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How does E-commerce live streaming affect Chinese consumers' purchase intention

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Abstract: Among many marketing models, e-commerce live streaming has rapidly become a mainstream commercialized marketing approach by integrating consumer attributes of e-commerce with the rapid user acquisition capabilities of live streaming. Although e-commerce live streaming is continually promoted in practice, its effect on online consumption intentions still lacks sufficient theoretical and empirical support. Understanding how e-commerce live streaming influences online purchasing intentions can provide valuable references and suggestions for e-commerce websites and sellers to maximize the marketing potential of live streaming, thereby enhancing market competitiveness. Additionally, this understanding can expand research on the commercialized marketing mode of live streaming, offering a solid theoretical foundation. This study focuses on e-commerce live streaming as the research subject, exploring its impact on consumers' online purchase intentions. It considers the tripartite interaction system formed by consumers, sellers, and live streaming platforms. Based on socio-technical theories, the study analyzes in depth how the technical features and service quality of e-commerce live streaming influence purchase intentions. Data for this research was obtained through a questionnaire survey.

Keywords: *E-commerce live streaming, Purchase intention, Service quality, Socio-technical theory, Technical feature.*

1. Introduction

With the rising competition in online retail and growing consumer demands for a better online shopping experience, current marketing models struggle to sustain and attract consumers. Consequently, an increasing number of e-commerce platforms and sellers are introducing new marketing strategies to adapt to the evolving business landscape [1]. E-commerce live streaming has emerged as a popular marketing strategy, blending the interactive nature of live streaming with the consumer engagement of e-commerce. Live streaming has emerged as a significant global social and economic trend in recent years, providing users with essential information and interactive experiences. Major social networking platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter have incorporated live streaming features since 2017. The Interactive Advertising Bureau's 2024 report indicates that over 71.2% of Internet users have engaged with live streaming, with 47% continuing to watch real-time content [2].

For e-commerce sellers, it is both a development opportunity and a challenge. Understanding consumers' online purchasing intentions in the context of e-commerce live streaming is crucial. This study focuses on e-commerce websites and examines which elements of live streaming sellers can use to attract consumers and drive purchasing [3]. Based on the above background, this study investigates the impact of e-commerce live streaming on consumer purchase intention. Utilising socio-technical theory, it examines technical and social factors to reveal how live streaming technical feature and service quality affect consumer intention.

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This study expands the research scope of evaluating the commercial marketing model of live streaming. Based on the theoretical framework and practical research of existing digital marketing models, this study analyses the commercial marketing model and the impact of live streaming in the current online retail market. The theoretical hypothesis framework is verified by combining practical data. Based on the analysis of the core interactive system of e-commerce live streaming, this study identifies key components that may enhance business performance and conducts empirical research. The findings affirm the critical marketing role played by live streaming in enhancing sales on e-commerce platforms [4]. The findings supplement the theoretical basis of the success of e-commerce live streaming marketing practice and qualitative research, enriching the research implications of digital marketing theory and live streaming business models.

The findings can help e-commerce platform sellers establish live streaming marketing and improve market competitiveness through live streaming model innovation. By analysing the development of e-commerce live streaming and the rise in product sales following its introduction on China's largest e-commerce platform, this study helps online sellers understand mainstream marketing models in today's online retail environment and supports e-commerce growth amid intense market competition [5]. Sellers should improve their concept and awareness of live streaming marketing and meet their own urgent needs to improve online marketing effects by customising live streaming modes. Distinguishing product types can accurately position the focus of live streaming content and maximise marketing efficiency through live streaming model innovation.

2. Literature Review

2.1. E-commerce Live Streaming Technical Feature

In the context of online retail, technical feature of e-commerce refers to how retailers design different characteristics through website content and structure, thereby increasing online consumers' positive emotions and intentional responses. This not only reflects consumers' perception of the website's objective attributes, but also their perception of its subjective attributes [6].

Extensive literature has demonstrated that the technical feature of websites significantly affects consumers' online intentions, such as their intentions for continuous use, purchase intentions, and participation intentions. Since 1996, there has been a growing reliance on e-commerce websites for online transactions, with much research focusing on technical feature [7]. Their study highlighted two crucial aspects of the technical environment: information-task matching and visual appeal. These aspects positively affect consumers' co-creation experiences, including learning value, social integration value, and hedonic value, influencing future participation intentions [8].

2.2. E-commerce Live Streaming Service Quality

E-commerce service quality refers to a specific type of service quality in the context of e-commerce. E-commerce service quality relates to consumers' overall judgment and evaluation of service delivery in virtual markets [9]. E-commerce service quality refers to whether various business activities carried out through the network platform can be efficient and convenient, along with the degree of consumer trust and satisfaction [10]. E-commerce service quality is the result of consumers evaluating the quality of the interaction process and the quality of the outcome. Among them, the interactive interface used by consumers who are not limited to computer networks, and the service content required is not limited to online shopping [11].

2.3. Purchase Intention

Purchase intention as the subjective probability that consumers will buy a particular product or service, shaped by their attitudes, evaluations, and other factors. They perceive purchase intention as a key predictor of consumer intention [12]. Purchase intention forms the foundation of consumer purchase intention [13]. Purchase intention develops when consumers collect information based on

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their experiences, preferences, and external factors, which informs their decision-making process regarding a purchase [14].

2.4. Socio-Technical Theory

Socio-technical theory offers a framework for understanding how new technologies can support and enhance social interactions while improving coordination in both work and personal life [15]. Introduced by Cherns [16] this theory emphasises the integration of technological and social factors. Firstly, socio-technical theory explains user information sharing and donation intention in social media. The technical feature of individual users' intention to use Weibo and the impact of network factors on users' psychology and intention through a socio-technical system framework [17]. Considered social commerce to be a socio-technical system [18]. Finally, socio-technical theory explains the intention of users of other new technologies and organisational forms. employees' organisational citizenship intention can be regarded as social factors, and service innovation and improvement as technical factors, which not only have a direct impact on the value perception of services, but also ultimately affect satisfaction, sustainability and Intention to use [19].

3. Research Hypotheses

3.1. E-commerce Live Streaming Technical Feature and Purchase Intention

3.1.1. Real-time interactivity and Purchase Intention

A significant body of research confirms that the technical feature of websites impact consumers' online intentions, such as willingness to continue using, willingness to purchase, and willingness to participate. interactive real-time features of a website can create positive emotions for consumers and therefore increase their time spent browsing the website and willingness to purchase online [20]. Three technical features of a website—readability, real-time capabilities, and information richness—impact users' willingness to keep using the site. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H_1: Real-time interactivity positively affects purchase intention.

3.1.2. Perceived Proximity and Purchase Intention

Research on the perceived proximity of technical feature of social business websites is also relatively mature. The impact of interactive and social features of social media on users' online experience and willingness to acquire virtual goods from the perspective of consumers. The study found that the three features—active control, two-way communication, and perceived proximity—have differing degrees of positive effects on cognitive involvement, clear sense involvement, and mind-flow experience [21]. These features increase users' purchasing intention and mind-flow experience to varying degrees, which further improves users' purchasing intention. How technical feature surrounding social commerce influence consumers' virtual experiences, focusing on social support. Their findings revealed that perceived proximity, perceived personalisation, and perceived sociability affect the virtual experience of social support and social presence. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H_2: Perceived proximity positively affects purchase intention.

3.1.3. Perceived Authenticity and Purchase Intention

During a live stream, consumers can post comments at any time, which are immediately visible to both the seller and other viewers, fostering synchronised communication and enhancing perceived authenticity [22]. Additionally, live streaming offers genuine product information and behind-the-scenes sales scenarios, with its spontaneous and unedited nature. This contributes to higher perceived authenticity compared to pre-recorded videos or static website images [23]. The integration of real-time comments within the live video interface helps create a sense of spatial perceived authenticity by allowing consumers to perceive the presence of others.

H_3: Perceived authenticity positively affects purchase intention.

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3.2. E-commerce Live Streaming Service Quality and Purchase Intention

3.2.1. Information Quality and Purchase Intention

Consumers with stronger brand connections exhibit a greater impulse purchase intention when they receive negative information about a brand; those with a weaker brand connection showed inhibition in their impulse purchase intention when they received negative information about a brand. Additionally, several scholars have noted that the quality of information provided by anchors is a crucial factor influencing consumer intention when examining anchor traits [24]. The characteristics of anchors as a source of information can impact consumers' trust, intention, and other aspects. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H_4: Information quality positively affects purchase intention.

3.2.2. Interaction Quality and Purchase Intention

Interaction is among the most common phenomena in interpersonal communication. Interaction quality is playing an increasingly important role in marketing, public service, and other fields, where the role of interactions is receiving more scholarly attention. Interaction quality between employees and customers is an important form of service. It is also the basis of customers' perceived service value, service quality and satisfaction. The interaction between employees and customers has a positive impact on employee work efficiency and customer satisfaction, among other aspects [19]. Interaction quality within communities into informational, interpersonal, and human-computer interactions, indicating that these three types of interactions play a significant role in fostering consumer loyalty. Research on interaction has amply demonstrated that interaction quality affects user satisfaction, loyalty, and other aspects, which, in turn, impact consumers' purchase intention. Based on the above, this study proposes the following hypothesis.

H_5: Interaction quality positively affects purchase intention.

Figure 1 shows that the framework comprises two main structures, namely, the independent and dependent. The independent variable consists of two constructs: e-commerce live streaming technical feature and service quality. The dependent variable is purchase intention.

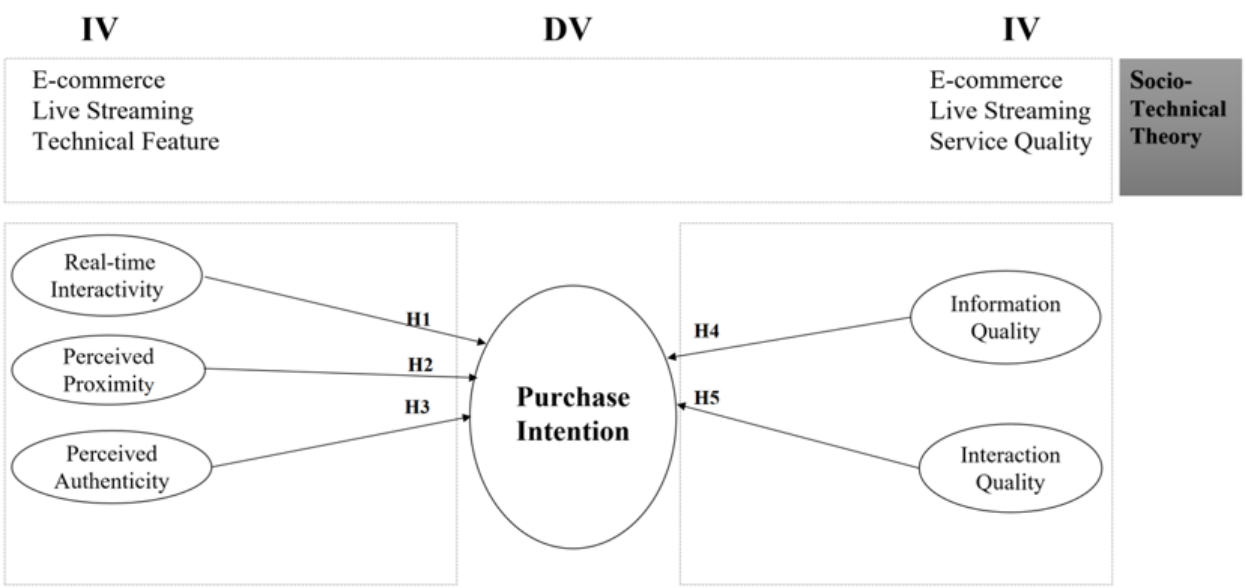

Figure 1.
Conceptual framework.

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4. Methodology

4.1. Survey Instrument

This study empirically tested the research model through a survey questionnaire. Based on a review and synthesis of existing literature, a theoretical model was developed to examine how e-commerce live streaming technical feature and service quality influence consumers' purchase intention.

To assess the impact of e-commerce live streaming technical feature and service quality on consumers' purchase intention, the questionnaire measures several dimensions. Technical features include real-time interactivity, perceived proximity, and perceived authenticity. For service quality, the questionnaire evaluates dimensions such as credibility, usefulness, and vividness of information quality; responsiveness, real-time, and empathy of interaction quality.

4.2. Measures

The questionnaire is divided into three sections as follows.

Introduction and Screening: This section provides an overview of the questionnaire and includes screening questions to ensure respondents have relevant experience. A specific question, such as "Do you have experience purchasing goods through live streaming e-commerce platforms?" is used to filter out those without such experience.

Demographic Information: This section collects basic respondent information, including gender, age, education level, monthly income, occupation, and frequency of engaging with e-commerce live streaming.

Variable Measurement: This section comprises detailed questions that measure the variables of interest. Respondents rate their agreement with each statement on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Sample Characteristics

Table 1 shows the basic characteristics of the respondents counted.Gender of the survey sample. Among survey respondents, 45.0% were male and 55.0% were female who had watched or purchased on e-commerce live streaming platforms, representing more female than male respondents. Nearly 80% of the respondents in the study sample were under the age of 35, with approximately 50% falling between the ages of 19 and 30. This indicates that the respondents comprised a large portion of younger age groups. Based on the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) [25] audience with the highest participation rate for live shopping is younger generations under the age of 30. Specialist and undergraduate qualifications accounted for more than 70% of the total number of respondents, with only a few having high school or lower qualifications. This finding suggests that e-commerce live shopping as a mode of consumption can be quickly accepted by the highly educated group. In this survey, the proportion of students was the largest, followed by company employees and freelance professionals. Due to the lower income levels of students, most respondents reported a monthly income of less than 3,000 RMB. The distribution of occupation and income aligns with the overall age demographics, ensuring a reasonable and representative sample structure. Most respondents engage with live streaming at least once a week or several times a week. Given its entertainment value, some individuals watch at a higher frequency, reaching once a day or even multiple times a day. The statistical distribution indicates a balanced proportion of both frequent and infrequent viewers, ensuring the survey results are reasonable and representative.

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Table 1.
Demographic Variables for Samples.

S/N	Demographic Variables	Frequency (N = 493)	Valid %
I	Gender		
	Male	222	45.0
	Female	271	55.0
2	Age		
	under 18 years old	14	2.8
	19 to 25 years old	198	40.2
	26 to 30 years old	43	8.7
	31 to 35 years old	128	26.0
	36 years old and above	110	22.3
3	Education Level		
	High school and below	45	9.1
	Specialist	156	31.6
	Undergraduate	230	46.7
	Graduate and above	62	12.6
4	Monthly Income		
	below 3000 RMB	150	30.4
	3000 to 4999 RMB	132	26.8
	5000 to 7999 RMB	113	22.9
	more than 8000 RMB	98	19.9
5	Occupation		
	Student	237	48
	Company employee	133	27
	Institution worker	37	7.5
	Freelance worker	54	11.0
	Other	32	6.5
6	Viewing Frequency		
	Several times a day	47	9.5
	Once a day	55	11.2
	Several times a week	181	36.7
	Once a week	98	19.9
	Several times a month	67	13.6
	Once a month	45	9.1

5.2. Measurement Model

Table 2 shows that all the items for constructs have individual factor loadings that are higher than the recommended level of 0.7. Furthermore, the overall constructs have AVE values greater than 0.5 and high composite reliability, with values exceeding 0.7. Therefore, the results show evidence of convergent validity (CV).

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Table 2.
Convergent Validity.

Variables	Items	Outer loadings	AVE	Composite reliability
Real-time interactivity (RI)	RI1	0.871	0.752	0.938
	RI2	0.84		
	RI3	0.877		
	RI4	0.847		
	RI5	0.863		
Perceived Proximity (PP)	PP1	0.854	0.755	0.925
	PP2	0.874		
	PP3	0.866		
	PP4	0.849		
Perceived Authenticity (PA)	PA1	0.884	0.774	0.911
	PA2	0.887		
	PA3	0.878		
Credibility (CRE)	CRE1	0.865	0.729	0.915
	CRE2	0.867		
	CRE3	0.847		
	CRE4	0.838		
Usefulness (USE)	USE1	0.873	0.776	0.933
	USE2	0.883		
	USE3	0.873		
	USE4	0.885		
Vividness (VIV)	VIV1	0.866	0.756	0.939
	VIV2	0.861		
	VIV3	0.862		
	VIV4	0.887		
	VIV5	0.861		
Responsiveness (RES)	RES1	0.85	0.731	0.916
	RES2	0.846		
	RES3	0.867		
	RES4	0.865		
Real-time (RTI)	RTI1	0.835	0.726	0.93
	RTI2	0.862		
	RTI3	0.841		
	RTI4	0.843		
	RTI5	0.855		
Empathy (EMP)	EMP1	0.903	0.77	0.931
	EMP2	0.857		
	EMP3	0.891		
	EMP4	0.865		
Purchase Intention (PI)	PI1	0.89	0.783	0.916
	PI2	0.878		
	PI3	0.887		

Moreover, discriminant validity is assessed using the AVE, which should exceed the squared correlations between constructs. Table 3 shows that the AVE for each construct surpasses its corresponding squared inter-scale correlation, confirming discriminant validity.

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Table 3.
Discriminant Validity.

	CRE	EMP	PA	PI	PP	RES	RI	RTI	USE	VIV
CRE	0.854									
EMP	0.452	0.879								
PA	0.446	0.479	0.883							
PI	0.478	0.498	0.442	0.885						
PP	0.471	0.447	0.421	0.44	0.861					
RES	0.517	0.434	0.453	0.483	0.4	0.857				
RI	0.462	0.524	0.48	0.472	0.423	0.411	0.86			
RTI	0.418	0.452	0.438	0.421	0.441	0.386	0.491	0.847		
USE	0.419	0.413	0.482	0.473	0.415	0.408	0.382	0.431	0.878	
VIV	0.515	0.398	0.419	0.469	0.538	0.462	0.471	0.446	0.43	0.868

The variance inflation factor (VIF) is used to assess the extent of multicollinearity in a regression analysis. If the VIFs of the inner model, obtained through a full collinearity test, are 3.3 or lower, the model can be regarded as free from common method bias (CMB). Since information quality, and interaction quality are formative indicators, it is necessary to test their dimensions for multicollinearity. Table 4 presents the variance inflation factor (VIF) results for assessing the second-order formative latent variables in this study. The findings indicate that all VIF values range from 1.259 to 1.645, confirming that common method bias (CMB) is not a concern. Therefore, this study validates that information quality, interaction quality, social support, and swift relationship can be conceptualized as formative indicators.

Table 4.
Formative Variance Inflation Factors Results.

Formative Construct	Items	Outer Weight	t-value	VIF
Information Quality	CRE	0.412	6.281	1.464
	USE	0.431	5.98	1.346
	VIV	0.401	5.97	1.476
Interaction Quality	RES	0.417	6.461	1.338
	RTI	0.364	5.857	1.32
	EMP	0.482	7.632	1.394

5.3. Structural Model

We tested the fit of the proposed model using SEM. The results showed a good model fit. Table 5 shows that the SRMR for this study was 0.037, well below the 0.08 threshold, confirming a good model fit. Furthermore, the normative fit index (NFI) was 0.885, where values closer to 1 indicate a better fit. The Q^2 values PI (0.511), all of which exceed 0, thereby confirming the predictive relevance of the inner model. These findings validate the model's predictive power and overall acceptability. The R^2 for PI was 0.568, indicating that the model explains all variance in the construct. This confirms that the models in this study are valid and accepted.

Table 5.
GoF (SRMR-NFI).

Model fit	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.037	0.054
NFI	0.885	0.875

5.4. Effects Testing

Table 6 presents the path coefficients and hypothesis testing results for the direct relationships in H1–H5. Path coefficients range from -1 to +1, with values closer to +1 indicating strong positive associations. While high coefficients generally suggest statistical significance, this study further verifies significance through bootstrapping. A path coefficient is considered significant if it meets the 0.05

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threshold. This requires a t-value above 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05 in a two-tailed test. Therefore, hypothesis testing supports the model for H1 to H4, but it does not support H5. Real-time interactivity positively affects purchase intention. Perceived proximity positively affects purchase intention. Perceived authenticity positively affects purchase intention. Information quality positively affects purchase intention. Interaction quality positively affects purchase intention.

Table 6.
Testing of Direct Effect Hypotheses.

Hypotheses	Paths	Path coefficient	Mean	Standard Error	T-statistics	P-values
H1	RI→PI	0.132	0.130	0.063	2.079	0.038*
H2	PP→PI	0.120	0.119	0.054	2.211	0.027*
H3	PA→PI	0.133	0.132	0.062	2.147	0.032*
H4	IQ1→PI	0.136	0.138	0.068	2.006	0.045*
H5	IQ2→PI	0.047	0.052	0.072	0.659	0.510

Note: Significant at 0.01** Significant at 0.05*.

6. Conclusion

E-commerce live streaming technical feature (real-time interactivity, perceived proximity, and perceived authenticity) positively affects purchase intention.

According to socio-technical theory, the impact of new technologies should be evaluated from both technical and social perspectives. As a growing social media format, live streaming has a significant effect on consumer experiences in e-commerce, where both dimensions influence engagement and purchasing decisions.

From a technical standpoint, e-commerce live streaming is characterised by real-time interactivity, perceived proximity, and perceived authenticity. Real-time interactivity enables instant communication between hosts and viewers, allowing for immediate responses and engagement. Perceived proximity cultivates a sense of closeness, enhancing trust and connection. Perceived authenticity reinforces credibility by making content appear genuine and unscripted.

E-commerce live streaming service quality (information quality and interaction quality), information quality positively affects purchase intention, and interaction quality negatively affects purchase intention.

In socio-technical theory, social factors primarily emphasise human behaviour. A review of previous studies on live streaming highlights that consumers are primarily driven by information search and social interaction. Additionally, information quality and interaction quality are widely acknowledged as critical dimensions of service quality. Based on these insights, this study incorporates these two factors to evaluate the quality of e-commerce live streaming services.

As a new form of social media and online marketing, e-commerce live streaming differs significantly from traditional e-commerce in terms of information delivery and interaction formats. Existing measurement scales for information and interaction quality fail to capture their unique characteristics. To address this gap, this study redefines and validates the variables and question items for these dimensions by integrating established scales with the specific feature of live commerce.

Transparency:

The authors confirm that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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