



## Exploring the Behavioural Intentions of Facebook users in Live Auction on the Basis of Dramaturgy Theory

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This study aims to investigate the influencing factors of consumer-participation in live auctions, by using the “theater perception”, “live video experiencing” and “behavioural intentions” of Dramaturgy Theory as the main structure of this study. Representative fan pages and consumers of Facebook live auctions were selected using Purposive Sampling Method as the research objects, a total amount of 296 valid questionnaires were collected. Data obtained was verified by descriptive statistics, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). The results are as follows, 1. The theater perception of the consumer’s in Facebook live auction positively affects the live video experiencing; 2. The follow-up behaviour intentions of live auction consumers will positively be affected by the live video experiencing acquired. Based on the research results, practical strategies and recommendations were proposed.

**Keywords:** *Dramaturgical Theory, Live Auction, Behavioural Intention.*

### Introduction

With the rapid development of online media, mobile phones have gradually replaced televisions and become the main screens in people's lives, and online videos have become an important part of the daily usage of the internet. The Epoch Times (2016, July 19) shows that the number of Facebook users has surpassed the search engines, Facebook active users have reached 1.65 billion globally and become a new hometown for people on the internet. Today, mobile phones are already part of our lives, we can use our mobile phones to search for information or to communicate with others at anytime, anywhere. Through Facebook, people are free to post their life-related information on the Internet and get to know the number of



reverberations. (Hu & Tsang, 2015). McQuail (2000) think that Facebook has created a self-media era, the former readers have now turned into publishers and send instant messages to the world via the internet by using a Facebook account through mobile devices.

Owing to the uptake of this media trend, social media has become a large-scale stage. Through the social platform, everyone is a performer and that presents a diversified role in life and exposes a normal life to others (Ricchio, 2013). Goffman (1959) said that, if we imagine ourselves as directors observing what goes on in the theatre of daily life; we are doing dramaturgical analysis, the study of social interaction in terms of theatrical performance. In dramaturgical sociology, the elements of human interactions are dependent upon time, place and audience; the form of delivery presented by the mass media injects more dramatic elements (Smith, Downs, & Witte, 2007; Çetinkaya, et al, 2018). Since the live broadcast moved the stage to the network, it thus created Internet Celebrities and a live auction platform. Today's, live auctions are often used for marketing purposes and provide sales services. The users can interact with the live broadcasters during the live broadcasts, and the whole process is like a performance, the situation is the same as detailed in the concept of dramaturgical theory.

Grove and Fisk (1983) applied dramaturgical theory to the service industry, indicating the interaction between the staff and the consumers as a performance between actors and the audience. Wilson (2013) proposed the theory “without walls” for breaking the limits of the boundaries on and off the stage. In the online world, people can get involved on and off the stage at any time. The theater effects generated by the live media broadcasts are consistent with the connotation conveyed by the dramaturgical theory of service. They provide services to the audience during the live broadcasts, and allow the audience to immerse in the experience as in a theatre performance. With relevant literature, this study uses Facebook as a performance platform for live media auctions, applying new perspectives on servicing dramaturgical theory in virtual communities and explaining the influential impacts of service process from the live auctions.

Pine and Gilmore (1998) considered the consumer experience as an economic commodity. Companies try to combine "experiencing" with traditional services to achieve better sales results. The company use services as a stage and commodities as props to create unforgettable memories for consumers throughout the experiencing process, so that consumers can immerse in them. Consumers nowadays are more focused on the pursuit of feelings and stimulations while expecting and enjoying challenges of creative approaches and the immersive feelings provided by commercial companies (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004) thought that by allowing consumers to interact with the experiencing environment in the way they expect and choose, and then integrating with the



experience and enjoying the different depth and breadth of interactions, consumers could get the best experience. Through live broadcast, consumers can better understand the goods displayed and blend into shopping ambience. Live broadcasts are presented in a dramatic process, which enhances the level of experiencing, create value for consumers. To understand whether the four elements mentioned in the dramaturgical theory can positively affect the live broadcast experiencing is one of the motives of this study.

Marketing strategy is very important in commercial activities. Live auctions, as a platform for experiencing media, can deepen the impression of consumers with different experiences. Experience marketing is a marketing technique based on customer feelings, in order to promote consumers action. “The Age of Experiencing Economy” suggests that consumer experience is an economic commodity that exists in the heart of an individual obtained through physical, emotional, and intellectual participation. (Gilm ore, 1998). Experiential marketing is generated mainly from the consumer experience of environmental atmosphere or satisfactory services, leading the consumers to more intangible added value in experience, in visual and spiritual enjoyment and situational experiencing.(Huang, Chiu, & Chen, 2004; Chang, 2017). With the diversification of the media platform, Facebook’s self-media live auctions have used the experience media to encourage viewers to generate the motives for watching live broadcasts and then generate the behaviour of making purchases. After the audience’s heated discussion, word-of-mouth communication has formed the social phenomenon of the live broadcast economy. The gathering and continuous expansion of the live broadcast audience and the experience during the live broadcasts can prompt people to continue watching. This study seeks to understand whether the experiencing media can positively influence the behaviour of subsequent viewing. At present, the live broadcast audiences continue to expand, so this study is trying to explore whether the experience media can positively influence the behaviour of subsequent viewing.

The purpose of this study is as follows:

- (1) Based on the dramaturgical theory, explore the adaptation of structural models.
- (2) Understand the current situation of consumer theater perception, live experience, and behavioural intentions in Facebook live auctions.
- (3) Explore the influence of theater perception on the behaviour of people in using the live broadcast platform.

## **Research Methodology**

### ***Research Subject***

The research subject of this study were users of the Facebook live auction. A total of 330 questionnaires were distributed online, 296 valid questionnaires were collected, and the effective rate was 89.96%.



### ***Research Tools***

The theater perception scale referred to Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005), all indexes are in line with the standards (RMR=.03, RMSEA=.05, GFI=.96, NFI=.97, IFI=.98, TLI/NNFI=.98, CFI=.98, PNFI=.71, CN=230,  $\chi^2/df=1.68$ ). The factor load of the theater perception is between .72~.91; CR value of scene is .88, AVE value is .70; CR value of actor is .85, AVE value is .66; CR value of audience is .85, AVE value is .65; CR value of performance is .92, AVE value is .79; indicating that each variable has good reliability and validity.

The live experience scale was referred to Schmitt (1999), most indexes are in line with the standards (RMR=.04, RMSEA=.08, GFI=.90, NFI=.93, IFI=.96, TLI/NNFI=.94, CFI=.95, PNFI=.71, CN=124,  $\chi^2/df=3.04$ ). The factor load of the live experience is between .80~.90; CR value of sensory experience is .89, AVE value is .73; CR value of feeling experience is .90, AVE value is .75; CR value of thinking experience is .88, AVE value is .71; CR value of action experience is .89, AVE value is .72; CR value of related experience is .86, AVE value is .67; indicating that each variable has good reliability and validity.

The behavioral intention scale was referred to Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000), most indexes are in line with the standards (RMR=.04, RMSEA=.07, GFI=.82, NFI=.89, IFI=.92, TLI/NNFI=.91, CFI=.92, PNFI=.80, CN=132,  $\chi^2/df=2.51$ ). The factor load of the behavioral intention is between .84~.91; CR value is .91, AVE value is .76; indicating that each variable has good reliability and validity.

All the above items are measured by the 7-point Likert scale, the higher the score, the higher the cognition of the factor.

### ***Data Analysis***

Data obtained were verified by descriptive statistics, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modelling by SPSS 21.0 and Amos 21.0 to conduct statistics and analysis of this study.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Subject Data Analysis***

The subject of this study in majority were male (53%); aged around 20-29 (67.6%); occupation was dominated by the service industry (28.4%); monthly income was around 20,001-30,000 (24.3%) and 30,001-40,000 (24.3%); the number of live broadcasts viewed

per week: 1 times (66.2%); join the live auction fan page: 1 times (36.1%); the most frequently used live auction type: clothing category (35.5%); experience in participating in the live auction: 0 times (67.6%); The money spent participating in online bidding activities in the past year: none (61.8).

### *Situation Analysis*

The overall behavioral pattern of this study is generally well-adapted (RMR=.04, RMSEA=.07, GFI=.82, NFI=.89, IFI=.92, TLI/NNFI=.91, CFI=.92, PNFI=.80, CN=132,  $\chi^2/df=2.51$ ), indicating that this model is acceptable, so the relationship and impact between the various facets can be further discussed.

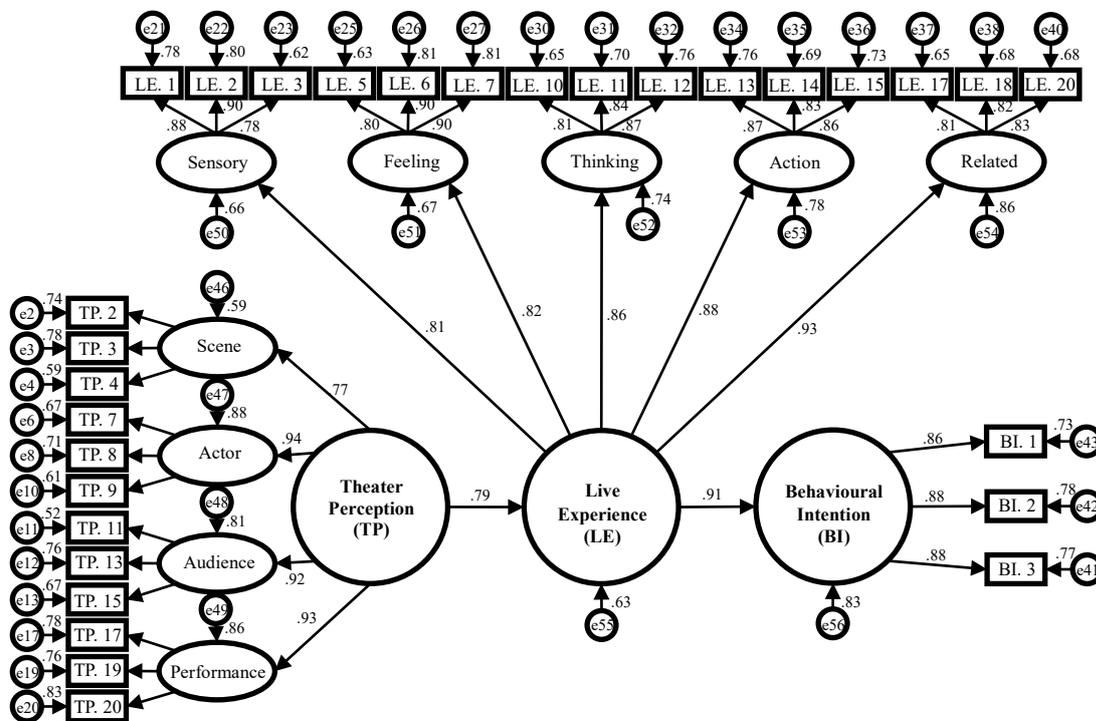
Facebook live auction consumers get more than 5 points in the perception of the theater, indicating that consumers are satisfied with the services experienced on Facebook live auctions. Among the dimensions, cognitive “performance” was the highest (M=5.76, SD=1.02), followed by “audience” (M=5.70, SD=0.99), “actor” (M=5.61, SD=1.11), and “scene” (M=5.39, SD=1.20) being the lowest. The highest score in the live experience was the “sensory experience” (M=5.39, SD=1.13), followed by “thinking experience” (M=5.24, SD=1.15), “action experience” (M=5.01, SD=1.27), “feeling experience” (M=4.99, SD=1.31), and “related experience” (M=4.92, SD=1.27) being the lowest. In the behavioral intention, cognitive "I will be willing to join the live auction again" had the highest score (S=5.10, SD=1.34), indicating that after viewing the live auction, consumers are willing to rejoin the live auction.

According to the results of the path coefficient of the consumer behaviour pattern of the Facebook live auction, it is found that the standardization coefficient of the theater perception for the live experience is .79, and the t value is 9.50, which reached a significant standard. Therefore, theater perception has a significant positive impact on the live experiencing. The impact factors of the theater performance elements for the live experiencing is .93, the impact factors of the audience elements on the live experiencing is .92, which is also very important for the formation of theater perception. The profound performance of the actors can positively affect emotional transmission which may also affect the true feelings of consumers in the process. In addition, the service personnel and performance can lead the consumers to create the theater perceptions, the relationship within the consumers is also important, the interactive behaviour will contribute to the results of service contact.

The standardization coefficient of the live experiencing on behavioural intention is .91, t value is 13.95, which achieved the significant standard. Therefore, the live broadcast experience has a significant positive impact on behavioral intentions. The impact coefficient of the related experience on behavioral intention (.88) is the largest, indicating that the related

experience is an important factor in influencing the experiencing of live broadcast. Through the scenes of live interactions between the host and the consumers, the Facebook live broadcasts can create theater effects to meet the demands of curiosity or exploration of consumers. The live scene designs will arouse and deepen the consumer's familiarisation about the products, which will enable consumers to form a theater perception and have a deeper feeling in the live broadcast experience. It will help Facebook live auctions get a positive evaluation of affecting the consumers' continuous viewing behaviours or recommending others.

**Figure 1.** Path Analysis of Theater Perception, Live Experience, and Behavioural Intention



### Academic Implications

This study is the first model of applying the dramaturgical theory to the live auction services and proposes the behaviour intention of consumers participating in the live auctions. The results broke the previous framework of service dramaturgical theory that was only applied to physical services. Consumers participating in live auctions can produce dramaturgical feelings and form a good participation experience, which can produce positive behavioural intentions. In the real set of drama, not only the interaction processes between the consumers and the service personnel are necessary, it is also necessary to include all activities that may



occur between the entire service organization and the consumers. Therefore, the live broadcast service needs the cooperation and input from the actors and consumers.

### ***Practice Implication***

The actors and performance are the main factors formatting the theater perception, through the services and the integrity of the overall performance from the actors, the consumers can enjoy a positive experience and make a positive behavioural intention through the live experience. The most important factor in forming a live broadcast experience is relating experiencing. In the live theatre, the live broadcasts will try to make more connections with consumers to engage them and then influence the consumers to get more involved in emotional communications when watching live broadcasts which has a positive intention for live broadcast behaviours.

### **Conclusion**

#### ***Practice Recommendation***

Firstly, this study found that the elements of an actor have a higher influence on the formation of theater perception, indicating that the images of live broadcasts can directly impact the feeling of consumers in the live experience. Mattsson (1994) said that the service staff are the front line who play an important role in contacting and delivering service messages to consumers. Therefore, in the process of live broadcasts, the viewers can directly feel the atmosphere and emotions created by the live broadcasts through the screen, and even understand the store positioning through the temperament and images conveyed during live broadcasts.

Secondly, this research found that the second-highest performance element impact in the formation of theater perception that is that the process of watching live broadcasts will also affect the degree or extent of consumer experience. Gosserand and Diefendorff (2005) pointed out that service staff can positively influence emotional transmission through profound performance, so that the emotional transmission of service personnel may also affect the true feelings of consumers. Therefore, in the service providing process, the enthusiasm and greetings presented by the service personnel will lead consumers to feel respected and enjoy the fun in watching live auctions. Through interaction with the audience, maintaining customer relationships and strengthening the activities in the live broadcasts can enhance the number of audience members who continue to watch the live broadcasts.

Further, this research process found that audience elements have a certain influence on the formation of theater perception, and the related experience has the highest impact on the



formation of live broadcast experience. According to the research results, the customers are a very important part of service delivery, especially for the connection between customers and service personnel, the interaction within customers, and all of the service contacts in the connection process (Grove, 1998).

### ***Future research recommendation***

There are many kinds of live auctions, and sales prices are also obviously different. However, this study only used specific categories as research topics, and there was no comparison between various live broadcast auctions. Therefore, it is recommended that future researchers explore the influencing factors of consumer behavioural intentions in different types of Facebook live auctions. This study was limited to the Taiwan region, so it is recommended that the scope of research be expanded in the future. The evaluation of using live videos as marketing tools in different countries is different, therefore, future research could increase the number of samples to explore the differences between users in Western countries and Asian countries.

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