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The Role of Trust in the Influence of Live Streaming Characteristics on Purchase Hesitation: A Conceptual Paper

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ABSTRACT

Live streaming commerce has grown rapidly, especially in Indonesia. However, despite its significant growth, there is still a lack of literature on purchase hesitation in this context. Previous studies have focused on consumers' purchase intentions, while purchase hesitation, which is also a crucial part of the decision-making process, remains underexplored. Using the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory, this study aims to analyze how live streaming commerce characteristics can build trust—trust in products and trust in streamers—which in turn influences purchase hesitation. The results of this conceptual paper suggest that the characteristics of live streaming commerce (interactivity, visibility, and personalization) positively influence the building of consumer trust in streamers and products, thereby reducing perceived purchase hesitation. Future research is needed through statistical testing using SEM-PLS by collecting data via surveys. A sample size of 260 respondents who have watched live streaming on Shopee is required for this study. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to filling the literature gap and provide implications for the development of more effective marketing strategies on live streaming platforms, focusing on enhancing consumer trust to mitigate purchase hesitation.

Keywords: live streaming e-commerce; interactivity; visibility; personalization; trust in streamer; trust in product; purchase hesitation

1. Introduction

In today's digital era, e-commerce has become an integral part of business, offering various innovations for a more convenient and diverse shopping experience for consumers. One innovation that has developed rapidly in e-commerce is live streaming commerce, which integrates live broadcasting into e-commerce platforms. This format combines physical activities with real-time broadcasts, creating a unique and interactive shopping experience (Wang, 2019). In Indonesia, according to a 2023 JakPat survey, about 86% of internet users have watched live streaming shopping sessions, 65% of them have made purchases through this feature, and 35% have not yet made a purchase. Additionally, the survey shows that Shopee dominates the use of live shopping features, with 83.4% of viewers watching on this platform.

Despite its rapid growth, research on live streaming commerce still has limitations in the

literature, particularly in investigating purchase hesitation. Previous studies have only focused on factors that influence consumers' purchase intentions, such as consumer characteristics, seller (streamer) characteristics, and various communication and information functions on the platform (Xu et al., 2020). In reality, users not only have purchase intentions, but some also tend to feel hesitant before making a purchase, except for a few consumers who are highly motivated to shop (Ma et al., 2022). Purchase hesitation is also assumed to be one of the consumption behaviors representative of live streaming shopping. Ma et al. (2022) investigated the impact of participant interaction in live streaming commerce on purchase hesitation, based on telepresence and trust. Their study yielded unexpected results, showing that trust had a positive effect on purchase hesitation. This indicates that trust in the live streaming commerce environment is more complex than in traditional e-commerce, requiring a deeper and more holistic approach.

The main goal of this study is to expand the literature on factors in live streaming commerce that influence purchase hesitation by investigating the impact of live streaming commerce characteristics on building trust—trust in the seller (streamer) and trust in the product. The characteristics studied are interactivity, visibility, and personalization in live streaming commerce, which are advantages that differentiate it from traditional e-commerce. Therefore, this study aims to answer questions regarding whether interactivity, visibility, and personalization influence consumer trust in streamers and products. Additionally, can consumer trust in streamers and products reduce purchase hesitation?

By conducting this research, it is hoped that sufficient knowledge can be generated to contribute theoretically to filling the literature gap regarding purchase hesitation in live streaming commerce. Furthermore, this research also has practical implications that can help sellers design more effective marketing strategies on live streaming platforms. By understanding the factors that influence purchase hesitation, sellers can adjust their approaches and improve their performance to enhance consumer trust and turn purchase hesitation into actual purchases.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Live Streaming Commerce

Research on live streaming commerce can be explained through two aspects: research issues and research perspectives. Most studies focus on factors influencing purchase intentions and consumer buying behavior in live streaming commerce (Ma et al., 2022). From a managerial perspective, research indicates that consumers tend to make impulsive purchases when driven by streamers (Lee and Chen, 2021; Ming et al., 2021), with sales promotions and interactions affecting consumer satisfaction and purchase intentions (Kaveh et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022; Zhong et al., 2022). From a psychological perspective, studies examine how contextual stimuli affect the cognitive and emotional states of viewers (Xu et al., 2020), as well as the social and technical impacts on customer trust (Zhang et al., 2022).

Furthermore, from a research perspective, there are three main perspectives: consumer, live streaming platform, and host (streamer). Research on consumers focuses on psychological factors that influence purchasing behavior (Zhao et al., 2021), while platform-related studies emphasize real-time interactions and technology in live streaming that influence purchase intentions (Sun et al., 2019; Kang et al., 2021). Lastly, the host or streamer perspective explores how host characteristics and interactions affect consumer trust and purchase intentions (Lu and Chen, 2021).

Although live streaming adoption in commerce continues to grow, research remains limited, with a need for more in-depth exploration of how live streaming technology can build trust and influence purchase hesitation.

2.2 Purchase Hesitation as Response

Purchase hesitation is part of the decision-making process, where consumers are often faced with many choices and tend to delay purchasing to find the best solution (Ma et al., 2022). According to Anderson (2003) and Cho et al. (2006), purchase hesitation includes the delay and abandonment of purchases. Moreover, according to Ma et al. (2022), purchase hesitation is defined as the state between the intention to buy and the decision not to purchase. In some cases, this hesitation may evolve into a purchase delay or, conversely, lead to a purchase decision. In online shopping, this hesitation can take the form of overall indecision, cart abandonment, or hesitation at the final payment stage (Cho et al., 2006).

Research indicates that factors influencing purchase hesitation can be divided into two main categories: perceived uncertainty factors and contextual factors. Perceived uncertainty factors include financial, social, psychological, and procedural risks, where consumers worry about costs, image, regret, or lack of information in purchasing (Cho et al., 2006). Contextual factors include time pressure and negative past experiences that reduce consumer trust in shopping (Cho et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2017). Awareness of product quality also contributes to hesitation (Cho et al., 2006). In the context of live streaming commerce, consumers' perceived uncertainty can be reduced as they can see the product directly and receive real-time information, thereby reducing the perceived risks.

2.3 Theoretical Framework: The Stimulus-Organism-Response

The SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory, proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), describes how environmental stimuli (Stimulus) influence an individual's internal or emotional states (Organism), which in turn affect their behavior or responses (Response). Stimuli can be environmental elements such as the amount of information that affect individuals' psychology and emotions. These emotions then influence how individuals react to the environment, whether they tend to approach or avoid a situation. The S-O-R theory allows for capturing the unique characteristics of live streaming e-commerce and establishing mechanisms by which live streaming e-commerce features or attributes can reduce purchase hesitation through trust.

2.4 Characteristics of Live Streaming as Environmental Stimuli

2.4.1 Interactivity as stimuli

Interactivity in live streaming commerce is defined as the level of reciprocal interaction between two parties (Bonner, 2010; Lee, 2005), involving two-way information exchange, active control, and real-time synchronization (Liu & Shrum, 2002). Research by Bao et al. (2016) states that better interaction provides sellers with the opportunity to demonstrate their expertise to customers and enhance customer trust. A higher level of social interaction can also reduce consumers' perceived uncertainty, thereby strengthening their trust in the seller (Li et al., 2018).

Interactivity in live streaming enables information exchange, allowing consumers to receive immediate answers to their questions, which in turn enhances product knowledge and demonstrates the streamer's responsibility and sincerity (Xiao & Benbasat, 2007). Therefore, interactivity in live streaming commerce creates a more engaging shopping experience, strengthens interpersonal relationships (Wohn et al., 2018), reduces perceived uncertainty (Lu & Chen, 2021), and increases trust in both the product and seller (Zhang et al., 2022). Thus, through synchronous two-way communication and high responsiveness, interactivity promotes

consumer purchase intentions and reduces purchase hesitation.

2.4.2 Personalization as stimuli

Personalization refers to the ability to deliver services tailored to the needs and preferences of users (Dong et al., 2016). In the context of live streaming commerce, personalization includes more personalized interactions, where customers can quickly receive customized responses related to products or services. This personalized attention fosters a sense of closeness with the streamer and builds trust (Lee, 2005; Zhang et al., 2022).

In live streaming, streamers can swiftly respond to customer needs, provide relevant product recommendations, and help customers filter information according to their preferences (Tam & Ho, 2006; Xiao & Benbasat, 2007). This creates a perception among customers that the streamer is acting in their best interest, helping to establish a sense of belonging and reducing the perceived distance between the customer and the streamer (Edwards et al., 2009). Therefore, personalization enhances engagement and trust by creating a more intimate interaction and allowing customers to better understand products based on their preferences and needs.

2.4.3 Visibility as stimuli

Live streaming enables the real-time transmission of images and sound from one location to another (Chen & Lin, 2018). This technology has given rise to another characteristic in live streaming commerce: the availability of visibility. Visibility refers to the ability to visually present products to users (Dong et al., 2016), allowing customers to view products clearly and in detail through the screen. In traditional e-commerce, sellers are often invisible to customers (Treem & Leonardi, 2013), which hinders consumers from obtaining important interpersonal communication cues, making it difficult to establish trust (Bai et al., 2015). Customers require substantial information before making a purchase, and live streaming enables sellers to demonstrate product usage directly, helping consumers understand the product better.

Product descriptions provided by streamers help customers form a realistic imagination of the product, bringing them closer to it (Yim et al., 2017). Moreover, this visualization helps consumers comprehend and imagine the product's use (Yim & Yoo, 2020), thereby alleviating concerns about product authenticity (Chen et al., 2017; Zhou et al., 2018) and increasing customer trust in the product. Therefore, visibility in live streaming commerce plays a critical role in building customer trust in both the product and the streamer. By providing direct visualization, consumers can clearly see product details, understand how the product is used, and overcome doubts about product authenticity. This helps customers form a realistic imagination of the product and provides better interpersonal cues, ultimately enhancing consumer trust in the product and their relationship with the streamer.

2.5 Customer Trust as Organism

In the literature reviewed, there are gaps in the existing research. Previous studies often view trust as a single concept (Zhang et al., 2021), whereas customer intentions are not only influenced by product expectations but also by the service provider (Kim & Park, 2013). Research by Zaefarian et al. (2017) demonstrates that different types of trust can have varying effects on customer behavioral intentions.

In the context of live streaming commerce, there are two types of trust: trust in the product and interpersonal trust in the streamer. Trust in the product refers to the belief that the product will meet expectations and live up to its claims (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2018). Interpersonal trust in the streamer refers to the belief that the streamer is trustworthy, provides accurate information, and does not exploit the audience (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2018). In live streaming shopping, reliable and honest information provided by the streamer is seen as

enhancing positive attitudes toward the promoted or recommended product, leading to a transfer of trust (Zhang et al., 2022).

Trust in live streaming commerce should be understood as a combination of two key elements: trust in the streamer and trust in the product. Both types of trust play a critical role in influencing consumer behavior in live streaming commerce, and further research is necessary to uncover more insights into how these types of trust are built and how they help overcome purchase hesitation. In essence, consumers must feel confident in their purchase decisions through their trust in both the seller and the product.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Conceptual framework

The framework for this study is as follows:

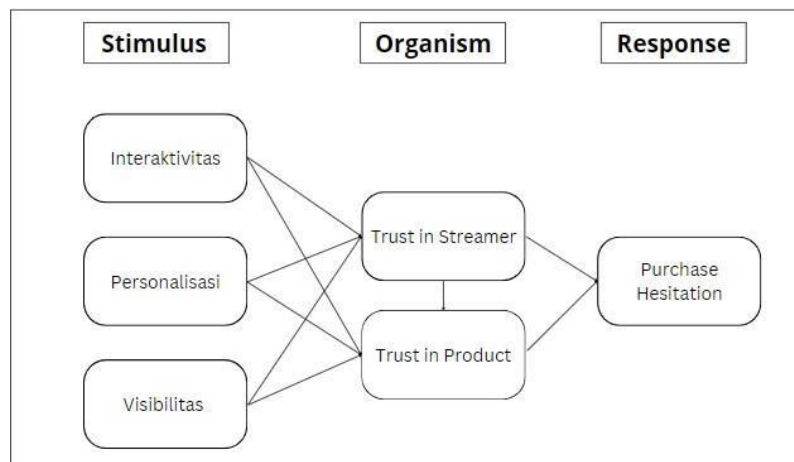


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

3.2 Hypotheses Development

This study proposes the development of a conceptual model based on the SOR theory, where the characteristics of live streaming commerce are the antecedent variables, trust in the streamer and trust in the product are mediating variables, and purchase hesitation is the outcome variable. With this aim, the study intends to test the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1a: Interactivity positively influences trust in the streamer.

Hypothesis 1b: Interactivity positively influences trust in the product.

Hypothesis 2a: Personalization positively affects trust in the streamer.

Hypothesis 2b: Personalization positively affects trust in the product.

Hypothesis 3a: Visibility positively influences trust in the streamer.

Hypothesis 3b: Visibility positively influences trust in the product.

Hypothesis 4: Trust in the streamer positively influences trust in the product.

Hypothesis 5a: Trust in the streamer negatively influences purchase hesitation.

Hypothesis 5b: Trust in the product negatively influences purchase hesitation.

3.3 Sample

The target sample for this study consists of individuals who have watched Shopee live-streaming e-commerce in Indonesia within the past month and are aged 17 years or older. The sample size determination follows the guidelines of Hair et al. (2019). The total number of items

used by all variables in this study is 26 items. Therefore, the minimum target sample size = $n \times 10$ (26×10), which equals 260 respondents.

3.4 Measurement

The measurement indicators in this study were adapted from previous literature, with slight adjustments to fit the context of live streaming commerce. The scale for measuring interactivity was adapted from Ou et al. (2014); the measurement of visibility and personalization were adapted from Dong et al. (2016); trust in the streamer and trust in the product were adapted from Wongkitrungruent & Assarut (2018); and purchase hesitation was measured using the scale developed by Cho et al. (2006). The study employed a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Table 1
Measurement items of constructs

| Construct | Measurement Items |
|--------------------------|---|
| Interaktiviti | I1 I felt that I had a lot of control over my experience at live streaming commerce. |
| | I2 I could choose freely what I wanted to see at live streaming commerce |
| | I3 This streamer facilitated two-way communication between herself/himself and viewers. |
| | I4 This streamer gave viewers the opportunity to talk to her/him. |
| | I5 This streamer responded to my questions very quickly. |
| | I6 I was able to get information from streamer very rapidly |
| Visibility | V1 Live streaming commerce provides me with detailed pictures of the products. |
| | V2 Live streaming commerce makes the product attributes visible to me. |
| | V3 Live streaming commerce makes information about how to use products visible to me. |
| | V4 Live streaming commerce helps me to visualize products like in the real world. |
| Personalization | P1 Streamer on live streaming commerce help me establish my product needs. |
| | P2 Streamer on live streaming commerce help me identify which product attributes best fit my needs. |
| | P3 Streamer on live streaming commerce provide me with personal product customization based on my requirements. |
| | P4 Streamer on live streaming commerce provide me with information on all alternative products I intend to buy. |
| Trust in Streamer | TS1 I believe in the information that the streamer provides through live streaming. |
| | TS2 I can trust streamer that use live streaming. |
| | TS3 I believe that streamer who use live streaming are trustworthy. |
| | TS4 I do not think that streamer who use live streaming would take advantage of me |
| Trust in Product | TP1 I think the products I order from live streaming commerce will be as I imagined. |
| | TP2 I believe that I will be able to use products like those demonstrated on live streaming commerce |
| | TP3 I trust that the products I receive will be the same as those shown on live streaming commerce |

| Construct | Measurement Items | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| Purchase Hesitation | PH1 | I have hesitated to purchase products in live streaming commerce at the final decision stage after spending time in live streaming sessions. |
| | PH2 | I have decided not to buy products after spending my time in live streaming commerce. |
| | PH3 | I have hesitated to click the final payment button to purchase the product in live streaming commerce. |
| | PH4 | It has taken some time for me to click the final payment button to purchase product while shopping in live streaming commerce. |
| | PH5 | I have thought twice before I have clicked the final payment button to purchase product in live streaming commerce. |

3.5 Research design dan data analysis

An explanatory research method will be used in this study with the aim of examining the relationships between several variables through hypothesis testing (Sugiyono, 2018). This research is associative-causal, aiming to test how the characteristics of live streaming e-commerce influence purchase hesitation, with seller or streamer trust and product trust as mediating variables.

The study will be conducted within a period of less than one year, or at a single point in time, thus employing a cross-sectional method. Data collection for this study will be carried out by distributing questionnaires via Google Forms to the respondents. Data analysis will be conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the SmartPLS software. The PLS-SEM approach was chosen for its ability to test causal models involving complex relationships between independent, mediating, and dependent variables, and is suitable for non-normally distributed data and relatively small sample sizes.

4. Conclusion

This study emphasizes the significance of live streaming commerce as a platform that influences consumers' purchasing decisions, particularly in mitigating purchase hesitation. The characteristics of live streaming commerce, such as interactivity, visibility, and personalization, serve as stimuli that contribute to the formation of trust. Interactivity allows real-time communication, visibility enables consumers to view products directly, and personalization provides a more tailored experience based on individual needs.

These three characteristics are instrumental in building trust, which can be categorized into two forms: trust in the product and trust in the streamer. Both forms of trust play a crucial role in reducing consumer purchase hesitation. Trust in the product assures consumers that the product will meet their expectations, while trust in the streamer reflects the confidence that the streamer is providing accurate and reliable information.

Therefore, this study hypothesizes that the characteristics of live streaming commerce help alleviate purchase hesitation by strengthening consumer trust in both the product and the streamer. Further research is needed to statistically test the relationships between these variables. The subsequent sections of this study will provide a more detailed discussion of the research findings, as well as their managerial implications. The results will be valuable for e-commerce sellers who utilize live streaming features to create more effective and convincing shopping experiences.

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