



## **Streaming to Success: Amplifying Purchase Intentions Among Malaysian Consumers**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This research project explores the factors influencing consumers' purchase intention via live streaming in Malaysia, including trustworthiness, social influence, perceived ease of use, and attractiveness. The study utilized both primary and secondary data, with questionnaires administered through Google Forms to 207 respondents in the urban areas of Malaysia. This study used Smart PLS software (version 3.0), and the findings suggest that trustworthiness, peer or social influence, and perceived ease of use have a significant relationship with purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia, whereas attractiveness does not support this hypothesis. The findings of this study can assist new startups and entrepreneurs in gaining a better understanding of the live-streaming selling concept using the Source Credibility Theory.

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2020, 91.7 percent of Malaysians had access to the Internet and the use of online commerce platforms had increased dramatically from time to time. According to The Star Newspaper (2021), the number of buying goods and services through the online commerce platforms, such as Lazada and Shopee had also increased from 35.2 % in 2019 to 45% in 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, traditional retailers, particularly small and medium enterprises (SMEs), have suffered from poor sales, causing many entrepreneurs to shift to digital platforms. Live streaming has become a popular strategy for entrepreneurs to sell their products and sustain their businesses, as it allows them to showcase their products to customers and provide detailed explanations in real-time. The trend of live-stream shopping has risen in Malaysia, particularly on Facebook, where retailers use live-stream features to attract customers. Live-streaming commerce can increase product visibility and positively influence consumers' purchase intentions. Livestream commerce is an important trend that can help increase sales of products, and businesses need to know the factors that influence consumers to switch their buying process to livestream in order to keep pace with consumer needs and demands. Tran (2021) predicts that livestreaming will become a key sales method for entrepreneurs in the future. Consequently, businesses and retailers utilize streaming to reach their target customers. In Malaysia, there are more than 10 live-streaming platforms that can easily target customers. However, it is easy to select a platform, but it can be a hassle for a company to target the right consumer that has the intention to purchase.

Therefore, understanding consumers' purchase intentions via livestreaming in Malaysia is crucial for merchants who want to keep up with their customers' needs and demands. Hsu and Chang's (2019) research indicates that certain companies doubled their sales after switching to Facebook streaming, highlighting the importance of livestream commerce in increasing product and service sales. Previous research on purchase intention via livestream has been conducted in various countries, including Pakistan (Lakhan et al., 2021), Vietnam (Tran, 2021), and China (Sun et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2021). However, it is not appropriate to assume that the findings from these studies can be generalized to Malaysia, as respondents from different countries may have different perspectives on purchase intention via livestream. The authors acknowledge this limitation in their research. Moreover, cultural differences among consumers may result in varying perceptions of purchase intentions. Therefore, it is important to conduct research specifically in the Malaysian context to understand the factors that influence purchase intention via the ream in this setting. This study aims to help new live streamers determine the factors that affect customers' purchase intention.

## LITERATURE REVIEW - LIVE STREAMING SHOPPING

Live streaming shopping involves conducting online business transactions through live-streaming platforms, as defined by Xu et al. (2020). This innovative business model allows real-time communication between sellers and consumers, enabling the provision of product information and descriptions. Sun et al. (2018) argue that this new form of shopping has the potential to influence consumer behavior. It is built on the foundation of e-commerce (Song and Liu, 2021) and allows consumers to purchase products they see in live streams (Andersson and Pitz, 2021). Additionally, live-streaming shopping can be viewed as a combination of social commerce and media platforms (Sun et al., 2018). Three types of live streaming commerce exist, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1 The 3 types of live streaming commerce

No	Type of Live Streaming Commerce	Source
1	Livestream embedded into online shopping website such as Taobao, Amazon, Shopee and Lazada	Cai et al. (2018)
2	Live streaming commerce integrated into social media platform such as Instagram and Facebook and it also consider as new type of social commerce.	Wong et al. (2020)
3	The platform that is originally offer the livestream services integrating e commerce activities such as Live.me and Livby.	Chen et al. (2020)

Additionally, Hsu and Chang's (2019) research revealed that the livestream feature is offered on Facebook and Instagram. Chen et al. (2020) discovered that the market size of livestreaming has skyrocketed to 433.8 billion RMB, which is a significant increase compared to 19 billion RMB three years ago, indicating

that it is now an emerging industry worth 100 billion RMB. Additionally, other researchers indicate that live-streaming e-commerce sales in China will reach nearly \$623.29 billion by 2023. However, according to Statista Research Department (2023), in the fourth quarter of 2022, approximately 16% of Malaysian consumers bought products online through streaming. However, this figure decreased compared to previous years (23% in Q1 2021, 22% in Q2 2021), as the majority of activities have returned back to normal following the pandemic.

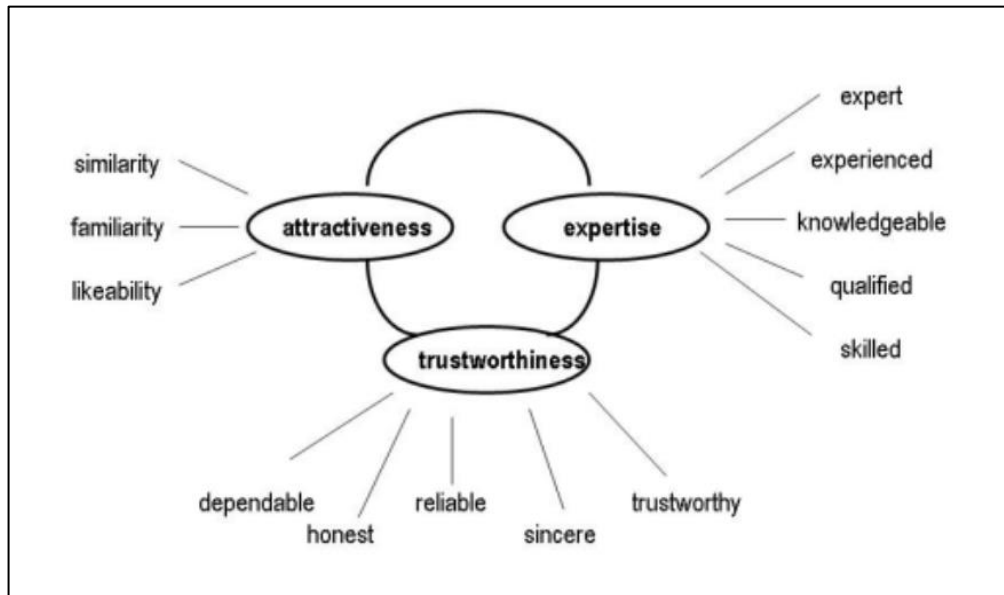
### **Purchase Intention**

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) proposed the concept of purchase intention, which refers to the likelihood and willingness of consumers to buy products or services based on their evaluations, attitudes, and other factors. Several studies have shown that purchase intention plays an important role in predicting consumer behavior, and has been widely used to measure the likelihood and willingness of consumers to buy something (Erdil, 2015; Tan et al., 2017; Hsu and Chang, 2019; Addo et al., 2021). With the rise of the Internet, researchers have begun to study online purchase intention, which is defined as the willingness and intention of consumers to engage in online transactions. Studying purchase intention is crucial for businesses to sustain themselves in a competitive industry, as it helps them to understand what factors consumers consider when making a purchase decision. Additionally, purchase intention is an important predictor to research on the effectiveness of livestream commerce. Consumers conduct research before purchasing products to make informed decisions, and the intention to buy, whether through online or physical shops, is the key to leading a business transaction. The combination of subjective consumer attitudes and extrinsic factors determines the purchase intention of consumers, and these factors should be studied to understand what is important to consumers when making purchase decisions (Guo et al., 2021). This research aims to study the factors influencing the purchase intention of consumers via live streaming in Malaysia, as there is a lack of studies on this topic in the country (Lakhan et al., 2021; Tran, 2021; (Sun et al., 2019; Zhou et al., 2021) and which will help fill the gap in Malaysia.

### **Source Credibility Theory**

Source credibility theory was introduced by Hovland and Weiss (1951), who stated that the effectiveness of a message is based on the degree of trustworthiness and expertise of the communicator. In addition, Hovland et al. (1953) indicated that the receiver of a message will be more easily persuaded if the source appears to be credible. Bowers and Phillips (1967) conceptualized expertise and trustworthiness as a two-dimensional construct. In addition, previous studies have shown the importance of trustworthiness in the effectiveness and persuasion of messages (Whitehead, 1968). This is supported by the study of Ohanian (1990), who also indicated that attractiveness is an important factor because the attractiveness of the communicators would influence the receiver to be more likely to persuade the message delivered. Ohanian (1990) incorporated attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise into source credibility theory. In fact, Ohanian source credibility theory created a scale to analyze the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement based on source credibility by measuring the endorser's attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise (Ohanian, 1990).

Moreover, the third dimension of the source credibility theory is attractiveness. Attractiveness is defined as the similarity, familiarity, and likeability of the source and communicator (Ohanian, 1990). The meaning of similarity is that the communicator and recipient may share a similarity in lifestyle, desire, and even interest, while familiarity is the proximity of the receiver and source, as well as sympathy. Likeability is the fondness of a source due to physical appearance, personal traits, and behavior (Mc Guire, 1985). In the study by Morrow et al. (1990), attractiveness is also defined as desirable features such as posture, facial and body appearance, and others. Ahmad et al. (2020) also studied the influence of an endorser's attractiveness on consumers' purchase intention; therefore, this theory is adopted in this study.



Source: Ohanian (1990)

Figure 1 Source Credibility Theory

## Trust

Ismagilova et al. (2020) defined trustworthiness as a recipient's level of message trust in an information communicator's advice. According to Tong (2017), consumers are more likely to purchase if they trust a product or enterprise. Additionally, influencers with high levels of trustworthiness positively impact consumers' purchase intentions (Lee and Chen, 2021). Consumers are more likely to believe information delivered through live streams by a trusted seller. Lakhan et al. (2021) and Zahari et al. (2021) found that trust is more likely to be generated in livestream commerce, leading to an increased likelihood of making a purchase due to real-time communication with the livestream seller regarding product information. However, there have been some contradictory studies by other authors. According to Yeo et al. (2015), there is no significant link between the trustworthiness of celebrity endorsers and consumers' purchase intentions. Rahmi et al. (2017) also did not support the connection between the trustworthiness of vloggers and consumers' purchase intentions. Additionally, Chen et al. (2020) did not find support for the relationship between consumers' trust in live streamers and their purchase intentions. Somehow, the study of Lu and Chen (2021) stated that the trust of consumers towards the livestream seller had positive and significant influence the purchase intention of consumers. As a result, this study examines whether trustworthiness influences purchase intention via live streaming among Malaysian consumers. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was developed.

*H1: There is a relationship between the trustworthiness and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia*

## Social Influence

Social influence, defined as consumer behavior, can be influenced by another person (Ang et al., 2001). Social influence is significant for consumers' purchase intention. Lim et al. (2013) state that consumers are always influenced by social groups when making decisions. This is because consumers who are more vulnerable to external pressure face a more severe impact on social influence (Soh et al., 2017). Based on Soh et al. (2017), the consumer would purchase something to conform and adhere to society-imposed standards. This is supported by Hsu and Chang (2019), who mentioned that the purchase intention of consumers in livestream shopping was influenced by conformity. In addition, Pradhan (2018) and Goh et al. (2016) mentioned that the reference group or peer-based group, such as family and friends, would be regarded as the role model of the consumer during the purchasing process. According to the study of Wang and Yu (2017), the author indicated that the observation of other consumers purchase had a significant effect towards the consumers purchase intention. This is consistent with Cheung et al. (2014), who pointed out that peer consumer purchase and review would influence the purchase intention of other consumers. Furthermore, the reference group also

impacted social influence, reflecting consumers' perceptions of online shopping decisions (Lin, 2007). This is supported by research by Tran (2021), who showed that the opinion of the reference group had a positive influence on the purchase intention of consumers via live streaming.

*H2: There is a relationship between the social influence and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia*

### **Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU)**

Davis (1989) defined perceived ease of use as the standard of an individual believing that it is effortless and not complicated when using a technology or system. Moreover, perceived ease of use also describes the capability of consumers to determine the best products or services through a comparison of the functions and benefits of a variety of products and services (Tan et al., 2017). Furthermore, perceived ease of use is also regarded as consumers' belief in their ability to use a specific product or service correctly after studying the guideline or the usage of a product or service within a logical amount of time (Tan et al., 2017). In an e-commerce context, ease of use refers to the simplicity of the ordering process, functionality, website navigation, and information accessibility (Ru et al., 2021). This is correlated with the study by Ramayah and Ignatius (2005), who mentioned that user friendliness is linked to perceived ease of use. In addition, Sulistiyaningsih et al. (2014) point out that the extent to which customers see the expansion of something as being easy to use is regarded as the perceived ease of use. Apart from that, the study of Lim et al. (2021) mentioned that the openness and innovation of data are determined by ease of use. Perceived ease of use is significant for consumers' purchase intentions. Numerous studies have used perceived ease of use to study consumers' purchase intentions of the consumers (Tan et al., 2017; Ru et al., 2021).

Therefore, hypothesis 3 is formed:

*H3: There is a relationship between the Perceived ease of use (PEOU) and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia*

### **Attractiveness**

Attractiveness refers to the familiarity, likeability, and similarity of the source and the communicator (Ohanian, 1990). In addition, Erdogan (1999) stated that attractiveness refers to physical attributes or characteristics such as the personality of an endorser. Cai et al. (2018) indicates that the attractiveness of livestream seller positively influenced the consumers' attitude towards the livestream seller. Consumers are attracted to the live-streaming actions graphic, which allows direct communication in the chat. In live streaming context, the attractiveness of livestream seller is also important as it represents the role of product endorsers (Song and Liu, 2021). Xu et al.(2020) also stated that the attractiveness of livestream seller is a significant stimulus context in the live streaming commerce. Samat et al. (2016) indicated that the attractiveness of an endorser has a positive impact on consumer purchase intention. Since livestream seller considered as the main product endorser according to numerous studies (Lee and Chen, 2021; Liu, 2021; Song and Liu, 2021). Thus, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H4: There is a relationship between the attractiveness and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia*

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research design is a strategy for gathering and analyzing data to obtain precise results or test hypotheses. This study uses a quantitative research method, which involves collecting numerical data and analyzing it using statistical methods. The survey employed English and was aimed at consumers in Malaysia. A non-probability sampling approach, specifically the snowball sampling technique, was employed owing to its cost and time efficiency. The questionnaire relied on individuals connected through friends who made purchases on live-streaming platforms. To ensure a diverse representation of consumers from various live-streamer platforms, the researchers implemented the snowball sampling method, enabling them to obtain a larger and more varied

sample, rather than solely focusing on a single platform. The study was conducted through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms to prevent missing values.

The secondary data sources include journals, articles, online newspapers, books, conference papers, and other valid sources. SPSS version 26 and Smart PLS 3.0 were used for data analysis, and the study required a total of 138 target populations (determined by G-power software) with four predictors. However, due to more than 10 platforms of live streaming in Malaysia, this study managed to obtain 207 respondents. SPSS Software was used to clean the data and test for Common Method Bias. The Harman's single factor test has shown the total variance was less than 60%. To test this hypothesis, we employed Smart PLS 3.0. A well-structured research design is crucial for efficient and effective research.

## FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The questionnaire was adopted from previous studies, and the results indicated in Table 2-4 shows the overall analysis results from SMART PLS 3.0. The reliability of the construct measurement was determined by assessing composite reliability. Composite reliability, as calculated in Table 2, shows that the values of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability are above 0.6, with factor loadings of all items above 0.8. The average variance extracted (AVE) also exceeded the proposed criterion of 0.60 (Hair et al., 2012; Hair et al., 2019; Sarstedt et al., 2014). Subsequently, the discriminant validity of the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) model was evaluated (Table 3), which shows that the values are all lower than the threshold of 0.8 (Henseler, 2016). As a result, discriminant validity is acceptable.

Bootstrapping procedures with a resample of 5000 were used to perform the structural model. The R2 value is 0.482, which illustrates that there are 48.2% of purchase intention via live streaming can be explained by the four independent variables in this research model which are trustworthiness, attractiveness, social influence, and perceived ease of use. The effect size ( $f^2$ ) was greater than 0.02, as suggested by Cohen (1988), except for attractiveness. Thus, this shows that all three variables (trustworthiness, PEOU, and social influence) affect the dependent variables except for attractiveness. Overall, the findings show that trustworthiness ( $\beta = 0.299$ ), social influence ( $\beta = 0.169$ ), and PEOU ( $\beta = 0.319$ ) which indicate all three variables have a significant influence on purchase intention via live streaming. Table 4 shows the summary of the hypothesis that all hypothesis H1-H3 are accepted, except H4, which is not supported in this research, where the p-value is above 0.05.

Table 2 Measurement items of the study

Variables	Items	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE	Effect size: $f^2$
Attractiveness	A1	0.816	0.783	0.804	0.859	0.605	0.008
	A2	0.742					
	A3	0.713					
	A4	0.834					
Perceived Ease of Use	PEOU1	0.779	0.869	0.87	0.906	0.658	0.115
	PEOU2	0.785					
	PEOU3	0.85					
	PEOU4	0.814					
	PEOU5	0.825					
Social Influence	SI1	0.799	0.849	0.868	0.898	0.687	0.04
	SI2	0.829					
	SI3	0.886					
	SI4	0.798					
Trustworthy	T2	0.875	0.909	0.911	0.932	0.732	0.106
	T3	0.875					
	T4	0.861					
	T5	0.839					
	T1	0.829					
Purchase Intention	PI1	0.896	0.929	0.93	0.946	0.778	R2: 0.482
	PI2	0.909					
	PI3	0.873					
	PI4	0.892					
	PI5	0.839					

Table 3 Discriminant validity: The heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT)

	Attractiveness	PEOU	Purchase Intention	Social Influence	Trust
Attractiveness					
PEOU	0.617				
Purchase Intention via LS	0.551	0.671			
Social Influence	0.593	0.497	0.491		
Trust	0.604	0.636	0.628	0.379	

Table 4 Hypothesis Results

	Std. Beta	Std. Error	T Value	P Values	Remark
H1: Trust -> Purchase Intention	0.299	0.081	3.671	0.000	<b>Support</b>
H2: Social Influence -> Purchase Intention	0.169	0.076	2.205	0.028	<b>Support</b>
H3: PEOU -> Purchase Intention	0.319	0.076	4.178	0.000	<b>Support</b>
H4: Attractiveness -> Purchase Intention	0.085	0.077	1.099	0.272	<b>Not support</b>

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine whether there is a relationship between independent variables (trustworthiness, attractiveness, social influence, and perceived ease of use) and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia. Smart PLS 3.0, was used for data analysis, and the measurement model showed that all items achieved the minimum thresholds, indicating that all variables were reliable and consistent. The results showed that trustworthiness, social influence, and perceived ease of use had a significant influence on purchase intention via live streaming, whereas attractiveness did not.

These findings are consistent with previous studies and indicate that consumers in Malaysia focus on trustworthiness, social influence, and perceived ease of use when making purchases via live streaming. A possible reason for the lack of a relationship between attractiveness and purchase intention via live streaming among consumers in Malaysia is that not all attractive endorsers will result in a positive marketing outcome that will lead to the purchase intention of consumers (Park and Lin, 2020). Campbell (2022) mentioned that consumers' goal when purchasing from live streaming is the product, and there are many popular live streamers who do not show their face or appearance. Additionally, Till and Busler (1998) indicated a poor logical link between endorser attractiveness and purchase intention. In short, it can be concluded that the target respondents of this study do not care about the attractiveness of the livestream seller when making purchases via live streaming.

This study provides valuable insights for online merchants on how to effectively utilize live streaming to influence consumer purchase intentions and capture their attention. By identifying the key factors that affect purchase intention via live streaming, merchants can make informed decisions on how to improve their marketing strategies, and focus on the most impactful aspects of their products or services. Furthermore, this research can serve as a foundation for future studies exploring other relevant factors that may influence purchase intention through live streaming. Future researchers should consider using qualitative data collection methods or expanding the sample size beyond the current 207 respondents to further enhance the study.

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