FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' REPURCHASE AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE IN LIVE STREAMING COMMERCE: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

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FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' REPURCHASE AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE IN LIVE STREAMING COMMERCE: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AVE	AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED
CB-SEM	COVARIANCE BASED STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING
CMV	COMMON METHOD VARIANCE
EA	EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT
EOU	EASE OF USE
ES	EMOTIONAL SATISFACTION
GMV	GROSS MERCHANDISE VOLUME
HTMT	HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT
M	SENSE OF MEMBERSHIP
RB	REPURCHASE BEHAVIOR
PF	PRICE FAIRNESS
PLS	PARTIAL LEAST SQUARE
PQ	PRODUCT QUALITY
PS	SYNCHRONICITY
PU	USEFULNESS
TAM	TECHNOLOGY ACCAPTANCE MODEL
SA	STREAMER ATTRACTIVENESS
SE	STREAMER EXPERTISE
SEM	STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING
SI	SOCIAL INTERACTION
SOBC	STIMULUS ORGANISM BEHAVIOR CONCEQUENSE MODEL
SPSS	STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE
ST	STREAMER TRUSTWORTHINESS

VIF	VARIANCE INFLATION FACTOR
W2PM	WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE

FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PEMBELIAN SEMULA PELANGGAN DAN KESANGGUPAN UNTUK MEMBAYAR LEBIH DALAM PERDAGANGAN PENSTRIMAN LANGSUNG: KESAN PENYEDERHANAAN IKATAN EMOSI

ABSTRAK

Sejak kemunculan teknologi Internet termaju, penstriman langsung telah menjadi alat penting untuk jenama dan penjual untuk meningkatkan jualan dan memupuk penglibatan pelanggan. Landskap kompetitif perdagangan penstriman langsung telah membawa kepada penyelidikan yang meluas tentang faktor yang mempengaruhi motivasi pelanggan, niat membeli, pembelian impulsif dan penglibatan dalam konteks ini. Walau bagaimanapun, peranan penting emosi, yang berpunca daripada interaksi antara *streamer* dan pelanggan, sering diabaikan. Kajian ini secara khusus menumpukan pada peranan kepuasan emosi dan pemacunya dalam perdagangan penstriman langsung, terutamanya mengenai kesan seterusnya terhadap gelagat pembelian semula pelanggan dan kesediaan untuk membayar lebih dalam saluran penstriman langsung. Menggunakan rangka kerja *Stimulus-Organism-Behavior-Consequence (SOBC)* dan Teori Kredibiliti Sumber, kajian ini mengutarakan hipotesis bahawa ciri-ciri *streamer*, platform, produk, dan aspek sosial berfungsi sebagai perangsang yang mempengaruhi kepuasan emosi pengguna semasa pengalaman membeli-belah dalam penstriman langsung. Selain itu, kajian ini telah meneroka kesan penyederhana ikatan emosi pengguna dalam tingkah laku pembelian semula dan kesediaan untuk membayar lebih banyak di saluran penstriman langsung. Penyelidikan ini menggunakan *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* sebagai alat analisis. Satu kaji selidik dalam talian komprehensif yang

melibatkan 521 peserta telah dilaksanakan, yang mana 506 respons yang sah diperoleh selepas penyingkiran *outlier*. Perisian IBM SPSS 27 dan Smart PLS 4 telah digunakan untuk melaksanakan analisis data. Penemuan kajian ini menyerlahkan peranan penting daya tarikan serta kebolehpercayaan *streamer*, kualiti produk dan rasa keahlian dalam meningkatkan kepuasan emosi dalam saluran penstriman langsung, seterusnya mengukuhkan gelagat pembelian semula pengguna. Selain itu, ikatan emosi muncul sebagai pembolehubah kritikal yang memperkukuh hubungan antara tingkah laku pembelian semula dan kesanggupan untuk membayar lebih dalam saluran penstriman langsung. Walau bagaimanapun, hubungan yang dijangkakan antara kepakaran *streamer*, ciri-ciri platform (termasuk kebolehgunaan, kemudahan penggunaan dan kesegerakan), interaksi sosial, keadilan harga dan kepuasan emosi, tidak disokong. Penemuan ini menawarkan maklumat yang berharga untuk peruncit dalam talian yang berusaha untuk mengukuhkan hubungan penonton dan memaksimumkan potensi penstriman langsung dalam landskap perdagangan digital yang berkembang pesat.

FACTORS INFLUENCING CUSTOMERS' REPURCHASE AND WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE IN LIVE STREAMING COMMERCE: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT

ABSTRACT

Since the advent of advanced Internet technology, live streaming has become a pivotal tool for brands and sellers to amplify sales and foster customer engagement. The competitive landscape of live streaming commerce has led to extensive research into factors influencing customer motivation, purchasing intent, impulsive buying, and engagement in this context. However, the critical role of emotions, stemming from the interaction between streamers and customers, has often been overlooked. This study specifically focused on the role of emotional satisfaction and its drivers in live streaming commerce, particularly regarding the subsequent impact on customer repurchase behavior and willingness to spend more in live streaming channels. Employing the Stimulus-Organism-Behavior-Consequence (SOBC) framework and the Source Credibility Theory, this study hypothesizes that the characteristics of streamers, platforms, products, and social aspects were hypothesized as stimuli influencing consumers' emotional satisfaction during live streaming shopping experience. Moreover, this study has explored the moderating effect of consumers' emotional attachment in repurchase behavior and willingness to spend more in live streaming channels. This research employed the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) as the analytical tool. A comprehensive online survey involving 521 participants was executed, culminating in 506 valid responses after outlier removal. IBM SPSS 27 and Smart PLS 4 software were used to perform the

analysis. The findings of this study emphasize the crucial role that streamer attractiveness, trustworthiness, product quality, and the sense of membership play in enhancing emotional satisfaction within live streaming channels. These factors ultimately lead to stronger repurchase behaviors and an increased willingness to pay more. Additionally, emotional attachment emerged as a critical variable, enhancing the relationship between repurchase behavior and willingness to pay more within these channels. Nonetheless, the anticipated associations between streamers' expertise, platform attributes (including usefulness, ease of use, and synchronicity), social interaction, price fairness, and emotional satisfaction, were not supported. These findings offer valuable insights for online retailers striving to strengthen viewer relationships and maximize the potential of live streaming in a rapidly evolving digital commerce landscape.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an introductory outline of live streaming commerce. It delves into how factors in live streaming commerce impact consumers' shopping experiences and patterns. Subsequently, it presents the problem statement, accompanied by the research questions and objectives. The significance, scope, definitions of pivotal terms, and the structure of the subsequent sections are also elucidated within this chapter.

1.2 Background of this study

Since its emergence in 2011, live streaming has burgeoned, becoming a predominant form of media that has captured the attention of global audiences (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). This rise is not just a phenomenon but reflects a shift in consumer preferences. Where traditional e-commerce platforms once ruled the roost, the integration of live streaming features has transformed the landscape, providing a more immersive, real-time shopping experience.

By 2019, even before the full-blown effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, China had amassed an impressive 433 million live streaming viewers (CNNIC, 2019). One testament to the effectiveness of this model was demonstrated by Taobao, a leading Chinese e-commerce platform. During the mid-year online shopping spree in 2019, Taobao attributed sales worth 13 billion RMB (about 189 million USD) to the distribution of live streaming (AliResearch, 2020).

The outbreak of COVID-19 disrupted global commerce in an unprecedented manner. Countries worldwide imposed lockdowns and social distancing norms, leading to a sharp decline in physical store sales. Amidst these challenges, the silver lining for the e-commerce industry became evident. Forced to adapt to an "in-home lifestyle", consumers leaned heavily into online platforms for work, education, entertainment, and, most significantly, shopping (Fletcher & Griffiths, 2020).

By mid-2021, China's live streaming users ballooned to a staggering 638 million, marking a one-third increase from 2019 figures. Even more impressively, 384 millions of these users engaged with live streaming commerce, reflecting a year-on-year surge of 75.24 million (CNNIC, 2021). These stats are not mere numbers, but indicators of a paradigm shift in shopping norms (see Figure 1.1 for the market size of live streaming in China in 2023).

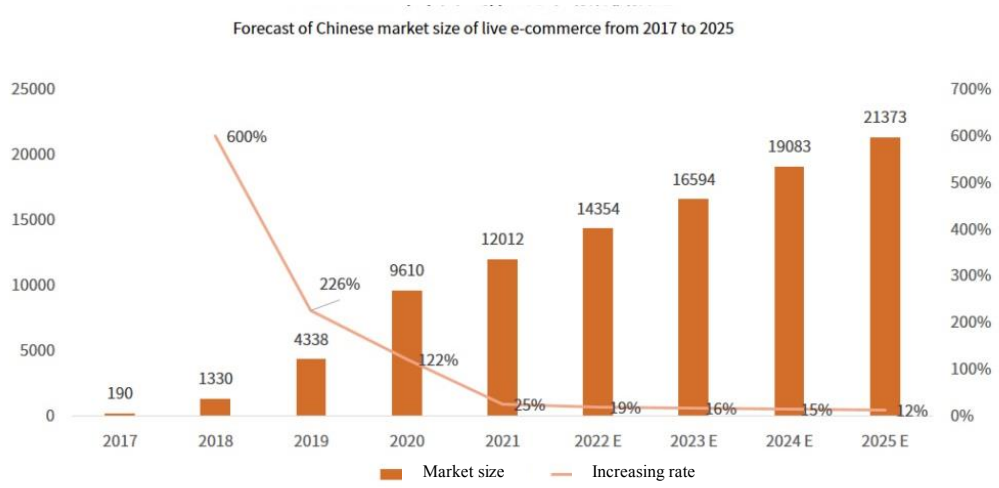

Figure 1.1 Forecast Of Chines Market Size of Live E-Commerce from 2017 to 2025 (Li, 2022).

While behemoths like Taobao.com and JD.com held dominant positions, the live streaming trend did not go unnoticed by other platforms. Various media platforms, keen on capitalizing on this lucrative trend, hastened to embed live streaming

commerce features. This swift adoption catalyzed an intense competitive atmosphere within the live streaming commerce domain. By the end of 2020, China alone had 8.862 registered live streaming commerce enterprises. The influx of streamers was equally noteworthy, with their numbers soaring to 1.23 million (iResearch, 2020).

In such a saturated and competitive market, establishing and maintaining robust relationships with consumers becomes the cornerstone for sustained growth. The essence of these relationships is rooted deeply in the experiences that online vendors can offer throughout the purchasing journey. Retaining customers in this high-stakes environment is not just a strategic move but an imperative for survival and success.

In the intricate web of live streaming commerce, numerous factors play decisive roles in shaping these experiences. Attributes of streamers, ranging from their authenticity to their expertise, can sway viewer opinions. Platform features, like user interface, interactive elements, and real-time responsiveness, can make or break the viewer experience. The inherent qualities of products showcased, and the ambient social dynamics further add layers of complexity to this equation.

At the heart of this myriads of factors lies the emotional responses they elicit. Emotional satisfaction, stemming from positive interactions, authentic engagements, and genuine product value, becomes the linchpin. When consumers feel emotionally connected and satisfied, their behaviors align more favorably with the platform's objectives. They are not only more inclined to make repeated purchases but are also more willing to increase their spending.

1.2.1 Live Streaming Commerce Streamers

The most significant innovation of live streaming commerce is offering persuasive information to consumers and motivating them to make purchase decisions (Erkan & Evans, 2016). Streamers are the ones who provide information to consumers. This is regarded as an advantage of live streaming commerce compared with traditional e-commerce, which enables consumers to be more informed when they make shopping decisions. When consumers tend to be attracted by a streamer in live streaming commerce, they would perceive the agreement of the streamer's behavior, and attitude and then have the desire to know the streamer's opinion or feelings. This phenomenon is categorized as an endorsement which usually involves three characteristics: attractiveness, expertise, and trustworthiness (Ohanian, 1990). The major responsibility of streamers in live streaming commerce is to present product or service information correctly and integrally in real-time, which combines their gestures (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). During the streaming process, streamers will reveal their appearance and voice, and offer personalized service and guidance to customers (Sun et al., 2019). Meanwhile, viewers can predict streamers' credibility and attractiveness in this environment based on simple clues or heuristic reasoning (Sun et al., 2019). When streamers' popularity reaches a certain level, their recommendation of products in live streaming commerce can be regarded as the same as celebrities do, thus called the endorsement effect. The celebrity endorsement effect has been tested to improve the positive impression of a product or brand in customers' minds and then enhance customers' purchase behavior (Hsu et al., 2012).

In China, live streaming commerce tends to have four major kinds of streamers. The first type is talent streamers who are more like key opinion leaders (KOL). This type of streamer already influences their target audiences and affects them to try and

accept new products or services through their posts on their social media page (Jafari et al., 2011). Their popularity is regarded as one of their strengths. Regularly, KOLs signed the contract with multi-channel network enterprises which carries the responsibility of live streaming commerce's positive operation. KOLs with the advantage of rich experience in broadcasting and their popularity can boost the live streaming commerce conversion rate which refers to the result of the number of sales divided by the total number of viewers during the live streaming session (36Kr, 2020). The challenge of talent streamers is also obvious. There is a direct association between the number of followers owned by streamers (i.e., streamers' fame) and the live streaming commerce sales (36Kr, 2020). Thus, competition between streamers is very severe, and streamers also need to improve their popularity which will result in sales in live streaming commerce sessions. The second type of streamers in China is celebrities who originally with a career in performing, singing, or TV program hosts. Unlike KOLs, celebrities' fame is usually associated with their works, and their endorsement not only sticks with social media platforms but also expands that to TV, printed advertising, radio, and movies. Like KOLs, celebrities own a certain number of followers who would accept the celebrity endorsement effect in live streaming commerce, and this could be counted as their advantage. Celebrities as streamers also have challenges, like viewers may join the live streaming channel out of curiosity without high purchase intention.

The third type of streamers are animation figures which are usually shown as cute figures with sweet voices. This type of streamer has the advantage of no limitation on working hours, they can broadcast at the off-peak hours. The weakness of this type of streamer is poor interaction ability due to the technical settings, robot streamers can simply reply with easy inquiries. The last type of streamers is the brand's employees