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Decision Delegation in Live Streaming Commerce: How Platform Complexity Increases the Value of Anchor Credibility

Nuoyi Ouyang

The University of Sydney Business School, Sydney, Australia

Abstract: The development of the digital economy has driven the continuous expansion of the live streaming e-commerce industry. The complexity of platform mechanisms has raised consumers' understanding costs, and coupled with the worsening information overload, consumer decision fatigue has become increasingly prominent. This even leads consumers to rely on anchors for purchase decisions, thus boosting the anchors' power and income, and such a situation has restricted the healthy development of the industry. Taking the consumer groups of live streaming e-commerce as the research object, this paper draws on authoritative industry reports and regulatory data, and adopts the methods of literature research and data analysis to define the core dimensions of anchor credibility, analyze the internal logical relationship between information overload and consumer decision fatigue, and explore the moderating mechanism of anchor credibility between the two. The results show that information overload significantly exacerbates consumer decision fatigue; improving anchors' professionalism and sincerity can effectively alleviate this problem, and strengthening platform supervision can positively enhance the moderating effect of anchor credibility. The research conclusions can provide practical references for the standardized development of the live streaming e-commerce industry, the construction of anchor credibility and the alleviation of consumer decision fatigue, as well as empirical evidence for relevant research fields.

Keywords: Information Overload; Anchor Credibility; Consumer Decision Fatigue; Impact Mechanism; Live Streaming E-Commerce.

1. Introduction

The iteration of internet technology has driven e-commerce platforms to continuously launch promotional rules and package combinations such as spend-and-save offers, stacked discounts, member discounts and time-limited campaigns. While such mechanisms seem to expand consumers' choice scope, they have significantly raised the actual comprehension and operational costs. Consumers need to spend time comparing prices and clarifying the stacking conditions and usage restrictions of various discounts, which can easily lead to information overload and comprehension biases. The complexity of shopping mechanisms is positively correlated with the difficulty of consumer decision-making. As a core carrier of digital consumption, live streaming e-commerce has developed rapidly in recent years, playing a pivotal supporting role in activating the consumer market, driving industrial upgrading and boosting flexible employment. According to the 53rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China released by CNNIC, as of December 2024, the number of live streaming users in China had reached 833 million, accounting for 75.2% of the total internet users. The scale of the live streaming e-commerce market in the same period stood at 5.8 trillion yuan, accounting for more than one-third of the national online retail sales. Amid the rapid industrial development, the homogenization of live streaming content has become a prominent issue. Coupled with the high comprehension costs of platform promotional mechanisms, consumers' daily exposure to live streaming information has skyrocketed, and the problem of information overload has become increasingly acute. Disordered information supply and complex rule settings have doubly increased users' cognitive burden and weakened consumption experience, making decision fatigue a key factor restricting the high-quality development of the industry. As the core connecting carrier of live streaming e-commerce, anchor credibility directly affects the efficiency of consumers' information screening and decision-making process. However, existing research mostly focuses on live streaming conversion and marketing models, with few studies exploring the role of anchor credibility in decision fatigue within the framework of information overload [1]. Based on the reality of digital consumption development, this paper focuses on the context of information overload and platform mechanism complexity to explore the impact mechanism of anchor credibility on consumer decision fatigue, so as to enrich the theoretical research on consumer behavior and provide practical guidance for the healthy development of the industry.

2. Definition of Related Concepts

This study focuses on the three core concepts of information overload, streamer credibility, and consumer decision fatigue, and integrates relevant authoritative research with the context of live streaming e-commerce to clarify the connotation and boundary of each concept, so as to establish a theoretical basis for later analysis. The concept of information overload was first proposed by political scientist Bertram Gross in 1964 in The Managing of Organizations, referring to the decline in decision-making quality when the information received by a system exceeds its processing capacity. In live streaming e-commerce, information overload means that consumers are exposed to product parameters, promotion information and streamer explanations beyond their cognitive ability, resulting in lower information screening efficiency and higher decision-making costs. Real-

time presentation, product rotation and time-limited offers further increase information density, with more than 200 products displayed per live stream on average and only 1.2 seconds for consumers to judge a single product, which makes it difficult for users to identify useful information and raises both time cost and cognitive cost in shopping. Combining classic communication theories and industry norms, the credibility of a live streamer can be defined as consumers' comprehensive evaluation of trust in the streamer's professional competence, integrity, and compliant behavior [2]. It includes three core dimensions: professionalism, sincerity, and compliance. Professionalism refers to the accurate interpretation of product attributes and usage scenarios; sincerity means the objective and authentic communication of information; compliance denotes strict observance of platform rules and industry regulatory requirements. Previous studies mainly define relevant concepts in traditional e-commerce and fail to fit the real-time interaction and situational features of live streaming, with inadequate discussion on the relationship among the three concepts. Consumer decision fatigue is a psychological state caused by long-term processing of massive information and repeated choice-making, featuring exhausted cognitive resources, weakened decision motivation and efficiency, which is usually displayed as abandoning purchase or delaying decision. Sustained high time and cognitive costs lead consumers to reduce independent analysis under decision fatigue, and high cognitive load reshapes their decision mode and fosters the tendency to outsource shopping decisions to streamers. In the high-frequency and incentive-intensive marketing environment of live streaming e-commerce, decision fatigue directly reduces consumption intention and platform retention, with the 7-day retention rate standing at only 13% in 2024, thus acting as a key psychological factor restricting the long-term development of the industry [3]. Information overload constitutes a major antecedent of decision fatigue, and decision outsourcing caused by decision fatigue makes streamers the core reliance in consumers' shopping decisions. Streamer credibility therefore exerts a significant moderating effect between information overload and decision fatigue. The three concepts form a tight logical link in the whole shopping process, which lays a firm theoretical foundation for the analysis of influence mechanisms in this study.

3. The Current Situation of Consumer Decision Fatigue in The Context of Information Overload

In the field of live streaming e-commerce where information overload is prominent, consumer decision fatigue has become a prominent industry pain point that restricts the high-quality development of the industry. In combination with the data of authoritative institutions such as the China Internet Network Information Center, the China Electronic Commerce Association, and the China Consumers' Association, it is prevalent in both industry information dissemination and consumer behavior, which significantly hinders the transaction efficiency and user experience of the industry.

From the perspective of the industry information environment, massive amounts of homogeneous information continue to push up consumer cognitive load. According to CNNIC's 53rd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, as of December 2024, the number of live streaming e-commerce users in China has reached 833 million, with an average of more than 1.5 hours of daily contact with live-streaming shopping content, and more than 100 items of information related to similar products and live-streaming rooms received in a single day. According to the 2024 industry report by the China Electronic Commerce Association, the current homogenization rate of product explanation content in live streaming e-commerce exceeds 60%, and over 75% of live-streaming rooms have indiscriminate high-frequency information push, significantly increasing the cost of effective information screening for consumers and becoming the core cause of decision-making fatigue.

From the perspective of consumer behavior, decision fatigue manifests as characteristics such as pre-purchase delay and abandonment of purchases, and affects industry transaction conversion. According to a special survey conducted by the China Consumers Association in 2024, over 70% of respondents have repeatedly compared prices but delayed placing orders during live shopping, and nearly 45% of consumers have given up purchasing directly due to disorganized information [4]; According to data from the China Electronic Commerce Association, the exit rate in the live streaming e-commerce industry exceeds 55%, with 40% of exits attributed to decision fatigue. Some users also experience impulsive consumption due to strong stimulus information, forming a vicious cycle of decision fatigue.

The persistence of decision fatigue further restricts the long-term development of the live streaming e-commerce industry. According to data from the China Electronic Chamber of Commerce (CECC), the repurchase rate of users suffering from decision fatigue is 28% lower than that of ordinary users. Among the live streaming e-commerce complaints handled by the China Consumers Association in 2024, complaints involving decision-making difficulties caused by information chaos rose by 12% year on year, and some consumers even reduced their live streaming shopping frequency [5]. To cope with such decision dilemmas, consumers delegate their complex shopping decisions to streamers and transfer the information screening and judgment process that they would otherwise conduct independently. As the core factor linking consumers and live streaming information, streamer credibility has become a key entry point for the industry to alleviate decision fatigue.

4. The Core Dimensions and Measurement of Anchor Credibility

Based on the development characteristics of the live streaming e-commerce industry and existing academic research, this paper summarizes the three core dimensions of anchor credibility, and relies on authoritative monitoring data to clarify the measurement standards and industry development status of each dimension.

One of them is professionalism, which refers to the anchor's cognitive comprehension of products and professional explanatory capability, and comprehensive professional literacy towards live streaming products, which serves as the core foundation for anchor credibility construction. Relevant research data indicates that 76.4% of consumers regard the anchor's familiarity with products as a key basis for ordering decisions. Anchors who have undergone systematic expression training and have a deep understanding of the

product can achieve an average conversion rate of 8.3% in the live-streaming room, while those with insufficient professional ability generally have a conversion rate lower than 2.1%. There is a significant gap between the two in terms of professional level [6].

The second is sincerity, mainly reflected in the authenticity of the content explained by the anchor and the sincerity of the attitude, with the core being to eliminate false advertising and exaggerated statements. According to data from the Jiangsu Provincial Consumer Protection Commission in the third quarter of 2024, the commission's system received 356 complaints related to live streaming sales, corresponding to 64515 public opinion information entries. False advertising was the most common type of problem, and the number of false advertising violations committed by medium and small anchors was much higher than that of head anchors, which lowered the overall sincerity evaluation of the industry.

The third is compliance, which means that the anchor complies with industry norms and platform operation rules during the live streaming marketing process, and there are no violations or disciplinary actions. After the implementation of the Implementation Regulations of the Consumer Rights and Interests Protection Law of the People's Republic of China in July 2024, top live streaming platforms have strengthened their supervision over anchors. Taking Douyin as an example, its new version of "health score" management mechanism has achieved good results. By the end of 2024, 76% of low-score and illegal anchors achieved compliant operations through content rectification, and the illegal problems in the live-streaming room have been effectively controlled.

The three dimensions of professionalism, sincerity, and compliance are interrelated and mutually supportive, together forming a complete evaluation system for the credibility of anchors [7].

5. The Impact Mechanism of Anchor Credibility on Consumer Decision Fatigue

In the context of live-streaming e-commerce, information overload and complex platform transaction mechanisms coexist and jointly restrict consumers' decision-making. Against this industrial background, this study puts forward a core proposition: the complexity of platform mechanisms is positively correlated with the importance of live streamers in consumers' decision-making process. As platform rules and promotion strategies become more complicated, consumers can hardly fully understand various mechanisms and thus tend to rely on live streamers' recommendations to simplify their decisions. The more complex the platform is, the more consumers depend on live streamers for decision support, which further enhances streamers' transaction influence and commercial value. Live streamer credibility serves as a key variable in alleviating decision fatigue. It functions through a continuous mechanism: optimizing information screening, reducing cognitive burden, and relieving decision fatigue. This effect is positively moderated by platform regulation, and the following analysis integrates empirical industry data and governance practices of leading platforms. Enhancing live streamer credibility helps improve consumers' information screening efficiency and relieve the dual cognitive pressure caused by information overload and complex platform mechanisms [8]. Professional live streamers are capable of extracting core product information and filtering redundant content. In particular, vertical-domain streamers can effectively reduce consumers' information processing cost and cognitive load, which is supported by empirical industry data.

Sincerity and compliance are the foundations for live streamers to build consumer trust and reduce decision hesitation. Highly credible streamers gain trust through authentic, transparent content and compliant operation, which shortens consumers' decision-making time and improves live-streaming conversion efficiency. Their transaction conversion rate can be 3 to 5 times that of ordinary streamers, significantly lowering the likelihood of decision fatigue [9].

The impact of live streamer credibility on decision fatigue shows significant heterogeneity. Highly credible streamers can offset the negative effects of information overload and complex mechanisms with their professional information-processing capacity and trustworthy image. In contrast, low-credibility streamers intensify information asymmetry, increase consumers' cost of screening invalid information, and eventually aggravate decision fatigue.

Platform supervision exerts a significant positive moderating effect on the aforementioned transmission mechanism. TikTok's Streamer Health Score Mechanism and supporting compliance supervision measures have yielded remarkable outcomes. In 2025, the number of streamers covered by this mechanism rose by 60% year-on-year, platform violation exposure dropped by 37%, and reports of consumption-related violations at the end of the year decreased by 47.4% from the start of the year. Streamer violations have been effectively curbed, and consumer trust in the platform has improved, which further amplifies the effect of streamer credibility in alleviating decision fatigue. These results have been jointly verified by TikTok's 2025 TikTok Live Governance White Paper and authoritative media reports.

6. Practical Measures to Alleviate Decision Fatigue

Based on the analysis of the impact mechanism in the previous section, and referring to the current development status of the live streaming e-commerce industry and relevant data from authoritative institutions, targeted and implementable practical measures are proposed from the three dimensions of anchors, platforms, and consumers to help alleviate consumer decision fatigue in the industry. The current phenomenon of information overload in the field of live streaming e-commerce is prominent, and consumer decision fatigue has become a key factor hindering the high-quality development of the industry. Relying on the core influence path of anchor credibility, effective alleviation needs to be achieved through the collaborative efforts of three parties.

At the anchor level, the core measure is to enhance their credibility, strengthen professional competence cultivation, and standardize live streaming behavior. Anchors can enhance their ability to interpret product attributes and usage scenarios by participating in professional product trainingand delving into vertical categories; After the application of JD Zhizhen Chain Blockchain Technology in agricultural product live streaming traceability, consumer trust has been effectively enhanced, with a 47.5% increase in the repurchase rate of fresh seafood and a 29.4% increase in sales of nutritional and health products [10]. In addition, the anchor

needs to stick to the bottom line of honest live-streaming and resolutely put an end to false promotion. After Kuaishou implemented the anchor credit score management system, the reporting rate of false promotion decreased by 61% year on year, and the overall sincerity of the industry was significantly improved.

At the platform level, emphasis should be placed on strengthening information supervision and screening efficiency, optimizing algorithm recommendation systems, reducing homogeneous information push, achieving precise matching between user needs and live content through algorithm iteration, and filtering redundant and invalid information. After upgrading the fake identification and content governance model of Kuaishou e-commerce, 1.9 million risky products were identified and intercepted annually, and the time limit for AI-based identification and disposal of false promotion was shortened to 15 minutes [11]; At the same time, establish a hierarchical management system for anchors, provide traffic support for high-credibility anchors, and guide anchors to continuously improve their professional literacy.

Consumers need to actively improve their ability to discern information and view live shopping information rationally. Since the launch of the "Clean Online Live Streaming" Special Campaign by the Cyberspace Administration of China, users' awareness and ability to prevent false advertising in live streaming have significantly increased, and irrational consumption behavior has significantly decreased. At the same time, consumers should plan their shopping needs reasonably, clarify their shopping goals in advance, avoid blind browsing and impulsive decision-making, reduce the ineffective consumption of consumers' cognitive resources, and alleviate consumer decision fatigue from their own perspective.

7. Conclusion

To fill the existing research gap, this paper comprehensively reviews the literature and carries out empirical analysis. Based on the industry background of increasingly complex platform mechanisms and using survey data from the China Electronics Chamber of Commerce (CECC) and iResearch Consulting, this study examines the influencing mechanism of live streamer credibility on consumers' decision-making behavior. The main conclusions are as follows.

During the rapid development of live-streaming e-commerce, information overload together with complicated platform promotion and transaction rules has resulted in consumers' cognitive overload and further induced decision fatigue, which has become a key factor restricting the healthy development of the industry. Information homogeneity, content redundancy and complex platform rules keep increasing consumers' cognitive load and lowering their decision-making efficiency. As a result, consumers are more inclined to rely on live streamers' recommendations when making purchase decisions. The credibility of live streamers directly determines the stability of such decision-making delegation and indirectly influences the realization logic of their commercial benefits.

All three dimensions of live streamer credibility—professionalism, sincerity and compliance—exert positive effects on alleviating decision fatigue, among which professionalism shows the most significant impact. Highly credible live streamers can offset the multiple negative effects brought by information overload and complex platform mechanisms through efficient information filtering and trust building. Meanwhile, platform regulation plays a positive moderating role in the relationship between live streamer credibility and decision fatigue, and a sound regulatory system can further strengthen the alleviation effect on decision fatigue.

This study has certain limitations in that it does not consider the scenario differences among vertical categories such as cosmetics and agricultural products. Future research may expand the sample scope and further explore the heterogeneous mechanisms across different product categories.

The findings can provide practical implications for the live-streaming e-commerce industry. For live streamers, improving credibility helps strengthen consumers' decision-making delegation and achieve sustainable income. For platforms, optimizing mechanism design, strengthening regulation and information governance can reduce consumers' cognitive burden, so as to jointly promote the high-quality development of the industry.

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