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**Full Research Paper**

# The Influence of Live Streamer Morality on Consumer Purchase Intentions from the Perspective of Identity

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**Abstract:** Most of the existing studies have described the characteristics of live streaming and the participation motivation of consumers using surveys. However, the relationship between consumer judgment of live streamer morality and their purchase intention has been largely ignored. Based on identity theory, this study constructs a theoretical framework for the influence of live streamers morality on consumer purchase intentions. The results show that the morality of live streamers influences consumer purchase intentions by influencing their identity. Furthermore, the entertainment value of live streaming content has a positive moderating effect on live streamers morality while the information value of live streaming content has no moderating effect. The purpose of this study is to focus on the psychological mechanism and boundary conditions of the influence of live streamer morality on consumer decision making and expand the research on live streaming, which will have important significance for consumer decision making and enterprise marketing strategy formulation.

**Keywords:** live streaming, live streamer morality, consumer identity, entertainment value of live streaming content, information value of live streaming content

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Live streaming marketing is a new online marketing form emerging due to the maturity of Internet technology and the development of e-commerce platforms. Live streamers present product information more vividly through a live streaming platform to promote consumer purchase intentions<sup>[1]</sup>. However, recently, the "Fanche" phenomenon has frequently appeared, which means that streamers engage in unethical marketing during their live streaming. For example, Simba's team, Jiaqi Li and Yonghao Luo once sold fake or substandard products in their studio. This kind of unethical marketing behavior seriously affects consumer trust and further undermines marketing effectiveness.

In fact, the field of marketing and psychology has been paying close attention to the morality of celebrity spokesman and key opinion leaders, and points out that virtue characteristics are important factors that influence consumers' willingness to buy. And scholars have called for more attention to the morality of sales-related personnel<sup>[2, 3]</sup>. For example, Martin(2017) indicated that the morality of celebrity spokesperson can influence people's purchasing choices<sup>[4]</sup>. Cheng (2015) argued that ethical sales practices in e-commerce have a significant impact on consumer attitudes<sup>[5]</sup>. At present, a number of studies on the characteristics of live streamers are focused on professionalism<sup>[6]</sup>, attractiveness<sup>[7]</sup>, popularity<sup>[8]</sup>, interactivity<sup>[1]</sup> and so on, while there is little research focusing on the morality of live streamer. This study argues that there are two main reasons for the above limitation. First, as a new form of marketing, research on live streaming marketing is still in its infancy at present. Although many studies have pointed out current problems in the live streaming industry and given development forecasts or legal regulation recommendations, but ignored the most important core figure in live marketing - the live streamer.

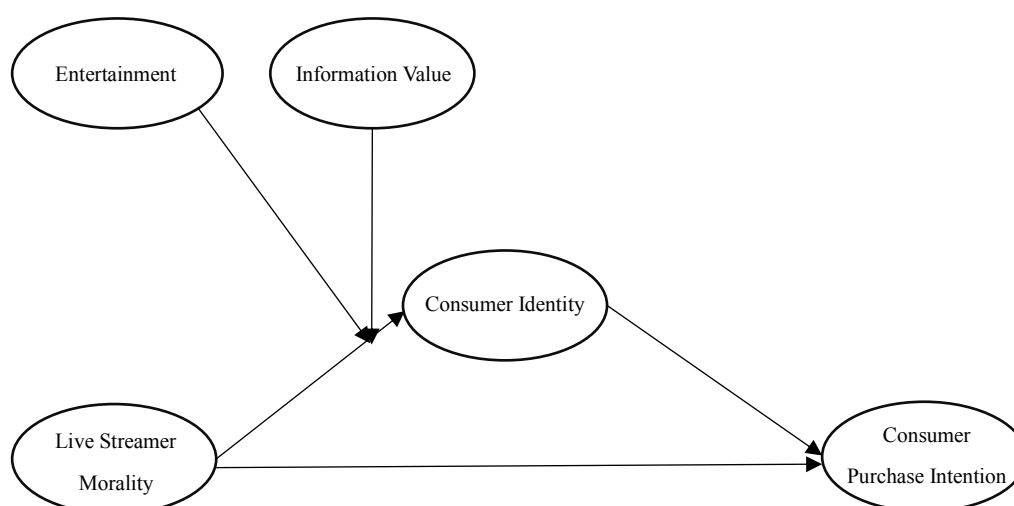
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Second, the market and enterprises pay too much attention to the immediate benefits brought by live streaming instead of the damage to the long-term benefits caused by unethical sales behavior.

Based on identity theory, this study discusses the psychological mechanism by which live streamer morality (LSM) affects consumer purchase intention (CPI) in live streaming marketing and proposes the boundary conditions of the above relationship. According to identity theory, an individual's identity is always based on some widely accepted characteristics in the social and cultural contexts. People either internalize them to form the characteristics of their own or use them to enrich and perfect their original identity when they interact with others<sup>[9]</sup>. Stets(2011) argued that morality is one of the factors that influence identity<sup>[10]</sup>. In addition, identity also includes the extent to which one adopts a behavior from others or groups. Wang Ning(2001) stated that in the era of consumption, consumer behavior is an important way to construct identity<sup>[11]</sup>. According to the research of Cao (2012), consumer self-identity and social identity will have significant impacts on the brand attitude and purchase intentions of an endorsed brand<sup>[12]</sup>. Martin (2017) proposed that the morality of celebrity spokespersons would influence consumer consumption choices by affecting their identity<sup>[4]</sup>. According to the bidirectional construction relationship between identity and consumption<sup>[13]</sup>, it can be inferred that consumer identity(CI) may have a mediating role which live streamer morality influences consumer buying intentions.

There are two main motivations for consumption, hedonic and utilitarian<sup>[14]</sup>, that is, consumers hope to obtain a pleasant experience or useful information during consumption<sup>[15]</sup>. Existing studies have shown that brand-related content that is informative and entertaining can affect consumer emotional responses<sup>[16]</sup>. Similarly, if the content of live streaming is funny or useful, it will arouse the emotional reaction and attract attention, which makes it possible for consumers to deeply participate in the interaction process with live streamers and establish a "para-social relationship" with them<sup>[17]</sup>. Therefore, we believe that the entertainment value (EV) and information value (IV) of live streaming content may moderate the influence of live streamer morality on consumer identity. In summary, a moderated mediation model was established in this study, as shown in Figure 1. First, the model reveals the mediating role of consumer identity in the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer purchase intentions. Second, the moderating effect of the information value and entertainment value of live streaming content on the first half of the mediating effect will be explored.



**Figure 1. Conceptual model.**

This study aims to open the "black box" of consumer behavior in live streaming marketing and explore the complex influence of live streamer morality on consumer purchase intentions, thus providing a new perspective for the research conclusions that are inconsistent in the existing literature. Furthermore, this study provides the corresponding theoretical basis for the selection and cultivation of live streamers in marketing practice.

## 2. THEORY AND HYPOTHESIS

### 2.1 Live streamer morality and consumer purchase intentions

Unethical behavior in marketing will damage the trust and affect attitudes and behaviors of consumers<sup>[5]</sup>. For example, studies have shown that consumers are paying increasing attention to socially responsible brands<sup>[18]</sup>. Dang (2020) shows that an enterprise's sense of social responsibility has a direct impact on consumer behavior<sup>[19]</sup>. Valenzuela (2010) also believes that social responsibility can help retailers gain loyal customers and improve their customer relationships<sup>[20]</sup>. Similarly, in the traditional marketing field, morality, as a source of meaning transmission and credibility, will increase consumer purchase intentions by increasing their identity with celebrity spokespeople<sup>[4]</sup>. Research also shows that the credibility of opinion leaders will influence consumer purchase decisions<sup>[21]</sup>.

The morality of live streamers defined in this study refers to the reliability, honesty, sincerity and social responsibility of live streamers perceived by consumers. For example, a live streamer's moral level can be reflected by whether they objectively introduce the use effect of a product and a guarantee of after-sales service and the enthusiasm of live streamers for participating in the public welfare broadcasts. Recently, the unethical sales practices occurring in live marketing have seriously affected consumer trust and further affected marketing effectiveness. Therefore, this paper concludes that the moral level of live streamers will affect consumers' purchase intention. The more moral live streamers are, the more willing consumers are to identify with live streamers and become like them.

Based on the above analysis and the results of existing empirical studies, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H1: The morality of live streamers positively influences consumer purchase intentions.

### 2.2 The mediating role of identity

Baudrillard pointed out in *The Consumer Society* that consumption has gradually become the main way for people to construct their identity. Previous studies on opinion leaders also point out that the influence of opinion leaders on consumers' buying intentions is largely through identification. People can relieve the anxiety caused by the identity crisis by wanting to be the person they want to be, such as stars or key opinion leaders, because those people often represent the symbolic significance of fashion, trend, profession and so on. Therefore, buying the products recommended by them becomes a way to construct their own identity. As described earlier, the formation of identity will be influenced by some commonly recognized characteristics in social culture. Moreover, Stets(2011) argued that morality is also one of these characteristics<sup>[10]</sup>. Erikson (1998) argued that people tend to seek a balance between their moral self and their behavior, which also implies that morality is an essential element of one's self<sup>[22]</sup>. When consumers perceive the moral traits of celebrities, it is reasonable for them to process the information through their own moral sense and identify with celebrity spokespersons to strengthen their moral identity. In this way, celebrities shape the self-concept of consumers<sup>[23]</sup>. Johnson (2005) found that as time passes, consumers will have a sense of identity and intimacy with celebrities after they are exposed to the news of celebrities in the media<sup>[24]</sup>. Therefore, the celebrity's morality will increase consumer sense of identity with the celebrity. In live marketing, we assume that a live streamer can be thought of as an extension of the traditional spokesperson. The good moral character of live streamers provides a moral example for consumers, affects consumer moral judgments, and strengthens the moral identity of consumers. Therefore, live streamer morality may be the influencing factor shaping consumer self-concepts.

Based on the above analysis and the results of existing empirical studies, we propose the following:

- H2: The morality of live streamers positively influences consumer identity.

Consumer attitudes towards celebrities would shift to recognized brands<sup>[25]</sup>. Horton and Wohl (1956) argue that a unilateral connection and the illusion of face-to-face interaction with a celebrity can be described as a para-social relationship, which reflects a deep identity that leads to changes in attitudes and behaviors<sup>[26]</sup>. Consumers

with a higher degree of identification will correspondingly show a more positive attitude towards celebrities<sup>[24]</sup>, thus producing attachment and loyalty to the endorsed brand<sup>[27]</sup>. In addition, the identity effect also represents that people's emotional and cognitive identification of the meaning of an event has a significant impact on their evaluation of, attitude towards and behavior towards the event. To achieve the goal of self-improvement, individuals tend to respond positively to external information consistent with their own identity<sup>[28]</sup>. Therefore, we believe that in the context of live streaming, consumer identification of live streamer morality will affect their purchase decisions and intentions related to live streaming.

Based on the above analysis and the results of existing empirical studies, we propose the following:

- H3: Consumer identity positively influences consumer purchase intentions.

Based on H1, H2 and H3, we propose the following hypothesis:

- H4: Consumer identity mediates the influence of live streamer morality on consumer purchase intentions.

### **2.3 The moderating effect of the characteristics of live streaming content**

Previous studies have stated that consumer motivation is essentially dualistic because consumers purchase goods and services mainly for two basic reasons: hedonism and utilitarianism<sup>[14]</sup>. The hedonistic motivation is based on sense, that is, the desire to obtain a pleasant experience in consumption activities. Utilitarianism is based on function, that is, the evaluation of a product's functional attributes<sup>[15]</sup>. Recent studies have also shown that consumer dual motivations are also reflected in social networking sites and online consumption activities. For example, the research results of Lin (2011) show that the most important factor influencing people to continue to use social networks is the fun of social networks, followed by the number and usefulness of peers<sup>[29]</sup>. Kim (2016) also stated that brand-related content that is informative, practical and entertaining will affect consumer emotional responses<sup>[16]</sup>. We believe that in live streaming marketing, consumer consumption motivation is also an important factor for consumers to choose whether to watch live broadcasts or not. The funniness and usefulness of live streaming content correspond to consumer hedonistic and utilitarian motives, respectively, because they may be important factors to attract consumer attention and arouse consumer emotional reactions. That is, the fact that interacting with live streamers can acquire happy experiences and useful information from them will encourage consumers to deeply participate in the live-streaming process<sup>[17]</sup>. In this way, consumers are more likely to have an in-depth understanding of live streamers, identify with their moral characteristics and allow live streamers to influence their consumption choices. However, when watching live streaming fails to satisfy consumer motivation, consumers may not choose to watch it, let alone establish an emotional connection with anchors. Therefore, we believe that the entertainment value and information value of live streaming content may moderate the influence of live streamer morality on consumer identity.

Based on the above analysis and the results of existing empirical studies, we propose the following:

- H5: The entertainment value of live streaming content positively moderates the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer identity.
- H6: The information value of live streaming content positively moderates the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer identity.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

### **3.1 Samples and investigation process**

The questionnaires in this study were distributed on the Questionnaire Star platform from July 18, 2020 to August 3, 2020. The questionnaires were distributed to the online fan groups of main live streaming, including Weibo fan groups and QQ fan groups. In this study, a total of 300 questionnaires were sent out, and 291 effective responses were received, with an effective response rate of 97%.

### 3.2 Research tools

The measurement items used in this study were all derived from mature domestic and international scales with good reliability and validity. To ensure a respondent's accurate understanding of the questions, the wording of the measurement items was carefully modified considering the background of live streaming marketing. All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree). Specific scale items are shown in Table 1. According to previous studies, individual statistical variables, such as age, gender, education level and monthly income, may also affect consumer purchase intentions. To exclude the influence of other relevant variables on the results, these variables were treated as control variables in this study<sup>[30]</sup>.

**Table 1. Measurement items.**

Variables	Items	References
Live streamer morality	I think the live streamer is honest.	Davies <sup>[31]</sup> , 2004
	I think the live streamer is sincere.	
	I think the live streamer is trustworthy.	
Consumer identity	I think the live streamer is socially responsible.	Karl & Americus <sup>[32]</sup> , 2002
	Being someone who has the characteristics of the live streamer is an important part of who I am.	
	A big part of my emotional well-being is tied in with the live streamer.	
	It would make me feel good to be a person like the live streamer.	
	Being like the live streamer is truly important to me.	
Consumer purchase intention	I consider it likely that I would purchase this service from this brand.	Reinikainen, H. <sup>[33]</sup> , 2020
	I am happy to wait in the studio for the live streamer to place the purchase link.	
	I consider it possible that I would purchase this service from this brand.	
Entertainment value of live streaming content	I consider it probable that I would purchase this service from this brand.	Voss et al. <sup>[15]</sup> , 2003
	I think live streaming is fun.	
	I think live streaming is exciting.	
	I think live streaming is delightful.	
	I think live streaming is thrilling.	
Information value of live streaming content	I think live streaming is enjoyable.	Voss et al. <sup>[15]</sup> , 2003
	I think live streaming is effective.	
	I think live streaming is helpful.	
	I think live streaming is functional.	
	I think live streaming is necessary.	
	I think live streaming is practical.	

## 4. RESEARCH RESULTS

### 4.1 Confirmatory factor analysis

First, in order to investigate and confirm the convergent validity and discriminant validity of each variable, we used AMOS 22.0 to conduct confirmatory factor analysis. The results show that the five-factor model of each factor in the factor loading and the t value reached a 0.05 significance level, and there was no inappropriate solution, which means a good convergent validity.

In addition, we use the model comparison method to investigate the discriminant validity of each variable. The results of the comparison between the five-factor model and four four-factor models showed that the adaptation index of the five-factor model with all variables independently separated was reasonable (the

adaptation result was  $\chi^2=451.653$ , TLI = 0.941, CFI = 0.949, RMSEA = 0.066, and SRMR = 0.047) and was superior to all four-factor models (see Table 2), indicating that the model has good discriminant validity. In addition, when all the items were combined into a potential factor, the single-factor model with all the indicators had a poor fitting effect ( $\chi^2=2323.260$ , TLI = 0.532, CFI = 0.576, RMSEA = 0.187, and SRMR = 0.126), so there was no serious common method bias in this study<sup>[34, 35]</sup>. Finally, the corresponding mean extraction variance and comprehensive reliability coefficient were calculated. The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  values of the variables were 0.911, 0.862, 0.922, 0.928, and 0.911, respectively. The normalized factor loadings of all dimensions were greater than 0.7 and significant at the 0.001 level. Moreover, the combined reliability coefficients of each dimension are all greater than 0.8, and the average extraction variances are all greater than 0.6, indicating that the scale used in this paper has a good reliability level.

**Table 2. Comparison of measurement models.**

Model	Descriptions	$\chi^2$	df	TLI	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 1	Five factors: live streamer morality, consumer identity, purchase intentions, entertainment value of live streaming content, and information value of live streaming content.	451.653	199	0.941	0.949	0.066	0.047
Model 2	Four factors: live streamer morality and consumer identity were combined into one potential factor.	831.856	200	0.854	0.873	0.104	0.081
Model 3	Four factors: purchase intentions and consumer identity were combined into one potential factor.	810.802	200	0.859	0.878	0.103	0.074
Model 4	Four factors: purchase intentions and entertainment value of live streaming content were combined into one potential factor.	986.130	200	0.818	0.842	0.116	0.081
Model 5	Four factors: purchase intentions and information value of live streaming content were combined into one potential factor.	897.106	200	0.839	0.86	0.110	0.071
Model 6	Live streamer morality, consumer identity, purchase intentions, entertainment value of live streaming content, and information value of live streaming content were combined into one potential factor.	2323.260	209	0.532	0.576	0.187	0.126

*Note.* RMSEA=root mean square error of approximation, SRMR=standardized RMR, CFI=comparative fit index, and TLI=Tucker Lewis index.

#### 4.2 Descriptive statistical results

The mean and standard deviation of each variable and the correlation coefficients among variables are shown in Table 2. There were significant pairwise correlations among the major variables. These results are consistent with our theoretical expectations and can be used for further conditional process testing.

**Table 3. Means, standard deviations and correlations among variables.**

Variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. LSM	3.141	0.763	1				
2. CI	2.434	0.869	0.492***	1			
3. CPI	3.021	0.935	0.498***	0.516***	1		
4. EV	3.269	0.805	0.342***	0.375***	0.620***	1	
5. IV	3.276	0.772	0.573***	0.456***	0.630***	0.685***	1

*Note.*  $N = 291$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ .

### 4.3 Hypothesis testing

#### 4.3.1 Mediating effect test

According to the suggestions of Baron and Kenny, the mediating effect was tested in four steps: (1) The influence of independent variables on outcome variables. (2) The influence of independent variables on mediating variables: Based on the introduction of control variables, the influence of the live streamer morality on consumer identity was analyzed (Hypothesis 1). (3) Influence of mediating variables on outcome variables (Hypothesis 2): Based on the introduction of control variables, the influence of identity on consumer purchase intentions is analyzed. (4) Mediating effect (Hypothesis 3): The effect of live streamer morality and identity is introduced simultaneously to analyze whether the effect of live streamer morality on consumer purchase intentions disappears (complete mediation) or weakens (partial mediation) due to the introduction of identity. Model 2 showed that live streamer morality had a significant positive relationship with their identity ( $\beta=0.45$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), and Hypothesis 1 was verified. Model 5 shows that identity has a significant positive relationship with consumer purchase intentions ( $\beta = 0.48$ ,  $P<0.01$ ). Hypothesis 2 is verified. Model 6 showed that after the addition of identity, the relationship between a live streamer morality and consumer purchase intentions was still significant ( $\beta$  decreased from 0.45 to 0.29 from Model 3 to Model 6, respectively). Therefore, the mediating role of identity is verified. Thus, the bootstrap test showed that the mediating effect was significant, with a 95% confidence interval [0.24, 0.44], and the mediating effect was 0.15, accounting for 33.33% of the total effect (0.45). Combined with the above evidence, we believe that identity partly mediates the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer buying intentions.

**Table 4. Stepwise stratified regression.**

Variables	CI			CPI		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Sex	-0.02 (0.16)	-0.05 (0.14)	-0.06 (0.14)	0.12 (0.15)	0.15** (-0.15)	0.13** (0.15)
Age	0.05 (0.13)	0.06 (0.12)	0.05 (0.12)	-0.01 (0.13)	-0.04 (0.12)	-0.03 (0.12)
Education	-0.0 (0.08)	-0.05 (0.07)	-0.07 (0.07)	0.002 (-0.08)	0.01 (0.08)	0.02 (0.07)
Monthly income	0.01 (0.08)	0.01 (0.07)	-0.002 (0.07)	0.11 (0.08)	0.10 (0.08)	0.11 (0.07)
LSM		0.45*** (0.06)	0.28*** (0.07)	0.45*** (0.06)		0.29*** (0.07)
CI					0.48*** (0.06)	0.35*** (0.06)
EV			0.22*** (0.07)			
IV			0.13 (0.08)			
LSM*EV			0.22*** (0.05)			
LSM*IV			-0.11 (0.04)			
R <sup>2</sup>	0.009	0.206	0.304	0.024	0.225	0.321

Note.  $N = 291$ ;  $\dagger p < 0.10$ ; \*  $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*  $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ . The numbers in brackets in the table are the standard errors for regression coefficients.



### 4.3.2 Moderating effect test

In this step, we conduct the moderation test of the first stage of the model. To eliminate the possible threat of collinearity, when constructing the product term of an independent variable and moderating variable, we standardized the two (live streamer's morality, entertainment value of live streaming content, and information value of live streaming content). Combined with the addition of the interaction items in Model 3, we found that the interaction items of live streamers morality and entertainment value of live streaming content had a significant impact on identity ( $\beta=0.22$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and the interaction between live streamer morality and the information value of live streaming content had no significant effect on identity ( $\beta=-0.11$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that the entertainment value of live streaming content plays a positive moderating role in the relationship between a live streamer morality and consumer identity while the information value of live streaming content has no moderating role in the relationship between a live streamer morality and consumer identity. Furthermore, bootstrapping was used to conduct a second test on the moderating effect of the entertainment value and information value of live streaming content on identity in the first stage, and the results are shown in Table 5. The confidence interval of the determination index does not contain 0, and the test results are the same as those in Table 4. In addition, the information value of live streaming content has no significant moderating effect. The test results support hypothesis 5 but do not support hypothesis 6.

**Table 5. Moderating effect.**

Result variable	Moderating effect					Index			
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	ULCI	INDEX	BootSE	BootLLCI	ULCI	
EV	-1 SD	0.069	0.025	0.018	0.119	0.048	0.016	0.018	0.081
	+1 SD	0.165	0.034	0.101	0.234				
IV	-1 SD	0.093	0.025	0.044	0.144	0.009	0.015	-0.019	0.041
	+1 SD	0.112	0.035	0.047	0.185				

To further confirm whether the type of moderating effect of the entertainment value of live streaming content on the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer identity meets the original expectation, we refer to the practice of Aiken and West (1990<sup>[36]</sup>), put the entertainment value of live streaming content plus or minus one standard deviation into the regression model, and then make a graph (see Figure 2). Figure 2 shows that compared with the low entertainment value of live streaming content, a live streamer morality has a more significant impact on consumer identity under the high entertainment value of live streaming content, which is consistent with the expected hypothesis. Hypothesis 5 is supported.



**Figure 2. Interaction effect of live streamer morality and the entertainment value of live streaming content on consumer identity. High and low levels of entertainment value represent one standard deviation above and below the mean, respectively.**

## 5. DISCUSSION

There is growing interest in live streaming marketing. For the first time, this study elucidates its internal mechanism, constructs its impact on consumers, and proposes an integrated model. This study expands previous studies on live streamer characteristics from the perspective of morality, and considers the mediating role of consumer identity. In addition, the model also proposes the possible moderating effect of the information value and entertainment value of live streaming content from the perspective of consumer consumption motivation. The results show that live streamer morality positively influences consumer identity and then influences consumer attitude and purchase intentions towards the products recommended by live streamers. The entertainment value of live streamer content positively moderates the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer identity. The results of our study are expected to have theoretical significance for researchers studying Internet marketing and live streaming marketing. The results also inform brands and consumers of effective marketing and consumption knowledge.

One of the main findings is about the role of live streamer morality in influencing consumers attitudes and the indirect effect of consumer identity. This adds to our knowledge of research on the morality of consumer opinion leaders and live streamers. This finding is consistent with the research results in the field of traditional marketing. Thus, live streamers can be seen as the extension of traditional spokespersons. Due to the particularity of Internet marketing, consumers cannot see the goods and have a direct feeling before making purchase decisions. Therefore, the final purchase decision depends on the influence of relevant factors in the Internet environment to a large extent. As the core of live streaming, the influence of live streamers on consumer attitudes can be clearly seen. However, as a new marketing form, the development of live streaming marketing is not yet mature in many aspects. For example, Unethical selling by live streamers often appears. Many scholars even point out that live streaming marketing is essentially a kind of trust camp. In many cases, consumers will buy the products recommended by live streamers out of their trust. Thus, live streamer morality is a very important influencing factor in live streaming marketing.

The second main finding is that the entertainment value of live streaming content has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between live streamer morality and consumer identity. When live streaming content is more entertaining, live streamer morality has a stronger predictive effect on consumer identity. In contrast, the information value of live streaming content has no regulating effect. For the first time, this paper proposes the possible moderating effect of live streaming content characteristics from the perspective of consumer binary motivation. When live streaming content is entertaining, this content can just meet the hedonistic motivation of consumers. When the live streaming content is informative, it can just meet the utilitarian motivation of consumers. The results show that consumers watch live broadcasts more for fun than for information provided by live streamers. We speculated that the reasons for this result are that consumers who make buying decisions on the Internet often encounter an "information explosion", which makes consumers feel resistant to all kinds of product information. Entertaining live will attract the attention of consumers and allow them to participate in the interaction with the live streamer, conditional on the morality of the live streamer to make basic judgments. In this case, consumers do not need to spend many cognitive resources to make purchase decisions based on their sense of identity with anchors.

### 5.1 Theoretical contribution

This study is the first to explore the internal mechanism and boundary conditions of how live streamer morality characteristics influence consumer purchase intentions, extending the framework of live streamer characteristics. This study fills the gap between changing Internet marketing practices and the lack of existing research and increases the impact of the importance of live streaming marketing. This study can also be used as a starting point for future empirical research on live streaming marketing, which has the following important

theoretical significance. First, based on the theory of identity, this paper discusses the influence of morality on consumer purchase intentions in the context of live streaming marketing. The results show that morality factors are indispensable to the effectiveness of live streaming marketing, which expands the research field of live streamer characteristics. Second, this paper seeks to explain the psychological mechanism of the influence of live streamer morality on consumer purchase intentions, that is, the mediating role of consumer identity. The results show that identity plays a partial mediating role, which enhances the importance of the construction of identity in the field of consumption. Finally, this paper focuses on the boundary conditions under which live streamer morality affects their identity, as well as the entertainment value and information value of live streaming content, which expands the research perspective of consumer consumption motivation.

### **5.2 Managerial implication**

This study also provides some useful suggestions for those interested in live streaming marketing. For example, since consumer recognition of live streamer morality plays an important role in consumer purchase intentions, brands and enterprises should pay more attention to the moral quality and moral behavior of live streamers when cultivating or selecting live streamers to ensure that the good morality of live streamers promotes consumer recognition of live streamers and then generates consumer behavior. In addition, live streamers, as sellers, are also content creators. In addition to maintaining their professional status and attractiveness, live streamers should continue to improve their entertainment sensitivity so that they can produce more content with entertainment value. Finally, this paper also provides enlightenment for the development of live streamers. Live streamers should constantly improve their moral cultivation, strive to create interesting live content, and better win the recognition of consumers.

### **5.3 Limitations and prospects**

The current study also has some limitations. First, the small sample size and the deviation of the sampling method may affect the reliability of the data. Future studies can consider expanding the sample to the general population to explore the universality of the conclusions. Second, we believe that the factors identified in this study are helpful for us to better understand the mechanism of live streaming marketing. In addition, we recognize that other relevant factors not included in our study will also affect this process, such as social presence during live streaming. Third, the study asked consumers of live streaming marketing about their overall acceptance of live streamer morality. However, due to the different types of live streamers themselves, for example, network live streamers can be divided into entertainment type, goods type and skills type, different types of live streamers may have different influences on consumer attitude, and future research can refine this aspect. Finally, the cross-sectional data collection method is adopted in this study, and the causal logic between variables cannot be determined. Future research can use other methods, such as longitudinal studies and experimental designs, to study the causal relationships between specific variables.

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