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Investigation on Student Immersion and Buying Intent on Chengdu Live Platforms

Xinai Tian*

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Abstract

Purpose: The present study is intended to talk about the factors that impact the immersion and purchase intentions of university students in Chengdu on live streaming platforms. This research investigates students' perspectives in the context of lifestyle shopping, which falls under four categories: clothes and food, cosmetics, electronics, and local living. **Research Design, Data, and Methodology:** The quantitative research will involve samples of 500 undergraduates from universities in Chengdu and their purchase intention and immersion in live streaming platforms. The study developed a conceptual framework with variables: interactivity orientation, professionalism, price discounts, immersion, website trust, search intention, and subscription intention. The IOC index and Cronbach's Alpha tests check the survey's content validity and the data's reliability. The collected data is analyzed using SEM and CFA to test the model's goodness of fit. **Results:** Interactivity orientation, professionalism, price discounts, immersion, website trust, search intention, and subscription intention have significantly influenced the purchase intention of Chengdu University students in live streaming platforms. This may provide some practical evidence for optimizing the live streaming platform user experience and making marketing strategies. **Conclusion:** The results are intended to provide stakeholders in the live-streaming industry with strategic insights on driving better user experience and improved sales conversion rates.

Keywords: Live Streaming Platform, Immersion, Purchase Intention, Interactive Orientation, Professionalism

JEL Classification Code: E44, F31, F37, G15

1. Introduction

According to the Statistical Report on Internet Development in China by the China Internet Network Information Center, by March 2020, the number of Internet users in China had crossed the 904 million marks, and the percentage of people going online reached 64.5%. More importantly, the growth in the proportion of mobile Internet users has been remarkable—99.3% of Internet users go online via mobile phones—which fully indicates the strong development momentum of mobile e-commerce. Moreover, Internet users in the young demographic category aged 20 to 29, while 21.5% of students, the largest group of Internet users, account for 26.9%. That puts a strong emphasis on young people and students as far as e-commerce activities are concerned. The huge scope of China's e-commerce

market, the segmentation of industries, the wide use of mobile payments, high requirements from supply chains and logistics, and the perfecting of relevant laws and regulations all contribute to vigorous e-commerce development.

Due to the economic contribution from the live-streaming industry, "live-streaming salesperson" was listed as a new profession by the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security of China in July 2020. Integrating live-streaming elements, businesses have managed to pull off under live-streaming shopping some feats hard to achieve under any classic market model; for example, several million viewers were recorded from the first few live streams of some famous personalities through which several billion USD worth of sales were generated. They speak to the size and success of China's e-commerce market, although this represents a two-trillion-dollar industry with 190,000

*Xinai Tian, Chengdu City Concert Hall, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, China. Email: 471798883@qq.com

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companies and 1.5 million employees.

As a new social e-commerce platform, live streaming is becoming an essential trend. With the rapid development of industries related to live streaming, major e-commerce platforms have incorporated live streaming features, and many sellers are selling with live streaming, thus endowing a pattern of online social shopping: live streaming shopping. Further, live broadcast shopping has greatly increased online sellers' sales performance; hence, it is a much-needed option for social e-commerce sellers and platforms to improve their sales growth.

In 2020, livestream shopping became very popular, using social attributes and real-time interaction features to drive consumer purchases, opening up the retail world for retailers and brands, especially with the young consumer demographic. Moreover, demand for livestream talent is highly concentrated in the first-tier and new first-tier cities, and there is much higher demand for livestream positions in southern cities than in northern ones in China. Specifically, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Beijing, Zhengzhou, and Hangzhou are among the top five for employment demand in the livestreaming industry, representing the sector's vibrant development.

As a sub-category of positive psychology, immersion theory depicts the psychological state whereby individuals are fully involved in an activity. More pronounced in online live streaming, it gives viewers the feeling of participation, immersion, and enjoyment. For core disseminators and users, university students of live streaming platforms, interactivity, professionalism, and discount prices in live streaming content may influence their consumer behavior and purchase intention. These factors combine to shape a live-streaming experience and, therefore, shopping decisions for university students.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Interactive Orientation

An online retail enterprise needs full and accurate information about its customers' needs, the user experience, and improvement suggestions. Gao and Yu (2023) reveal that with action capability, online retail enterprises will take very little time before changing the collected and integrated interactive information into concrete actions touching service innovation, thus helping businesses stay ahead of some other competitors, proving or realizing more significant benefits as coined by Lu (2023). Customer authorization refers to authorizing customers who interact better with enterprises, sharing information, offering effective evaluation, and giving improvement suggestions to create higher cooperative value. Customer value is also an

important reference for enterprise customer classification. Measuring customer value enables enterprises to realize which customers create more current or potential profits so that more positive interactions can be established to maximize enterprise profits, as Ankara et al. (2021) have explained.

H1: Interaction orientation has a significant effect on immersion.

2.2 Professionalism

The transparency, authenticity, interactivity, and entertainment value brought by live broadcasts increase consumers' purchasing intention directly or indirectly through perceptions, as Zeng and Huang (2021) project. It would significantly facilitate audience purchase intentions and behaviors regarding anchors' professionalism and interaction with the audience. Based on the S-O-R model, Xu et al. (2021) further find that enhancing the enhancement of broadcast interactivity and entertainment casts and cultivating professional anchors would facilitate purchasing behaviors by stimulating customers' emotions. Similarly, Sun et al. (2022) found that the credibility, professionalism, attractiveness, interactivity, and activity level of broadcast rooms increased consumers' perceived pleasure and arousal, increasing impulsive purchase intentions.

H2: Professionalism has a significant effect on purchase intention.

2.3 Price Discount

The perception of a higher value price is related to a lower perceived price by consumers for the product, thus higher discounting of the product price. According to Tam and Jackie, in the value-intention framework, the more extreme the consumer perceives the discount's price and emotional value, the more likely they will accept and use it for actual purchases. Hill et al. (2016) further suggested that probabilistic discounts might be more curiosity-enhancing to consumers, thus holding higher emotional value perception and greater purchase intention. For example, Alavi et al. (2015) found that fixed discounts serve as a suggestive clue for consumers to believe something might be wrong with the product; hence, they lower the internal reference price for the product and further undervalue the benefit from the discount.

H3: Price discounts have a significant effect on purchase intention.

2.4 Immersion

When the challenge and the skill come into balance, the flow is created, containing an immersive experience (Pang, 2021). Chen et al. (2018) found that network broadcasts can

be a regular instance of immersing media. Everybody can be an anchor in network broadcasts and upload self-produced real-time videos; viewers may enter their favorite anchor's room, which enables fiat, fair, and real-time communication between users and anchors and among users themselves. Contemporary youth are experiencing many pressures, with few channels to release their ever-built emotional energy; hence, watching live broadcasts is a way to avoid the real world.

H4: Immersion has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

2.5 Website trust

The factors of the subject are those that influence the whole process of consumers' network trust, while the object factors are those that directly influence consumers' initial trust. The interaction between the subject and object directly influences the continuous trust of consumers (Chen et al., 2008). According to Coleman (2018), in a social environment, an individual's trust in a website determines whether others will have trust or not. Jin et al. (2021) conducted a questionnaire survey on online shopping behaviors among college students and concluded that trust may be affected by the quality of network information. Sultan (2002) points out that customers tend to have higher trust if they perceive favorable product values or online services.

H5: Trust towards the website has a significant effect on purchase intention.

2.6 Search Intention

Hsieh and Chiang (2005) highlighted that with objective product descriptions, the characteristics and attributes of the searchable products could be derived before purchase, which consumers would entirely evaluate through comparisons by second-hand information. Citrin et al. (2003) identified that providing a product experience before buying or using is not feasible; the Internet is better suited for search-based products rather than experiential products. For example, Moon et al. (2008) found that consumers are more willing to purchase search-type personalized products than experiential ones when studying the consumers' purchase intention for online personalized products. Wan and Merwe pointed out that due to the online customization process of search-based products, consumers may feel a sense of control, which could lead to higher purchase intentions.

H6: Search intention has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

2.7 Subscribe Intention

Purchase intention is a part of behavioral intention, and subscription intention is a subcategory of the former because both deal with consumer behavioral intention. According to Fajar Ramadhan et al. (2021), the perceived value of services positively affects purchase intention. Therefore, to increase consumers' purchase intentions, service providers must first meet the needs of consumers regarding convenience and practicality, as well as trust in services, as suggested by Sookmano (2020). Both system interface quality and subscription service quality positively affect users' mental models. Users' mental models, in turn, influence purchase intention both directly and indirectly through mediating paths that include perceived usability and usefulness, as Baek and Kim (2022) observed.

H7: Subscribe intention has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

2.8 Purchase Intention

Willingness is a psychological state, but it is different from attitude. As Eagly and Chaiken (1984) stated, it captures conscious, planned individual motivation to perform the given behavior.

Ajzen and Driver (1992) explained that willingness is an important determinant before behavior, and it cannot exist without an important process to initiate consequent actions. Fishbein et al. (1975) described willingness with respect to purchase intention as subjective; therefore, this probability for purchase of some product or service is created by consumer attitude, evaluation, and other factors. Hence, it is one of the core predictors of customer behavior. Eroglu and Davis (2001) suggested that technical characteristics of shopping websites, website environment, shopping conditions, consumer perception, uncertainty, trust, and the factors of products and product type should be able to influence consumers' online purchase intentions.

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is built upon integrating four previous research frames. Firstly, by adopting the S-O-R framework, Zhong et al. (2022) filled the research lacuna by explaining and predicting how price discount, interactivity, and professionalism jointly influence college students' purchase intentions through live shopping. Building on this, Liao et al. have reviewed social interaction theory and traffic theory, viewing the role of anchor interaction attitude in affecting the audience's involvement,

hypersocial interaction, and purchase intent. In this study, they empirically test this by simulating an immersive and quasi-social live shopping experience for the audience through structural equation modeling. The third framework, from McLean et al. (2020), used social presence theory, elaborating on the perceived usefulness of real-time chat services in online travel shopping and their human attributes in influencing customer attitudes, beliefs, and subsequent behaviors. Finally, Ang and Anaza (2018) asserted that the CSR image positively affected product attitude but did not significantly affect purchase intentions. Below is the study's conceptual framework, as diagrammed in Figure 1.

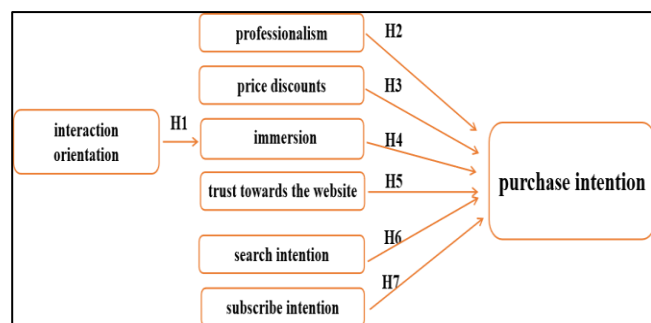


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

H1: Interaction orientation has a significant effect on immersion.

H2: Professionalism has a significant effect on purchase intention.

H3: Price discounts have a significant effect on purchase intention.

H4: Immersion has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

H5: Trust towards the website has a significant effect on purchase intention.

H6: Search intention has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

H7: Subscribe intention has a significant effect on purchase intentions.

3.2 Research Methodology

The quantitative methodology will be applied in this research, and primary data collection will be done through an online questionnaire. This questionnaire will have three parts: screening questions, measurement variables, and demographic details. All the statements will seek agreement/disagreement with the respondents based on a 5-point Likert scale. The Item Objective Consistency index was used to assess the validity of the questionnaire's content. At the same time, Cronbach's Alpha Test was adopted to assess the internal consistency reliability of the measuring instrument. Structured statistical techniques applied in this

study after data collection were SEM and CFA, employed for data analysis, validation of research hypotheses, and assessment of model fit. Additionally, it was important to test for normality in the data to be sure it was appropriate and reliable for analysis.

3.3 Population and Sample Size

The target population involves university students in Chengdu from the following: Sichuan University, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Southwest Jiaotong University, and Xihua University. The sample size for this research would be 500 people who desire to maximize diversity and have a good representation of the target population using multi-stage sampling techniques: purposive sampling techniques, stratified random sampling, and convenience sampling.

3.4 Sampling Technique

This research will be informed by a multi-stage sampling technique, drawing from purposive, stratified random, convenience, and quota sampling. Samples will first be drawn from four main universities in Chengdu to ensure representativeness across different disciplines and academic levels. Second, after the samples are picked, a web-based questionnaire will be sent out to students with experience in online shopping through social media and email for easy reach. Moreover, the subjects must share this link to the questionnaire with more people through social networks to increase the sample coverage. This comprehensive sampling approach will be applied to gather a representative sample of university students for an in-depth analysis of the immersion experience and purchasing intention on live-streaming platforms.

Table 1: Sample Units and Sample Size

Four Main University	Total number	Proportional Sample Size
Sichuan University	63000	187
Sichuan Conservatory of Music	16000	47
Southwest Jiaotong University	44697	132
Xihua University	45000	134
Total	168697	500

Source: Constructed by author

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Information

The target profile of 500 participants is detailed in Table 2. The gender distribution includes 43.00% males and 57.00% females. Age-wise, most participants fall within the 26-35 age range, making up 42.60% of the sample. This is followed by those aged 45 and above, who represent 28.6%, those aged 36-45 at 18.80%, and the 18-25 age group at 10%. Regarding educational background, 63.2% of respondents hold undergraduate degrees, while 33.4% have master's degrees. Participants with only juniors are less represented, at 3.4%.

Table 2: Demographic Profile

Demographic and General Data (N=500)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	215	43.00%
	Female	285	57.00%
Age	18-25 years old	52	10.4%
	26-35 years old	213	42.6%
	36-45 years old	92	18.4%
	Over 45 years old	143	28.6%
Education	Junior college	17	3.4%
	Undergraduate degree	316	63.2%
	Master's degree	167	33.4%

4.2 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Confirmatory Factor Analysis evaluated the measurement model that included the eight latent variables: Trust in the website, Interaction Orientation, Immersion, Professionalism, Search Intention, Purchase Intention, Price Discounts, and Subscribe Intention. Therefore, modifying the original model was unnecessary, given that the fit of the data was reasonable, as specified in Table 3. Therefore, the structure as proposed is well supported by the fit of the data to the model. This means that the CFA adequately sets relations between latent variables and confirms that the research findings are reliable in the theoretical constructs being studied.

As captured in Table 3, convergent validity refers to the consistency exhibited between different measuring tools under the same construct and various methods. Cronbach's Alpha values for internal consistency of items falling under each construct were acceptable to excellent ranges between 0.7 and 0.9. Factor loadings in Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) provide information regarding the extent of the relationship between observed variables within latent constructs. Highly loaded factors would portray convergent validity. Composite reliability considers factor loadings and error variances of indicators, where values above 0.7 are considered high reliability. Values of Average Variance Extracted above 0.5 manifest that construct variance is larger than the measurement error, hence advising convergent validity. All constructs exceed the value of 0.5, with AVE values for the constructs of Immersion and Purchase Intention equal to 0.709 and 0.775, respectively. These results confirm strong convergent validity for all constructs, providing a robust basis for structural equation modeling analysis and further elaborating the theoretical framework.

Table 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	Source of Questionnaire (Measurement Indicator)	No. of Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Factors Loading	CR	AVE
Trust towards the website (TR)	Jin et al. (2021)	4	0.907	0.824-0.916	0.923	0.751
Interaction Orientation (INTO)	Ankara et al. (2021)	5	0.925	0.778-0.877	0.918	0.691
Immersion (IMS)	Chen et al. (2018)	3	0.931	0.813-0.865	0.879	0.709
Professionalism (PRO)	Xu et al. (2021)	4	0.804	0.720-0.786	0.842	0.572
Search Intention (SI)	Moon et al. (2008)	3	0.867	0.699-0.715	0.747	0.496
Purchase Intention (PI)	Eagly and Chaiken (1984)	4	0.897	0.805-0.921	0.932	0.775
Price Discounts (PD)	Alavi et al. (2015)	4	0.831	0.656-0.765	0.818	0.531
Subscribe Intention (SUI)	Sookmano (2020)	3	0.919	0.720-0.807	0.799	0.570

Table 4 presents the reference values and sources from the literature for evaluating the goodness of fit. The table lists key fit indicators, including CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI, NFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA. Each of these CFA statistics exceeds the acceptable thresholds, validating the goodness of fit for the measurement model.

Table 4: Goodness of Fit for Measurement Model

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values
CMIN/DF	< 5.00 (Al-Mamary & Shamsuddin, 2015; Awang, 2012)	599.78/377 or 1.591
GFI	≥ 0.85 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007)	0.925
AGFI	≥ 0.80 (Sica & Ghisi, 2007)	0.907
NFI	≥ 0.80 (Wu & Wang, 2006)	0.939
CFI	≥ 0.80 (Bentler, 1990)	0.976
TLI	≥ 0.80 (Sharma et al., 2005)	0.972

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values
RMSEA	< 0.08 (Pedroso et al., 2016)	0.034
Model Summary		Acceptable Model Fit

Remark: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI = normalized fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker Lewis index, and RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

Fornell and Larcker (1981) described discriminant validity as the degree of dissimilarity among constructs. It can be validated by examining an AVE's square root concerning the correlation with other constructs. When the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than its correlation with all other constructs, this will confirm the strong discriminant validity. In Table 5, the diagonal AVE square roots are higher than the correlations of other constructs. It confirms, without any doubt, the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Table 5: Discriminant Validity

	TR	INT O	IMS	PRO	SI	PI	PD	SUI
TR	0.867							
INT O	0.407	0.831						
IMS	0.421	0.712	0.842					
PRO	0.339	0.307	0.321	0.756				
SI	0.298	0.293	0.328	0.405	0.704			
PI	0.460	0.363	0.465	0.505	0.535	0.880		
PD	0.275	0.179	0.188	0.251	0.230	0.345	0.729	
SUI	0.244	0.217	0.219	0.344	0.458	0.434	0.194	0.754

Note: The diagonally listed value is the AVE square roots of the variables

Source: Created by the author.

4.3 Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Structural Equation Modeling is the most preferred tool for examining model fit and confirming various scientific relationships among variables under study. Indeed, it is well suited for researching factors affecting university students' purchase intention and immersion in Chengdu, China. As summarized, the modified structural model, represented in Table 6, evaluates the direct and indirect relationships among latent variables and defines paths using arrows. As shown in Table 6, all the fit indices reached all levels of acceptability after adjustments, improving the structure to a better fit.

Table 6: Goodness of Fit for Structural Model

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
CMIN/DF	< 5.00 (Al-Mamary & Shamsuddin, 2015;	1131.531/398 or 2.843	970.934/393 or 2.471

Fit Index	Acceptable Criteria	Statistical Values Before Adjustment	Statistical Values After Adjustment
	Awang, 2012)		
GFI	≥ 0.85 (Sica & Ghis i, 2007)	0.845	0.865
AGFI	≥ 0.80 (Sica & Ghis i, 2007)	0.819	0.840
NFI	≥ 0.80 (Wu & Wang, 2006)	0.884	0.901
CFI	≥ 0.80 (Bentler, 199 0)	0.921	0.938
TLI	≥ 0.80 (Sharma et a l., 2005)	0.914	0.931
RMSEA	< 0.08 (Pedroso et a l., 2016)	0.061	0.054
Model Summary		Unacceptabl e Model Fit	Acceptabl e Model F it

Remark: CMIN/DF = The ratio of the chi-square value to degree of freedom, GFI = goodness-of-fit index, AGFI = adjusted goodness-of-fit index, NFI = normalized fit index, CFI = comparative fit index, TLI = Tucker Lewis index, and RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation

4.4 Research Hypothesis Testing Result

Regression and standardized path coefficients were used to verify the reasonableness of the hypothesis in the structural model and to determine the degree of correlation between the dependent and independent variables. As shown in Table 7

Table 7: Hypothesis Results of the Structural Equation Modeling

Hypothesis	(β)	t-value	Result
H1: INTO→IMS	0.789	0.788*	Supported
H2: PRO→PI	0.304	0.284*	Supported
H3: PD→PI	0.169	0.137*	Supported
H4: IMS→PI	0.234	0.196*	Supported
H5: TR→PI	0.227	0.204*	Supported
H6: SI→PI	0.362	0.316*	Supported
H7: SI→PI	0.212	0.208*	Supported

Note: * $p < 0.05$

Source: Created by the author

Table 7 shows the results of hypothesis testing, which confirm that all the hypotheses are statistically supported, thus proving that interaction orientation, professionalism, price discounts, immersion, trust towards the website, search intention, and subscribe intention all significantly positively influence customer purchase intention. For example, interaction orientation significantly impacted immersion, with $\beta = 0.789$ and $p < 0.05$, and professionalism significantly affected purchase intention, with $\beta = 0.304$ and $p < 0.05$. Of these, Search Intention has the greatest impact on Purchase Intention— $\beta = 0.362$, with $p < 0.05$ —and Price Discounts, although their influence is relatively small, are at

$\beta = 0.169$ and with $p < 0.05$. These data support how the studied factors comprehensively promote customer purchasing behavior on live streaming platforms through different paths and intensities.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion

This research deeply probed into the factors affecting the immersion and purchase intention of university students in Chengdu on live streaming platforms, relying on quantitative methods of Structural Equation Modeling and Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Several important conclusions have been drawn from this study.

First, user interaction and platform professionalism refer to the extent of user interaction with live-streaming platforms and the degree of professionalism in content. Therefore, they highlight the importance of designing interaction and quality content to enhance users' experiences.

Second, price discounts and establishment of trust: Price discounts offered and user trust established have a great deal of positive effect on users' purchase decisions. In the live shopping environment, allowing users to enjoy price incentives and mechanisms of trust will help increase the conversion rate.

Third, to serve the intentions and behaviors of users: Users' search and subscription intentions are two other important factors that drive purchase behavior. This shows that purchase decisions are formed by active participation from the user side and long-term subscription intentions, which may serve as strategic directions for e-commerce platforms in terms of improving user retention and promoting sales.

The findings also provide strategic insights into live-streaming e-commerce platforms, including optimizing user interaction design, enhancing the professionalism of content, formulating a reasonable pricing strategy, and establishing trust in the platform. All of these strategies will increase user retention and, hence, improve sales performance. Correspondingly, this study provides theoretical support to understand consumer behavior in the emerging live shopping environment and has directions leading to future research in e-commerce fields.

5.2 Recommendation

This research concludes with some recommendations, hinting that if these strategies are implemented, live-streaming platforms will enhance user satisfaction, increase user retention, and gain an advantage in the marketplace.

First and foremost, to improve user bilateral interaction, live streaming platforms should develop forward-looking interactive functions, such as real-time Q&A and polling. It can increase user participation, user stickiness, and purchase intentions.

Second is the improvement in content and pricing strategy: the professionalism and appeal of live-streaming content should be guaranteed while adopting proper pricing strategies without over-reliance on discounts, which will guarantee brand value and attract users to purchase.

Third, trust and subscription mechanisms: Establish transparent information and customer service to win users' trust; encourage users to subscribe to relevant, personalized content to retain them for further long-term interaction.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

Some limitations of this study are as follows. First, the sample selection is majorly within certain regions and groups, with limited representativeness. Second, there are methodological shortcomings, such as sample selection biases, which might modulate results that must be more representative of the study population. Further, the data collection process may go haywire due to issues like inadequate data volume, poor quality, or incomplete data, which, in turn, affect the accuracy of the conclusions. The theoretical framework the study is based on may only include some phenomena; experimental conditions are also quite difficult to control perfectly. Therefore, there is interference from extraneous variables. The measurement tools may be flawed, and time and resource constraints have also thus limited the scope and depth of research.

Such research may be further improved by extending samples, refining the research design and data quality, covering more basic theoretical frameworks, controlling experiments, bettering measuring devices, and considering certain cultural and social factors. I fully complied with the study's ethical norms, minimized subjective bias, and obtained comprehensive and reliable research results.

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