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I Watch But I Intend Not To Buy: Viewers' Persuasion Knowledge About Live-streaming Shopping

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Abstract: Live-streaming shopping is a new shopping pattern integrating real-time commerce communication and real-time social interaction by streaming videos. The intense attempts taken by marketers trying to persuade viewers to buy products have stimulated the purchase intention of some viewers, however, generated reactance of some other viewers at the same time, such as the behavior of "watching without buying anything." Based on the Persuasion Knowledge Model, we investigated what persuasion knowledge viewers beheld. Thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews and online comments of viewers of live-streaming shopping revealed four themes (recognition of tactics, awareness about psychological mediators, censors on tactics, clearness of coping goals) and ten sub-themes (coupon tactic, hunger marketing tactic, social influence, flow, effectiveness, manipulativeness, legitimacy, upgrading persuasion knowledge, managing self-image, and managing costs and benefits) of viewers' persuasion knowledge about live-streaming shopping. We argued that the persuasion of live-streaming shopping might backfire since viewers' persuasion knowledge motivated them to take responses strategically. Discussions and implications were provided, based on which researchers in live-streaming shopping can better involve prominent factors of persuasion knowledge in their analytical framework, and marketers can improve management on their persuasion tactics.

Keywords: live-streaming shopping, persuasion knowledge, persuasion tactics, reactance

1. INTRODUCTION

As the competitions among marketers become fierce, many marketers are attempting to employ live-streaming shopping to engage consumers and stimulate their purchase intention. Live-streaming shopping, the newly emerging way of online shopping since 2015, can be defined as a type of shopping merging real-time social interaction [1] with real-time marketing information transferring to assist online viewers in making purchase decisions [2].

Live-streaming shopping is becoming popular all over the world. Some e-commerce or online shopping platforms have introduced live-streaming shopping modules [3], such as Taobao, Mogujie in China, and Livby, Popshop Live in American. At the same time, some streaming media platforms are beginning their commerce business [3], such as Tik Tok and YY streaming. Besides, some professional live-streaming shopping platforms are emerging, such as Shopshops, Red bean angle. Amazon has launched its platform of live-streaming shopping, Amazon Live [4]. Furthermore, there is news that Facebook has bought a video-commerce company named Packagd, aiming to explore the business in live-streaming shopping [5].

Live-streaming shopping has exploded in China from a $1.8 billion industry in 2015 to an expected $15.9 billion in 2020 [6]. By broadcasting a live streaming show, Alibaba achieved a total sales of $ 17.7 billion in the year 2019, 32% more than the last year [7]. Many brands, including P&G, Burberry, Adidas, and Sony, attempt to

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sell their products through live-streaming shopping. Moreover, sellers are becoming experts at applying to kinds of persuasion tactics, such as celebrity endorsement, sensation cooperation, and a series of exclusive consumer discounts [8]. Moreover, they are keeping exploring the persuasion strategies which can work best.

On the other side, the persuasion attempts in live-streaming shopping face much reactance from consumers. On one hand, there are still lots of people who find it hard to accept live-streaming shopping as a shopping ritual, on the other hand, there is an interesting phenomenon that some consumers do not avoid watching live-streaming shopping videos but develop some alternative strategies to react to purchasing while watching the videos. In short, they "watch without buying anything." This kind of behavior has been noticed by some scholars, as [3] mentioned, some of the motivations of viewers were not significant with shopping behaviors, only significant with watching behavior, or shopping through other channels. However, since live-streaming shopping is newly entering the field of academic interest, there has been sparse research on this topic [3], [8], and there has been barely research directly focus on people's reactance behavior to live-streaming shopping, to our knowledge. Under this circumstance, this study tried to figure out the reason people do this through the lens of the Persuasion Knowledge Model. Specifically, how will viewers develop coping and controlling strategies during participating in live-streaming shopping? What are the "good" and "successful" persuasion tactics when considering viewers' persuasion knowledge and their consequent responses? This study collected data from 42 semi-structured interviews and 200 online comments to identify the prominent themes from the content of viewers' persuasion knowledge influencing their responses to live-streaming shopping.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 What is live-streaming shopping

A few scholars have defined live-streaming shopping mainly by a focus on the merging of interaction technology and e-commerce. For instance, [2] defined "IT-mediated service content of e-commerce live streaming" as the functions of transmitting marketing information to assist online viewers in making purchase decisions. Moreover, this function of transmitting marketing information has its own features, namely real-time social interaction [3], including business-to-consumer and business-to-business interactions [8], and interactions among consumers as well. Thus we define live-streaming shopping as a shopping pattern integrating real-time commerce communication and real-time social interaction by streaming videos.

2.2 The advantages and tricky sides of live-streaming shopping

The existing studies (which are very rare till now) mainly focus on the benefits of live-streaming shopping. It has been found that live-streaming shopping can enhance both consumers' utility and hedonic value [1]; based on prior research on general live streaming, the gratifications of convenience, informativeness, pleasure, sensational satisfaction of consumers have been distinguished [1], [9]-[11].

As for its marketing effects, live-streaming shopping has many advantages comparing to traditional online shopping. First, because of the rich media and multi-sensory technology it employs, it increases the authenticity of the products [12]. Some scholars also argue that its media richness can improve people's immersion and presence [8], both of which have positive effects on their purchase intention [13]. Some researchers suggest that the more pre-purchase information consumers have about a product, the lower are their perceived uncertainty and psychological distance [14], and the more likely they intend to purchase [15]. Second, it advances prior video media in its feature of synonymy [16], which means that while watching the live streaming video, viewers can have real-time social interaction with streamers and other viewers as well. Communication visibility increases social presence, which can also have a positive effect on viewers' purchase intention [2].

However, everything has two sides. Due to the features of multi-sensory, real-time, and sociality of live-streaming shopping, many marketers employ profoundly influencing tactics into their persuasion attempts,

such as celebrity endorsements, peer-to-peer influencing, time-orientation tactics such as hunger marketing and time pressuring, limited-time discount. These persuasion tactics help to persuade viewers into purchasing, but many times the way they are perceived may negatively influence viewers' purchase intention.

2.3 The reactance to live-streaming shopping: based on the Persuasion Knowledge Model

The Persuasion Knowledge Model has built up a framework of how people's responses to persuasion attempts are influenced by their persuasion knowledge [17]. It points out that people's reactance behavior is not a simple rejection, but is a procedure maintaining control over the expected outcomes under their specific goals, in other words, some coping behavior [18]. People's persuasion knowledge to persuasion attempts from other people or agencies mainly contained several causal-explanatory beliefs about the psychological states and interacting processes during the persuasion [17]. It can be divided into several facets, being: beliefs about the identity, the purpose, and the features of marketers' tactics (such as weather recognizing marketers' certain behavior as a tactic trying to persuade, the perceived effectiveness, the appropriateness of their behaviors, and marketers' persuasion goals), beliefs about the psychological mediators which affects one's response to the stimulation generated from marketer's behaviors, beliefs about one's own coping (including the coping goals and the coping tactics) [17], [18].

In the context of live-streaming shopping, both the marketers' persuasion and the viewers' responses are tense. What is more, both the marketers' persuasion tactics and consumers' persuasion knowledge is upgrading at a fast speed. We find that employing the Persuasion Knowledge Model as an analytical framework in live-streaming shopping has two advantages: 1) It helps us to identify some prominent topics related to people's persuasion knowledge which may hinder the viewer from transforming into a buyer; 2) It also helps to investigate the reason why viewers watched but not purchase, and thus help to explain some of the primary responses of viewers to the persuasion attempts in live-streaming shopping.

3. DATA COLLECTION

The data mainly contains two types: the first type is data collected from semi-structured interviews; the second type is data collected from Microblog, the famous social media network website in China.

3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Two of the co-authors carried out all the semi-structured interviews. Both of them were female Ph.D. candidates majoring in commercial management, of expertise at interviewing, which allowed them to develop a strong rapport with interviewees.

The interviewees were recruited through social media networks. We posted a recruiting advertisement through the Wechat moment news, in several online communities, on the Q&A platform Zhihu, and through some volunteers' personal social networks. Finally, 42 interviewees (refer to Table 1 for demographic details) agreed to join in this study. We organized in-depth interviews with them, and each of them was reimbursed with 20 RMB for their devotion of time.

Interviews were carried out face to face, or through video chats provided by some telecommunication applications (Tencent QQ, or Wechat). All of the interviews were conducted under a guideline covered three main aspects: their experiences of live-streaming shopping, their opinions about live-streaming shopping, and the related experiences such as online shopping, live streaming. Each interview lasted for about 20 minutes to 30 minutes. During the interviews, the researchers listened carefully and allowed the interviewees plenty of time to answer the questions. All the interviews were audio-recorded.

The interviews were immediately transcribed into electronic texts to ensure consistency. Interviewees were assigned pseudonyms, and the transcripts were imported into MAXQDA 2020, a computer-assisted data analysis package, which facilitated reading and re-reading to identify themes.

Table 1. Demography statistics

Gender	*number*	*percentage*
Female	30	71.43%
Male	12	28.57%
Age	*number*	*percentage*
16-20 years	22	52.38%
21-25 years	8	19.05%
26-30 years	6	14.29%
Above 31 years	6	14.29%
Education	*number*	*percentage*
High school/ Vocational education or below	6	14.29%
Bachelor's degree	28	66.67%
Master's degree	3	7.14%
Ph.D.'s degree or above	5	11.90%
Income per month (after tax)	*number*	*percentage*
Below 2000 RMB	25	59.52%
2000-4000 RMB	10	23.81%
4000-6000 RMB	4	9.52%
6000-8000 RMB	2	4.76%
Above 8000 RMB	1	2.38%
Occupation	*number*	*percentage*
Student	30	71.43%
Employed for wages	4	9.52%
Professional/Technical (examplified by teachers, doctors)	7	16.67%
Self-employed	1	2.38%

3.2 Data collected from Microblog

The other source of data was collected from one of China's biggest social network sites, Microblog, on 12th Nov 2019, right a few hours after the Singles Day, China's biggest sales day. On that day, Alibaba was broadcasting a "See now, buy now" fashion show, including over 80 brands, and China's famous streamer Austin Li has given a streaming show of a whole evening, which has generated many discussions. We searched netizens' comments posted on Microblog and tagged with "live-streaming shopping" or "Austin Li," and collected the newest 207 comments. After deleting seven posts which are not relative with live-streaming shopping, we imported the valid 200 comments into MAXQDA 2020 for analysis.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The analysis process brought to light some interesting features of the experience of live-streaming shopping and other related experiences of the interviewees (refer to Table 2). It was shown that 11 of them had viewed live-streaming shopping but never conducted a purchase. Comparing to their purchases on traditional online shopping platforms, their purchases through live-streaming shopping are still limited. Besides, the most mentioned products viewers focus on are clothing, cosmetics, and food. Taobao, the online shopping platform merged with live streaming, is the most often referred platform, while none of the participants talked about

experiences on any of the professional live streaming platforms.

Table 2. Live-streaming shopping experiences and related experiences

Live-streaming shopping experiences:		
Watching experience	*number*	*percentage*
Have viewed	33	78.57%
Have never viewed	9	21.43%
Frequency of watching	*number*	*percentage*
Below one hour per week	31	73.81%
2-10 hours per week	9	21.43%
Above ten hours per week	2	4.76%
Purchasing experience	*number*	*percentage*
Have bought things through it	22	52.38%
Have never bought things through it	20	47.62%
Frequency of purchasing	*number*	*percentage*
Once or below once per month	30	71.43%
2-10 times per month	10	23.81%
Above ten times per month	2	2.38%
Platforms	*number*	*percentage*
Online shopping platforms	19	57.58%
Streaming platforms	14	42.42%
Products	*number*	*percentage*
Clothing	17	77.27%
Cosmetics	11	50%
Food	6	27.27%
Daily use articles	5	22.73%
Electronic products and toys	1	4.55%
Toys	1	4.55%
Related experiences:		
Frequency of traditional online purchasing	*number*	*percentage*
Once or below once per month	8	19.0%
2-10 times per month	26	62.0%
Above ten times per month	8	19.0%
Frequency of watching other live streaming	*number*	*percentage*
Below one hour per week	7	16.6%
2-10 hours per week	23	54.8%
Above ten hours per week	12	28.6%

Each interview was analyzed simultaneously using a three-step thematic analysis procedure, as proposed by [19]. The inductive thematic analysis approach was used to generate codes, which were then collated into themes. Themes were then checked against the initial codes for consistency before being defined explicitly with specific accounts chosen to illustrate each theme. Two researchers coded the transcripts independently (the first and second authors) and then reviewed interpretations in discussion with a third researcher (the third author) who was not involved in the analysis [20]. We found that the themes reflected in the data collected through

interviews were almost the same as themes reflected by online comments.

Four themes and ten sub-themes were summarized. We named and made definitions of them, which are shown in Table 3. The four themes depicted the most prominently discovered types of viewers' persuasion knowledge on live-streaming shopping, which could be understood by two orientations: the persuasion knowledge on the persuasion tactics employed in live-streaming shopping, and the persuasion knowledge on viewers' own coping goals. More vividly, the former could be divided into three facets, focusing on the observable feature/pattern, the underneath psychological activities and procedures, and the overall appraisals of persuasion tactics, namely, recognition of tactics, awareness about psychological mediators, and censors on tactics. Besides, there was actually an intimate association between viewers' persuasion knowledge on the persuasion tactics and the persuasion knowledge on their own coping goals.

Table 3. Definition of the themes

Themes	Definitions	Sub-themes	Definitions
Recognition of tactics	Viewers' recognition of the observable feature/pattern of the persuasion attempts in live-streaming shopping	Coupon tactic	The tactical pricing from marketers in live-streaming shopping, e.g., a time-limited coupon
		Hunger marketing tactic	The promotion way that was strategically making viewers have strong desires to purchase by driving up the scarcity of the product
Awareness about psychological mediators	Viewers' beliefs about the psychological activities and procedures that marketers are trying to influence them	Social influence	Influences coming from others during live-streaming shopping, including streamers and other viewers
		Flow	The mental state of being fully immersed in live-streaming shopping
Censors on tactics	Viewers' beliefs about the essential features and overall appraisals of the causal relation between marketers' tactics, psychological mediators and the behavioral outcomes	Effectiveness	Evaluations on whether the persuasion can have a significant effect on viewers
		Manipulativeness	Evaluations on whether the persuasion aims to manipulate viewers, e.g., inducing them consuming compulsively
		Legitimacy	Evaluations on whether the persuasion is admitted by ethics, norms, and judgment
Clearness of coping goals	Viewers' establishment and self-awareness of the possible goals they can pursue in their coping activity	Managing self-image	Viewers' aims of maintaining or changing (usually maintaining) their opinions about themselves
		Managing costs and benefits	Viewers' aims of minimizing the relative costs and maximizing the relative benefits (including utility and hedonism benefits)
		Upgrading persuasion knowledge	Viewers' aims of gaining further understanding of live-streaming shopping, including the tactics, psychological mediators, and the overall natures

4.1 Recognition of tactics

Viewers were aware of some of the persuasion tactics employed in live-streaming shopping, such as some price-related tactics and time-related tactics.

4.1.1 Coupon tactic

The price tactic was highly recognized. Coupons were usually provided during live streaming. However, viewers like [I6] noticed that the coupons could only be used when purchasing from some unreliable or

unfamiliar sellers; she will give up the coupons. Selectively using the coupons provided by certain sellers that are trusted by viewers dismissed the persuasion effect of the price promotion. See:

[I6][2]*(be asked about whether the coupon had influence) because the coupons were usually provided by the official flagship online stores, they had impacts on me. However, if the coupons were offered by other kinds of stores, I would refuse to use them.*

Another thinking related to price tactics is viewers' thorough view of price, see:

[I3] I usually searched for the live streaming video about the products I needed to buy. Considering the time cost and the risk, I found live-streaming shopping was relatively low in value.

And also:

[N15] The so-called economic efficiency was achieved at the cost of wasting time. The key point was, it (refers to live-streaming shopping) was not necessarily economy.

Both the viewers subjectively evaluated the total price instead of only the monetary price of buying a product through live-streaming shopping. By containing the time into the total cost, they get a more rational assessment of the products, which would also dismiss the persuasion effect of the low price tactics often being uses in live-streaming shopping.

4.1.2 Hunger marketing tactic

Hunger marketing was a commonly-used tactic. Viewers realized time orientation played a crucial role in this real-time video shopping, so they sometimes realized that the declaration of "almost sold out" was a persuasion tactic from the marketers. This recognition would somewhat dismiss the stimulation power of applying hunger marketing in live-streaming shopping. See:

[I4]And they created an atmosphere that everybody thought the product was good, and everybody bought it. So this kind of product was sold out in no less than a second, for the broadcasting room which had a steady flow of the viewers.

4.2 Awareness about psychological mediators

Besides the persuasion tactics, viewers could also somewhat realize the psychological procedure involving in the persuasion of live-streaming shopping, especially the social influencing procedure, and the effect of flow.

4.2.1 Social influence

[N23] Live-streaming shopping was actually letting a person get into such kind of a situation: someone in the broadcasting room was selling, the streamer was asking you to buy, others were buying, and then you found yourself was buying too!

This viewer realized that live-streaming shopping attempted to impose the social influence on him/her by making all the related communication visible, and he/she realized that the influence might come from not only the streamer, but also the groups of other viewers.

4.2.2 Flow

In no matter the interviews or the online comments, many viewers described their feeling about involved by the flow. Generally, viewing live-streaming shopping without a clear purpose of selecting information would be more influenced by the procedure of flow, as [I2] said:

[I2] For example, shopping in physical stores and shopping on Taobao were purposeful, because I only bought what I needed. Live-streaming shopping was different; sometimes, one bought what one saw or even what one did not need. Live-streaming shopping could induce me to buy things I did not need, what is important, I did not feel like it was inducing me when I bought them, and then I found out that the products were actually of little use to me right after I bought them.

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* We distributed each case a serial number. "I" means this text was transcribed from interviews; "N" means this was netizens' comment. The following are the same.

Moreover, [N166] vividly described the co-influence from the social influence of an expertise streamer and the flow procedure.

[N166] Austin Li was really "toxic," there was still all the echoes of his voice in the live streaming show in my head now: "all the girls, all the girls,....." And then I kept adding items to the shopping cart.

4.3 Censors on tactics

Most importantly, viewers would also form the overall evaluation of not precisely one live-streaming shopping experience but the way of doing shopping through live streaming. Once this evaluation had formed, it would directly and generally influence people's adoption of live-streaming shopping. The evaluation relied on three indexes, namely, effectiveness, manipulativeness, and legitimacy.

4.3.1 Effectiveness

An occupy of consumers admitted the effectiveness of live-streaming shopping. Interestingly, they mentioned their concern on its "addictive" feature and called the expertise streamer as "toxic" teasingly, which hinted their admittance of the negative outcomes of live-streaming shopping based on the effectiveness of the persuasion tactics. See:

[I4] There were disadvantages of live-streaming shopping. Watching the shows was an addictive behavior, just like playing games on the mobile phone.

And also see:

[N97] Austin Li's live streaming shows were really "toxic." My mother, a middle-aged woman who was addicted to watching them, sent me screenshots every time she saw something she wanted to buy.

4.3.2 Manipulativeness

Inductivity, or manipulativeness of live-streaming shopping is among the most mentioned concerns of consumers. Both [I1] and [N155] showed their intense reactance once they realized the seller's intention of manipulating them to buy.

[I1] I realized it would tempt me to "cut off my hand," so I repelled.

[N155] I might be disgusted by all behaviors that make too much noise and stir up too much emotion. In addition, the time they choose live-streaming shopping was usually at night when both people's judgment and self-control were feeble. This kind of thing made me think it was a very tricky act, taking advantage of the weakness of human nature.

4.3.3 Legitimacy

Interestingly, many netizens with a negative view on live-streaming shopping showed their strong doubts about the legitimacy of this shopping pattern. They might hold strong beliefs in the analogy with live-streaming shopping and the nearly disappeared TV shopping. See:

[N58] I am really very puzzling, TV shopping has long been believed by no one, how comes that people believe in live-streaming shopping? Is there any difference between the two? The latter one is just a rougher form of the former one.

Most people like [N58] acclaimed that they found live-streaming shopping and TV shopping were essential and acclaimed their confusion that live-streaming shopping was accumulatively popular while TV shopping had been proved to be an out of time and lack-in-legitimacy shopping pattern. Most of the people behold of this view would vehemently refuse to give a try on live-streaming shopping, not to mention forming a purchase intention through live-streaming shopping.

4.4 Clearness of coping goals

Viewers formed their own beliefs about the goals of their coping behavior when viewing the live-streaming shopping video, which could be reflected by three main aspects: the goal of managing their benefits, the goal of managing their self-image, and the goal of upgrading their understanding of persuasion tactics.

4.4.1 Managing self-image

Another theme that repeatedly appeared was the effort of self-managing the images of viewers. It was found that how to respond to live-streaming shopping attached to one's self-image, and viewers might maintain or change their knowledge of self-image after coping with live-streaming shopping. When a viewer had a strong motivation to maintain his/her original self-image, the purchase intention through live-streaming shopping was usually negatively influenced. See:

[I1] Since I am a rational consumer, I will instinctively stay away from the thing which tempts me to "cut off my hands[*3]."*

Although repeatedly mentioned herself a person with ration who would never buy things without a need, this viewer talked about the experiences that he/she was at the edge of buying things, and then realized the purchasing behavior might go against her perceived image of a rational consumer, that he/she stopped the purchase just before it would become real. Also, see:

[I7] I entirely believe in my own ideas. For example, if this dress was suddenly ordered by a lot of people, it would not have an impact on me (since I would doubt if it was a tactic of the seller).

This viewer thought she was not that easy to be influenced by others, so a specific persuasion tactic emerged, she interpreted it in a way that she could be less socially influenced. A similar theme appeared in some of the online comments. See:

[N45] My brother asked me if I wanted something that he could send to my address. But I really did not want to buy anything. I was so sorry that I opened Austin Li's video for the first time to find a little shopping desire, but still no.

This viewer believed he/she was an individual with a low desire for consumption and commodity. Interestingly, he/she chose to watch the live-streaming shopping video and was confirmed of this self-perception after he/she found himself/herself not influenced by it.

4.4.2 Managing costs and benefits

Viewers could both negotiate and have some control over the benefits they achieved during watching the live streaming video, including either utility or hedonism/experiential benefits, which goes along with [3]. The benefits included but not limited to:

Convenience, see:

[I5] I do not have to go too far for live streaming (shopping). What is more, the number of offline shopping stores nearby is not too many, so I guess I cannot visit many within a day. But if I watch live-streaming shopping videos, I can visit a lot more "shops" within a short time. For instance, once I watched the live video, I saw the streamer tried on over seventy clothes in only one hour.

Entertainment, see:

[I1] It (refers to live-streaming shopping) is interesting. I will watch it if I really want to kill time.

[N92] I think the live shows of Austin Li looked very entertaining. The feeling of them was not like pure live-shopping shows. Anyway, I watched them with relish, like watching entertainment programs. Even if I did not want to buy anything, I still watched his live shows from time to time, which were very good anyway.

[I1] expressed that time pressure was among the main factors influencing his/her watching live-streaming shopping video, and if he/she were not under time pressure, he/she would choose to watch it since it had high entertainment. The online comment [N92] also realized the enjoyment of the live streaming video. It seemed that the pleasure of this entertaining content could be achieved by just watching the streaming video, not necessarily purchasing the products, so [N92] told his/her coping strategy of watching the streaming video and avoiding purchase intention.

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* "Cut off my hands" is a Chinese slang meaning conducting impulse buying while neglecting the budget.

Even the meaning of consumption, see:

[N21] There is something that you long to buy times ago, you just need someone to convince you. That is why you enter the broadcasting room of live-streaming shopping.

[N117] To be straight, when you buy from the live-streaming shopping show, what you buy is not the commodity, it is a compulsive pleasure of shopping. And Austin Li just can "bless" the merchandise that kind of pleasure, that is the reason why he goes popular.

Some viewers realized the meaning of participating in live-streaming shopping, and they seem to legitimate the happiness achieved by purchasing and consumption, which could be confirmed by live-streaming shopping and the soothing persuasion of online celebrities.

4.4.3 Upgrading persuasion knowledge

Consumers also realized that facing in all the persuasion attempts could gain their understanding of live streaming marketing, and gain their coping performance. See:

[I4] After watching live-streaming shopping for such a long time, I even had an impulse to be a streamer myself. [When being asked why developed this idea] It seemed that doing this kind of streaming was easy, did not need much unique technology. Still, when coming to practical operation, it was not that kind of thing, e.g., the management of product supply...but I just felt this way of selling things was good.

From this narrative, [I4] was conducting consumer learning when experiencing and coping live-streaming shopping, and it even stimulated his/her motivation to change his/her role from a viewer to a streamer and seller. This motivation was generated by the confidence he/she got from learning through live-streaming shopping.

[N33] It is, at the same time, an excellent way to cultivate my rationality.

This viewer's strategy was somewhat unexpected yet very typical. Instead of passively receiving the exposure and influence of live-streaming shopping, he chose to encounter it consciously. He aimed to gain more knowledge about the persuasion tactics by intentionally watching but avoiding buying anything.

5. DISCUSSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Theoretical findings

This study distinguished the content of viewers' persuasion knowledge influencing their responses to live-streaming shopping by developing four themes, namely, recognition of tactics, awareness about psychological mediators, censors on tactics, and clearness of coping goals. These themes served as the reasons depicting why people watch live-streaming shopping but give up purchasing on purpose. Viewers recognized well of some of the tactics employed by live streaming marketers, which are the coupon tactic, and the hunger marketing tactic; they also had an awareness of the psychological mediators such as the social influence and the flow; based on these features, patterns, and effecting paths, they built up an overall evaluation of live streaming persuasions, where some persuasion attempts failed at their censors for being manipulative, or lack in legitimacy, although they might be admitted to be effective at persuasion. However, people did not merely avoid them but developed some coping tactics under specific goals, such as managing their self-image, managing the costs and benefits, or even gain their persuasion knowledge by watching live-streaming videos.

This study is the first (to our knowledge) to adopt the perspective of the Persuasion Knowledge Model to analyze people's perception and behavioral intention in the domain of live-streaming shopping. We found different content of persuasion knowledge play an essential role in people's different responses, which implies that persuasion knowledge might serve as an important mediator when studying the influences on live-streaming shopping on viewers. Moreover, we underlined not only the facets but also the most prominent factors within these facets influencing the persuasiveness of live-streaming shopping, which might shed light on a further research agenda on how different factors (such as hungry marketing tactic, social influence, flow, perceived

Manipulativeness) influence the persuasiveness of live-streaming shopping.

5.2 Practical implications

5.2.1 Persuasion tactics in live-streaming shopping backfire

The finding tells that, viewers do not merely accept or refuse the persuasion in live-streaming shopping but select to accept and reject specific elements of live-streaming shopping. Based on the accumulatively increasing knowledge on live-streaming shopping and their beliefs on the values they achieved through live-streaming shopping, they will make decisions on either watching the live-streaming shopping video or purchasing through this channel. Admitting that consumers have their own recognition and understanding of persuasion tactics used and even the psychological procedures effect in live-streaming shopping, the persuasion tactics which are too induced or makes consumers feel being manipulated may not work well. Moreover, we can also find that both marketers and consumers are gaining their persuasion knowledge, so some more refined and implicit persuasion tactics are expected to appear.

5.2.2 Spillovers through different purchasing channel due to various coping strategies

Since consumers are motivated to embrace various benefits, they may develop different coping strategies. For instance, viewers who only intended to consume the entertaining content will watch the live-streaming shopping video without explicit purchase purpose, and be vigilance of being induced into buying something; viewers who want to seek for information about products will refer to the vivid presentation in the live streaming video, but they will choose another channel (a more trusting online shop or a physical shop) to buy. The circumstances hint that live-streaming shopping may have effects on brand equity, and might contribute spillovers from one shop to another.

5.2.3 Consumers are empowered by their persuasion knowledge

Consumers today may selectively accept and refuse specific elements of live-streaming shopping in order to fulfill their goals, including managing costs and benefits, managing their self-image, and upgrading their knowledge of live-streaming shopping. Interestingly, some consumers are curious about the effectiveness and manipulativeness of live-streaming shopping. Thus they intentionally try to watch live-streaming shopping for the first time to satisfy their curiosity. Some consumers choose to face the persuasion procedure instead of avoiding it in order to gain their persuasion knowledge, to increase their recognition ability, and even to achieve an “immunocompetence” of the “bad” persuasion. It gives marketers some insight that the propaganda of live-streaming shopping through media, including social media, might stimulate people to try it, and word of mouth seems necessary for persuading more people to try it.

5.2.4 Incorrect perceptual of live-streaming shopping will hinter

From the online comment, there is a trend that people will emphasize the similarity between live-streaming shopping and TV shopping in that both ways are employing some highly induced persuasion tactics, and the differences between these two (also the advantages of live-streaming shopping), e.g., the real-time commerce communication, the authenticity of the presentation of products and other consumers’ opinions, are often neglected. It gives marketers some insight that educates people on the main features of live-streaming shopping and makes them form a more objective understanding of live-streaming shopping will play a critical role in persuasion people to adopt this shopping channel.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this study, we employed a thematic analysis to understand the prominent factors in people’s persuasion knowledge that influence their responses to live-streaming shopping. We identified four themes named recognition of tactics, awareness about psychological mediators, censors on tactics, and clearness of coping goals. By recognizing ten sub-themes (namely, coupon tactic, hunger marketing tactic, social influence, flow,

effectiveness, manipulativeness, legitimacy, upgrading persuasion knowledge, managing self-image, and managing costs and benefits), we provided some discussions on how to deal with the persuasion knowledge of viewers from the perspective of marketers. We felt that this study is limited to the content of viewers' persuasion knowledge, which left the interacting procedure of both viewers' and marketers' persuasion knowledge a vast space to explore.

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