

**THE IMPACT OF LIVE STREAMING ON CONSUMER PURCHASE
BEHAVIOUR IN E-COMMERCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE CHINA
MARKET**

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ABSTRACT

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Live streaming is the new type of social media, delivering real-time video content over the internet, combined with interactive features that allow users to engage directly with hosts and other viewers. Live streaming e-commerce has gained huge popularity and has been growing rapidly worldwide. It is transforming the way consumers shop.

A qualitative research approach was used to conduct the study. Eleven key interview questions were developed to gather detailed information from participants. The aim was to understand their behavior, preferences, and reasons for engaging with live streaming content. The findings from this case study revealed that live streaming has a great effect on online shopping behavior in China. Consumers engage in live streaming because of the real-time interactions, detailed production information, the entertainment, and their trust on influencers. Furthermore, consumers tend to make immediate purchasing decisions when hosts provide instant feedback and highlight great deals.

Overall, this research shows how important live streaming is in shaping the way people shop online. It gives useful insights for brands and marketers who want to better understand and connect with their customers.

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1 INTRODUCTION

E-commerce refers to the process of selling physical products online directly to individual consumers (B2C). People make online purchases through laptops, computers, and mobile devices. According to Lucier (2024), the live streaming e-commerce market in China grew rapidly during the COVID-19 pandemic, hitting US\$450 billion by 2021, US\$695 billion in 2023. Even after the pandemic, this growth has continued, suggesting a lasting shift toward live commerce among Chinese consumers. As shown in Figure 1, this market has expanded steadily since 2019, with projections from Lucier (2024) indicating it will surpass the US\$1 trillion mark by 2026.

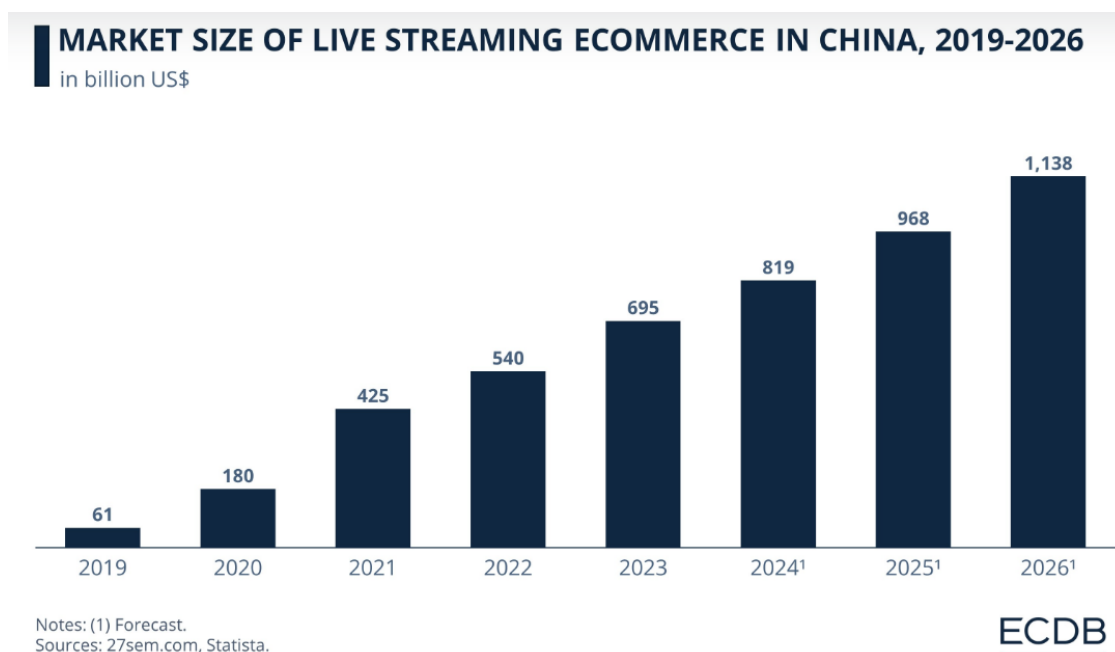


Figure 1 Market size of live streaming ecommerce in China, 2019-2026 (Sources: 27sem.com, Statista.)

But what exactly is live streaming e-commerce? It is a method of broadcasting real-time video content to accelerate online shopping. During these live commerce sessions, hosts present products, interact directly with viewers, and answer their questions, creating an engaging and interactive shopping experience. Meanwhile, viewers can communicate with each other through comments or

emojis. The interactions between the viewers and between the hosts and the viewers on that live channel give a lively social interaction experience. (Xu & Ye 2020.)

Understanding the main live streaming platforms is essential for comprehending this e-commerce model. As said by (Chen & Yang 2023), short video sites like Douyin, Kuaishou, and TikTok (the U.S. version of Douyin) provide a strong pool of commercial live streamers. Social networking sites such as Xiaohongshu, WeChat, Facebook, and Instagram increase content dissemination. Moreover, e-commerce platforms like Taobao, Shopee, and Lazada use their large user bases and data analytics to support the development of top commercial live streamers.

The primary objective of this research is to develop a conceptual model (shown in Figure 4) that illustrates how live streaming impacts online shopping behavior, with a particular focus on consumer engagement and the role of influencer marketing within live streaming e-commerce. This research addresses two key questions: (1) How do influencers affect Chinese consumer purchase decisions? (2) What drives consumer engagement in live streaming? Furthermore, it seeks to help retailers, marketers, and scholars to understand the impact of live streaming e-commerce on consumer purchasing behavior. By collecting these insights, brands and marketers can develop and innovate effective marketing strategies, reaching more consumers and increasing sales.

This research consists of seven main parts: introduction, influencer marketing, consumer engagement, research methodology, findings, discussion and implications. The influencer marketing part examines the role of influencers in live streaming e-commerce, influencer marketing strategies, impact of real-time interactions on consumer buying behavior, challenges and opportunities in influencer marketing. The consumer engagement part focuses on how consumers participate in discussions, follow influencers' recommendations, and become loyal customers through the interactions during live streaming sessions. The empirical study part covers interviewing live streaming e-commerce users in China, defining data collection methods, analytical tools, ethical considerations, and research limitations. The finding part provides an in-depth analysis of the data collected

from interviewees and presents how live streaming impacts consumer purchasing behavior. Lastly, the discussion part explores the results of this empirical study in relation to the theoretical framework and considers what the findings mean to brands and marketers.

This study analyzes how live streaming influences online shopping behavior, focusing on influencer marketing and consumer engagement. The goal of the study is to help brands and marketers develop better strategies to connect with consumers and increase sales through live streaming.

2 INFLUENCER MARKETING

As mentioned by Song et al. (2022) influencer marketing is widely adopted in social commerce, which leverages the role of influencers in influencing consumer preferences and purchasing decisions. Most previous studies of influencer marketing have been conducted in non-commercial settings, such as social media platforms such as Twitter and video platforms such as TikTok. In terms of marketing outcomes, most field studies of influencer marketing are interested in consumer engagement on social media platforms, including likes, comments, and shares. Customer acquisition is also an important goal of influencer marketing. On social media platforms such as Facebook, companies and influencers actively attract fans, often by investing in paid advertising, to expand the reach of their content on the platform.

2.1 Influencer marketing in live streaming e-commerce

Chen & Yang (2023) state that in the field of live streaming e-commerce research, influencer marketing explores how live streamers can impact consumers to improve marketing outcomes. First, concerning the effect of influencers on their audiences, live streamers have been found to particularly increase the intention to continue watching, decrease psychological distance, strengthen interactive participation, and encourage purchase intentions among viewers. Second, regarding the factors related to influencers, it has been established that the appeal of the live streamers significantly impacts the buying intentions of viewers. Attributes such as professionalism, trustworthiness, and popularity have been shown to have a major influence. Moreover, the benefits and features of the platform itself play an important role in boosting consumer purchase intention. These features include interactivity, visibility, and entertainment value. A large literature supports the considerable effect these website characteristics have on purchase intentions, thereby enhancing the marketing effectiveness of influencer marketing. Lastly, in examining the processes through which influencers shape consumer decisions, it has been found that building trust or fostering identification with

consumers and highlighting the value of live streaming platforms cultivate a positive consumer mindset. This serves as the core mechanism driving the success of influencer marketing.

2.2 The role of influencers in live streaming e-commerce

As the hosts of live streaming events, influencers serve as the motivation cause behind livestream shopping. Influencers vary in numerous ways, but two key attributes stand out: (1) Social impact: the ability of influencers to draw a large audience to their livestream is known as their social impact. By watching the livestreams, consumers are introduced to the recommended products, making the potential market size closely tied to this feature. (2) Credibility of endorsements: This refers to an influencer's capability to assess and convey the actual quality of products. Higher endorsement credibility indicates that the influencer can more accurately communicate the product's quality to consumers. (Hou, Shen & Xu 2022.)

The characteristics of the influencer are categorized into three primary components: 1) the influencer's appeal, 2) the influencer's expertise, and 3) the influencer's interaction with the audience. (Chen-Leino 2023.)

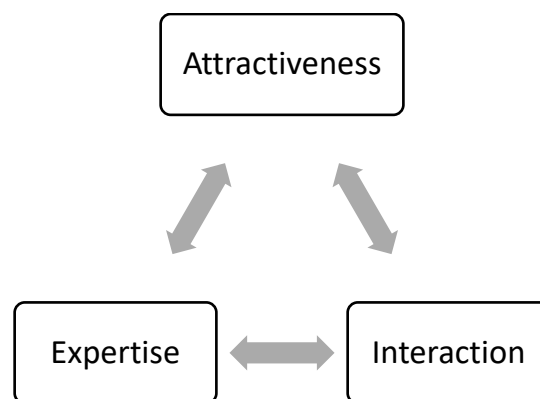


Figure 2 Modified influencer characteristics

As stated by Chen-Leino (2023), the attractiveness of an influencer is shaped by their physical appearance and personality. An influencer's physical attractiveness significantly contributes to their ability to attract followers and achieve popularity. Additionally, consumers are frequently attracted to influencers because of their

engaging personality traits, such as humor and honesty. This corresponds with the audience's desire to view livestreams of influencers who contain the qualities they admire.

An influencer's expertise refers to their knowledge and experience within the specific category of the products they promote. In the field of livestream marketing, this expertise is measured by the accuracy of product information and the effective demonstrations of product usage that the influencer delivers, making it an important characteristic. During livestream shopping, consumers can ask questions about product specifications and receive instant replies from the influencer. Furthermore, the influencer showcases the products during the livestream, allowing consumers to gain a direct visual experience. The high-quality product information provided by the influencer can greatly boost consumers' intention to purchase. (Chen-Leino 2023.)

Direct interaction enabled by live streamers also provides immediate feedback and clarification, further impacting consumer decision-making processes. Additionally, increased interactions lead to greater mutual trust. The professionalism, popularity, engagement, and similarity of online opinion leaders significantly influence consumers' trust. This trust, acting as an intermediary variable, positively affects purchase intentions and shows a strong correlation with them. (Yang et al. 2024.)

Based on Hou et al. (2022), influencers typically dedicate a big amount of time and effort to evaluate and choose products to showcase, as well as to negotiate with brands for price reductions. Items featured in livestreams hosted by leading influencers or live streamers can be offered at discounts ranging from 30% to 60% off their standard prices. If brands approach influencers without offering substantial concessions, their products are unlikely to be included in the livestream. While watching livestreams, consumers can ask about product features and request specific demonstrations. The immediate aspect of livestreaming, along with the influencer's concern for their reputation, reduces the likelihood of influencers misleading consumers. It is also common for influencers to inform consumers about any flaws of products during the livestream. If influencers mistakenly

promote a low-quality item as a high-quality one and sell it at a relatively high price, their reputation can suffer significant harm.

In the live streaming format, drawing consumers to view the streams and engage in the interaction is the prerequisite for the success of the broadcast. To motivate consumers to participate in live broadcasting, influencers or brands have designed a series of incentive mechanisms. For example, Taobao live broadcast hosts often use red envelopes, coupons, lucky draws and other activities to attract consumers to participate in likes, comments, and sharing. The cash red envelopes or coupons received by consumers after completing the interaction can be directly deducted when purchasing goods. (Zhang & Xu 2024.)

According to Sekkei Digital (2024), the Chinese market operates exceptional well in the influencer marketing empire. While the rest of the world began selling through real-time content during the pandemic, China has been benefiting of this trend since 2016. Live streaming hosts are essentially Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs), and as a result, Chinese viewers are more likely to put their trust and money in products recommended through these channels. Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) in China have huge influence, reaching audiences from tens of thousands to millions, depending on the platform. For example, one of the top KOLs, Viya once sold over US \$30 million worth of products in a single live-streaming session. Another top influencer, Li Jiaqi, generated US \$1.3 billion in sales on the first day of the 11.11 Singles' Day promotions. These influencers not only promote products but also create trends through real-time interactions and their industry expertise, fostering emotional connections with consumers and converting them into loyal customers.

2.3 Strategies and impact of influencers in live streaming e-commerce

Yesiloglu & Costello (2021, 9) define that an influencer is someone who strategically influences individual behavior and purchasing decisions on digital platforms. They can operate on any communication platform but typically serve a niche audience that trusts their power, authority and expertise in a specific field, product, industry or brand. These key elements (power, authority and expertise) are

significant to making influencer marketing effective as they rely on a dedicated target audience that trusts and values their opinions.

Furthermore, Yesiloglu et al. (2021, 8) point out that some researchers are now studying “ordinary” individuals who have a significant influence on their followers. To define what makes a non-celebrity (or ordinary person) an “influencer,” scholars have created various terms for these individuals, such as “instafamous” (Marwick 2015), “micro-celebrity” (Khamis, Ang & Welling 2017), “market maven,” or “opinion leader” (McQuail & Windahl 1993; Northouse 2016; Lin, Bruning & Swarna 2018).

As mentioned by Yesiloglu et al. (2021, 11), social media provides an interactive space where all users can view or create a variety of content. While users do not need to be celebrities or well-known brands, they can build their own communities and develop into micro-celebrities, achieving high levels of engagement in the digital sphere. These micro-celebrities or influencers can be various, ranging from high school students to fitness enthusiasts, travelers, and beauty experts (e.g., Marwick 2015; Abidin & Ots 2015; Saul 2016).

Given the significant role key opinion leaders (KOLs) play in live streaming sales, selecting the right KOL to promote live streaming sales is crucial. The characteristics of KOLs in live streaming sales include popularity, charm, recommendations, and presentation methods. KOLs are increasingly important in live streaming sales, as the combination of the network's physical environment and the unique traits of KOLs enable viewers to obtain rich product information in real time. In the context of the proliferation of live streaming sales channels and SKUs (stock keeping units), KOLs' popularity, professionalism, appeal to female fans, and quotations are the boundary conditions that affect live streaming sales. (Lyu, Qi & Liu 2024.)

2.4 Influencer marketing risks

Campbell & Farrell (2020) indicate that influencer marketing campaigns also come with risks. One of these risks is involving multiple individuals in branded content creation. Without clear guidelines, brands risk diluting their brand

meaning or even straying from corporate goals. Brands may also develop close and negative associations with individuals vulnerable to personal indiscretions or scandals. When influencers become more and more famous, their public visibility increases more and more. Influencers often have celebrity status, which can damage brand reputation if the influencer drifts away from brand expectations or engages in unethical behavior. Another intrinsic risk in influencer marketing is due to the focus on metrics in the past, which has led many influencers to spend money on follower bots or engagement bots to inflate their success metrics. While companies can try to avoid this problem by focusing on more powerful engagement rate metrics such as comments and shares, many influencers still buy follower bots to appear more competitive and attractive to brands.

As "public figures" with millions of fans, Internet celebrities are both role models and celebrities. They are subject to socialist moral expectations and responsibilities, as well as media and public supervision. Internet celebrities are the public face of China's social media entertainment industry and digital economy. The governance of this group of rich and famous "ordinary" people is intrinsically political. For example, at the end of December 2021, China's "live streaming queen" Wei Ya was fined \$210 million for tax evasion. Her Weibo, Douyin and Taobao accounts were blocked afterwards. (Xu, Qu & Zhang 2022.)

3 CONSUMER ENGAGEMENT

Zheng, Li & Na (2022) define that customer engagement behavior refers to the continuous voluntary actions taken by online viewers that are valuable to the e-retail store, go beyond the transaction itself, and originate from psychological intrinsic motivations stimulated by external factors (emotional or cognitive). Customer engagement can be considered as a series of actions taken by consumers in response to brand-related content on social media, such as reacting to content, commenting on content, sharing content with others, and posting user-generated content.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework has been broadly applied in the study of consumer engagement behaviors and has proven to work well with self-determination theory. As a result, using the S-O-R framework to study consumer engagement behaviors based on influencer advertising is viewed as a reasonable approach. (Gu & Duan 2024.) The SOR model provides a valuable framework for understanding how the various stimuli (S) provided by live streaming (e.g., host attractiveness, presentation quality, interactive elements) affect viewers' internal states (O) (e.g., emotional arousal, trust, perceived value), which in turn influence their responses (R), such as purchase intention or impulse buying. (Yang et al. 2024.) This is achieved through the activation of various pathways of an individual's cognitive and emotional states, which in turn lead to behavioral responses (Ul Islam & Rahman 2017). As illustrated in Figure 3, the Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Model (Marike 2018) highlights the relationship between external stimuli and consumer responses.

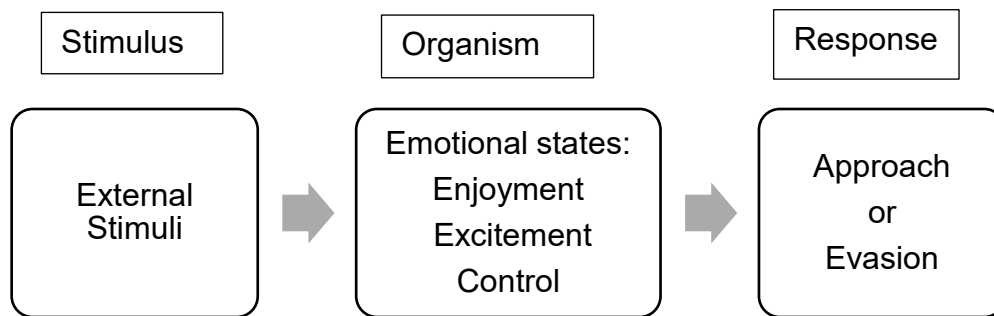


Figure 3 Stimulus Organism Response (SOR) Model (Marike 2018).

3.1 Engagement through real-time interactions in live streaming e-commerce

In accordance with Meng, Duan, Zhao, Lu & Chen (2021), live streamers in e-commerce engage with audiences in real time by broadcasting themselves playing video games, tasting food or beverages, or creating art in the moment. Viewers of the livestreams can also engage in social interaction with others by exchanging and sharing their thoughts. Real-time involvement fulfills the viewers' psychological desires for social connection and entertainment, leading to recognition, engagement, sharing, and purchasing actions. As livestreaming e-commerce becomes popular, consumers can exchange information and share their feelings with live streamers on live broadcast platforms, participating in various interactive activities.

Zhang & Shi (2022) state that in the online live broadcast room, consumers can use the live broadcast platform to see the seller's physical display on the other side of the communication port in real time and communicate with the seller through text. Generally, the live broadcast interface will be accompanied by a payment link, and consumers can place orders directly through the payment link and make transactions directly under the guidance of the seller. In other words,

with real-time physical display and the seller's hard sales guidance, consumers can make consumption decisions quickly.

During live shopping, consumers can interact with influencers in real time, including live video and chat boxes, and ask product details, recommendations, try-ons, and any product-related questions. Consumers are not only able to interact with influencers, but also with other consumers during live shopping. During live shopping, influencers may give consumers additional discounts to increase their desire to buy. Live shopping attracts more consumers than traditional online shopping because it provides clearer and more reliable product displays, instant and personalized product information, interactions with influencers and other viewers, and discounts. (Chen-Leino 2023.)

3.2 Engagement drivers and their impact on purchase intention in live streaming e-commerce

Trust in live streamers, platforms, and product quality plays an essential role in shaping the consumer decision-making process (Guo et al. 2021). Real-time interactions and special promotional offers during live streams can trigger impulsive purchases, thereby increasing consumers' purchase intentions (Huang & Suo 2021). Furthermore, Meng et al. (2021) discovered that consumers are significantly influenced by the emotions shown by influencers during live broadcasts. Emotions such as pleasure, admiration, excitement, and trust raise the viewers' willingness to make a purchase.

3.2.1 Trust as an engagement driver

Trust is an essential element that positively impacts purchase intentions in live streaming commerce. It is the consumer's expectation that the seller will behave appropriately to fulfill the promises made to the consumer. Trust plays a vital role in the live broadcast environment, because the product cannot be seen in person, so the trust in the live broadcaster and the platform must be high. Trust affects users' judgment and behavior online. Trust can be divided into cognitive trust and

affective trust. Cognitive trust is the customer's confidence or willingness to rely on the ability and reliability of the service provider; it comes from the accumulation of knowledge. If consumers trust the star and the star likes the brand, they will like the brand. This is an affective trust. Affective trust in a brand or product will increase consumers' willingness to buy that brand or product. (Yang et al. 2024.)

3.2.2 Emotional responses as engagement drivers

Emotional responses also play a significant role in influencing purchase intentions. The pleasant emotions that consumers experience when watching live broadcasts refer to the degree to which individuals feel happy, joyful, satisfied, etc. when watching live broadcasts, thereby increasing the degree of their product purchase behavior. (Meng et al. 2021.) Moreover, the arousal emotions characterized by feelings of stimulation, positivity, and alertness, also increase purchase intentions. The increased emotional engagement during live broadcasts contributes to a favorable consumer mindset that encourages buying behavior. (Meng et al. 2021.) Furthermore, the admiration consumers experience under the influence of the host and other audience members has a positive impact on consumers' purchase intentions. Admiration for celebrities motivates fans to buy celebrity-endorsed products. Admired brands attract more purchases, increase consumers' attitudes and behavioral intentions, and have greater engagement, connection, and loyalty. (Meng et al. 2021.)

3.2.3 Impulsivity and scarcity as engagement drivers

In addition to trust and emotional responses, impulsivity and scarcity are also key engagement drivers that influence live commerce purchase behavior. Yang et al. (2024) point out that impulsivity is characterized by spontaneous and unplanned decisions driven by emotions, which has a positive impact on purchase intention. As described by Beatty & Ferrell (1998), buying impulse represents consumers' natural tendency to make purchase decisions immediately without fully considering potential consequences. The phenomenon of impulse buying is often accompanied by heightened emotional reactions, making it an important factor in live

commerce (Zhang & Shi 2022). Scarcity promotions, which are often used in live broadcast environments, can boost consumers' excitement and lead to impulsive buying behavior. In addition, perceived scarcity may trigger panic buying because people foresee the regret of missing out. In this case, live scarcity promotions are increased by the visibility, authenticity, and interactivity of the platform interaction between buyers and sellers, which together influence consumers' purchase intention. Therefore, both external stimuli (such as promotional strategies) and internal psychological states drive impulsive buying behavior in the live broadcast field. (Qu, Khan, Su, Tong & Zhao 2023.)

3.3 Perceived risk

Based on Zhang & Yu (2020), perceived risk refers to the mental cost involved in consumers' purchasing behavior. It represents an uncertainty about the future, which directly affects consumers' willingness to buy.

Table 1 Levels of fear according to different types of risks when consumers shop online (Md Ariff, Sylvester, Zakuan, Ismail & Mat Ali 2014).

Rank	Type of risk	Observation
1	Economic risk	Respondents' biggest fear is the potential monetary loss from credit card fraud.
2	Quality risk	The second biggest concern is that the product may not meet quality expectations.
3	Time-related risk	Consumers worry that a product may not perform as advertised, leading to

		lengthy returns, and waiting periods.
4	Logistics risk	Consumers fear that deliveries might be delayed or that products could arrive damaged.
5	Data security risk	Consumers are concerned about sellers misusing their personal data and credit card information.
6	Emotional risk	Consumers doubt about electronic transactions, especially when the product is expensive or needed urgently.
7	Status risk	The least intense fear is social risk, which involves the concern that a misleading transaction could cause their reference group (family or friends) to criticize them for making a poor decision.

Heidar (2024) points out that performance risk involves concerns about product failure or failure to provide expected consumer benefits, including economic, material, and effort-related considerations. Financial risk involves the potential financial loss due to purchase or cheating. Time risk is related to the risk of wasting

time on an unsatisfactory purchase. Psychological risk involves the impact of product choices on consumer well-being and self-perception. Social risk includes the potential loss of social status due to product choices. Finally, privacy risk involves the potential loss of personal information. Consumer hesitancy to accept new technologies and engage in online transactions is often driven by perceived risk, which can lead to feelings of uncertainty and anxiety during the adoption process.

4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section defines the methodology used to study how live streaming influences consumer purchasing behavior in the Chinese e-commerce market. It includes descriptions of the research method, data collection and analysis, ethical considerations, and research limitations. Qualitative methods are chosen to gain in-depth insights from participants who engage in livestream shopping. The methodology used in this study ensures that both the research questions and objectives get effectively solved. In the opinion of Oranga & Matere (2023), qualitative research collects non-numerical data about people's lives, thoughts, and reactions to various situations. As a result, it provides insights into experiences, behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, and motivations. This type of research is particularly effective in gathering specific information about the behaviors, values, opinions, and social context of a particular group of people.

4.1 Research method

This section introduces a qualitative research design focusing on thematic analysis, which is considered the most suitable for this study. The research aims to address the following questions:

RQ1: How do influencers affect Chinese consumer purchase decisions?

RQ2: What drives consumer engagement in live streaming?

This study investigates essential patterns and themes related to consumer purchasing behavior through detailed interviews with a small sample of participants who engage in livestreaming shopping in China. The case study provides an in-depth analysis of China's unique e-commerce environment, thereby deepening the understanding of the impact of live streaming on purchasing decisions. According to Patten (2015), qualitative research methods are particularly well suited to exploring the deeper emotions and feelings of participants, providing insights that quantitative methods may lack. In addition, qualitative methods focus on

detailed analysis of smaller samples, making them particularly suitable for this type of research.

4.2 Data collection

The primary data will be collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions targeting Chinese consumers. These open-ended questions are designed to minimize bias and gain insight into the participants' behaviors. As suggested by Olsen (2012), semi-structured interviews provide flexibility in the order of questions, allowing for exploration of new ideas and answers as they emerge, making the interview a collaborative process. In this format, at least two participants (the interviewer and the interviewee) adopt a focused dialogue around key concepts, allowing for a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

4.3 Data analysis

Naeem, Ozuem, Howell & Ranfagni (2023) state that thematic analysis is a method of examining qualitative data to identify patterns by interpreting key words used by participants. Systematic thematic analysis involves six key steps: creating records and becoming familiar with the data; identifying key words; selecting codes; developing themes; conceptualizing by interpreting key words, codes, and themes; and finally, developing a conceptual model. These steps provide a structured approach to fully process qualitative data, thereby increasing the accuracy of the research and the depth of the findings.

The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis.

Step 1: Transcriptions from a total of six participants will be collected, with all data related to consumers' perceptions of influencer live streaming shopping emphasized.

Step 2: Interesting features and patterns related to live streaming's influence on consumer purchase behavior will be highlighted. Initial coding will be conducted.

Step 3: Codes will be grouped into themes that reflect key insights, such as consumer engagement, the live streamer's effect on consumer decision-making, emotional engagement, influencer credibility, and impulsive buying behavior.

Step 4: The themes will be refined to ensure they align with the research objectives.

Step 5: Comprehensive narratives will be developed, connecting the findings to existing literature and drawing conclusions about how live streaming influences consumer purchase behavior in the Chinese e-commerce sector.

Step 6: The validated themes and insights will be integrated into a conceptual model that visually illustrates the research findings.

4.4 Ethical considerations

Bell, Bryman & Harley (2022) state that during data collection, the research team will follow ethical procedures to address research questions related to consumer behavior in live streaming. The team will ensure participant privacy and anonymity, protect against allegations of misconduct, and communicate the study's purpose clearly. They will also remove identifying information from records, avoid offensive language, and ensure that participants understand the study's nature. By presenting and interpreting data transparently, the team will allow others to assess the credibility of the findings.

To maintain these ethical standards, participants will be informed of the study objectives and their role in the study. Their identities will be anonymized in the report, and personal information will be kept confidential. The data collected will be stored securely and will only be accessible to the researcher, thus protecting the rights of participants and maintaining the integrity of the research process.

4.5 Research limitations

This case study will be conducted only in the Chinese market and will not include the perspectives of consumers from other regions, which will limit the diversity of

age and geographic representation. As the interviews will be conducted in Chinese, some meaning may be lost when translated into English. Additionally, there is very limited research on impulse consumer buying behavior in the live streaming context, and this study will not examine factors such as consumer personality, product and livestream expectations, and financial background, and therefore will not fully capture the influence of live streamers. Furthermore, the small number of participants in this study means that the full range of Chinese consumers' experience with live streaming will not be reflected. As noted by Chen-Leino (2023), the phenomenon of influencing live streaming shopping is relatively new, and there are a limited number of studies on impulse buying in this context. Therefore, the characteristics of influencers are mainly summarized based on the existing influencer marketing literature, which means that these summaries may not reflect the latest trends. Despite the sampling strategy adopted by the researcher, the final respondents showed some similarities, such as age and geographical location. This raises concerns about the representativeness of the research results.

5 RESULTS

This section presents the key findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with six Chinese participants engaged in live streaming e-commerce. The interview questions aimed to explore participants' experiences, behaviors, and perceptions of live streaming shopping, especially its impact on their purchasing decisions. The participants' responses provided valuable insights into how live streaming influences consumer behavior, with themes appearing from the data such as consumer engagement, influence of live streamers, emotional responses, trust, and impulse buying.

5.1 Interviews

A total of six participants were interviewed via WeChat, a popular instant messaging app in China. Conducting interviews in Chinese enabled the participants to express their feelings and thoughts without language barriers, fostering more accurate and meaningful responses. Given the time zone differences between the researcher in Finland and the participants in China, the interviews were conducted through text messages and voice calls over a two-week period. The interview questions were sent via WeChat, and the participants responded in their own time, providing detailed answers. Eleven open-ended questions focused on participants' behaviors, experiences, and the impact of live streaming e-commerce on their purchasing decisions. As shown in Table 2, the interview framework includes themes, questions, and their purposes.

Table 2 Interview question framework

Themes	Questions	Purposes
Consumer engagement	- How often do you watch live online shopping events?	To assess both the frequency of consumer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you describe your overall experience? - How has live streaming influenced your purchasing decisions? 	behavior and the quality of the experience.
Influence of live streamers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What qualities do you look for in a live streamer? 	To identify the factors that influence participants' preference for specific live streamers.
Emotional engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does watching a live streaming session affect your emotions? - Do you usually make a purchase afterwards? 	To explore how live streaming affects participants' emotions and whether those feelings influence their buying decisions.
Influencer credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do you trust influencers in general? - Do you buy the products influencers recommend? - How do you think of influencers' credibility? 	To explore the role of trust in influencer marketing and how it impacts consumer behavior.
Impulsive buying behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have you ever bought any products impulsively during influencer live streaming sessions? 	To explore impulse buying during live streaming sessions and identify its triggers and behaviors.

	- If so, why did you buy something you did not need?	
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5.2 Data analysis

The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. Table 3 provides a demographic profile of the six interviewees, including their age, gender, profession, monthly income, hobbies, and how often they watch live streaming shopping events. After collecting the interview responses, the researcher read the transcriptions multiple times to ensure familiarity with the content. Initial coding focused on interesting features and patterns, which were then grouped into key themes. These themes reflect essential insights into consumer behaviors in live streaming e-commerce, including consumer engagement, the live streamer's effect on decision-making, emotional engagement, influencer credibility, and impulsive buying behavior.

Table 3 Interviewees' profile

Inter-viewee	Age	Gender	Profes-sion	Monthly income (€)	Hobbies	Fre-quency
1	69	F	Retiree	500	Shopping	Every day, whenever free
2	71	M	Retiree	700	Jogging, watching TV	3 times/week
3	51	F	Professor	3500	Shop-ping, trav-elling, reading	7 times/week

4	44	F	Housewife	4000	Travel- ling, shopping	4 times/week
5	21	F	University student	300	Reading, travelling, shopping, playing badmin- ton, swimming	Whenever free
6	27	M	Customer service specialist	1500	Playing video games, travelling	3 times/week

As shown in Table 4, the themes, codes (with quotes), and insights drawn from the interviews are summarised.

Table 4 Themes, codes with selected quotes, insights on consumer purchase behaviors in live streaming e-commerce

Themes	Codes (with quotes)	Insights
Consumer engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "I watch live online shopping events whenever free." - "The experience is exciting and pleasant." 	Consumers participate live online shopping events because they find them fun, enjoyable, and exciting, which motivates them coming back.
Influence of live streamers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "The streamer gives simple but clear descriptions about the 	The streamer's professionalism, patience, clarity, responsiveness,

	<p>product and answers my questions fast and clearly.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “He is professional, patient, and kind to old people.” 	<p>empathy, and trustworthiness are essential factors that may influence consumers’ purchasing decisions.</p>
Emotional engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I feel happy, excited, surrounded by people.” - “I get encouraged and become enthusiastic.” 	<p>Emotional engagement significantly influences consumer behavior in live streaming e-commerce.</p>
Influencer credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I admire that influencer so much; therefore, I buy anything he recommends as I consider it a way to support my idol!” 	<p>Trust and loyalty to influencers can remarkably affect consumer buying decisions.</p>
Impulsive buying behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “I have bought impulsively. It was my favorite influencer promoting, plus it was a limited offer.” - “Yes. I might not need the product now, but later I would find some use of it.” 	<p>The trust and urgency created by popular influencers and limited time offers encourage impulse purchases, often justified by anticipation of future use of the product.</p>

The insights from the six Chinese participants provide valuable evidence of how live streaming significantly influences consumer purchase behavior in e-

commerce. These findings emphasize the roles of real-time interactions, trust in influencers, emotional engagement, and impulsive buying behavior.

5.3 Thematic narratives of findings

This section presents a detailed analysis of the key themes that emerged from the semi-structured interviews with participants who engaged in live streaming e-commerce. The analysis underlined five main themes: consumer engagement, influence of live streamers, emotional engagement, influencer credibility, and impulsive buying behavior. The themes are analyzed through the participants' narratives and supported by existing literature to provide a deeper understanding of how live streaming influences consumers' purchasing decisions.

5.3.1 Consumer engagement

Consumers participate in live online shopping events because they find them fun, enjoyable, and exciting, which motivates them to keep coming back. As Participant 1 mentioned, "I watch live online shopping events every day, whenever I am free." Participant 3 similarly noted, "I like the experience and enjoy watching it; it is entertaining." According to Zheng et al. (2022), customer engagement behavior refers to the continuous voluntary actions taken by online viewers that are valuable to the e-retail store, go beyond the transaction itself, and stem from psychological intrinsic motivations stimulated by external factors (emotional or cognitive). These findings align with the responses of participants in this study.

5.3.2 Influence of live streamers

The streamer's professionalism, patience, clarity, responsiveness, empathy, and trustworthiness are essential factors that may influence consumers' purchasing decisions. As Participant 2 said, "The live streamer is patient and kind to old people. He teaches me to buy the product step by step." Participant 4 mentioned, "He gives simple but clear descriptions about the product. His description style attracts me. Participant 6 also noted, "The live streamer's expertise attracts me

to the online event. He explains the product in simple and easy-to-understand words but remains professional." This reflects the findings of Chen & Yang (2023), who emphasized that attributes such as professionalism, trustworthiness, and popularity are major influences on consumer decision-making.

5.3.3 Emotional engagement

Emotional engagement significantly influences consumer behavior in live streaming e-commerce. Participant 1 admitted, "I feel happy when I watch a live streaming session. I feel that I'm surrounded by people. I feel excited and alive." Participant 4 also stated, "I get encouraged and become enthusiastic. The atmosphere is good. I don't feel lonely at home when I watch it. Some live streamers are good at making people laugh. They are so funny." This aligns with research by Meng et al. (2021), who found that emotional responses play a significant role in influencing purchase intentions. The pleasant emotions that consumers experience when watching live broadcasts, such as feeling happy, joyful, satisfied, can increase the possibility of product purchases.

5.3.4 Influencer credibility

Trust and loyalty to influencers can significantly affect consumer buying decisions. Participant 2 shared, "I do trust influencers. They check the products first before recommending them to us." Participant 4 also stated, "I absolutely trust influencers. Nowadays, influencers are popular people; they are good and professional." Participant 5 claimed, "They are influencers, come on! Of course, they are trustworthy. They have so many fans!" This reflects the findings of Hou et al. (2022), who noted that influencers often dedicate significant time and effort to evaluate products and negotiate with brands for price reductions. Similarly, Yang et al. (2024) found that if consumers trust the influencer and the influencer likes the brand, consumers will also like the brand. This affective trust in a brand or product increases consumers' willingness to purchase that brand or product.

5.3.5 Impulsive buying behavior

The trust and urgency created by popular influencers and limited-time offers encourage impulse purchases, often justified by the anticipation of future use. For instance, Participant 3 mentioned, "I have bought some products impulsively during live streaming sessions. I just want to support him. I can always find some use for the product even if I don't need it now. I get an extra discount if I buy from him during the session." Participant 5 also noted, "I have bought impulsively sometimes. I like certain live streamers. I want to feel connected to him. It's kind of showing appreciation to him. Plus, the product has a limited offer. I feel like I'm saving money by buying it." These participants' statements align with the findings of Qu et al. (2023), who noted that scarcity promotions, frequently used in live broadcast environments, can heighten consumer excitement and lead to impulsive buying behavior. Additionally, perceived scarcity may trigger panic buying due to the fear of missing out. In this context, live scarcity promotions are strengthened by the visibility, authenticity, and interactivity of the platform, which together influence consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore, both external stimuli (such as promotional strategies) and internal psychological states drive impulsive buying behavior in the live broadcast space. The participants' statements also align with Zhang & Shi (2023), who found that impulse buying is often accompanied by strong emotional reactions, making it an important factor in live commerce.

5.4 Conceptual model

Based on the themes identified in the interviews, a conceptual model has been developed to represent the main factors influencing consumer purchasing behavior in live streaming e-commerce. As shown in Figure 4, this model integrates the roles of real-time interactions, trust in influencers, emotional engagement, and impulsive buying behavior on consumer decision-making.

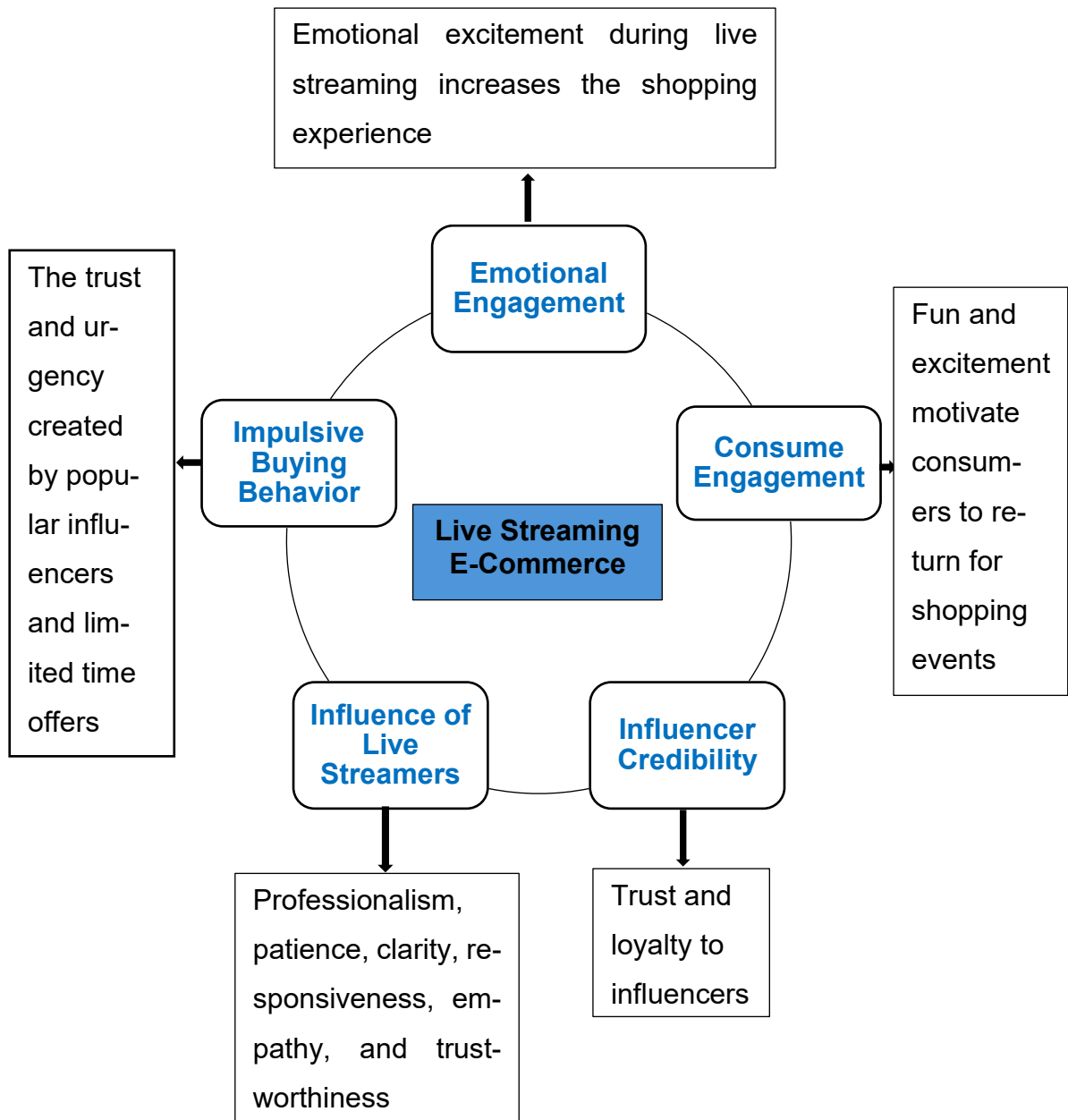


Figure 4 Conceptual Model of Live Streaming E-Commerce Impact on Consumer Purchase Behavior

6 DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This research examines the impact of live streaming on consumer purchasing behavior in the Chinese e-commerce market, focusing on themes such as the influence of live streamers, consumer engagement, influencer credibility, emotional engagement, and impulsive buying behavior. The primary objective is to develop a conceptual model that illustrates how live streaming influences online shopping behavior, with a particular focus on consumer engagement and influencer marketing. This study aims to improve existing literature by providing insights into the relationship between live streaming and consumer behavior in China's e-commerce market.

The main findings of this study come from an empirical survey conducted in the Chinese market, in which six participants shared their experiences and opinions. They expressed strong trust and loyalty to influencers, and especially appreciated their professionalism. Many participants mentioned that influencers made it easier for them to make shopping decisions by providing clear and reliable product information. The influencers' constant interaction and genuine connection with their audiences were key factors in building this trust. As a result, participants felt more confident in their purchase choices, trusted the advice they received, and felt that these influencers helped guide their purchase decisions.

However, influencer marketing is not without risks. One major concern is that brand reputation can be damaged if the influencer engages in unethical behavior or conduct that undermines the brand's values. These inconsistencies can lead to serious negative consequences, such as a loss of consumer trust and a decline in brand credibility. Once a brand's reputation and trust are compromised, it can be extremely challenging to rebuild them. Therefore, brands must carefully select influencers who align with their essential values and ethical standards to avoid such risks.

While emotional engagement has been shown to increase consumer enthusiasm, happiness, and satisfaction in live e-commerce, perceived risk remains a key factor influencing consumer behavior. Perceived risk, which refers to the uncertainty

consumers face regarding the outcome of their purchase decisions, can significantly influence their purchase intentions. Specifically, financial and performance risks are important issues that can weaken the excitement or sense of urgency generated during live events, potentially causing consumers to hesitate or avoid making a purchase. These insights highlight the need for marketers to balance emotional engagement with strategies to reduce perceived risk to encourage purchase behavior.

Given the research limitations of empirical study, which focus only on Chinese participants in the China market, future research should broaden the geographic scope and examine other consumer demographics to capture a wider range of experiences. It would also be beneficial to investigate how personal traits and financial status influence engagement with live streaming platforms.

In conclusion, live streaming has significantly improved the online shopping experience, making it more engaging, entertaining, interactive, and fast-paced. However, further investigation is needed to address its current limitations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of this rapidly developing phenomenon.

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APPENDIX

1. 您多久观看一次在线购物直播?
2. 您能描述一下您的整体体验吗?
3. 直播如何影响您的购买决策?
4. 您在选择主播时会考虑哪些品质?
5. 观看直播会如何影响您的情绪?
6. 您通常会在直播后购买商品吗?
7. 您一般信任网红吗?
8. 您会购买网红推荐的产品吗?
9. 您如何看待网红的可信度?
10. 您是否曾在网红直播期间冲动购买过某些产品?
11. 如果有, 您为什么要购买不需要的东西?