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The Key Influencing Factors on Purchase Intention Via Live Streaming in China

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Abstract

This conceptual paper develops a UTAUT-based conceptual framework to examine the relationships between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation and purchase intention through live streaming. In previous studies, Online purchase intention has been an important research topic in e-commerce research field, while relevant research in the live streaming context is still in its infancy. On the other hand, the competition in live streaming shopping industry is too fierce which makes the profit distribution extremely unbalanced. This study aims to fill the research gap by investigating the influencing factors of purchase intention through live streaming from a technology adoption perspective in China context, to offer suggestions for small streamers to find new breakthroughs to attract more consumers. This study adopts PLS-SEM and Smart PLS 3.0 software to analyze the data. It is predicted that all these four constructs namely, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence and hedonic motivation have positive and significant influence on purchase intention through live streaming. The conceptual framework developed in this study can be useful to explain the influencing factors of consumers purchase intention via live streaming. By exploring the influence factors of purchase intention through live streaming, it is hoped that this study can provide new ideas for small entrepreneurs to attract more customers via online platforms.

Keywords: Purchase Intention, performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation.

Live streaming refers to online streaming media which simultaneously recorded and broadcast the audio or video via the Internet in real time (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). It is a new Internet-based interactive social media form for entertainment (Hilvert-

Bruce et al., 2018). Compared with other social media, live streaming owns many advantages, such as high visualization, real time interaction, ease of use, realness, simultaneity, authenticity, vividness, low cost (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018; C. Y. Lu et al., 2020; Scheibe et al., 2016; Tang et

al., 2016; Tong, 2017), etc. Moreover, since it is a type of audio and video media by nature, it presents a high degree of entertainment (Bründl et al., 2017; C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018). By watching live streaming, people can feel a kind of immersion and their curiosity is better satisfied. These characteristics made it quickly attract a large amount number of users. In China, by December 2021, the number of online live streaming users had reached 703 million, accounting for 68.2% of the total Internet users (China Internet Network Information Center, 2022).

The rapid popularity of live streaming has given birth to a new e-commerce mode through live streaming. In live streaming shopping, detailed information, user experience and real trial of the products are clearly shown, real-time counseling and interaction become possible. (Zhang et al., 2020). In China, by December 2021, consumers who use live streaming to buy things were already 464 million people, accounting for 44.9% of the Internet users (China Internet Network Information Center, 2022).

However, the influx of a large number of streamers makes the competition of live streaming shopping industry more and more fierce. The beneficiaries are mainly concentrated on a few head streamers, which makes the profit distribution unbalanced. Meanwhile, since the celebrity effect plays an important part in this industry, this pattern has basically been fixed. That is to say, it is too difficult for small streamers to grow up and compete with the existing head streamers. In order to break this situation, it is necessary to know about the main influencing factors of consumers' purchase intention through live streaming to make live streaming shopping industry a more balanced development mechanism and environment.

In the previous studies, although online purchase intention in the traditional e-commerce context has already been widely investigated, as a new trend of e-commerce way, the relevant research on live streaming shopping is still in its infancy (B. Lu & Chen, 2021). Therefore, it is

necessary to better understand the influencing factors of consumers' purchase intention through live streaming, so as to better stimulate consumers' purchase motivation.

Purchase Intention

The concept of purchase intention is originated from the concept of behavioral intention in social psychology area. According to Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), behavioral intention is a person's subjective probability to perform a behavior which will influence people's performance or nonperformance. Extending into marketing research, the behavioral intention to purchase is usually interpreted as purchase intention, which is widely explained as a consumer's willingness or likelihood to buy a certain product (Dodds et al., 1991; Mullet & Karson, 1985). Purchase intention is an important and effective indicator to predict the probability of consumers' actual purchase behavior (Mullet & Karson, 1985).

Entering into the 21st century, the popularization of Internet promotes the rapid development of e-commerce, which has made online shopping a popular alternative to traditional way of shopping (Hill & Beatty, 2011). Since online shopping has many different characteristics from traditional retail context, in order to learn how to attract more consumers, online purchase intention has been a hot topic in e-commerce and marketing research. One of the main research directions is to investigate the influencing factors of online purchase intention in the view of consumers' acceptance of new technology.

As a newly emerged but fast developed ecommerce form, live streaming shopping has already aroused some researchers' attentions. Liu et al., (2020) explored the influence of live streaming on consumers' adoption intention of mobile commerce focusing on the enjoyment feeling. The results showed that consumers' adoption intention is affected by perceived enjoyment, perceived enjoyment is affected by visual scene and social presence, social presence is affected by visual scene and communication

function. Xu et al., (2020) developed a stimulusorganism-response (S-O-R) framework investigate how contextual and environmental stimuli factors (streamer attractiveness, parasocial interactions and information quality) affect viewers' cognitive and emotional states (cognitive assimilation and arousal), and in turn influence consumer behaviors through live streaming (hedonic consumption, impulsive consumption and social sharing). The results confirmed two influence paths: streamer attractiveness and para-social interaction affect the three response behaviors by the mediation of arousal; information quality affects the three response behaviors by the mediation of cognitive assimilation (Tee et al., 2022).

Bründl et al., (2017) investigated the determinants of consumers' enjoyment in live streaming shopping by divided enjoyment into active behavior (chatting) and passive behavior (watching). The results showed that consumers' perceived co-experience has a strong positive effect on the enjoyment of both active behavior passive behavior; while perceived effectance only has a positive impact on the enjoyment of active behavior. Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, (2020) examined the relationships among customers' perceived value of live streaming, customer trust, and engagement. The study found that symbolic value has a direct and indirect effect via trust in sellers on customer engagement, while utilitarian and hedonic values affect customer engagement indirectly through customer trust in products and trust in sellers sequentially.

Performance Expectancy

Performance expectancy is an important influencing factor to behavioral intention in UTAUT, which was formulated from similar constructs in the existing research models, including perceived usefulness in TAM/TAM2 and C-TAM-TPB, extrinsic motivation in MM, job-fit in MPCU, relative advantage in IDT and outcome expectations in SCT. It is defined as the degree to which an individual believes that using the system will help him or her to attain gains in

job performance (Venkatesh et al., 2003). That is to say, when the users believe that using the new technology will be useful for them, they will be more inclined to use and accept it (Davis, 1989). Performance here can be interpreted as the usefulness, productivity, effectiveness, chances to get a raise in peoples' work, which can help them get a better performance in job (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). It reflects the extrinsic motivation to individuals' intention to use a technology (Blaise et al., 2018; Dewi et al., 2020), as well as the users' (or consumers') pursuing of the utilitarian value of a technology (Celik, 2016; Yuan et al., 2015). According to the measurement conducted in the original UTAUT, it is found that performance expectancy is the strongest determinant to behavior intention (Venkatesh et al., 2003), which is consist with the findings of the importance of similar constructs in some other models such as TAM (Davis et al., 1989) and IDT (Rogers Everett, 1995).

In almost all the UTAUT based technology acceptance researches, the investigation on the effect of performance expectation has never been omitted. Its' major effect to behavior intention has been confirmed in many empirical studies (Morosan & Defranco, 2016; Pascual-miguel et al., 2015; Sharifi fard et al., 2016; Tarhini et al., 2017). In the e-commerce context, performance expectancy can be understood as the degree to which a consumer believe that shopping through the Internet will provide benefits (Marinković et al., 2020). The characteristics of e-commerce determine its advantages such as time or cost saving, no time and space constrains, quick responses, which can bring consumers benefits so that to improve shopping performance (Singh et al., 2017; Turban et al., 2004). There are already many studies have proven that performance expectancy has a significant positive influence on the consumers' online purchase intention. The specific research contexts include online shopping in one specific country (area) or in one specific group of consumers, as well as for one specific category

of products, etc. (An et al., 2016; Dewi et al., 2020; Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013; Musleh et al., 2015; San Martín & Herrero, 2012; Sharifi fard et al., 2016).

In live streaming shopping, consumers can know more about the products in detail via the streamer's introduction, display and trail. The quality of the product is more guaranteed. In a way, it saves time to see the real item in a physical store. Moreover, it is usually cost-effective than directly buying through traditional way of online shopping. All of these are the benefits consumers can get by shopping through live streaming which may be attractions to them. Therefore, in this study, it is hypothesized that:

H1: There is a positive relationship between performance expectancy (PE) and purchase intention through live streaming.

Effort Expectancy

Effort expectancy is another variable in UTAUT, which is developed on the basis of perceived ease of use in TAM/ TAM2, complexity in MPCU and ease of use in IDT. According to the explanation in original UTAUT, effort expectancy means the degree of ease associated with the use of the system (Venkatesh et al., 2003). That is to say, the easier and more convenient the technology is, the more likely users intend to use it (Perea Y Monsuwé et al., 2004; Yuan et al., 2015). In UTAUT, effort expectancy is proved as another essential determinant to behavior intention, while the strength of the effect tends to be nonsignificant over periods of extended and sustained usage. (Venkatesh et al., 2003).

In the technology acceptance related studies, the impact of effort expectancy has also been widely tested. In most online shopping related studies, the influence of effort expectancy on online purchase intention has still been proven to be significant (An et al., 2016; Dewi et al., 2020; Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014; Musleh et al., 2015; Pascual-miguel et al., 2015). For online consumers, on the one hand, reducing efforts is one important motivation for consumers to shop online; on the other hand, too

complex using procedures prevent online shopping intention (Celik, 2016).

As a new and developing technology, live streaming itself is not difficult to find and watch. However, when using the transaction function, the operation may become a little complicated for some of the consumers. For example, how to find the right products, how and where to place an order, how to use the discount, etc. The simplicity in terms of these factors the consumers feel may affect their purchase intention. Therefore, in this study, it is hypothesized that:

H2: There is a positive relationship between effort expectancy and purchase intention through live streaming.

Social Influence

Social influence is also proved as a determinant that has significant influence on behavioral intention, especially for the adoption of a new technology (Blaise et al., 2018). It is used into UTAUT by summarizing three existing constructs in other research models which are subjective norms in TRA, TAM2, TPB/DTPB and C-TAM-TPB, social factors in MPCU as well as image in IDT. According to Venkatesh et al., (2003)'s definition in UTAUT, social influence refers to the degree to which an individual perceives that important others believe he or she should use the new system which emphasizes on the voices from others. The source of the influence might be families, friends or other people who are considered important. (Venkatesh et al., 2003)

The impact of social influence on behavior intention has also been tested in many UTAUT based studies. Many studies have shown that social influence has significant positive influence on online purchase intention (Dewi et al., 2020; Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2013; Musleh et al., 2015). Internet offers a new platform to make more friends and communicate with more people. Under this environment, except people around, information from the Internet becomes another source of influence. To purchase intention, this kind of

social influence may come from the opinions of net friends, key opinion leaders and early adopters. (Y. A. Kim & Srivastava, 2007) Bearden et al., (1986) divided social influence during the adoption of a new product into normative social influence and informational social influence. Normative social influence creates a kind of social pressure for people to adopt a product, people who do not adopt it may he regarded as old fashioned. While informational social influence is a learning process through which people observe the experience of early adopters' purchase intention.

In the social media and live streaming shopping context, except the influence from friends and families, social interaction and word of mouth (WOM) are considered more important (C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018; Hajli, 2012; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Y. Wang & Yu, 2017; Yu et al., 2018), the influence from opinion leaders (influential celebrities or famous streamers who recommend products through Internet) becomes greater (Cai et al., 2018; Y.-F. Chen et al., 2017; Hu et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2021; Nunes et al., 2018; Park & Lin, 2020; Xu et al., 2020). Thus, it is predicted that in live streaming shopping process, social influence should have an impact on purchase intention. In this study, it is hypothesized that:

H3: There is a positive and significant relationship between social influence and purchase intention through live streaming.

Hedonic Motivation

According to motivation theory, motivation to perform an activity can be divided into two types: extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation (Calder & Staw, 1975; Scott Jr et al., 1988). Extrinsic motivation refers to the motivation to achieve some external goal or satisfy some external constraint, while intrinsic motivation indicates the motivation for the pure enjoyment of the task itself (Hennessey et al., 2015). Hedonic motivation belongs to intrinsic motivation (Davis et al., 1992).

The word "hedonic" means relating to or characterized by pleasure. According to

Venkatesh et al., (2012) hedonic motivation refers to the fun or pleasure gained from the use of a technology. Similar construct in TAM based perceived studies is called enjoyment (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008). Other similar expressions include fun, enjoyment, playfulness, entertainment, hedonic expectancy, etc (Alalwan et al., 2018; Tamilmani et al., 2019). It has been proved that hedonic motivation is one influencing factor on the intention as well as the actual use of a technology (Thong et al., 2006; Van Der Heijden, 2004). Hedonic motivation is believed as an essential extension in UTAUT2 since it reflects the importance of intrinsic motivation besides extrinsic motivation in the process of new technology acceptance and use, especially in consumer context (Alalwan et al., 2018; Tamilmani et al., 2019).

In consumer behavior relevant researches, hedonic motivation is often studied on the contrary of utilitarian motivation. Utilitarian is more task-oriented and put emphasis on the function and usefulness aspect, while hedonic pursues fun, exciting and enjoyable (Babin et al., 1994; Y. H. Kim et al., 2013). Hedonic or utilitarian nature of an information system affects what shapes the intention to use (Van Der Heijden, 2004).

To better measure the hedonic motivation in the shopping process, Babin et al., (1994) developed a 15-items-scale mearing hedonic and utilitarian values in consumers' consumption experiences and found that distinct hedonic and utilitarian shopping value dimensions exist. Arnold & Reynolds, (2003) developed a scale mearing hedonic shopping motivations from six perspectives namely. adventure, gratification, shopping role. value. social, and idea motivations, then divided consumers into 5 clusters named the minimalists, the gatherers, the providers, the enthusiasts, and the traditionalists

In the previous studies, the influence of hedonic motivation on the behavior intention of Internet or mobile based technologies has been investigated. Most of the relationships were proved to be significant, for example in the adoption of Internet or mobile banking (Alalwan et al., 2015; Baptista & Oliveira, 2015; Sharif & Raza, 2017), information system (Beqqali Hassani et al., 2020), mobile social networking sites (SNS) (Guo, 2015) etc. For entertainment-oriented technologies, for example in social media (Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019), the effects of hedonic motivation are strong (Alalwan, 2018; Arum & Sung, 2018; Guo, 2015; Martín-Consuegra et al., 2019; Sharifi fard et al., 2016).

In the online shopping context, the influence of hedonic motivation on online purchase intention has also been proved (An et al., 2016; Escobar-Rodríguez & Carvajal-Trujillo, 2014; Sharifi fard et al., 2016). Some scholars have used some other similar expressions like enjoyment, perceived enjoyment, shopping enjoyment, entertainment, playfulness and have also proven their influences on online purchase intention (Arli, 2017; Chu & Lu, 2007; Fu et al., 2018; Khalid et al., 2018; Tan Pei Kian et al., 2017; Yang, 2010).

For live streaming, entertainment is an essential function (Bründl et al., 2017; C. C. Chen & Lin, 2018). In the researches related to behavior in live streaming context, the influence of hedonic factors are usually considered (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2021). Moreover, the influence from hedonic aspects in the adoption process of live streaming shopping has also been proved (Bründl et al., 2017; Cai et al., 2018; Liu et al., 2020; Park & Lin, 2020; Z. Wang et al., 2018; Xu et al., 2020). In the shopping process, hedonic motivations include the enjoyment of the experience, the desire for entertainment and escapism, the enjoyment for hunting discount and bargain (Loo et al., 2024). These are exactly what live streaming shopping can provide. Therefore, in this study, it is hypothesized that:

H4: There is a positive and significant relationship between hedonic motivation and purchase intention through live streaming.

Conceptual Framework and Conclusion

Based on the review and discussion before, the conceptual framework of the present study is developed to confirm the relationships between performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation and purchase intention through live streaming, which is exhibited in Figure 1.

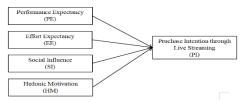


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

It is predicted that all these four constructs namely. performance expectancy, hedonic expectancy, social influence and motivation have positive and significant influence on purchase intention through live streaming. This newly developed framework is assumed to be useful to explain the influencing factors of consumers' purchase intention through live streaming. Facilitating conditions, perceived price value and habit are omitted in this study. The reasons include two aspects. The first reason is because mobile phone and network has already been highly covered and popularized among citizens, facilitating conditions and perceived price are no more important determinants for the usage of Internet based technologies. Another reason is habit and facilitating conditions are considered as direct determinants to the actual usage of technology, so that these two factors are not theorized in this framework. Since predicting the relationship is the main concern, rather than theory testing, this study adopts PLS-SEM and Smart PLS 3.0 software to analyze the data (Hair Jr et al., 2014). By exploring the influence factors of purchase intention through live streaming, it is hoped that this paper can provide new ideas for small entrepreneurs to attract more consumers via online platforms.

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