

The Impact of Content Value and Streamer Credibility on Consumers' Purchase Intention

-- An Empirical Study of Apparel Live Streaming on TikTok

Zhongai Wan

School of Business, Guilin Institute of Information Technology, Guilin, 541000, China

Abstract: With the rapid development of live-streaming e-commerce, the presentation of live-streaming content and streamer characteristics have become increasingly important factors influencing consumers' purchase decisions, particularly in apparel live-streaming contexts. Compared with traditional e-commerce, live-streaming commerce reduces information asymmetry to some extent through real-time product display, interactive communication, and scenario-based marketing. However, substantial differences in conversion performance still exist across live-streaming sessions. Drawing on Uses and Gratifications Theory and Source Credibility Theory, this study develops a research framework to systematically examine the effects of live-streaming content value (entertainment value and informativeness) and streamer credibility (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise) on consumer attitude and purchase intention. Data were collected through a questionnaire survey of consumers with experience in watching or purchasing apparel products via TikTok live streams, yielding 436 valid responses. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted using SmartPLS to test the proposed hypotheses. The results indicate that both the entertainment value and informativeness of live-streaming content have significant positive effects on consumer attitude. In addition, streamer attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise significantly enhance consumer attitude, which in turn exerts a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Furthermore, bootstrap analysis reveals that consumer attitude plays a partial mediating role in the relationships between content value, streamer credibility, and purchase intention. These findings provide practical implications for content design, streamer development, and operational management in apparel live-streaming commerce.

Keywords: Live-streaming e-commerce; TikTok; Apparel live streaming; Streamer credibility; Consumer attitude; Purchase intention.

1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of rapid development in the digital economy and platform economy, live-streaming e-commerce has emerged as a novel marketing model that deeply integrates content platforms with electronic commerce, becoming an important driver of consumer spending growth. Short-video platforms such as TikTok and Kuaishou have established a closed-loop mechanism of "content recommendation–live-stream interaction–instant transaction," which highly integrates product presentation, information dissemination, and consumer decision-making processes. Compared with traditional online shopping that relies primarily on images, text, and search, live-streaming e-commerce has fundamentally transformed consumers' shopping experiences. By leveraging real-time product display, bidirectional interaction, and scenario-based marketing, live-streaming commerce has demonstrated strong advantages in enhancing consumer engagement and facilitating transaction conversion.

Among various live-streaming e-commerce categories, apparel live streaming is particularly representative. On the one hand, apparel products are characterized by frequent style updates, strong situational dependence, and high experiential attributes. Consumers often face uncertainties related to size fit, fabric quality, and actual wearing effects during the purchase process. On the other hand, traditional e-commerce platforms, which mainly rely on static images and textual descriptions, are often insufficient to comprehensively present apparel details and wearing performance, thereby

intensifying information asymmetry. Through live try-ons, outfit demonstrations, and real-time question-and-answer interactions, live-streaming e-commerce can effectively reduce consumers' perceived risk to some extent and has gradually become an important channel for apparel consumption. However, in practice, substantial differences exist across live-streaming sessions in terms of interaction intensity and conversion performance, suggesting that consumers' purchase intention is influenced by multiple factors rather than a single determinant.

Existing studies generally agree that both live-streaming content characteristics and streamer-related attributes play critical roles in shaping consumer decision-making. High-quality live-streaming content can provide useful information while enhancing viewing experience, whereas streamers, as the core transmitters of product information, influence consumers' perceptions of information authenticity and reliability through their credibility and professional competence. This influence is particularly salient in apparel live streaming, where experiential attributes are highly emphasized. Nevertheless, the existing literature still exhibits several limitations. First, some studies focus on isolated factors and lack a systematic examination of the combined effects of content value and streamer credibility. Second, the mediating role of consumer attitude in the relationship between live-streaming factors and purchase intention has received insufficient attention. Third, empirical research focusing specifically on apparel live streaming on TikTok remains relatively limited and warrants further investigation.

Based on these research gaps, this study adopts the context

of apparel live streaming on TikTok to comprehensively examine the effects of live-streaming content value and streamer credibility on consumers' purchase intention from a consumer-oriented perspective. Consumer attitude is introduced as a key mediating variable to elucidate the underlying mechanism. Using data collected through a questionnaire survey and employing structural equation modeling for empirical analysis, this study aims to contribute to the theoretical understanding of live-streaming e-commerce while offering practical insights for apparel live-streaming operations and management.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

2.1. Uses and Gratifications Theory and Live-Streaming Content Value

Uses and Gratifications Theory posits that individuals are not passive recipients of media messages; instead, they actively select media content based on their own needs in order to satisfy multiple purposes such as information acquisition, entertainment, and emotional regulation (Katz et al., 1974; Rubin, 1984). With the evolution of media forms, this theory has been widely applied to explain users' motivations and outcomes in new media contexts, including social media, short video platforms, and live streaming (Sundar & Limperos, 2013).

In the context of live-streaming e-commerce, consumers watch live streams not only to obtain product-related information but also to seek enjoyment and interactive gratification, which is highly consistent with the core assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Theory. Compared with traditional e-commerce, live streaming enables real-time explanations, scenario-based product demonstrations, and interactive communication, allowing consumers to simultaneously achieve informational fulfillment and entertainment experience, thereby influencing attitude formation.

Specifically, the entertainment value of live-streaming content enhances the enjoyment and immersion of the viewing process, increases consumer engagement, and generates more positive psychological responses. In contrast, the informativeness of live-streaming content provides clear and sufficient product details, usage scenarios, and purchasing suggestions, which helps reduce uncertainty and perceived risk in apparel purchasing and strengthens consumers' confidence in decision making. Prior studies have also shown that content integrating both informational and experiential value is more likely to elicit positive responses and facilitate attitude formation (Chan et al., 2021). Accordingly, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: The entertainment value of live-streaming content has a significant positive effect on consumer attitude.

H2: The informativeness of live-streaming content has a significant positive effect on consumer attitude.

2.2. Source Credibility Theory and Streamer Credibility

Source Credibility Theory emphasizes that the perceived credibility of an information source significantly affects recipients' acceptance of information and the formation of attitudes. Hovland and Weiss (1951) argue that messages delivered by sources perceived as more credible and knowledgeable tend to be more persuasive. In live-streaming

e-commerce, streamers serve as the primary transmitters of product information. Given the highly personalized and interactive nature of live streaming, streamer credibility often becomes a critical cue influencing consumers' judgments.

Previous studies commonly conceptualize source credibility as comprising dimensions such as attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990). Streamer attractiveness reflects the appeal of a streamer's appearance, communication style, and personal charisma; trustworthiness represents the extent to which a streamer is perceived as honest and reliable; and expertise captures the streamer's knowledge of product attributes, industry-related information, and explanatory competence. In apparel live-streaming contexts, where consumers cannot physically try on products, they tend to rely more heavily on streamers' authentic demonstrations and professional explanations when making purchase decisions. Accordingly, streamer trustworthiness and expertise exert more stable influences on attitude formation. Prior research has also confirmed that trustworthiness and expertise significantly enhance consumer trust and promote purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Streamer attractiveness has a significant positive effect on consumer attitude.

H4: Streamer trustworthiness has a significant positive effect on consumer attitude.

H5: Streamer expertise has a significant positive effect on consumer attitude.

2.3. Consumer Attitude and Purchase Intention

Consumer attitude refers to an individual's overall evaluative tendency toward a specific object or behavior and is widely regarded as an important antecedent of behavioral intention. According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, the more favorable an individual's attitude toward a behavior, the stronger the likelihood of forming the corresponding behavioral intention (Ajzen, 1991). In live-streaming e-commerce, consumer attitude encompasses not only evaluations of the product itself but also overall assessments of live-stream shopping, content quality, and streamer performance.

Existing research indicates that in social commerce and live-stream shopping environments, content-related attributes and source-related characteristics often influence purchase intention indirectly by shaping consumer attitudes (Chan et al., 2021; Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022). Therefore, examining the mediating role of consumer attitude helps to elucidate the underlying mechanism linking content and streamer characteristics to purchase intention. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Consumer attitude has a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

H7: Consumer attitude mediates the relationships between live-streaming content value, streamer credibility, and purchase intention.

2.4. Research Model Development

Based on the theoretical analysis and hypotheses proposed above, this study develops the research model illustrated in Figure 1.

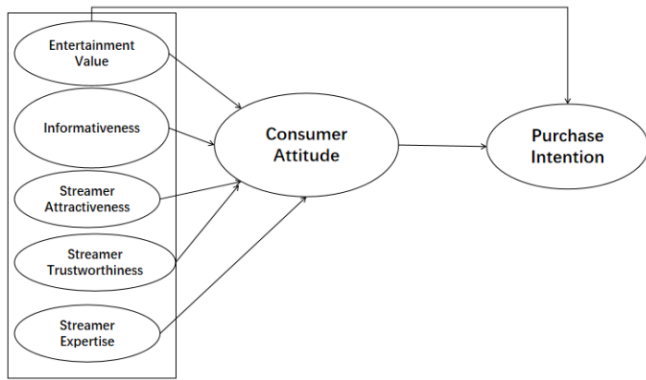


Figure 1. Proposed Research Model

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Sample Source

This study employed a questionnaire survey method to collect data. The research subjects were consumers who had experience watching or purchasing apparel products through TikTok live-streaming sessions. The questionnaire was distributed anonymously via online platforms. After eliminating invalid responses, a total of 436 valid questionnaires were retained for analysis.

The sample was primarily composed of young consumers, with a relatively higher proportion of female respondents. Overall, the sample characteristics were largely consistent with the main consumer demographics of apparel live streaming on TikTok, indicating a reasonable level of representativeness.

3.2. Measurement of Variables and Scale Design

The research variables included live-streaming content value, streamer credibility, consumer attitude, and purchase intention. Live-streaming content value was measured along two dimensions: entertainment value and informativeness. Streamer credibility was measured across three dimensions: attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise. Consumer attitude and purchase intention served as outcome variables.

All constructs were measured using five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). Measurement items were adapted from well-established scales in prior studies and were slightly modified to fit the context of apparel live streaming on TikTok, ensuring contextual relevance and respondent comprehension.

3.3. Data Analysis Method

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyze the data using SmartPLS software. The analytical procedure involved three steps: first, assessing the reliability and validity of the measurement model; second, testing the structural model and path relationships; and third, applying the bootstrap method to examine the mediating effects.

4. Empirical Results

After data screening and preparation, PLS-SEM was applied to test the proposed research model.

First, the results of the measurement model evaluation indicated that Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE) for all constructs met recommended statistical thresholds. These findings

demonstrate good internal consistency and convergent validity of the measurement scales, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural model analysis.

Second, structural model path analysis revealed that the entertainment value of live-streaming content ($\beta = 0.214$, $p < 0.001$) and informativeness ($\beta = 0.203$, $p < 0.001$) both had significant positive effects on consumer attitude. This suggests that in apparel live-streaming contexts, content that integrates both entertainment and informational value is more likely to enhance consumers' overall evaluations of live-stream shopping, supporting H1 and H2.

Streamer-related factors also exhibited significant effects. Streamer attractiveness ($\beta = 0.206$, $p < 0.001$), trustworthiness ($\beta = 0.178$, $p < 0.001$), and expertise ($\beta = 0.183$, $p < 0.01$) all significantly enhanced consumer attitude, indicating that streamers, as core information sources, play an important role in attitude formation. Therefore, H3–H5 were supported. In addition, consumer attitude exerted a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = 0.252$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H6.

Finally, bootstrap analysis further demonstrated that consumer attitude played a partial mediating role in the relationships between live-streaming content value, streamer credibility, and purchase intention. This indicates that content and streamer characteristics can influence purchase intention both directly and indirectly through the formation of consumer attitudes, thereby supporting H7.

5. Discussion and Marketing Implications

5.1. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study demonstrate that both live-streaming content value and streamer credibility have significant effects on consumers' purchase intention, with consumer attitude serving as a key mediating mechanism. First, the entertainment value and informativeness of live-streaming content significantly enhance consumer attitude, indicating that apparel live streaming embodies both information-oriented and experience-oriented consumption attributes. Consumers not only focus on product-related information to reduce uncertainty but also value the enjoyment derived from the viewing experience. Therefore, apparel live-streaming operations should avoid emphasizing a single dimension and instead balance "usefulness" and "enjoyment" to foster favorable attitudes.

Second, streamer attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise all significantly influence consumer attitude, with trustworthiness and expertise exerting more stable effects. This finding underscores the central role of streamers in apparel live streaming. Given the strong experiential attributes of apparel products, consumers tend to rely heavily on streamers' authentic demonstrations and professional explanations when making purchase decisions. Streamers' trust endorsement and professional expression effectively reduce perceived risk and strengthen attitudinal alignment.

Third, consumer attitude has a significant positive effect on purchase intention and partially mediates the relationships between content and streamer factors and purchase intention. This suggests that live-streaming e-commerce not only stimulates immediate purchases through situational cues but also cultivates long-term favorable attitudes that enhance consumer loyalty and repurchase potential.

5.2. Marketing Implications

First, apparel live-streaming content design should balance entertainment and informativeness. While ensuring accurate and sufficient product information, marketers can enhance enjoyment and immersion through scenario-based demonstrations, interactive topics, live try-ons, comparisons, and styling suggestions. At the same time, product information such as sizing recommendations, fabric characteristics, usage scenarios, and care instructions should be communicated in a structured and efficient manner to jointly promote positive attitude formation and purchase conversion.

Second, greater emphasis should be placed on strengthening streamer credibility and professional competence, prioritizing the development of “trustworthy and professional” streamer assets. Platforms and merchants should enhance streamers’ knowledge of products, styling logic, and communication skills through systematic training and standardized management mechanisms. In streamer selection, trustworthiness and expertise should be regarded as key evaluation criteria, rather than relying solely on physical attractiveness or traffic metrics.

Third, live-streaming operations should shift from a focus on short-term conversion to long-term attitude management. Given the important mediating role of consumer attitude, firms should not only pursue immediate sales but also accumulate trust and goodwill through consistent content quality and stable streamer image management. This approach can foster sustained positive attitudes, thereby enhancing repeat purchase intention and user stickiness.

6. Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Research

6.1. Conclusion

Based on the context of apparel live streaming on TikTok, this study empirically examined the mechanisms through which live-streaming content value and streamer credibility influence consumers’ purchase intention. The results show that the entertainment value and informativeness of live-streaming content, as well as streamer attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise, significantly enhance consumer attitude. Consumer attitude, in turn, significantly promotes purchase intention and partially mediates the relationships between content value, streamer credibility, and purchase intention. Overall, content and streamers jointly shape consumer attitudes, which subsequently influence purchase intention, providing an important explanation for differences in conversion performance across apparel live-streaming sessions.

6.2. Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was drawn primarily from the TikTok platform, and the applicability of the findings to other platforms remains to be examined. Second, the use of cross-sectional survey data limits the ability to capture dynamic changes in attitudes and behaviors. Third, the model did not incorporate variables such as pricing strategies, promotional intensity, or platform mechanisms, which could be considered in future research.

6.3. Future Research Directions

Future studies may extend this research by conducting cross-platform and cross-category comparisons, incorporating longitudinal or behavioral data, and integrating variables related to pricing, promotions, and interactive mechanisms. Such efforts would help construct a more comprehensive framework for explaining consumer decision making in live-streaming e-commerce and enhance the generalizability and practical value of research conclusions.

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