

Be Careful! Loneliness can be a Reason to Impulsive Purchase in Livestreaming E-Commerce

Andhy Setyawan¹, Grace Felicia Djayapranata^{1,*}

¹ Universitas Surabaya, Indonesia

*Corresponding author. Email: gracedj@staff.ubaya.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Rapid technological developments have made consumers increasingly seek convenience and practicality in shopping. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the transition of consumer behavior from offline shopping to online shopping due to social distancing policies. The prolonged implementation of social distancing policies has undoubtedly impacted consumer psychology. Many consumers feel lonely and have become accustomed to avoiding direct social interaction, leading them to socialize more through social media. Social media, through its content, can make consumers more impulsive. Previous studies have not extensively discussed the phenomenon of online shopping, particularly from the perspective of consumers who experience loneliness and social avoidance. This study uses 166 respondent using self-administered survey. Specifically, this study analyzes the influence of factors such as loneliness and real-life social avoidance on consumer online shopping behavior. The method used is a survey with a purposive sampling approach to obtain relevant respondents. The results of this study are expected to contribute to understanding consumer behavior in the digital age and serve as a foundation for businesses on design more effective marketing strategies on live-streaming platforms.

Keywords: *Real life Social Avoidance, Loneliness, Impulsive Purchase*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media use is an inseparable part of daily life. Social media functions not only as a communication tool but also as an alternative solution to fulfill social needs and various experiences and even seek self-recognition (Karapanos et al., 2016; Osei-Frimpong et al., 2022). This certainly impacts the excessive use of social media and even exceeds interactions in the real world. This phenomenon is often called social media addiction.

Social media addiction is often caused by various psychological factors, one of which is loneliness (Sarfika et al., 2024). Today, many individuals feel dissatisfied with real-life social relationships, so they turn to cyberspace as an escape. Moreover, the presence of AI technology that can helps individuals feel helped to reduce their loneliness. Social interaction is often avoided by individuals who feel anxious or lack confidence in interacting in the real world. According to (Pellegrino et al., 2022), social media is considered capable of providing safer and more controlled interactions, resulting in more individuals depending on the platform.

The dependence on social media platforms has resulted in changes in consumer behavior, including online purchasing. According to research by Jameel et al., (2024), the factor causing the increase in online shopping is the excessive use of social media. The existence of engaging content on social media (in this case, livestreaming) results in the emergence of emotional impulses that result in unplanned purchases. Attractive promotions and advertisements displayed during live streaming tend to encourage individuals who feel lonely and who have a high sense of social avoidance in real life to make unplanned purchases. This study focuses on the relationship between loneliness, avoidance of real-world social activities, and impulse buying behavior influenced by social media use. Although consumptive behavior on social media has been widely discussed, understanding its impact on impulse buying behavior, particularly in the context of the psychological effects of disrupted social interaction, is limited (Deng et al., 2023; Yang et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to explore how social media, loneliness, and social interaction avoidance influence impulse buying and what the implications are for consumer behavior in the digital age.

1.1 The Effect of Sense of Loneliness on Purchase Intention

Loneliness is a feeling of discomfort that arises because social needs have not been fully met, for example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, which limits social interaction (Zhao et al., 2022). Consumers usually find ways to eliminate loneliness, such as using cell phones excessively and using social media to fulfill social needs (Wan & Wu, 2020). In

view of gratification theory, consumers do various ways to fulfill their needs by using various media, for example, to fulfill social, entertainment, and information needs. Gratification theory explains consumer motivation for social media (Hsu & Lin, 2023). Watching live streaming is one way for consumers to fulfill their needs. Livestreaming is seen to fulfill individual needs from 2 aspects, namely (1) social interaction and (2) getting information. By watching live streaming individuals get information and interaction from the comment section when using live streaming. In addition, by watching live streaming, consumers can also provide self-reward to themselves by purchasing products through attractive promotions given during live streaming (Liu et al., 2022). Research by (Kaveladze et al., 2022) shows that livestreaming can increase impulsive purchase. Therefore, the hypothesis is structured as follows:

H1: Sense of loneliness has a positive effect on Purchase Intention

1.2. Effect of real-life social avoidance on impulsive purchase

Social avoidance is the tendency to avoid social activities such as communicating and activities with others for several reasons (Kardefelt, 2014). Research by Gasiorowska et al. (2022) revealed that although everyone has social needs, some people have low needs to connect, especially those with high social avoidance. Humans have a fundamental need to interact socially with their environment, but the higher a person tries to avoid social activities in real life, the greater the fulfillment of the psychological needs needed (). To fulfill these needs, a person must look for other alternatives, for example, by using social media. When someone has anxiety and a tendency to avoid social interaction in real life, they see that social media is an alternative way that can be done to fulfill social needs (Zhang et al., 2024). Research by Li et al. (2020) found that livestreaming is done by individuals to reduce discomfort from fundamental social interactions and fulfill social needs. Live streaming is a medium that can be used to stay connected and communicate even though it is not done face-to-face. Individuals with a high level of avoidance tend to feel greater benefits through livestreaming than face-to-face interactions (Kaveladze et al., 2002). The interaction felt while watching livestreaming can increase excitement and pleasure, which has an impact on increasing the intention to make impulsive purchases (Li et al., 2022). A high level of live streaming usage due to escapism from real social life can increase consumers' desire to make purchases. Therefore, the hypothesis is structured as follows:

H2: Real-life avoidance has a positive effect on purchase intention

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a purposive sampling approach distributed using a self-administered survey. The criteria for selecting respondents were as follows: At least 17 years old and have purchased through a live streaming platform. This study uses three main variables, namely Sense of Loneliness, adapted from Pittman and Reich (2016), Real real-life social Avoidance, adapted from Liebowitz (1987), and Purchase Intention, adapted from Dibble et al. (2016). Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents about the three variables, which were then analyzed to identify the relationship between loneliness, social avoidance, and impulse purchase intention through livestreaming. Data processing was carried out using the SEM method using AMOS 29.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Before conducting hypothesis testing, validity and reliability tests were carried out. The validity standard is 0.5, and the standard for reliability is at least 0.6-0.8. In Table 1, the validity and reliability requirements have been met. Furthermore, Goodness of fit Model testing is carried out on the CFA model. GOF results are as follows: CMIN/DF: 1.130; RMSEA: 0.028; GFI: 0.941; CFI: 0.993; TLI: 0.992. These values indicate that the CFA model has met the fit criteria.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability

Construct	Item	Std Loading	CR
SL	SL1	0.82	0.91
	SL2	0.78	
	SL3	0.86	
	SL4	0.75	
	SL5	0.73	
	SL6	0.70	
	SL7	0.74	

Construct	Item	Std Loading	CR
SA	SA1	0.83	0.86
	SA2	0.87	
	SA3	0.90	
	SA6	0.52	
IP	IP1	0.77	0.62
	IP2	0.88	

After that, proceed with hypothesis testing. The results of hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 2. GOF on the structural model as follows: CMIN/DF: 1.460; RMSEA: 0.054; GFI: 0.926; CFI: 0.975; TLI: 0.968. Based on the test results, two hypotheses are supported.

Table 2 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Std Estimate	C.R	P-Value	Information
SL→ IP	0.213	1.654	0.098	supported (H1)
SA→ IP	0.242	1.872	0.061	supported (H2)

SL = sense of loneliness; SA = real-life social avoidance; IP = impulsive purchase. *** $p \leq 0.001$.

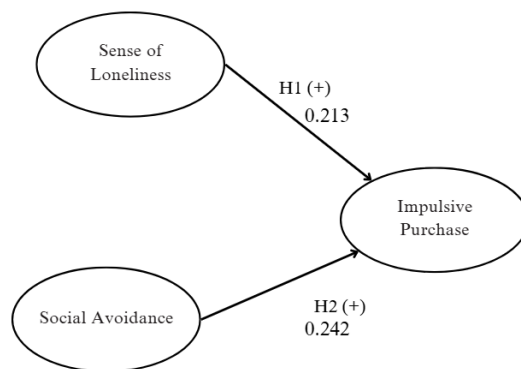


Figure 1. Hypothesis Results

4. CONCLUSION

Nowadays, social media's role is vital in every individual's life. Social media is a communication tool and a fulfillment of social needs. The existence of social media and the various interesting features provided make individuals more focused on interacting through cyberspace than the real world, especially for individuals who do not like social interaction in the real world. This is exacerbated by the existence of COVID-19 and social distancing policies, making individuals look for alternative solutions to reduce the sense of anxiety and loneliness that arises due to unmet social needs. Therefore, it is unsurprising that many individuals use social media excessively today. This study revealed interesting findings that livestreaming use is driven by loneliness and avoidance of social activities, which is primarily done to fulfill the basic need to socialize. However, over time, engaging in live-streaming content can make individuals make impulsive purchases, especially those who experience loneliness and social avoidance. The findings in this study also show that real-life social avoidance has a greater influence on impulse buying than a sense of loneliness. This means that individuals with high real-life social avoidance usually make impulse purchases more often than those who watch live streaming due to loneliness. This finding is beneficial, especially for managers to be able to package content more interestingly so that individuals who are lonely and who have high real-life social avoidance become entertained and watch the shared content. Managers can also create online community-based marketing strategies so consumers feel welcome and have a family online. The limitation of this research lies in using a small number of respondents so that, the results obtained will get a clearer picture in the future.

REFERENCES

- Deng, F., Lin, Y., & Jiang, X. (2023). Influence mechanism of consumers' characteristics on impulsive purchase in E-commerce livestream marketing. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 148(July), 107894. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2023.107894>
- Dibble, J. L., Hartmann, T., & Rosaen, S. F. (2016). Parasocial interaction and parasocial relationship: Conceptual clarification and a critical assessment of measures. *Human Communication Research*, 42(1), 21–44. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hcre.12063>
- Gasiorowska, A., Folwarczny, M., & Otterbring, T. (2022). Anxious and status signaling: Examining the link between attachment style and status consumption and the mediating role of materialistic values. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 11503.
- Hsu, C. L., & Lin, J. C. C. (2023). The effects of gratifications, flow and satisfaction on the usage of livestreaming services. *Library Hi Tech*, 41(3), 729–748. <https://doi.org/10.1108/LHT-02-2021-0069>
- Jameel, A., Khan, S., Alonazi, W. B., & Khan, A. A. (2024). Exploring the Impact of Social Media Sites on Compulsive Shopping Behavior: The Mediating Role of Materialism. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 17(January), 171–185. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S442193>
- Karapanos, E., Teixeira, P., & Gouveia, R. (2016). Need fulfillment and experiences on social media: A case on Facebook and WhatsApp. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 55, 888–897. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2015.10.015>
- Kaveladze, B. T., Morris, R. R., Dimitrova-Gammeltoft, R. V., Goldenberg, A., Gross, J. J., Antin, J., Sandgren, M., & Thomas-Hunt, M. C. (2022). Social Interactivity in Live Video Experiences Reduces Loneliness. *Frontiers in Digital Health*, 4(March), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fdgth.2022.859849>
- Liebowitz, M. R. (1987). Social phobia. *Modern Problems of Psychopharmacology*, 22, 141–173. <https://doi.org/10.1159/000414022>
- Liu, H., Tan, K. H., & Pawar, K. (2022). Predicting viewer gifting behavior in sports live streaming platforms: The impact of viewer perception and satisfaction. *Journal of Business Research*, 144(February 2021), 599–613. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.02.045>
- Osei-Frimpong, K., McLean, G., Islam, N., & Appiah Otoo, B. (2022). What drives me there? The interplay of socio-psychological gratification and consumer values in social media brand engagement. *Journal of Business Research*, 146(August 2021), 288–307. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2022.03.057>
- Pellegrino, A., Stasi, A., & Bhatiasavi, V. (2022). Research trends in social media addiction and problematic social media use: A bibliometric analysis. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.1017506>
- Pittman, M., & Reich, B. (2016). Social media and loneliness: Why an Instagram picture may be worth more than a thousand Twitter words. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 62 (9), 155–167. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.03.084>
- Wan, A., & Wu, L. (2020). Understanding the Negative Consequences of Watching Social Live Streaming Among Chinese Viewers. *International Journal of Communication*, 14, 5311–5330.
- Yang, P., Sheng, H., Yang, C., & Feng, Y. (2024). How social media promotes impulsive buying: examining the role of customer inspiration. *Industrial Management and Data Systems*, 124(2), 698–723. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IMDS-05-2023-0343>
- Zhao, S., Yang, Q., Im, H., Ye, B., Zeng, Y., Chen, Z., Liu, L., & Huang, D. (2022). The impulsive online shopper: effects of COVID-19 burnout, uncertainty, self-control, and online shopping trust. *Future Business Journal*, 8(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s43093-022-00174-0>