Exploring the Influence of Live Streaming on Consumer Purchase Decisions in Social Commerce in Malaysia

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Abstract

This conceptual research paper embarks on an exploratory journey to scrutinize the multifaceted impacts of live streaming on consumer purchase decisions within the dynamic landscape of social commerce in Malaysia. The study is intricately woven around core variables: live-streaming interactions, technological aspects, and marketing strategies, spotlighting consumer engagement as a pivotal mediator. Guided by a robust theoretical framework, the research seeks to unveil the nuanced interplay between these variables and their cumulative influence on consumer purchase behaviours. At the forefront, the research aims to dissect the role of live-streaming interactions in shaping consumers' shopping experiences and purchase intentions. A parallel focus is accorded to the technological architectures and functionalities that underpin live-streaming platforms, assessing their efficacy in fostering conducive and engaging shopping environments. Marketing strategies, a pivotal cog in the commercial wheel, are meticulously evaluated to gauge their potency in captivating consumer interest and facilitating purchase decisions. Anchoring these explorations is the mediatory role of consumer engagement, envisioned as a critical conduit through which various influences resonate with consumer purchase motivations and actions. Through a systematic inquiry, the paper aspires to foster a comprehensive understanding of the consumer purchase trajectory within live-streaming social commerce, culminating in pragmatic insights that can invigorate academic discourses, inform industry practices, and shape policy landscapes. In essence, this conceptual exposition strives to be a beacon of knowledge, illuminating the intricate pathways through which live streaming moulds consumer purchase landscapes in Malaysia's vibrant and evolving realms of social commerce.

Keywords: Live Streaming Social Commerce, Consumer Purchase Decisions, Consumer Engagement, Live-streaming Interactions, Technological Aspects, Marketing Strategies

Introduction

Live streaming social commerce is expanding as a transformative paradigm, revolutionizing the retail landscape with interactive and real-time shopping experiences (Sun et al., 2019). This research aims to investigate this contemporary commercial phenomenon in Malaysia, a dynamic marketplace filled with technological adoption and consumer engagement. The focus lies in exploring the impact of live streaming on consumer purchase decisions within social commerce.

As a confluence of entertainment and shopping, live streaming creates immersive experiences, forging direct connections between sellers and buyers (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Sellers, ranging from

established brands to individual entrepreneurs, utilize this platform to showcase and demonstrate products, answer queries, and foster a sense of community among viewers. This research aspires to disclose the intricate ways such interactions shape purchasing behaviours, discern the effectiveness of live streaming in enhancing consumer trust and satisfaction, and unravel its role in driving sales and brand loyalty.

Understanding the localized strategies, cultural nuances, and consumer preferences is vital in Malaysia's vibrant and diverse market. This study is focal in providing nuanced insights, analyzing how live-streaming platforms and sellers navigate the multifaceted Malaysian consumer landscape, and discerning the essential elements that captivate and persuade potential buyers. By resolving these dimensions, the research aims to furnish crucial knowledge to guide strategies, enhance consumer experiences, and bolster live-streaming social commerce's continued innovation and growth in Malaysia. In doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on the evolving retail ecosystems, technology's role in shaping commercial interactions, and the future of consumer engagement in the digital age.

Background study

The increasing landscape of live-streaming social commerce presents a tapestry of opportunities and challenges in Malaysia's diverse and dynamic market (Lei Zhang & Liu, 2023). A thorough understanding of the influences steering consumer purchasing decisions within this sphere is lacking, creating a gap in strategic insights and knowledge (Lei Zhang & Liu, 2023). This study seeks to unravel the complexities of consumer interaction and engagement in live streaming, exploring how these real-time platforms either enhance or diminish the trust and credibility of sellers and products in the consumer's perception.

Central to this investigation is exploring the technological mechanisms at play, seeking to evaluate the efficacy of various live-streaming technologies and strategies in captivating consumer interest and directing purchasing behaviours. Furthermore, in a society rich with cultural nuances, it becomes imperative to understand how societal norms and values impact consumer preferences and decision-making processes in the live-streaming social commerce environment (Xu et al., 2022).

The study also aims to dissect the role of innovative marketing strategies, seeking to uncover how these influence consumer decisions and shape the trajectory of purchase outcomes. The necessity of this research emanates from the urgency to equip businesses, marketers, and stakeholders with nuanced insights and strategic directions that are both informed and adaptive to the evolving consumer preferences and market trends in Malaysia (Joo, 2022). It strives to foster a deeper comprehension of consumer behaviour, technological influences, and the overarching factors that propel the success of live-streaming social commerce in a Malaysian context. Through this, the study endeavours to contribute meaningful knowledge, bolstering the sustainable growth and innovation of Malaysia's live-streaming social commerce sector.

Literature Review

Consumer Purchase Decisions

The domain of consumer purchase decisions within live-streaming social commerce has garnered significant scholarly attention, reflecting its growing prominence in the contemporary retail landscape. Studies echo that live streaming adds a real-time, interactive dimension to online shopping, fostering a sense of connection between the buyer and seller, thus influencing purchase intentions and behaviours (Xu et al., 2022).

The literature illuminates the centrality of trust and credibility in exploring the determinants of consumer purchase decisions. Consumers tend to resonate with live streamers who exude authenticity and expertise, viewing them as reliable sources of product information and recommendations (Dong et al., 2022). Trust is cultivated through interactive features such as real-time queries and instant feedback, enhancing consumer confidence and purchase likelihood (Clement Addo et al., 2021).

Moreover, marketing strategies employed during live streaming, such as influencer collaborations, promotions, and engaging content, have been pivotal in captivating consumer interest and driving sales (X.

Ma et al., 2022). Cultural considerations also significantly sway consumer behaviours, where aligning content with local norms and values is instrumental in engaging consumers effectively (Min Zhang et al., 2020).

Technological aspects, including platform usability, video quality, and augmented reality integrations, are crucial factors that impact the overall shopping experience and consumer satisfaction, thus influencing purchasing decisions (Lu Zhang et al., 2023).

In conclusion, the literature suggests a multifaceted interplay of variables that collectively shape consumer purchase decisions in live-streaming social commerce, highlighting the significance of trust, engagement, cultural relevance, marketing strategies, and technological proficiency in this domain.

Live Streaming Interactions

Live streaming interactions have metamorphosed the online shopping milieu, embedding real-time connectivity and engagement into the fabric of digital commerce (L. Ma et al., 2022). Literature in this realm unfolds the tapestry of interactions that burgeon within live-streaming platforms, emphasizing their pivotal role in shaping consumer experiences and behaviours.

A striking theme within existing research is the dynamism of presenter-audience interactions. The immediacy and intimacy of these interactions are found to forge robust connections, enabling consumers to glean insights, seek clarifications, and engage directly with brands or presenters (Gao et al., 2023). Such interactions facilitate a participative shopping experience, nurturing informed and confident purchase decisions.

Furthermore, the communal interactions among consumers within the live-streaming environment amplify the vibrancy of the shopping experience. The community's shared dialogues, reviews, and participative energy create a collective consumer experience, influencing individual perceptions and purchase tendencies (Chavee & Vongurai, 2023).

Technological enhancements, such as chat features, emojis, and interactive games within live streams, also accentuate the interaction landscape, proffering enriched, multi-dimensional consumer engagements (Chenglin et al., 2023). These features bolster the interaction dynamism, enabling expressive and engaging consumer participation.

However, the literature also subtly underscores the challenges entwined with live-streaming interactions, such as the potential for misinformation, overly aggressive marketing practices, and concerns surrounding consumer privacy and data security (Hua et al., 2023).

In encapsulating the insights, live streaming interactions emerge as a powerful conduit of consumer engagement, decision facilitation, and experience enhancement in online shopping, bespeaking their criticality in the modern social commerce ecosystem.

Technological Aspects

Technological advancements have continually reshaped the landscape of live streaming in social commerce, embodying a crucial determinant of its success and consumer adoption (F. Liu et al., 2022). The existing body of literature underscores the indispensable role of technology, spotlighting various facets that enhance the live-streaming experience and, consequently, influence consumer behaviour.

One of the most pivotal technological aspects underscored is the quality and reliability of the streaming platform. (Liao et al., 2022) emphasize that the video and audio stream's stability, clarity, and seamlessness significantly impact the user experience, dictating the level of engagement and interaction consumers can achieve during live sessions.

Next, the literature also delineates the role of augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) as influential drivers in the evolution of live-streaming commerce. These technologies usher in an immersive shopping

experience, enabling consumers to interact with products virtually, thereby enhancing product understanding and evaluation (Shiu et al., 2023).

Interactivity also surfaces as a cardinal technological consideration in the literature. Technologies facilitating real-time chat, instant feedback, emojis, and likes have been identified as enriching the interactive vitality of live-streaming sessions, bolstering consumer engagement and participation (Yogie Alontari et al., 2023).

Integrating analytics and data-driven personalization also occupies a place of prominence in research. Sophisticated algorithms and analytics tools that offer personalized content, product recommendations, and consumer insights are seen as instrumental in tailoring the shopping experience to meet individual preferences and needs (Li, Liu, & Lee, 2020).

In conclusion, the technological aspects of live streaming, from platform quality to innovative features like AR/VR and analytics, emerge as instrumental forces that shape the richness of consumer experiences, the depth of engagement, and the overall efficacy of live streaming in social commerce.

Marketing strategies

Marketing strategies within live-streaming social commerce have become increasingly sophisticated and multifaceted (Cheng et al., 2022). The literature reveals a myriad of approaches that businesses employ to captivate audiences, foster engagement, and ultimately drive sales within the dynamic live-streaming environment.

One prevalent strategy emphasized in research is the collaboration with influencers and key opinion leaders (KOLs). Scholars have noted that influencers bring authenticity, relatability, and trust, enhancing the appeal and credibility of promoted products or services (Xia, 2022). Influencers bridge the gap between brands and consumers, enabling a more organic and persuasive interaction that facilitates consumer buying decisions.

Additionally, the literature underscores the importance of content innovation and storytelling within live-streaming sessions. Creative, informative, and engaging content enhances the consumer experience, making shopping more entertaining and educational (Lei Zhang & Liu, 2023). Strategies such as product demonstrations, tutorials, and real-time Q&A sessions have been highlighted as effective in bolstering consumer understanding and confidence in products.

Promotional strategies such as discounts, giveaways, and exclusive offers are also prevalent within live-streaming commerce. These tactics spur urgency, encourage participation, and enhance the perceived value of the live-streaming shopping experience (X. Ma et al., 2022)).

Analyzing consumer behaviours and preferences through data analytics is another vital marketing strategy in the literature. Brands and live streamers leverage consumer insights to tailor content, product offerings, and interactions to resonate more profoundly with target audiences (Mingli Zhang et al., 2022).

The literature elucidates a spectrum of marketing strategies—from influencer collaborations to content innovation and promotional tactics—that play an instrumental role in shaping consumer experiences and purchase decisions within live-streaming social commerce.

Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement has emerged as a pivotal construct in the live-streaming social commerce (LSSC) literature, embodying the interactive and participatory nuances that characterize consumer involvement in live-streaming sessions. The spectrum of engagement ranges from passive viewing to active participation through comments, likes, shares, and purchases (Z. Liu et al., 2020).

Research indicates that high levels of consumer engagement in LSSC often translate into enhanced consumer loyalty, satisfaction, and purchase intentions. For instance, live streams that facilitate real-time

interactions, questions, and personalized responses foster a sense of connection and trust between the streamer and the audience, enriching the consumer's shopping experience (X. Ma et al., 2022).

The content relevance and quality are also pivotal in driving engagement. Scholars have found that consumers are more likely to engage when the live stream content resonates with their interests, preferences, and needs, making the content captivating and value-adding (Mingli Zhang et al., 2022).

Technological facets, such as user-friendly interfaces, seamless navigation, and interactive features like polls and quizzes, also play a critical role in facilitating consumer engagement by making the live streaming experience more enjoyable and less cumbersome (Yang et al., 2023).

Moreover, influencers or key opinion leaders in live streams have been recognized as a significant booster of consumer engagement, leveraging their credibility and expertise to foster a more influential and trustworthy environment (Amalia & Aprianingsih, 2023).

In conclusion, consumer engagement in live-streaming social commerce is influenced by various factors, including interactive opportunities, content relevance, technological ease, and influencer participation, each playing a distinct role in shaping the consumer's shopping journey and their resultant purchase decisions.

Underpinning Theory

The underpinning theory of this research revolves around understanding the influences on customer purchase decisions within the context of live-streaming social commerce. The theoretical framework is structured to dissect the pathways through which various independent variables, namely live-streaming interactions, technological aspects, and marketing strategies, impact the customer purchase decision, with consumer engagement acting as a mediating variable.

Live-streaming Interactions and Purchase Decisions:

Drawing upon the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, live-streaming interactions serve as stimuli that affect consumers' internal evaluations or organism, represented by consumer engagement in this study, influencing their response, i.e., the purchase decision. This alignment underscores the role of real-time interactions, conversations, and engagements in a live-streaming context, influencing consumers' buying behaviours (Lin et al., 2023).

Technological Aspects and Purchase Decisions:

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) can be applied to understand how technological aspects influence consumer purchase decisions. In this framework, perceived ease of use and usefulness of the technology, in this case, the live-streaming platforms and features, directly impact consumers' attitudes and intentions to engage and make purchases (Camilleri & Falzon, 2021).

Marketing Strategies and Purchase Decisions:

Theories related to Marketing Communication and Consumer Behavior form the basis to explore how various marketing strategies within live streaming platforms influence consumer purchase decisions. Strategies such as influencer collaborations, promotions, and storytelling can shape consumers' perceptions, attitudes, and purchase intentions.

Mediating Role of Consumer Engagement:

Consumer engagement is theorized as a mediating factor based on Engagement Theory. This position suggests that the level of consumer engagement mediates the relationship between the independent variables (live-streaming interactions, technological aspects, marketing strategies) and the dependent variable (customer purchase decision).

This research is grounded in a cohesive theoretical framework that integrates principles from the SOR model, TAM, Marketing Communication, Consumer Behavior, and Engagement Theory to holistically analyze the intricate relationships between live-streaming elements and customer purchase decisions in social commerce.

Population and Sampling

The proposed research will be conducted among individuals with experience with live-streaming social commerce. The population of interest encompasses a diverse array of consumers who regularly interact with, participate in, or conduct purchases through live-streaming platforms. Given the study's objective, focusing on individuals with live-streaming experience ensures that the insights and responses garnered are informed, relevant, and reflective of genuine consumer experiences and perceptions within the live-streaming social commerce ecosystem.

A target sample size of 500 participants has been identified, and the sampling approach that will be employed is convenience sampling. This approach is pragmatic and facilitates easier access to potential respondents who are accessible through various social media platforms.

Data Collection Process

The data collection will be operationalized through online surveys disseminated across various social media channels. Only completed surveys will be recorded in the database to ensure the data is comprehensive and usable for analysis.

Following the recommendations of Hair (2010), the study will prioritize respondents with prior experience in live-streaming, ensuring that the data collected reflects genuine consumer interactions and experiences in live-streaming social commerce. These criteria align with the study's objectives and will enhance the validity and reliability of the research findings.

The measurement items within the survey were adapted from past studies and modified for clarity and relevance to align with the study's context and objectives. Adaptations will ensure that the survey is easily understandable and accessible to the target respondents, optimizing the collected data quality (Oosterveld et al., 2019).

Before the official dissemination, all measurement items in the survey will be validated by subject-matter experts, encompassing academic and industry professionals. This validation process aims to ensure the survey is accurate, reliable, and effective in capturing the necessary data to meet the research objectives.

Measurement Items

Dependent Variable: Customer Purchase Decision

1. I often make purchases during or after watching a live-streaming session.
2. I find that live-streaming sessions influence my decision to purchase a product.
3. I feel confident in making purchase decisions during live-streaming sessions.
4. I consider live-streaming sessions a reliable platform for making purchase decisions.
5. I will likely purchase based on the information shared during live-streaming sessions.

Independent Variable: Live-streaming Interactions

1. I find the interaction in live-streaming sessions engaging.
2. Interaction with the host or other viewers enhances my shopping experience.
3. I often participate in discussions and interactions during live-streaming sessions.
4. I find that the level of interaction in a session influences my interest in the products being presented.

5. I feel that real-time interactions in live-streaming sessions assist in addressing my queries and doubts.

Independent Variable: Technological Aspects

1. I find the technology used in live-streaming sessions user-friendly.
2. I believe that the technological features enhance my shopping experience.
3. I consider live-streaming sessions' visual and audio quality important for my shopping experience.
4. I find that easy navigation through the live-streaming platform enhances my user experience.
5. I appreciate incorporating advanced technologies such as AR or VR in live-streaming sessions.

Independent Variable: Marketing Strategies

1. I am influenced by the marketing strategies used during live-streaming sessions.
2. I find promotional offers and discounts appealing during live-streaming sessions.
3. I believe the presence of influencers or celebrities enhances the appeal of live-streaming sessions.
4. I find exclusive content or early access to products during live-streaming sessions attractive.
5. I appreciate when a brand's marketing strategies in live-streaming sessions align with my preferences and interests.

Mediator: Consumer Engagement

1. I feel engaged with the content presented during live-streaming sessions.
2. I find myself actively participating or reacting during live-streaming sessions.
3. I feel a sense of connection or community during live-streaming sessions.
4. I believe that engaging content during live-streaming sessions enhances my shopping experience.
5. I find that my level of engagement influences my satisfaction and overall shopping experience in live-streaming sessions.

Data Analysis

The analysis process for the research will commence with meticulous data preparation before utilizing SmartPLS (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling) for analysis. Initially, the collected data will be thoroughly cleaned and scrutinized for accuracy. The preliminary stage involves addressing missing values, identifying and managing outliers, and ensuring the consistency and reliability of the dataset to maintain the integrity of the analysis outcomes (Sarstedt et al., 2017).

Subsequently, the measurement model assessment or the outer model evaluation will be undertaken. This phase involves the assessment of the reliability and validity of the constructs. In terms of reliability, the individual item reliability will be examined by analyzing the outer loadings of the indicators. Conventional guidelines suggest a loading of 0.70 or higher indicates satisfactory individual item reliability. Following this, construct reliability will be assessed using Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.70 deemed acceptable according to common thresholds.

Convergent validity will be prioritized in assessing validity, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) from each construct will be calculated. Established rules of thumb propose that an AVE value exceeding 0.50 signifies adequate convergent validity, confirming that the constructs represent the observed variables appropriately.

The subsequent phase of the analysis involves the evaluation of the structural model or the inner model. This aspect focuses on the relationships between constructs, hypothesized path coefficients, and the overall model fit. R-squared values, effect sizes (f^2), and the significance of the path coefficients will be carefully assessed to elucidate the explanatory power of the model and the impact of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

In conclusion, the SmartPLS analysis will be conducted systematically, adhering to established guidelines and thresholds, to thoroughly examine the relationships between constructs within the live-streaming social commerce context.

Expected Outcome

This study anticipates uncovering nuanced insights into the multifaceted influences that live-streaming interactions, technological aspects, and marketing strategies exert on consumer purchase decisions within social commerce. A fundamental expectation is to delineate the mediatory role of consumer engagement in mediating the influences. Through rigorous analysis, the research aims to unveil patterns, correlations, and causal relationships that will demystify the consumer purchase journey within the live-streaming context.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this research is manifold. It aspires to contribute a richer, context-specific understanding to the burgeoning field of live-streaming social commerce, an area still navigating its theoretical and practical contours. By focusing on a region-specific context (e.g., Malaysia), the study could unearth culturally and regionally relevant consumer behaviours and preferences, offering a granular perspective that global or more generalized studies may overlook.

Academic Contributions

This study promises several academic contributions. It aims to enhance the theoretical discourse by providing empirical evidence on the interplay between various factors and their collective impact on consumer purchase decisions in the live-streaming domain. By integrating various theoretical frameworks, this research will facilitate a comprehensive understanding that could pave the way for further scholarly exploration and theory development in live-streaming social commerce.

Practical Contributions

From a practical standpoint, the findings of this research could be instrumental for industry practitioners, particularly for businesses, marketers, and live-streaming platform developers. Insights gleaned from the study could inform strategic decision-making, designing consumer-centric live-streaming experiences, optimizing marketing strategies, and enhancing technological infrastructures to meet consumer needs and preferences effectively.

Policy and Regulation Contributions

Lastly, the research may offer valuable inputs towards formulating policies and regulations governing live-streaming social commerce practices. By highlighting consumer preferences, behaviours, and areas of concern, the study can provide a consumer-focused perspective that could be integral in shaping ethical, consumer-friendly policies and industry standards.

In conclusion, the study is poised to offer a well-rounded contribution that spans theoretical advancement, practical strategy enhancement, and policy development centred around improving consumer experiences and outcomes in live-streaming social commerce.

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