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Streaming into Selfhood: Parasocial Dynamics and Self-pleasing Congruence in Green Repurchase Intentions

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Abstract: In the live streaming shopping context, this study extends the Expectation Confirmation Theory model by proposing three constructs, including Customer Experience Quality, Parasocial Interaction and Self-Pleasing Experience. These constructs are identified as critical drivers of green products repurchase intention, with self-pleasing experience replacing satisfaction to emphasize pleasing value in green consumption. Survey data were collected from 588 respondents regarding their perceptions of green products usage, which were subsequently analyzed using Partial least square-structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) to investigate its impact on the repurchase intention of green products. The results indicate that customer experience quality and parasocial interaction are significant factors influencing customers' confirmation of expectations related to live streaming shopping. The findings also confirm that confirmation and perceived performance serve as important mediators in facilitating the generation of self-pleasing experience. Additionally, both perceived performance and self-pleasing experience exhibit a positive relationship with the repurchase intention of customers.

Keywords Live streaming shopping · Green consumption · Repurchase intention · Expectation confirmation theory · Self-pleasing experience · Parasocial interaction

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1. Introduction

The promotion of green consumption behaviors has garnered significant attention within interdisciplinary scholarship in recent years (He & Li, 2025). Studies have identified the integration of sustainable consumption into daily routines as a critical strategy for mitigating environmental degradation (White et al., 2019). Despite consumers frequently expressing strong intentions to adopt eco-friendly products, a pronounced divergence between their stated attitudes and actual behaviors remains (ElHaffar et al., 2020). This phenomenon is most notably underscored by the suboptimal rates of repeat purchases. For instance, such hesitation to repurchase is often attributed to perceived risks arising from information asymmetry and skepticism concerning “greenwashing” practices (Chen & Chang, 2012; Delmas & Burbano, 2011).

In this landscape, live streaming commerce has emerged as a transformative solution. By offering real-time interactivity (Sjöblom et al., 2019) and multi-perspective product demonstrations, live streaming mitigates perceived risks

and bridges the trust gap (B. Wang et al., 2022). More recently, the integration of Virtual Influencers (VIs) has further revolutionized this channel. Defined as algorithmically controlled digital avatars, VIs simulate social behaviors that evoke authentic cognitive responses (Gambino et al., 2020). Moreover, they offer a novel paradigm of stable co-presence that human streamers cannot match (Sands et al., 2022).

Despite the evolution of the industry, theoretical frameworks for understanding green repurchase in this virtual context remain underdeveloped. The dominant Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) traditionally relies on satisfaction as the primary predictor of continuance intention (Bhattacherjee, 2001). In this framework, satisfaction represents a cumulative evaluation of functional utility. However, this study argues that satisfaction is insufficient to capture the depth of green consumption. Unlike utilitarian purchases, the repurchase of green products is fundamentally driven by the need for self-verification. This process is rooted in emotional utility rather than mere functional fulfillment (Hartmann & Apaolaza-Ibáñez, 2012). Consequently, relying solely on traditional satisfaction fails to explain why consumers persist in green behaviors, particularly when functional benefits are not immediate. To address this limitation, this study proposes Self-Pleasing Experience (SPE) as a superior alternative to satisfaction within the ECT model. By capturing the dimensions of spiritual gratification (Sheth et al., 2010) and long-term value realization (Venhoeven et al., 2013), SPE offers a more precise explanatory mechanism for sustainable behavior.

Furthermore, the drivers of this experience in a virtual environment remain underexplored. Existing literature often treats the impact of live streaming as a monolith. It tends to focus on broad outcomes rather than specific mechanisms (Luo

et al., 2023). While recent studies have begun to distinguish the psychological pathways triggered by the streamer as a persona from those triggered by the content as an experience (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020), their specific interplay in generating holistic experiences like SPE remains unexamined within the virtual influencer context. To address this limitation, this study posits that the formation of SPE is driven by a dual mechanism. This mechanism comprises Parasocial Interaction with the virtual influencer (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020) and the Customer Experience Quality of the information provided (Lemke et al., 2010).

Accordingly, this study aims to reconstruct the ECT model for the virtual green economy. By integrating Customer Experience Quality and Parasocial Interaction as core antecedents and substituting satisfaction with SPE, this study proposes three crucial research questions:

RQ1: How does Customer Experience Quality and Parasocial Interaction influence Expectation Confirmation in virtual live streaming?

RQ2: Does Self-Pleasing Experience serve as a more effective predictor of Green Repurchase Intention than traditional Perceived Performance?

RQ3: What are the mediating mechanisms through which Customer Experience Quality and Parasocial Interaction foster sustained green consumption?

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Green Value Formation and Self-pleasing Experience

Despite a widespread stated willingness to engage in environmentally friendly consumption, a significant attitude-behavior gap persists, primarily manifested in suboptimal repurchase rates (ElHaffar et al., 2020). Prior research has predominantly examined this discrepancy through a utilitarian lens, attributing discontinuous

consumption to external barriers such as price premiums and information asymmetry (Rosner et al., 2021). To bridge this gap, recent scholarship has shifted focus toward Green Value Formation—a psychological mechanism wherein consumers derive intrinsic worth from sustainable actions rather than solely from external outcomes (Liu et al., 2025; Ng et al., 2023). Grounded in the Theory of Impure Altruism, this perspective posits that consumer motivation stems predominantly from the "warm-glow" effect—the private emotional utility derived from the act of giving—rather than from public environmental benefits (Andreoni, 1990). In this vein, the value of a green product is constituted not merely by its physical attributes but significantly by its capacity to generate moral satisfaction and enhance the consumer's self-concept.

Consequently, the drivers of green repurchase behavior appear to be shifting from external validation toward internal reinforcement. While social media narratives may facilitate the construction of these values. However, Oliver' s (1999) loyalty framework suggests a more profound requirement. To achieve resilient action loyalty, consumers must go beyond mere cognitive evaluations based on cost or utility. Instead, they must develop affective loyalty. Consistent with this view, empirical research shows that positive effect is a key predictor of the willingness to make financial sacrifices or pay a price premium (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). This highlights the necessity of moving beyond cognitive trust (Xu et al., 2022) to explore how consumers obtain hedonic gratification throughout the consumption process.

Building on this logic, this study adapts Expectation Confirmation Theory model by replacing the traditional "Satisfaction" construct with Self-Pleasing Experience (SPE). While satisfaction typically represents a cognitive evaluation of functional confirmation (Oh et al., 2022), SPE is defined in this study as a therapeutic

and experiential process. Drawing on the experiential view of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), SPE is characterized by the emotional responses and symbolic meanings arising from the consumption activity itself. It serves as a strategic mechanism for self-reward rooted in emotional regulation (Atalay & Meloy, 2011). Although "retail therapy" is often misunderstood as a loss of self-control, empirical evidence suggests it is a strategic effort to regulate mood that can coexist with restraint. In the context of green consumption, this self-reward is uniquely distinguished by the "warm glow" derived from pro-social behavior.

Accordingly, SPE represents a form of "virtuous hedonism." The pursuit of pleasure in SPE is not irrational but represents a rational, higher-order approach to self-actualization (Balleyer & Fennis, 2022). To illustrate the rational nature of SPE, this study proposes a dual-attribute analytical model:

Long-term Orientation: Unlike myopic indulgence, SPE represents a future-oriented perspective that emphasizes goal planning and intertemporal decision-making. Consumers often exercise restraint to regulate their mood. Similarly, SPE involves heightened self-control to avoid unnecessary consumption. Moreover, it integrates a sustainability consciousness that prioritizes the well-being of future generations (Haws et al., 2013; Joireman et al., 2004). In this context, immediate gratification functions as a reinforcement mechanism for long-term behavior.

Spiritual Orientation: SPE extends beyond material satisfaction to a state of mindfulness, characterized by an awareness of responsibility for behavioral consequences (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019). This distinguishes SPE from mere sensory stimulation, positioning it as a valid and adaptive basis for decision-making.

2.2 Technological Trust and Customer Experience Quality

Virtual Influencers (VIs) have emerged as effective agents of digital persuasion, with their influence grounded in the Computers as Social Actors (CASA) paradigm (Nass et al., 1994). In the low-cognitive-load context of live streaming, individuals unconsciously apply social rules to non-human agents. This cognitive shortcut allows VIs to establish high levels of anthropomorphism and social presence, effectively overcoming skepticism toward their artificial nature. To promote Expectation Confirmation within this environment, Customer Experience Quality (CEQ) and Parasocial Interaction (PI) serve as critical antecedents.

Grounded in Service-Dominant Logic, CEQ represents the consumer’ s overall assessment of the service encounter, specifically comprising peace of mind, outcome focus, and interactional ease (Kuppelwieser & Klaus, 2021). In green live streaming, where information asymmetry is high, high CEQ indicates a distraction-free and immersive environment. This provides tangible performance evidence, functioning as a rational anchor that allows consumers to verify whether the live stream's actual performance aligns with their expectations (Sjöblom et al., 2019).

Simultaneously, regarding trust mechanisms, VIs establish a unique form of Technological Trust. Drawing on Source Credibility Theory, VIs build trustworthiness not through human empathy but through algorithmic consistency—offering a stable and reliable performance that human streamers cannot guarantee (Sands et al., 2022). This stability is particularly critical for products with abstract green attributes. Furthermore, consistent with Social Penetration Theory, repeated interactions allow users to gradually reduce psychological distance (Altman & Taylor, 1973). When consumers perceive shared values with the VI, this combination of algorithmic stability and emotional intimacy serves as a heuristic cue, confirming expectations of a trustworthy interaction (Yuan & Lou, 2020). Based on the above, this study

proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Customer Experience Quality positively affects Expectation Confirmation.

H2: Parasocial Interaction positively affects Expectation Confirmation.

2.3 Cognitive Verification and Affective Elevation

In the proposed Virtuous-Hedonic ECT Model, Expectation Confirmation (CON) acts not as an endpoint but as a catalyst for a dual-pathway mechanism grounded in Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Lazarus, 1991).

The first pathway is rational. Given the prevalence of skepticism regarding "greenwashing" in green consumption, confirmation serves a critical verification function. When consumers confirm that the VIs' claims are authentic and product attributes match expectations, this psychological validation significantly enhances their subjective assessment of the product's functional utility and efficacy (Bhattacherjee, 2001).

The second pathway is affective. Specifically, confirmation validates the consumer's ethical decision-making, thereby triggering the "warm glow" effect (Andreoni, 1990). According to the Affect-as-Information framework, consumers often use their momentary feelings as a proxy for product evaluation. In the context of VI live streaming, the immersive experience facilitates a state of Flow. This distinct mental state is characterized by a loss of self-consciousness, which reduces the cognitive effort required for decision-making. Consequently, consumers unconsciously misattribute the pleasure of the viewing experience (Flow) and the moral satisfaction (Warm glow) to the product itself via an affect transfer mechanism (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987). This process transforms the confirmation of expectations

into an elevated Self-Pleasing Experience. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H3: Expectation Confirmation positively affects Perceived Performance.

H4: Expectation Confirmation positively affects Self-Pleasing Experience.

2.4 Determinants of Repurchase Intention: Rational and Affective Loyalty

To fully understand the drivers of repurchase intention, it is essential to clarify the link between PP and SPE. Consumers often fear the "green liability"—a perceived trade-off between sustainability and quality. In this context, high PP acts as a security baseline (Shukla, 2019). Consumers shift their focus to the higher-order emotional reward of ethical behavior only when basic functional needs are met without compromise. Thus, high perceived performance allows the consumption experience to go beyond utilitarian fulfillment, transforming a rational purchase into an emotionally rewarding SPE.

Consequently, PP and SPE drive repurchase intention through rational and affective pathways, respectively. On the rational pathway, green consumers are fundamentally pragmatic; environmental benefits cannot compensate for functional failure. High PP provides the necessary utilitarian justification for continuing the relationship (Cronin et al., 2000), indicating that repurchase intention is partially driven by the direct confirmation of product efficacy.

However, to achieve the "resilient action loyalty" proposed by Oliver (1999), SPE serves as the dominant driver. Drawing on the Broaden-and-Build Theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive eudaimonic emotions like SPE function to broaden consumers' scope of attention and action, thereby building enduring personal resources—specifically, Affective Loyalty. In green consumption, repurchasing

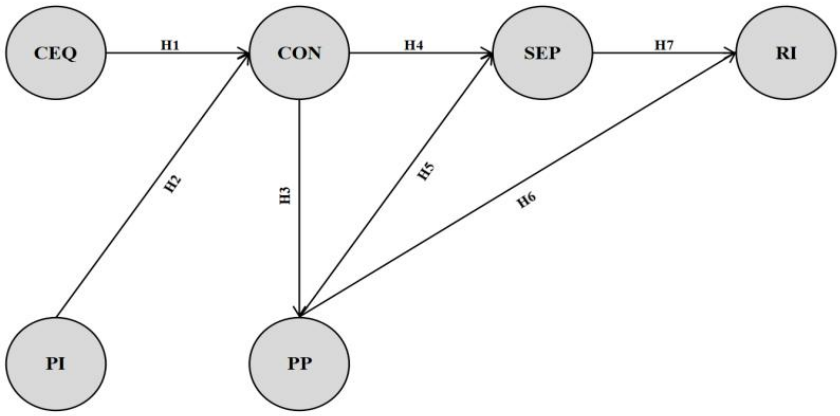
extends beyond mere transactional necessity. Instead, it functions as a mechanism to sustain this state of psychological elevation and moral consistency (Suhartanto et al., 2021). Consumers characterized by the spiritual and long-term orientation of SPE are thus driven to repeat purchases to maintain their self-actualization. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H5: Perceived Performance positively affects Self-Pleasing Experience.

H6: Perceived Performance positively affects Repurchase Intention.

H7: Self-Pleasing Experience positively affects Repurchase Intention.

Based on the above analysis, the research framework is shown in Figure **1**.



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Figure 1 The Proposed Research Model

3.Methodology

3.1 Data collection and Demographic Profile

Data were collected via Sojump (https://www.wjx.cn). This online platform functions similarly to Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) for data collection purposes. All methods were carried out in accordance with relevant guidelines and regulations. The study protocol received institutional ethics exemption approval from Zhejiang

University of Finance and Economics (reference no. ZUFE-SO-2026-004). Informed consent was obtained from all participants before they completed the online questionnaire. Following the exclusion of invalid responses, such as incomplete or inconsistent questionnaires, 588 valid responses were retained.

As summarized in Table 1, the sample primarily consists of young, educated adults. Specifically, 55.4% hold a bachelor's degree, and 34.7% fall within the 25–34 age range. Regarding income, 72.7% of respondents earn below 6,000 CNY monthly. This distribution indicates a lower-to-middle income demographic. In terms of environmental identity, 21.8% of participants identified as environmentalists. The majority classified themselves as neutral (65.6%) or non-environmentalists (12.6%). This profile represents general consumers with moderate purchasing power and variable environmental awareness. Consequently, the sample is suitable for examining the drivers of green product repurchase among the general public.

3.2 Measurement Instruments and Questionnaire Development

This study proposes seven hypotheses and employs a questionnaire survey to collect precise empirical data. A five-point Likert scale is used, ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree). The questionnaire items for constructs like CEQ ("Phil" Klaus & Maklan, 2012; Deshwal, 2016), PI (Davlembayeva et al., 2024), CON (Hsu & Lin, 2015), PP (Chen & Chang, 2012; Pahlevi & Suhartanto, 2020), SPE (Mansoor & Paul, 2022) and RI (Suhartanto et al., 2021; Xu et al., 2022) are based on relevant studies (See Appendix A). Specifically, 12, 4, 3, 9, and 4 items are designed for CEQ, PI, CON, PP, and SPE respectively, along with 3 items for RI.

3.3 Data Analysis

This study employed SmartPLS 4 software for the statistical analysis of empirical data. This methodology offers distinct advantages for exploratory theory validation. The partial least squares (PLS) approach effectively addresses multicollinearity among independent variables (Henseler et al., 2009). Additionally, it maintains analytical robustness even with limited sample sizes. Furthermore, PLS requires no stringent normality assumptions (Fornell & Bookstein, 1982).

To assess validity, this research evaluated the quality of the measurement model using a multidimensional indicator system. First, convergent validity was established through statistically significant standardized factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE). Second, discriminant validity was examined using the AVE square root criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio threshold. Finally, bootstrapping procedures with 5,000 subsamples were utilized for parameter estimation in the structural model. This process verified the statistical significance of path relationships between latent variables.

Table 1 Sample Demographic Profile (N=588)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	274	46.6%
	Female	314	53.4%
Age	0-18 years	8	1.4%
	19-24 years	94	16%
	25-34 years	204	34.7%
	35-44 years	158	26.9%
	45-54 years	122	20.7%
	65 years old	2	0.3%
Occupation	Full-time	518	88.1%
	Student	60	10.2%
	Homemaker	6	1.0%
	Self-employed individuals	4	0.7%
Education	Primary school	2	0.3%
	Junior high	70	11.9%
	Senior high	64	10.9%

	Bachelor’ s degree	326	55.4%
	Master’s degree	6	1.0%
	Doctoral or above	12	2.0%
Marital Status	Singles	268	45.6%
	Married individuals	320	54.4%
Household Size	1	10	1.7%
	2-3	220	37.4%
	4-5	300	51.0%
	5 or above	58	9.8%
Personal Monthly Income (CNY)	<2000	122	20.7%
	2000-3000	142	24.1%
	3000-4500	102	10.9%
	4500-6000	180	30.6%
	6000-8000	10	1.7%
	8000-10000	14	2.4%
	10000-20000	8	1.3%
	20000-50000	2	0.3%
	>50000	8	1.3%
Environmental Engagement	Environmentalists	128	21.8%
	Non-environmentalists	74	12.6%
	Neutrals	386	65.6%
Environmentalist Social Ties	Having environmentalist ties	140	23.8%
	Non-environmentalist ties	448	76.2%

Source(s): Authors’ own creation

4.Results

4.1 Measurement Model: Reliability and Validity Assessment

Prior to hypothesis testing, Common Method Bias (CMB) was assessed to mitigate potential measurement errors. Initially, Harman’s single-factor test was conducted using SPSS (Version 26). As indicated in Table **2**, the first factor accounted for 49.085% of the total variance. This value falls below the recommended 50% threshold (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Given the known limitations of Harman’s test, a full collinearity assessment was subsequently performed at the latent variable level (Kock, 2015). As presented in Table **3**, the Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) derived from the inner structural model in

SmartPLS were all below 3.3. These results indicate that common method bias does not pose a significant threat to the validity of this study.

Table 2 Common Method Bias Test (Harman's single-factor)

Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
20.423	49.085	49.085

Source(s): Authors' own creation

Table 3 Common Method Bias Test (variance inflation factors)

Structural Path	VIF
CEQ→CON	1.868
PI→CON	1.868
CON→PP	1.000
CON→SPE	2.140
PP→SPE	2.140
PP→RI	2.151
SPE→RI	1.000

Source(s): Authors' own creation

The convergent validity of the measurement model was evaluated through three key criteria. First, factor loadings should exceed 0.5 (Chan et al., 2018). Second, Composite Reliability (CR) should be above 0.6 (Chin, 1998). Third, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must surpass 0.5 (Yang & Su, 2017). Additionally, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to measure internal consistency, with a recommended threshold above 0.6 (Yang & Su, 2017). As presented in Table **4**, all

factor loadings exceed 0.6. Similarly, all AVE values surpass 0.6, and all CR values are above 0.8. These results demonstrate that the measurement model possesses adequate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity was assessed using two distinct methods. First, the criterion established by Fornell and Larcker (1981) was applied. This rule requires that the square root of the AVE must be greater than the correlation coefficients between the latent constructs. As shown in Table **5**, the square roots of all AVE values exceed the inter-construct correlations.

However, recent literature suggests that the Fornell and Larcker criteria may exhibit sensitivity limitations (Henseler et al., 2014). To address this, the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio was employed as a secondary metric. For this criterion, values should be less than 1 to establish validity (K. Wang et al., 2022). As indicated in Table **6**, the model meets this requirement. The highest HTMT value is 0.943, and all remaining values are below 0.9. Collectively, these results confirm that the constructs in this study exhibit satisfactory reliability and validity.

Table 4 Factor Loading, Cronbach's Alpha, CR, AVE of Constructs

Construct	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
CEQ	CEQ 1	0.794	0.958	0.963	0.690
	CEQ 2	0.737			
	CEQ 3	0.727			
	CEQ 4	0.608			
	CEQ 5	0.826			
	CEQ 6	0.886			
	CEQ 7	0.893			
	CEQ 8	0.857			

	CEQ 9	0.902			
	CEQ 10	0.905			
	CEQ 11	0.899			
	CEQ 12	0.876			
PI	PI 1	0.882	0.930	0.934	0.826
	PI 2	0.927			
	PI 3	0.910			
	PI 4	0.916			
CON	CON 1	0.947	0.934	0.934	0.883
	CON 2	0.951			
	CON 3	0.921			
PP	PP 1	0.855	0.952	0.952	0.722
	PP 2	0.826			
	PP 3	0.833			
	PP 4	0.874			
	PP 5	0.880			
	PP 6	0.885			
	PP 7	0.849			
	PP 8	0.852			
	PP 9	0.792			
SPE	SPE 1	0.886	0.952	0.955	0.875
	SPE 2	0.953			
	SPE 3	0.953			
	SPE 4	0.948			
RI	RI 1	0.876	0.858	0.858	0.779
	RI 2	0.852			

RI 3	0.918

Source(s): Authors' own creation

Table 5 Simple Correlation Matrix and Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Lacker Criterion)

Construct	SEP	CEQ	CON	PI	PP	RI
SEP	**0.935**					
CEQ	0.744	**0.831**				
CON	0.722	0.748	**0.940**			
PI	0.690	0.682	0.681	**0.909**		
PP	0.732	0.705	0.730	0.595	**0.850**	
RI	0.748	0.708	0.845	0.718	0.721	**0.883**

Source(s): Authors' own creation

Table 6 Simple Correlation Matrix and Discriminant Validity (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio)

Construct	SEP	CEQ	CON	PI	PP	RI
SEP						
CEQ	0.773					
CON	0.764	0.784				
PI	0.727	0.718	0.727			
PP	0.767	0.730	0.773	0.629		

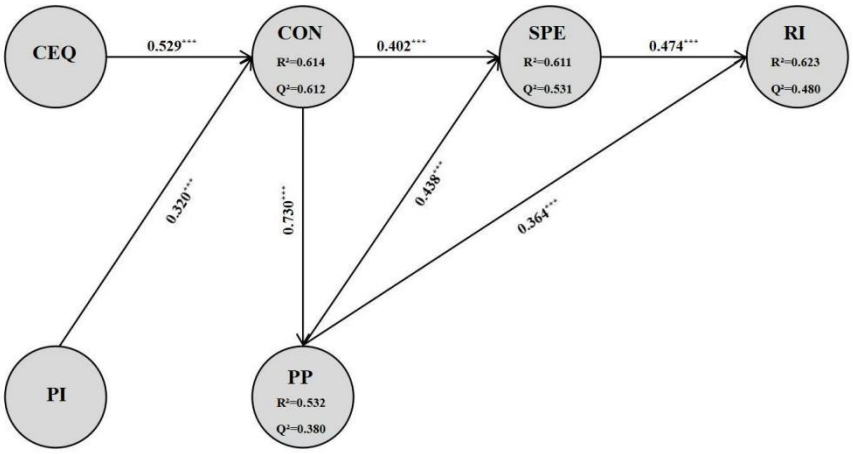
RI	0.827	0.780	0.943	0.802	0.797

Source(s): Authors' own creation

4.2 Structural Model

The predictive capability of the structural model was evaluated based on the criteria outlined by (Tenenhaus et al., 2005). Specifically, this assessment utilized the coefficient of determination R^2 for each construct and the Stone-Geisser predictive relevance test Q^2.

First, regarding the coefficient of determination, the R^2 value should exceed the minimum threshold of 0.1 (Falk & Miller, 1992). Second, for the Stone-Geisser test, the Q^2 value assesses the model's predictive relevance. According to (Hair et al., 2011), thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large predictive effects, respectively.



Source(s): Authors' own creation

Figure 2 Structural model PLS results. Superscript three asterisks (***) denote significant paths at $p < 0.01$.

As illustrated in Figure **2**, the structural model exhibits satisfactory predictive

metrics. The R^2 values for the endogenous constructs are 0.614, 0.532, 0.611, and 0.623, respectively. Furthermore, the Q^2 values are recorded as 0.612, 0.380, 0.531, and 0.480. Collectively, these results indicate that the proposed structural model possesses substantial explanatory power and predictive relevance. In addition, Figure **2** details the results of the hypothesis tests obtained via the bootstrapping procedure.

4.3 Validation of Research Hypotheses

Table **7** presents the results of the hypothesis testing. The analysis confirms that all seven research hypotheses are supported.

Regarding the antecedents of confirmation, CEQ significantly influences CON (β=0.529, p=0.000***). Similarly, PI shows a positive effect on CON (β=0.320, p=0.000***).

In terms of downstream effects, CON exerts a strong influence on PP) (β=0.730, p=0.000***) and SPE (β=0.402, p=0.000***). Furthermore, PP demonstrates significant predictive power for both SPE (β=0.438, p=0.000***) and RI (β=0.374, p=0.000***).

Finally, the pathway from SPE to RI is significant (β=0.474, p=0.000***). Collectively, these results validate the proposed structural relationships within the model.

Table 7 The T-value of Research Hypotheses and Path Coefficients

No.	Research hypotheses	Path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Validated result
H1	CEQ→CON	0.529	13.631	0.000***	Supported
H2	PI→CON	0.320	7.966	0.000***	Supported
H3	CON→PP	0.730	30.196	0.000***	Supported

H4	CON→SPE	0.402	7.661	0.000***	Supported
H5	PP→SPE	0.438	8.823	0.000***	Supported
H6	PP→RI	0.374	8.333	0.000***	Supported
H7	SPE→RI	0.474	10.301	0.000***	Supported

*p < 0.1; **p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Source(s): Authors' own creation

4.4 Mediating Effects

Following the assessment of direct relationships, this study investigated the mediation mechanisms among CEQ, PI, CON, PP, SPE, and RI. This investigation adhered to the analytical procedures established by Malik et al. (2021) and Wong et al. (2021). Table **8** presents the results of the mediation analysis.

The analysis identified three primary mediation pathways. First, CON functions as an intermediary linking CEQ and PI to PP and SPE. Second, SPE mediates the relationship between CON or PP and RI. Third, PP serves as a sequential mediator connecting CON with both RI and SPE. Results demonstrated statistically significant positive indirect effects across all pathways:

CEQ→CON→PP (β=0.386, p=0.000***), PI→CON→PP (β=0.233, p=0.000***),

CEQ→CON→SPE (β=0.213, p=0.000***), PI→CON→SPE (β=0.129, p=0.000***),

CON→PP→SPE (β=0.320, p=0.000***), and CON→PP→RI (β=0.273, p=0.000***).

Moreover, the SPE-mediated paths from CON→SPE→RI (β=0.190, p=0.000***) and PP→SPE→RI (β=0.208, p=0.000***) revealed novel cascading

mechanisms underlying green products repurchase behaviors.

Table 8 Results of Mediation Test

Independent Variables	Mediator	Dependent Variable	Path Coefficients	P-value	Result
CEQ	CON	PP	0.386	0.000***	Significant
PI	CON	PP	0.233	0.000***	Significant
CEQ	CON	SPE	0.213	0.000***	Significant
PI	CON	SPE	0.129	0.000***	Significant
CON	PP	SPE	0.320	0.000***	Significant
CON	PP	RI	0.273	0.000***	Significant
CON	SPE	RI	0.190	0.000***	Significant
PP	SPE	RI	0.208	0.000***	Significant

**p < 0.05; ***p < 0.01

Source(s): Authors' own creation

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study is to identify the critical antecedents of green product repurchase intention, specifically examining the roles of CEQ and PI within live-streaming commerce. Additionally, this study extends the Expectation Confirmation Theory model by introducing SPE as a theoretical replacement for satisfaction, thereby aligning the framework with the dynamics of pleasure-driven consumption.

First, regarding the antecedents of confirmation, the empirical results demonstrate that CEQ (β = 0.529) exerts a dominant influence on confirmation, significantly outweighing the impact of PI (β = 0.320). This finding offers a nuanced

perspective on the virtual influencer phenomenon in the specific context of sustainable consumption. While existing literature suggests that live streamers mitigate information asymmetry through immersive demonstrations (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020) and emphasizes the functional utility of virtual agents (Belanche et al., 2024), the empirical results reveal that consumers in the green domain remain fundamentally cautiously pragmatic.

Importantly, this divergence does not diminish the utility of virtual streamers but rather delineates their distinct strategic roles. Specifically, the novelty and anthropomorphic capability of AI-driven avatars serve as the essential relational entry point for engagement (Joel-Edgar et al., 2025). However, the transparency of the interaction serves as the cognitive anchor to mitigate consumer skepticism and foster trust. Specifically, this transparency is characterized by accurate product specifications and clear value propositions. Given the heightened scrutiny regarding greenwashing, consumers require the veracity of high-quality information to validate the authenticity of the virtual streamer (Daou et al., 2025). Consequently, while virtual influencers initiate the interaction, the confirmation of green expectations is ultimately substantiated by rational evaluation.

Despite the dominance of CEQ, PI remains a significant predictor, validating the role of virtual influencers as effective trust agents (Liu & Wang, 2025). Human streamers may exhibit behavioral inconsistencies. In contrast, virtual influencers are conceptualized as algorithmically controlled entities. As such, they offer a unique form of stable co-presence (Sands et al., 2022). The results support a trust transfer mechanism, wherein the emotional connection and reliability perception established with the virtual host are successfully transferred to the endorsed green products. By integrating empathetic communication with environmental expertise, virtual

influencers bridge the gap between abstract sustainability concepts and concrete purchasing decisions. This implies that while CEQ provides the functional evidence for confirmation, PI establishes the relational context that renders the evidence credible.

A pivotal contribution of this study is the validation of SPE as a superior predictor of green repurchase intentions compared to PP. This fundamentally distinguishes the proposed model from traditional ECT frameworks. The superior predictive power of SPE stems from its unique dual-attribute nature: Long-term Orientation and Spiritual Orientation.

Typically, PP drives traditional satisfaction through a retrospective evaluation of utility. In contrast, SPE reflects a forward-looking spiritual orientation aligned with responsibility and future well-being (Husemann & Eckhardt, 2019). The results (path coefficient H7 > H6) show that green repurchase is driven more strongly by SPE. This suggests that green consumption is motivated not merely by functional utility (as represented by PP) but by the “higher-order pleasure” derived from rational practice and self-actualization. When repurchasing green products, consumers engage in a self-pleasing act of moral identity construction. This confirms that SPE captures the eudaimonic well-being central to sustainable behavior, which utility-based constructs fail to fully capture.

Furthermore, the mediation analysis uncovers a sequential psychological hierarchy that integrates antecedents with outcomes. Specifically, the causal path progresses from CEQ and PI to Confirmation, subsequently influencing PP and SPE, and ultimately culminating in RI. The results confirm that CEQ and PI do not merely influence confirmation but extend their impact to downstream evaluations. By fostering a strong state of confirmation, high-quality experiences and parasocial

interactions indirectly enhance consumers' performance assessment (PP) and spiritual gratification (SPE). This establishes Confirmation as the pivotal mechanism that transmits the influence of digital stimuli (CEQ/PI) into internal psychological states.

Within this hierarchy, the specific pathway progressing from Confirmation through Perceived Performance to SPE offers a profound theoretical explanation for the relationship between functionality and emotion. It suggests that SPE transcends mere functional validation to become an autonomous experiential state. The finding that PP significantly drives SPE extends the argument regarding expectation-induced pleasure (Currie & Gagnon, 2000). However, this presents a nuanced deviation. Specifically, in the green consumption context, functional performance serves as the security baseline. Once consumers verify that the green product is functionally adequate, their cognitive focus shifts away from utilitarian scrutiny. Consequently, this release allows them to fully immerse themselves in the pleasure of the consumption process. This experience ultimately evolves into the enjoyment of moral agency and self-identity. In essence, SPE constitutes the spiritual premium of the consumption experience. Consequently, the dual pathway elucidates a critical dynamic. While functional performance serves to mitigate dissatisfaction, the spiritual gratification of the process plays a pivotal role. It fosters the consumer's emotional commitment and ultimately drives retention.

6. **Conclusions**

This study empirically elucidates the cognitive and affective mechanisms driving the Repurchase Intention (RI) of green products, specifically within the emerging context of virtual influencer-led live streaming. The findings reveal that while Parasocial Interaction (PI) serves as a crucial relational entry point, Customer

Experience Quality (CEQ) acts as the dominant cognitive anchor. Notably, CEQ significantly outweighs PI in driving Expectation Confirmation.

Theoretically, this research advances the Expectation Confirmation Theory model by validating Self-Pleasing Experience (SPE) as a superior theoretical replacement for traditional satisfaction. By integrating Long-term Orientation and Spiritual Aspirations, SPE successfully captures the eudaimonic nature of sustainable consumption. Consequently, the results indicate that green repurchase is not merely a repetition of functional utility; instead, it represents a sublimation of functional reliability into moral identity construction.

Furthermore, the identified mediation pathways provide a comprehensive explanation for the retention of green consumers, specifically highlighting the rational-affective dual trajectory. The results imply that functional performance serves as the security baseline, a foundation that allows consumers to pursue the spiritual premium of ethical consumption. For practitioners, this underscores a strategic imperative: they should leverage virtual influencers for distinctiveness while simultaneously prioritizing transparent, high-quality information to satisfy the pragmatic scrutiny of green consumers. Ultimately, this study positions virtual live streaming beyond a mere promotional channel, defining it as a transformative platform where digital interaction and ethical value co-create sustainable consumer commitment.

7. Implications

7.1 Theoretical Implications

This study advances the literature on digital sustainable consumption in three distinct ways.

First, it reconstructs Expectation Confirmation Theory (ECT) for the green

economy. By identifying Self-Pleasing Experience (SPE) as a superior predictor of repurchase intention compared to Perceived Performance, this study challenges the traditional reliance on functional satisfaction. It establishes a new eudaimonic theoretical lens, demonstrating that green retention is driven primarily by spiritual gratification and moral identity rather than mere functional outcomes.

Second, it clarifies the distinct roles of technology and experience in virtual live streaming. Contrary to the view that virtual influencers are the sole persuasion agents, our findings reveal a Rational-Affective dual mechanism. Specifically, Parasocial Interaction (PI) acts as the relational entry point to attract traffic, while Customer Experience Quality (CEQ) serves as the cognitive anchor to solidify trust. This highlights the necessity of combining emotional engagement with rational evidence in high-involvement green consumption.

Third, it enriches the understanding of trust transfer dynamics. By confirming the pathway from algorithmic consistency to trust, this study extends Parasocial Interaction Theory to non-human agents. It validates that stable co-presence is a critical antecedent for mitigating skepticism in the context of greenwashing.

7.2 Managerial Implications

First, marketers should adopt a Tech-Enabled Transparency strategy. Brands must leverage the visual capabilities of virtual streamers to display real-time environmental data (e.g., supply chain traces) via overlays. This transforms abstract claims into visible evidence, thereby securing rational trust through superior experience quality.

Second, narratives must shift toward Eudaimonic Rewards to evoke Self-Pleasing Experience. To validate consumers' moral identity, brands can

implement gamified features such as Green Badges or live Eco-Contribution Rankings. These tangible markers trigger the higher-order pleasure necessary for long-term loyalty.

Third, platforms should leverage Algorithmic Consistency to mitigate skepticism. By equipping VIs with a standardized Green Knowledge Base, brands ensure professional, consistent responses round-the-clock. This reliability acts as a trust anchor, eliminating the behavioral inconsistencies often found in human streamers.

Finally, industry associations should position virtual influencers as Sustainability Ambassadors. Virtual IPs can normalize low-carbon lifestyles through soft persuasion. Furthermore, adopting voluntary digital disclosure standards (e.g., visual Eco-Labels) can foster an ethically driven marketplace where technology serves public welfare.

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