

# Exploration into the Development Status and Popularization Reasons of Online Live Streaming of Niche Content: Blind Box Live Streaming as an Example

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**Abstract.** With the development of the internet, the retail industry has undergone earth shaking changes. Various new retail methods have emerged, as well as new best-selling products. Since 2022, blind box live streaming in the gaming industry has been thriving and gaining popularity among young people. This study aims to analyse the key factors for the success of the gaming blind box live streaming industry, with a focus on exploring how fast-moving consumer goods can achieve commercial success through live interaction, fun games, and utilizing consumer mentality. Firstly, the sales form of live streaming interaction enhances the connection between consumers and hosts, promotes consumer stickiness, and further forms a fan economy. In addition, blind box products take advantage of young people's pursuit of excitement and unknown psychology, further promoting consumption. Ultimately, this study suggests that the success of the gaming blind box live streaming industry depends not only on the popularity of social media, but also on its control and utilization of consumer psychology.

**Keywords:** Blind fast-moving products, live streaming shopping, random products, low unit price products, incendiary consumption.

## 1. Introduction

In the era of digital media, social media and online shopping have become the most popular forms of consumption in contemporary times. Whether it's daily necessities or durable goods, online shopping has become the main form of sales. Especially in the Asian market led by China, the online shopping and express delivery industries are thriving. In this context, the live streaming e-commerce industry has emerged as an important component of online shopping. The major sales live streaming rooms cover various categories of products, especially the best-selling affordable fast selling items.

Under the wide influence of social media, firms aim to increase competitiveness by innovating marketing strategy. Blind box products have become outstanding innovative products, and in recent years, they have developed rapidly, attracting the pursuit of many young people and giving rise to many derivative products of the same type. The concept of blind box altered from referring to a specific product type of random figure models to a new mode of retail sales and branch up into live stream industry. Another type of game based blind box live stream also comes under the category of blind boxes.

This paper will analyse the reasons why the gaming live streaming industry is so popular today through a discussion of consumer behaviour. By analysing the background of modern people's consumption habits, as well as the advantages and attractiveness of live streaming, further discuss the prospects and development of this industry. This paper will first discuss the development status and reasons for online live streaming, then study the concept and rise of blind box products, and finally further analyse the reasons for the popularity of game based blind box live streaming.

## **2. Development Status and Reasons for Online Live Streaming**

### **2.1. The Popularity of Tiktok and Fast-Moving Products**

Since 2016, short videos have become the mainstream form of content creation in modern society. Compared to the popular long videos on mainstream international platforms such as YouTube and Bilibili, the duration range of short videos is generally around 15 seconds to one minute, but some short videos may also reach a length of three minutes or more. The streamlined duration is easier to capture the audience's attention, utilizing modern people's fragmented time for high-speed and efficient information dissemination. This video format is well adapted to the fast-paced lifestyle of modern people and helps them dispel their daily leisure time. Short videos focus on convenience, speed, and efficiency.

Under the popularity of short video formats and corresponding short video platforms, fast-moving products have also become popular. Fast selling products are different from durable goods, with a focus on affordable pricing. The quality of these products may not be superior, but the cost is low, and the selling price is low. For products with a short lifespan, consumers usually discard the product after a few uses and purchase a new one. Experiencing fresh products at a low price and then purchasing other products to experience them is a very popular choice for modern consumers. Especially among young people, such products allow people to buy new experiences at a low price. For example, beauty, videos, beverages, etc. are all popular fast-moving product categories on short video platforms and live streaming platforms [1]. This product can quickly convey its selling points to consumers through short video promotion and advertising.

### **2.2. Live Streaming**

Live streaming sales is also one of the mainstream sales methods in contemporary society. The impact of live streaming on consumer decision-making can be summarized by the AISAS marketing theory, which stands for Attention, Interest, Search, Action, and Share. Consumers first pay attention to the product through platform promotion and live streaming, and then develop interest in the product through interaction in the live streaming room. They further search and understand the product, and ultimately decide to consume and share it with their friends and family around them. These five elements constitute the complete sales chain of live streaming sales [2].

Among them, in the Interest section, live sales allow for real-time interaction between hosts and viewers, answering questions and achieving one to many or even one-on-one service Q&A. In live streaming, consumers can interact with the host through bullet comments, comments, and other forms. This form enhances the distance between consumers and broadcasters, allowing consumers to have emotional attachments to specific broadcasters or live streaming rooms, increasing consumer loyalty and promoting more frequent consumptions [3].

Another important factor that makes live streaming rooms more competitive is the anchor. Research has shown that the personal charm, high interactivity, and trust factors of internet celebrities are key factors that directly affect the purchasing behaviour of live streaming sales fans. The language ability, personal image, personality, and other factors of the anchor have a direct impact on the sales of the live broadcast room. The audience generally favours hosts who are humorous, well regulated, and have a good personal appearance. Li Jiaqi, the famous anchor with goods, has 79.751 million fans on Taobao platform, more than 40 million fans on TikTok short video platform, and more than 30 million fans on Weibo. In the 2021 Double Eleven event, the marketing revenue of the live streaming room reached 10.653 billion yuan. This astonishing sales data not only stems from the excellent mechanism of the live streaming system, but also from the outstanding personal abilities of the anchor [4].

### **2.3. COVID-19: Live Shopping is Booming**

During the COVID-19 epidemic, lockdown and other epidemic closures were carried out in all major regions, which made it impossible for people to consume offline in physical stores. During this

period, all consumer behaviour was replaced by online shopping. Online shopping is not only convenient and fast and provide a wide range of products to consumers. It also meets people's social and interactive needs during the lockdown period. Especially in live streaming rooms, whether with the host or the audience, people can satisfy their social desires caused by boredom at home. During the control period, even if logistics delays result in delayed delivery of purchased goods, people's enthusiasm for live shopping has not diminished. On the contrary, due to this reason, people may lose their concept of how much they have consumed by not seeing the purchased items with their own eyes, thereby promoting impulse consumption and so on.

The study on global e-commerce in 2019 and 2020 by UNCTAD finds that during the COVID-19 pandemic period, aggregate online retail sales value in China increased to 1414.3 billion dollars from 1060.4 billion in 2018. This significant 33% increase in the total dollar value of online retail sales illustrates the impact of the pandemic on the growth of the online sales economy. Globally, the total e-commerce sales reached 26673 billion dollars in 2019 [5].

### **3. Development Status and Reasons for Online Live Streaming**

#### **3.1. Concept and Gameplay of Blind Box Products**

Blind boxes are a popular consumer product worldwide this year. Blind box products are usually figurines, decorations, toys, etc. At the time of purchase, consumers do not know what style of product is inside the packaging. Consumers generally know in advance what styles may appear in the box and the probability of each style being obtained. This sales form contains elements of luck, making purchasing blind box products full of excitement and anticipation. The hidden blind box takes advantage of consumers' preference for unknown surprises. Generally, blind box products do not disclose the specific styles of hidden items in advance and have a very small probability of arousing consumers' curiosity [6].

In nowadays, Blind box products are no longer limited to figurines, decorations, etc. Blind boxes have gradually evolved into a sales method, as long as they are associated with randomness and luck, they will make the product easier to sell. However, almost all products using the blind box methods are fast-moving goods, which are short life products with small unit prices and large quantities. Low prices can better promote the sales of goods, because for consumers, the joy, tension, and freshness brought by unboxing are more important than buying the products inside [7].

Today, blind boxes are not only a commodity, but also a social topic. Many blind box enthusiasts share videos on social media about topics such as unboxing, blind box reviews, blind box introductions, and more. This kind of video creation content has further opened the popularity of the blind box market and gradually formed its special communication circle and trading market. On various second-hand trading websites and social media, it is common to see enthusiasts selling or purchasing rare blind box products at high prices. More important than the quality of blind box products is the fun.

#### **3.2. Analysis of the Causes of the Rise of Blind Box Consumption**

##### **3.2.1. Hunger Marketing, Luck Component**

The operational strategy of blind boxes often utilizes hunger marketing, creating a sense of scarcity and urgency through limited distribution and random packaging. Merchants usually publicize the probability of obtaining a certain style, creating a scarcity scene through extremely small numerical proportions. Consumers have a lot of luck when making purchases, not knowing which one they will get. This unknown and lottery like experience stimulates people's desire to purchase, which in turn promotes the popularity of blind boxes.

##### **3.2.2. Unique Trading Market, Decorations Become Wealth Management Products**

The popularity of blind boxes has also brought about a unique trading market. Blind box sellers and buyers can often be seen on second-hand market platforms. Usually, limited edition, out of print,

or rare styles are sold. Based on different styles and brands, some styles can often be sold at extremely high prices. This behaviour of artificially inflating the prices of special items has further upgraded these blind box products from decorative items to wealth management products. Many consumers will make purchases because they see the potential for appreciation of this blind box in the future.

## **4. Reasons for the Popularity of Blind Box Live Streaming in Gaming**

### **4.1. Sales Attractiveness of Fast-Moving Goods**

Recently, various types of gaming blind box live streaming have emerged on major short video and live streaming platforms. For example, "Turtle paring game" "blind bag squishy", "blind bag bracelet", etc. The blind box products sold in live broadcasts are mostly low-priced items, such as small resin ornaments, beads, as well as low-cost slow rebound, slimes, etc. This type of product has a low unit price and can be purchased in large quantities within the same budget, giving consumers the impression of "value for money" and promoting consumption [8].

In addition, this type of live streaming further enhances the randomness and fun of blind boxes. The focus of purchasing is no longer on the style of blind boxes, but on the quantity of products obtained. Customers can obtain additional products through forms such as "wishing colour", which means that if the colour guessed by the customer when placing the order matches the colour obtained by opening the blind box, they can receive more of the blind box. Similarly, newly acquired blind boxes still follow this rule. It is precisely because of such rules that customers usually receive a whole box or basket of resin ornaments, even if they do not have a need to purchase resin ornaments themselves, they will still feel satisfied with the large quantity and make consumption.

### **4.2. The Impact of Live Room Interaction on Consumer Behaviour**

The components of a live broadcast room include not only live content, but also a team of hosts and live audience. This type of sales form utilizes Herd behaviour. People subconsciously follow the choices of the majority when consuming. In the era of diversified information, it is difficult for people to judge the authenticity of information, and it is also difficult to judge the value of goods based on personal experience. In such an era, people cannot rely on their own experience and can only rely on the evaluation and feedback of others. Consumers will choose the most popular products, products with the most positive reviews, and products that appear to be the most popular. When consumers see "explosive orders" in live streaming rooms and active comments from viewers in the comment section, they will have the idea of following the crowd to make purchases. When most people show a strong desire to purchase, coupled with the large number of sales displayed in the live broadcast room, it will affect people's rational judgment on whether they need to purchase this product, thereby promoting consumption.

This type of interactive consumption also utilizes consumers' bounded rationality, as live streaming is an interactive form where consumers can directly type or chat with the host through a microphone. This form of connection is different from regular online shopping and shortens users' thinking time. This form limits users' cognitive abilities, decision-making time, and information collection time, leading to the circumstance where consumers are unable to make rational decisions. Their decisions are stimulated by the information exposed to them, and unable to make decision eliminating the impact of dopamine stimulation.

In addition, this type of game blind box has a new form of sales, and the new rules not only give old customers a sense of superiority, but also arouse the curiosity of new customers. The exploration of rules by new customers will promote the number of interactions in the live broadcast room, and frequent comment interactions will lead to the live broadcast room being recognized as a popular live broadcast room by the platform, thereby providing more exposure opportunities and traffic bonuses.

### 4.3. Marketing Memes, Using Short Videos to Create Hype and Promote

Meanwhile, the retail strategy of blind box collaboration for gaming live streaming with short video content creators. This collaboration replaces hard-implanted advertising with a more easily accepted and receptive form of soft implantation. By sharing interesting anecdotes about products and sales processes with the audience, this marketing approach not only generates widely disseminated content, but also reduces consumers' resistance to commercial advertising. Make the audience unconsciously develop a favourable impression of the product.

In addition, merchants also utilize real-time hot topics and public figures to guide consumption. For example, during the 2024 Paris Olympics, Chinese diver Quan Hong Chan shared on social media the "Turtle pairing game" blind boxes she purchased in live stream. This post was quickly used as creative material by many marketing accounts. Although various tags have emerged, such as “#Quan Hong Chan also loves to open blind boxes”, bringing in the relationship between the audience and public figures. This form of creating memes has attracted more attention from the public, taking advantage of the high attention paid to sports events and athletes during the Olympic period to subtly promote products.

Through this approach, businesses not only successfully leverage hot events, but also subtly influence audiences in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, gradually stimulating their interest in consumption. Compared to traditional forced promotion, this approach is more in line with the consumption habits of young people, enhancing their sense of immersion and participation, and promoting more active interaction and discussion on social media.

## 5. Development Issues and Future Development Suggestions for Blind Box Live Streaming

At present, blind box products are still a very popular category and have gradually formed a unique cultural circle and consumption pattern. Blind box live streaming is also attracting more and more viewers due to the addition of various new game sales methods. Consumers today are still enthusiastic and eager to purchase unknown goods.

However, the problem of blind boxes in game live streaming is also obvious. The sales of blind boxes for gaming live streaming rely on high sales volume, in other words, the profitability of such products depends on high popularity and traffic. Only when the live streaming room has high popularity can high profits be obtained. However, the popularity is not unlimited, as the sales form involves live streaming, unboxing, and other activities that require time, as well as interaction with the audience, resulting in longer intervals between each order. This will lead to some viewers losing patience due to long waiting times, resulting in a loss of interest. Such live broadcasts require the continuous introduction of new games to maintain high sales and popularity. When a game format exists for more than three months, its popularity will significantly decrease as consumers are no longer interested in this type of game. This characteristic means that there is strong competition among businesses, and innovative game formats have become the most important core competitiveness for businesses. Businesses without new game formats are easily eliminated in this market.

## 6. Conclusion

Driven by the fast-moving social media trend and rapid spreading of information online, it's easy for game game-based live stream industry to gain popularity and has a stable range of audience. The high interaction and randomness help firms gain a strong advantage on their products. Creating more fun and appealing marketing strategy that's suitable to the social media environment.

However, the dual nature of such rapid dissemination may also lead to the rapid decline of such industries. Based on the current data trend and consumption pattern, blind box is a popular strategy that's appealing to current generation of consumers.

This paper analyses the gaming live streaming industry based on the current social context. However, in the face of future technological development and changes in the generation of main consumers in the market, there might be multiple unexpected changes to the industry. These changes are not accounted in this paper. In the coming years, with changes in consumption patterns, there may be more new research areas and directions.

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