

The Impact of Live-Streaming Shopping Characteristics on Behavioral Intention of Shoppers

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Abstract: Currently, live-streaming shopping has become one of the popular approaches to conducting business. Businesses shift from traditional online shopping to live-streaming shopping approach because of the benefits that live-streaming shopping could offer. This paper aims to study the impact of live-streaming shopping characteristics on behavioral intention among shoppers. Researchers used literature analysis and a Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework as the methods of the study. The findings showed that all characteristics had a positive impact on the behavioral intention of shoppers. The limitation of the study was the researcher focused only on the Stimulus and Response of the framework; the Organism factor of the framework was omitted.

Keywords: *Live-streaming, Characteristic, Online shopping, Behavioral intention.*

1. Introduction

Purpose of Inquiry: This conceptual paper is intended to investigate the impacts of live-streaming shopping characteristics on the behavioral intentions of shoppers. The answer to the inquiry question will be based on the literature analysis and Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework. However, the study only focuses on the stimulus and response, whereas the organism is not the research focus. In past years, online shopping has increased tremendously. Online shopping has become a powerful method to purchase products as customers do not have to go to physical stores to shop and also due to the fact of Covid-19 pandemic. However, traditional online shopping had several challenges like lack of interactivity and communication between sellers and shoppers. Moreover, the description of the product is not comprehensive and the image of the product is in a static format. Therefore, most of the sellers started to change their marketing strategy by using platforms that offer live-streaming features. The purpose of this paper is to investigate whether live-streaming shopping characteristics have an impact on the behavioral intention of shoppers.

Statistics: The current trend shows that shoppers purchase online not only through ordinary e-commerce websites but also more focused platform which is social media commerce. Due to the growth in popularity, most companies now are moving to social media platforms to promote their products. Statistics showed that China has the highest rate of shoppers using social media commerce; meanwhile, the majority of shoppers in the United States were youngsters aged 18 to 24. Furthermore, 50.7% of shoppers were using Facebook as the main platform to shop followed by Instagram (47.4%), YouTube (33.9%), TikTok (23.9%), SnapChat (18.8), and Twitter (18.5%). 40% of shoppers tend to purchase because of the platform itself and 49% of shoppers are influenced by the influencer's recommendation (Baluch, 2023). The increasing rate of shoppers in social media commerce is believed to be related to the live-streaming feature provided by social media platforms. The most popular live-streaming platform was Facebook Live (55%), and the least popular was Pinterest TV (14%). Even though Facebook Live was the most popular but the seller preferred to use Instagram for live-streaming. The most common products chosen by sellers were apparel and fashion (36%), followed by beauty (8%) and fresh food (7%) (Coher, 2023).

Live-Streaming Shopping: Live-streaming is one of the recent methods to sell products via online platforms. The technology is embedded into social media platforms, allowing sellers to perform their business activities, especially to promote and market their products to customers. Examples of social media platforms that support live-streaming are Instagram Live, Facebook Live, TikTok, and many more. The live-streaming has become a promising approach and favorable to sellers and customers due to the multimedia functions offered by the platforms. The multimedia functions provided are streamers could broadcast themselves, interact with the viewers in real-time using a chat box and at the same time viewers could send virtual gifts as support to

the streamers (Ma, 2021). Two ways communication between streamers and viewers could lead to the intention to purchase the products as the information is considered to be delivered effectively and the involvement and engagement between both parties lead to positive experiences (Ma, 2021). Even though live-streaming shopping has become trending in today's world, whether the approach could influence the behavior of the shoppers is still unclear. Therefore, to understand the characteristics of live streaming is significant to this study as the aim of this study is to investigate whether live-streaming characteristics could have a positive impact on the behavioral intention of the shoppers.

2. Conceptual Framework

This study adapted the conceptual framework by Gu et al. (2023) that highlighted the effects of live-streaming shopping characteristics on behavioral intention among shoppers. The original conceptual framework is based on the S-O-R model where the characteristics act as the stimuli (S), momentary and reflective states act as the organism (O), and behavioral intention as the response (R). However, as we have mentioned in the purpose of inquiry part, the scope of the study is on the stimuli and response. The characteristics of live-streaming shopping comprise five variables, namely information richness, interactivity, vividness, social presence, and newness. Meanwhile, the dependent variable, which is the behavioral intention, emphasizes the continuous participation intention of shoppers that leads to purchasing the product. The conceptual framework describes the relationship between these two.

Information Richness: Online shopping platforms that use live streaming have gained popularity, especially in industries where product demonstrations, personal interactions and real-time engagement play a significant role. For instance, beauty and cosmetics brands often use live streaming to demonstrate makeup application techniques, skincare routines and product usage. Live streaming can be used to showcase the products, interact with potential buyers and answer questions. However, despite these remarkable features, several challenges can prevent customers from purchasing online products such as uncertainty about the product quality, trust and security concerns, returns complexity, limited payment options and inability to see or touch the products. Therefore, to overcome these barriers, businesses need to focus on the information richness in digital content as it plays a crucial role in shaping online experiences and enhancing the decision-making process. According to Wu & Chen (2016), information is the richness and completeness of product descriptions in an online shopping platform.

Similarly, Zhu, Li, He, & Hong (2020) described that information richness includes the capacity for instant feedback, the capacity to transmit multiple clues, language variety and the capacity to provide personal attention. The research study by Hao, Haitao & Xiaoxu (2021) also found that the effectiveness of social shopping features enhances the consumers' purchase intention as it can enhance perceived product quality. Furthermore, Chesney, Swee-Hoon, Dobele & Hoffmann (2017) also found that information richness is an expression of trust to the customers as accurate and reliable information builds credibility. When customers find trustworthy information in digital content, they are more likely to trust the source. Well-presented and relevant information captivates the buyer's attention, encourages interaction and eventually increases engagement. In addition, information-rich content such as articles, videos and tutorials empower individuals to acquire new knowledge and skills conveniently. On the other hand, if customers cannot get complete information about a product, they might buy a product that does not meet their needs because they lack of understanding of its features, benefits or limitations.

This can result in dissatisfaction, return refunds, negative reviews and impact the business's reputation. Incomplete and inaccurate information erodes trust between customers and the business. Indeed, customers who feel misled due to incomplete information are more likely to share their negative experiences through online reviews and word-of-mouth. With the emergence of many social media platforms nowadays, businesses should emphasize the benefits of interactive communication during live streaming. This suggests that to mitigate these negative outcomes, businesses should prioritize accuracy and complete information accessibility. For instance, a comprehensive product description, high-quality images and visuals, FAQs and customer support and reviews and testimonials help customers make informed purchasing decisions. In summary, information richness is the cornerstone of digital content. Hence, businesses that prioritize

providing complete and accurate information are more likely to build trust, foster positive customer experiences and drive long-term success.

Interactivity: Interactivity between sellers and customers is an important characteristic that contributes to a successful online shopping process. A real time-interactivity is considered as the most the most unique feature of live-stream shopping platforms which allows consumers to engage with the seller (Joo & Yang, 2023). In fashion and apparel, for instance, live streaming is commonly used to showcase new collections, demonstrate outfit combinations, and provide styling tips through live videos. Viewers can ask questions, get instant feedback, and purchase items directly from the stream. Therefore, interactivity between the sellers and the potential customers can take several forms and serve several purposes. A good online shopping platform should offer a variety of communication options, allowing customers to choose the level of interactivity that suits them best. The best example of a live streaming feature in TikTok Live allows the sellers to broadcast live video content to their followers in real time. TikTok Live enables sellers to interact with their audience directly, respond to comments, answer questions, showcase talents and share experiences. At the same time, the viewers can interact with the live stream by sending comments, likes, and gifts to support the seller.

This is supported by Liu et al (2022) who reveal that with live streaming potential online consumers can learn about new products, ask questions, receive answers and interact with other consumers. Interestingly Joo & Yang (2023) also stated that customers can interact and chat with the seller during the live-stream. The role of online chat is to enhance the buying process by focusing on business-related discussions (Rytsy & Jonna Pauliina Koponen, 2019). Their study also reported that online shopping platforms can create a positive, convenient and trustworthy shopping environment that encourages repeat business and customer loyalty. During the live stream, customers will take the opportunity to interact actively with the hosts with concerns related to sales, for instance requesting information on the product description, pricing solutions for specific problems, asking how to make a purchase and other queries. Research findings by Sharma, et al (2019) also point towards the important characteristic of web interactivity in online shopping as communication and information provided can expedite the decision-making process. This is consistent with the study by Chen et al (2021) as the interactions between buyer-seller drives the buyers' purchase intention in online shopping platform. In summary, with the rise of social media in the e-commerce industry, live-streaming has become one of the trends. Our smart consumers perceived that the traditional shopping environment is boring and absence of proof to help them to conform during the purchasing process. Instead, they are more interested in a medium that can speed up the purchasing process by communicating and interacting with the seller. Hence, interactivity can be deemed as an important characteristic in live-streaming shopping.

Vividness: Another characteristic of live-streaming shopping is vividness. Vividness can be defined as the exhibition of target products using different camera angles, as well as the personalization of product presentation in response to specific requests from customers (Jiang & Benbasat, 2007; Mollen & Wilson, 2010). Vividness can also be referred to as a measure of how customers perceive the wide variety and depth of sensory cues and dimensions that a product's presentation offers (Cheng, 2020). In the world of e-commerce platforms, it is common to use textual descriptions and images as the main ways to show potential customers what products are for sale. However, these methods fail to effectively convey the dynamic attributes and tactile experiences of items to the audience (Jiang & Benbasat, 2007; Mollen & Wilson, 2010).

The viewers of a live shopping stream are unable to physically interact with the things being sold; however, they can communicate their needs and ask the live streamer questions via a chat room. The streamer can explain, exhibit, or display these products based on the requirements of viewers during the live streaming process, and answer these queries by employing engaging and vibrant ways in a live video. It is important to keep in mind that vividness can affect how much someone enjoys something and that this can be a good thing. This is because customers can have a better emotional experience when they can see a clear picture of a product, which gives them a stronger sense of immersion when they are shopping (Gu et al., 2023). Therefore, the incorporation of vividness in the context of live-streaming commerce enhances the level of understanding and perception of product information among viewers. By closely examining the visual and audio elements of streamers' presentations, viewers can develop a stronger connection to a product by gaining a more complete understanding of its tactile, visual, and olfactory qualities (Bao & Zhu, 2023).

A higher degree of vividness often suggests the existence of a greater number of informational signals and sensory pathways that possess the capacity to stimulate the senses of individuals (Jiang & Benbasat, 2007). Therefore, customers are more capable of recognizing and valuing the quality and value of a seller's goods or service as a result of this (Bao & Zhu, 2023). Thus, it is imperative to concentrate on the stimulation derived from online product presentation, specifically interactivity and vividness, within a live purchasing stream (Cheng, 2020).

Social Presence: Live-streaming shopping is a dynamic e-commerce approach that combines real-time video streaming with interactive features to engage customers and facilitate product purchases. An interactive shopping experience is created since viewers may leave feedback and ask questions during the live session and get immediate responses from the sellers (Zhou et al., 2018). As a result, this creates a social presence among the parties involved. According to Gu, Cheng, and Shen (2023), social presence can be thought of as one of the characteristics of live-streaming shopping. Social presence refers to how people perceive other people's presence through the live-streaming platform and how this perception affects their interaction with others in virtual spaces (Shen, 2012). As a result, it helps create a sense of connection and engagement among participants. Li, Wang, and Cao (2022) suggest that social presence in live-streaming shopping is important because it positively affects impulse buying, influences consumers' purchase behavior, and enhances shopping enjoyment, trust, and viewer engagement.

Newness: According to Liu et al. (2022), live-streaming shopping provides novel interactions that stimulate immediate purchase intentions and enhance consumers' perceptions of the overall value of a featured product while reducing uncertainty. As compared to traditional online shopping, this streaming commerce offers customers several innovative features such as real-live interaction with the sellers and other viewers (Gu, Cheng & Shen, 2023). By enabling viewers to ask questions and receive immediate responses from the seller, live commerce creates an engaging and unique shopping experience for consumers to discover and purchase products (Gu, Cheng, and Shen, 2023). Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2018) stated real-time interactions with the seller help potential customers obtain comprehensive and high-quality information about the featured product before making more informed purchasing decisions. As a result, customers' loyalty and trust towards the brand as well as online sellers can therefore be increased.

Behavioral Intention (Purchase Intention) through Live-streaming Shopping: The term "live-streaming" refers to an electronic medium platform that broadcasts online in real time. This type of platform is used to connect with specific audiences for a variety of different reasons (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). With the increasing popularity of live-streaming platforms, standard social commerce has changed in many ways. In traditional Internet shopping, customers can only learn about products through pictures and written descriptions. On the other hand, live streaming shopping has given streamers, who sell goods online, the ability to show off their goods through real-time videos, giving buyers a lot of information about the products they're interested in (Sun et al., 2019; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020).

To effectively predict customer behaviors, it is imperative to have an in-depth understanding of the attitudes, perceived values, and internal motivations that ultimately lead to the tendency to engage in an online purchase (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). According to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the concept of behavioral intention refers to the underlying motivational factors that drive a specific course of action, leading to the manifestation of behavioral intention and subsequent demonstration of observable behavior. The evident example of behavioral intention can be seen in the execution of apparent behavior (Beck & Ajzen, 1991).

In the context of live streaming, "purchasing" is used to describe a viewer's propensity to make an internet purchase during a live broadcast (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). A study conducted by Zhu, Liu, Li, Jiang, & Zhu, (2023) reveals that the distinct characteristics of multi-dimensional product demonstrations and video interactions not only expedite consumers' acquisition of pertinent product information but also create a more immersive shopping experience and also enhancing social presence, thus making online shopping a more pleasurable endeavor. The findings were also consistent with the study conducted by Cai & Xu, (2011) and Shin, (2013). Other findings by Moon, Kim, Choi, & Sung, (2013) reveal that the way in which individuals in an audience and livestream viewers engage with one another has the potential to enhance the strength of one's

social profile. The perceived level of happiness and utility among live-streaming viewers significantly influences their behavioral intentions.

Another factor that could have influenced customers' behavior is the utilization of content marketing strategies and the involvement of influencers. According to findings conducted by Apasrawirote & Yawised (2022), both factors have demonstrated a favorable influence on customer perceptions. Additionally, the perceived value and attitude of the client exerted an impact on their behavioral intention. Furthermore, the findings strongly support the notion that behavioral intention plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' intention to make online purchases.

3. Results and Findings

For this conceptual paper, the literature is a valuable source of new information and insights. Based on the literature, all characteristics of live streaming which are information richness, interactivity, vividness, social presence, and newness had a positive impact on the behavioral intention of the shoppers. The main difference between live streaming shopping with traditional online shopping is that the later cannot maintain the engagement between sellers and shoppers due to the lack of information provided on the website or platform, static image of the product, and there is no two-way communication between sellers and shoppers. Cother (2023) mentioned that educational content was really important to persuade shoppers to purchase the product. Generally, traditional online shopping is using a web-based application where the information must be balanced with the images to avoid information being loaded. As a result, the product descriptions are unclear. That is why, shoppers nowadays favor platform that has live-streaming features. Some of the companies even hired influencers to promote the products using live-stream platforms. This shows that social presence and interactivity are positively related to the behavioral intention that leads to the purchase intention (Ma, 2021). The influencers or the sellers could provide detailed explanations, demonstrate the product, enhance the uniqueness of the product, and accept questions from the potential shoppers. Thus, could lead to purchase intention among shoppers.

4. Conclusion

Live-streaming shopping brings new perception to the sellers. The multimedia features that the live-streaming platforms had, provide greater benefits to sellers and shoppers. This paper contributed to the knowledge regarding the importance of the use of platforms that have live-streaming features. The knowledge could change sellers' perspectives towards traditional online shopping mediums with live-streaming shopping. However, this paper is only limited to the five characteristics of live-streaming shopping. Future studies will focus on the collection of data and analysis among respondents that performed live-streaming shopping based on the five characteristics previously, and focus on certain social media commerce that offer live-streaming features.

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