

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Exploring Consumer Justification of Overconsumption in Live Streaming E-commerce in China

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Studies in Marketing at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

Yuan Chang

2025

Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore how Chinese consumers perceive sustainable consumption and how these perceptions are shaped and enacted within livestream e-commerce environments. While sustainable consumption has gained increasing scholarly attention, most existing research adopts quantitative approaches and focuses on Western contexts, leaving a gap in understanding how sustainability is subjectively constructed and behaviorally rationalized in China's rapidly evolving digital marketplaces. Drawing on 18 semi-structured interviews and guided by a constructivist epistemology, this study employs thematic analysis to uncover the layered understandings, tensions, and justifications surrounding sustainability in the context of livestream shopping.

The findings from this research reveal that consumers often equate sustainability with product durability, frugality, and personal responsibility, but also experience internal conflicts when navigating entertainment-driven shopping platforms. The study highlights how platform features—such as interactivity, persuasive streamer tactics, and ease of returns—both complicate and facilitate sustainable decision-making. Furthermore, consumers adopt various rationalization strategies, including neutralization techniques, to justify overconsumption.

This research contributes to sustainability literature by contextualizing consumer behavior in emerging digital economies and expanding the application of ethical consumption theories to livestream retail. Practical implications are offered for platform designers, marketers, and policy makers seeking to promote sustainability in e-commerce.

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all those who have supported me throughout the course of this thesis.

Firstly, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Nitha Palakshappa and Associate Professor Sandy Bulmer for their unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this journey. Their care and kindness have been a constant source of strength, especially during the moments when I felt lost and uncertain.

I would also like to thank my parents, my partner Ying, and all other friends who have supported me with warmth and encouragement over the past year. Your presence and belief in me meant more than words can express.

I am sincerely grateful to my colleagues at work for their understanding and patience, which allowed me the time and space to focus on completing this thesis.

Finally, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all the participants who generously took the time to share their thoughts and experiences with me. Their input was invaluable to this research, and this project would not have been possible without their willingness to contribute.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract.....	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
2.1 Introduction.....	3
2.2 Sustainability and Sustainable Consumption.....	3
2.2.1 Defining Sustainability.....	3
2.2.2 Sustainable consumption.....	4
2.2.3 Defining Sustainable Consumption Behavior.....	6
2.2.4 Predictors of Sustainable Consumption Behavior.....	6
2.2.4.1 Internal Factors.....	7
2.2.4.2 External Factors.....	8
2.2.5 Consumer Mindfulness and Mindful Consumption.....	9
2.3 Overconsumption and Impulse buying.....	12
2.3.1 Defining Overconsumption.....	12
2.3.2 Impulse Buying.....	14
2.4 Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Overconsumption.....	15
2.4.1. The Attitude-Behavior Gap.....	15
2.4.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).....	16
2.4.3 Methodological Biases.....	17
2.4.4 Neutralization Techniques in Consumer Behavior.....	18
2.4.4.1 Core Neutralization Techniques.....	19
2.5 Live-Streaming in China.....	20
2.5.1 Overview.....	20

2.5.2 Interactivity	22
2.5.3 Vividness	23
2.5.4 Entertainment	24
2.5.5 Visibility	25
2.5.6 The Role of Streamers	26
2.6 Research gaps	27
2.7 Chapter Summary	28
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	29
3.1 Introduction	29
3.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions	29
3.3 Research paradigm	30
3.3.1 Ontology	31
3.3.2 Epistemology	32
3.4 Methodology	32
3.5 Methods	33
3.5.1 Data Collection	33
3.5.1.1 Semi-Structured Interview	34
3.5.1.2 Pilot Study	34
3.5.2 Data Analysis	35
3.5.2.1 Translation Process	35
3.5.2.2 Thematic Analysis	36
3.6 Sampling and Participants	37
3.6.1 Justification of Number of participants selected	39
3.7 Ethical Considerations	39
3.7.1 Confidentiality	39
3.7.2 Privacy	40
3.7.3 Informed Consent	40

3.7.4 Risks	40
3.8 Chapter Summary	41
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS	42
4.1 Introduction	42
4.2 What are the perceptions of sustainable consumption for live-streaming shoppers?42	
4.2.1 The Life-Cycle Approach	43
4.2.2 Sustainable Consumption as an Antonym of “Fast” Consumption	44
4.2.3 Internal Tensions Between Economic and Social Dimensions	45
4.2.4 Sustainable Consumption as Policy Compliance	46
4.2.5 Sustainable Consumption as Financial Mindfulness	47
4.2.6 Sustainability as a “Positive Loop”	48
4.2.7 Desirable but Not Practical	49
4.3 Shopping Environment Shaping Perceptions & Behaviours	50
4.3.1 Too Cheap to Care	51
4.3.2 Sustainability as a Marketing Gimmick	53
4.3.3 Shopping Environment Shaping Sustainable Behaviors	55
Cost-efficiency	56
Health	57
Entertainment	58
Convenience	59
Transparency	59
4.3.4 Shopping Environment Shaping Non-Sustainable Behaviors	61
Scarcity	61
Bulk buying	62
The Role of Return Policies	63
4.3.5 Self-reflection failed to alter self-regulation	64
4.4 How the perception of sustainability shapes consumer sustainable behaviour	66

4.4.1 Positive Attitude Reinforcing SCB	66
4.4.1.1 Altruistically Motivated SCB	66
4.4.2 Negative Perception Inhibiting SCB	68
4.4.2.1 Consumer resistance	69
4.4.3 Positive Perception Failed to Translate into Behavior: The “Attitude– Behavior Gap”	70
4.4.3.1 Conceptual Tensions	70
Present vs Future	71
Self vs Others	72
4.4.3.2 Preconceptions About Sustainable Products	72
Product Performance	73
Expense	74
4.4.3.4 Overestimated Perceived Behavior Control	75
4.4.3.5 Psychological Distance Affecting Attitude	77
4.4.3.6 Subjective Unsustainable Norms	79
4.5 Chapter Summary	80
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	81
5.2 <i>RQ1: What are consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption?</i>	81
5.2.1 Life-cycle approach	82
5.2.2 Sustainable consumption as an antonym of “fast” consumption	83
5.2.3 Internal tensions of sustainable consumption	84
5.2.4 Sustainable consumption as policy compliance	84
5.2.5 Sustainable Consumption as Financial Mindfulness	85
5.2.6 Desirable but Not Practical	85
5.3 <i>RQ2: How does the shopping environment shape consumers’ sustainable perception and behavior</i>	86
5.3.1 Too Cheap to Care	86
5.3.2 Sustainability as a Marketing Gimmick	87

5.3.4 Shopping Environment Shaping Non-Sustainable Behaviors	89
Scarcity	89
The Role of Return Policies	89
5.3.6 Section Summary - The Multiple Layers of Rationalization	90
5.4 RQ3: How do perceptions shape consumers' sustainable/non-sustainable behaviors	92
5.4.1 Other-Oriented Motives	92
5.4.2 Consumers' Resistance	93
5.4.3 Positive Perception Failing to Translate into Behavior: The Attitude–Behavior Gap	94
5.4.3.1 Conceptual Tensions	94
5.4.3.2 Psychological Distance Affecting Attitude	95
5.4.3.3 Preconceptions	96
5.4.3.4 Subjective Unsustainable Norms	97
5.4.3.5 Overestimated Perceived Behavior Control	98
5.4.4 Section Summary	98
5.5 Chapter Summary	99
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION	101
6.1 Research Purpose	101
6.2 Theoretical Contribution	101
6.3 Managerial Implications	103
6.4 Limitations	105
6.5 Future Research Directions	106
6.6 Final Remarks	107
REFERENCES	108
APPENDICES	126
APPENDIX A: Informed Consent (Chinese)	126
APPENDIX B: Informed Consent Form (English)	129

APPENDIX C: Interview Question Guide (Translated)..... 131

Table of Figures

Figure 1. RQ1 Findings Road Map.....	42
Figure 2. RQ2 Findings Road Map.....	51
Figure 3. RQ3 Findings Road Map.....	66

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the concept of sustainable consumption has gained significant attention from researchers, policymakers, and businesses, as global concerns over environmental degradation, climate change, and resource depletion continue to grow. At the same time, livestream e-commerce has emerged as a rapidly expanding form of retail, particularly in China, reshaping how consumers engage with shopping platforms and make purchasing decisions. While both sustainable consumption and livestream shopping have been widely studied, few attempts have been made to examine how these two areas intersect. Understanding how livestream shopping environments shape consumer perceptions and behaviors related to sustainability is critical for promoting responsible consumption in the digital age.

Existing literature has explored the meanings and practices of sustainable consumption, as well as the challenges associated with achieving sustainability goals. In the context of livestream e-commerce, most studies focus on how platform features encourage purchase intentions and impulsive buying. While these studies have deepened our understanding of overconsumption in livestream settings, little is known about how such environments shape consumers' perceptions of sustainability or how consumers negotiate their consumption choices in relation to sustainability.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating livestream shoppers' perceptions of sustainable consumption and how these perceptions are shaped by livestreaming environments. In addition, it aims to provide valuable insights into how these perceptions influence online shopping behaviors. Accordingly, the study addresses the following research questions:

- *RQ1: What are consumers' perceptions of sustainable consumption in livestream e-commerce contexts?*
- *RQ2: How do livestream shopping environments shape consumers' perceptions and behaviors related to sustainability?*
- *RQ3: How do consumers' perceptions of sustainable consumption influence their purchasing behaviors?*

These questions were examined using a qualitative methodology. A total of 18 in-depth interviews were conducted, with data analyzed through thematic analysis as the primary analytical approach.

The contribution of this thesis lies in both its theoretical and managerial implications. Theoretically, it develops and extends existing knowledge on the well-documented “attitude–behavior gap” in sustainable consumption. It also enriches our understanding of consumers’ perceptions of sustainability within the context of the Chinese market. From a managerial perspective, the study provides insights that can inform strategies for promoting more sustainable consumption practices in livestream e-commerce environments.

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter presents the background, research gap, objectives, and research questions of the study. It highlights the significance of the research and provides an overview of the thesis structure.

Chapter 2: Literature Review. This chapter reviews existing studies on sustainable consumption, the attitude–behavior gap, and livestream e-commerce. It identifies key theories and concepts that inform the research and outlines the gaps this study seeks to address.

Chapter 3: Methodology. This chapter describes the research design, sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical approach. It explains the use of qualitative interviews and thematic analysis in addressing the research questions.

Chapter 4: Findings. This chapter presents the main findings of the study, organized by key themes that emerged from the data analysis. It provides illustrative quotes and interpretations to support the identified themes.

Chapter 5: Discussion. This chapter discusses the findings in relation to existing literature and theoretical frameworks. It highlights the study’s contributions to knowledge and reflects on the implications of the results.

Chapter 6: Conclusion. This chapter summarizes the main findings, theoretical and practical contributions, and limitations of the study. It also offers suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review sets the foundation for understanding how sustainable consumption is perceived and practiced in the context of livestream e-commerce. It critically examines existing research on sustainable consumption, the attitude–behavior gap, and the influence of digital retail environments on consumer decision-making. While previous studies have provided valuable insights into green consumption and its challenges, few have explored how emerging commercial formats, such as livestream shopping, shape sustainability-related behaviors.

The review begins by outlining key definitions and frameworks related to sustainable consumption. It then discusses the attitude–behavior gap, focusing on factors that contribute to the inconsistency between consumers’ stated values and actual purchasing decisions and how consumers rationalize or justify their non-sustainable behaviors. This review also highlights how the unique features of livestream e-commerce, including its interactive and entertainment-driven nature, may reinforce or undermine sustainable intentions. In doing so, the review identifies gaps in the literature.

2.2 Sustainability and Sustainable Consumption

This section reviews the existing literature on sustainability and sustainable consumption, with a focus on how these concepts and associated behaviors have been defined and conceptualized. It also explores the motivations behind sustainable consumption at the individual level.

2.2.1 Defining Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the responsible use of natural resources while promoting ecological conservation to meet the needs of the current generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland, 1987, p. 43). This concept is based on three interconnected pillars: economic, social, and environmental sustainability (Mensah, 2019). The three pillars of sustainability are often viewed as interdependent and mutually reinforcing, forming a balanced framework for sustainable development (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019). Economic sustainability refers to the ability of economic systems to remain functional and

productive over time, ensuring long-term viability without depleting natural or social resources (Spangenberg, 2005). Social sustainability refers to the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities, aiming to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion. It encompasses dimensions such as equity, cohesion, participation, and quality of life (Colantonio, 2009; Dempsey et al., 2011). Environmental sustainability focuses on conserving natural resources to safeguard the environment for future generations (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019). The definition of sustainability often varies depending on the specific context in which it is applied (Palakshappa et al., 2024). When refined to the business realm, the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a key sustainability framework introduced by Elkington (1997). TBL is commonly summarized by the “3Ps”—profit, people, and planet—highlighting the need for businesses to consider financial performance and their social and environmental impacts (Slaper and Hall, 2011).

2.2.2 Sustainable consumption

Sustainable consumption lacks a unified definition (Jackson, 2006), as existing literature presents diverse perspectives that can be categorized into three primary dimensions: environmental, social, and economic (Purvis, Mao, & Robinson, 2019). While the overarching goal of sustainable consumption is to balance the needs of present and future generations (Quoquab and Mohammad, 2017), scholars emphasize different aspects of sustainable consumption, including minimizing environmental harm (e.g., Tukker et al., 2010), promoting social fairness and ethical responsibility (e.g., Peattie & Peattie, 2009; Varul, 2009), and driving market transformations toward sustainability through consumer influence (e.g., Seyfang, 2005). Below, each dimension is explored in greater detail.

The environmental dimension of sustainable consumption centers on reducing resource use, minimizing waste, and curbing pollution (Kemper & Ballantine, 2019). Definitions such as that provided by the OECD (2002) stress the importance of meeting basic needs and improving quality of life while ensuring that resource use and emissions throughout the lifecycle of goods and services do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Similarly, Luchs et al. (2011) define sustainable consumption as optimizing environmental outcomes alongside social and economic goals to balance current and future needs. Quoquab and Mohammad (2020) further highlight the importance of rationalizing consumption by avoiding

unnecessary purchases and focusing on preserving natural resources. This perspective is vital in addressing the ecological damage caused by overconsumption, where excessive purchasing often results in waste, pollution, and a significant depletion of resources.

Beyond environmental concerns, sustainable consumption also incorporates a social dimension emphasizing fairness, justice, and ethical responsibility in consumer behavior (Eizenberg & Jabareen, 2017). Scholars like Lee (2014) argue that sustainable consumption reflects ethical responsibilities, where consumers uphold values such as fairness and justice through their purchasing choices. This aligns with the view of Peattie and Peattie (2009), who describe sustainable consumption as a citizen-centered activity that promotes equality, stewardship, and social care. Varul (2009) expands this notion by linking sustainable consumption to fair-trade and ethical practices that address social inequities. In contrast, overconsumption often neglects these ethical considerations, prioritizing material desires over social well-being and equity.

The economic dimension of sustainable consumption examines the relationship between consumer behavior and market dynamics. Seyfang (2005) describes sustainable consumption as a manifestation of consumer agency, where individuals drive market changes by integrating social and environmental considerations into their purchasing decisions. Abdulrazak and Quoquab (2018) similarly emphasize the role of consumption activities, such as choosing, using, and disposing of goods, in generating social and environmental benefits. Luchs et al. (2011) add that sustainable consumption requires balancing economic outcomes with environmental and social goals. However, overconsumption disrupts this balance, reinforcing wasteful economic patterns that prioritize short-term profits over long-term sustainability (Ah Fook & McNeill, 2020).

This study adopts the definition proposed by Quoquab and Mohammad (2020), which integrates these three dimensions into a comprehensive framework. They define sustainable consumption as the rationalized use of goods and services to satisfy basic needs while minimizing resource use, waste, and pollution. Their definition emphasizes the importance of quality of life over material standards of living, the avoidance of unnecessary purchases, and the preservation of natural resources for future generations. This holistic perspective aligns with the goals of this study, which seeks to explore the opposing concept of overconsumption. Overconsumption not only depletes environmental resources but also undermines social equity and perpetuates

unsustainable economic practices. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, this research aims to provide a deeper understanding of sustainable consumption and its implications at the consumer level.

2.2.3 Defining Sustainable Consumption Behavior

Sustainable consumption behavior (SCB) has been widely promoted as a means of reducing the environmental impacts associated with products throughout their life cycles (Luchs et al., 2011). Most studies examine SCB from the consumer's perspective, focusing on how individual choices at different stages of consumption can contribute to more sustainable outcomes. The consumption process typically includes information search, decision making, product adoption, usage, and disposal—each of which offers opportunities to minimize environmental harm (White et al., 2019; Luchs et al., 2011; Geng et al., 2017).

A central theme in the SCB literature is the importance of reducing overall consumption levels, minimizing waste, and making more effective use of products to mitigate negative environmental impacts. In this regard, sustainable consumer behavior may begin with voluntarily reducing consumption. Leonard-Barton (1981) describes this as adopting a lifestyle that maximizes personal control over daily activities while minimizing consumption and dependency.

When it comes to purchasing decisions, choosing products with sustainability attributes is a key aspect of SCB. Examples include purchasing organic products (Bonini & Oppenheim, 2008) or opting for Fair Trade items (Luchs & Kumar, 2017). During the usage phase, efficient use of products to reduce waste is a recurring emphasis in prior studies. Concepts such as efficient consumption and slow consumption are reflected in behaviors like repairing products for longer use and repurposing items to maximize their value (Luchs et al., 2011).

2.2.4 Predictors of Sustainable Consumption Behavior

To explain consumers' sustainable intentions and behaviors, researchers have examined a wide range of factors influencing engagement in sustainable consumption behavior (SCB), including internal personal factors and social influences. Internal factors such as responsibility, values, health awareness, attitudes, and past behavior are mainly concerned with the intrinsic motivation

of consumers, while external factors are concerned with the shaping of behavior by external conditions such as social, cultural, educational, availability, and economic environment. These factors will be briefly reviewed here.

2.2.4.1 Internal Factors

Internal factors primarily focus on individual motivations, attitudes, and values that drive sustainable consumption. One of the most frequently cited internal drivers is a sense of responsibility. Luchs et al. (2015) argue that perceived responsibility often has a stronger influence on sustainable consumption behavior than general attitudes toward sustainability. Similarly, Abdulrazak and Quoquab (2018) define responsibility as a perceived moral duty to contribute to societal and environmental well-being, reinforcing its central role in sustainable decision-making. This notion of responsibility can also be linked to behaviorist principles, where rewards and punishments influence actions (Minton et al., 2012).

Another core internal factor is personal values. Sharma and Jha (2017) highlight that values such as universalism, compassion, and acceptance are positively correlated with sustainable consumption. For instance, universalism—emphasizing environmental protection and social justice—can inspire behaviors such as waste reduction and ethical purchasing (Hasan, Wooliscroft, & Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, 2024). These deeply held values reveal the ethical and psychological foundations of sustainable choices, often shaped by broader cultural or societal narratives.

In addition to values, attitudes and perceptions are also critical. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) emphasize the importance of perceived consumer effectiveness (PCE) and confidence in sustainability claims. When consumers believe their actions have meaningful impact, they are more likely to act sustainably. Internalized attitudes, as noted by Minton et al. (2012), help bridge the gap between intention and behavior, fostering consistency in sustainable practices.

Other internal drivers include health consciousness and personal experience. In the context of food consumption, health concerns can outweigh environmental motivations. For example, Mylan (2018) finds that meat reduction behaviors are often driven more by concerns about personal health than sustainability. Meanwhile, Lee (2014) suggests that past involvement in

environmental organizations serves as a strong predictor of future sustainable behavior, as early participation fosters a lasting sense of commitment.

2.2.4.2 External Factors

External factors encompass social, cultural, and structural elements that shape sustainable consumption behaviors. Social and cultural influences, such as family and peer dynamics, play a pivotal role. Lee (2014) observes that parental influence significantly impacts young adults' attitudes toward sustainability, particularly in collectivist cultures like Hong Kong. Minton et al. (2012) also highlight the role of collective cultural norms, noting that South Korea's collectivist society fosters higher engagement with sustainability through social media and community-driven initiatives. These findings illustrate how social pressure and cultural expectations amplify sustainable behaviors, even when individual attitudes may not align perfectly with sustainability goals (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006). However, external factors can also trigger resistance to sustainability interventions. Gonzalez-Arcos et al. (2021) identify practical barriers such as increased costs and reduced convenience as key drivers of resistance, as these factors disrupt established routines and create emotional discomfort, delaying the adoption of sustainable practices.

Education and awareness also serve as critical external drivers. Geng et al. (2017) argue that educational initiatives and awareness campaigns can enhance consumers' understanding of sustainable consumption, bridging the gap between attitudes and behaviors. Moreover, providing credible information about sustainability claims increases consumers' confidence and intention to purchase sustainable products, as noted by Vermeir and Verbeke (2006). Structural factors, such as product availability and market conditions, further influence sustainable consumption. Vermeir and Verbeke (2006) highlight that low perceived availability of sustainable products often undermines purchasing intentions, even among consumers with positive attitudes. Addressing this gap through better distribution and marketing strategies can effectively stimulate demand. Similarly, the economic system itself acts as a constraint. Banbury et al. (2012) reflect on how capitalist structures limit consumer choices, forcing sustainable behaviors to operate within an economically driven framework.

Finally, social media and technological advancements create new avenues for promoting sustainability. Minton et al. (2012) find that active engagement in social media correlates with higher participation in sustainability initiatives, particularly in collectivist societies. This illustrates the potential for external platforms to amplify individual motivations and create collective momentum for sustainable consumption.

The interplay between internal and external factors is crucial in shaping sustainable consumption behaviors. For instance, internal values like responsibility and universalism often find expression through external social norms and cultural expectations. As Sharma and Jha (2017) suggest, compassion and acceptance can drive higher levels of sustainable consumption, but their manifestation is often supported by family influences or peer pressure, as observed by Lee (2014). Similarly, while perceived consumer effectiveness (an internal factor) enhances consumer confidence, external factors like product availability and education are necessary to translate this confidence into action (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006; Geng et al., 2017). Moreover, internal health motivations intersect with external societal trends. Mylan (2018) notes that health concerns drive meat reduction, but these choices are also shaped by broader narratives about health and sustainability promoted through media and social campaigns. This dynamic illustrates how individual and systemic factors work together to encourage sustainable behaviors.

2.2.5 Consumer Mindfulness and Mindful Consumption

Mindfulness refers to focusing on the present moment and being aware of what is happening, including a dispassionate yet open-hearted awareness of perceptible mental states and processes (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 822; Grossman, 2010). It is described as “open-hearted moment-to-moment, nonjudgmental awareness” (Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 24).

There has been a variety of studies on the connection between mindfulness and sustainable consumption. Prior empirical evidence demonstrates that mindfulness is negatively related to conspicuous consumption and impulsive buying, with mediating factors such as self-worth, self-concept clarity, and consumers’ proneness to normative influence (Bharti et al., 2022). Furthermore, mindfulness fosters green purchase intentions through higher ethical self-identity (Daniel et al., 2023). Recent research extends these findings by showing that mindfulness influences sustainable consumer behavior through the mediating role of spiritual well-being

across personal, communal, and environmental domains, with stronger effects observed among individuals who have undergone formal mindfulness training (Daniel et al., 2024).

Mindful consumption (MC) literally refers to the application of mindfulness in consumption (Milne et al., 2020). Mindfulness offers the potential to transform mindless consumption into mindful consumption by “disengaging individuals from automatic thoughts, habits, and unhealthy behavior patterns” (Brown & Ryan, 2003, p. 823). MC, as the manifestation of mindfulness in consumer decision-making, serves as an “antidote” to mindless consumption (Bahl et al., 2016). It emphasizes deliberate, thoughtful, and ethical purchasing decisions that align with one’s values and awareness of societal and environmental impacts (Rosenberg, 2004). Grounded in the principles of mindfulness, MC encourages individuals to reflect on their needs, reduce waste, and prioritize sustainability in their daily choices, fostering a more conscious and responsible approach to consumption.

Building on this foundation, mindful consumption is further characterized by a conscious awareness of the consequences of one’s consumption choices. As Sheth et al. (2011, p. 27) explain, MC involves the ability to freely choose what and how much to consume, unaffected by external constraints such as circumstances or market conditions. It is driven by personal values and preferences, where a mindful mindset not only informs but also shapes behavior, enabling sustainable consumption practices.

Mindful consumption is shaped by both mindset and behavior, with a fundamental emphasis on caring for self, caring for community, and caring for nature (Sheth et al., 2011). These three dimensions reflect an awareness of personal well-being, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability in consumption choices. Alongside this mindful mindset, behavior plays a key role, particularly through temperance, which encourages moderation and intentionality in consumption (Sheth et al., 2011). The following discussion explores these attributes in detail, highlighting their role in fostering a more conscious and sustainable approach to consumption.

First, mindful consumption fosters caring for self by encouraging individuals to find happiness in meaningful, non-materialistic aspects of life while enhancing financial well-being by avoiding the negative consequences of overconsumption, such as debt and financial instability (Sheth et al., 2011). Research has highlighted the role of eudaimonic well-being in mediating the

relationship between mindfulness and health-related behaviors. Geiger et al. (2020) found that mindfulness practice reduces materialistic orientations and enhances well-being, suggesting that mindfulness may indirectly promote sustainable consumption by shaping deeper psychological factors. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023) demonstrated that mindfulness positively affects eudaimonic well-being, which, in turn, promotes healthier lifestyle choices, such as increased physical activity. These findings reinforce the broader benefits of mindful consumption in fostering overall well-being.

Beyond individual well-being, mindful consumption also encompasses caring for community, addressing materialism, mitigating environmental degradation, and reducing the prioritization of private consumption over public goods (Sheth et al., 2011). Research suggests that compassion, as a key driver of prosocial behavior, is positively associated with pro-environmental intentions (Pfattheicher et al., 2016). Likewise, altruistic and prosocial values have been identified as significant motivators for adopting lower-carbon lifestyles (Howell, 2013) and have been consistently linked, albeit modestly, to various environmental beliefs and behaviors (de Groot & Steg, 2008; Steg et al., 2014). Furthermore, the ethical dimension of mindfulness extends beyond individual well-being to include care for the broader animate and inanimate world (Grossman, 2015). Research by Van Doesum et al. (2020) found that social mindfulness—an active rather than reactive form of prosociality—is positively correlated with empathy, social value orientation, and general prosocial behavior while being negatively associated with moral disengagement and narcissism. Daniel et al. (2024) further demonstrated that mindfulness fosters communal spiritual well-being, encouraging individuals to engage in ethical consumption, voluntary simplicity, and prosocial sustainability practices.

Another key dimension of mindful consumption is caring for nature, which involves recognizing its intrinsic, instrumental, and aesthetic value (Sheth et al., 2011; Kilbourne, 2006). Research supports the notion that mindfulness fosters environmental responsibility by enhancing ethical self-identity. Daniel et al. (2023) found that dispositional mindfulness positively influences green purchase intentions (GPI), with ethical self-identity acting as a key mediator in this relationship. Furthermore, mindfulness training strengthens this connection, reinforcing the role of mindfulness in promoting environmentally responsible consumption choices.

Beyond mindset, mindful consumption is also reflected in behavior, particularly in the practice of temperance—consuming in moderation to align with well-being and sustainability goals. Temperance in consumption manifests in three key behavioral patterns. First, acquisitive consumption refers to the excessive accumulation of goods beyond one’s needs or capacity for use, often leading to waste and inefficiency (Sheth et al., 2011, p. 28). Consumers driven by acquisitive tendencies tend to overconsume, accumulating material possessions that may not contribute to long-term satisfaction. Second, repetitive consumption describes the cycle of frequent buying, discarding, and repurchasing, which exacerbates environmental degradation and resource depletion (Sheth et al., 2011). This behavior is particularly evident in fast fashion and other disposable consumer industries, where products are designed for short-term use, fueling a continuous loop of unnecessary consumption. Third, aspirational consumption is driven by the desire to signal wealth or social status, prioritizing external validation over utility and sustainability (Sheth et al., 2011, p. 29). Aspirational consumers often engage in conspicuous consumption, acquiring goods not for their functional value but to maintain or enhance their social standing.

Sheth et al. (2011) argue that mindful consumption serves as a counterbalance to overconsumption, which is often associated with environmental harm and the neglect of personal and community well-being. Overconsumption may stem from ignorance, indifference, or denial, whereas mindful consumption is rooted in a conscious, intentional approach to consumption. A mindful mindset fosters an ethic of care toward oneself, the community, and the environment, translating into consumption choices that enhance well-being and align with one’s values.

2.3 Overconsumption and Impulse buying

2.3.1 Defining Overconsumption

There has been a significant rise in consumption over the past centuries (Håkansson, 2014, p. 692). While sustainable consumption is often simplified as consuming less or only what is necessary (Peattie & Crane, 2005), overconsumption refers to consuming in excess. The term “overconsumption” is widely used across various scientific disciplines, including medicine, nutrition, psychology, and marketing (Håkansson, 2014). It is typically defined as the excessive

use of goods and services, often driven by the belief that "possessing and consuming an increasing variety and quantity of goods and services is the primary pathway to personal happiness, enhanced social status, and national success" (Elkins, 1991).

Brown and Cameron (2000) argue that determining whether consumption qualifies as overconsumption depends on whether material pursuits genuinely contribute to satisfaction and happiness (p. 28). However, overconsumption often results in excessive resource waste, environmental degradation, and adverse impacts on global sustainability (Wang et al., 2022, p. 1). These consequences highlight the urgent need to address overconsumption as it not only depletes natural resources but also undermines long-term societal well-being.

Building on this foundation, Håkansson (2014) categorized overconsumption into three dimensions, acknowledging that these aspects often overlap in individual cases. The first dimension, consumption with negative consequences, highlights behaviors that harm individuals and the environment, such as underutilized purchases that contribute to waste and place additional pressure on ecological systems. Similarly, Jain (2012) suggested that consumption at a rate that jeopardizes future well-being constitutes overconsumption. These outcome-focused definitions emphasize the tangible effects of consumption; however, they offer limited guidance on how to promote sustainable consumption or discourage overconsumption. This limitation arises because consumers often struggle to predict the broader consequences of their purchasing decisions (Heiskanen & Pantzar, 1997).

Delving deeper, the second dimension of overconsumption shifts attention to procedural aspects, exploring whether consumption involves faulty processes. Håkansson (2014) proposed that a consumption process without faults is one where "neither party regrets the transaction afterward." This perspective focuses on the methods and processes leading to consumption decisions.

The third dimension of overconsumption highlights its impact on societal and cultural values. Value-degenerative consumption refers to behaviors that undermine broader cultural virtues (Håkansson, 2014). In its destructive sense, consumption not only encourages extravagance and wastage but also promotes luxury and, at times, moral corruption (Wilk, 2004). These behaviors erode societal values by normalizing material excess and short-term gratification, often at the

expense of long-term collective well-being. Together, these aspects illustrate how overconsumption can transcend individual actions, influencing broader cultural and moral landscapes.

Overall, while Håkansson's framework provides valuable insights into the manifestations of overconsumption, it could benefit from greater integration of systemic and contextual factors. Addressing these gaps may help bridge the divide between theoretical understanding and practical solutions for mitigating overconsumption.

2.3.2 Impulse Buying

Impulse buying, defined by Rook (1987) as “a sudden, often powerful and persistent urge to buy” (p. 191), is typically unplanned and lacks rational deliberation. Literature on impulse and impulsive decision tend to imply that such decision making often result in poor decision quality (Eberhart (Née Moser) & Naderer, 2017). Impulse decision making are considered “wasteful” and “risky” in conceptualizations by researchers (Levy, 1976, Solnick et al., 1980). The literature demonstrates that impulsive buying behavior is closely associated with overconsumption as both share similar negative attributes.

In the context of live-streaming e-commerce, procedural errors often arise from marketing techniques and strategies designed to influence consumer behavior. For example, scarcity promotions—such as limited-time or limited-stock offers—create a sense of urgency, prompting consumers to make immediate and impulsive decisions (Liu & Zhang, 2023). Live-streaming platforms further enhance interactivity and immediacy, heightening entertainment value and accelerating the consumption process (Xu et al., 2020). Seamless payment systems also lower cognitive barriers, making impulse purchases more frequent (Khan et al., 2015; Park et al., 2012).

From a consequentialism perspective, though some impulsive purchase satisfies hedonic desires and has experiential value (Eberhart (Née Moser) & Naderer, 2017). Overconsumption can be observed in the negative outcomes of impulse buying. Research indicates that a majority of impulsive buyers report dissatisfaction, often stemming from a gap between their expectations and the actual performance of the purchased products (Rook, 1987; Kumar et al., 2021). The features of live-streaming e-commerce shift consumers' attention toward the act of shopping—

particularly the excitement of acquiring new items—while diminishing their focus on the actual products being sold and their genuine needs. This shift frequently results in purchases that do not match the actual needs, aligning with Frick et al.'s (2021) definition of overconsumption.

2.4 Psychological Mechanisms Explaining Overconsumption

Having introduced and critically reviewed the definitions of overconsumption and its key expression—impulse buying—this section focuses on exploring the main theories in existing literature that help explain such behaviors. It begins by examining the attitude–behavior gap, a widely documented phenomenon that highlights the inconsistencies between consumers' sustainability-related attitudes and their actual behaviors. The discussion then introduces the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), a well-established framework that offers valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying this gap. In addition, this section considers how methodological biases, such as social desirability, may affect research findings on sustainable consumption. Finally, it explores neutralization techniques as coping strategies that allow consumers to rationalize behaviors that conflict with their ethical or environmental values. Together, these perspectives provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the psychological dynamics that contribute to overconsumption.

2.4.1. The Attitude-Behavior Gap

While sustainable consumption enjoys widespread support and individuals often express positive attitudes toward it, these attitudes rarely translate into corresponding actions (Carrigan and Attala, 2001). This discrepancy, known as the attitude-behavior gap, highlights how individuals may express concern for environmental issues but fail to act accordingly (ElHaffar et al., 2020). The attitude–behavior gap has emerged as a significant focus in the literature on sustainable consumption and ethical consumer behavior. Studies have highlighted this persistent discrepancy between what consumers claim to value and how they actually behave (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; ElHaffar et al., 2020). Despite widespread support for sustainability principles and growing awareness of environmental and social issues, research consistently shows that consumers often fail to translate their positive attitudes into consistent, sustainable actions. This gap is not only well-documented but also recognized as a central challenge in advancing pro-environmental and ethical consumption practices (White et al., 2019; Johnstone & Tan, 2015). As such,

understanding the dynamics of the attitude–behavior gap is essential for scholars and practitioners seeking to bridge the divide between consumer intention and actual purchasing decisions.

2.4.2 The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The theory of planned behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), posits that behavior is primarily driven by intentions, which are shaped by three factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The theory of planned behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), posits that behavior is primarily driven by intentions, which are shaped by three key factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes refer to a “psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor” (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993, p. 1). Subjective norms capture the social influences of key referent individuals or groups, emphasizing the extent to which normative ideas about the action are valued and the individual’s willingness to conform to them (Kamalanon et al., 2022). Finally, perceived behavioral control reflects an individual’s perception of how easy or difficult it is to perform a behavior, influenced by personal ability and external circumstances. Notably, perceived behavioral control can sometimes directly affect behavior, bypassing intentions (Ajzen, 1991).

According to TPB, intention is the strongest predictor of behavior, and it bridges the gap between what people think and what they do (Kamalanon et al., 2022). However, research shows that intentions often fail to translate into actions. For instance, Rogers (1998) found that while 57% of participants claimed they would stop buying a brand if child labor were involved, only 21% supported actions against unethical companies (Folkes & Kamins, 1999). Furthermore, just 20% of participants reported purchasing products associated with good causes within the past year. Similarly, Futerra (2005) noted that while 30% of consumers claimed they would purchase ethically, only 3% actually followed through. Futerra also highlighted that using intentions as predictors of actual behavior is incorrect 90% of the time. Research by Carrington et al. (2010) suggests that the attitude-behavior gap can be broken down into two distinct gaps: the gap between attitude and intention, and the gap between intention and behavior. Understanding these gaps is crucial for analyzing and addressing green consumption behavior. By identifying the

barriers at each stage, researchers and practitioners can better forecast and influence sustainable consumption practices.

2.4.3 Methodological Biases

A key focus in the study of the attitude-behavior gap is the influence of methodological biases on research findings. One significant bias is social desirability, where individuals tend to overstate their pro-environmental attitudes to align with socially accepted norms or expectations, leading to an overestimation of sustainable behaviors in research (Barber et al., 2016). This contributes to the observed attitude/intention-behavior gap, which describes the inconsistency between what consumers claim to value and their actual actions (Carrington et al., 2010; ElHaffar et al., 2020). Another issue is the reliance on self-reported data, which can further distort findings. Many studies assume that participants provide accurate accounts of their behavior, yet these self-reports are often overstated, painting an overly optimistic picture of sustainable consumption (Peattie, 2010). As a result, the literature may underestimate the true extent of the gap between consumers' stated intentions and their actual green behaviors. Addressing these methodological challenges is essential for obtaining a more accurate understanding of green consumerism and bridging the gap between attitudes and actions.

Second, genuine positive attitudes may fail to translate into action due to external constraints such as price, convenience, or limited access to sustainable options. As part of investigating different research questions in a range of study contexts, several studies have identified possible reasons for this gap. For example, Eckhardt et al. (2010) observe that:

“Doing the right thing may mean paying more, expending more time and effort to find the “right” product, or doing without a popular brand. Therefore, consumers may choose to remain consciously or subconsciously ignorant of the labor conditions, environmental impacts, or intellectual property rights issues involved in the products they buy.”

Consumers often struggle to maintain sustainable behaviors due to realistic constraints, leading them to employ various justifications to reconcile their actions with their values. Eckhardt et al. (2010) identify three primary reasons consumers use to rationalize unethical behaviors: economic rationalization, reliance on economic development realities, and government

dependency. Similarly, De Witt Huberts et al. (2014) emphasize that justification mechanisms play a crucial role in self-regulation failure, enabling individuals to rationalize behaviors that conflict with long-term goals like sustainability. These justifications can occur preemptively (e.g., “This deal is too good to pass up”) or post hoc (e.g., “I’ll make up for this later”), helping consumers mitigate guilt or dissonance.

In the context of overconsumption, research indicates that consumers frequently shift responsibility for their excessive consumption onto external factors, such as marketing practices, rather than acknowledging their own role. Pereira Heath and Chatzidakis (2012) found that while participants acknowledged that “too much importance is attributed to material goods in society,” demonstrating their awareness of the problematic nature of overconsumption, they predominantly attributed the blame to advertising and marketing. This externalization further enables overconsumption by reducing personal accountability.

2.4.4 Neutralization Techniques in Consumer Behavior

When social norms are not internalized to the degree that they guide behavior under all circumstances, consumers may develop coping strategies to deal with the dissonance that they experience (Chatzidakis et al., 2007, p. 90). To address the discomfort caused by inconsistencies between their green attitudes and actual behaviors, consumers often employ psychological mechanisms known as neutralization techniques.

Originally introduced by Sykes and Matza (1957) in their study of juvenile delinquency, these techniques explain how individuals rationalize norm-violating behaviors. According to Sykes and Matza (1957), neutralization techniques are rationalizations used to “protect the individual from self-blame and the blame of others after the act” (p. 666). Over time, Bryant et al. (2017) expanded this framework, adapting it to broader contexts by adding two techniques.

Gruber & Schlegelmilch (2014) argue that the use of neutralization techniques is a self-reinforcing process, where consumers, once successfully rationalizing their behavior, are more likely to adopt similar justification strategies in future purchases. Research has explored the applicability of neutralization theory in a variety of consumer contexts (Chatzidakis et al. 2004). Chatzidakis et al. (2007) demonstrated that these techniques could explain attitude-behavior

discrepancies in consumer decisions, such as those related to not purchasing fair-trade products. Building on this, Brunner (2014) further explored the role of neutralization techniques in consumer decision-making, identifying two key strategies: internal neutralization (focusing on self-justifications, such as personal financial constraints) and external neutralization (shifting responsibility to external factors, such as skepticism about the impact of ethical consumption). His findings suggest that consumers strategically employ these rationalization mechanisms to justify their purchasing behaviors, even when they conflict with their expressed attitudes toward ethical consumption.

In summary, neutralization techniques provide a valuable framework for understanding how consumers rationalize behaviors that conflict with their ethical or sustainable attitudes. By alleviating self-blame and external criticism, these techniques help explain the discrepancies between attitudes and actions in various consumer contexts, such as the decision not to purchase fair-trade products. This dynamic highlights the psychological mechanisms consumers use to reconcile their actions with social and personal values, making it particularly relevant to the study of overconsumption behaviors.

2.4.4.1 Core Neutralization Techniques

Neutralization theory offers a useful lens for understanding how consumers justify behaviors that may conflict with sustainability norms. One commonly observed technique is denial of responsibility, where individuals attribute their actions to external forces beyond their control. In the context of live-streaming e-commerce, this may be reflected in statements such as “The streamer made me buy it,” indicating that persuasive sales tactics are blamed for impulsive purchases. Another technique is denial of injury, where consumers minimize the consequences of their actions. A typical justification might be, “One more purchase won’t harm the environment,” which downplays the environmental impact of overconsumption. Denial of the victim involves acknowledging harm but reframing it as either deserved or outweighed by perceived benefits; for example, a consumer might claim, “My spending helps support delivery workers,” thereby suggesting the harm is justified. Condemning the condemners deflects criticism by attacking the credibility or consistency of those who advocate for sustainable behavior, as in, “Environmentalists aren’t perfect either.” Another technique, appeal to higher loyalties,

prioritizes personal obligations over broader societal norms—for instance, “I bought this for my family,” indicating that familial duty justifies the purchase. Expanding on the original framework, Bryant et al. (2017) identified two additional strategies. Appeal to good character allows individuals to justify unsustainable actions by highlighting their otherwise virtuous behavior—e.g., “I usually make sustainable choices, so one indulgence doesn’t matter.” Meanwhile, victimization portrays the individual as a deserving recipient of comfort or reward, as seen in claims like, “I work hard and deserve to treat myself.” Together, these neutralization techniques illustrate how consumers construct moral justifications that enable them to maintain a positive self-image while engaging in unsustainable practices.

Many studies, although not explicitly grounded in neutralization theory, reveal justification patterns in consumer behavior that functionally resemble the techniques described by Sykes and Matza (1957). For example, moral licensing theory (Merritt et al., 2010) shares key functional similarities with the notion of “appeal to good character,” as both describe how individuals justify transgressions through reference to prior virtuous acts. Similarly, Gosling, Denizeau, and Oberlé’s (2006) work on denial of responsibility as a cognitive dissonance reduction strategy reflects mechanisms comparable to neutralization techniques. Several empirical studies have also identified rationalization processes in consumption that align with these functions, even if they do not explicitly draw on neutralization theory (e.g., d’Astous & Legendre, 2009; Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber, 2011; Stich, 2012; Banbury, Stinerock, & Subrahmanyam, 2012; Eckhardt et al., 2010). While these studies are rooted in diverse theoretical frameworks, they collectively highlight consumers’ use of justifications to reconcile behaviors that might otherwise be seen as inappropriate, unethical, or inconsistent with their stated values. This comparison, though does not claim theoretical equivalence, illuminates the functional parallels between these rationalization processes and neutralization techniques.

2.5 Live-Streaming in China

2.5.1 Overview

With the advancement of mobile communication technology, live streaming has been increasingly utilized for online shopping, giving rise to a new form of social commerce called

live-streaming commerce (Ma et al., 2022). Many sellers on social commerce platforms in China have embraced live streaming to boost their sales performance (Sun et al., 2019). In China, Alibaba launched Taobao Live in 2016, followed by ByteDance's entry into e-commerce with the launch of TikTok Live in 2018. This spurred the rapid growth of live-streaming commerce in China (Ma et al., 2022). According to a report on China's live-streaming commerce industry by IResearch(2021), the market size surpassed 1.2 trillion RMB (approximately 168 billion USD) in 2020, reflecting an annual growth rate of 197%. The report further projected that the market would exceed 4.9 trillion RMB (about 686 billion USD) by 2023. As of March 2023, China had around 7.65 million users actively participating in live-streaming e-commerce, representing 71% of the country's total internet user base. Female users comprised roughly 54% of this group (China Marketing Corp, 2023).

According to Ma et al. (2022), Cai and Wohn (2019), and Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut (2018), live-streaming commerce can be categorized into two main types. The first type involves e-commerce platforms integrating live-streaming features to facilitate real-time product demonstrations and consumer engagement. The second type refers to live-streaming platforms that incorporate commercial activities, allowing users to purchase products directly during the live stream. Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2018) further introduced a category in live-streaming commerce that is the integration of live-streaming features into social media platforms, such as Facebook Live and TikTok(known as "Douyin" in China). Unlike the first two types of platforms, which focus primarily on commerce or live entertainment, social media platforms add live streaming as an extension of their core social networking functions, blending social interaction with commercial transactions.

With the growing success of live-streaming as a new shopping method, it has also attracted significant academic attention. Numerous studies have explored the factors influencing consumers' buying intentions on live-streaming platforms (Lu & Chen, 2021; Ma et al., 2022; Song et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2023). Based on the existing literature, studies on the influence of live-streaming e-commerce on consumer behavior can be broadly categorized into two types.

The first research category explores how the inherent characteristics of live-streaming as a new sales channel influence consumer behavior and purchase intentions. This section will delve into

identifying key attributes of live-streaming e-commerce. These attributes—interactivity, vividness, entertainment, and visibility—are among the most frequently discussed in existing literature and will be examined individually in the following sections.

2.5.2 Interactivity

One key feature of live-streaming commerce is real-time interaction (Cai and Wohn, 2019, p. 2554). In live-streaming environments, audiences can engage with streamers in various ways, including real-time commenting, subscribing, gift-giving, and sending bullet-screen messages (known as “danmaku”). Interactivity refers to the extent to which users can participate in modifying the form and content of a mediated environment in real time (Steuer, 1992). It is generally understood as the degree of mutual communication between two parties, allowing users to switch between the roles of sender and receiver either in real-time or on-demand (Fortin & Dholakia, 2005). In social interaction studies, interactivity serves as a stimulus that influences consumers’ physiological arousal, attitudes, and purchase intentions. Particularly in online commerce, interactivity is a key factor in shaping consumers’ cognitive and emotional responses, which ultimately affect their behavior (Kang et al., 2021).

In the context of advertising communication and web interfaces, research consistently indicates that interactivity significantly influences consumer involvement and arousal, ultimately enhancing advertising effectiveness (Fortin & Dholakia, 2005). Similarly, in studies on live-streaming e-commerce, many researchers have emphasized interactivity as a key factor in shaping the live-streaming shopping experience. For instance, Ma et al. (2022) noted that interactivity positively influences social presence, reduces psychological distance, and fosters trust, which in turn increases engagement and purchase intentions. In the context of sustainable consumption, Wang and Fan (2021) found that, in green agri-food marketing, interactivity in livestreaming e-commerce facilitates real-time communication between firms and consumers, improving information flow and trust, addressing information asymmetry, and ultimately enhancing marketing effectiveness and consumer engagement. Similarly, Addo et al. (2020) highlighted that humanizing websites, increasing real-time interactivity, and incorporating “green messages” with added value can effectively promote sustainable purchasing decisions.

Together, these findings suggest that interactivity in live-streaming e-commerce plays a crucial role in driving consumers' purchase intention.

2.5.3 Vividness

Another attribute of live streaming that has been extensively analyzed in previous studies is vividness, often examined alongside interactivity. Vividness refers to the richness of a mediated environment's representation, determined by its formal features—specifically, how the environment presents information to the senses. As a stimulus-driven concept, it relies entirely on the technical attributes of the medium. Two key factors contribute to vividness: sensory breadth (the number of sensory dimensions presented simultaneously) and sensory depth (the resolution within each sensory channel) (Steuer, 1992). For example, in live-streaming e-commerce, a streamer showcasing a piece of clothing might use vividness to reduce the psychological distance between the consumer and the product. The streamer can use high-definition video to display the texture, color, and fit of the clothing from multiple angles, while also describing how it feels to touch and wear. By presenting detailed, sensory-rich information, the consumer feels as if they are almost physically present, making it easier to visualize the product and trust the streamer's demonstration. This level of vividness helps bridge the gap between the digital experience and in-person shopping.

In e-commerce, vividness often refers to the quality of product presentations (Jiang and Benbasat, 2007). Live-streaming literature tends to find vividness is a key factor driving engagement in live-streaming e-commerce. Multiple studies have demonstrated the key role of vividness in enhancing user engagement. For instance, Gu et al. (2023) found that vividness enhances continuous participation by boosting perceived diagnosticity, enjoyment, and social support, leading to memorable experiences. Liu et al., (2023) similarly noted that sensory-rich presentations improve both enjoyment and product evaluation in live-streaming. Fortin and Dholakia (2005) suggest that while vividness has a greater impact on engagement than interactivity, the optimal combination involves high vividness with moderate interactivity to maximize consumer involvement. This balance underscores how vivid, immersive presentations paired with interactive features can effectively enhance consumer engagement and decision-making in live-streaming environments.

2.5.4 Entertainment

Live-streaming e-commerce offers a stronger entertainment component compared to traditional e-commerce. Cai et al. (2018) found that people view live-stream shopping as more entertaining than traditional online shopping. Participants expressed excitement over the novelty and interactive nature of live-stream shopping, describing it as a “fun” and “engaging” way to browse and purchase products, with some preferring it over conventional shopping websites for the added enjoyment it provides.

Entertainment is widely recognized as a primary factor in capturing consumer attention and fostering continuous engagement in live-stream e-commerce. Studies by Xue et al. (2020) and Chen and Lin (2018) emphasize that entertainment elements—such as real-time interaction, humor, and flow—enhance viewers’ perceived enjoyment and value, making the live-stream experience more immersive and engaging. Chen and Lin (2018) further demonstrate that entertainment shapes viewers’ attitudes and encourages their intention to continue watching, with enjoyment being a central motivator that distinguishes live-streaming from traditional e-commerce. Hou et al. (2020) also highlight humor and appeal as critical components that support long-term engagement, reinforcing the notion that entertainment is essential for sustaining audience attention in a dynamic, real-time environment.

Beyond engagement, entertainment also fosters trust, an essential element in online shopping environments where consumer confidence in sellers is crucial. Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) found that the hedonic and symbolic values embedded in entertaining live-stream presentations enhance consumer trust in products and sellers. Ma et al. (2020) further support this by noting that entertainment, along with elements like social presence, reduces psychological distance, strengthening the live-stream environment's perceived authenticity. These findings illustrate that entertainment draws consumers in and makes them more receptive to the streamer’s recommendations by creating a trusted, enjoyable atmosphere, ultimately bridging the gap between viewer skepticism and trust.

A consistent finding across studies is that entertainment helps convert engagement into purchase intentions by reducing psychological distance and perceived risk. Xue et al. (2020) show that entertaining features, such as interactive presentations and engaging product displays, decrease

perceived risk, making viewers more comfortable with the idea of purchasing. Zheng et al. (2023) affirm this effect, showing that entertaining agricultural product presentations by live-stream streamers lead to higher purchase intentions during live-stream events. Additionally, Ma et al. (2020) highlight the importance of entertainment in creating a sense of social presence, which not only enhances trust but also positively influences purchase decisions by making the product experience feel more real and accessible. Collectively, these findings indicate that entertainment serves as both a bridge and a catalyst, transforming passive viewers into active buyers by enhancing the appeal and tangibility of the products.

2.5.5 Visibility

Live streaming shopping is a highly visible form of product presentation through online videos (Sun et al., 2019). Visibility affordance refers to the ability to visually present various aspects of a product to users, including its appearance, functions, and specifications (Zhang et al., 2022). Unlike traditional online shopping environments, where sellers are often hidden from shoppers, live streaming allows streamers to showcase their personalities and emotions in real time. This visual connection helps enhance viewers' sense of identification and engagement, fostering a stronger sense of trust (Zhang et al., 2022).

Moreover, in live shopping, not only is the seller visible, but product information is also clearly displayed, providing consumers with a more authentic and comprehensive portrayal of the items. This visibility helps reduce the psychological distance between the customer and the streamer, further enhancing trust (Lv et al., 2018) and consequently reducing uncertainty (Bai et al., 2015, Lu & Chen, 2021). In comparison, traditional e-commerce primarily relies on static images and descriptions, which limits the richness of product information available to consumers. Live streaming, by contrast, emphasizes real-time, dynamic product demonstrations, making the shopping experience more immersive.

Additionally, the visibility of other users' behaviors, plays a significant role in social commerce. Bai et al. (2015) found that product reviews and comments on social platforms can help consumers form a sense of social support and reduce the product uncertainty level. Su et al. (2020) found that the visibility of virtual gifts is positively correlated with the green purchase intentions of viewers, highlighting the social influence in live shopping environments. Overall,

visibility in live streaming extends beyond just the product and seller—it encompasses the entire interactive experience, including consumer behavior, which collectively contributes to purchasing decisions.

2.5.6 The Role of Streamers

As discussed earlier, research on live-streaming and consumer engagement, including buying intentions and behaviors, generally falls into two categories. The first category explores the features and functions of live-streaming platforms, which this chapter has summarized. The second category delves into the role of individuals who directly interact with viewers and drive sales—referred to in various studies as “anchors,” “streamers,” “broadcasters,” “influencers,” or “hosts.” For consistency, this study will use the term “streamers”. Streamers are undeniably a crucial driving force behind the success of the live-streaming industry. Numerous studies confirm the importance of streamers in enhancing viewer engagement, fostering continuous watching, and influencing both buying and impulse buying intentions. Streamers fulfill a range of roles in guiding viewers from initial interest to purchase, shaping the entire live-stream shopping experience.

In the live-streaming experience, streamers first serve as “attention magnets,” capturing viewers’ interest with their appeal, personality, and professional presence. Their engaging style and unique qualities create an inviting atmosphere that encourages viewers to enter and stay in the stream. This initial engagement is essential for establishing rapport and laying the foundation for trust-building (Lee & Chen, 2021; Gao et al., 2021). Once viewers are present, streamers transition into the role of “trust streamers,” building trust by interacting in real time, sharing values, and showcasing products to reduce common uncertainties. By responding to questions and highlighting product features, streamers help clarify product fit and quality, which are often sources of concern in online shopping. By aligning their values with those of their audience, streamers foster a sense of connection and confidence in their recommendations, establishing authenticity in their interactions (Lu & Chen, 2021; Gao et al., 2021). As viewers continue to engage, streamers work to deepen this connection by fostering emotional ties and a sense of social belonging. Their charisma and expertise create a community atmosphere where viewers feel part of a shared experience centered around the streamer and the product. This emotional

connection satisfies viewers' social and emotional needs, enhancing their intent to buy as they feel more invested in the experience (Xu et al., 2020; Heo et al., 2020). Based on this trust and emotional resonance, streamers encourage purchasing by employing scarcity tactics such as limited-time offers or exclusive deals. This “hunger marketing” strategy creates a sense of urgency, leveraging viewers' fear of missing out to drive impulse purchases (Zhang et al., 2022).

In sum, streamers play multiple roles in live-streaming e-commerce, guiding viewers through an engaging path from curiosity to purchase. By driving metrics such as gross merchandise value (GMV), expanding fan bases, and maintaining high viewer engagement, streamers are central to platform success. Their impact relies not solely on their fan base size but on the quality of interactions and trust they build with viewers (Liu et al., 2023). This flow illustrates how streamers guide viewers through each stage of engagement, underscoring their essential role in shaping consumer behavior and driving success in live-streaming e-commerce.

2.6 Research gaps

In summary, while existing literature on sustainable consumption has made important strides in identifying barriers such as the attitude–behavior gap and exploring consumers' ethical justifications (e.g., Carrington et al., 2014; Chatzidakis et al., 2004, 2007), most of this work has relied on quantitative approaches and has focused on general or Western consumer contexts. Little is known about the subjective perceptions of Chinese consumers, particularly in relation to sustainability within livestream e-commerce environments. Prior research on livestream shopping has primarily examined its role in promoting impulsive buying (e.g., Lee & Chen, 2021; Ming et al., 2021; Qu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022; Zuo & Xiao, 2021), yet has not sufficiently addressed how this environment fosters overconsumption or how consumers rationalize such behavior.

Furthermore, while neutralization theory has proven useful in explaining attitude–behavior inconsistencies in ethical consumption, it has not been systematically applied to overconsumption in digital retail contexts such as livestream e-commerce. Similarly, although mindful consumption has been proposed as a framework to counteract excessive and mindless

purchasing (Sheth et al., 2011; Bahl et al., 2016), its interaction with consumer rationalization processes in this setting remains unexplored.

This study seeks to address these gaps by investigating how livestream e-commerce environments shape consumer perceptions and behaviors around sustainable consumption. Specifically, it explores the psychological and contextual factors that contribute to overconsumption, including how consumers rationalize unsustainable choices and how the interactive and persuasive features of livestreaming may suppress mindful consumption tendencies. By focusing on Chinese consumers in a rapidly evolving digital shopping context, this research aims to contribute novel insights to both the sustainability and consumer behavior literature.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed and synthesized key literature on sustainable consumption, overconsumption, impulse buying, and the unique characteristics of livestream e-commerce. It highlighted the multidimensional nature of sustainable consumption, the persistence of the attitude–behavior gap, and the psychological mechanisms that enable consumers to reconcile unsustainable behaviors with pro-environmental values. The review also examined how features of livestream e-commerce—including interactivity, vividness, entertainment, and visibility—can promote impulsive and excessive consumption while complicating efforts toward mindful or sustainable practices.

The review identified significant gaps in the literature. While prior studies have explored sustainable consumption and impulse buying, most focused on Western contexts or used quantitative approaches, leaving the subjective experiences of Chinese livestream consumers underexplored. Little is known about how livestream shopping environments influence consumer rationalization processes or mindful consumption tendencies. These gaps provide a clear rationale for this study, which seeks to qualitatively explore how livestream e-commerce shapes consumer perceptions and practices of sustainable consumption in China. The next chapter outlines the research methodology adopted to address these objectives.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted in this research. Guided by a constructivist ontology and an interpretivist epistemology, this study aims to explore how livestream e-commerce consumers understand and engage with the concept of sustainable consumption. A qualitative methodology is employed to capture the subjective experiences and socially constructed meanings that participants attach to their consumption behaviors. Given the context-specific and nuanced nature of the research questions, semi-structured interviews are used to generate rich, detailed narratives. The following sections elaborate on the philosophical underpinnings, data collection methods, data analysis procedures, sampling strategy, and ethical considerations that structure this inquiry.

3.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The primary objective of this study is to explore how live-streaming commerce shapes consumers' understanding and engagement with sustainable consumption. Specifically, it investigates how this relatively new form of shopping influences consumer behavior about sustainability.

Existing research on live-streaming commerce has largely focused on the causal relationships between platform attributes (e.g., interactivity, social presence, time-limited promotions) and consumer engagement (e.g., Ma et al., 2022; Song et al., 2022; Dong et al., 2022; Gu et al., 2023; Zheng et al., 2023). Many studies highlight the role of live-streaming commerce in enhancing purchase intention, and several have identified its facilitative effect on impulsive buying behavior, providing evidence that overconsumption does exist within live-streaming e-commerce platforms. However, research on overconsumption has not sufficiently explored live-streaming as a shopping context.

Given this gap, this study seeks to examine how the live-streaming shopping environment facilitates or inhibits sustainable consumption behaviors. Therefore, the specific research objectives of this study are:

- Research Objective 1: To develop a deeper understanding of how livestream e-commerce consumers conceptualize “sustainable consumption.”
- Research Objective 2: To examine how livestream shopping environments shape consumers’ sustainability-related perceptions and how these perceptions influence their purchasing behaviors.

The development of the research questions in this study was guided by existing literature, identified research gaps, and the need to better understand the relationship between sustainable consumption perceptions and consumer behavior within the unique context of livestream e-commerce.

Previous research has extensively explored consumer attitudes toward sustainability, common barriers to sustainable consumption, and the persistence of the attitude–behavior gap (White et al., 2019; Johnstone & Tan, 2015; Carrington et al., 2014). However, limited attention has been paid to how specific retail environments shape consumer perceptions of sustainability and ethical consumption. To address this gap, the study formulated three research questions:

- *RQ1: What are consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption in livestream e-commerce contexts?*
- *RQ2: How do livestream shopping environments shape consumers’ perceptions and behaviors related to sustainability?*
- *RQ3: How do consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption influence their purchasing behaviors?*

Together, these questions aim to generate understanding of how livestream shopping environments interact with consumer psychology to facilitate or hinder sustainable consumption.

3.3 Research paradigm

According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a research paradigm is “the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways.” Whenever research is undertaken, individual researchers

must consider the processes by which they gain knowledge. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a *research paradigm* comprises four core elements: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and axiology. These elements collectively shape the researcher's assumptions about reality (ontology), the nature of knowledge (epistemology), the process of inquiry (methodology), and the values that inform the research (axiology). Given that this research is grounded in an interpretivism paradigm, it is important to examine the differences between interpretivism and alternative paradigms in order to justify the choice of this philosophical and methodological framework.

3.3.1 Ontology

Ontology concerns itself with theorizing about the nature of reality and the fundamental assumptions we make about existence (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). Different ontological positions define reality in distinct ways, shaping how researchers approach their studies and what they seek to understand. In essence, ontology addresses the nature of existence and the way knowledge about a phenomenon can be identified (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p. 40).

Two primary ontological perspectives are objectivism and constructivism, which differ based on their metaphysical and epistemological foundations (Jonassen, 1991, p. 8). Objectivism posits that social phenomena exist independently of human perception, meaning they are external realities that remain unchanged regardless of individual awareness. In contrast, constructivism challenges this notion by asserting that social realities such as organizations, culture, and even knowledge, are not objective entities but rather socially constructed through human actions, interactions, and interpretations (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). From this perspective, reality is not fixed but continuously shaped by individuals' experiences and social contexts. As Jonassen (1991, p. 7) explains:

“If our learning theory assumes that we construct meaning for objects and events by interpreting our perceptions of them in terms of our past experiences, beliefs, and biases, then each of us mentally represents our own personal reality.”

This study adopts a constructivist ontological stance, viewing reality as socially constructed through individual values, perceptions, and interpretations. Specifically, it considers sustainable

consumption not as a fixed, measurable concept but as a subjective construct shaped by personal values and social context. Each individual's understanding of sustainability and consumption behaviors is formed within social interactions and influenced by external factors, making reality dynamic and context-dependent rather than absolute.

3.3.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is the theory of knowledge, concerned with how researchers acquire and validate knowledge (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). It follows logically from ontology, as a given ontological position—a particular understanding of what reality is—determines the epistemological stance, shaping how knowledge about that reality can be obtained (Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020, p. 40).

This study adopts an interpretivist epistemological stance, as it seeks to explore how live-streaming e-commerce consumers understand the concept of sustainable consumption. Interpretivism differs from positivism, which aims to identify generalizable laws, by instead taking a historical and context-specific approach to research (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511). Interpretivists seek to determine motives, meanings, and subjective experiences that are time- and context-bound, making it particularly suitable for studying how consumers form personal understandings of sustainability within the unique environment of live-streaming commerce (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988, p. 511).

3.4 Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative methodology consistent with an interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative approach was chosen to explore how consumers understand and engage with sustainable consumption within the context of livestream e-commerce. Such an approach is well-suited for investigating subjective experiences, meaning-making processes, and contextual influences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

Guided by an interpretivist stance, the research seeks to capture participants' diverse perspectives and the complex interactions between the shopping environment and consumer

behavior. This methodological orientation ensures alignment between the research questions, data collection strategies, and analytical methods (Crotty, 1998; Alharahsheh & Pius, 2020).

3.5 Methods

The objective of this study was to explore livestream e-commerce consumers' perceptions of sustainable consumption, examine how these perceptions are shaped by the livestream shopping environment, and understand how consumers rationalize their sustainable or non-sustainable consumption behaviors. Given this aim, the study sought to investigate how consumers construct the meaning of "sustainability" based on their experiences, values, and beliefs. A qualitative research design was deemed appropriate because qualitative research explores and provides deeper insights into real-world problems (Moser & Korstjens, 2017). Rather than collecting numerical data or testing interventions as in quantitative research, qualitative inquiry helps generate hypotheses and facilitates a richer understanding of complex, context-dependent phenomena (Tenny, Brannan, & Brannan, 2022).

Existing research on livestream e-commerce has predominantly relied on quantitative methods, focusing on how livestreaming features promote impulsive buying (e.g., Lee & Chen, 2021; Ming et al., 2021; Qu et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2022; Zuo & Xiao, 2021). While such studies provide valuable generalizable insights, they offer limited explanation of the deeper psychological and social processes that underpin consumer behaviors. By adopting a qualitative approach, this study seeks to complement prior work by offering an in-depth exploration of how consumers interpret, negotiate, and rationalize their consumption decisions in the livestreaming context.

3.5.1 Data Collection

Qualitative research interviews are particularly valuable when the goal is to understand participants' subjective perspectives rather than to generate broad, generalizable findings (McGrath et al., 2019, p. 1002). In this study, in-depth interviews were employed to obtain rich insights into livestream e-commerce consumers' perceptions of sustainable consumption, including how they define sustainability and experience digital shopping environments. This method aligns with the study's exploratory nature, as it enables the collection of detailed

accounts of participants' perspectives through open-ended, conversational dialogue (Rutledge & Hogg, 2020).

3.5.1.1 Semi-Structured Interview

In-depth interviews can be structured, unstructured, or semi-structured (Fontana & Frey, 2000). This research adopted a semi-structured format, which balances guidance with flexibility—allowing for consistent focus on key topics while enabling the exploration of emerging ideas (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021). This approach is well suited for examining complex social and behavioral questions (Furneaux & Wade, 2011).

A predetermined list of topics—an interview guide—is used to guide the interview process and ensure that essential areas are covered. However, interviewees retain the freedom to express their thoughts in detail, and the interviewer can adapt the sequence of questions as needed. It is generally recommended to start with a few introductory questions to help participants feel at ease and familiarize themselves with the topic (McGrath et al., 2019, p. 1003). While the interview guide provides structure, interviewers can ask follow-up questions to probe deeper into participants' responses, leading to richer insights (Lingard & Kennedy, 2010). This flexibility makes semi-structured interviews an effective data collection method, allowing researchers to dynamically explore emerging themes while maintaining focus on the core research questions (Bell, Bryman, & Harley, 2022). Given the exploratory nature of this study, a semi-structured interview approach is particularly well-suited to capturing nuanced perspectives on the research topic.

3.5.1.2 Pilot Study

Two pilot interviews were conducted prior to the main data collection to evaluate the clarity, tone, and structure of the interview guide. The participants—one male and one female—were both postgraduate students with frequent experience in livestream e-commerce shopping. While they shared similar characteristics with the intended sample, they were not included in the final dataset.

Feedback from the pilot process led to several refinements. In particular, certain questions were found to be too direct or personally framed. These were reworded to adopt a more neutral, third-

person perspective to ease participant engagement and reduce potential discomfort. For example, instead of asking “Why do you impulse buy in livestream shopping?”, the question was reframed as “Why do you think some people tend to impulse buy during livestream sessions?”. Additionally, the pilot confirmed that the overall interview flow and length (approximately 45–60 minutes) were appropriate. The process helped improve the conversational tone of the guide and enhanced its effectiveness in eliciting in-depth responses.

3.5.2 Data Analysis

3.5.2.1 Translation Process

Interviews were conducted via Tencent Meeting (腾讯会议), a Chinese videoconferencing platform. This platform was chosen to ensure ease of participation for all interviewees, who were based in mainland China and preferred domestic tools. Interview transcripts were first automatically generated using the platform’s transcription function. These initial transcripts were then manually reviewed and corrected by the researcher to remove irrelevant content, combine fragmented responses, and ensure logical coherence in the textual data. The goal was to retain meaning fidelity while making the material more analytically coherent and translatable.

Following transcription, the corrected Chinese transcripts were translated into English using a triangulated approach. The researcher cross-verified each segment using three main strategies: (1) translation software, including Youdao Dictionary and DeepL; (2) AI-supported translation assistance using ChatGPT; and (3) the researcher’s bilingual judgment. As a Chinese researcher with over seven years of residency in English-speaking countries and previous experience in English instruction for Chinese students, the researcher ensured that translations reflected both semantic accuracy and cultural nuance. Where discrepancies occurred among the translation sources, a sentence-by-sentence comparison was performed to reach an optimal rendering. All final bilingual documents (Chinese original and English translation) were then imported into NVivo and Microsoft Word for the analytical process.

3.5.2.2 Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a well-established and flexible analytical method for analysing qualitative data; it enables the identification, analysis, and reporting of patterns (themes) within interviews or textual data. Originally formalised by Braun and Clarke (2006), this approach is both accessible and adaptable across different research contexts, making it especially useful for exploring subjective experiences and complex narratives. It provides a systematic way to organize and describe a dataset in rich detail while also allowing for deeper interpretation of the research topic (Boyatzis, 1998). Beyond simple categorization, thematic analysis enables researchers to uncover underlying meanings and relationships within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Thematic analysis involves searching for recurring themes that are central to understanding the phenomenon under study (Daly, Kellehear, & Gliksman, 1997). It requires careful reading and re-reading of the data to identify patterns and categories that emerge inductively (Rice & Ezzy, 1999). The themes that emerge from the data will provide insights into how live-streaming affects e-commerce consumers' perception and behaviors of sustainable consumption.

Braun and Clarke (2006) proposed a six-step framework for thematic analysis, these steps were strictly followed in this study:

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, and noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work for the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.

5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

3.6 Sampling and Participants

This study employs a purposive sampling approach initially, where participants are selected based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. To obtain the most information about the phenomena under study, purposive sampling is a method typically employed by case study methodology (Eisenhardt, 1991, p. 620).

Following this, a snowball sampling method was implemented, where initial participants were encouraged to refer other individuals who also met the criteria. This approach is particularly useful for accessing frequent live-streaming shoppers, as these individuals may be difficult to identify through traditional recruitment methods.

All participants received detailed information about the study, including their rights, confidentiality measures, and voluntary participation, ensuring ethical compliance. Those who agree to participate will provide informed consent before the interviews are conducted.

Participants for this study were recruited through social media outreach, primarily using WeChat, to post recruitment requests and seek individuals who met the study's criteria. 13 participants were successfully recruited by the initial outreach, and 5 participants were recruited by a snowball approach. **Table 1** provides an overview of participants' demographic profiles. The sample included 18 participants with diverse gender, age, educational, and occupational backgrounds, although skewed toward higher educational attainment and income levels.

Participants Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Education Level	Occupation	Livestream Shopping Frequency
Tony	Male	20-29	Bachelor's	Pursuing a Master's	Frequent
Toby	Male	30-39	Ph.D	Government employee	Occasional
Miro	Male	30-39	Bachelor's	Manager in finance	Frequent
Leo	Male	20-29	Bachelor's	Unemployed	Occasional
Jason	Male	20-29	Bachelor's	Not disclosed	Occasional
James	Male	20-29	Bachelor's	Business Owner	Frequent
Eric	Male	20-29	Bachelor's	Not disclosed	Occasional
Yun	Female	50-59	Bachelor's	Engineer (Retired)	Occasional
Yuhan	Female	18-19	High School	Uni Student	Frequent
Yiran	Female	20-29	Bachelor's	Pursuing a Master's	Frequent
Xueyao	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Enterprise employee	Frequent
Xinyi	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Photographer	Frequent
Ninghan	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Enterprise employee	Frequent
Meng	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Enterprise employee	Frequent
Juanjuan	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Enterprise employee	Frequent
Jane	Female	20-29	Bachelor's	English Teacher	Frequent
Amber	Female	30-39	Bachelor's	Pursuing a Master's	Frequent
Aileen	Female	20-29	Master's	Not disclosed	Frequent

Table 1. Participants

3.6.1 Justification of Number of participants selected

In this study, the number of participants was not determined by statistical formulas, as would be the case in quantitative research. Instead, it was guided by the principle of theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Data collection continued until additional interviews no longer provided new insights or generated new themes, and existing categories were sufficiently developed and well supported by the data. This decision was also informed by practical guidance for qualitative research, which highlights that sample size depends on the richness and depth of the data, the diversity of participants, the scope of the research questions, and the methods used for data collection (Moser & Korstjens, 2018). As the study progressed, it became clear that later interviews mainly confirmed and refined the existing findings rather than contributing new analytical information. This indicated that saturation had been reached, and further data collection would be unlikely to add meaningful value.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with Massey University's *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Human Participants*. It received approval through the University's Low Risk Notification process (Ethics Notification Number: 4000029951), following a peer review that assessed the project as involving minimal risk to participants. As such, the study was not reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees.

To protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of participants, the research followed ethical principles including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection. All participants were provided with clear information about the study and gave their consent before taking part. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without consequence.

3.7.1 Confidentiality

All participant data were treated with strict confidentiality. Pseudonyms were assigned to each interviewee to prevent any possibility of personal identification in transcripts, quotes, or published findings. Identifiable information such as names, contact details, or specific

geographic locations was removed during transcription and analysis. Only the researcher had access to the raw data, which were stored securely on a password-protected device. Any references to participants in the thesis or related outputs were anonymized to preserve confidentiality.

3.7.2 Privacy

To protect participants' privacy, all interviews were conducted in environments chosen by the participants, typically via one-on-one Tencent Meeting sessions, allowing them to feel comfortable and speak freely. Participants were informed in advance that they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the interview at any time without consequence. Additionally, care was taken during the write-up process to ensure that contextual details did not indirectly reveal participants' identities or sensitive personal information.

3.7.3 Informed Consent

Before the interviews began, all participants received a written information sheet outlining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and how their data would be used. Participants were allowed to ask questions and clarify any concerns before signing an informed consent form. Consent was obtained explicitly before recording any interviews. Participants were also reminded of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, without needing to provide a reason.

3.7.4 Risks

Given the nature of the research, the potential risks to participants were minimal. The interview topics focused on everyday online shopping behavior, which did not involve sensitive or emotionally distressing content. However, participants were assured that they could skip any questions they found uncomfortable. In the unlikely event that a participant experienced discomfort or distress, they were encouraged to pause or terminate the session. The research was carefully designed to minimize risk while maximizing participants' autonomy and comfort.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter described the methodological framework used in this study to explore consumer perceptions of sustainable consumption in livestream e-commerce contexts. The research adopted a qualitative, interpretivist approach, utilizing semi-structured interviews with 18 participants to generate rich, in-depth data. Thematic analysis was employed to identify key patterns and themes within the data that address the study's research questions. Efforts were made to ensure methodological rigor, including purposive and snowball sampling strategies, ethical considerations, and measures to enhance trustworthiness such as member checking and reflexivity. The chosen methodology is well aligned with the study's aims, as it allows for a detailed understanding of consumers' lived experiences and subjective meanings. The next chapter presents the findings of the thematic analysis, organized according to the key themes that emerged from the data.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the key findings of the study, based on a thematic analysis of qualitative data collected through 18 semi-structured interviews. The analysis focused on how livestream e-commerce consumers conceptualize sustainable consumption, and how livestream shopping environments shape their sustainability-related perceptions and purchasing behaviors. The findings are organized thematically, with each theme supported by direct quotes from participants to illustrate and substantiate the analysis. In doing so, this chapter addresses the study's research questions concerning (1) consumer perceptions of sustainable consumption in livestream e-commerce, (2) the influence of livestream shopping environments on these perceptions and behaviors, and (3) how such perceptions shape actual purchasing decisions.

4.2 What are the perceptions of sustainable consumption for live-streaming shoppers?

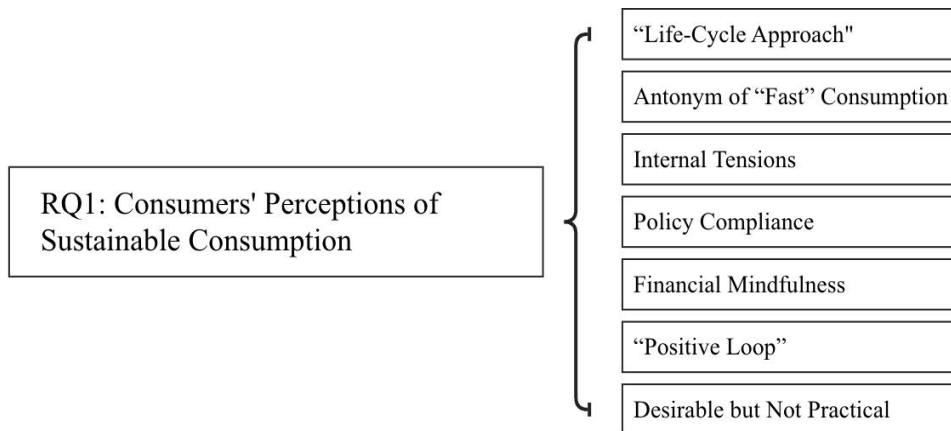


Figure 1. RQ1 Findings Road Map

This section presents how participants in this study conceptualized sustainable consumption within the context of livestream e-commerce. While the term "sustainability" was familiar to most participants, their understandings varied widely, often reflecting practical experiences,

personal values, and tensions between ideals and behaviors. The analysis revealed several key themes in how participants perceived sustainable consumption.

4.2.1 The Life-Cycle Approach

Many participants primarily understood green or sustainable consumption through environmentally oriented behaviors. Rather than offering abstract definitions, they described specific practices across different stages of a product's lifecycle, from production to use and post-use disposal.

At the production stage, some interviewees emphasized the materials used and the environmental impact of how products are made. For example:

Toby: "There are two main aspects, I think. One is that the product itself is environmentally friendly, like being recyclable or sustainable. The other is that the carbon emissions are minimized during the production process."

Yiran: "Green consumption means buying things that are more environmentally friendly, like less polluting, energy-efficient, or made with recycled materials."

During the usage stage, participants often linked green consumption to minimalism, energy conservation, or avoiding unnecessary purchases. They emphasized making full use of items and only buying what is needed:

Amber: "Sustainable consumption affects my lifestyle in terms of minimalism. Also, when I consume, I have a sense of responsibility; I want whatever I buy to be fully used."

Meng: "Green consumption just means using things until they're fully utilized."

In the post-use phase, participants highlighted responsible disposal and recycling as critical to green behavior. Several noted that packaging waste and improper disposal were significant concerns:

Aileen: "I think clothes should be recycled. If clothes are burned, they can release harmful gases into the air."

Xueyao: “There are many online recycling services now. I don’t care about the money, I just want to get rid of old stuff properly. They come straight to your door, it’s super convenient.”

Together, these accounts reveal that participants primarily perceive green consumption not as an abstract value, but as a collection of specific, tangible behaviors that reduce environmental harm at different consumption stages.

4.2.2 Sustainable Consumption as an Antonym of “Fast” Consumption

Some participants perceived sustainable consumption as a concept that critiques “fast” consumption. Instead of framing it in abstract environmental terms, they emphasized tangible qualities such as product durability, reparability, and the intention to reduce the frequency of replacement. These perspectives resonate with the idea of slow consumption discussed in prior literature, which promotes longer product lifespans and thoughtful usage habits.

Luchs et al. (2011) note that sustainable consumption includes behaviors such as purchasing durable products, repairing instead of replacing, and reducing the frequency of product acquisition, which mirrors the values expressed by several participants in this study.

For example, Jane described her understanding of sustainable consumption as “the opposite of fast-fashion.” Her perception aligns with critiques in the literature that view fast fashion as emblematic of overconsumption, promoting short-lived, low-quality products and wasteful disposal practices.

Jane: “I’d buy something good in terms of quality so that I can use it longer. For instance, clothes, I would definitely not buy those fast-fashion things. They are poor in quality. Maybe you wear them for a season and have to dump them by the next season. Overall, I think sustainable consumption is an antonym of ‘fast’ consumption.”

This understanding was also evident in Jane’s actual shopping behavior. She emphasized the importance of checking product details in advance to ensure the items were not only long-lasting but also repairable if needed.

Jane: “Before I buy, I want to know as much as possible about the products. I would like to ensure they are fixable instead of those that have to be dumped after being broken.”

This reflects Luchs et al.’s (2011) emphasis on “extending product lifetimes and maximizing utility over time” as core practices of sustainable consumption. Jane’s perspective also illustrates how sustainability can be interpreted as an ethic of care, not only for the environment but for the longevity and purpose of products themselves.

4.2.3 Internal Tensions Between Economic and Social Dimensions

While many participants acknowledged the importance of environmental protection as a core dimension of sustainable consumption, a few went further to articulate the tensions and trade-offs between environmental and social sustainability. These participants did not simply list sustainability goals; instead, they reflected critically on the systemic contradictions embedded in the pursuit of these goals.

Toby, for instance, offered a detailed and multi-layered critique of how environmental and social sustainability can be fundamentally at odds. He emphasized that resources should be preserved not only in environmental terms but also in the form of human resources. In his view, labor and natural resources are both valuable and should not be wasted, yet sustainability discourse often emphasizes the latter while ignoring the socioeconomic implications of efficiency and automation.

Toby: “There are jobs like toll collectors on highways or gas station attendants, honestly, we don’t need them anymore. But the government keeps these positions because behind every job, there’s a family. From a social responsibility standpoint, these jobs matter. But they’re not environmentally friendly, those extra steps create more pollution. But it keeps the economy and society stable.”

Toby further illustrated this trade-off with the example of AI-driven automation. While new technologies could replace human labor and improve efficiency, governments often regulate their rollout to avoid structural unemployment, thus prioritizing social cohesion over environmental or technological advancement.

Toby: “Say AI driving is already technically feasible, but the government won’t allow it to be widely used. Because if everyone’s replaced overnight, there will be mass unemployment and chaos. So they slow it down on purpose. In the end, it’s not the environment or tech that decides, it’s social order.”

He extended this reasoning to the realm of livestream e-commerce, using the return and refund culture as an example. Although frequent returns may appear environmentally wasteful, he argued that many people in logistic industry might lose their jobs if the return rate is reduced. The perceived waste, in this context, is embedded in a larger system that distributes labor and income.

Toby: “People criticize high return rates as wasteful. But it’s like ordering food delivery on a rainy day. Some say it’s unfair to the rider, but for many, that’s when they earn more. If you don’t order, they have fewer jobs. The same logic applies here. Even if returns are wasteful, the pricing already accounts for that. Businesses have their profit models.”

Through this lens, sustainable consumption is no longer seen as a purely individual responsibility or a behavioral choice, but rather as a systemic negotiation between values, environmental impact, social stability, and economic viability. Toby’s reflections underscore a deep awareness of macro-level trade-offs, presenting a more critical and complex view of what sustainability entails in practice.

4.2.4 Sustainable Consumption as Policy Compliance

In some interviews, participants expressed the view that sustainable consumption was not a personally driven behavior but rather a response to external policy mandates. In this framing, sustainability was not seen as a moral or value-based pursuit but as something that is expected or enforced by authorities. James, for instance, explicitly framed sustainability in terms of adherence to governmental standards:

James: “First, the environmental pollution should be reduced. Second, the product materials should comply with sustainability development policies.”

By referring to “complying with sustainable policies,” James showed that he did not regard sustainability as an independent value or personal choice. Instead, it was conceptualized as something defined and imposed by the government rather than himself.

Miro took this idea further, suggesting that not only sustainability, but consumption itself is shaped by national policy:

Miro: “It’s really the government that decides whether people should consume more or less—it’s all about the national policy direction.”

While Miro acknowledged the existence of individual consumption choices, he emphasized that the overarching trend and intensity of consumption are ultimately guided by macro-level state planning. Both cases reflect a form of institutional dependency (Eckhardt et al., 2006), where individuals perceive consumption and sustainable consumption as something governed by institutional actors, not initiated by individuals themselves.

4.2.5 Sustainable Consumption as Financial Mindfulness

While most participants associated sustainability primarily with environmental protection, some expressed alternative understandings. For instance, Miro initially acknowledged the environmental connotation of the term, but upon reflecting on the word “sustainable,” he emphasized financial discipline. In his view, sustainable consumption means making conscious and controlled spending decisions that contribute to one’s long-term financial well-being. This interpretation highlights a shift from ecological concerns to personal financial health as the core outcome of responsible consumption.

Miro: “It means buying reasonably based on your own financial capacity. Only buy what you really need. Don’t let consumption put you in a difficult position. You don’t need to use “buy now, pay later” services for everyday spending.”

Miro’s understanding of sustainable consumption may not appear to align with that of other participants. He pointed out that he was reluctant to use “buy now, pay later” services was because he could “lose track” at times which further prove the mindfulness in his shopping habits. Miro stated that “Only buy what you need”, suggest Miro’s avoidance towards wasteful

behaviours. Although Miro focused primarily on financial outcomes, his emphasis on thoughtful, restrained consumption suggests an internalized logic of sustainability, even if framed through a different lens.

4.2.6 Sustainability as a “Positive Loop”

In this study, some participants, when asked about their understanding of “sustainable consumption,” did not offer abstract or theoretical definitions. Instead, they responded based on specific shopping experiences. As Ninghan noted:

Ninghan: “It’s a huge topic, and I don’t find it that easy to discuss.”

This comment reveals that the term “sustainability” remains somewhat abstract in the Chinese context, making it difficult for some consumers to conceptualize directly. As a result, participants often relied on concrete experiences to form their perceptions. One common response was the phrase “huo zhen jia shi” (货真价实), which can be loosely translated as “genuine goods at a fair price”, with a slight emphasis on “value of money”.

Although this phrase typically refers to the consistency between product quality and its advertising claims, participants extended its meaning to express a fundamental expectation of the shopping environment—namely, the reliability and truthfulness of product information. As Tony put it:

Tony: “It wears down your sense of anticipation. I used to look forward to receiving a product, but now I just worry whether it will have issues.”

Such remarks suggest that participants perceived sustainable consumption not only in terms of eco-friendly or resource-saving behaviors, but also in terms of whether consumption is built on a foundation of trust and transparency. If consumers are repeatedly misled, their confidence in the system erodes, leading them to view such patterns of consumption as inherently unsustainable.

This understanding was further elaborated in Ninghan’s interview, where he stated:

Ninghan: “The market helps filter or screen products before they reach most consumers... If the market environment is good and stable, we get a positive loop.”

Ningham emphasized a systemic perspective: sustainability, in her view, is a “positive loop”. In her view, sellers play a crucial role in enabling positive consumption experiences by offering high-quality products, transparent and accurate product information, and fair pricing. When consumers receive goods that meet or exceed their expectations, they are more likely to provide positive feedback, reinforcing the seller’s credibility and encouraging further responsible behavior on both sides.

Therefore, participants like Tony and Ningham appeared to construct their understanding of sustainable consumption around a transactional ecosystem that supports long-term credibility, rather than around normative environmental or ethical criteria. Their interpretation reflects a notion of sustainability that centers on whether the broader commercial environment can function in a trustworthy and stable manner.

However, this understanding also reveals certain limitations. Participants tended to emphasize transactional reliability and consumer protection, while paying less attention to broader ecological, social, or systemic concerns. This may reflect how the abstract discourse of sustainability is translated in everyday life, often reduced to whether a transaction feels “worth it” or whether the market is “fair”, rather than connecting to planetary boundaries, resource conservation, or collective well-being.

4.2.7 Desirable but Not Practical

Most participants agreed that livestream platforms, streamers, and merchants should promote sustainable consumption. When asked directly, they responded with strong moral approval, often referencing social responsibility and the common good.

However, this normative support was almost always followed by a disclaimer: they don’t believe businesses will actually do it. The main reason, as participants frequently pointed out, was the lack of visible economic benefit. James articulated this view clearly:

James: “When we speak from the moral high ground, of course, this is something that should be promoted. But if you analyze the actual incentives, unless there are government subsidies, it simply won’t benefit the platforms or the sellers. Streamers just care about whether the product sells or not. They don’t really care what they are selling.”

James's opinion closely aligns with Miro's (see 4.5.3.5). Both emphasized that for merchants and streamers, economic gain is a far more motivating factor than sustainability. Their comments suggest that unless sustainable practices are tied to profit, they are unlikely to be adopted voluntarily. Toby offered a cultural framing of this logic, citing a classical Chinese saying:

Toby: “达则兼济天下，穷则独善其身 (When struggling, one should preserve oneself; only when successful can one help others.)”

This proverb captures the conditional expectations of sustainability. From the consumer's perspective, economic capacity must come first. Only when sellers have “surplus” resources might they be expected to care about sustainability. These accounts reflect a recurring perception that sustainability is desirable, but not practical.

4.3 Shopping Environment Shaping Perceptions & Behaviours

Previous studies on sustainable consumption often highlight the barriers that prevent consumers from engaging in green behaviors. For example, the high price of eco-friendly products or the inconvenience associated with sustainable choices. This study's research findings suggest similar outcomes but a different pattern. In live-streaming, the alternatives tend to be too cheap, too convenient for consumers to resist. Several participants mentioned that the extremely low price on livestreaming and the convenience of return policies weakened their sustainable commitment.

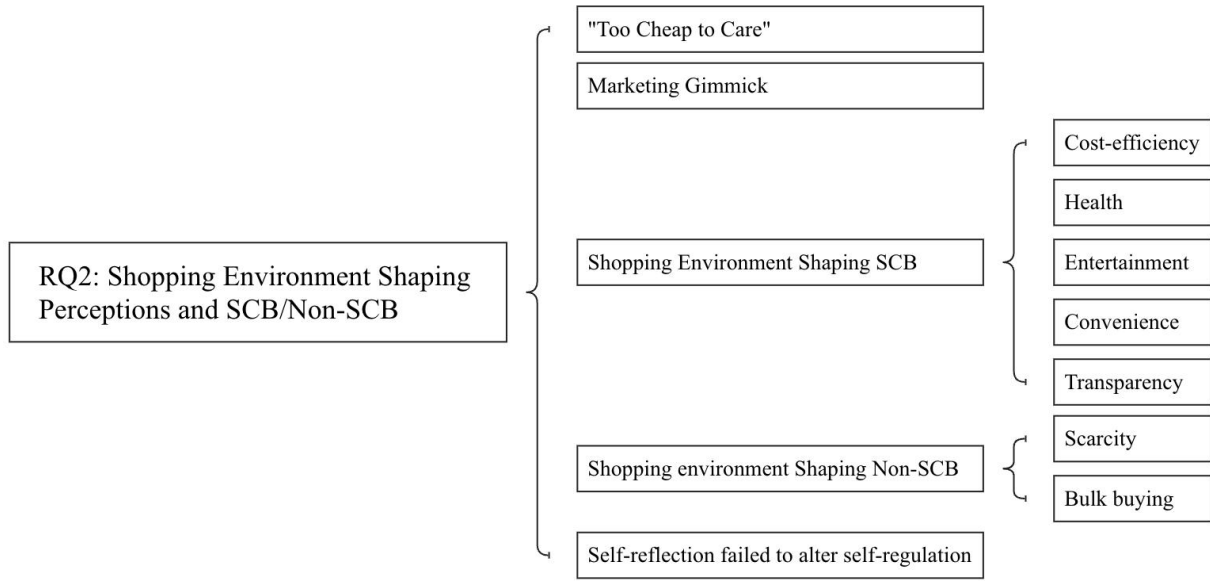


Figure 2. RQ2 Findings Road Map

4.3.1 Too Cheap to Care

In live-streaming e-commerce, the low pricing strategy, often paired with bulk packaging, mobile payment convenience, and flexible return policies, has contributed to a significant weakening of mindful consumption. Many participants indicated that when prices are extremely low. For instance, Juanjuan pointed out the primary reason she buy from livestreaming was the price advantage.

Juanjuan: “ It’s cheaper, yeah, definitely cheaper. So I basically don’t buy things from platforms like Taobao, mostly on Douyin¹. I’ve compared the prices on them, Douyin is cheaper.”

¹ Although Taobao now also offers livestreaming services, Juanjuan still associates it more closely with traditional online shopping, due to its historical positioning as one of China’s earliest e-commerce platforms. In contrast, she views Douyin as being natively aligned with the livestreaming format, given its roots in short-form video content and entertainment-based interaction. In this way, Juanjuan implicitly contrasts conventional e-commerce (represented by Taobao) with livestream-based commerce (represented by Douyin).

The perceived cost of making a “wrong” purchase also becomes negligible, which diminishes the psychological threshold for decision-making and increases the likelihood of impulsive or excessive buying. Yiran described the common mindset shaped by livestream pricing strategies, noting that low unit prices and generous quantities can quickly create a sense of “value” that overrides deliberation.

Yiran: “Most livestream products are under 300 yuan. Food items are even cheaper, like 9.9 yuan for a big pack, or 20 yuan for 20 buckets of instant noodles. Because it’s cheap, I don’t think much. Worst case, I wasted a few bucks. So people just buy first and think later.”

Livestreaming is a relatively new shopping platform that allows for minimal cost on both the buyer and seller’s side. The price could be low to the extent that consumers would not even notice. In Yiran’s case, even though she did notice that she’s been purchasing too frequently, the small amount of money involved in each transaction lowered her threshold of vigilance. As a result, she continued to buy repeatedly, often without deliberate awareness. This attitude of “too cheap to care” reflects how low pricing reduces the perceived consequences of overconsumption. In such cases, consumers often neglect their actual needs, rationalizing their behavior with the logic that the financial risk is minimal.

Beyond price itself, the payment method further compounds this effect. Meng highlighted how mobile payment platforms are making it harder to track or reflect on actual expenditures.

Meng: “Now with mobile payment, I have no idea how much I’ve spent each month. Even though the app shows some stats, it’s too complicated to read. I just don’t look at it.”

The combined effect of low prices and invisible payments leads to diminished awareness of spending, fostering what can be termed as mindless consumption, where purchases are made without clear intention or consideration.

Tony offered a reflective critique on this consumer mindset, pointing out that the core driver is not just the pursuit of cheap prices, but a deeper desire to maximize benefit with minimal cost, what he described as a kind of self-deceiving greed:

Tony: “I think this kind of consumption is driven by greed. We always want better products and services for less money, but that’s just impossible. The whole idea of ‘value for money’ is a paradox. Price reflects value. You get what you pay for, one yuan gets you one yuan’s worth, maybe two if you’re lucky. But some things can’t be done cheaply, like expecting a 100,000-yuan car to have a V8 engine. That’s just not realistic.”

His comments reveal how the pursuit of cost-efficiency can not only distort consumer expectations but also encourage mindless consumption by leading consumers to overlook their genuine needs. In Tony’s view, this mindset not only results in a waste of money and resources but also represents a deeper misunderstanding of how value, function, and cost relate to one another. These accounts illustrate how the pricing and payment environment of livestream e-commerce fosters a consumption culture that prioritizes perceived value over genuine need. This environment not only blurs the line between necessary and unnecessary purchases but also weakens consumers’ ability to make deliberate, sustainable choices. As a result, the live-streaming shopping model, while offering convenience and affordability, cultivates habits of mindless consumption.

4.3.2 Sustainability as a Marketing Gimmick

The findings revealed that some participants might hold negative attitudes towards sustainability narratives due to the lack of perceived transparency and authenticity of marketing in live-streaming. Xueyao shared her perspective on the calls for more rational purchases on live-streaming:

Xueyao: “Even when Li Jiaqi (streamer) keeps saying ‘consume rationally,’ it’s all just for show. He also keeps hyping the product like ‘how can you not buy it, sisters?’.....the return rate was extremely high—sometimes over 50% the next day. So what’s the point of rational consumption slogans?”

For Xueyao, this kind of message felt fake because the streamer was saying one thing but doing another. This contradiction made her doubt the honesty of their advice and the value of their messages. Xueyao then shifted her skepticism from towards streamers to streamers’ messages, which in her case, is sustainability.

Similarly, Miro expressed a pragmatic view of shopping. He considers sustainability unrelated to the core purpose of shopping. He believes that consumers should focus solely on what they need or want, while sellers are responsible for offering competitive products and maximizing profit. From this perspective, concepts such as environmental protection or social responsibility are seen as irrelevant to the transaction and often play a role in marketing tactics.

Miro: "I only care about what I'm buying. I don't care if it's made from recycled materials or if it saves the planet. That's the sellers' own thing. I've never seen a livestreamer seriously talk about sustainability, and even if they did, I wouldn't buy because of that."

Miro holds that all individuals are motivated by self-interest. This means prioritizing product-related concerns like quality, functionality, and price for consumers. For sellers and platforms, it means increasing sales and maximizing returns. As a result, he interprets sustainability content not as a sincere value but as a means to increase profit. This skepticism extends to social narratives, particularly "helping the farmers" campaigns that usually serve as poverty alleviation or rural development. Miro sees these messages as manipulative and lacking transparency.

Miro: "I don't like it when poverty alleviation or charitable narratives are tied to the products I'm buying. To me, that feels like the streamer is trying to manipulate consumers, using sympathy or kindness to drive profits. It elevates the product to a level it doesn't deserve. Maybe it's just a regular piece of fruit, not something that truly helps the poor, but they give it this special meaning. And I have no way of verifying if the benefits truly go to the farmers, so I simply don't believe it. I tend to think they're just hyping it up for sales. I also feel uncomfortable with this kind of moral inflation, turning a simple purchase into something it's not."

Miro used the phrase "moral inflation" to describe how sellers add extra meaning to a product to persuade buyers. This made him feel pressured to act morally during what he saw as a simple purchase. He also doubted the truthfulness of these claims, especially when there was no clear way to verify whether the money would help those in need.

This combination of moral pressure and lack of trust led Miro to reject this type of messaging. He believed it had no place in livestream shopping, which he saw as a space for convenience and

entertainment. Even though he agreed with the broader goals of helping the poor, he did not want to be morally burdened during the shopping process.

Being different from Xueyao's skepticism, in Miro's view, sustainability, whether it takes the form of energy-saving production, eco-friendly packaging, or socially responsible branding, is simply a promotional device used to increase sales. It does not offer tangible value for either sellers or consumers.

Miro: "Because Livestream e-commerce is ultimately about selling products, right? So if you try to force something that's not related to the main goal, something that's not even added value, just extra content, I think it's unnecessary. It doesn't benefit the streamer, the seller, or the consumer. It's like taking a college entrance exam and writing in your Chinese essay paper that you know how to solve a quadratic equation. Sure, it proves you have the ability, but it has nothing to do with the task at hand."

The content of the interview with Miro clearly shows that he perceives sustainability as lacking tangible value in the shopping environment. Miro explicitly stated sustainability "doesn't benefit the streamer, the seller, or the consumer", indicating he simply sees shopping as a transaction of values among stakeholders. The abstract nature of sustainability was interpreted as a lack of concrete benefit by Miro.

4.3.3 Shopping Environment Shaping Sustainable Behaviors

This section examines a set of consumer behaviors that aligned with the goals of sustainable consumption but were not driven by sustainability-related motives. Rather than emerging from environmental awareness or long-term ethical values, these behaviors were shaped directly by the functional and emotional incentives embedded in the livestream shopping environment. While these actions may contribute to waste reduction, product reuse, or supply chain localization, they reflect consumers' pursuit of cost-efficiency, health benefits, or emotional value, not ecological intention.

This finding suggests a significant shift in how sustainability-related behaviors are formed in the context of livestream commerce. Unlike traditional models that emphasize the internalization of environmental values, the livestream environment appears capable of shaping behavior directly,

through price mechanisms, health narratives, or emotionally engaging storytelling, without first reshaping perceptions. In other words, the livestream setting enables consumers to “act green without thinking green.”

Cost-efficiency

One of the clearest patterns emerging from participant interviews was the pursuit of cost-efficiency. Some participants engaged in behaviors that aligned with the goals of sustainable consumption, such as reducing waste or prolonging product life. Ying provided a representative example. She described regularly purchasing “food blind boxes” in livestream sessions, which offered unsold bakery items at a discounted price. Although this practice helps minimize food waste, Ying emphasized that her motivation was primarily financial and experiential:

Ying: “A shop sells blind boxes at a lower price; you don’t know exactly what you’ll get, which is exciting for consumers while helping the shop reduce unsold waste. It’s cheaper and helps avoid throwing stuff out.”

While Ying acknowledged the environmental benefits, her primary motivation was saving money and enjoying the thrill of surprise, rather than contributing to food sustainability. When talking about the benefits of buying food blind box, the green reasons, “reduce unsold waste” and “avoid throwing stuff out” often come after her primary reasons, such as “exciting” and “cheaper”. Similarly, when discussing secondhand items, Ying again highlighted economic value rather than environmental concern:

Ying: “Buying secondhand can reduce cost and environmental impact... But if it’s still in good condition, I can resell or reuse it.”

Here, sustainability appeared only as an added benefit, not the reason for purchase. The decision to buy secondhand was framed as financially smart rather than ecologically responsible. Based on these statements, though participants did not explicitly frame sustainability as additional value, the structure and sequence of their explanations suggest this interpretation. Environmental benefits were consistently mentioned after primary drivers such as price, novelty, or practicality. This sequencing implicitly frames sustainability as an additional attribute that is nice to have, but not a dealbreaker.

Health

Health-related concerns were frequently cited by participants as primary drivers of certain consumption decisions that incidentally aligned with sustainable practices. In particular, the desire for freshness, safety, and perceived naturalness was often more influential than environmental considerations.

For instance, participant Xinyi described her experience purchasing fruit from agricultural livestreams that promoted poverty alleviation. While these livestreams incorporated elements of social sustainability, Xinyi made it clear that her decision was driven primarily by health and quality considerations:

Xinyi: “Yes, sometimes I do end up buying some fruits (from poverty-alleviation themed live-streaming), and they turn out pretty good. It’s not just about supporting them—it’s also because the product is fresher. Before, you never knew where the fruit came from; maybe it had been in a warehouse for who knows how long. Now, you see that it’s harvested straight from the orchard, so it seems fresher.”

This example illustrates how certain livestream purchasing behaviors, such as favoring locally sourced, minimally handled food, may yield sustainable outcomes, even when sustainability is not the consumer’s explicit goal. Rather than engaging with livestream campaigns for their ethical or ecological implications, participants like Xinyi were motivated by a desire to consume what they perceived to be healthier and more trustworthy products.

Other participants echoed similar sentiments, noting that they preferred food items that “looked more natural” or were believed to contain “fewer chemicals.” In such cases, the appeal of organic or locally sourced food was rooted in self-oriented reasoning, particularly personal health, rather than environmental responsibility. These findings align with existing literature suggesting that instrumental motivations, such as health and cost-efficiency, can drive environmentally beneficial behavior in the absence of explicit pro-environmental intent

Entertainment

In addition to cost and health, the hedonic value of live-streaming emerged as a significant motivator behind consumer behaviors that coincidentally aligned with sustainability. In the livestream shopping context, emotional connection, narrative immersion, and novelty played central roles in driving purchases, sometimes regardless of product utility or environmental value. Participants described experiences in which they bought items not because they needed them or because they were sustainable, but because the storytelling or emotional engagement felt worth paying for.

Xinyi, for instance, recalled purchasing agricultural products from a livestreamer not due to any particular liking for the product itself, but because the storytelling behind the product moved her. This perceived emotional value became the basis for consumption:

Xinyi: “Even if the story has nothing to do with the product, you feel like you’re getting some extra knowledge, and you’re willing to ‘pay’ for that knowledge. It creates a certain emotional state, so you think, ‘Even if this corn has nothing to do with the story, I’m paying for that story. I’ll buy the corn.’ That’s how it works.”

Such purchases blur the boundary between rational product choice and emotional gratification, echoing studies on hedonic consumption in digital environments (e.g., Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). In this context, the product serves as a souvenir of the emotional experience, rather than the primary object of consumption. Although Xinyi’s purchase may support local agriculture and reduce long-haul supply chains, these environmental outcomes are incidental rather than intended.

This finding also reflects the growing convergence of media entertainment and commerce in livestream settings, where shopping is no longer a utilitarian activity but part of a leisure experience. Emotional drivers, such as feeling touched by a rural entrepreneur’s story or enjoying the unexpectedness of product presentation, can activate purchasing decisions without conscious reflection on environmental impact.

In these cases, the sustainability of a purchase lies more in its systemic effect (e.g., supporting low-waste production, local sourcing, or direct-from-farm models) than in the buyer’s intention.

The entertainment-oriented nature of livestream shopping thus reshapes behavioral outcomes, encouraging actions that may align with sustainability goals even when the consumer is not consciously pursuing them.

Convenience

Some participants framed sustainability as a desirable side effect of convenience rather than an independent purchasing goal. In particular, logistics and delivery speed played a central role in shaping participants' judgments about whether a transaction was "green." Han Yun, for example, described her frustration with cross-provincial shipping procedures in livestream e-commerce. Although she used terms like "waste" and "carbon emissions," her core concern was with the inefficiency and delays in the delivery process:

Han Yun: "Sometimes the product is just around the corner, but it gets sent to the provincial capital first and then routed back. That's not only a waste, it's not environmentally friendly either... I feel it should be direct, from one city to the next—it would save time and reduce emissions."

While Han Yun associated logistics inefficiency with environmental harm, her desire for faster, more direct delivery appeared to be the primary motivator. Her comments suggest that green outcomes, such as shorter transport routes and lower emissions, are welcome but not required. What mattered most was convenience.

This pattern reflects a broader tendency among some participants to evaluate sustainability through the lens of personal experience rather than collective impact. In these cases, efficiency and convenience become proxies for environmental responsibility, even if the underlying motivation remains self-centered. The green perception is thus instrumental and contingent upon personal benefit—an echo of the broader theme in this study that many sustainability-related behaviors are behaviorally aligned but motivationally decoupled from ecological concern.

Transparency

In this study, some participants mentioned that transparency in the livestream shopping environment made a difference in whether they trusted sustainability-related claims and chose to

support them. The findings suggest that consumers are willing to pay premium price for green product on live-streaming with higher level of transparency. On the other hand, lower transparency might result in skepticism. For example, Toby recalled his experience of buying corn from “helping the farmers” livestreaming:

Toby: “They said the corn from the farmers cost 2 yuan, with transport it became 3, and with all the extra splits and platform cuts, it would be sold for 5-plus yuan. But he made it clear where every cent went.”

At first, Toby found the price too high as he had bought corn before for much less and wasn’t sure it was worth it. However, when he actually needed corn again, he remembered this livestream and made the purchase:

Toby: “I used to think corn is just corn... when he said it’s five yuan, I wondered why not just buy someone else’s. But when I needed corn, I thought of it again and decided to give the more expensive one a try. I didn’t buy much though.”

This shows that transparency doesn’t always lead to immediate buying, but it can create a moment of trust or hesitation where someone might change their mind. Even though Toby didn’t buy a lot, the fact that he was willing to “give it a try” suggests that being upfront about pricing and sourcing helped justify the higher cost.

Other participants, however, were much more doubtful when transparency was lacking. Meng, for example, said she didn’t trust livestreams that claimed to help farmers if she was not able to tell where the money was really going:

Meng: “If it’s a distributor livestreaming, how do I know if the money goes to the farmers or to some middleman? I can’t verify it... There are too many scams nowadays. They could all be acting.”

Even though Meng agreed that helping farmers is a good thing, and said higher farmer income would be a positive outcome. However, the lack of clear information made it hard to trust what she was seeing, and that meant she wasn’t likely to make decisions based on sustainability messages alone. The two cases demonstrate that consumers, though knowing that the fact that

streamers need to make profit, but still appreciate, and even willing to pay premium price for transparency.

These examples suggest that transparency plays a pivotal role in shaping how livestream shoppers react to sustainability claims. When the message feels clear and honest, it gives people a reason to act. But when things seem unclear or exaggerated, even well-meaning consumers may back away. In this sense, transparency helps turn good intentions into real decisions—or stops that from happening when it's missing.

4.3.4 Shopping Environment Shaping Non-Sustainable Behaviors

This section of findings highlights a range of unsustainable consumer behaviors that were largely shaped by the livestream shopping environment. The results underscore the pivotal role of livestreaming platforms and streamer tactics in driving these behaviors. Specifically, practices such as bulk-buying—often resulting in waste—and impulse purchasing triggered by scarcity-based selling strategies emerged as key forms of non-sustainable consumption influenced by the platform's design and marketing approach.

Scarcity

Participants described how perceived scarcity played a significant role in shaping their purchase decisions during livestream shopping. For some, the limited availability of a product triggered a strong sense of urgency, leading them to buy items they would not have otherwise considered. Ninghan Sun provided a clear example of this dynamic, explaining that she had purchased a bracelet not because she needed it, but because it was framed as an exclusive, limited-quantity item:

Ninghan: "If they say, 'We only produced 10 of these bracelets' and it's well-priced, I might not need a bracelet, but because it's limited and the quality seems good, I'll grab it."

In such cases, scarcity enhanced the perceived value of the product and overrode considerations of necessity or practicality. The emotional response generated by the idea of missing out on a rare opportunity appeared to drive the purchase decision more than any functional need. Ninghan further explained:

Ninghan: “It’s not just price—it’s that sense of scarcity. Many people competing for a small quantity. People see that crowd and think, ‘Must be good’”

This sense of urgency was frequently linked to the livestream environment itself, where limited-time offers and claims of restricted inventory heightened the pressure to act quickly. As such, scarcity emerged as a powerful psychological trigger that contributed to impulsive, and often unnecessary, consumption within the livestream commerce setting.

Bulk buying

Within the livestream shopping environment, promotional campaigns and bundled pricing strategies often encouraged participants to engage in bulk purchasing, sometimes exceeding their actual needs. This tendency was particularly evident during large-scale discount events, where limited-time offers and reduced unit prices created a strong sense of urgency and value.

Ninghan: “For instance, when there’s a holiday promotion—like the big e-commerce sales—women often stock up on everyday items, including beauty products. Let’s say tissues: normally I pay 1 yuan per pack, but on a big promotional day, after all the coupons and extras, the price might be 0.6 yuan per pack. Even if I already have 10 packs at home, that new bargain triggers me to stock up. That’s a classic scenario.”

In this context, the act of purchasing was less about fulfilling immediate needs and more about seizing what appeared to be a good deal. For some, this behavior was further shaped by platform constraints that limited individual product purchases, effectively pushing consumers toward buying more than they initially intended.

Yuhan: “There are many times when I only want one or two items from a bundle, but the platform forces me to buy the whole set. For example, I just want to try one or two snacks, but they’ll launch a trial pack with everything inside. If I buy them individually, it’s expensive and the quantity is too large, so in the end I have no choice but to buy the bundle.”

She also reflected on similar experiences with cosmetics:

Yuhan: “It’s worse with makeup. Say I just want one shade, but then they run a ‘buy two, get one free’ promotion, with random colors and extra discounts. I get tempted and think, why not try them all? So I end up buying everything.”

Although such decisions were made in the moment under promotional pressure, they were often followed by regret.

Yuhan: “I still regret it. I ask myself why I forced myself to spend money on things I didn’t need. But once I’ve bought them, there’s nothing I can do. I can only slowly get over it.”

These examples reflect how pricing structures and packaging strategies embedded in the livestream environment created consumption conditions where buying more felt both rational and unavoidable. While participants acknowledged feelings of post-purchase regret, their decisions were shaped by the logic of maximizing value in a setting designed to promote volume-based incentives.

The Role of Return Policies

Most participants viewed frequent returns as an environmentally unfriendly behavior. This perception likely stemmed not only from negative feelings toward wasteful behavior but also from their reflections on the reasons behind frequent returns. Many noted that their returns often occurred after the initial impulse of the purchase faded and they realized they didn’t really need the product—yet it had already been shipped.

In livestream e-commerce, return policies are typically loose and convenient. This creates a sense of safety for buyers, encouraging them to make faster decisions. The mindset of “at worst, I can just return it” reduces the mental effort required during the purchase process and lowers the threshold for impulsive shopping. For Juanjuan, the policy became a tool to justify trying out items without firm commitment:

Juanjuan: “I don’t know why I thought like that, I just felt the item looked really nice. I thought I’d try it out, and if it doesn’t look good, I’ll return it.”

Similarly, Yuhan saw return policies as a fallback mechanism when she was uncertain about her needs:

Yuhan: “Now I’ve learned to return things. If I buy something and it’s not right, I’ll return it. Everyone thinks this way now—since there’s a return policy, like a last line of defense, you don’t have to think too hard about whether the product is actually useful.”

These accounts show that return policies not only offer practical flexibility but also help consumers avoid internal conflict by delaying or outsourcing decision-making. This contributes to a shortened decision cycle and potentially encourages overconsumption. Yiran offered a slightly different but related view. For her, cheap prices combined with high return shipping fees led to a pile-up of unwanted items:

Yiran: “That’s how it is. I scrolled for an afternoon and ended up ordering socks from five or six shops. After they arrived, I thought I’d compare them and see which pair is best. But many of them weren’t as advertised and were poor quality. The key is, because they’re cheap, and you have to pay for return shipping—like the socks cost five yuan, but shipping costs six—it’s just not worth it. So I don’t bother returning them. In the end, I’ve got a pile of socks I don’t wear. Sometimes I buy five or six pairs and don’t even want to wear a single one. I just go buy new ones again.”

Her story reveals a paradox: the return policy offers a sense of control during purchase, but in practice, it may result in accumulation and waste when returning the item is inconvenient or economically irrational.

4.3.5 Self-reflection failed to alter self-regulation

Several participants reported experiencing regret or dissatisfaction after impulsive purchases, often accompanied by post-purchase regret, followed by self-reflection. However, these reflections rarely led to meaningful behavioral change. Although participants recognized the irrationality or excessiveness of their consumption, they admitted that such awareness did not translate into long-term self-regulation. Yiran acknowledged that many of her livestream purchases ended up unused, yet she did not take these reflections seriously due to the low cost:

Yiran: “Sometimes I do feel it’s quite wasteful. Many of the things I bought were barely used. But, to be honest, I never really thought much about it before, probably most people are the

same. Once you've bought something, it's already done. And since it wasn't expensive, I didn't pay much attention to it."

Here, the triviality of monetary loss serves as a buffer, weakening the influence of reflection on future restraint. "Denial of harm" was used by Yiran to rationalize the wasteful behavior.

Xueyao described a recurring pattern of late-night impulse buying during livestreams, recognizing both the irrationality of the purchases and the resulting consequences:

Xueyao: "If I can return it, I will. If not, I'll just accept it. But maybe I'll still make impulsive purchases next time... Some livestreams offer lower prices late at night when there's less platform oversight. You end up buying a bunch of toys you didn't really plan to buy. Some are never opened, some your kid doesn't even like. But you can't return them anymore because they've already been used. You just have to live with it, it was your choice."

Despite this clear awareness, she implied that the cycle would likely repeat, showing how recognition alone lacks the force to interrupt habitual consumption patterns.

Tony also reflected on the disappointment and financial waste caused by his livestream purchases. He initially tried to adjust his behavior, such as pausing online shopping, but acknowledged that these changes were only temporary:

Tony: "There is reflection, but it's short-term. In the long run, I still end up making impulsive purchases. I think shopping behavior is still mostly driven by price. Not just cheap prices, but "value of money". I always want to get more for less. But that's a trap. The more I chase "value of money", the more I regret the purchase afterward."

He recognized a recurring conflict between rational self-awareness and emotional impulses, stating that the pursuit of "value for money" often overrode his initial reflections. These accounts illustrate a clear disjunction between reflective awareness and actual behavioral control, contributing to the broader attitude-behavior gap in sustainable consumption. Even when individuals acknowledge wastefulness and experience dissatisfaction, the psychological and

environmental conditions of livestream commerce, such as ease of payment, emotional marketing, and low product prices, undermine their capacity for sustained behavioral change.

4.4 How the perception of sustainability shapes consumer sustainable behaviour

This section explores how consumers’ perceptions of sustainability influence their sustainable consumption behaviors. It examines the pathways through which sustainability-related understandings either promote or inhibit sustainable actions. Specifically, three patterns are identified: (1) positive perceptions of sustainability that encourage sustainable behaviors, (2) negative perceptions that suppress sustainable behaviors, and (3) instances where positive perceptions fail to translate into action, reflecting an attitude–behavior gap. Through this analysis, the chapter highlights the complex and sometimes contradictory role that sustainability perceptions play in shaping consumption decisions in live-stream shopping environments.

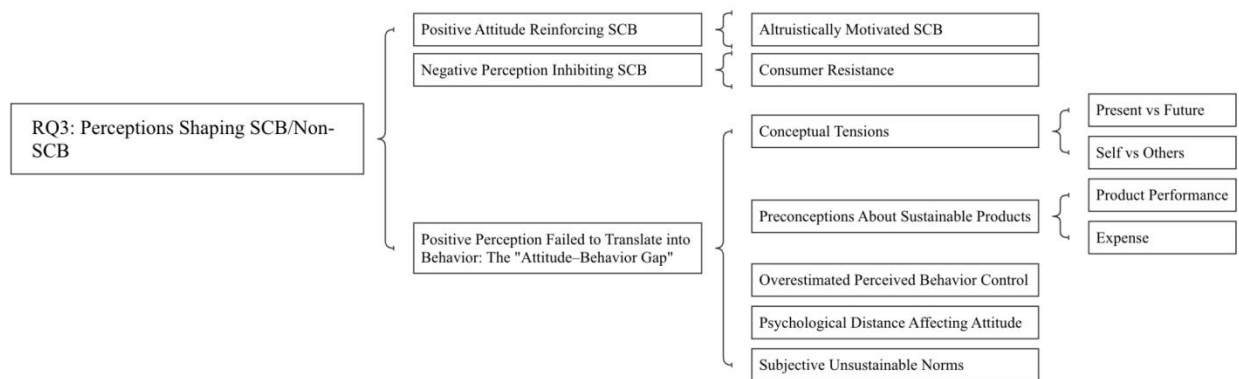


Figure 3. RQ3 Findings Road Map

4.4.1 Positive Attitude Reinforcing SCB

This section explored how positive attitude can translate to sustainable consumer behaviors. The findings revealed that other-oriented motives can lead to pro-social and pro-environmental behaviors.

4.4.1.1 Altruistically Motivated SCB

While much of the discussion around sustainable consumption centers on environmental awareness or personal lifestyle choices, some participants demonstrated sustainability-oriented

behaviors rooted in altruism. These behaviors were not necessarily informed by technical definitions of sustainability, but rather by a moral concern for others, ranging from empathy for merchants to solidarity with rural farmers. This highlights how moral considerations, even when not framed in explicitly environmental terms, can lead to choices that align with the goals of sustainable consumption.

Toby described a detailed process he follows when making uncertain online purchases, such as buying multiple variations of a clothing item to try at home. Crucially, he emphasized the importance of treating the return items with care, folding and repackaging them meticulously to avoid damaging the goods or their packaging.

Toby: "I might buy three or four jackets when I'm unsure about size or color, but I know I'll only keep one. I open them very carefully, remember how they were folded, and return the rest just as they came. That way, the seller doesn't need to repackage it. That's my view of being environmentally friendly."

Here, Toby's sustainability is motivated primarily by a desire to avoid unnecessary resource consumption. His attention to maintaining the original condition of returned products reflects a personal principle of environmental responsibility, which he refers to as his own "eco-consciousness." While his action may incidentally benefit sellers or logistics operations, his underlying motivation lies in minimizing material waste and preventing additional packaging or product depreciation. This aligns with the environmental dimension of sustainable consumption, particularly the effort to reduce consumption-related externalities through careful and thoughtful behavior (Quoquab & Mohammad, 2020). Rather than being driven by social altruism, Toby's behavior illustrates a form of micro-level ecological mindfulness rooted in product care and waste avoidance.

Toby described a purchasing experience involving a livestreamer from Xinjiang who promoted agricultural products under a rural revitalization narrative. Although the price was similar to products available locally, he chose to buy the honey and dried fruits out of a sense of moral support for underdeveloped regions.

Toby: “I bought from a Xinjiang livestreamer. He said the honey was from his own land, and he got nearby farmers to join him. The idea was: buying it helps them sell their produce. Even though the price wasn’t cheaper than in Beijing, I felt I was supporting their agricultural development and rural economy. So I made the purchase.”

This case illustrates altruistically motivated consumption grounded in social sustainability. Rather than evaluating the purchase based on utility or cost-performance, the consumer framed it as a small act of social contribution, aligning with prosocial motivations identified in sustainability literature (e.g., Pfattheicher et al., 2016; Daniel et al., 2024).

As White et al. (2019) suggest, consumers may be more willing to engage in sustainable or pro-social behavior when they value outcomes beyond the self. Toby’s case reflects this orientation, as he showed a clear readiness to accept personal cost for the sake of supporting someone he cared about.

Toby: “I like watching this streamer’s videos because she takes really good care of her dogs. She also sells chestnuts during her livestreams. I bought a bag once, and it was huge—I could only finish half of it. But I think that’s okay. I just want to support her so she can keep taking good care of her dogs. I’d still buy the chestnuts even if it were only half a bag.”

Toby’s comment illustrates a clearly other-oriented purchasing motive, where the perceived benefit lies not in the product’s utility but in supporting someone he cares about. His primary reason for buying the chestnuts was purely to show support for the streamer, as he stated, “so she can keep taking good care of her dogs.” Meanwhile, his statement “even if it were only half a bag” demonstrates his awareness of the personal cost involved, and his willingness to accept it. This suggests that consumers with a stronger concern for others, or in other words, a higher level of altruism, may be more motivated to engage in pro-social consumption behaviors.

4.4.2 Negative Perception Inhibiting SCB

This section explores how consumers’ perceptions of sustainability may inhibit sustainable behaviors. In particular, it focuses on instances where negative or skeptical understandings of sustainability lead to disengagement or rejection of sustainable consumption practices. One key form of this inhibition is consumer resistance, where individuals consciously push back against

sustainability narratives or reject the idea that personal behavior should carry environmental responsibility.

4.4.2.1 Consumer resistance

The findings reveal that consumers' negative perceptions of sustainability significantly inhibit sustainable consumer behavior. This resistance emerges prominently in Miro's interview, reflecting a combination of skepticism toward green marketing and frustration regarding the perceived unfair distribution of sustainability responsibilities.

On the surface, Miro's resistance was driven by doubt about exaggerated or unverifiable green marketing claims. More fundamentally, however, he expressed dissatisfaction with the broader societal trend of shifting environmental responsibility onto individuals, questioning why ordinary consumers are asked to make sacrifices when larger systemic issues remain unaddressed:

Miro: "If we're really talking about environmental protection, cutting a few Ferraris off the street would be more effective than switching to eco-materials... Think about those commercial buildings with lights on 24/7, that's where we should be saving electricity. What difference does it make if I personally turn off a light?"

Miro's remarks illustrate a perceived futility regarding the effectiveness of individual actions, highlighting skepticism toward sustainability narratives that emphasize personal behavior changes rather than systemic reform. This sense of ineffectiveness is encapsulated clearly in his rhetorical question, "What difference does it make if I personally turn off a light?", emphasizing his belief that meaningful environmental impact requires institutional and collective action rather than isolated personal choices.

Additionally, his critique about luxury consumption ("cutting a few Ferraris off the street") underscores frustration with the inequitable distribution of sustainability responsibilities, highlighting a perception that the wealthy and powerful remain largely unaccountable despite their disproportionate resource use.

Thus, consumer resistance, as exemplified by Miro, is not merely skepticism about green marketing but a profound critique of how sustainability is framed within contemporary consumer contexts, pointing to deeper tensions between individual and structural responsibility.

4.4.3 Positive Perception Failed to Translate into Behavior: The “Attitude–Behavior Gap”

Although many participants expressed positive attitudes toward the concept of sustainable consumption, these attitudes often failed to translate into consistent sustainable behaviors. This phenomenon, widely referred to in previous research as the attitude–behavior gap (Carrigan and Attala, 2001), was observable within the current study. Participants’ explanations revealed that the formation of this gap was not driven by a single factor but rather emerged from a combination of underlying mechanisms. This section explores the diverse sources of the attitude–behavior gap among livestream e-commerce consumers. First, conceptual tensions within participants’ understanding of sustainability, such as perceived conflicts between individual and collective interests, contributed to behavioral inconsistencies. Second, fixed impressions regarding the inherent limitations of sustainable products, including doubts about product quality, affordability, or availability, discouraged sustainable purchasing. Finally, this chapter examines internal psychological factors such as overestimation of perceived behavioral control, perceived unsustainable social norms, and the weakening effect of low-cost consumer environments, all of which further complicate the path from positive attitude to sustainable action.

4.4.3.1 Conceptual Tensions

While participants generally held positive attitudes toward the notion of sustainable consumption, their understandings often revealed inherent tensions that complicated the translation of these attitudes into consistent actions. These conceptual tensions stemmed from the internal contradictions embedded within the idea of sustainability itself, especially when individuals were confronted with practical trade-offs. In particular, two forms of trade-off emerged prominently across interviews: the tension between present and future, and the tension between self and others. This section explores how these trade-offs surfaced in participants’ reflections and how they shaped the complexities of their sustainable consumption practices.

Present vs Future

Sustainable consumption inherently involves a trade-off between satisfying present desires and preserving resources for future generations whereas the consumers are more present-focused (White et al., 2019). For some participants, this trade-off was not only intellectually recognized but also emotionally experienced, often creating inner conflict between their values and their immediate wants. Jane demonstrated a relatively deep understanding of sustainability. She described sustainable consumption as a conscious choice to prioritize long-term environmental and human well-being over short-term material gratification. This understanding shaped her shopping decisions: she avoided fast fashion products, preferring high-quality, long-lasting, and repairable items. In her hobbies, such as collecting character cards, she also showed a commitment to waste reduction by reselling duplicate items rather than discarding them.

Jane: "(Being green is) more than being altruistic, I think it's about giving up something now to benefit the future. It's a trade-off between the present and what lies ahead."

However, Jane's in-depth understanding of sustainability did not always translate into ease of action. She openly acknowledged the emotional difficulty of resisting immediate temptations, particularly when it involved lifestyle pleasures she valued. Her reflection highlights the psychological cost associated with sustainability-oriented decision-making.

Jane: "Sustainability sometimes forces you to give up certain material desires. Like when I think about whether a purchase is really sustainable, I realize that it may mean giving up a beautiful outfit, or a fashion trend I like. It's like sacrificing your current wants for the sake of the future."

Jane's case shows how short-term emotional desires can conflict with long-term sustainability goals. She described sustainable consumption as "sacrificing current wants" to benefit the future. This idea created pressure to suppress material desires. However, she admitted that it was hard to fully control her impulse to shop. Her experience reflects a common conflict: people may value sustainability but still act on impulse. This tension between present comfort and future responsibility is a key reason why sustainable attitudes don't always lead to sustainable actions. Even when Jane knows what the right choice is, emotions in the moment can make it difficult to

follow through. Jane's case helps explain why the attitude–behavior gap exists, even among consumers with strong sustainable values.

Self vs Others

Some participants held positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption, but their motivation to act depended on whether the behavior offered visible personal benefits. For example, organic food was often considered more sustainable, but participants valued it primarily for its perceived health benefits.

For instance, Juanjuan emphasized that she would consider sustainable choices when they were closely related to her health, such as selecting healthier food or building materials:

Juanjuan: “To live a healthier life, of course, I would take that(organic foods) into consideration.”

However, when asked about sustainability practices that benefit society at large, such as reducing carbon emissions, her motivation declined:

Juanjuan: “As for the larger aspects that concern other people or society, I don't really care. It doesn't seem to have a direct relationship with me.”

This distinction reflects a conceptual tension between self-oriented and other-oriented motivations within sustainable consumption. While participants could recognize the societal value of sustainable actions, personal relevance was a decisive factor in whether sustainability considerations translated into purchasing behaviors. This highlights how the abstraction of collective benefits often reduces the immediacy and perceived urgency of sustainable actions at the individual level, complicating efforts to promote broader environmental goals through consumer behavior.

4.4.3.2 Preconceptions About Sustainable Products

Another factor contributing to the attitude–behavior gap observed in this study was participants' pre-existing perceptions of sustainable products. Many participants tended to associate sustainability with compromises in other valued dimensions. In particular, sustainable products

were frequently perceived as inferior in terms of quality, functional performance, or price competitiveness. These preconceptions influenced purchasing decisions by reducing the likelihood that consumers would ultimately choose sustainable options.

In contrast, a few participants expressed that they would prioritize sustainable products when all other attributes, such as quality, performance, and price, were comparable. In these cases, sustainability was perceived as an added value rather than a primary deciding factor. This section explores participants' preconceptions across two main dimensions: product performance and expense

Product Performance

Some participants held preconceptions about the performance of sustainable products compared to conventional ones, which reduced their willingness to buy green options. For example, James worried that sustainability goals might lead to lower product quality:

James: "Switching from Material A to Material B could raise costs. But if the price can't go up (because that will affect sales), the only way to adjust is by reducing the amount of material used. That results in worse product performance."

James also expressed his concern of sustainable materials with his own experience. He used "disposable plastic bags appeared to be more fragile" as an example. James expressed a belief that better environmental performance often comes at the expense of product quality. Stemmed from his experience, he assumed that sustainable materials are more expensive, so using them means reducing other aspects, like durability in order to keep prices stable. A similar concern appeared in Yuhan's comment. Although she didn't refer to a specific example, she shared a general sense that recycled or green materials are probably less reliable, particularly in clothing:

Yuhan: "Yes, maybe it's just a conventional mindset, but I feel like if it's made from recycled materials, then the quality might not be that good."

Yuhan's view reflects a common assumption that sustainable products may not be as strong or long-lasting. Unlike James, who focused on how producers make trade-offs, Yuhan's concern came more from an overall impression. Both cases indicated that, when consumers perceive that

the products' performance unable to be satisfactory to their needs, they tend to not choose the products.

Expense

Several participants expressed their positive attitude towards buying sustainable products. However, they were constrained by the cost of the products. It is prevalent among the participants that the expense cost was used as a justification for not buying sustainable. For example, Yuhan, a current university student, expressed her concern that being sustainable might cost more. Her perception of being sustainable reduced her willingness to buy sustainable products.

Yuhan: "Sustainability is a positive concept, but in reality, it's also something I can't afford. Most of the time, I care more about cost efficiency. Maybe I'm just being selfish, but I think that's normal, everyone does that."

Yuhan further pointed out that being sustainable is not all about buying sustainable. She emphasized that "fast consumption" does not necessarily refer to the inherent nature of the product itself, but rather to how the consumer chooses to use it. In her view, even products typically labeled as fast or disposable can be used over a long period if the consumer is intentional about it. By extending the product's use, she believed she was still contributing to sustainability, despite purchasing items from the fast fashion or fast consumption category.

Yuhan: "Fast consumption isn't always negative. If the product is useful and I can afford it, that's what matters. It depends on how you use it. If I keep using something from fast-fashion for 5 years or more. It's still sustainable, isn't it?"

This cost-based perception of sustainability was also found in other interviewed cases. Other participants also expressed concern that products marketed as sustainable or environmentally friendly tend to come with a higher price, which reduces their willingness to prioritize sustainability in daily decisions. For instance, participant Shajuanjuan described how, in her experience, the simple inclusion of the word "organic" on food packaging often indicated a significant price increase, even when the product appeared otherwise identical to non-organic alternatives.

Juanjuan: “If a food product has the word ‘organic’ on it, it’s usually more expensive than other similar items.”

She also extended this perception to other categories, such as home renovation materials. Environmentally friendly building options were seen as good in principle but more expensive in practice:

Juanjuan: “For example, eco-friendly materials for renovations are more expensive than standard ones. So overall, while sustainability is a good trend, for individuals like me, it just increases the cost of living.”

Price sensitivity was found prevalent in this study. Several participants expressed that price was the first concern when buying most products. These accounts reinforce the finding that cost acts not only as a constraint but also as a justification for not choosing sustainable options. Despite acknowledging the value of sustainability, participants perceived it as a financial burden, which further reduced their willingness to buy sustainable products.

4.4.3.4 Overestimated Perceived Behavior Control

One recurring pattern observed among participants was the overestimation of their perceived behavioral control at the point of purchase. Many participants expressed strong intentions to use the products they bought, but later found themselves unable to follow through with regular or sustained use. This gap between intended and actual behavior often resulted in products being underutilized or abandoned entirely. The phenomenon highlights how overly optimistic assessments of future self-discipline and usage behaviors can contribute to unsustainable consumption patterns. Participants’ reflections on unused fitness equipment and household exercise machines provide illustrative examples of this dynamic.

This finding aligns with Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior, which identifies perceived behavioral control (PBC) as a key predictor of behavioral intention and action. However, when PBC is overestimated, it can lead to a mismatch between intentions and behaviors. Similarly, Carrington et al. (2010) found that ethical consumers often overestimate their capacity to act on their good intentions, especially when the intended behavior requires ongoing self-regulation.

One participant humorously recounted the fate of a treadmill, initially purchased with the hope of supporting a healthier lifestyle but ultimately repurposed as a household storage solution:

Tony: “I think about 40% of the things I buy are actually not useful. At the time of purchase, I feel like I will definitely use them... For example, almost every household ends up regretting buying a treadmill. It eventually just becomes a clothes rack.”

While the treadmill example reflects a large and relatively expensive item, Meng reported similar experiences even with smaller fitness purchases. Another participant described how online recommendations from social media posts fueled the optimistic belief that new fitness equipment would integrate seamlessly into daily routines:

Meng: “For example, fitness equipment, like ab rollers or kettlebells, I bought a bunch of them based on recommendations from social media. At the time, I was determined to exercise. But after the initial excitement wore off, I couldn’t stick with it, and they just ended up sitting there unused.”

These cases reveal a consistent pattern: both Meng and Tony placed high value on health and believed they had sufficient self-control to follow through with their intentions. Their purchase decisions appeared to be driven by positive attitudes and a strong sense of perceived behavioral control (Ajzen, 1991). However, reality proved more difficult to manage. Over time, both participants found that using the products required more time, effort, or discipline than they had anticipated at the point of purchase. As Meng admitted, “I couldn’t stick with it.”

This overestimation of behavioral control not only led to personal inefficiencies and regret, but also contributed to broader issues such as material waste and unsustainable consumption. Similar cases were observed across other product categories in this study—including food (see 4.4.1), children’s toys (see 4.5.3.7), and skincare products (see 4.5.3.6). Together, these findings suggest that overestimating one’s ability to follow through is a significant psychological factor contributing to excessive and wasteful consumption outcomes.

Interestingly, some purchases were made with clear acknowledgement that the products were not going to be utilized. While Yuhan was making decisions about whether buying her skincare, she was clearly aware that the product was too much for her:

Yuhan: “I bought a lot of skincare products, but I only have one face. Even if I alternate between them day and night, I still can’t finish them. When I bought them, I thought: they each have different effects, so maybe one of them will really work. So I bought a lot. I truly believed I would use them all.”

Yuhan: “Part of it was thinking I’d definitely use them eventually. Another part was: what if I run out and can’t buy it again later? But in the end, many expired before I even opened them.”

This example illustrates how consumers often engage in pre-purchase rationalization when perceived behavior control is not enough to lead actual buying behavior. Yuhan’s statement “I’d definitely use them eventually” demonstrates that in some purchases, the perceived behavior control is artificially inflated for the emotional satisfaction.

4.4.3.5 Psychological Distance Affecting Attitude

Some participants expressed that sustainability-related messaging in livestream shopping felt psychologically distant. This feeling was not caused by the e-commerce format itself. Instead, it came from a mental disconnect between how participants perceived sustainability and how they perceived livestream shopping.

Participants appeared to associate sustainability with seriousness, long-term responsibility, or even policy-level issues (see 4.1.4). In contrast, they often visited livestream shopping platforms not primarily for shopping, but for entertainment and relaxation. Because of this contrast, sustainability messages felt “out of place” or less relevant within the livestream context.

As a result, even when participants encountered green messaging, it failed to create an emotional impact or strong relevance. This did not mean they rejected sustainability as a concept. Rather, it showed that the tone and framing of such messages didn’t match the informal and emotionally driven setting of livestream shopping. This mismatch contributed to indifferent or even negative attitudes toward sustainability within that context.

Yiran, for example, described livestream shopping as a space for casual relaxation. She viewed topics such as environmental protection or rural development as overly serious or formal,

especially when framed as part of poverty alleviation campaigns. In her view, these messages were reminiscent of political discourse, creating a dissonance that disrupted the shopping experience:

Yiran: “I feel like those words seem really distant from my life, like something you’d read in a political textbook. I already study a lot of politics, and when I’m just casually scrolling through live streams, I want to relax. Seeing those serious topics like “poverty” or “charity” feels a bit out of place.”

Yiran’s use of phrases like “distant from my life” and “political textbook” suggests a high degree of psychological distance, particularly in the social and hypothetical dimensions. Rather than rejecting sustainability, she positioned it as structurally detached from the shopping moment, reinforcing the sense that it belonged to a formal or institutional space rather than the casual setting of livestream commerce. Yiran further mentioned that she’d be more engaged if the tone of sustainability messaging was framed “less serious”.

For Miro, the perceived distance was not emotional but structural. He believed that livestream commerce is driven by stakeholders pursuing their self-interest. Within this logic, messages that appeal to broader social goals, such as sustainability, feel out of place and disconnected from the motivations of those involved:

Miro: “Even if they did say something like ‘our production process is environmentally friendly,’ that kind of message just doesn’t appeal to customers. It’s not really aligned with the purpose of the livestream. So I think neither the sellers nor the consumers are motivated to care about this. It’s just a mismatch, like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole.”

Miro’s description of sustainability messaging as “a mismatch” and his metaphor of “a square peg in a round hole” reflect a perceived incompatibility between the goals of sustainable communication and the transactional nature of livestream shopping. His language illustrates a functional dissonance between the abstract values of sustainability and the immediate, concrete goals of price, convenience, and entertainment.

4.4.3.6 Subjective Unsustainable Norms

Some participants attributed their overconsumption and resulting waste to a perceived normalization of unsustainable behavior. In this study, subjective social norms were found to influence both the purchasing decision-making phase and the post-purchase phase.

When discussing the over-purchasing of skincare products, participant Yuhan highlighted the perceived commonality of wasteful behavior:

Yuhan: "I knew I probably won't be able to use all of them, that amount of skincare was too much for one face.....But I think this is a very normal and common mindset. Everyone does it, and it doesn't seem like a big deal."

Yuhan was very aware that her purchase was probably going to be wasteful, as she stated "too much for one face," indicating a certain level of discomfort she felt for being wasteful. However, she justified her behavior by normalizing it as she thinks bulk buying skin care is "very normal and a common mindset." By framing overconsumption as socially typical, Yuhan reduced the discomfort associated with buying products she did not fully need. Although she recognized that some purchases might not be used, the perception of widespread behavior justified her actions and led to purchasing eventually.

Meanwhile, Yuhan minimized the perceived harm of her potentially wasteful behavior by stating that "it doesn't seem like a big deal." Yuhan employed a neutralization technique known as "denial of injury" (Sykes and Matza,1957), through which individuals downplay the consequences of their actions in order to alleviate internal discomfort or guilt associated with overconsumption.

Yiran expressed a negative attitude toward waste but minimized its significance:

Yiran: "I do feel it's quite guilty for being wasteful. Many of the things I bought were barely used. But to be honest, I never really thought much about it before, probably most people are the same. Once you've bought something, it's already done. And since it wasn't expensive, I didn't pay much attention to it."

Similar to Yuhan's statement, the role of subjective norm played in participants' overconsumption is crucial. Participants demonstrated a tendency to normalize unsustainable behavior by situating their actions within a perceived broader social pattern. This process aligns with the concept of subjective norms in the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), where individuals' perceptions of common practices influence their behaviors.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the key findings of the study, addressing how consumers in livestream e-commerce environments perceive sustainable consumption, how these perceptions are shaped by platform features, and how they influence purchasing behaviors. The analysis revealed several core themes: consumers' understanding of sustainable consumption is layered, often contradictory, and shaped by a mix of environmental, financial, and social considerations; the livestream environment facilitates both sustainable and unsustainable choices through its fast pace, persuasive tactics, and emotionally engaging design; and consumers frequently rely on justification mechanisms, such as anticipated regret and cognitive rationalizations, to reconcile tensions between their attitudes and behaviors.

Together, these findings provide a nuanced picture of the complex interplay between individual intentions, psychological dynamics, and the commercial pressures embedded in livestream shopping. These insights form the foundation for the discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

This chapter aims to interpret and contextualize the findings presented earlier, offering a critical discussion of how consumers in livestream e-commerce environments perceive and engage with sustainable consumption. Drawing on in-depth interviews with 18 participants and a thematic analysis of their narratives, this study identified several key patterns that directly respond to the research objectives and questions.

The following objectives guided the research:

- Research Objective 1: To develop a deeper understanding of how livestream e-commerce consumers conceptualize “sustainable consumption.”
- Research Objective 2: To examine how livestream shopping environments shape consumers’ sustainability-related perceptions and how these perceptions influence their purchasing behaviors.

In line with these objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

- *RQ1: What are consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption in livestream e-commerce contexts?*
- *RQ2: How do livestream shopping environments shape consumers’ perceptions and behaviors related to sustainability?*
- *RQ3: How do consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption influence their purchasing behaviors?*

The following sections discuss these questions in relation to theoretical frameworks and existing literature, highlighting both the complexities and contradictions embedded in consumer interpretations and actions.

5.2 RQ1: What are consumers’ perceptions of sustainable consumption?

Participants understood sustainable consumption in diverse and sometimes conflicting ways. The following sub-sections explore six recurring themes, from practical behaviors like reusing and

repairing to more complex views involving social responsibility, financial control, and skepticism about the feasibility of sustainability in livestream e-commerce.

5.2.1 Life-cycle approach

The study explored the broad definition of sustainability, then the participants discussed what “sustainable consumption” means to them. In general, the participants understood the term as extending each phase of consumption, before purchase, during use, and at the point of disposal—thereby prolonging the product's lifecycle. While the term “sustainability” sounded quite abstract to many, they still managed to convey their understanding through a series of practical behaviors such as reusing items, repairing products, or minimizing purchases. These behaviors align with Luchs’ (2011) findings, which emphasize reducing overall consumption levels, minimizing waste, and making effective use of products to lessen environmental impact.

Importantly, the fact that most participants chose to describe specific actions rather than provide conceptual definitions highlights the psychological distance associated with the term sustainability. This reflects what Reczek, Trudel, and White (2018) identify as a core challenge: that eco-friendly actions and their outcomes often feel vague and distant from the self. In this study, participants appeared more comfortable engaging with sustainability through everyday behavior than through abstract theorization. This behavioral framing may serve as a coping strategy to bridge the distance and translate broad sustainability values into personal routines.

Such concrete responses also closely reflect the logic of life-cycle thinking, which encourages individuals to evaluate the environmental impact of their consumption choices across the full lifespan of a product from production, to usage, to end-of-life disposal (Quoquab & Mohammad, 2020; Jackson, 2014). Although participants did not explicitly mention this term, their narratives suggest an intuitive grasp of this approach. Rather than treating sustainability as a fixed trait of a product, they saw it as a continuous process shaped by consumers’ actions at multiple stages. While most participants focused on individual behaviors within the consumption lifecycle, a few also extended their understanding of sustainability to the broader market context. For instance, Ninghan described sustainability as a “positive loop” where transparent, high-quality, and honest communication from sellers leads to increased consumer trust, positive feedback, and ultimately,

a healthier market environment. In this view, sustainability is not solely about the environmental attributes of a product, but about the integrity of the transactional process itself.

This perspective reflects a more systemic interpretation of life-cycle thinking, one that includes not only the physical life of a product but also the social and relational dynamics that shape consumption over time. The emphasis on trust, information quality, and long-term interaction suggests that some consumers view sustainability as emerging from stable, low-friction exchanges rather than isolated green choices. While these reflections did not directly reference ecological goals, they reveal a belief that sustainable consumption requires a responsible and reciprocal marketplace.

This aligns with broader academic discussions of sustainability (e.g., Quoquab & Mohammad, 2020), where both producers and consumers share responsibility for long-term well-being, environmentally, socially, and economically. It also illustrates how life-cycle thinking, even when not explicitly articulated, underpins how consumers decide not only what to buy, but also how and from whom.

5.2.2 Sustainable consumption as an antonym of “fast” consumption

Fast fashion goods are frequently criticized in the existing sustainability literature for their environmental impacts (Sun, Bellezza, & Paharia, 2021). Echoing this perspective, some participants in this study perceived sustainable consumption as the opposite of “fast consumption.” In their view, fast consumption typically implies short product lifecycles, lower quality, and cheap pricing, representing a consumption model that is resource-intensive and lacking in responsibility. As a contrast, sustainable consumption was characterized by higher product quality, longer usage cycles, and designs that emphasize durability and repairability. For instance, Jane explicitly expressed the view that fast-moving consumer goods are inherently unsustainable.

Some participants, such as Yuhan, went further by reflecting on their consumption habits. They recognized that even within the framework of “fast” consumption, individuals can make more mindful choices, such as reducing the use of disposable items, extending the usage period of products, or actively avoiding overconsumption. This suggests that consumers' understanding of

sustainability is not solely dependent on macro-level systemic change, but can also manifest in micro-level, incremental behavioral adjustments.

5.2.3 Internal tensions of sustainable consumption

This study finds that some consumers perceive internal contradictions within the concept of sustainability. In the existing literature, sustainability is often framed through the model of three “pillars” or “intersecting circles” representing society, environment, and economy (Basiago, 1999; Gibson, 2006). While these dimensions are conceptually interrelated, their overlap also implies potential conflicts. This tension is exemplified by Toby’s account, in which he notes that certain practices aimed at improving environmental outcomes—such as discouraging product returns or replacing human drivers with autonomous vehicles—may lead to unintended social consequences like structural unemployment.

Such narratives highlight the fact that the three dimensions of sustainability often pursue distinct goals. In practice, these goals are not always mutually reinforcing and may require trade-offs. This supports previous critiques of the three-pillar model, which argue that calls for “integration” and “balance” remain under-theorized and often obscure the political and moral decisions involved in operationalizing sustainability (Barbier & Markandya, 2013; Barbier & Burgess, 2017). For consumers, these tensions contribute to the difficulty of aligning sustainable attitudes with consistent behavior.

5.2.4 Sustainable consumption as policy compliance

This study found that some participants primarily understood sustainable consumption as a government-initiated policy directive rather than a value-driven personal choice. For these consumers, sustainability was framed as a matter of institutional compliance rather than intrinsic motivation. For example, participant James frequently referred to making consumption choices “to comply with sustainability policies,” but did not demonstrate substantial engagement with the underlying environmental or ethical rationales. This pattern suggests that, in certain contexts, sustainability remains an externally mandated behavior—a practice performed to meet regulatory expectations rather than one rooted in internalized environmental concern.

This finding resonates with Eckhardt et al. (2010), who observed that some consumers view ethical consumption as the responsibility of governments rather than individuals. These participants often express that “legislation and laws are the way to fix things,” thereby displacing personal accountability onto political systems. Similarly, in the present study, some interviewees rationalized non-sustainable behaviors or indifferent attitudes toward sustainability by transferring responsibility to external entities. For instance, Miro emphasized that those who consume more resources in society should bear greater environmental responsibility. From his perspective, unequal resource consumption justifies an unequal burden of responsibility. This logic provides a moral buffer that reduces cognitive dissonance around his consumption behavior.

While this form of reasoning reflects an awareness of broader structural inequalities, it simultaneously weakens the perceived role of the individual in driving change. Consumers who adopt this stance may acknowledge sustainability as important, but see their actions as inconsequential within a larger system. This perception can diminish motivation to make behavior changes, contributing to the persistence of unsustainable consumption despite growing awareness.

5.2.5 Sustainable Consumption as Financial Mindfulness

The finding that some consumers associate sustainable consumption with financial self-discipline reflects a personal, self-protective interpretation of sustainability. Rather than focusing on environmental or social aspects, these consumers emphasized avoiding unnecessary spending and preventing financial difficulties. This aligns with Rosenberg’s (2004) and Sheth’s (2011) definition of mindfulness as deliberate and thoughtful decision-making, although the focus here is mainly on economic security. This suggests that while financial self-discipline may lead to reduced consumption, it does not necessarily reflect broader pro-environmental intentions. Such interpretations also highlight how consumer understandings of sustainability can vary depending on individual priorities and socio-economic circumstances.

5.2.6 Desirable but Not Practical

A notable finding of this study is that participants frequently described sustainability as “good in theory but unrealistic” within commercial environments like livestream e-commerce. While they

generally supported sustainable consumption as a moral value, they questioned its practical viability in fast-paced, profit-driven contexts.

In this study, sustainability was repeatedly implied as “idealistic” or “unrealistic” within livestream contexts, not necessarily because participants rejected its moral value, but because it lacked commercial tangibility. By contrast, affordability, convenience, and quantity were framed as “real” values. Thus, sustainability was seen as incompatible not only with the commercial logic of livestreaming but also with the value logic of consumers themselves. This aligns with findings by Eckhardt et al. (2006), who observed that consumers often adopt an “economic rationalist” perspective, prioritizing cost and quality over ethical attributes in their purchasing decisions.

5.3 RQ2: How does the shopping environment shape consumers’ sustainable perception and behavior

This section addresses the second research question. It examines how features of livestream e-commerce, such as low prices, scarcity appeals, and return policies, influence consumers’ decision-making and shape both sustainable and non-sustainable consumption patterns.

5.3.1 Too Cheap to Care

In some consumers’ views, the low prices and convenient payment systems of livestream e-commerce platforms encourage purchases that occur with little deliberation. These small, frequent transactions often go unnoticed in the moment, as each purchase feels insignificant. Over time, however, this pattern can accumulate into considerable waste, prompting some consumers to reflect on their behavior.

Yet even when awareness arises, many consumers rationalize their actions by pointing to the low monetary value of the items. This reflects what Sykes and Matza (1957) described as “denial of harm” in neutralization theory. Instead of acknowledging the environmental or ethical implications of waste, consumers downplay the consequences. As Yiran put it, “Worst case, I wasted a few bucks. So people just buy first and think later.” Such statements illustrate how the perceived smallness of the loss helps to reduce cognitive discomfort, allowing consumers to continue unsustainable behaviors without feeling morally compromised.

This strategy protects the consumer's self-image while reinforcing impulsive purchasing habits. It highlights how structural features of the shopping environment, especially low prices, interact with psychological defenses to undermine sustainable consumption.

5.3.2 Sustainability as a Marketing Gimmick

This study highlights that consumers frequently perceive sustainability messaging in livestream e-commerce as a form of marketing gimmick. Participants generally viewed livestream platforms as spaces dominated by efficiency, affordability, and sales volume, characteristics that are fundamentally at odds with sustainability, which they associated with slower consumption patterns, higher costs, and idealistic long-term goals. This perceived mismatch can be explained by Task-Technology Fit (TTF) theory (Goodhue & Thompson, 1995), which argues that technologies improve performance when their characteristics align closely with the tasks they are intended to support. Previous research has demonstrated that livestreaming excels in promoting products aligned with immediacy and entertainment (Wang & Xue, 2021). In contrast, participants in this study perceived sustainability marketing, which emphasizes reduced consumption and long-term considerations, as misaligned with the immediate sales-driven nature of livestream e-commerce. Consequently, sustainability messaging was often seen as symbolic or performative, lacking genuine functionality or credibility within this context.

Moreover, the perceived incompatibility between sustainability and livestream e-commerce highlights a deeper issue related to the tangibility of these platforms. Participants implicitly valued immediate profitability and tangible benefits, while sustainability benefits appeared abstract, distant, and difficult to quantify (Reczek, Trudel, & White, 2018). This aligns with existing research indicating that consumers tend to prioritize clear and personally relevant outcomes over vague, collective, and long-term benefits (Gifford, 2011).

The skepticism toward sustainability in livestream shopping environments also stemmed directly from inconsistencies observed in streamers' behavior. Leonidou and Skarmeas (2017) describe this as green skepticism, where consumer trust in sustainability claims decreases significantly if such claims appear inconsistent with established industry norms. For example, participant Xueyao noted the contradiction in streamers advocating for rational consumption while simultaneously employing aggressive sales tactics. Her skepticism was not aimed at the concept

of rational consumption itself but rather at the perceived discrepancy between messaging and actual sales-driven behaviors. Wu and Huang (2023) support this finding, noting a strong correlation between consumer trust in streamers and trust in promoted products. When trust in the streamer diminishes, skepticism extends naturally to the products and messages they endorse.

5.3.3 Self-Oriented Motives

This study found that many instances of sustainable consumption behavior were not necessarily driven by consumers' internalized beliefs about sustainability, but rather by self-gratifying motivations. In the livestream shopping context, consumers adopt sustainable behaviors such as choosing second-hand goods, "blind-boxed" food, or items with shorter shipping routes. Although these behaviors are considered sustainable consumer behaviors, the consumers engaging in them did so without conscious thought or consideration of sustainability, nor was their motivation connected to sustainability.

Participants commonly cited reasons such as lower price, health benefits, entertainment value, or convenience as key motivators. In these cases, the sustainable nature of the product or practice was incidental rather than intentional. For example, some consumers chose unpackaged or reusable items because they were seen as better value or more functional, rather than out of environmental concern. Some participants also mentioned that they preferred more transparent sellers, like showing clear prices, product sources, or being honest during livestreams. These choices looked like responsible consumption, but the real reason was that they trusted the seller or thought it was fair. Still, over time, this kind of behavior can help build a better and more reliable market for consumers themselves.

Overall, the findings support what other studies have found: people are more likely to act sustainably when it also benefits them personally (White, Habib, & Hardisty, 2019). Even if they're not thinking about the environment, their choices can still lead to positive outcomes.

5.3.4 Shopping Environment Shaping Non-Sustainable Behaviors

Scarcity

The findings demonstrate that scarcity-based selling strategies in livestream commerce play a significant role in shaping consumer behavior, particularly in triggering impulse buying. Participants like Ninghan described situations where limited availability, “only 10 items produced,” created a strong sense of urgency and exclusivity that overrode functional considerations. The psychological impact of scarcity extended beyond product value; it induced a heightened emotional response rooted in the fear of missing out and perceived competition among other buyers.

This aligns with earlier work on impulse buying. Rook (1987) and Rook and Hoch (1985) identified several cognitive reactions during impulsive purchases: psychological disequilibrium, internal conflict, and diminished evaluative control. Such patterns were evident in this study. The momentary tension between “I don’t need it” and “It’s too limited to miss” created a psychological conflict that many participants resolved by giving in to the purchase.

In particular, scarcity appeals tap into what Rook (1987) described as a state of helplessness within the consumer, whereby the perceived loss of control leads to emotionally driven action. Rather than deliberate decision-making, consumers in these moments acted reactively, motivated by the emotional payoff of securing a limited product rather than its practical utility.

The Role of Return Policies

The findings of this study revealed that lenient return policies significantly increased consumers’ purchase intentions, largely because they lowered both the perceived risk and cognitive effort associated with making purchase decisions. The relatively “low-hassle” nature of return processes enabled consumers to “try things out” without firm commitment. As several participants described, the return policy often acted as a psychological buffer—a “last line of defense” that allowed them to proceed with uncertain purchases. For hesitant buyers, the availability of flexible return options frequently served as a decisive factor, or “dealbreaker,” justifying the purchase.

These observations align with existing literature suggesting that return policy leniency is positively associated with purchase likelihood (e.g., Wood, 2001; Wang, 2009). Moreover, prior research emphasizes that return policies play a more complex role beyond logistics. For instance, Lysenko-Ryba (2021) found that time-related elements such as delivery speed, complaint handling, and return processing are central to customer satisfaction, reinforcing the notion that efficient return systems are perceived as part of high-quality service in online retail contexts.

More notably, Lysenko-Ryba also showed that awareness of return rights can increase the tendency to make unnecessary purchases, especially among younger consumers. This insight directly supports the present study's finding that return policies can unintentionally foster a "try first, decide later" mindset, contributing to impulsive or excessive consumption. In this sense, return policies reduce the psychological burden of decision-making, shifting the evaluation process from the point of purchase to the post-purchase stage.

5.3.6 Section Summary - The Multiple Layers of Rationalization

In this study, the results suggest that in livestream e-commerce environments, platforms and sellers intentionally cultivate a convenient and permissive shopping atmosphere that, in many ways, undermines consumers' capacity for rational decision-making. While traditional consumer behavior research often frames purchasing as a process of uncertainty reduction (Lu & Chen, 2021), findings from this study suggest that livestream consumers have adopted a distinctive risk-mitigation strategy: treating the return policy as a built-in safety net. When facing uncertainty, many interviewees reported that instead of evaluating their actual need for the product, they simply adopted the mindset of "just buy it and return it if it doesn't work out." This psychological mechanism of "pre-setting a way out" reduces decision anxiety and weakens the level of pre-purchase evaluation, thereby blurring the boundary of rational consumption.

Moreover, consumer decisions were found to be shaped not only by impulsive cues but also by the emotional anticipation of future regret. Although the livestream setting fosters impulse buying, the shopping process was not entirely unplanned. On the contrary, participants often demonstrated a calculated logic, preferring to buy preemptively to avoid the anticipated regret of missing out. As Sandberg and Conner (2008) suggest, anticipated regret is a critical emotional predictor of behavioral intentions. This study echoes their conclusion by showing that consumer

actions in livestream contexts are not necessarily driven by immediate utility or product need, but rather by the desire to avoid the emotional cost of regret in the future.

Interestingly, the findings reveal that some consumers seem to have developed an internal balancing mechanism toward anticipated regret. For instance, Yuhan acknowledged purchasing skincare products in quantities far beyond her needs, yet justified her behavior as a reaction to not wanting to miss a good deal. Such reasoning suggests that consumers are not unaware of the irrationality of their actions; rather, they rationalize the behavior as a form of “emotional insurance” to manage cognitive dissonance. In this light, irrational consumption is not always the result of a lack of planning, but may instead represent a planned response aimed at emotional regulation. This points to a key insight: consumers’ decisions may stem not from an actual desire for the product, nor the hedonic joy of instant gratification, but from a strategic choice between two types of anticipated regret either the consumers “buy and regret the action”, or “don’t buy and regret the inaction”, with the former seen as the lesser of two emotional costs. This dynamic echoes Ajzen and Sheikh’s (2013) findings, which suggest that anticipated affect plays a particularly powerful role when action (e.g., purchasing) and inaction (e.g., not purchasing) are evaluated in contrast. Their study showed that regret linked to inaction often outweighs regret linked to action, especially when consumers perceive an opportunity as unique or fleeting. In livestream e-commerce contexts, where scarcity and time-limited offers are prevalent, the emotional pull of avoiding inaction regret may become a dominant force shaping consumer behavior

The discomfort arising from this dissonance was frequently alleviated by platform policies, particularly the ease and zero-cost nature of product returns. These policies served as a psychological cushion that minimized the perceived consequences of unsustainable behavior. As many participants noted, the idea of “I can just return it if it’s not right” provided the reassurance needed to proceed with the purchase, even if they had doubts.

Interestingly, when returns did not happen, consumers employed further rationalizations such as “I’ll use it someday” to justify the unused items. Even in cases where waste eventually occurred, participants tended to normalize it with statements like “everyone does this” or “it’s not a big deal,” thus mitigating feelings of personal responsibility.

This layered rationalization process highlights how platform features can interact with consumers' internal justifications to sustain unsustainable behaviors. The convenient return mechanism lowers the perceived risk of consumption, while personal and social narratives reduce the emotional cost of overconsumption.

5.4 RQ3: How do perceptions shape consumers' sustainable/non-sustainable behaviors

This section addresses the third research question. Drawing on participants' narratives, the analysis explores how consumers' varying understandings of sustainability influence and failed to influence their decision-making processes and actual consumption practices. Several key themes emerged from the data, highlighting the dynamic interplay between perceived meanings of sustainability, internal justifications, and the tension between intentions and actions. These findings shed light on both the drivers of sustainable choices and the rationalizations behind unsustainable behaviors in the livestream e-commerce environment.

5.4.1 Other-Oriented Motives

This study highlights that sustainable consumer behavior (SCB) can be driven not only by environmental awareness or personal lifestyle goals, but also by other-oriented motivations. Participants who showed greater concern for others, whether it be for animals, farmers, or future generations, were more willing to accept personal costs to support sustainable or socially beneficial outcomes. For example, the decision to purchase organic products was often based on self-related health concerns, which reflects a self-oriented motivation. In contrast, participants like Toby, who expressed a clear willingness to pay more or receive less to support a streamer's well-being or rural development, exemplified truly other-oriented SCB.

As White et al. (2019) point out, one of the main challenges in encouraging sustainable behavior is that consumers often perceive such actions as costly to themselves (see also Luchs & Kumar, 2017), while the benefits—such as environmental protection or social impact—are often external (Campbell & Winterich, 2018). In this light, overcoming the self-other trade-off may require consumers to care more about people and systems beyond themselves. The findings of this research support this argument: participants with a stronger other-oriented mindset were more

likely to engage in prosocial and sustainable consumer behaviors, a pattern consistent with earlier research on altruism and sustainability (e.g., Steg et al., 2014).

5.4.2 Consumers' Resistance

The achievement of sustainability goals often requires collective effort across individuals, institutions, and society at large. Participants in this study widely recognized their environmental responsibilities. Prior research suggests that awareness of the environmental consequences of consumption typically predicts stronger engagement in sustainable behaviors. However, findings from this study indicate that participants' perceptions of responsibility extend beyond individual agency, emphasizing systemic and collective accountability.

Consumer resistance, exemplified clearly in Miro's case, highlights a significant tension between individual responsibility and institutional accountability. Miro's skepticism toward green marketing claims was initially driven by perceptions of exaggerated or unverifiable environmental benefits. More profoundly, however, he critiqued sustainability narratives that placed excessive moral burden on individuals without adequately addressing institutional responsibilities. Miro's rhetorical question captures a prevalent sense of perceived consumer ineffectiveness (Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006), where individuals feel overwhelmed by the scale of environmental issues, believing their actions lack impact. This perception fosters a disengagement from sustainability efforts, leading to inhibited sustainable consumer behaviors.

Additionally, Miro's criticism of luxury consumption and wasteful institutional practices reveals frustration with perceived inequities in sustainability discourses. He explicitly articulated that those with greater societal resources should bear more responsibility for environmental protection. When powerful entities appeared to neglect this responsibility, Miro felt justified in his inaction, perceiving the distribution of sustainability demands as fundamentally unfair. Thus, environmental responsibility became a relational construct, contingent upon the actions (or inactions) of others.

This dynamic aligns closely with Gosling, Denizeau, and Oberlé's (2006) concept of denial of responsibility as a cognitive dissonance reduction strategy. Their research highlights how individuals deflect responsibility to more powerful institutions or societal groups when their

behavior conflicts with personal environmental values. By externalizing responsibility, individuals like Miro alleviate the emotional discomfort or guilt associated with unsustainable practices. Although this external attribution may reflect legitimate critiques of structural inequality, it simultaneously serves as a psychological mechanism enabling consumers to avoid confronting their unsustainable behavior.

These findings suggest that sustainability narratives must integrate individual behavioral changes with explicit systemic accountability and reforms. Addressing consumer resistance effectively requires engaging deeply with consumers' emotional and moral reasoning, acknowledging valid structural critiques, and creating an equitable, actionable sense of collective responsibility. Thus, interventions aimed at encouraging sustainable behavior must not only inform consumers about their impact but also ensure that responsibility distribution is perceived as fair and systemic accountability is demonstrated.

5.4.3 Positive Perception Failing to Translate into Behavior: The Attitude–Behavior Gap

Although the participants demonstrated a diverse level of commitment to sustainable consumer behavior, this positive attitude did not effectively translate to sustainable consumer behaviors in their shopping environment. Aligning with previous studies, executing sustainable consumer behaviors often face the well-documented “attitude-behavior gap”, which was found prominent in this study as well.

5.4.3.1 Conceptual Tensions

The findings reveal that consumers often face multiple tensions when practicing sustainability concepts. The tensions occur as a form of trade-off in the buying process, including self-other tradeoff (whether I should compromise my benefits for others), and present-future tradeoff (whether I should suppress my present desire for future benefits).

The “SHIFT framework” of sustainable consumer behaviors (White et al., 2019) highlights the importance of self-other tradeoffs in shaping sustainable consumption decisions. This dynamic was evident in the current study. For instance, one participant, Juanjuan, stated that she is not concerned about larger-scale issues such as environmental and social impacts, as she perceives them to be external to her own life. Her stance reflects a self-oriented perspective that places

limited emphasis on broader consequences beyond personal consumption needs. In contrast, another participant, Toby, demonstrated a more other-oriented outlook. He expressed concern about how consumption might affect vulnerable groups and societal well-being. This comparison illustrates how different positions along the self-other spectrum can significantly influence how individuals respond to sustainability-related messaging and behaviors.

Caring for future generations is often considered a core value of sustainability (eg, Brundtland, 1987). In this study, Jane explicitly stated that her understanding of sustainable consumption is about thinking for the future. She reflected that sustainability, to her, means considering long-term impacts when making daily consumption decisions. However, this future-oriented thinking was not entirely positive. Jane also described sustainable consumption as a process of “desire suppression.” When this sense of suppression accumulated, she occasionally responded with impulsive buying behaviors, where prolonged restraint can lead to overcompensation. This “rebound” consequence, driven by long-term desire suppression, can be explained by moral licensing theory, which indicates that people who initially behave in a moral way can later display behaviors that are immoral, unethical, or otherwise problematic (Blanken, van de Ven, & Zeelenberg, 2015). Jane’s reflections also illustrate the “Appeal to Good Character” neutralization technique (Bryant et al., 2017), as she justified her impulsive purchases by emphasizing her overall commitment to sustainable consumption. By highlighting her usual restraint and long-term thinking, she framed occasional indulgence as acceptable or inconsequential.

Taken together, these conceptual tensions, manifesting as self-other and present-future trade-offs, significantly shape consumers' responses to sustainability by complicating decision-making processes and sometimes triggering unintended or counterproductive behaviors.

5.3.3.2 Psychological Distance Affecting Attitude

The findings suggest that some consumers perceive social sustainability narratives as distant from their everyday lives. These consumers primarily regard livestreaming as a form of entertainment. Their main purpose in watching livestreams is not to shop, but to find joy or emotionally engaging content. Similar to participants who viewed sustainability as a top-down policy directive, they tend to associate social sustainability with seriousness and politics, which

feels out of place in the lighthearted, entertainment-oriented atmosphere of livestreaming. This contributes to a heightened sense of social distance between the viewers and the topic of sustainability (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

In Miro's case, the sense of hypothetical distance appears to be amplified by the mismatch between the commercial nature of the livestreaming environment and the perceived cost of engaging in sustainable practices. Since sustainability is seen as requiring sacrifice in a context where profitability, the relevance of sustainability messaging is further reduced. This case illustrates how a high level of perceived improbability can lead to increased psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Together, the examples of Yiran and Miro suggest that when there is a misalignment between the tone of sustainability messages and the expectations embedded in the livestreaming context, such communication may fail to resonate with the audience. Previous studies have found that livestreaming's entertainment value helps reduce psychological distance and maintain viewer engagement (eg, Ma et al., 2020; Chen & Lin, 2018). However, in the cases discussed here, the way sustainability was framed had the opposite effect; it reinforced distance rather than bridging it, demonstrating that the consumers' perception of sustainability is opposite to entertainment.

5.3.3.3 Preconceptions

Several participants expressed pro-social and pro-environmental intentions, but noted that the higher cost of green products often limited their ability to act on these values. As widely recognized, environmentally friendly options can sometimes be more expensive for consumers (Gupta & Odgen, 2009; Rehman, Seman, & Harun, 2024). In such cases, participants appeared to use the cost of green products as a justification for choosing not to purchase them. While some green products may offer cost savings over the long term, some consumers prefer to use cheaper alternatives and instead extend the life cycle of those products by using them more carefully to achieve greater cost efficiency.

A similar rationale emerged in discussions of product quality. Some participants (eg, Yuhan) perceived that overall green products may be low in quality or ineffective in product performance because she perceives "made with recycled materials" as "low in quality". This

reflects what Luchs et al. (2010) describe as the “sustainability liability,” where ethical or green products are perceived as less functional. These associations, though not always based on direct experience, may deter consumers from making sustainable choices even when their intentions are aligned with environmental values.

5.3.3.4 Subjective Unsustainable Norms

Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior identifies three primary predictors of human behavior: attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. In this study, it was evident that some participants perceived non-sustainable behaviors as normative. This perception reinforced justifications such as “it’s normal and common” or “most people probably do the same,” which in turn helped to alleviate the discomfort associated with wasteful behaviors. The sense that such behavior is socially acceptable made participants feel more at ease with their own choices. Such statements demonstrate the pivotal role of subjective norm in the purchase decision-making of consumers and how it works as a post-purchase rationalization. De Witt Huberts et al. (2014) emphasize that justification mechanisms play a crucial role in self-regulation failure, enabling individuals to rationalize behaviors that conflict with long-term goals such as sustainability. In the cases of Yuhan and Yiran, normalization of overconsumption served a similar function, helping them alleviate the psychological discomfort arising from the inconsistency between their pro-sustainability attitudes and actual behaviors.

Notably, these consumers did not appear to have a clear or evidence-based assessment of whether non-sustainable behavior is truly socially accepted. For instance, Yiran’s comment “probably everyone does the same” suggests a vague and assumptive interpretation of social norms. Individuals assume a behavior is justified simply because it is presumably widespread among others. It is possible that the spontaneous, impulsive emotions drive the consumers to frame or inflate their subjective norms to eventually execute the purchasing behaviors. When participants claimed that “everyone” shops or consumes in a certain unsustainable way, they may have been engaging in what Ross et al. (1977) identified as the “false consensus effect”, a cognitive bias where individuals assume that their behaviors or attitudes are more widely shared than they are. This justification strategy demonstrates that consumers tend to seek new

cognitions, whether they are real, to mitigate the discomfort from their cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957; McGrath, 2017).

In both Yiran's and Yuhan's narratives, this kind of reasoning served as a psychological strategy to neutralize the tension between their behaviors and personal or societal expectations. Such mechanisms share conceptual similarities with neutralization techniques (Sykes and Matza, 1957), as discussed in the literature (eg, Chatzidakis et al., 2004, 2007), where individuals employ cognitive justifications to deflect guilt or responsibility.

5.3.3.5 Overestimated Perceived Behavior Control

At the same time, Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior highlights the significance of perceived behavioral control (PBC) as a key determinant of both behavioral intention and actual behavior. While PBC is assessed by perceived ease or difficulty in performing that behavior, this study found that participants often exhibited overconfidence regarding their ability to follow through on aspirational behaviors. For example, Meng and Tony both reported purchasing fitness equipment to establish a new routine. A strong belief in future behavioral change initially justified these purchases. However, over time, both participants admitted that they failed to use the products as expected, resulting in waste and regret.

Interestingly, the negative emotions triggered by wasteful outcomes were often mitigated by participants' repeated emphasis on their perceived ability to act differently in the future. Rather than acknowledging the purchase as a mistake, they used statements such as "it'll come in handy someday" to justify their actions. This type of reasoning reflects an illusion of control (Langer, 1975), where individuals overestimate their ability to influence future outcomes. It also exemplifies a common form of cognitive dissonance reduction (Festinger, 1957), where discomfort is managed by adding self-justifying beliefs that restore internal consistency between one's actions and values.

5.4.4 Section Summary

This section has explored how consumers' perceptions—shaped by personal values, emotions, and broader social influences—impact their sustainable and non-sustainable behaviors. While some participants were motivated by other-oriented concerns such as fairness, altruism, or future

generations, others expressed resistance rooted in perceived institutional failure or moral overload. Even when consumers held positive views toward sustainability, their actions were often constrained by conceptual tensions (e.g., self vs. others, present vs. future), psychological distance, or practical concerns like cost and quality. Additionally, behaviors were often justified through biased perceptions of social norms, inflated confidence in future change, or strategic reasoning that reduced cognitive dissonance. Together, these findings suggest that sustainable behavior for live streaming shoppers is rarely the result of a single belief or value, but rather a complex negotiation of motives, perceptions, and situational factors.

5.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed how consumers in livestream e-commerce contexts perceive and act on sustainability, responding to the three research questions.

For RQ1, the findings showed that consumers often understood sustainable consumption through simple and concrete behaviors, like reusing, repairing, or reducing purchases, rather than conceptualized definitions. Many framed sustainability as a way to extend a product's life cycle or as the opposite of wasteful "fast consumption." Some saw it as a government policy to comply with, rather than a personal value. Others described it as a good idea in theory, but unrealistic in livestream environments. A few participants also pointed out that the concept itself feels contradictory or hard to define, reflecting confusion or distance from the topic.

For RQ2, the livestream shopping environment was found to shape both sustainable and unsustainable behaviors. Features like low prices, easy returns, scarcity tactics, and emotional triggers such as avoiding potential regret in the future, led many consumers to make impulsive purchases. At the same time, some participants made more sustainable choices, but not out of environmental concern. Instead, these decisions were often driven by personal benefits such as price, convenience, or rewarding good quality such as transparency or entertainment of particular sellers. While some sustainability-related behaviors did occur, they were typically decisions that meet the personal benefits such as lower price, convenience, healthiness and entertainment.

For RQ3, the study found that while some participants held positive views of sustainability, these views rarely translated into consistent action. Although a few participants reported that their

behaviors were directly driven by their positive attitudes, the well-documented “attitude–behavior gap” was prominently observed in this study. Using Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as the core framework, the study revealed that positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption were often hindered by internal tensions, such as the self–other trade-off and the present–future trade-off. Subjective norms also played a pivotal role in consumers’ sustainable consumption decisions. The findings indicated that consumers might justify unsustainable behaviors by aligning with perceived social norms, or by assuming that unsustainable actions are common and therefore acceptable. Additionally, perceived behavioral control was sometimes overestimated, with participants expressing confidence in their future sustainable intentions while failing to follow through in practice. Together, these factors contributed to the persistence of the attitude–behavior gap, despite consumers’ stated positive intentions toward sustainability.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

This final chapter concludes the study by summarizing the key findings, contributions, and practical implications of the research. The study explored how consumers in livestream e-commerce environments perceive sustainable consumption, how these perceptions are shaped by platform features, and how they translate into buying behaviors. The chapter begins by restating the research purpose and objectives, followed by a discussion of the theoretical and managerial contributions of the study. It then outlines the methodological limitations and suggests directions for future research. The chapter closes with final remarks on the significance of the study and its relevance for advancing sustainable consumption in digital commerce contexts.

6.1 Research Purpose

This study explored how Chinese livestream consumers perceive sustainable consumption and how livestream shopping features shape these perceptions and related purchasing behaviors. It addressed a gap in existing literature by examining the complex interplay between sustainability, consumer psychology, and digital commerce.

Through qualitative analysis of participants' attitudes, motivations, and shopping decisions, the study identified key themes that reveal how platform structures and psychological dynamics contribute to the attitude–behavior gap. The findings offer valuable guidance for designing more authentic and effective sustainability strategies in livestream e-commerce and highlight opportunities for future research, including interventions to close the attitude–behavior gap and comparative studies across digital retail formats.

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

This study makes important theoretical contributions to the existing literature on sustainable consumption by offering an in-depth understanding of consumer behavior, the attitude–behavior gap, and the psychological mechanisms that support or hinder pro-environmental behavioral change. Drawing from interdisciplinary perspectives—including marketing, sociology, and psychology—this research provides a more holistic view of how consumers engage with sustainability, what motivates their choices, and how internal cognitive processes shape their decisions. Understanding why consumers often fail to act on their pro-sustainability attitudes is

essential for addressing this gap. This study investigates these issues in detail and offers several key theoretical contributions to the sustainable consumption literature:

First, most existing studies on sustainable consumption from a consumer perspective are grounded in Western contexts. However, as one of the world's largest economies, China's consumer perspectives on sustainability remain underexplored. This study addresses this gap by examining how consumers understand and interpret the concept of sustainability within the emerging context of livestream e-commerce in China. By situating the research in a non-Western digital consumption context, this study provides valuable insights into how culturally and technologically specific factors influence consumers' interpretations of sustainability. Through this, the study expands existing understandings of sustainability by examining how Chinese livestream e-commerce consumers interpret the concept within their own cultural and technological context.

Secondly, prior research on sustainable consumption has predominantly relied on quantitative methods, resulting in limited attention to consumers' subjective experiences and meaning-making processes (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). This study addresses that gap by adopting a qualitative approach to explore how consumers in China's livestream e-commerce environment understand and relate to the concept of sustainable consumption. The qualitative design not only captures consumers' attitudes but also reveals how they construct, negotiate, and occasionally resist the meanings of sustainability in context-specific shopping situations. This adds conceptual depth to existing models by framing sustainability as a socially constructed and context-dependent concept.

In contrast to most existing studies on livestream impulse buying, which largely employ quantitative methods (e.g., Lee & Chen, 2021; Qu et al., 2023), this research offers a qualitative lens that uncovers the underlying emotions, internal contradictions, and situational cues that shape consumer decision-making in real time. By doing so, it expands the current understanding of impulse consumption dynamics in livestreaming contexts and illustrates how emotionally charged and environmentally ambiguous settings can complicate sustainable intentions.

Thirdly, existing literature has widely acknowledged that consumers often fail to translate their positive attitudes toward sustainable consumption into corresponding behaviors (Carrigan &

Attalla, 2001; ElHaffar et al., 2020). This attitude–behavior gap is also evident throughout this study. The findings reveal that participants frequently employed justification-based narratives to legitimize or rationalize their actions, thereby alleviating the psychological discomfort caused by cognitive dissonance. These strategies align with several well-established theories of dissonance reduction, including the neutralization techniques developed by Sykes and Matza (1957), the denial of responsibility framework proposed by Gosling, Denizeau, and Oberlé (2006), the false consensus effect described by Ross et al. (1977), and the concept of moral licensing (Merritt et al., 2010). This dynamic confirms that consumers often engage in cognitive strategies to protect their moral self-image and maintain psychological consistency, even when their actions deviate from their stated pro-environmental values.

Building further on this, the study adopts Ajzen’s (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) as a core theoretical framework to examine how consumers regulate themselves into overconsumption. It explores how attitudes, social norms, perceived behavioral control, and anticipated outcomes interact with environmental cues and internal justification mechanisms to facilitate excessive consumption. As a key theoretical contribution, the study identifies a previously underexplored mechanism based on anticipated regret. While TPB has been widely applied to predict planned behavior, this research reveals that consumers often experience conflicting anticipations of regret, both for making a purchase and for forgoing it. Rather than purely rational deliberation, their decisions are shaped by an affective calculus: they tend to select the option that feels less regretful in advance, or one whose negative consequences seem easier to reverse (e.g., products with flexible return policies). This perspective provides new insight into how the shopping environment and psychological rationalizations jointly contribute to the breakdown of sustainable intentions.

6.3 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study offer several managerial implications for both practitioners and policymakers seeking to promote sustainable consumption within livestream e-commerce environments. For practitioners, including livestream platforms, brands, and streamers, the insights point to the importance of embedding sustainability authentically into business practices, communication strategies, and shopping experiences. For policymakers, the findings highlight

opportunities to support sustainable consumption through regulatory frameworks, industry standards, and public education initiatives. This section outlines practical recommendations aimed at helping both groups address key challenges identified in the study—such as consumer skepticism, the attitude–behavior gap, and the tension between commercial imperatives and sustainability goals.

First, the study highlights the critical importance of aligning sustainability messaging with authentic practices. Consumers expressed significant skepticism toward sustainability claims, particularly when the behaviors of streamers, platforms, or sellers appeared inconsistent with green messaging. To overcome this skepticism and foster trust, managers should ensure that sustainability commitments are reflected in actual business practices. This could include establishing clear internal guidelines for sustainability-related communication, training streamers to convey consistent messages, and providing consumers with transparent reporting on environmental performance. By aligning green claims with real actions, brands can strengthen credibility and build long-term consumer trust.

Second, livestreaming is entertaining in its nature while sustainability is often perceived relatively serious or as a political topic. This creates a psychological distance between consumers and sustainability narratives. To address this, managers should work to embed sustainability messaging within emotionally engaging and relatable content. For instance, integrating sustainability into product storytelling, behind-the-scenes footage of eco-friendly production, or interactive livestream challenges may help reduce psychological distance and enhance audience receptivity. Such strategies would allow sustainability to become part of the entertainment experience, rather than feeling out of place or burdensome.

Third, the study underscores the effectiveness of linking sustainable consumption to consumers' self-interested motives. Many sustainable behaviors observed in this research were driven not by environmental concern, but by perceived personal benefits such as cost savings, convenience, or health advantages. Therefore, livestream commerce managers should highlight these self-relevant benefits when promoting sustainable products. Messaging that emphasizes durability, multi-functionality, or long-term savings can make green choices more attractive to consumers whose primary motivations are pragmatic.

Fourth, the findings reveal that features of the livestream shopping environment—including scarcity tactics, low price, and lenient return policies—can undermine rational decision-making and encourage unsustainable consumption. These findings highlight the need to consider how platform design and real-time sales pressure can influence consumer decisions, especially when it comes to buying things they don't really need. As Xie (2019) points out, people are not always making rational choices to maximize value, but often just want to feel emotionally satisfied. This helps explain why online shoppers might still make impulsive or excessive purchases, even when they are aware of the consequences. Managers should also critically evaluate the overuse of such tactics and explore ways to nudge consumers toward more thoughtful purchasing. For example, platforms might experiment with “slow checkout” prompts, reminders about the environmental impacts of returns, or limit the use of urgency cues in promoting green products.

Finally, the study suggests that sustainability campaigns should convey a shared sense of responsibility across platforms, brands, and consumers. Some participants resisted sustainable actions due to a perceived imbalance in responsibility, feeling that institutions were not doing their part. To address this, managers should communicate clearly about their organizational commitments—such as green logistics, ethical sourcing, or carbon neutrality—while empowering consumers with specific, achievable actions. This dual approach can help reduce moral overload and encourage individual participation within a fairer, collective framework.

Overall, these implications highlight that promoting sustainability in livestream e-commerce requires more than isolated messages or green labels. It calls for systemic changes in how sustainability is communicated, operationalized, and embedded into the consumer experience.

6.4 Limitations

This study has some methodological limitations. First, the sample size was relatively small, with only 18 participants, and the distribution of gender, age, education, and occupation was not broad, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. In addition, compared to the general population in China, participants in this study were generally more highly educated and likely to have higher-than-average income levels due to the nature of their occupations. As a result, the findings may better reflect the views of relatively affluent and educated consumer segments rather than the broader population.

Second, the use of purposive and snowball sampling may have introduced selection bias. While these methods were effective in recruiting participants with relevant livestream shopping experience, they may have resulted in a sample that disproportionately reflects individuals who are more engaged, articulate, or interested in sustainability issues. Thus, the findings might overrepresent certain viewpoints or experiences, limiting the extent to which they can be generalized to the broader population of livestream consumers. Future studies could mitigate this limitation by employing more diverse sampling strategies, such as stratified or random sampling, to capture a wider range of consumer perspectives.

Third, while social desirability bias is often a concern in self-reported data, especially when discussing socially valued behaviors such as sustainable consumption and mindful consumption, this study suggests that many vague or inconsistent responses were less about trying to appear “green” and more about not wanting to appear uninformed. That is, participants seemed more uncomfortable admitting a lack of knowledge of what sustainability means than acknowledging a gap between their values and actions. These limitations may have affected the findings related to RQ1 more than those for RQ2 and RQ3, as the former relied more on participants’ ability to articulate abstract meanings, whereas the latter focused on behaviors and situational experiences.

6.5 Future Research Directions

Although this study met its research objectives and addressed the research questions, further investigations are needed to deepen understanding of sustainable consumption in the context of livestream e-commerce.

First, a key limitation of this study is the representativeness and size of the sample due to the small sample size. Future qualitative studies could build on this work by involving larger and more diverse participant groups to explore a broader range of consumer understandings of sustainability.

Second, this study examined how various functional features of livestream e-commerce influence consumers’ purchase decisions and the emergence of impulsive buying. One notable finding was the important role of anticipated regret in consumers’ decision-making processes. Participants appeared to weigh anticipated regret when choosing options they believed would lead to less

future regret. It could be worthwhile for future research to examine which specific feature or combination of features within livestream e-commerce environments contributes to the formation of anticipated regret and how these, in turn, influence impulsive buying decisions. This insight calls for further quantitative research to determine how widespread this phenomenon is, which could provide valuable guidance for practitioners and policymakers.

Third, this study employs a cross-sectional design, which captures consumer perceptions and behaviors at a single point in time. Future studies could adopt a longitudinal design to explore how consumers' sustainability perceptions and behaviors evolve over time in the livestream e-commerce environment. Such an approach would allow researchers to track changes in consumer attitudes, the influence of repeated exposure to sustainability messaging, and the long-term impact of environmental cues or platform features on consumption patterns. For example, participants could be interviewed or surveyed at multiple points in time—before, during, and after engaging in livestream shopping campaigns that include sustainability themes. This would provide valuable insights into whether and how sustainable consumption intentions become more deeply internalized or, conversely, eroded by ongoing platform dynamics.

6.6 Final Remarks

This study has provided new insights into how consumers in Chinese livestream e-commerce contexts perceive and engage with sustainable consumption. It highlights how the unique features of livestream shopping shape consumer attitudes, justifications, and purchasing behaviors in ways that both support and hinder sustainability goals. The research provides practical insights into how sustainability efforts might be better integrated into digital shopping environments, with attention to both consumer psychology and platform design. By adopting qualitative methods and gathering first-hand perspectives from livestream shoppers, the study offers a detailed and grounded view of these dynamics. Although limited in scope, the findings contribute to ongoing discussions on how to promote more sustainable consumption in emerging digital marketplaces.

References

- Abdulrazak, S., & Quoquab, F. (2018). Exploring consumers' motivations for sustainable consumption: A self-deterministic approach. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 30(1), 14–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2017.1354350>
- Addo, P., Fang, J., & Li, L. (2020). Green advertising and purchase decisions in live-streaming B2C and C2C interactive marketing. *International Journal of Information and Management Sciences*, 31(3), 191–212. <https://doi.org/10.6186/IJIMS.202006>
- Adeoye-Olatunde, O. A., & Olenik, N. L. (2021). Research and scholarly methods: Semi-structured interviews. *JACCP: Journal of the American College of Clinical Pharmacy*, 4(10), 1358–1367. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jac5.1441>
- Ah Fook, L., & McNeill, L. (2020). Click to buy: The impact of retail credit on over-consumption in the online environment. *Sustainability*, 12(18), 7322. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12187322>
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50(2), 179–211. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T)
- Ajzen, I., & Sheikh, S. (2013). Action versus inaction: Anticipated affect in the theory of planned behavior. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(1), 155–162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2012.00989.x>
- Alharahsheh, H. H., & Pius, A. (2020). A review of key paradigms: Positivism vs interpretivism. *Global Academic Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1), 39–43.
- Bahl, S., Milne, G. R., Ross, S. M., Mick, D. G., Grier, S. A., Chugani, S. K., Chan, S. S., Gould, S., Cho, Y., Dorsey, J. D., Schindler, R. M., Mordock, M. R., & Boesen-Mariani, S. (2016). Mindfulness: Its transformative potential for consumer, societal, and environmental well-being. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 35(2), 198–210. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.15.139>

- Bai, Y., Yao, Z., & Dou, Y.-F. (2015). Effect of social commerce factors on user purchase behavior: An empirical investigation from Renren.com. *International Journal of Information Management*, 35(5), 538–550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2015.04.011>
- Banbury, C., Stinerock, R., & Subrahmanyam, S. (2012). Sustainable consumption: Introspecting across multiple lived cultures. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(4), 497–503. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.028>
- Barber, N. A., Taylor, D. C., & Remar, D. (2016). Desirability bias and perceived effectiveness influence willingness to pay for pro-environmental wine products. *International Journal of Wine Business Research*, 28(3), 206–227. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWBR-09-2015-0042>
- Bell, E., Bryman, A., & Harley, B. (2022). *Business Research Methods* (6th ed., pp. 46–48). Oxford University Press.
- Bharti, M., Suneja, V., & Bharti, M. (2022). Mindfulness as an antidote to conspicuous consumption: The mediating roles of self-esteem, self-concept clarity, and normative influence. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 184, 111215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.111215>
- Blanken, I., van de Ven, N., & Zeelenberg, M. (2015). A Meta-Analytic Review of Moral Licensing. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 41(4), 540–558. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167215572134>
- Bonini, S., & Oppenheim, J. (2008). Cultivating the green consumer. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 6, 56–61.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>

- Brown, P. M., & Cameron, L. D. (2000). What can be done to reduce overconsumption? *Ecological Economics*, 32(1), 27–41. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009\(99\)00093-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0921-8009(99)00093-2)
- Brundtland, G. H. (1987). *Our Common Future: The World Commission on Environment and Development*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Brunner, T. A. (2014). Applying neutralization theory to fair trade buying behaviour. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 38(2), 200–206. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12081>
- Cai, J., Wohn, D. Y., Mittal, A., & Sureshbabu, D. (2018). Utilitarian and hedonic motivations for live streaming shopping. In *Proceedings of the 2018 ACM International Conference on Interactive Experiences for TV and Online Video* (pp. 81–88). Association for Computing Machinery. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3210825.3210837>
- Carrigan, M., & Attalla, A. (2001). The myth of the ethical consumer – Do ethics matter in purchase behaviour? *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 18(7), 560–578. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07363760110410263>
- Chatzidakis, A., Hibbert, S., & Smith, A. P. (2007). Why people don't take their concerns about Fair Trade to the supermarket: The role of neutralisation. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 74(1), 89–100. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-006-9222-2>
- Chatzidakis, A., Hibbert, S., Mitussis, D., & Smith, A. (2004). Virtue in consumption? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 20(5–6), 526–543. <https://doi.org/10.1362/0267257041323861>
- Chen, C.-C., & Lin, Y.-C. (2018). What drives live-stream usage intention? The perspectives of flow, entertainment, social interaction, and endorsement. *Telematics and Informatics*, 35(1), 293–303. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2017.12.003>
- Cherrier, H. (2009). Anti-consumption discourses and consumer-resistant identities. *Journal of Business Research*, 62(2), 181–190.

- China Marketing Corp. (2023). Unlocking China's live streaming e-commerce: Part 1 insights. *China Marketing Corp.* <https://chinamarketingcorp.com/blog/unlocking-chinas-live-streaming-e-commerce-part-1-insights/>
- Crotty, M. (1998). *Foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003115700>
- Daly, J., Kellehear, A., & Gliksman, M. (1997). *The public health researcher: A methodological guide*. Oxford University Press.
- Daniel, C., Chowdhury, R. M. M. I., & Gentina, E. (2024). Mindfulness, spiritual well-being, and sustainable consumer behavior. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 455, 142293. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142293>
- Daniel, C., Gentina, E., & Dhandra, T. K. (2023). Mindfulness and green purchase intentions: A mediated moderation model unveiling the role of ethical self-identity. *Ecological Economics*, 209, 107810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecolecon.2023.107810>
- De Camillis, C., & Goralczyk, M. (2013). Towards stronger measures for sustainable consumption and production policies: Proposal of a new fiscal framework based on a life cycle approach. *International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment*, 18, 263–272. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11367-012-0460-5>
- de Groot, J. I. M., & Steg, L. (2008). Value orientations to explain beliefs related to environmentally significant behavior: How to measure egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric value orientations. *Environment and Behavior*, 40(3), 330–354. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916506297831>
- De Witt Huberts, Jessie C., Catharine Evers, and Denise T. D. De Ridder. “‘Because I Am Worth It’: A Theoretical Framework and Empirical Review of a Justification-Based Account of Self-Regulation Failure.” *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 18(2), 119–38. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868313507533>.

- d'Astous, A., & Legendre, A. (2009). Understanding Consumers' Ethical Justifications: A Scale for Appraising Consumers' Reasons for Not Behaving Ethically. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 87(2), 255–268. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-008-9883-0>
- Eberhart (Née Moser), A. K., & Naderer, G. (2017). Quantitative and qualitative insights into consumers' sustainable purchasing behavior: A segmentation approach based on motives and heuristic cues. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 33(13–14), 1149–1169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2017.1371204>
- Eckhardt, G. M., Belk, R., & Devinney, T. (2010). Why don't consumers consume ethically? *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 9(6), 426–436. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cb.332>
- Eizenberg, E., & Jabareen, Y. (2017). Social sustainability: A new conceptual framework. *Sustainability*, 9(1), 68. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9010068>
- ElHaffar, G., Durif, F., & Dubé, L. (2020). Towards closing the attitude-behavior gap in sustainable consumption: A theoretical framework and research agenda. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 275, 122556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2020.122556>
- Elkington, J. (1998). Partnerships from cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st-century business. *Environmental Quality Management*, 8(1), 37–51. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tqem.3310080106>.
- Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, and Company.
- Folkes, V. S., & Kamins, M. A. (1999). Effects of information about firms' ethical and unethical actions on consumers' attitudes. *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, 8(3), 243–259. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327663jcp0803_03
- Fontana, A., & Frey, J. H. (2000). The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 645–672). Sage Publications.

- Fortin, D. R., & Dholakia, R. R. (2005). Interactivity and vividness effects on social presence and involvement with a web-based advertisement. *Journal of Business Research*, 58(3), 387–396. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963\(03\)00106-1](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(03)00106-1)
- Futerra, S. C. L. (2005). *The rules of the game: The principles of climate change communication*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- Gao, X., Xu, X.-Y., Tayyab, S. M. U., & Li, Q. (2021). How the live streaming commerce viewers process the persuasive message: An ELM perspective and the moderating effect of mindfulness. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 49, 101087. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2021.101087>
- Geng, D., Liu, J., & Zhu, Q. (2017). Motivating sustainable consumption among Chinese adolescents: An empirical examination. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 141, 315–322. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.09.113>.
- Ger, G., & Belk, R. W. (1999). Accounting for materialism in four cultures. *Journal of Material Culture*, 4(2), 183–204. <https://doi.org/10.1177/135918359900400204>
- Gifford, R. (2011). The dragons of inaction: Psychological barriers that limit climate change mitigation and adaptation. *American Psychologist*, 66(4), 290–302. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023566>
- Glaser, Barney, G. and Anselm L. Strauss. 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Publishing.
- Gosling, P., Denizeau, M., & Oberlé, D. (2006). Denial of responsibility: A new mode of dissonance reduction. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 90(5), 722–733. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.90.5.722>
- Grossman, P. (2010). Mindfulness for psychologists: Paying kind attention to the perceptible. *Mindfulness*, 1, 87–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-010-0012-7>

- Gruber, V., & Schlegelmilch, B. B. (2014). How techniques of neutralization legitimize norm- and attitude-inconsistent consumer behavior. *Journal of Business Ethics, 121*(1), 29–45. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1667-5>
- Gu, Y., Cheng, X., & Shen, J. (2023). Design shopping as an experience: Exploring the effect of live-streaming shopping characteristics on consumers' participation intention and memorable experience. *Information & Management, 60*(5), 103810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2023.103810>
- Gupta, S., & Odgen, D. T. (2009). To buy or not to buy? A social dilemma perspective on green buying. *Journal of Consumer Marketing, 26*(6), 369-391.
- Hasan, Wooliscroft, and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft (2024) argue that ethical consumption is often driven by both universalist values and personal achievement motivations, which may coexist or conflict depending on the context.
- Håkansson, A. (2014). Consumption with consequences: Examining overconsumption through three dimensions. *Journal of Consumer Studies, 28*(4), 693–703.
- Heiskanen, E., & Pantzar, M. (1997). Toward sustainable consumption: Two new perspectives. *Journal of Consumer Policy, 20*(4), 409–442.
- Heo, J., Kim, Y., & Yan, J. (2020). Sustainability of live video streamer's strategies: Live streaming video platform and audience's social capital in South Korea. *Sustainability, 12*(5), 1969. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12051969>
- Hou, F., Guan, Z., Li, B., & Chong, A. Y. L. (2020). Factors influencing people's continuous watching intention and consumption intention in live streaming. *Internet Research, 30*(1), 141–163. <https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-04-2018-0177>
- Howell, R. A. (2013). It's not (just) “the environment, stupid!” Values, motivations, and routes to engagement of people adopting lower-carbon lifestyles. *Global Environmental Change, 23*(1), 281–290. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2012.10.015>

- Huang, Z., Zhu, Y., Hao, A., & Deng, J. (2023). How social presence influences consumer purchase intention in live video commerce: The mediating role of immersive experience and the moderating role of positive emotions. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 17(4), 493–509. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JRIM-01-2022-0009>
- Hudson, L. A., & Ozanne, J. L. (1988). Alternative ways of seeking knowledge in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(4), 508–521. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2489157>
- IRResearch. (2021). The research report on the Chinese live-streaming e-commerce industry. *Baidu Baijiahao*. <https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1710963499129873379&wfr=spider&for=pc>
- Jackson, T. (2004). Negotiating Sustainable Consumption: A Review of the Consumption Debate and its Policy Implications. *Energy & Environment*, 15(6), 1027-1051. <https://doi.org/10.1260/0958305043026573> (Original work published 2004)
- Jain, Sanjay. (2012). Marketing of vice goods: A strategic analysis of the package size decision. *Marketing Science*, 31(1), 36–51. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.1110.0657>
- Jiang, Z., & Benbasat, I. (2007). Investigating the influence of the functional mechanisms of online product presentations. *Information Systems Research*, 18(4), 454–470. <https://doi.org/10.1287/isre.1070.0124>
- Johnstone, M. L., & Tan, L. P. (2015). Exploring the gap between consumers’ green rhetoric and purchasing behaviour. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 132(2), 311–328. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-014-2316-3>
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (2005). *Coming to our senses: Healing ourselves and the world through mindfulness*. Hyperion.
- Kamalanon, Piyanoot, Ja-Shen Chen, and Tran-Thien-Y Le. ““Why Do We Buy Green Products?” An Extended Theory of the Planned Behavior Model for Green Product Purchase Behavior’. *Sustainability* 14, no. 2 (9 January 2022): 689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14020689>.

- Kamalanon, Piyanoot, Ja-Shen Chen, and Tran-Thien-Y Le. “‘Why Do We Buy Green Products?’ An Extended Theory of the Planned Behavior Model for Green Product Purchase Behavior.” *Sustainability* 14, no. 2 (January 9, 2022): 689. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14020689>.
- Kang, K., Lu, J., Guo, L., & Li, W. (2021). The dynamic effect of interactivity on customer engagement behavior through tie strength: Evidence from live streaming commerce platforms. *International Journal of Information Management*, 56, 102251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2020.102251>
- Kemper, J. A., & Ballantine, P. W. (2019). What do we mean by sustainability marketing? *Journal of Marketing Management*, 35(3–4), 277–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2019.1573845>.
- Khan, J., Belk, R. W., & Craig-Lees, M. (2015). Measuring consumer perceptions of payment mode. *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 47, 34–49.
- Kilbourne, W. E. (2006). The role of the dominant social paradigm in the quality of life/environmental interface. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 1(1), 39–61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-006-9004-0>
- Kumar, A., Chaudhuri, S., Bhardwaj, A., & Mishra, P. (2020). Impulse buying and post-purchase regret: A study of shopping behaviour for the purchase of grocery products. *International Journal of Management*, 11(12). <https://doi.org/10.34218/IJM.11.12.2020.057>
- Lee, C.-H., & Chen, C.-W. (2021). Impulse buying behaviors in live streaming commerce based on the stimulus-organism-response framework. *Information*, 12(6), 241. <https://doi.org/10.3390/info12060241>
- Lee, K. (2014). Predictors of sustainable consumption among young educated consumers in Hong Kong. *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, 26(3), 217–238. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08961530.2014.900249>.

- Leonidou, Constantinos N., and Dionysis Skarmas. 'Gray Shades of Green: Causes and Consequences of Green Skepticism'. *Journal of Business Ethics* 144, no. 2 (1 August 2017): 401–15. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2829-4>.
- Levy, M. (1976), "Deferred gratification and social class", *The Journal of Social Psychology*, Vol. 100, pp. 123-35.
- Lincoln, Y.S. and Guba, E.G. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*. SAGE, Thousand Oaks, 289-331. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- Liu, J., & Zhang, M. (2023). Formation mechanism of consumers' purchase intention in multimedia live platform: A case study of Taobao live. *Multimedia Tools and Applications*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11042-023-15666-6>
- Liu, Z., Li, J., Wang, X., & Guo, Y. (2023). How search and evaluation cues influence consumers' continuous watching and purchase intentions: An investigation of live-stream shopping from an information foraging perspective. *Journal of Business Research*, 168, 114233. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2023.114233>
- Lu, B., & Chen, Z. (2021). Live streaming commerce and consumers' purchase intention: An uncertainty reduction perspective. *Information & Management*, 58(7), 103509. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2021.103509>
- Luchs, M. G., & Kumar, M. (2017). "Yes, but this other one looks better/works better": How do consumers respond to trade-offs between sustainability and other valued attributes? *Journal of Business Ethics*, 140(3), 567–584. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2695-0>
- Luchs, M. G., Naylor, R. W., Irwin, J. R., & Raghunathan, R. (2010). The sustainability liability: Potential negative effects of ethicality on product preference. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(5), 18–31. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkg.74.5.18>
- Luchs, M. G., Phipps, M., & Hill, T. (2015). Exploring consumer responsibility for sustainable consumption. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 31(13–14), 1449–1471. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2015.1061584>.

- Luchs, M. G., Naylor, R. W., Rose, R. L., Catlin, J. R., Gau, R., Kapitan, S., Mish, J., Ozanne, L. K., Phipps, M., Simpson, B., Subrahmanyam, S., & Weaver, S. (2011). Toward a sustainable marketplace: Expanding options and benefits for consumers. *Journal of Research for Consumers, 1*. https://www.jrconsumers.com/Academic_Articles/issue_1/
- Lv, J., Cao, C., Xu, Q., Ni, L., Shao, X., & Shi, Y. (2022). How live streaming interactions and their visual stimuli affect users' sustained engagement behaviour—A comparative experiment using live and virtual live streaming. *Sustainability, 14*(14), 8907. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14148907>
- Lv, Z., Jin, Y., & Huang, J. (2018). How do sellers use live chat to influence consumer purchase decision in China? *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications, 28*, 102–113. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2018.01.003>
- Lysenko-Ryba, K. (2021). THE IMPACT OF IMPULSIVE BUYING ON CUSTOMER RETURNS. *International Journal for Quality Research, 15*(3), 857-870. doi:<https://doi.org/10.24874/IJQR15.03-11>
- Ma, L., Gao, S., & Zhang, X. (2022). How to use live streaming to improve consumer purchase intentions: Evidence from China. *Sustainability, 14*(2), 1045. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14021045>
- McDonagh, P., & Prothero, A. (2014). Sustainability marketing research: Past, present and future. *Journal of Marketing Management, 30*(11–12), 1186–1219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2014.943263>.
- McGrath C, Palmgren PJ, Liljedahl M. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Med Teach. 2019;41*(9):1002–1006. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149>.
- Mensah, J. (2019). Sustainable development: Meaning, history, principles, pillars, and implications for human action: Literature review. *Cogent Social Sciences, 5*(1), 1653531. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2019.1653531>.

- Merritt, A. C., Effron, D. A., & Monin, B. (2010). *Moral self-licensing: When being good frees us to be bad*. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 4(5), 344–357. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2010.00263.x>
- Milne, G. R., Ordenes, F. V., & Kaplan, B. (2020). Mindful consumption: Three consumer segment views. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 28(1), 3–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2020.01.001>
- Ming, J., Jianqiu, Z., Bilal, M., Akram, U., & Fan, M. (2021). How does social presence influence impulse buying behavior in live-streaming commerce? The role of S-O-R theory. *International Journal of Web Information Systems*, 17(4), 300–320. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWIS-02-2021-0012>
- Minton, E., Lee, C., Orth, U., Kim, C.-H., & Kahle, L. (2012). Sustainable marketing and social media: A cross-country analysis of motives for sustainable behaviors. *Journal of Advertising*, 41(4), 69–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00913367.2012.10672458>.
- Moser, A., & Korstjens, I. (2017). Series: Practical guidance to qualitative research. Part 1: Introduction. *European Journal of General Practice*, 23(1), 271–273. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13814788.2017.1375093>
- Mylan, J. (2018). Sustainable consumption in everyday life: A qualitative study of UK consumer experiences of meat reduction. *Sustainability*, 10(7), 2307. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10072307>.
- Norwegian Ministry of the Environment. (1994). Oslo roundtable on sustainable production and consumption. Retrieved from <http://www.iisd.ca/consume/oslo004.html>.
- Öberseder, M., Schlegelmilch, B. B., & Gruber, V. (2011). ‘Why Don’t Consumers Care About CSR?’: A Qualitative Study Exploring the Role of CSR in Consumption Decisions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 104(4), 449–460.
- OECD. (2002). *Towards Sustainable Household Consumption? Trends and Policies in OECD Countries*. OECD: Paris.

- Palakshappa, N., Bulmer, S., & Dodds, S. (2024). Co-creating sustainability: Transformative power of the brand. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 40(9–10), 820–850. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0267257X.2024.2380261>.
- Park, E. J., Kim, E. Y., Funches, V. M., & Foxx, W. (2012). Apparel product attributes, web browsing, and e-impulse buying on shopping websites. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(11), 1583–1589.
- Peattie, K., & Collins, A. (2009). Guest editorial: Perspectives on sustainable consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33(2), 107–112. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.14706431.2009.00758.x>.
- Peattie, K., & Crane, A. (2005). Green marketing: Legend, myth, farce or prophesy? *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 8(4), 357–370.
- Peattie, K. (2010). Green Consumption: Behaviour and norms. *Annual review of environment and resources*, 35(2010), 195-228
- Pereira Heath, M. T., & Chatzidakis, A. (2012). ‘Blame it on marketing’: Consumers’ views on unsustainable consumption. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 36(6), 656–667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2011.01043.x>
- Pfattheicher, S., Sassenrath, C., & Schindler, S. (2016). Feelings for the suffering of others and the environment: Compassion fosters proenvironmental tendencies. *Environment and Behavior*, 48(7), 929–945. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916515574549>
- Prothero, A., Dobscha, S., Freund, J., Kilbourne, W. E., Luchs, M. G., Ozanne, L. K., & Thøghersen, J. (2011). Sustainable consumption: Opportunities for consumer research and public policy. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, 30(1), 31–38. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jppm.30.1.31>.
- Purvis, B., Mao, Y., & Robinson, D. (2019). Three pillars of sustainability: In search of conceptual origins. *Sustainability Science*, 14(3), 681–695. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-018-0627-5>

- Qu, Y., Khan, J., Su, Y., Tong, J., & Zhao, S. (2023). Impulse buying tendency in live-stream commerce: The role of viewing frequency and anticipated emotions influencing scarcity-induced purchase decision. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, 103534. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103534>
- Qu, Y., Khan, J., Su, Y., Tong, J., & Zhao, S. (2023). Impulse buying tendency in live-stream commerce: The role of viewing frequency and anticipated emotions influencing scarcity-induced purchase decision. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 75, 103534. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103534>
- Quoquab, F., & Mohammad, J. (2017). Managing sustainable consumption: Is it a problem or panacea? In W. Leal Filho, D. M. Pociovalisteanu, & A. Al-Amin (Eds.), *Sustainable economic development* (pp. 115–125). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-45081-0_7
- Quoquab, Farzana, and Jihad Mohammad. “A Review of Sustainable Consumption (2000 to 2020): What We Know and What We Need to Know.” *Journal of Global Marketing*, 33(5), October 19, 2020, 305–34. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08911762.2020.1811441>.
- Rehman, Z. U., Seman, N. A. A., & Harun, A. (2024). Exploring intention to purchase green products using the theory of reasoned action: Testing the moderating effect of price sensitivity. *Process Integration and Optimization for Sustainability*, 8, 1649–1662. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41660-024-00451-1>
- Rice, P. L., & Ezzy, D. (1999). *Qualitative research methods: A health focus*. Oxford University Press.
- Rogers, D. (1998, August 6). Ethical tactics arouse public doubt. *Marketing*, 12–14.
- Rook, D. W. (1987). The buying impulse. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(2), 189–199. <https://doi.org/10.1086/209105>
- Rook, D.W. and Hoch, S.J. (1985) Consuming Impulses. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 12, 23-27.

- Rosenberg, E. L. (2004). Mindfulness and consumerism. In T. Kasser & A. D. Kanner (Eds.), *Psychology and consumer culture: The struggle for a good life in a materialistic world* (pp. 107–125). *American Psychological Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/10658-007>
- Ross, L., Greene, D., & House, P. (1977). The “false consensus effect”: An egocentric bias in social perception and attribution processes. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 13(3), 279–301. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031\(77\)90049-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(77)90049-X)
- Sandberg, T., & Conner, M. (2008). Anticipated regret as an additional predictor in the theory of planned behaviour: A meta-analysis. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 47(4), 589–606. <https://doi.org/10.1348/014466607X258704>
- Seyfang, G. (2005). Shopping for sustainability: Can sustainable consumption promote ecological citizenship? *Environmental Politics*, 14(2), 290–306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09644010500055209>.
- Sharma, R., & Jha, M. (2017). Values influencing sustainable consumption behaviour: Exploring the contextual relationship. *Journal of Business Research*, 76, 77–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2017.03.010>.
- Sheth, J. N., Sethia, N. K., & Srinivas, S. (2011). Mindful consumption: A customer-centric approach to sustainability. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 39(1), 21–39. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-010-0216-3>
- Slaper, T., & Hall, T. J. (2011). The triple bottom line: What is it and how does it work? *Indiana Business Review*, 86(1), 4–8.
- Song, Z., Liu, C., & Shi, R. (2022). How do fresh live broadcasts impact consumers’ purchase intention? Based on the SOR theory. *Sustainability*, 14(21), 14382. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su142114382>
- Spangenberg, J. H. (2005). Economic sustainability of the economy: Concepts and indicators. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(1–2), 47–64. <https://doi.org/10.1504/IJSD.2005.007374>

- Steg, L., Bolderdijk, J. W., Keizer, K., & Perlaviciute, G. (2014). An integrated framework for encouraging pro-environmental behavior: The role of values, situational factors, and goals. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 38, 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jenvp.2014.01.002>
- Steg, L., Perlaviciute, G., van der Werff, E., & Lurvink, J. (2014). The significance of hedonic values for environmentally relevant attitudes, preferences, and actions. *Environment and Behavior*, 46(2), 163–192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013916512454730>
- Steuer, J. (1992). Defining virtual reality: Dimensions determining telepresence. *Journal of Communication*, 42(4), 73–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1992.tb00812.x>
- Stich, A. (2012). Fooling Yourself: The Role of Internal Defense Mechanisms in Unsustainable Consumption Behavior. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 40, 408–416.
- Su, Q., Zhou, F., & Wu, Y. J. (2020). Using virtual gifts on live streaming platforms as a sustainable strategy to stimulate consumers' green purchase intention. *Sustainability*, 12(9), 3783. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12093783>
- Sun, J. J., Bellezza, S., & Paharia, N. (2021). Buy less, buy luxury: Understanding and overcoming product durability neglect for sustainable consumption. *Journal of Marketing*, 85(3), 28–43. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242921993172>
- Sun, Y., Shao, X., Li, X., Guo, Y., & Nie, K. (2019). How live streaming influences purchase intentions in social commerce: An IT affordance perspective. *Electronic Commerce Research and Applications*, 37, 100886. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.elerap.2019.100886>
- Sykes, G. M., & Matza, D. (1957). Techniques of neutralization: A theory of delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, 22(6), 664–670.
- Tenny, S., Brannan, J. M., & Brannan, G. D. (2022). Qualitative study. In *StatPearls*. StatPearls Publishing. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/>
- Tilly, C. (2006). *Why? What Happens When People Give Reasons... and Why*. Princeton University Press.

- Trope, Y., & Liberman, N. (2010). Construal-level theory of psychological distance. *Psychological Review*, 117(2), 440–463. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018963>
- Varul, M. Z. (2009). Ethical selving in cultural contexts: Fairtrade consumption as an everyday ethical practice in the UK and Germany. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 33(2), 183–190.
- Wang, M., & Fan, X. (2021). An empirical study on how livestreaming can contribute to the sustainability of green agri-food entrepreneurial firms. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 12627. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su132212627>
- Wang, X. (2009). Retail return policy, endowment effect, and consumption propensity: An experimental study. *The B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis & Policy*, 9(1), Article 38. <https://doi.org/10.2202/1935-1682.2288>
- Wang, Y., & Hao, F. (2018). Does Internet penetration encourage sustainable consumption? A cross-national analysis. *Sustainable Production and Consumption*, 16, 237–248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2018.08.011>
- Wilk, R. (2004). Morals and metaphors: The meaning of consumption. In K. M. Ekström & H. Brembeck (Eds.), *Elusive consumption* (pp. 11–26). Oxford: Berg.
- Wongkitrungrueng, A., & Assarut, N. (2020). The role of live streaming in building consumer trust and engagement with social commerce sellers. *Journal of Business Research*, 117, 543–556. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2018.08.032>
- Wood, S. L. (2001). Remote purchase environments: The influence of return policy leniency on two-stage decision processes. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 38(2), 157–169. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jmkr.38.2.157.18847>
- Wu, Y., & Huang, H. (2023). Influence of perceived value on consumers' continuous purchase intention in live-streaming e-commerce—Mediated by consumer trust. *Sustainability*, 15(5), 4432. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15054432>

- Xie, J. (2019). Discussion on the Mechanism of Irrational Online Shopping Behavior—Based on the Perspective of Mental Accounting Theory. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 7, 53-71. doi: 10.4236/jss.2019.75004.
- Xu, X., Wu, J. H., & Li, Q. (2020). What drives consumer shopping behavior in live-streaming commerce? *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 21(3), 144–167.
- Young, C., Hwang, K., McDonald, S., & Oates, C. (2009). Sustainable consumption: Green consumer behaviour when purchasing products. *Sustainable Development*, 18(1), 20–31. <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.394>
- Zhang, M., Liu, Y., Wang, Y., & Zhao, L. (2022). How to retain customers: Understanding the role of trust in live streaming commerce with a socio-technical perspective. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 127, 107052. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2021.107052>
- Zhang, Z., Zhang, N., & Wang, J. (2022). The influencing factors on impulse buying behavior of consumers under the mode of hunger marketing in live commerce. *Sustainability*, 14(4), 2122. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14042122>
- Zuo, R., & Xiao, J. (2021). Exploring consumers' impulse buying behavior in live streaming shopping. In J. Xu, F. P. García Márquez, M. H. Ali Hassan, G. Duca, A. Hajiyev, & F. Altıparmak (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on Management Science and Engineering Management* (pp. 610–622). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79203-9_47

Appendices

Appendix A: Informed Consent (Chinese)

访谈研究知情同意书

研究题目： 关于中国直播电商用户对可持续消费的认知研究

研究者（含联系方式）： 常远 Email: [REDACTED]

一、研究背景与目的

- 本研究旨在了解中国直播电商消费者如何理解可持续消费和绿色消费以及这些理解是如何影响了消费者的消费行为。本研究成果仅用于学术研究或论文撰写，不作商业用途。

二、访谈方式与时长

- 研究者将通过线上会议访谈的方式，与您进行约 30-60 分钟的交谈。
- 访谈内容可能包括：
 - **个人背景：** 受访者的年龄、职业、教育背景及基本生活状况等（仅收集与研究相关的必要信息）；
 - **网购体验：** 受访者在网购平台/直播电商的使用习惯、购买频率、使用动机、对直播购物优缺点的看法；
 - **对可持续消费/绿色消费的理解：** 受访者对“可持续消费”或“绿色消费”的认知、态度、个人实践、遇到的困难或疑虑；
 - **直播电商与可持续消费的联系：** 受访者是否在直播间购买过助农产品或环保相关产品，对此类宣传或活动的感受与评价；
 - **消费行为与决策因素：** 促使受访者下单的主要因素（价格、折扣、主播推荐、社会责任感等）、是否存在冲动消费及其原因；
 - **对可持续消费的看法与建议：** 受访者对平台/主播/政府在推动可持续消费方面应发挥的作用，以及对未来发展的个人见解。

三、参与者的权利

1. 自愿参与与随时退出

- 您的参与完全基于自愿。

- 在任何时候，您都有权终止访谈或拒绝回答某些问题，而无需承担任何后果。

2. 隐私与保密

- 研究过程中收集的任何个人信息仅用于本研究分析，不会向无关人员透露。
- 本研究成果中不会以真实姓名公开您的个人身份信息；如有需要引用您的观点，将使用化名或编号。

3. 风险与收益

- 本访谈不存在明显的人身或心理风险。若在访谈过程中您感到不适或不愿回答，可立即提出。
- 您的参与将有助于更深入地了解可持续消费，并可能对相关实践产生参考价值。

四、访谈记录与使用

- **录音/录像/文字记录**：为了确保访谈内容的准确性，研究者可能会使用录音或文字速记。
- 研究结束后，访谈记录将妥善保存，只有研究者及其指导老师/研究团队可访问此资料。
- 研究结果可能以论文、报告或学术文章形式发表，但不会泄露您的个人身份信息。

五、同意与签署

在充分了解以上信息后，若您同意自愿参与并允许研究者对访谈内容进行记录、分析与发表，请在下方签字并注明日期。

如有任何疑问或后续需求，可通过以下方式联系研究者：

- 研究者姓名：常远
- 联系方式：Email: XXXXXXXXXX

受访者声明：

- 我已阅读并理解上述说明，并有机会就不明之处进行提问；
- 我明白我拥有自愿参与、随时退出、不回答部分问题，以及个人信息保密等权利；
- 我同意以录音/文字记录等方式进行访谈，并允许研究者在研究中使用访谈资料（不公开我的真实身份）。

受访者签名： _____

日期： _____

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form (English)

Informed Consent Form for Interview Study

Research Title:

A Study on Chinese Livestream E-commerce Consumers' Perceptions of Sustainable Consumption

Researcher (including contact information):

Yuan Chang

Email: [REDACTED]

1. Research Background and Purpose

This study aims to explore how Chinese livestream e-commerce consumers understand sustainable consumption and green consumption, and how these understandings influence their purchasing behavior. The findings will be used solely for academic research or thesis writing and will not be used for commercial purposes.

2. Interview Format and Duration

The interview will be conducted via online meeting platforms. The estimated duration of the interview is approximately 30 to 60 minutes.

The interview may cover the following topics:

- **Personal background:** Age, occupation, education level, and basic living situation (only information necessary for the research will be collected).
- **Online shopping experience:** Habits of using online shopping platforms or livestream e-commerce, purchase frequency, motivations for use, and views on the advantages and disadvantages of livestream shopping.
- **Understanding of sustainable/green consumption:** Perceptions, attitudes, personal practices, and challenges or concerns regarding “sustainable consumption” or “green consumption.”
- **Connection between livestream e-commerce and sustainable consumption:** Whether you have purchased agricultural assistance or environmentally friendly products via livestream, and your feelings and evaluations of such promotions or campaigns.
- **Consumption behavior and decision-making factors:** Main factors influencing purchasing decisions (e.g., price, discounts, streamer recommendations, sense of social responsibility), and whether impulsive buying occurs and its reasons.
- **Views and suggestions on sustainable consumption:** Your views on the roles platforms, streamers, or government should play in promoting sustainable consumption, as well as your insights on future developments.

3. Participant Rights

Voluntary participation and withdrawal

Your participation is entirely voluntary.

You have the right to terminate the interview or decline to answer any questions at any time without any consequences.

Privacy and confidentiality

Any personal information collected during the study will be used only for research analysis and will not be disclosed to unrelated parties.

Your identity will not be revealed in any research outputs without your consent; if your statements are quoted, pseudonyms or codes will be used.

Risks and benefits

There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with participating in this interview. If you feel uncomfortable or unwilling to answer any questions during the interview, you may stop at any time.

Your participation will help advance understanding of sustainable consumption and may provide valuable insights for related practices.

4. Interview Recording and Use

Recording: To ensure the accuracy of the interview content, the researcher may record audio or take written notes.

All interview records will be securely stored, and only the researcher and their supervisor/research team will have access to the data.

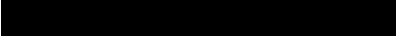
The research results may be published in the form of a thesis, report, or academic article, but no personally identifiable information will be disclosed.

5. Consent and Signature

After fully understanding the above information, if you agree to voluntarily participate in the study and allow the researcher to record, analyze, and publish the interview data, please sign below and indicate the date.

If you have any questions or further needs, please contact the researcher:

Researcher: Yuan Chang

Contact: Email: 

Participant Declaration:

I have read and understood the above information and had the opportunity to ask questions about anything unclear.

I understand that I have the right to voluntary participation, withdrawal at any time, refusal to answer certain questions, and confidentiality of my personal information.

I agree to participate in the interview and consent to audio recording/written note-taking and the use of the interview data for research purposes (without disclosing my real identity).

Participant Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Interview Question Guide (Translated)

Part 1: Opening Questions – General Information

- Can you briefly tell me about yourself? (e.g., age, gender, occupation)

Part 2: Live-Streaming Shopping Behavior

- How often do you make purchases via live-streaming platforms?
- What types of products do you usually buy?

Part 3: Perceptions of Sustainable Consumption (RQ1)

- Have you ever heard of the concept of sustainable consumption?
- How do you understand the term?
- Do you consider sustainability when making purchases? Why or why not?
- In your experience, do live-stream sellers or platforms emphasize sustainability?
- How does the live-streaming shopping environment influence your awareness or perception of sustainability?

Part 4: Sustainable Consumption and Buying Behavior (RQ2&3)

- Have your perceptions of sustainability ever influenced your shopping decisions in live-streaming e-commerce? Why or why not?
- Compared to traditional e-commerce, do you think live-streaming makes you more or less likely to consider sustainability?
- What factors influence your purchase decisions in live-streaming shopping? (e.g., discounts, urgency, social influence)
- Have you ever purchased something in a live-stream that you later felt was unnecessary? Why?
- Do you think live-stream shopping encourages excessive consumption? Why or why not?

Part 5: Reflection and Closing

- Do you think live-streaming e-commerce platforms should promote sustainability more actively?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share about your shopping experiences and views on sustainability?