

Live Streaming to Influence Repeat Purchase: A Critically Appraised Topic

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Abstract:

This paper explores how integrating live-streaming events into social commerce marketing strategies can enhance consumer repurchase intentions. Through a focused literature review and critical appraisal, it analyzes five empirical studies. The findings suggest that live-streaming events can enhance consumer repurchase motivation, contingent on factors like trust, social connectedness, and customer engagement, potentially outweighing post-purchase satisfaction. As a multidimensional construct, trust reduces perceived risks and can promote repeat purchases, though its impact may vary across consumer segments. Social connectedness, crucial in consumer decision-making, is fostered by interactive and immersive social environments, enriching community and engagement with varying degrees of influence. This engagement, driven by hedonic, social, and utilitarian gratifications, significantly impacts repurchase behavior, though its effects are context-specific. This research offers practical implications for brands seeking sustainable growth in social commerce within the studied contexts. However, it also underscores the ongoing need for further studies to fully comprehend consumer demographic differences, engagement effects over time, and platform-specific dynamics. This emphasis on continuous research highlights the dynamic nature of social commerce and underscores the importance of staying updated in this evolving field.

Clinical Question:

Does integrating live streaming events into social commerce marketing strategy enhance consumers' intention to repurchase a brand?

The research question is structured in the PICOC format in Table 1.

Table 1. PICOC Format

P = Problem or Population	Costly traditional social commerce marketing strategies fail to consistently drive repeat purchases, hindering sustainable sales growth and ROI optimization.
I = Intervention or Success Factor	Consumer brands may implement live streaming social commerce marketing events.
C = Comparison	Compare consumer brands that implement live streaming social commerce marketing events to those that do not to determine if this intervention increases repurchase intention.
O = Outcome	Consumer brands integrating live streaming social commerce events into their marketing strategy experience elevated consumer repurchase intent.
C = Context	To determine if integrating live streaming events improves the efficacy of social commerce marketing strategies, leading to increased repeat purchases, driving sales growth, and optimizing the brand's marketing ROI.

Background:

As consumers increasingly rely on social media to inform and execute their purchase decisions, the commerce landscape is shifting. Social media platforms serve as crucial distribution channels for e-commerce, benefiting from their expansive user base and built-in features that facilitate product discovery, sharing, and purchasing. Social commerce, where consumers explore products and complete transactions within social media platforms, is rapidly expanding, projected to reach \$107 billion in the US alone by 2025 and surpass \$5 trillion globally by 2030 (eMarketer, 2022). This shift marks a fundamental change in consumer-brand

interactions, allowing companies to leverage social commerce as a cornerstone of their marketing strategy.

Brands must grasp the evolution of social commerce to remain competitive and relevant, enabling effective engagement with consumers and adaptation to their evolving needs. In the fast-paced realm of social commerce, marketing strategies are crucial in guiding consumers through their purchase journey amid many choices and information.

A pivotal advancement in social commerce is the rise of live stream shopping, which seamlessly integrates instant purchasing with audience interaction through chat or reaction buttons under the guidance of a host. Due to its real-time interaction capabilities, live streaming is being used to generate sales.

Recognizing the significance of repurchase intent is crucial, as it often holds greater importance than the initial purchase in shaping consumer behavior and fostering long-term brand loyalty in social commerce. Repurchase intention, which refers to consumers' willingness to repeatedly purchase a product through a social website (Ou et al., 2014), is commonly used by behavioral researchers as a standard for predicting certain shopping behaviors (Molinillo et al., 2020). Repeat purchases signal satisfaction and strengthen the consumer-brand relationship, driving increased customer lifetime value, positive word-of-mouth, and a sustainable revenue stream. Thus, strategies focused on nurturing repurchase intent are essential for ensuring sustained success and growth in the competitive landscape of social commerce.

Figure 1. Social Commerce Example (Pinterest)

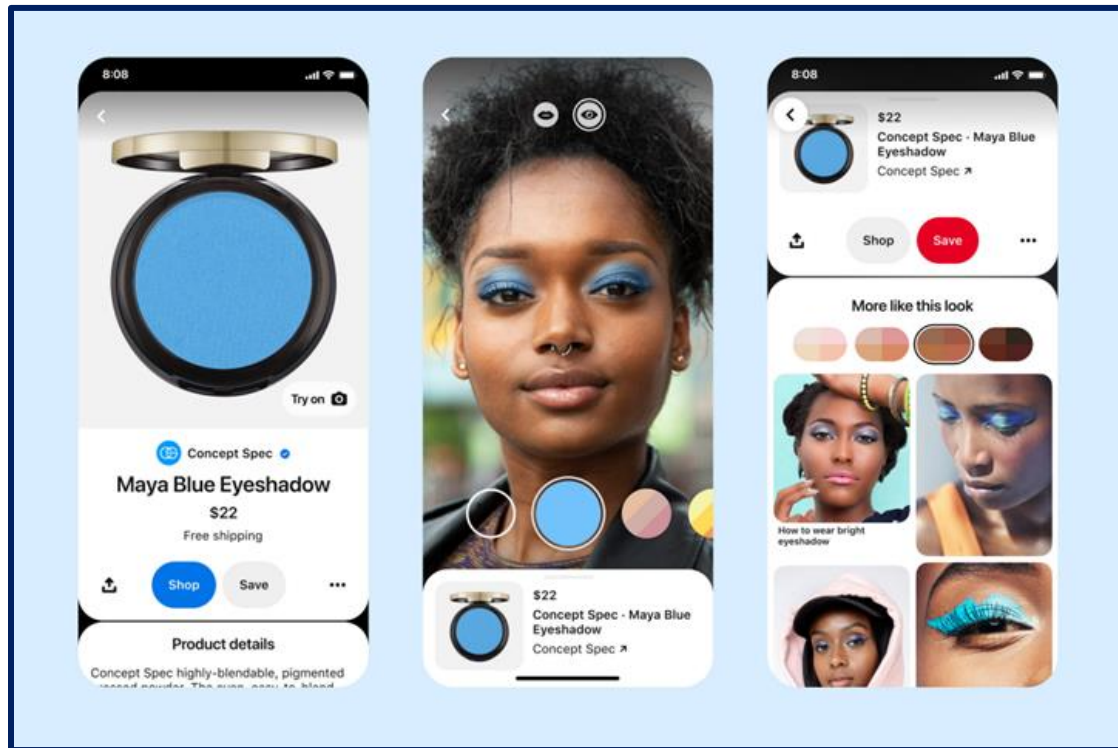
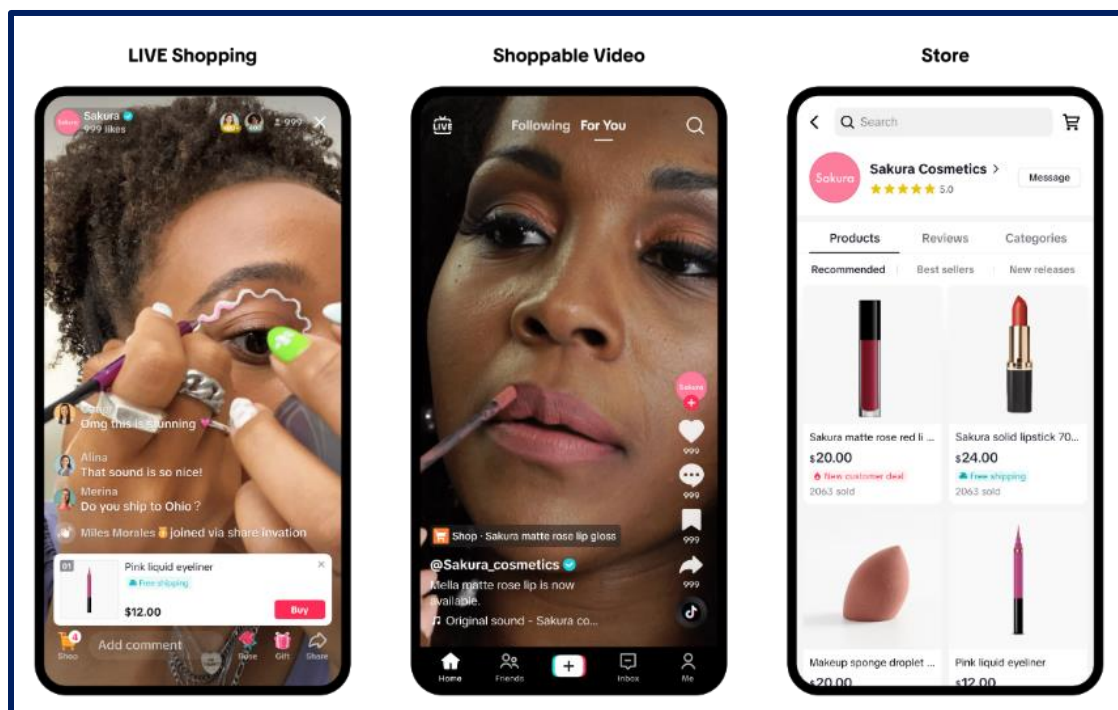


Figure 2. Social Commerce Live Stream Marketing Event Example (TikTok)



Search Strategy:

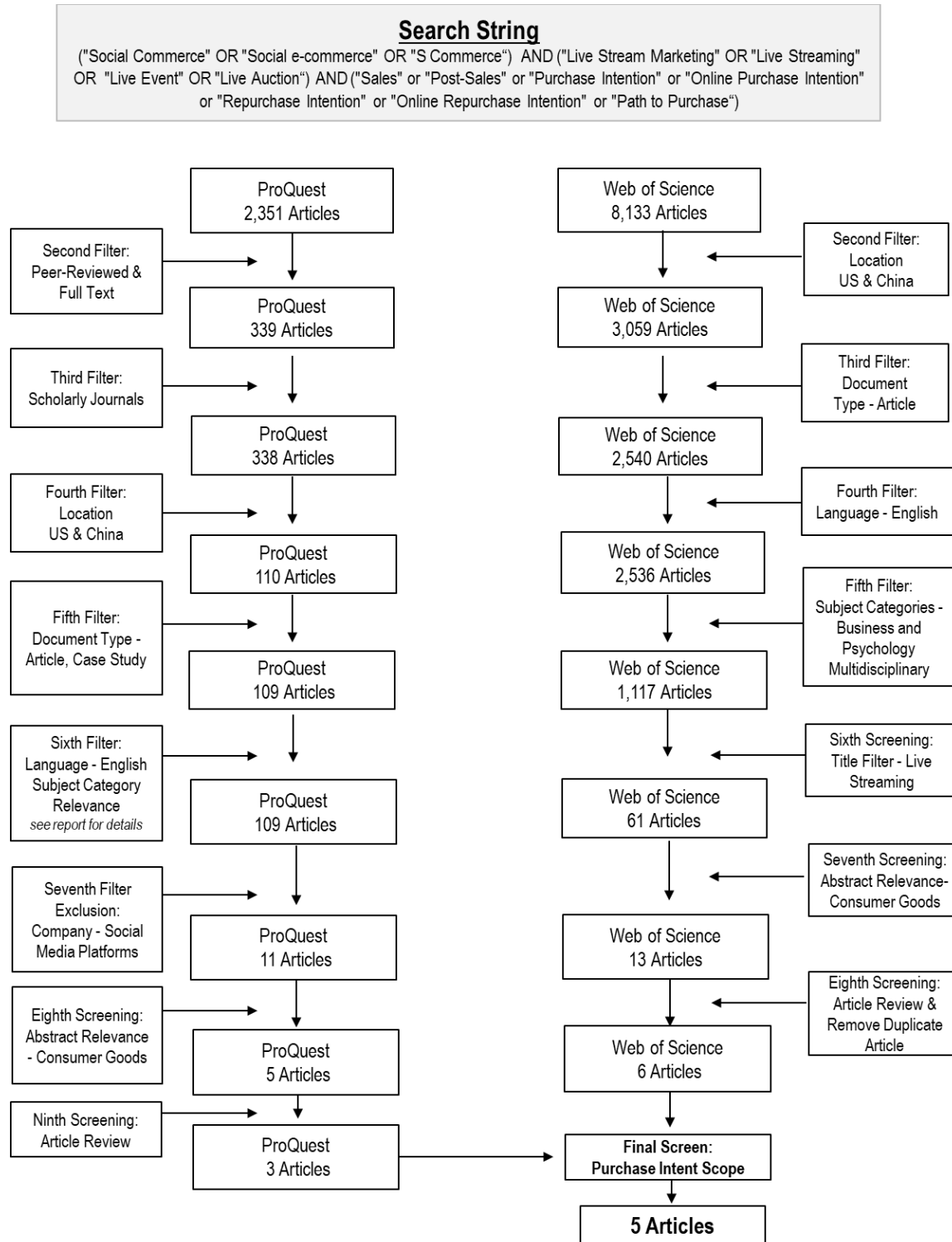
For the focused literature search focused on relevant studies concerning social commerce and marketing strategy, ProQuest and Web of Science were chosen as primary databases for their comprehensive coverage of academic journals and scholarly publications across disciplines. The selection of these platforms highlights the rigor of the research process, facilitating a thorough analysis of literature to identify key insights and emerging themes in social commerce marketing strategies.

The initial ProQuest search string encompassed terms related to social commerce and live stream marketing, resulting in 2,351 articles. Additional filters were applied to refine this vast pool, prioritizing peer-reviewed, full-text articles in scholarly journals. This narrowed the selection to 338 articles. Further criteria included focusing on the United States and China as key markets in social commerce, reducing the number to 110 articles. Subsequent filters were applied for document type (article and case study) and language (English), resulting in 109 articles. Filtering by prominent social media platforms mentioned in the articles, such as TikTok and WeChat, refined the search to 11 articles. Abstracts of these articles were then reviewed for relevance to the consumer goods industry, resulting in 5 applicable articles. Finally, thoroughly examining each article led to identifying the most pertinent ones, leaving 3 articles for consideration in the study.

The Web of Science search strategy was adjusted from the ProQuest search string, focusing on "social commerce" as the main topic and incorporating phrases like "live streaming" and "purchase intention" in other fields. Keywords such as "consumer purchase intention," "live streaming commerce," and "live streaming shopping" were added. Initially, 8,133 articles were discovered, reduced to 2,536 after filtering by location, document type, and language. Further

refinement included filtering by subject categories (e.g., Business, Psychology), resulting in 1,117 articles. Screening titles for the phrase "live streaming" narrowed the articles to 61, and abstracts were screened for relevance to consumer goods, resulting in 13 articles. Finally, relevance and applicability were assessed, resulting in 6 articles, excluding a duplicate identified during the ProQuest search.

In conclusion, the final selection process entailed a comprehensive review of the 9 filtered articles. Each article was carefully examined to ensure coverage of various aspects of purchase intention. Consequently, 5 articles were chosen, each providing insights into repurchase intent, purchase intent, continuous purchase intentions, and purchase behavior. The flow of discovery is displayed in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Flow of Discovery

The final results are displayed in Table 2.

Search Results:

Table 2. Search Results

1	Lee, C. H., Chen, C. W., Chen, W. K., & Lin, K. H. (2021). Analyzing the effect of social support and customer engagement on stickiness and repurchase intention in social commerce: A trust transfer perspective. <i>Journal of Electronic Commerce Research</i> , 22(4), 363-381.
2	Liu, F., & Wang, Y. (2022). Marketing by live streaming: How to interact with consumers to increase their purchase intentions. <i>Frontiers in Psychology</i> , 13, 933633.
3	Sun, X., Pelet, J. É., Dai, S., & Ma, Y. (2023). The Effects of Trust, Perceived Risk, Innovativeness, and Deal Proneness on Consumers' Purchasing Behavior in the Livestreaming Social Commerce Context. <i>Sustainability</i> , 15(23), 16320.
4	Sun, Y., Shao, X., Li, X., Guo, Y., & Nie, K. (2019). How live streaming influences purchase intentions in social commerce: An IT affordance perspective. <i>Electronic Commerce Research and Applications</i> , 37, 100886.
5	Wang, J., & Jay In, O. (2023). Factors influencing consumers' continuous purchase intentions on TikTok: An examination from the uses and gratifications (U&G) theory perspective. <i>Sustainability</i> , 15(13), 10028.

Results:

Table 3 describes a critical evaluation of the five studies' overall validity.

Table 3. Critical Evaluation of Overall Validity

	Research Approach	Empirical Basis	Analysis Method	Overall Validity
Study 1 (Lee et al., 2021)	Online Survey	Online survey using convenience sampling. Survey used adapted measurement scales and responses from pre-screened social commerce (Facebook, Instagram) purchasers (n=417). Sample representativeness was confirmed with data from the Market Intelligence and Consulting Institute, Taiwan.	Statistical Inference: Structural Path Analysis	High Validity – reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity; no common method bias; findings statistically significant.
Study 2 (Liu & Wang, 2022)	Survey	Convenience sampling method, recruiting participants (n=576) via retail intercepts in Shanghai, China. Survey used adapted measurement scales.	Statistical Inference: Structural Path Analysis	High Validity – reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity; no common method bias; findings statistically significant.
Study 3 (Sun et al., 2023)	Online Survey	Online survey using snowball sampling method, live streaming mainland Chinese consumers (n=675) using platforms like TikTok. Data set reflected demo characteristics of the online shopping population.	Statistical Inference: Model/CFA, Structural Path Analysis	Moderate Validity – Measurement model satisfactory. The model exhibits limited explanatory capacity, demonstrating moderate predictive accuracy in delineating consumers' purchasing patterns.
Study 4 (Sun et al., 2019)	Online Survey	Online survey, recruited pre-screened Live streamingshoppers (n=504) from August to September 2018 using the Wenjuanxing website in China. Survey used adapted measurement scales.	Statistical Inference: Structural Path Analysis	High Validity – reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity; no common method bias; findings statistically significant.
Study 5 (Wang & Jay, 2023)	Online Survey	Online survey using two sampling methods (n=234) in February 2022: Snowball sampling using Wenjuanxing website in China and disseminated survey links on social media platforms (WeChat & QQ).	Statistical Inference: Structural Path Analysis	High Validity - Measurement model satisfactory. No issues with common method bias. Statistically significant findings. Good explanatory power.

Table 4 lists the studies' key findings and relates them to each other, with the resulting translations of the collective findings.

Table 4. Findings and Translations

	Finding 1 Trust	Finding 2 Social Connectedness	Finding 3 Engagement	Translation
Study 1 (Lee et al., 2021)	Member trust strongly impacts community trust in social commerce platforms, driving consumer engagement. This increased engagement, marked by higher platform involvement and enthusiasm, positively influences repurchase intention.	Social support within social commerce communities fosters connections among members, offering emotional and informational support. This support mitigates fears of making mistakes and encourages efficient choices, enhancing repurchase intentions.	Customer engagement positively affects repurchase intention.	<i>Studies: <u>1, 2 & 5</u> Trust and social support within social commerce platforms drive consumer engagement and enhance repurchase intentions.</i>
Study 2 (Liu & Wang, 2022)	Consumer interaction, including frequency, interest, reciprocity, and concentration, has been shown to bolster purchase intention by developing cognitive and emotional trust.	Interaction factors (host-consumer & consumer-consumer) shape consumers' feelings of identity and belonging. This social presence enhances the enjoyment experienced during interactions, subsequently impacting engagement and purchase intentions.	The dynamic atmosphere, real-time interactions, and constant engagement in live streaming shopping rooms create an addictive consumer experience, guiding conformity in line with group expectations.	
Study 3 (Sun et al., 2023)	Trust positively influences purchasing behavior. Consumers value platform trustworthiness and employ coping mechanisms in uncertain situations.		The active involvement in livestream purchasing alleviates worries about supplier credibility, reducing perceived online shopping risks.	

Table 4. Findings and Translations – continued

	Finding 1 Trust	Finding 2 Social Connectedness	Finding 3 Engagement	<i>Translation</i>
Study 4 (Sun et al., 2019)		Streamer interacts with customers, creating a sense of telepresence and leading to a sense of immersion into the community. Immersion helps customers identify the values and benefits they can obtain from this activity.	Visibility, metavoicing, and guidance shopping features in live streaming shopping directly influence customer purchase intention by fostering engagement. Customers exhibit diverse engagement-related responses to various marketing communications. Measures of customer engagement need to be tailored to specific contexts.	
Study 5 (Wang & Jay, 2023)	As audiences engage with live streams, social presence enhances authenticity, trust, enjoyment, and perceived usefulness, boosting consumers' intentions for continuous purchases.			
Translation	<i>Studies: 1, 2, 3 & 5</i> <i>Trust, a personal evaluation facilitated by social connectedness, drives increased consumer engagement and ultimately enhanced repurchase intentions.</i>	<i>Studies: 1, 2, 4 & 5</i> <i>Live streams' interactive and immersive quality heightens social support and presence within social commerce communities, enhancing consumer engagement and purchase behavior.</i>	<i>Studies: 1, 2, 3 & 4</i> <i>Customer engagement in live streaming shopping significantly influences repurchase intention through an addictive consumer experience, conformity with group norms, and reduced perceived risks facilitated by key IT affordances: visibility, metavoicing, and guidance shopping.</i>	

Study 1 examines how social support and customer engagement impact stickiness and repurchase intentions in social commerce. Conducted through an online survey of social commerce website users, the study aims to uncover engagement's antecedents and outcomes. Findings highlight the significant role of community trust in shaping engagement and impacting stickiness and repurchase intention. Additionally, the study emphasizes the impact of social support interventions on engagement dynamics.

Study 2 provides an in-depth analysis of interactions in live streaming e-commerce, mainly focusing on obtaining product information and understanding others' purchase dynamics. These interactions have a notable impact on consumer conformity and social presence. Additionally, the study emphasizes the pivotal role of social presence in shaping consumer conformity and highlights its positive influence on purchase intention. However, the study also acknowledges limitations, including the necessity to explore additional factors such as consumers' gender, shopping frequency, and motivations in future research and the potential regional specificity of the findings.

Study 3 extends the technology acceptance model (seeks to explain how users come to accept and use technology) framework to explore the dynamics of perceived risk, trust, innovativeness, and deal proneness in live streaming social commerce. Results reveal positive associations between perceived risk and trust, trust and actual purchasing behavior, innovativeness, and deal proneness. Practical implications include strategies to enhance trust and target innovative consumers. In contrast, limitations include potential biases from snowball sampling and the potential for demographic bias due to a majority of respondents under 30.

Study 4 investigates the popularity of live streaming shopping in China and highlights the essential role of IT affordances in social commerce, shaping purchase intentions. By examining visibility, meta voicing, and guidance shopping affordances, the study unveils their significant contribution to bolstering purchase intentions. The research also reveals the mediating influence of customer engagement between IT affordances and purchase intention.

Study 5 explores how hedonic, social, utilitarian, and content gratifications impact consumers' continuous purchase intentions in livestream shopping, emphasizing their influence on behavior. Findings reveal that hedonic gratification, driven by enjoyment, holds the most substantial sway over purchase intentions, followed by social presence and cost-saving, representing social and utilitarian gratifications. The study, among Taobao Live (TTL) consumers in China, applies structural equation modeling and multi-group SEM to analyze data, highlighting the moderating role of education levels.

Conclusion and Comments:

The research indicates that incorporating live stream events into social commerce strategies can boost consumer repurchase rates when three critical experiential elements are present: trust, social connectedness, and customer engagement. (1) Trust, in its various dimensions, is a cornerstone of success. Member trust fosters credibility and security among individuals, while community trust shapes perceptions of reliability among those engaging in the live event. The transfer of trust enhances the credibility of the live stream event and social platform, directly influencing purchase intentions. This interconnected trust network is pivotal in minimizing perceived risks, reassuring consumers, and encouraging repeat purchase behavior. This reassurance about the effectiveness of live-streaming events in social commerce underscores the importance of trust in driving consumer behavior. (2) Social connectedness,

derived from interactions and a sense of community, is not just a contributing factor but a significant driver of repurchase intentions. This connection is reinforced by hedonic motives, such as the enjoyment consumers derive from engaging with live-streaming events, and practical motives, like the cost-saving benefits they experience. By fostering a strong sense of community and interaction, brands can enhance customer experience, increasing repurchase intentions and long-term loyalty. (3) Customer engagement is crucial, as it includes various aspects like the pleasure customers get from engaging on the social platform (hedonic gratification), feeling connected to others (social presence), sharing helpful information (information sharing), and practical benefits (utilitarian motives), all of which influence their likelihood to make repeat purchases. The mediating role of customer engagement between IT features and the intention to purchase highlights the importance of focusing on user experience and how customers interact with our platform to encourage them to make repeat purchases through social commerce.

Brands must acknowledge the complexity of consumer behavior, particularly to fully understand the long-term impact of live stream events on performance. Social commerce site functionality, overall customer experience, and post-purchase satisfaction enhance trust, social connectedness, and engagement, influencing repurchase intentions.

Limitations and Future Research:

The review underscores the importance of caution in drawing universal conclusions due to several limitations in the analyzed studies. First, while the Chinese market often leads global trends in digital immersion, generalizing the results to other regions may be challenging. Future research should focus on comparative studies across different regions to validate the findings and understand cultural influences. Second, the studies' single-point-in-time measurement raises concerns about the potential variation in results over extended periods. Longitudinal studies are

needed to capture changes in consumer behavior over time, and platform-specific studies are necessary to account for different user interactions. Additionally, the limited consideration given to product types and the unexplored effects of different social commerce websites or virtual communities further highlights the need for caution in drawing universal conclusions. Future research should explore variations in consumer behavior across different product types and virtual communities to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that companies take a proactive approach to understanding the effectiveness of live stream marketing tactics on post-event repeat purchase behaviors. Companies can exert a significant degree of control over the testing process by considering the implementation of a low-stakes two-cell test and roll A/B testing method (Feit and Berman, 2019). This method uses two test cells on different social commerce-enabled platforms, each with a subset of the consumer target. It allows for comparing the profit effects of live streaming events on various platforms. The decision-making process using this testing format shifts from rejecting the null hypothesis to choosing between the marketing strategies of test cell 1 or 2 (Feit and Berman, 2019). This A/B testing strategy enables companies to understand the enduring impact of live streaming events on consumer behavior for multiple social media platforms.

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