

The Impact of Live streamers' Characteristics on Female Consumers' Purchasing Behavior in the Southeast Asian E-Commerce Market

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Abstract. The rise of technology has redefined consumer culture with novel corporate and social trends worthy of academic scrutiny. The study uses the para-social interaction (PSI) theory perspective to understand consumer behavioral intentions influenced by live streamers' characteristics. Additionally, the researcher adopts quantitative analysis and psychology research methods to test consumers' response/behavior to live streamers on Livestream shopping. Data is collected from 87 participants; a group of Asian women with the aim of acquiring an overview of commerce live streamers on the consumer purchase behaviour in the women's wear category. From the analysis, the results show that different live streamers' characteristics control customers' purchasing behavior. A strong positive correlation sensed between live streamers' physical and social attractiveness and consumer purchase decisions across the sample population. Additionally, the analysis records a restrained yet significant positive correlation between live streamers' professional ability and consumers' purchase decisions. The results restate trust in live streamers' aids in chain-mediation mechanisms. Clients' interactions, especially in Livestream platforms, determine live streamers' characteristics on PSI. Nonetheless, its significance is felt across the entire chain of mediation. Such variable bears a significant influence in only live streamers' physical and social attractiveness. Therefore, it does not affect the live streamers' professionalism. The study contributes to the demanding scope of literature on the growing frontiers of integrating live streaming tools and online social ecosystems across existing eCommerce infrastructure to influence consumer purchase decisions and its impact on contemporary consumerism culture.

Keywords: Livestream shopping, live streamer's characteristics, online marketing strategies, para-social interaction (PSI) theory perspective.

1 Introduction

Livestream shopping is one of the market strategies deployed in the developed world that have revolutionized the business world. Companies have used the strategy to boost their sales,

financial success, and visibility in the competitive marketplace. A significant example is the Southeast Asian e-commerce market. Many web celebrity live streamers are emerging in the continent, using different tools and strategies to ensure higher sales and revenue for businesses. The live streamers are part of an interactive and intuitive web experience that connects people and allow them to share experiences. Unlike the traditional concept of representative marketing, the live streamers directly interact with the consumers, offer tailored content, and shape instinctual experiences (Kim & Lennon, 2013). They can market products through live streaming platforms and popularize them among web buyers. Although these products are advertised over the web, they have gained massive uptake and success as live streamer-specific characteristics influence buyers to consider certain consumption patterns. According to Parayitam and Dooley (2009), the model became popular across the Southeast Asian region with a remarkable success record in 2021, with the highest-grossing Livestream shopping that earned 9.2 billion yuan. Li Jiaqi and Viya are among the renowned live streamers in China. They set the stage for a new wave of live streamers that can define new marketing strategies and consumer shopping platforms. Therefore, the model is a new concept that taps into the workings of the modern internet ecosystems, exploiting the millions of interactive channels and well-built and intuitive e-commerce systems.

Even though Southeast Asia is among the few places that promote Livestream shopping, it is lucid to appreciate that the marketing strategy is unacquainted to many nations, hence the need for academic research to define a working and transferable model. Nonetheless, there is a need to understand live streamers' characteristics as a critical enablers of consumer purchase decisions. Live streamer's characteristics are essential in linking web celebrities and Livestream products that control customers' purchasing behavior (Ming et al., 2021). Two variables determine the survival of the Livestream community broadcast. The first one is the power of an organization to retain its clients on the platform. Secondly, attracting new people to understand the e-commerce channel achieves sustainability. Retaining clients to the platform is essential as it aids in promoting the company's vitality, consumer brand evaluation, and purchasing influence. Nonetheless, Livestream broadcasts are essential since they aid in inducing the brand beyond market barriers and create awareness (Yilmaz, 2016). Companies that opt for celebrity intervention tend to succeed more than those that do not (Montoya, 2008). Celebrities tend to have a loyal fanbase that acts as a resourceful network for promoting the uptake and success of the endorsed products or services. Ideally, the Livestream shopping model borrows from traditional representative marketing to position the company and achieve success. Ming et al. (2021) explores the social presence influences the impulsive buying behavior in live-streaming commerce. The study confirms a correlation between impulsive purchase decisions and the interactive and intuitive experience during Livestream shopping.

Although the world has significantly evolved, traditional advertising methods are popular, and live streaming has significantly reshaped the traditional communication model. Live streamers are effective agents in the extensive corporate process as they interact with the consumers over the web and display business products through trial play and trying out -a new and intuitive experience that is a key to the contemporary consumer. Consumers have the power to interact with the live streamers in real time using bullet screens. The tailored experience enhances the customer-live streamer relationship (Yilmaz, 2016). The study consults and integrates the parasocial interaction (PSI) theory to understand the impact of live streamers' characteristics on female consumers' Livestream purchasing behavior in the Southeast Asian e-commerce market.

PSI model is practical and leading in the analysis as Livestream clients consider media live streamers as real individuals sharing real experiences (Qin, 2020). A para-social environment is created in Livestream shopping as it possesses the power of using real-time video interactive marketing. Nonetheless, online interaction propensity is essential as it allows different web users to interact with other individuals on the same platform. The interaction propensity show variation in individuals and online platforms.

2 Literature Review

Kim and Lennon (2013) live streaming is popular in the developed world as a marketing strategy for businesses. Companies use online and interactive platforms to sell their products to potential clients on a real-time streaming feel. The process resonates around product display, and customers interact with different media, including videos, games, and interactive chats. Ming et al, Jia F and Chen Z (2021) note that most consumers across Asia prefer the Livestream platform since it displays a realistic product environment and real-time processes. According to Qin (2020), live streamers are popular in the developed world and depend on social networking sites to connect with fans and build their network. Most of these live streamers are from the grassroots and not highly renowned celebrities. Most successful live streamers understand the offered products, as such information is critical in delivering the best and most informed experience. Nonetheless, they should understand the livelihood of the consumers and connect with them on the platform. According to Yilmaz (2016), social relationships are promoted on such sites as clients can question the live streamers, seek technical clarification, contribute to conversation, and define new discourse trends. However, the interaction is predominantly revenue-seeking by calling consumers to purchase certain products and support the brands.

Para-Social interaction is an essential component in the technological world as it is a consequence of the theory of social interaction. Technically, it describes the connection between users and media personalities. Qin (2020) states that the audience in PSI easily communicates with media characters, and most of them on the platform perceive each other as real friends. During the Livestream, it is essential to understand that live streamers are the media personalities, and the customers are the audiences. Based on the analysis of PSI, live streamers' characteristics play vital roles in determining clients' purchasing power (Yilmaz, 2016). Most studies categorize some of the live streamers' characteristics determining the purchasing power of customers as social and physical attractiveness and professional ability.

Physical attractiveness explains why consumers may prefer to purchase a product on the Livestream platform due to the physical appearance of the live streamer. Appearance is a highly subjective characteristic that shapes human interactions and connections (Parayitam & Dooley, 2009). It plays an indispensable role in swaying people's minds. Social attractiveness helps customers to purchase products based on the live streamers'. These explain how the live streamer relates to the clients in the Livestream platform and can also affect their moods and attitudes (Montoya et al., 2008). Professional ability defines the technical competence of the live streamer in understanding the product and interacting with the consumers with an inherent objective of promoting the brand and sales conversation. Ideally, professionalism is an intricate balance of using social cues, and the technical process is building a serious and objective-oriented platform that delivers across social and corporate areas. The Livestream shopping

experience is a nexus between working technological systems that can provide and sustain the consumerism culture and an interactive social experience that connects the masses. Therefore, the study defines the following hypotheses;

H1: The physical attractiveness of live streamers positively influences customers' purchasing behaviors on Livestream platforms.

H2: The social attractiveness of live streamers significantly influences clients' purchasing behavior.

H3: Live streamers' professional ability influences customers' knowledge of the product and significantly contributes to their purchasing decisions.

3 Methodology

A. Research Philosophy and Commerce Approach

Melnikovas (2018) states the research philosophy which creates the basis for the study. In that work, the study adopts a positivism paradigm. The philosophy is adopted as there is need for explicit procedures in the establishment of a statistical relationship and procedural activity between the variables. In addition, another reason for the use of the philosophy is the hypothetico-deductive model linked by logical rules. The model is based on assumption, stating in a way that factor A results to factor B and since the researcher focuses on livestream e-commerce broadcast, a positivistic nature of inquiry is more likely to generate measurements that will control the findings. Research approaches can be categorized into inductive, abductive and deductive. The researcher adopts a deductive approach since the general research aim supports this approach, comparably, the approach is considered most appropriate for its significant contribution towards determining the causal links between the variables. In the body of literature gathered on the investigation of livestream e-commerce broadcasting, there exists sufficient studies and theories to draw inferences from and determine the impact on the purchasing behavior of consumers. Additionally, the approach is known to recognize the effects of the variables.

B. Research Strategy

When carrying out research, two forms of strategies can be utilized: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research places emphasis on the numerical collection and analysis of data. Contrastingly, qualitative research emphasizes on words, attitudes and feelings of the participants (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The researcher adopts the quantitative strategy; survey forms, in seeking answers to the research questions. A questionnaire is most preferred since it reduces the chances of bias. This is due to the fact that it is presented to all subjects in a similar manner with no 'middleman' interpreting data during compilation. Also, there is a lesser likelihood that the questionnaire will be influenced by researcher bias as the researcher cannot influence answers using non-verbal and verbal cues.

C. Research Design

The study adopts a descriptive research design to provide data on the nature and extent of commerce live streamers on the purchasing behavior of consumers. The design encompasses a process of systematically describing the attributes of the given population, in this case, Asian women. Most importantly, using this design, the researcher aims to explore personal experiences.

D. Sampling

For quantitative data, the study uses the simple random sampling technique. This technique involves the random selection of a subset of population. For this technique, each member presents an equal and random chance of selection. According to Thomas (2022), the simple random sampling technique is the most straightforward as it involves the most random and single selection and at the same time, requires little advance knowledge on the selected population. As the technique focuses on randomization, Thomas (2022) argues that any study adopting this technique is likely to register a high external and internal validity. Acharya et al. (2013) claimed that the reason behind the frequent use of this technique is the ease of gathering the sample size. Data is collected from 87 participants; a group of Asian women with the aim of acquiring an overview of commerce live streamers on the consumer purchase behavior in the women's wear category

E. Data Analysis and Regression

As it is a quantitative study, descriptive and inferential analyses were conducted. Descriptive analysis aids in the constructive summarization of data points that provide quantitative description and patterns, inferential analysis, on the other hand, uses sample quantitative data to draw inferences and conclusions (Byrne 2007). Ahrens (2022) state the use of regression in stacking the business data through the learning economical behaviour of a market or product.

F. Ethical Considerations

The current study ensured that participants were provided with information on the objective of the study. Additionally, the awareness process ensured voluntary participation on the basis of the participant's knowledge and experience. Voluntary research terms allowed participants to understand that no incentives would be provided for research participation and that withdrawal was at their convenience. Lastly, confidentiality was reassured to the participants and maintained

4 Results

A. Demographic Information

A majority of the participants were aged between 36 and 45, followed by those aged between 18 and 25, and this is shown in the table below:

Table 1. Participant age information statistics table

| Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|

| | | | | | |
|-------|----------|----|-------|-------|-------|
| Valid | 18-25 | 22 | 25.3 | 25.3 | 25.3 |
| | 26-35 | 21 | 24.1 | 24.1 | 49.4 |
| | 36-45 | 36 | 41.4 | 41.4 | 90.8 |
| | Above 45 | 8 | 9.2 | 9.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 87 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

All the participants in this study were female, and this is because the researcher targeted only female participants.

Table 2. Participant gender information statistics table

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|--------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Female | 87 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Most of the participants in this study had achieved at least a bachelor's degree, and as such, the sample in this study was highly educated, and this is shown in the table below:

Table 3. Participant education levels information statistics table

| Level of education | | | | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Cumulative | | | | | |
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Percent |
| Valid | Highschool | 23 | 26.4 | 26.4 | 26.4 |
| | Diploma | 10 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 37.9 |
| | Bachelors | 27 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 69.0 |
| | Masters | 27 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 87 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

B. Testing Hypothesis

The decision rule for testing the hypotheses in this case is as follows:

Since the analysis is done at 95% CI, the critical value would be 0.05, and all variables that show p values that are <0.05, show statistical significance. Coefficient tables with more

variables with p values <0.05 are an indication that the hypothesis is supported, otherwise it is not.

H1: The physical attractiveness of live streamers positively influences customers' purchasing behaviors on livestream platforms.

R =0.491 as shown in the table below, and this shows a fairly weak correlation between the predictors and the outcome. The predictors or the independent variables also explain 24.2% of the outcome as shown by R square = 0.242.

Table 4. Model Summary of Testing Hypothesis 1

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted Square | RStd. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | .491 ^a | .242 | .195 | 1.113 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), I am naturally drawn to live streamers I view as attractive, I believe physical attractiveness of an live streamer is an important factor that should be considered by all consumers, I tend to trust live streamers that I perceive as attractive, The demeanor of the live streamer influences by decision to purchase, The physical appearance of the live streamer is an important factor for me when watching a livestream platform

F (5, 81) =5.159, p value < 0.05, which is an indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome. This is shown in the table below.

Table 5. Indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 31.938 | 5 | 6.388 | 5.159 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 100.292 | 81 | 1.238 | | |
| | Total | 132.23 | 86 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: Physical attractiveness of anchors influence my intention to purchase on livestream platforms | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), I am naturally drawn to anchors I view as attractive, I believe physical attractiveness of an anchor is an important factor that should be considered by all consumers, I tend to trust anchors that I perceive as attritive, The demeanor of the anchor influences by decision to purchases, The physical appearance of the anchor is an important factor for me when watching a livestream platform | | | | | | |

Most of the predictors/items of the questionnaires showed p values <0.05, and this is an indication that the hypothesis H1 has been supported.

Table 6: Indication that the hypothesis H1 has been supported.

| Coefficients | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------------|------------|--------------------------------|--------|-------|
| 1 | Model | Unstandardized Coefficients Bate | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Bate | T | Sig. |
| | (Constant) | -2.139 | 2.454 | | -0.872 | 0.386 |
| | The demeanor of the anchor influences by decision to purchase | 0.067 | 0.175 | 0.06 | 0.384 | 0.002 |
| | The physical appearance of the anchor is an important factor for me when watching a livestream platform | 0.54 | 0.392 | 0.27 | 1.378 | 0.172 |
| | I tend to trust anchors that I perceive as attractive | 0.863 | 0.236 | 0.71 | 3.661 | 0.000 |
| | I believe physical attractiveness of an anchor is an important factor that should be considered by all consumers | -0.009 | 0.172 | -0.006 | -0.055 | 0.047 |
| | I am naturally drawn to anchors I view as attractive | -0.47 | 0.174 | -0.044 | -0.268 | 0.789 |
| a. Dependent Variable : Physical attractiveness of anchors positively influence my intentions to purchase on livestream platforms | | | | | | |

H2: The social attractiveness of live streamers significantly influences the purchasing behavior of clients.

R = 0.598 as shown in the table below, and this shows a fairly strong correlation between the predictors and the outcome. The predictors or the independent variables also explain 35.7% of the outcome as shown by R square = 0.357.

Table 7: Model Summary of Testing Hypothesis 2

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .598 ^a | .357 | .334 | .880 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), How an live streamer relates to the audience influences my mood in the livestream platform, Live streamers that have likeable characters are more likely to be listened to, A socially attractive live streamer is more engaging

$F(3, 83) = 15.379$, p value < 0.05 , which is an indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome. This is shown in the table below.

Table 8: Indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome.

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|--|------------|----------------|----|-------------|--------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 35.710 | 3 | 11.901 | 15.379 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 64.244 | 83 | .774 | | |
| | Total | 99.954 | 86 | | | |
| a. Dependent Variable: Social attractiveness of anchors will more likely influence my purchasing behavior | | | | | | |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), How an anchor relates to the audience influences my mood in the livestream platform, Anchors that have likeable characters are more likely to be listened to, A socially attractive anchor is more engaging | | | | | | |

Most of the predictors/items of the questionnaires showed p values < 0.05 , and this is an indication that the hypothesis H2 has been supported.

Table 9: Indication that the hypothesis H2 has been supported.

| Coefficients | | | | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| 1 | (Constant) | .969 | .981 | | .988 | 0.326 |
| | Anchors that have likeable characters are more likely to be listened to | -0.43 | 0.108 | -.038 | -.399 | 0.691 |

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| | A socially attractive anchor is more engaging | .827 | 0.143 | .557 | 5.783 | 0.000 |
| | How an anchor related to the audience influences my mood in the livestream platform | -0.101 | 0.081 | -0.114 | -1.254 | 0.213 |
| a. Dependent Variable : Social attractiveness of anchors will more likely influence my purchasing behavior | | | | | | |

H3: Live streamers' professional ability influences customers' knowledge of the product and significantly contributes to their purchasing decisions

R = 0.155 as shown in the table below, and this shows a weak correlation between the predictors and the outcome. The predictors or the independent variables also explain 2.4% of the outcome as shown by R square = 0.024.

Table 10: Model Summary of Testing Hypothesis 3

Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | .155 ^a | .024 | -.011 | 1.323 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), A knowledgeable live streamer inspires confidence on the quality of the product on livestream, The live streamer's ability to understand the product knowledge influences if I believe him/her or not, only a knowledgeable live streamer is likely to convince me to purchase

F (3, 83) = 4.680, p value < 0.05, which is an indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome. This is shown in the table below.

Table 11: Indication that the model in this case significantly predict the outcome.

| ANOVA | | | | | | |
|-------|------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-------------------|
| Model | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 3.571 | 3 | 1.190 | .680 | .007 ^b |
| | Residual | 145.349 | 83 | 1.751 | | |
| | Total | 148.920 | 86 | | | |

| |
|--|
| a. Dependent Variable: Anchors' professional ability influences my knowledge of the product and significantly contributes to my decision to purchase |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), A knowledgeable anchor inspires confidence on the quality of the product on livestream, The anchor's ability to understand the product knowledge influences if I believe him/ her or not, only a knowledgeable anchor is likely to convince to purchase |

Most of the predictors/items of the questionnaires showed p values <0.05, and this is an indication that the hypothesis H3 has been supported.

Table 12: Indication that the hypothesis H3 has been supported.

| Coefficients | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|-------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| (Constant) | 3.469 | .795 | | 4.362 | 0.000 |
| The anchor's ability to understand the product knowledge influences if I believe him/her or not | .111 | 0.121 | .100 | .916 | 0.362 |
| Only a knowledgeable anchor is likely to convince me to purchase | -.072 | 0.157 | -.051 | -.460 | 0.046 |
| A knowledgeable anchor inspires confidence on the quality of the product on the livestream | -0.96 | .126 | -0.085 | -.762 | 0.048 |

5 Conclusion

The current study investigated the impact of live streamers' characteristics on female consumers' livestream purchasing behavior in the Southeast Asian e-commerce market. It establishes that the live streamers' physical attractiveness positively influences customers' purchasing behaviors on livestream platforms. The study also established that live streamers' social attractiveness significantly influences the purchasing behavior of clients. Live streamers' professional ability was also found to influence customers' knowledge of the product and significantly contribute to their purchasing decisions.

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