

Effects of Humorous, Emotional, and Rational Host Language Styles on Impulsive Purchase Intention in Livestreaming Commerce

Dr. Yue Huang

Graduate School, Stamford International University, Thailand
yue.huang@stamford.edu

Associate Professor Dr. Naksit Sakdapat

University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce, Thailand
naksit9@gmail.com

Dr. Salinee Chaiwatanaporn

Graduate School, Stamford International University, Thailand
salinee.chaiwatanaporn@stamford.edu

Dr. Boonyaporn Boonmek

Graduate School, Stamford International University, Thailand
Boonyaporn.boonmek@stamford.edu

Abstract

This study examines the effects of e-commerce hosts' humorous, emotional, and rational language appeals on consumers' impulsive purchase intention in livestreaming commerce. Drawing on Flow Theory, the study develops a moderated mediation framework in which flow experience serves as a mediator and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) serves as a moderator. Data were collected from 420 Chinese consumers who had watched e-commerce livestreams within the previous year. Structural equation modeling was used to test the direct and indirect relationships, while SPSS PROCESS was employed to examine the moderating effects. The results show that humorous, emotional, and rational appeals each have a significant positive effect on impulsive purchase intention. Flow experience significantly mediates the relationships between all three language appeals and impulsive purchase intention. In addition, eWOM positively moderates the relationship between host language style and impulsive purchase intention. However, its moderating effect on the relationship between flow experience and impulsive purchase intention is not significant. These findings extend the application of Flow Theory to livestreaming commerce by showing how host communication influences impulsive purchase intention through consumers' experiential states and how this relationship may vary according to external online evaluations.

Keywords: electronic word-of-mouth, e-commerce livestreaming, flow experience, host language style, impulsive purchase intention

1. Introduction

The rapid development of livestreaming technology has transformed e-commerce livestreaming into an increasingly important channel for product promotion, sales, and consumer engagement. Unlike conventional online shopping, livestreaming commerce allows consumers to receive product information, interact with hosts, and make purchase decisions in real time. Within this environment, the host plays a central role in presenting products, maintaining audience engagement, and facilitating transactions. Accordingly, the way hosts communicate with viewers has become an important factor influencing consumers' perceptions and purchase responses (Ma et al., 2023).

Language style is one of the key communication tools used by e-commerce hosts. During livestreaming sessions, hosts may use humor to create enjoyment, emotional expressions to build psychological closeness, or rational explanations to communicate product information. These different forms of communication can shape how consumers interpret the livestreaming experience and respond to purchase stimuli. Previous studies have provided evidence that host language can influence consumer attitudes, perceived value, and purchase intention. Li and Zhang (2022), for example, found that language use in livestreaming can affect consumers' emotional states and product sales. Wang et al. (2022) further showed that humorous language can increase consumers' enjoyment, while rational language can provide more comprehensive product information and enhance perceived value.

Other studies have also examined the relationship between host language style and purchase intention. Ma et al. (2023) reported that emotional appeals can evoke consumers' emotional responses, whereas rational appeals help communicate product information and brand-related meaning. Their findings further indicated that host language appeals can influence purchase intention through psychological mechanisms such as self-referencing and self-brand congruence. Similarly, Li and Zheng (2024) found that emotional and rational language styles can enhance consumers' cognition and attitudes toward products and, in turn, strengthen purchase intention through perceived value. These studies demonstrate that host communication is an important component of consumer decision-making in livestreaming commerce. Effects of Humorous, Emotional

Despite these findings, several issues remain insufficiently clarified. First, prior research has often examined selected language appeals or has focused mainly on emotional and rational communication. Less attention has been given to the simultaneous examination of humorous, emotional, and rational appeals as distinct dimensions of host language style within the same analytical framework. Considering these dimensions together may provide a more differentiated understanding of how different communication approaches influence consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

Second, previous research has largely focused on direct effects or explanatory mechanisms such as perceived value, cognition, and self-brand congruence. However, the experiential process through which host language style may translate into impulsive purchase intention requires further examination. Flow experience is particularly relevant in livestreaming commerce because consumers may become deeply engaged, focused, and immersed while interacting with hosts and viewing product presentations. Flow Theory suggests that such an experiential state can influence subsequent behavioral responses. Therefore, examining flow experience as a mediator may help explain not only whether host language style affects impulsive purchase intention, but also how this effect occurs.

Third, although electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has been recognized as an important source of consumer evaluation in online environments, its role in shaping the effectiveness of host communication remains less clear. Favorable evaluations of a host may strengthen consumers' trust and acceptance of the host's communication, whereas less favorable evaluations may weaken these responses. Examining eWOM as a moderating factor therefore provides an opportunity to identify the conditions under which host language style becomes more or less influential in stimulating impulsive purchase intention. The original manuscript already positions eWOM as a potential moderator, but this role needs to be integrated more explicitly into the research gap.

To address these gaps, this study draws on Flow Theory to develop an integrated framework linking three dimensions of e-commerce host language style—humorous appeal, emotional appeal, and rational appeal—to consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Flow experience is

examined as a mediating mechanism, while eWOM is investigated as a moderating factor. In doing so, the study brings together host communication, consumers' internal experiential states, and external online evaluations within a single framework.

This study makes three specific contributions. First, it provides a multidimensional examination of host language style by considering humorous, emotional, and rational appeals simultaneously. Second, it extends the application of Flow Theory in livestreaming commerce by examining flow experience as a psychological mechanism linking host language style to impulsive purchase intention. Third, it examines the boundary role of eWOM in determining whether the influence of host language style and flow experience on impulsive purchase intention varies according to consumers' external evaluative information. Taken together, the study seeks to provide a more integrated explanation of how host communication, consumer immersion, and online evaluations jointly shape impulsive purchase intention in livestreaming commerce.

2. Research Objective

1. To examine the effects of humorous, emotional, and rational host language appeals on consumers' impulsive purchase intention.
2. To examine whether flow experience mediates the relationships between humorous, emotional, and rational host language appeals and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.
3. To examine whether electronic word-of-mouth moderates the relationship between host language style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.
4. To examine whether electronic word-of-mouth moderates the relationship between flow experience and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

3. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Flow Theory

Flow Theory provides an appropriate theoretical lens for explaining how consumers respond to communication stimuli in livestreaming commerce. Flow experience refers to a positive psychological state in which individuals become highly focused, immersed, and intrinsically engaged in an ongoing activity (Hyun et al., 2022). When consumers enter a flow state, their attention becomes concentrated on the immediate experience, external distractions are reduced, and enjoyment and involvement tend to increase. In livestreaming commerce, these conditions may encourage consumers to respond more spontaneously to purchase-related stimuli and consequently strengthen impulsive purchase intention (Dong et al., 2023).

The interactive nature of livestreaming commerce makes flow particularly relevant. Consumers do not merely receive product information; they simultaneously observe the host, participate in real-time interaction, process product-related messages, and experience entertainment. Host communication can therefore function as an important stimulus that shapes consumers' attention, enjoyment, emotional involvement, and perceived clarity. Different language styles may induce flow through different psychological routes. Humorous communication may enhance enjoyment, emotional communication may increase involvement and psychological closeness, while rational communication may reduce uncertainty and facilitate focused information processing. Once consumers become immersed in the livestreaming experience, this state of flow may increase their willingness to make immediate and less deliberative purchase decisions. Accordingly, Flow Theory provides the theoretical foundation for examining both the direct influence of host language style and the mediating role of flow experience in impulsive purchase intention.

Influence of E-commerce Host Language Style on Impulsive Purchase Intention

Host language style refers to the manner in which livestreaming hosts communicate product information, emotions, and persuasive messages to viewers. Previous research distinguishes between task-oriented and interaction-oriented communication styles (Ma et al., 2023). Task-oriented communication emphasizes factual information, product functions, and logical explanation, whereas interaction-oriented communication focuses more strongly on interpersonal connection, emotional exchange, and audience engagement. Building on this distinction, the present study conceptualizes host language style through three dimensions: humorous appeal, emotional appeal, and rational appeal. Humorous and emotional appeals primarily reflect interaction-oriented communication, whereas rational appeal reflects a more task-oriented communication approach.

Humorous appeal involves the use of amusing expressions, playful communication, or entertaining language to create a relaxed and enjoyable livestreaming atmosphere. Humor may reduce consumers' psychological resistance, increase enjoyment, and decrease the perceived distance between the host and viewers. Guo et al. (2022) showed that communication characteristics such as humor can strengthen consumers' positive responses through hedonic value. In livestreaming commerce, humorous interaction may therefore make consumers more receptive to persuasive messages and increase the likelihood of spontaneous purchase responses.

Emotional appeal operates through a different mechanism. Rather than relying primarily on entertainment, emotional communication attempts to create emotional resonance and strengthen interpersonal connection. When hosts express emotion, enthusiasm, or personal meaning, consumers may develop stronger psychological involvement and value identification. Such emotional interaction can reduce perceived distance between the host and the audience and increase consumers' affective responses toward the livestreaming experience (Ye et al., 2023; Cheewakoset et al., 2026). As impulsive purchase decisions are often influenced by immediate affective responses, emotional appeal is expected to increase consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

Rational appeal emphasizes information quality, product attributes, logical explanation, and evidence-based persuasion. By providing detailed information and clearly explaining product benefits, rational communication can reduce uncertainty and perceived risk. Consumers may consequently feel more confident about the product and become more willing to make an immediate purchase decision. Although rational appeal relies more heavily on cognitive evaluation than humorous or emotional appeal, prior research indicates that rational communication can also positively affect purchase intention by improving product understanding and perceived value (Ma et al., 2023; Li & Zheng, 2024).

Taken together, the three language styles are expected to influence impulsive purchase intention through different persuasive mechanisms. Humorous appeal primarily stimulates enjoyment, emotional appeal strengthens affective engagement, and rational appeal improves informational clarity and reduces uncertainty. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1a: Humorous appeal style has a positive effect on consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

H1b: Emotional appeal style has a positive effect on consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

H1c: Rational appeal style has a positive effect on consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

Mediating Effect of Flow Experience

Flow experience may provide an important psychological mechanism through which host

language style influences impulsive purchase intention. According to Flow Theory, consumers are more likely to become fully engaged when an activity generates sustained attention, enjoyment, and involvement. Livestreaming hosts can create these conditions through the ways in which they communicate with viewers. Consequently, language style may influence purchase intention not only through direct persuasion but also by shaping consumers' experiential states during the livestream.

Humorous appeal may stimulate flow by creating enjoyment and encouraging continued attention. Entertaining communication can make viewers feel relaxed and engaged, reduce psychological resistance, and increase their willingness to remain involved in the livestreaming activity. Wu et al. (2020) highlighted the importance of flow-related processes in online impulse buying, suggesting that greater engagement and enjoyment can contribute to spontaneous purchasing responses. In the livestreaming context, humorous interaction may therefore first enhance consumers' flow experience, which subsequently strengthens impulsive purchase intention.

Emotional appeal may also promote flow, although through a more affective route. Emotional communication can increase psychological closeness, emotional involvement, and a sense of personal connection with the host. These reactions may deepen consumers' immersion in the livestreaming environment. Cuevas et al. (2021) demonstrated the importance of flow in social-media engagement, suggesting that greater involvement with interactive content can strengthen experiential engagement. Therefore, emotional appeal may enhance impulsive purchase intention by increasing consumers' immersion and flow during the livestream.

Rational appeal may facilitate flow by reducing cognitive uncertainty. Detailed explanations, logical arguments, and clear product information can make the livestream easier to follow and reduce the mental effort required to evaluate product-related information. Wang et al. (2021) found that livestreaming features can influence purchase intention through flow experience and social presence. In this context, rational communication may support concentration and reduce perceived risk, thereby facilitating consumers' engagement with the livestream and strengthening their flow experience.

Once flow experience is established, consumers may become more attentive to the livestream, less distracted by external stimuli, and more responsive to immediate purchase cues. Dong et al. (2023) found that flow experience contributes to impulse consumption intention in livestreaming commerce. Accordingly, humorous, emotional, and rational appeal styles may influence impulsive purchase intention indirectly by first increasing consumers' flow experience. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H2a: Flow experience mediates the relationship between humorous appeal style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

H2b: Flow experience mediates the relationship between emotional appeal style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

H2c: Flow experience mediates the relationship between rational appeal style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention.

Moderating Effect of Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Electronic word-of-mouth refers to consumer-generated evaluations, opinions, and feedback communicated through online platforms and social media. In livestreaming commerce, eWOM may function as an external reputational cue that influences how consumers interpret the host and the messages delivered during the livestream. Positive eWOM can increase consumers' trust in the host, reduce uncertainty, and strengthen their willingness to accept persuasive communication, whereas less favorable eWOM may weaken these responses. Prior research

has shown that eWOM plays an important role in shaping online purchase intention by influencing consumers' perceptions of information credibility and trust (Tien et al., 2019; QiYan et al., 2026).

The moderating role of eWOM may be particularly relevant to the relationship between host language style and impulsive purchase intention. Host communication constitutes an immediate persuasive stimulus, but consumers may interpret the same message differently depending on the host's existing online reputation. When favorable eWOM is available, humorous, emotional, or rational communication may be perceived as more credible, acceptable, and persuasive. Positive evaluations from other consumers may therefore reinforce the persuasive influence of host language style and increase the likelihood that viewers respond with impulsive purchase intention. Conversely, when eWOM is less favorable, consumers may be more cautious in responding to the host's communication. Thus, eWOM is expected to strengthen the effect of host language style on impulsive purchase intention.

H3: Electronic word-of-mouth positively moderates the relationship between e-commerce host language style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention, such that the relationship becomes stronger when electronic word-of-mouth is more favorable.

Electronic word-of-mouth may also influence the extent to which flow experience is translated into impulsive purchase intention. Flow represents an internal experiential state characterized by immersion, concentration, and enjoyment. However, even when consumers are highly immersed in a livestream, external information may still influence whether that experiential state leads to purchase intention. Favorable eWOM may provide additional reassurance and social validation, reduce perceived risk, and reinforce consumers' confidence in acting on an immediate purchase impulse (Zhang et al., 2014). Qiu et al. (2024) further emphasized the importance of online reviews in shaping purchase intention across different contexts.

From this perspective, consumers experiencing high levels of flow may be more likely to translate their immersion into impulsive purchase intention when the host is supported by favorable eWOM. Positive online evaluations may therefore strengthen the behavioral consequences of flow by reducing uncertainty at the point of purchase. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Electronic word-of-mouth positively moderates the relationship between flow experience and consumers' impulsive purchase intention, such that the relationship becomes stronger when electronic word-of-mouth is more favorable.

4. Methodology

The target population of this study consisted of Chinese consumers who had watched e-commerce livestreams on platforms such as Taobao and Douyin within the previous year. An online questionnaire was administered through the Wenjuanxing platform, and the survey link was distributed through social media platforms, including WeChat and QQ, using convenience sampling. This sampling approach was adopted because the target respondents were dispersed across online platforms and a complete sampling frame was not available. Data were collected over approximately two months, from January to February 2026. A total of 463 questionnaires were returned. After data screening, 43 responses were excluded, leaving 420 valid questionnaires for the final analysis.

All measurement scales were adapted from established instruments and modified to fit the context of e-commerce livestreaming. All constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale. E-commerce host language style was measured through three dimensions: humorous appeal style, emotional appeal style, and rational appeal style, with items adapted primarily

from Ma et al. (2023), Liu et al. (2023), and Li and Zheng (2024). Flow experience was measured using items adapted from Dong et al. (2023), electronic word-of-mouth was measured using items adapted from Yang (2024), and impulsive purchase intention was measured using items adapted from Chen and Yue (2023) and Dong et al. (2023).

The data were analyzed using a multistep procedure. First, descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and provide an overall profile of the sample. Second, the reliability and validity of the measurement scales were assessed. Internal consistency was evaluated using reliability coefficients, while construct validity was examined through factor loadings, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. After confirming the adequacy of the measurement model, structural equation modeling was used to test the direct relationships among the study variables and the mediating role of flow experience. Moderation analysis was subsequently conducted using SPSS PROCESS to examine the moderating effect of electronic word-of-mouth. These procedures were used to evaluate the direct, indirect, and moderating relationships specified in the conceptual model.

5. Research Results

Descriptive Statistics

All 420 respondents were Chinese consumers who had watched e-commerce livestreams on platforms such as Taobao and Douyin within the past year. The respondents are mainly young and middle-aged consumers with higher education backgrounds and frequent exposure to live-stream shopping.

Reliability and Validity

The assessment of the measurement model primarily focused on reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Table 1). The Cronbach's alpha values for e-commerce host language style, flow experience, electronic word-of-mouth, and impulsive purchase intention were all above 0.70, and the composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs also exceeded 0.70, indicating that the measurement model had strong reliability. In addition, the factor loadings of all variables were above 0.80, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values were all greater than 0.60. Furthermore, the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than the corresponding inter-construct correlation coefficients (Table 2), demonstrating that the measurement model had satisfactory convergent validity and discriminant validity.

Table 1. Results of Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	CR	AVE	Alpha
Humorous Appeal Style	HA1	0.879	0.907	0.708	0.906
	HA2	0.811			
	HA3	0.834			
	HA4	0.841			
Emotional Appeal Style	EA1	0.822	0.893	0.675	0.892
	EA2	0.824			
	EA3	0.825			
	EA4	0.815			
Rational Appeal Style	RA1	0.846	0.912	0.722	0.911
	RA2	0.844			
	RA3	0.859			
	RA4	0.849			
Flow Experience	FE1	0.838	0.901	0.695	0.901
	FE2	0.831			
	FE3	0.836			
	FE4	0.830			
Electronic Word-of-Mouth	EWOM1	0.876	0.928	0.763	0.927
	EWOM2	0.871			
	EWOM3	0.887			

Impulsive Purchase Intention	EWOM4	0.859	0.940	0.797	0.939
	IPI1	0.891			
	IPI2	0.897			
	IPI3	0.894			
	IPI4	0.888			

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	HA	EA	RA	FE	EWOM	IPI
HA	0.952					
EA	0.567	0.944				
RA	0.524	0.487	0.954			
FE	0.559	0.577	0.511	0.949		
EWOM	0.513	0.581	0.527	0.618	0.963	
IPI	0.529	0.499	0.571	0.624	0.484	0.969

Note: Bolded text on the diagonal is the square root of AVE

Hypothesis Testing

The structural model showed a good fit to the data. Specifically, χ^2/df was 2.313, which was below 3; RMSEA and SRMR were 0.067 and 0.073, respectively, both below 0.08; and IFI, TLI, and CFI were 0.916, 0.906, and 0.916, respectively, all above 0.90. Besides, GFI and AGFI value were 0.932 and 0.911, which were greater than 0.9. Overall, these results indicate that the model fit was acceptable and suitable for further hypothesis testing.

In this study, the Bootstrap method in AMOS 29 was used to examine the path coefficients of the direct effects (Table 3). Regarding the relationship between e-commerce host language style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention, the effect coefficient of humorous appeal style on impulsive purchase intention was $\beta = 0.361$ ($p < 0.001$), the effect coefficient of emotional appeal style was $\beta = 0.263$ ($p < 0.001$), and the effect coefficient of rational appeal style was $\beta = 0.195$ ($p < 0.001$). These results indicate that all dimensions of e-commerce host language style significantly enhanced consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Among them, humorous appeal style and emotional appeal style showed stronger marketing effects than rational appeal style. Therefore, hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c were all supported.

Table 3 Direct Effect Testing

Hypothesis	Path		β	B	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result	
H1a	IPI	<---	HA	0.361	0.309	0.035	8.718	***	Accepted
H1b	IPI	<---	EA	0.263	0.216	0.033	6.476	***	Accepted
H1c	IPI	<---	RA	0.195	0.168	0.035	4.768	***	Accepted

Indirect Effect Testing

As shown in Table 4, in the mediating paths of e-commerce host language style $\rightarrow$ flow experience $\rightarrow$ impulsive purchase intention, the path coefficient for humorous appeal style $\rightarrow$ flow experience $\rightarrow$ impulsive purchase intention was $\beta = 0.194$ ($p < 0.05$), the path coefficient for emotional appeal style $\rightarrow$ flow experience $\rightarrow$ impulsive purchase intention was $\beta = 0.188$ ($p < 0.05$), and the path coefficient for rational appeal style $\rightarrow$ flow experience $\rightarrow$ impulsive purchase intention was $\beta = 0.135$ ($p < 0.05$). These results indicate that all dimensions of e-commerce host language style were able to enhance flow experience, which in turn strengthened consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Therefore, hypotheses H2a, H2b, and H2c were all supported.

Table 4. Mediation Effect Test

NO.	Mediating path	Effect Value	95% Confidence Interval		P
			LLCI	ULCI	

H2a	HA→FE→IPI	0.194	0.059	0.209	0.001
H2b	EA→FE→IPI	0.188	0.018	0.226	0.021
H2c	RA→FE→IPI	0.135	0.015	0.219	0.003

Moderating Effect of Electronic Word-of-Mouth

The moderating effect of electronic word-of-mouth was tested using Model 15 in the SPSS PROCESS procedure developed by Hayes, and the results are presented in Table 5. The interaction term between electronic word-of-mouth and e-commerce host language style had a significant positive effect on impulsive purchase intention ($\beta = 0.092$, $p = 0.004$), indicating that electronic word-of-mouth positively moderates the relationship between e-commerce host language style and impulsive purchase intention. The more favorable the e-commerce host's electronic word-of-mouth, the higher the consumers' trust in and acceptance of the host, and the stronger the effect of host language style on consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Therefore, Hypothesis H3 was supported. In contrast, the interaction term between electronic word-of-mouth and flow experience was not significant ($\beta = 0.065$, $p = 0.175$), suggesting that the effect of flow experience on impulsive purchase intention was not moderated by electronic word-of-mouth. Therefore, Hypothesis H4 was not supported.

Table 5. Moderation Effect Testing

Variable	β	LLCI	ULCI	P
Language Style	0.378	0.035	0.309	0.000
FE	0.276	0.281	0.474	0.000
EWOM	0.228	0.346	0.624	0.000
EWOM* Language Style	0.092	0.037	0.124	0.004
EWOM*FE	0.065	-0.282	0.165	0.175

6. Discussion

This study examined the effects of e-commerce host language style on consumers' impulsive purchase intention in livestreaming commerce, with flow experience as a mediator and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) as a moderator. The results indicate that humorous appeal, emotional appeal, and rational appeal all significantly enhance impulsive purchase intention. In addition, flow experience mediates the effects of all three language-style dimensions on impulsive purchase intention. Moreover, eWOM positively moderates the relationship between host language style and impulsive purchase intention, whereas its moderating effect on the relationship between flow experience and impulsive purchase intention is not significant. Overall, these findings provide substantial support for the proposed framework and extend the literature on livestreaming commerce by clarifying how communication cues, experiential states, and external reputational signals jointly shape consumer responses.

First, the positive effects of humorous, emotional, and rational appeal styles on impulsive purchase intention support H1a, H1b, and H1c. This finding is consistent with prior livestreaming research showing that anchors' language appeals significantly influence consumer purchase intention. Ma et al. (2023) found that both rational and emotional appeals positively affect users' purchase intention in live-streaming e-commerce, while Guo et al. (2022) showed that streamer communication characteristics such as humor and passion are positively associated with consumers' behavioral intentions through hedonic and utilitarian values. The present study extends this line of research by further separating host language style into three dimensions and showing that all three are effective in stimulating impulsive purchase intention. The stronger effects of humorous and emotional appeals, relative to rational appeal, may reflect the highly interactive and entertainment-driven nature of livestreaming commerce, where immediate affective engagement often plays a more prominent role than purely cognitive

evaluation.

Second, the mediating role of flow experience supports H2a, H2b, and H2c. This result is consistent with Dong et al. (2023), who demonstrated that flow experience is an important mechanism through which livestreaming stimuli promote consumers' impulse consumption intention. In the present study, humorous appeal may foster flow by increasing enjoyment and reducing psychological resistance, emotional appeal may enhance flow by strengthening immersion and emotional involvement, and rational appeal may facilitate flow by reducing uncertainty and improving cognitive clarity. Although these three dimensions differ in emphasis, they all appear capable of drawing consumers into a focused and enjoyable experiential state, which in turn increases impulsive purchase intention. This finding reinforces the relevance of flow theory in livestreaming commerce and suggests that host language style affects consumer behavior not only through direct persuasion but also through experiential immersion.

Third, the positive moderating effect of eWOM on the relationship between host language style and impulsive purchase intention supports H3. This finding is in line with prior research showing that eWOM is a critical driver of online purchase intention. Ngo et al. (2024) found that eWOM credibility, usefulness, adoption, and information attitudes significantly shape online purchase intention, while Tien et al. (2019) likewise showed that customer-to-customer eWOM significantly affects purchase intention in social networking sites. In the context of livestreaming commerce, favorable eWOM may function as an external credibility cue that increases consumers' trust in and acceptance of the host, thereby strengthening the persuasive effect of humorous, emotional, and rational language appeals. In other words, positive reputational signals appear to amplify the conversion of host communication into purchase impulse.

However, H4 was not supported, as eWOM did not significantly moderate the relationship between flow experience and impulsive purchase intention. This result suggests that once consumers have already entered a state of flow, the effect of that immersive experience on purchase impulse may rely more on the immediacy of internal psychological arousal than on external review-based information. Existing research has consistently shown that eWOM and online reviews influence purchase intention, and meta-analytic evidence further indicates that review valence exerts a strong effect on purchase intention across contexts. However, the current findings imply that the influence of eWOM may be stronger at the stage of stimulus interpretation than at the later stage where an internal experiential state has already formed. Thus, while eWOM strengthens the impact of host language style, it does not appear to further strengthen the downstream effect of flow experience. This non-significant result adds nuance to the literature by suggesting that eWOM and flow may operate at different stages of the impulsive buying process.

In conclusion, the findings make three contributions to the livestreaming commerce literature. First, they provide a more refined understanding of host language style by showing that humorous, emotional, and rational appeals each exert significant positive effects on impulsive purchase intention. Second, they extend flow-based explanations of consumer behavior by confirming that flow experience is a key psychological mechanism linking host communication to impulsive buying. Third, they clarify the boundary role of eWOM by showing that it strengthens the effect of host language style, but not the effect of flow experience, on impulsive purchase intention. These findings offer a more precise account of how communication strategy, consumer immersion, and online reputation interact in e-commerce livestreaming.

Theoretical and Managerial Implications

This study makes some theoretical contributions. First, it extends the livestreaming commerce literature by conceptualizing e-commerce host language style as a multidimensional construct comprising humorous, emotional, and rational appeals, and by showing that each dimension significantly enhances impulsive purchase intention. This provides a more fine-grained understanding of how specific communication strategies shape consumer responses in livestreaming contexts. Second, this study enriches the application of flow theory in e-commerce livestreaming by demonstrating that flow experience is a key mechanism linking host language style to impulsive purchase intention. The findings suggest that host language style affects consumer behavior not only through direct persuasion, but also through immersive and engaging consumption experiences. Third, this study contributes to the boundary-condition literature by revealing that eWOM positively moderates the relationship between host language style and impulsive purchase intention but does not significantly moderate the relationship between flow experience and impulsive purchase intention. This finding indicates that eWOM may play a more important role in shaping consumers' responses to external communication cues than in strengthening the effect of internal experiential states. Overall, the study provides a more integrated explanation of impulsive buying behavior in livestreaming commerce.

This study also offers several practical implications. First, since e-commerce host language style can significantly enhance consumers' impulsive purchase intention, hosts should place greater emphasis on improving their language expression and communication skills. In particular, they should actively employ multiple language styles, such as humorous interaction, emotional communication, and rational analysis, to stimulate consumers' impulsive purchase intention. Second, as flow experience effectively promotes consumers' impulsive purchase intention, e-commerce hosts should make better use of humorous, emotional, and rational appeal styles to enhance viewers' concentration and sense of immersion during livestreaming sessions, thereby strengthening consumers' flow experience. Third, because electronic word-of-mouth positively moderates the relationship between e-commerce host language style and consumers' impulsive purchase intention, e-commerce hosts should pay greater attention to improving their professional competence and service quality. They should also respond actively to consumer feedback and address consumer concerns appropriately in order to cultivate favorable electronic word-of-mouth.

7. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Study

This study has several limitations. First, the sample was limited to Chinese consumers who had watched e-commerce livestreams on Taobao, Douyin, and similar platforms, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other cultural and platform contexts. Future studies may examine different countries or compare multiple livestreaming platforms. Moreover, this study focused on three dimensions of host language style which are humorous, emotional, and rational appeal. Future studies may incorporate other communication characteristics, such as authenticity, interactivity, or personalization, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of host communication in livestreaming commerce. Finally, this study examined impulsive purchase intention rather than actual purchase behavior. Future research may combine survey data with behavioral to further test the practical effects of host language style on actual purchasing.

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