng sự, 2023). Therefore, our proposed hypothesis is:

**H2: Reputation positively affects parasocial relationships through e-commerce platforms.**

#### **2.2.3. Parasocial relationships**

Studies show that when consumers feel a strong emotional connection with a streamer, their trust in that streamer increases, influencing their purchasing decisions (Labrecque, 2014). Research by Hu, Q et al. (2023) highlights that parasocial relationships with digital influencers have a significant impact on impulsive purchasing behavior. The feeling of connection and influence viewers to trust the streamer's opinion, thus driving purchase intention and consumer loyalty.

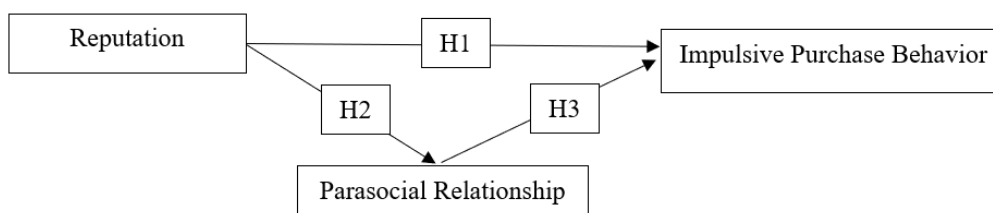
**H3: Parasocial relationships positively affects consumers' impulsive purchase behavior through e-commerce platforms.**

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### 2.2.4. Mediator effect

The credibility and value of a livestreamer's content can impact parasocial relationships and brand trust (Kim, M. 2023). This highlights the importance of maintaining a positive reputation as a livestreamer in order to foster strong parasocial relationships with viewers (Bermond, A. 2020). Furthermore, the influence of influencers on impulsive buying behavior has been studied extensively, with parasocial relationships being identified as a key factor in driving impulsive purchases (Ma, X et al. 2023; Leite, F. P et al. 2024). In the context of live streaming commerce, parasocial relationships mediate the relationship between stimuli and impulse food purchase and consumption intention (Lee, D., & Wan, C. 2023).

**H4: Parasocial relationship mediates the relationship between livestreamer's reputation and consumers' impulsive purchase behavior.**



**Figure\_1: The concept model**

**Source:** The model was required by the authors

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Sampling and data collection

The authors and participants completely agreed that all information provided in the survey would remain anonymous and entirely voluntary, with the results used exclusively for research purposes. Prior to conducting the survey, key concepts, including vulnerabilities in skills and knowledge, were clearly defined. The data for this study were collected through online surveys conducted in Vietnam in October 2024

The study sample was balanced between genders with 46.37% male and 53.63% female. The 15-22 and 23-30 age groups accounted for the highest proportions, at 33.68% and 34.20%, respectively. This shows that young people, especially students and new employees, are the main target of impulse buying behavior via Livestream. Participants from the urban for 35.49%, higher than those from the countryside (32.64%). This small difference shows the popularity of livestreaming across the country, but consumers in the South are somewhat dominant. Facebook (21.76%), Instagram (20.98%) and TikTok (20.47%) are the three main platforms used by consumers when participating in livestreams. This result emphasizes the important role of social media in promoting impulse buying behavior.

**Table 1: Demographic Profile of Participants**

		Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	179	46.37%
	Female	207	53.63%
Age	Under age 15	59	15.28%
	Ages 15-22	130	33.68%
	Ages 23-30	132	34.20%
	Over 30	65	16.84%
Living	Urban	200	51.81%
	Countryside	186	48.18%
Occupation	Student	118	30.57%
	University student	129	33.42%
	Working	139	36.01%
Social platforms	Facebook	106	27.46%
	Instagram	140	36.27%
	Tiktok	140	36.27%

**Source:** Analysis of authors' survey.

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## 3.2. Measures and questionnaire development

To examine the impact of reputation in the capability of livestreamers on consumers’ impulsive purchase behaviors in e-commerce, our study adopted scales that were developed in previous research. With the variable of reputation, we adapted the measurement from a previous study by Lou, L., et al. (2022). The parasocial relationships (PR) variable was measured using an adapted scale from the study by Riva Tukachinsky (2010). Finally, the measurement of impulsive purchase behavior (IPB) was adapted from the research of Li, X., et al (2024). Each variable was scored based on the five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). To avoid common method bias, we translated the Vietnamese version into English, and any differences were resolved before developing the final questionnaire survey. All questions in the survey provided brief explanations to ensure that participants could understand the contexts.

## 3.3. Data analysis

We applied Smart PLS 4 software to conduct the validity and reliability of constructs through Cronbach’s Alpha, EFA, and CFA. We evaluated the influence of reputation on impulsive purchase behavior by conducting structural equation modeling (SEM). We used the bootstrapping method to examine mediation coefficients. In this research, the bootstrapping sample was 5000 with a confidence interval of 95% and if the confidence interval did not involve zero, the mediations were conducted substantially. We used the Smart PLS 4 of (Hair et al., 2017), which is useful to recognize and estimate the indirect effects (Munir et al., 2024). The results permitted us to express the role of the mediating variable (PR) in the relationship between Reput and IPB.

## 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Scale assessment

The evaluation of the model utilizing Smart PLS 4 revealed that the outer loading for the observed variables exceeded 0.7. Consequently, items PR6 were removed due to their outer loading being below the threshold of 0.7, while the remaining variables met the desired criterion of outer loading greater than 0.7, as presented in **Table 2**. Subsequently, the research team examined the reliability of the scale across the full sample by calculating Cronbach’s Alpha. The results indicated that IPB had a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.930, PR recorded 0.914, and Reput achieved 0.946. All variables exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient exceeding 0.7, signifying a good level of reliability for the scale (Hair et al., 2010). Furthermore, **Table 2** demonstrates that the EVA coefficient surpassed the acceptable threshold of 0.5, confirming the effectiveness of the structural value. The diagonal values representing discriminant validity were derived from the square of the AVE coefficient, which was greater than the correlations among the dimensions. This indicates that the discriminant validity is robust, as each dimension maintains adequate discrimination, as illustrated in **Table 3**.

**Table 2: Measurement model reliability**

Variable	Code	Outer loading	VIF	ALpha	CR(rho_c)	AVE
Impulsive Purchase Behavior	IPB1	0.936	3.686	0.930	0.955	0.877
	IPB2	0.937	3.705			
	IPB3	0.937	3.848			
Parasocial relationships	PR1	0.934	4.103	0.914	0.940	0.797
	PR3	0.928	4.192			
	PR4	0.771	1.822			
	PR5	0.927	4.014			
Reputation	Reput1	0.931	4.171	0.946	0.961	0.860
	Reput2	0.932	4.435			
	Reput3	0.921	4.020			
	Reput4	0.926	3.930			

*Note: PR2 and PR6 were eliminated*

**Source:** authors’ survey.

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**Table 3: Result of the reliability and convergence of the scale**

<b>Fornell-Larcker Criterion</b>	<b>IPB</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>Reput</b>
Impulsive Purchase Behavior (IPB)	0.937		
Parasocial relationships (PR)	0.633	0.893	
Reputation (Reput)	0.050	0.282	0.928
<b>Heterotrait-Monotrait Ration (HTMT)</b>	<b>IPB</b>	<b>PR</b>	<b>Reput</b>
Impulsive Purchase Behavior (IPB)			
Parasocial relationships (PR)	0.677		
Reputation (Reput)	0.052	0.298	

**Source:** Analysis of authors' survey.

## 4.2. Structural path analysis

The results from the Direct Path Analysis Table 4 show significant interactions between livestreamer reputation (Reputation – Reput), parasocial relationship (PR), and impulsive purchase behavior (IPB). Specifically, PR has a strong and positive effect on IPB ( $\beta = 0.673$ ,  $T = 27.132$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that when viewers feel a close relationship with the livestreamer, they tend to make more impulsive purchase decisions. In contrast, livestreamer reputation has a direct negative effect on IPB ( $\beta = -0.140$ ,  $T = 3.495$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that when a livestreamer has a high reputation, viewers may become more cautious and less likely to make impulsive purchase decisions. However, reputation has a positive effect on PR ( $\beta = 0.282$ ,  $T = 4.961$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that a livestreamer with a high reputation will easily build and strengthen a one-sided relationship with the audience. Notably, the indirect effect of reputation on IPB through PR is significant ( $\beta = 0.190$ ,  $T = 4.859$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This means that although reputation can reduce the tendency to impulsively buy directly when it increases PR, PR becomes a factor that promotes IPB. So the total effect of Reput on IPB was positive with  $\beta = 0.050$ . In other words, if a livestreamer not only has a high reputation but also maintains strong interactions with the audience, this may increase impulsive buying behavior through the development of a one-sided relationship. These results suggest that to optimize sales from impulse buying behavior, livestreamers need to not only build credibility but also promote emotional connections with audiences to enhance PR effects, thereby indirectly influencing consumers' purchasing decisions.

**Table 4: Direct Path Analysis**

	<b>Original Sample (O)</b>	<b>Sample Mean (M)</b>	<b>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P Values</b>	<b>Result</b>
<b>H3: PR -&gt; IPB</b>	0.673	0.674	0.025	27.132	***	Supported
<b>H1: Reput -&gt; IPB</b>	-0.140	-0.142	0.040	3.495	***	Supported
<b>H2: Reput -&gt; PR</b>	0.282	0.283	0.057	4.961	***	Supported
<b>H4: Reput -&gt; PR -&gt; IPB</b>	0.190	0.191	0.039	4.859	***	Supported

*Note:*  $N = 386$ , \*\*\* is  $p < 0.001$ .

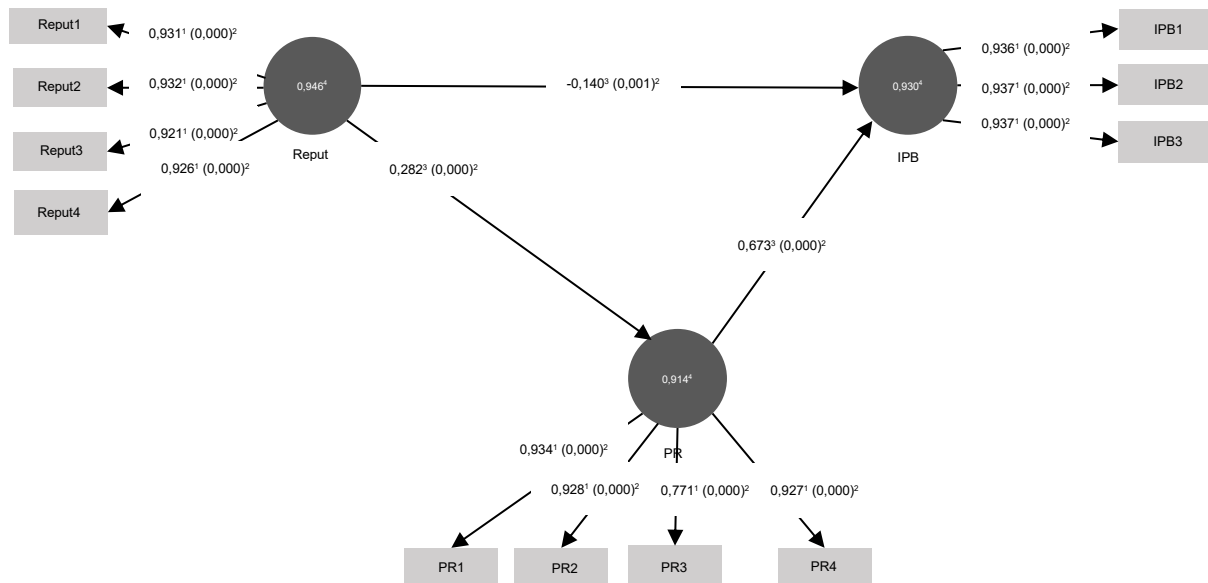
**Source:** Analysis of authors' survey

## 4.3. Discussion

The results of the study showed that Reput has an indirectly negative impact on IPB ( $O = -0.140$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). However, this contrasts with H1 and differs from the prior empirical findings of Su, L et al., (2016). This discrepancy may arise from various factors, including technological and technical advancements in online shopping platforms and the digital space in general. Today, when livestreamers are more reputable, consumers tend to less purchase with impulsive behavior because they lose their sense of scarcity, doubt authenticity, and become influenced by crowd psychology. In addition, famous livestreamers usually cooperate with the fame brands, so the price can be more higher than others, make customers consider more carefully before buying. Furthermore, the study also found that a Reput positively affects PR ( $O = 0.282$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). This result, although supporting H2, as the same as earlier studies like Kim et al (2013).

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The result also revealed that PR positively impacts IPB ( $O = 0.673$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). When compared with prior research, such as Labrecque (2014), similar results were observed, thereby supporting H3. It shows that social relationships with digital influencers have a significant impact on impulse buying behavior. When consumers follow livestreamers for a long time, they feel there is a close relationship, even in real life, this relationship is single direction. This trust reduces the psychological barrier to purchase, as customers tend to believe that the livestreamer will not recommend a poor-quality product. The study also highlighted that PR plays a role in mediation between PBE via PBC ( $O = 0.190$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Although this result is consistent with and supports H4, this finding also is a new contribution, the authors tend to conduct the results when regarding the PR as a mediator in this path effect. Consumers' behavior is decided by the relationships around them, to make these relationships closer, livestreamers need more skills to interact with consumers.



**Figure\_2. PLS-SEM structural equation modeling results.**

Note: \*\*\*1: Outer Loading; \*\*\*2: P-value; \*\*\*3: Path Coefficients; \*\*\*4: Cronbach's Alpha

Source: The result from Smart PLS 4.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1. Theoretical and practical implications

From a theoretical perspective, our study contributes to the research on impulsive purchase behavior through e-commerce platforms by examining the intricate relationship between livestreamers' reputation (Reput), parasocial relationship (PR), and impulsive purchase behavior (IPB). Specifically, the findings extend the applicability of the S-O-R theory and Impulse Consumption Theory, revealing nuanced dynamics that deviate from some previous studies.

From a practical perspective, the findings of our study offer several practical recommendations for livestreamers and consumers to enhance impulsive purchase behavior. For livestreamers, the first suggestion is Livestreamers can enhance their reputation and build stronger relationships with consumers by being authentic, transparent, and engaging during their streams, actively responding to comments, showcasing high-quality content, and collaborating with reputable brands. Offering exclusive deals, encouraging user-generated content, and maintaining consistency in their streaming schedules can further establish trust. Secondly, To boost consumers' impulsive purchase behavior, livestreamers should create a sense of urgency through limited-time offers, highlight product scarcity, leverage real-time reviews, and provide an interactive shopping experience with polls, giveaways, and emotional storytelling. Simplifying the checkout process, offering bundle deals, and using FOMO-driven tactics can encourage spontaneous buying decisions, ultimately benefiting both livestreamers and their audiences.

### 5.2. Limitations and future research

Despite its valuable contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a specific cultural and market context—Vietnam—where livestream shopping is rapidly growing. The findings may not be entirely generalizable to other markets with different consumer behaviors and levels of technological adoption. Future



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research could conduct comparative studies across different countries to assess the universality of the relationships identified in this study.

Second, the study primarily relied on self-reported survey data, which may introduce common method bias. Although measures were taken to reduce this bias, future research could incorporate behavioral data, such as actual purchase records or eye-tracking technology, to strengthen the validity of the findings.

Third, the research focused on the role of parasocial relationships as a mediator between livestreamer reputation and impulsive purchase behavior. However, other factors such as product attributes, time pressure, and promotional strategies may also play significant roles. Future studies should explore additional mediating and moderating variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of impulsive purchase behavior in livestreaming commerce.

Lastly, this study used cross-sectional data, limiting its ability to capture long-term consumer behavior trends. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how the impact of livestreamer reputation and parasocial relationships evolves over time.

### 5.3. Conclusion

This study contributes to the growing body of research on livestream shopping by examining the impact of livestreamer reputation on impulsive purchase behavior through parasocial relationships. The findings highlight that while reputation directly influences consumer trust and engagement, its effect on impulsive buying behavior is more complex. A strong parasocial relationship can amplify impulsive purchasing tendencies, acting as a crucial mediator in the consumer decision-making process.

From a practical perspective, the study underscores the importance of building both credibility and emotional connection in livestream commerce. Livestreamers who can effectively engage with their audience while maintaining authenticity and trustworthiness are more likely to drive impulsive purchases. Additionally, e-commerce platforms and marketers can leverage these insights to design more effective influencer marketing strategies.

In conclusion, while livestreaming presents immense opportunities for businesses, understanding the psychological mechanisms behind consumer behavior is essential for optimizing sales strategies. Future research should continue exploring the evolving dynamics of livestream shopping, considering emerging trends and technological advancements that shape consumer engagement in digital commerce.

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