

Building A Research Model for the Relationship between Live-Streaming E-commerce Service Quality and Agricultural Product Purchase Intention: With Perceived Value as a Mediator

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Abstract

In today's digital age, live streaming e-commerce has emerged as a rapidly growing new business model. By combining live streaming and e-commerce platforms, it offers consumers numerous advantages, including real-time interaction, product demonstration, and enhanced shopping experiences. Live streaming e-commerce is transforming consumer shopping habits, gradually influencing people's lives, and providing new opportunities for online merchants, significantly enhancing marketing effectiveness. Consumer purchase intention plays a crucial role in this context. Understanding user behavior and its influencing factors in live streaming e-commerce presents a significant research challenge. This study defines three dimensions of service quality in live streaming e-commerce: information quality, interaction quality, and product service quality. Based on the S-O-R theory, a model is constructed to explore the impact of service quality on purchase intention for agricultural products, proposing relevant hypotheses grounded in extensive literature review, thereby offering new perspectives and insights for future research.

Keywords: Live-streaming E-commerce, Service Quality, Perceived Value, Purchasing Intention

Introduction

In recent years, the government has encouraged innovation in new forms, models, and products within the live-streaming economy, leading to rapid growth in live-streaming e-commerce transaction scale. According to the "2024-2029 Market Analysis and Investment Risk Trend Forecast Report on China's Live-Streaming E-commerce Industry" released by the China Business Industry Research Institute, the transaction scale of live-streaming e-commerce in China reached 4.9 trillion yuan in 2023, a year-on-year increase of 40.48%. With its unique characteristics of interactivity, intuitiveness, and real-time engagement, live-

streaming e-commerce meets consumers' shopping needs, thus driving a steady growth in user scale. The same report indicates that the number of live-streaming e-commerce users in China reached 540 million in 2023, marking a year-on-year increase of 14.16%.

Purchasing intention can predict consumer purchasing behavior to some extent and is often used in marketing studies to examine consumer behavior. Dodds (1991) defined purchasing intention as the likelihood of consumers buying a certain product. Han et al. (2005) also viewed purchasing intention as the probability of consumers purchasing a product. Various factors influence consumers' purchasing intentions, and previous studies have explored how different promotional methods affect these intentions. Research by Pan (2021) found that consumers' perceptions of price significantly impact their purchasing intentions and actual buying behavior.

Gronroos (1982), first proposed the concept of perceived service quality, suggesting that service quality arises from the comparison between consumers' expectations of service quality and their actual perceptions of the service quality received. Zeithaml (2000) extended the concept of service quality to online services for the first time, defining electronic service quality as the effectiveness and usefulness of a website in assisting customers with the purchase, payment, and delivery of products and services. Lee and Kozar (2006) understood e-commerce service quality as consumers' overall judgment and evaluation of the services provided by e-commerce. Zhang (2021) categorized electronic service quality on live-streaming e-commerce platforms into two dimensions: information quality and interaction quality.

Zeithaml (1988) defined perceived value as the evaluation of the utility of a product or service after consumers perceive its benefits, weighed against the costs incurred in obtaining it. Wang (2021) suggested that perceived value is an evaluation of the degree of consumers' own needs during the consumption process. Consumer perceived value is an important mediating variable that influences purchasing intention, and there is a positive correlation between perceived value and purchasing intention. When making purchasing decisions, consumers tend to prioritize options with the highest perceived value (Lu et al., 2023).

Literature Review and Underling Theory

Purchase Intention

Fishbein et al. (1975) define consumer purchase intention as the willingness and behavioral decision-making that consumers exhibit during actual purchasing activities. Mullet and Karson (1986) found that purchase intention can be described as a consumer's attitude toward whether to buy a particular product, and this attitude is formed through the process of matching external product information with internal self-information. Fishbein and Manfredo (1992) argue that the best explanation for consumer purchasing behavior is that consumers already possess a strong desire to purchase before the actual buying takes place. Yin et al. (2010) suggest that purchase intention can be understood as the expression of consumers' willingness to engage in future purchasing behaviors, which implies a certain level of planning, awareness, and proactivity regarding future purchases. In other words, consumer purchase intention serves as a precursor to their purchasing behavior, allowing for predictions about future buying actions.

Dodds et al. (1991) found that consumer purchase intention can be explained as their attitude toward a particular product or service and the likelihood of purchasing that product or service. This means that purchase intention reflects consumers' subjective tendencies regarding product and service purchases, which have a certain degree of subjectivity. This subjectivity can drive consumers' future purchasing behavior to some extent. Schiffman et al. (2010) assert that purchase intention describes and determines consumers' responses to purchasing products. The higher the intention, the greater the likelihood of purchase. Consumers' purchase intentions can be assessed through their responses, feedback, and level of involvement. Highly engaged consumers tend to exhibit higher purchase rates. Schiffman et al. (2015) suggest that positively stated purchase intentions better reflect consumers' likelihood of purchasing a product or service. A higher probability of purchase implies greater purchase intention, indicating that consumers are more likely to buy a certain product or service in the future.

Meng et al. (2020) verified that characteristics of the host, such as professionalism, credibility, interactivity, skillfulness, and attractiveness, positively influence consumers' purchasing intentions. Since purchasing intention is a subjective inclination or attitude of consumers, many scholars have analyzed it from the perspective of consumer perception. Dang & Ma (2021) argued that consumers' perceived value results from their use of live-streaming platforms and is a key factor in the consumption experience, influencing not only consumers' interactions, such as sharing and commenting on social media, but also having a direct impact on their purchasing behavior.

Service Quality

Grönroos (1982) was the first to propose the concept of customer-perceived service quality, which he identified as consisting of two main components: technical quality, referring to the outcome of the service, and functional quality, referring to the quality of the service process. Grönroos (1997) further suggested that service quality is essentially a perception that arises from the discrepancy between customers' expectations of the service and their actual service experience, adopting a cognitive psychology perspective. The PZB team defined perceived service quality as an overall judgment regarding the superiority of the service (Parasuraman et al., 1985) and proposed the service quality gap model, which identifies reasons for the gap between customer expectations and actual perceptions of service, including: a lack of understanding of customer expectations by providers, deviations in service design and standards, deviations in the service delivery process from the standards, and inconsistencies between actual service and promises. In the early 21st century, the PZB team defined online service quality as the degree of utility and efficiency displayed by website businesses in assisting customers with purchasing, payment, and service practices. Building on this, the PZB team (Parasuraman et al., 2005) found through empirical research that customers' perceptions of online service quality are not only related to website interaction but also closely tied to the service provided after the interaction.

Wei (2024), found that logistics service quality has a significant positive impact on consumers' purchasing intentions. Kang & Tian (2024), conducted empirical research that revealed social e-commerce service quality significantly positively affects customer fit and repurchase intentions. Wang (2019) studied the factors influencing users' continuous use intentions of mobile social applications from the perspective of mobile service quality, confirming that

interaction quality and environmental quality can enhance user satisfaction, which directly influences users' continuous use intentions. Rita (2019) explored the relationship between electronic service quality, user satisfaction, and other user behaviors, measuring service quality across four dimensions: website design, customer service, security/privacy, and service fulfillment. The results indicated that, aside from customer service, the other three dimensions affect overall electronic service quality, which significantly influences user behavior through user satisfaction and trust. Zhang (2021) confirmed that information quality and interaction quality positively influence relational speed, which in turn affects consumers' online purchasing intentions on live-streaming platforms.

Perceived Value

Consumer perceived value plays a crucial role in predicting purchasing behavior, effectively explaining consumer decision-making and preferences, and has long been a research focus in marketing and management (Holbrook, 1996). It encompasses consumers' judgments regarding product quality, performance, the convenience and enjoyment of the shopping process, and the achievement of consumption goals, ultimately shaping their consumption experience and perceived value (Mwenda et al., 2014). Day (1994) defined perceived value as the difference between perceived benefits and costs in a purchasing context, while Zeithaml (1988) described it as a consumer's overall assessment of product utility based on what they give and receive. Woodruff et al. (1993) viewed perceived value as the trade-off between perceived gains and perceived losses, balancing expected attributes against costs. Thus, perceived value reflects the overall assessment of the perceived benefits gained from owning and using a product versus the perceived costs incurred to acquire it.

High perceived service value positively influences consumers' purchasing intentions, while low perceived service value negatively impacts them (Chen et al., 2019). In the context of online shopping, consumers' perceived service value primarily stems from the service quality and credibility of the seller. Familiarity and trust in the seller positively affect purchasing intentions, as consumers tend to prefer sellers or products with higher credibility and better service to mitigate risks (Benlian et al., 2012).

Du (2023) defines customer perceived value as the evaluation of the utility and benefits gained or expected during the selection, purchase, and use of brand products. Chopdar (2020) posits that prevalent perceived value and purchasing stimuli can stimulate consumers' value perception and impulsive buying desires. Studies by Zhang (2023) & Li et al. (2018) indicate that perceived value positively influences consumers' online shopping intentions, and that perceived value serves as an important mediating variable, playing a significant mediating role between various perceptual variables and consumers' purchasing intentions. Qing & Jin (2022) assert that the quality of live-streaming e-commerce is a crucial factor affecting consumers' online purchasing intentions. They constructed a scale for e-commerce live-streaming service quality based on three dimensions: service quality, information quality, and system quality, finding that e-commerce live-streaming quality significantly enhances perceived value, which in turn promotes consumers' online purchasing intentions.

Scholars have employed various theoretical models to explore the impact of live-streaming e-commerce marketing strategies on consumers' purchasing intentions. Among these, the perceived value model is one of the more commonly used theoretical frameworks. This model

suggests that consumers' purchasing intentions are influenced by their perception of the value of products or services, and that live-streaming e-commerce marketing strategies affect purchasing intentions by influencing consumers' value perceptions (Wang, 2022). Furthermore, with the rise of new marketing forms such as live-streaming e-commerce, related research continues to deepen. For instance, Zhu et al. (2022) examined how e-commerce live-streaming influences consumers' perceived usefulness and purchasing intentions from the perspective of social presence theory, while Ji et al. (2023) utilized structural equation modeling and various analytical methods to systematically analyze the specific pathways through which consumers' perceived service quality and perceived value influence purchasing intentions in the live-streaming e-commerce environment.

SOR Theory

In 1974, Mehrabian and Russell proposed the S-O-R (Stimuli-Organism-Response) theoretical model, which posits that consumers' purchasing behavior is influenced by external stimulus variables, primarily various shopping environments. These external stimulus variables (S) evoke psychological motivations in consumers, such as emotional and cognitive changes, and are thus treated as mediating variables (O), ultimately leading to purchasing behavior (R). This model reflects the process by which external stimulus variables influence purchasing behavior through mediating mechanisms. Over time, the S-O-R model has been refined by numerous scholars, becoming well-established with key components including external stimulus variables, mediating variables, and response variables. Stimulus variables influence the mediating variables by eliciting consumer motivations, which then affect the final response variables. This theoretical model is widely applied in the study of consumers' purchasing intentions and behaviors. The external stimulus variables, mediating variables, and response variables can be categorized as follows: external stimulus variables (S) include shopping environment, product price, user acceptance, actual product value, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, customer perceived costs, brand attitudes, and more. Mediating variables (O), also known as mechanism variables, mainly include perceived quality, perceived value, perceived risk, and consumer motivations. Response variables (R), which represent outcomes, primarily include purchasing intentions and purchasing behaviors. This framework is commonly used to investigate consumer purchasing behavior in online shopping environments, focusing on which stimulus factors can prompt consumers to make purchases.

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) model is also applicable in the context of live shopping. Researchers have used the S-O-R model to explore the relationship between external stimuli in the live shopping environment, consumers' cognitive and emotional states, and the resulting behaviors. Xue et al. (2020) using the S-O-R model framework, defined interactivity as the stimulus, perceived usefulness, psychological distance, and perceived risk as internal states, and engagement as the response in social commerce. Kang et al. (2021) applied the S-O-R model to examine the dynamic impact of interactivity on customer engagement behaviors through the strength of connections on live shopping platforms. Dong et al. (2023) using the S-O-R model as a framework, explored the relationship between technological and social factors in live shopping and consumers' purchase intentions.

Research Hypothesis

Relationship between Live-Streaming E-commerce Service Quality and Purchase Intention of Agricultural Products

Consumers' online purchasing behavior follows the AISAS model (Attention, Interest, Search, Action, Share), which suggests that consumers need to generate attention and interest in a product before taking specific purchasing actions. This process involves searching for product-related information, ultimately leading to a purchasing action and sharing. Information search plays a crucial role in influencing consumers' final purchasing behavior. Su et al. (2022) found through experiments that online reviews accompanied by attractive images significantly stimulate consumers' purchasing intentions. Zhang & Kong (2021) discovered that consumers with strong brand connections exhibit a "protective" mentality when exposed to negative brand information; as the negativity intensifies, their impulsive purchasing intentions increase. Conversely, consumers with low brand connections may suppress their impulsive purchasing intentions upon receiving negative brand information. Liu et al. (2020) pointed out that the characteristics of the host as a source of information impact consumers' trust and behavior.

Huang & Xie (2017), noted that interaction between employees and customers is one of the important forms of service, serving as the foundation for customers' perceived service value, service quality, and satisfaction. Furthermore, employee-customer interaction positively influences employee work efficiency and customer satisfaction. Fan et al. (2020) indicated that the interactivity of live-streaming affects user satisfaction and continuous use intentions by enhancing the user experience and user identification. Li & Cui (2020) pointed out that information interaction, interpersonal interaction, and human-computer interaction play significant roles in shaping consumer loyalty. Research on interaction by scholars indicates that the quality of interaction affects user satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn influences consumers' purchasing intentions.

Product service fulfillment refers to the extent to which live-streaming merchants fulfill their commitments regarding order delivery and product availability, specifically whether they can deliver products in good condition within the promised timeframe. Product delivery poses a significant challenge for online sellers, including live-streaming e-commerce, which encompasses aspects like timely delivery, damage-free delivery, and ensuring that delivered products match website descriptions. If online sellers fail to deliver products in good condition, it can increase consumers' perceived risks associated with online shopping (Choi & Lee, 2003). Rita (2019) found that product service fulfillment can enhance user satisfaction with merchants and build trust, facilitating the establishment of positive relationships and increasing consumers' sense of psychological security. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Information quality has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of agricultural products.

H2: Interaction quality has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of agricultural products.

H3: Product service quality has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of agricultural products.

Relationship between Perceived Value and Purchase Intention of Agricultural Products.

In the e-commerce context, consumer perceived value positively influences their online purchasing intentions. The more value consumers perceive during their shopping experience, the more likely they are to place an order for the product. Li et al. (2017) confirmed that perceived value significantly and positively affects consumers' purchasing intentions in electronic commerce. Li et al. (2017) proposed that in virtual brand communities, perceived value drives purchasing intentions. Liu et al. (2020), through grounded theory, studied consumer psychology in influencer live-streaming sales, demonstrating that perceived value impacts purchasing intentions. Wang & Wang (2022) suggested that during online shopping, consumers compare the costs they incur with the value they perceive from product or service information. When they perceive substantial benefits from the product or service they are about to purchase, this positive subjective feeling significantly enhances their perceived value. Higher perceived value can stimulate stronger purchasing intentions, ultimately promoting purchasing behavior. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Perceived value has a significant positive impact on the purchase intention of agricultural products.

Mediating Role of Perceived Value Between Live-Streaming E-commerce Service Quality and Purchase Intention of Agricultural Products

According to the research findings of Cheung (2018) and Erkan (2016) in the field of word-of-mouth, information credibility can enhance users' perceived information usefulness. Ahn (2007) also confirmed in the context of electronic commerce that high-quality information with good credibility positively influences information usefulness and perceived ease of use. Zhang (2022) demonstrated that real-time responses from e-commerce hosts help establish bonds and trust between users and hosts. Xue (2020) found that e-commerce hosts providing quick feedback to user inquiries allows users to obtain rich product information in a timely manner, thereby alleviating concerns about the products and enhancing user confidence while reducing perceived product risk.

Perceived value is consumers' subjective judgment and assessment of a product or service's value. As leaders in live-streaming sessions, e-commerce hosts can leverage their social influence and appeal to enhance consumers' perceived value, subsequently affecting their intention to repurchase (Maojie, 2023). Research by Ji et al. (2023) indicates that factors such as on-site characteristics and environment significantly influence customers' cognitive values, which can potentially affect their purchasing intentions. Han et al. (2019) found that the features of online live-streaming platforms subtly change customers' value perceptions, impacting their online purchasing behavior. Lin & Qu (2019) suggested that customers' purchasing intentions often undergo subtle changes based on the information conveyed about clothing products, reflecting the influence of product information on consumers' perceived value. Liu (2022), indicated that perceived value influences consumers' purchasing intentions in the context of after-sales and logistics services. Based on this, the following hypotheses are proposed:

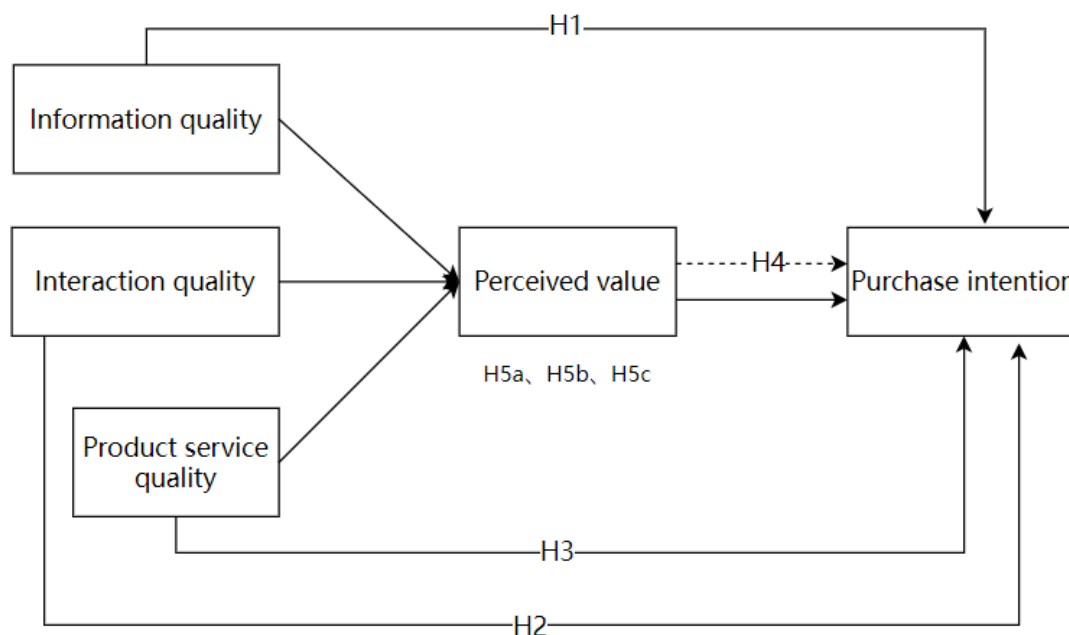
H5a: Perceived value mediates the relationship between information quality and purchase intention of agricultural products.

H5b: Perceived value mediates the relationship between interaction quality and purchase intention of agricultural products.

H5c: Perceived value mediates the relationship between product service quality and purchase intention of agricultural products.

Constructing the Research Model

Based on the above analysis, this study is grounded in the SOR theory, exploring the relationships among information quality, interaction quality, product service quality, perceived value, and purchasing intention in live-streaming e-commerce from the perspective of external stimuli—psychological perception—behavioral intention. A research model representing the relationships among these variables is constructed, as shown in Figure 1.



Conclusion

The dimensions of live-streaming e-commerce service quality are categorized into information quality, interaction quality, and product service quality. Enhancements in these areas contribute to consumers' purchasing intentions for agricultural products. Perceived value is a crucial factor influencing consumers' purchasing intentions in the context of live-streaming e-commerce. As consumers watch live streams of agricultural products, higher information quality, interaction quality, and product service quality lead to increased perceived value, thereby intensifying their purchasing intentions. Perceived value serves as a mediating factor between information quality, interaction quality, product service quality, and purchasing intention. This study is limited to a theoretical framework, and future research will involve selecting representative consumers as samples for a survey to test and empirically analyze the proposed hypotheses.

Contributions

This study constructs a mechanism model of the impact of live-stream e-commerce service quality on the purchase intention of agricultural products based on the SOR (Stimulus-Organism-Response) theory. The model reveals the intrinsic influence mechanism of live-stream e-commerce service quality on the purchase intention of agricultural products and clarifies the specific relationships between various variables. In line with the actual characteristics of the live-stream e-commerce context, this study defines the connotation of

live-stream e-commerce service quality and divides it into three dimensions: information quality, interaction quality, and product service quality, deepening the understanding of service quality theory. By examining the impact of live-stream e-commerce service quality on the purchase intention of agricultural products, the research results provide valuable references for the live-stream e-commerce industry, merchants, hosts, and live-stream platforms to improve service quality, optimize operational capabilities, and expand live-streaming revenues, offering significant practical value.

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