

The Influence of Live Streaming E-Commerce Features on Purchase Intention in The Thai Fashion Industry: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement and Electronic Word of Mouth

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Abstract

The first research objective of this study was to investigate the direct impact of live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, and eWOM on purchase intention. The second was to investigate the direct impact of live streaming e-commerce features on customer engagement and eWOM. The third was to investigate the indirect and mediating role of customer engagement and eWOM in the impact of live streaming e-commerce features on purchase intention. This study used purposive sampling and snowball sampling, and a total of 404 valid samples were obtained. Descriptive analysis and inferential statistics were used in this study. The results of the study showed that live streaming e-commerce features have a significant positive effect on customer engagement and eWOM. Still, the effect of eWOM on purchase intention was not significant. Meanwhile, live streaming e-commerce features and customer engagement have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. Meanwhile, customer engagement plays a partial mediating role between live streaming e-commerce features and purchase intention.

Keywords : Live streaming e-commerce features, Customer engagement, Electronic word of mouth, Purchase Intention

1. Introduction

In recent years, Thailand has witnessed tremendous growth in e-commerce. In particular, the market size of e-commerce in Thailand in 2021 was about 11 billion dollars in terms of total merchandise value. According to the Bangkok Post (Leesa-nguansuk,2023), the Thai social e-commerce market have a value of Baht 200 billion in 2022. Among them, live streaming e-commerce contributed 76 billion Baht in social e-commerce market value. According to ECDB website, the Thai fashion e-commerce industry market is expected to reach Baht 49.3 billion by 2023, accounting for 7.7 percent of the total e-commerce industry market in Thailand. Moreover, it is expected that by 2025, 43 million people in Thailand will shop online (Monks, 2021). However, there are many channels to purchase fashion online in Thailand.

Currently, the most popular online shopping platforms in Thailand are Shopee and Lazada (Similarweb,2023). However, Thais are also familiar with shopping through social media, with the most popular social media platforms being Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok (Kemp, 2023). Social media shopping includes social commerce, group buying, and live streaming shopping (Mileva, 2022).

This study extends the research on e-commerce through live streaming e-commerce and contributes to the literature on customer engagement and electronic word-of-mouth.

2. Objective

1. Investigate the direct impact of live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, and eWOM on purchase intention.
2. Investigate the direct impact of live streaming e-commerce features on customer engagement and eWOM.

3. Investigate the indirect impact and mediating role of customer engagement and electronic word-of-mouth in the impact of live streaming e-commerce features on purchase intention.

3. Literature review

Live Streaming E-commerce Features

It is important to note that there are many live streaming e-commerce platforms. Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut's (2020) research shows live streaming e-commerce platforms, such as Shopee, Lazada, Instagram, and TikTok, are commonly used by merchants to interact with their customers on live e-commerce platforms (Arora et al., 2019). As well as live streaming e-commerce has many features.

Guo et al. (2021) show live streaming e-commerce features are defined as the function and features of live streaming that allow real-time interaction through the use of text, sound, and images, as well as the fact that live streaming can provide accurate and reliable information to the live viewer from all perspectives, allowing the live viewers to assess the performance of the product clearly. According to the existing literature, the main live streaming e-commerce features are visualization, interactivity, and authenticity (Guo et al., 2021). That can bring live viewers closer to the products in space and time (Song et al., 2021).

Customer Engagement

According to Thakur (2018), customer engagement is a behavioral construct that goes beyond the act of buying. In the study of de Oliveira Santini et al. (2020), customer engagement is defined as a psychological state that occurs based on the presence of a customer interacting and creating an experience together with a specific engagement object.

The traditional customer engagement process allows the company to interact with the customers but limits the ability of the customers to interact with the company (Chen et al., 2021). In contrast to traditional customer engagement, the multi-way communication dynamics in social media-based live streaming enable live viewers to interact with merchants across distance and time, creating online customer engagement in live streaming e-commerce (Barari et al., 2021).

It is widely recognized that customer engagement is classified into the three most common dimensions, which are cognitive, emotional, and behavioral (Rosado-Pinto & Loureiro, 2020). Although most previous studies have proposed that customer engagement results from a combination of psychological and behavioral effects, Dessart et al. (2016) also proposed five dimensions of customer engagement, namely identification, attention, absorption, enthusiasm, and interaction, which together constitute customer engagement. In the above review of customer engagement dimensions, the attention and absorption dimensions can be considered in the cognitive aspect; the enthusiasm dimension can be considered in the emotional aspect; and the identification and interaction dimensions can be considered in the behavioral aspect (Dovalien et al., 2016).

Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Word of mouth is defined as a form of communication based on a consumer's personal experience and impression of a product or service (Gildin, 2022). After this, electronic word of mouth (eWOM) is any information about a company or product that a customer provides to many people and organizations via the Internet (Verma & Yadav, 2021).

Merchants often see social media platforms as suitable platforms for eWOM, and live streaming e-commerce on social media has become increasingly popular among consumers (Erkan & Evans, 2018). Studies have shown that social media platforms are effective communication platforms that influence consumers' attitudes toward merchants (Suwandee et al., 2019). The eWOM of live streaming e-commerce on social media not only provides information to live viewers but also provides advice to inexperienced live viewers, and

merchants can also increase sales by using the live streaming features (Rahaman et al., 2022).

Purchase Intention

The purchase decision process refers to the process that a customer goes through when purchasing a product. It consists of five stages, which are recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase (Petcharat & Leelasantitham, 2021). While in the information search process, many consumers now simply type what they are looking for in a search engine, which consists of eWOM, and the information consumers find will influence their purchase intention (Abd-Elaziz et al., 2015).

Sivaram et al. (2019) defined purchase intention as a decision that represents consumers who may, will, plan, or are willing to acquire a product or service in the future. Cong & Zheng (2017) and Peña-García et al. (2020) both defined purchase intention as the willingness and decision expressed by customers during the actual purchase process. Dadwal et al. (2020) stated that purchase intention is defined as the consumers' propensity to purchase a good or the customers' intention to take a purchase action on a product and is the sum of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects of the purchase and use of a product.

4. Theoretical framework, Hypotheses, and Hypotheses test

Theoretical framework

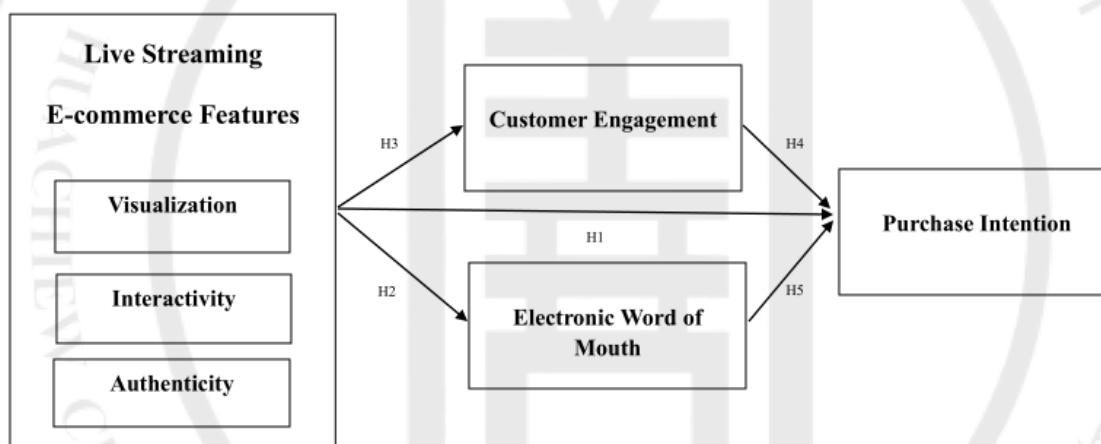


Figure 1 Theoretical framework

Hypotheses

Before setting up the model, the research provides a framework to carry out the research hypotheses. These hypotheses are based on the SOR theory mentioned above as well as the variables of live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, eWOM, and purchase intention. The hypotheses are:

- H1 Live streaming e-commerce features have a positive effect on purchase intentions.
- H2 Live streaming e-commerce features have a positive effect on customer engagement.
- H3 Live streaming e-commerce features have a positive effect on eWOM.
- H4 Customer engagement has a positive effect on purchase intention.
- H5 eWOM has a positive effect on purchase intention.

Hypotheses test

To further prove the hypotheses, the researcher uses path analysis in the next part of the empirical analysis. Path analysis can be used to test the relationship between a standard variable (Y) and a set of predictor variables (X). The model equation can be expressed as follows:

$$Y_{PI} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 LSEF + \beta_2 CE + \beta_3 eWOM$$

$$Y_{CE} = \beta_4 + \beta_5 LSEF$$

$$Y_{eWOM} = \beta_6 + \beta_7 LSEF$$

5. Research methodology

The sample for this study was people who live in Bangkok and have watched live streaming e-commerce. 404 samples were collected in this study. The researcher used non-probability sampling, purposive sampling, and snowball sampling. The researcher selected Thai internet users who have watched live streaming e-commerce. The researcher asked those who received the questionnaire to fill it out and pass it on to their friends who have also watched live streaming e-commerce. The questionnaire was sent to respondents via online channels such as Line, Facebook, and email. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and send it back directly to the researcher.

The questionnaire was constructed based on the research objectives, literature review, and conceptual framework. This study focuses on four variables, namely live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, eWOM, and purchase intention. The questionnaire was divided into seven parts. The first part is demographic, using nominal and ordinal scales such as age, gender, occupation, and income of the respondents. In this questionnaire, a Likert scale was used to measure live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, eWOM, and purchase intention.

The evaluation was done using 3 experts to use the Item Objective Congruence (IOC). All items in this study scored >0.66 in each variable. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha (CA) was used to analyze the reliability of the questionnaires. The Cronbach coefficients for live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, eWOM, and purchase intention were all 0.856.

After collecting the data, the researcher used the social statistics and process program for analysis. In this research, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics are used with frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Inferential statistics are inferences or conclusions about a group that are inferred from the observations of a sample. In this survey, path analysis and the Sobel test were used.

6. Results

Description Statistics

The majority of respondents were female. In addition, 96.29 percent of the respondents were in the age group of 18-35 years old, Generation Z and millennials. More than half of the respondents had a monthly income of less than 10,000 Baht, with the specific number of demands in Table 1.

Table 1 Description Statistics

	Items	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	101	25.00
	Female	303	75.00
Age	Under 18	10	2.48
	18-35	389	96.29
	36-50	5	1.24
	Above 50	0	0
Income	Less than ฿10000 / month	218	53.96
	฿10000-15000 / month	94	23.27
	฿15001-20000 / month	29	7.18
	Over ฿20000 / month	63	15.59
Frequency of live shopping	Very often	66	16.34
	Often	91	22.52
	Sometimes	149	36.88
	Rarely	98	24.26

The means and standard deviations of the respondents' scores on each variable were analyzed in this study, with the specific number of demands in Table 2. Visualization is a visual

result that respondents can see in the live stream, with a mean value of 3.72, indicating that they agree. Interactivity is the communicative interaction that occurs with other people during the live stream, and the mean value is 3.71, indicating that they agree. Authenticity is the respondents' evaluation of the degree of truthfulness of the information received during the live stream, with a mean value of 3.56 indicating they agree. The mean score of 3.48 indicates that overall, the respondents agree that they engage in live streaming. The mean value of eWOM, which is the respondents' communication of information related to the product through the internet, is 4.16, indicating that they agree. Purchase intention is the intention of live viewers to engage in purchasing a specific product, with a mean value of 3.53.

Table 2 Means and Standard Deviations of Visualization, Interactivity and Authenticity of Live Streaming E-commerce Features, Customer Engagement, eWOM and Purchase Intention

Variable	Mean	Std.Deviation	Interpretation
LSEFV	3.72	.62	Agree
LSEFI	3.71	.64	Agree
LSEFA	3.56	.67	Agree
CE	3.48	.67	Agree
eWOM	4.16	.68	Agree
PI	3.53	.75	Agree

This study uses Pearson's coefficient to measure the correlation between the variables. As shown in Table 3, the correlation coefficients between all variables range from 0.298 to 0.586. According to previous studies, if the correlation coefficients between the variables are more than 0.8, the problem of multicollinearity exists (Shrestha, 2020). In this study, the correlation coefficients between the variables are below 0.8, so there is no problem of multicollinearity.

Table 3 Correlations

	LSEFV	LSEFI	LSEFA	CE	eWOM	PI
LSEFV	1					
LSEFI	.494**	1				
LSEFA	.409**	.462**	1			
CE	.384**	.543**	.496**	1		
eWOM	.386**	.359**	.300**	.341**	1	
PI	.419**	.513**	.503**	.586**	.298**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Multiple Regression Coefficients

Table 4 shows the results of stepwise multiple regression coefficients between the independent variables (LSEF, CE, and eWOM) and the dependent variable (PI). The results of the analysis show that the effect of eWOM on purchase intention is not significant, and the effect of LSEF and CE on purchase intention is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Overall, 44.3 percent of the variance in purchase intention scores can be well explained by LSEF, CE, and eWOM. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is $1/\text{tolerance}$, which is always greater than or equal to 1. VIF values above 10 are usually considered multicollinearity. Table 4 shows that the VIF values for the LSEF, CE, and eWOM are 1.702, 1.562, and 1.250, respectively. Therefore, it again indicates that multicollinearity is not an issue in this study (Shrestha, 2020).

Table 4 Results of Multiple Regression Coefficients for Purchase Intention

Variable	Coefficients	t-value	Sig	VIF	Tolerance value
LSEF	.572	7.970	.000*	1.702	.587
CE	.397	7.557	.000*	1.562	.640
eWOM	.010	.223	.823	1.250	.800

R = .665 R² = .443 SEE = .564 F = 105.874

*p value < .05

Table 5 shows the analysis of Equation 1, which determines the relationship between LSEF, as a dependent variable, and customer engagement. The results show an R-squared of 0.351, which means that the live e-commerce feature explains 35.1 percent of the variance in customer engagement.

Table 5 Results of the Regression Coefficients for CE

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig
LSEF	.776	14.747	.000*

R = .593 R² = .351 SEE = .540 F = 217.484

*p value < .05

Table 6 shows the analysis of Equation 1, which determines the possible relationship between LSEF, as the independent variable, and eWOM, with an R-squared value of 0.189, thus LSEF explains 18.9 percent of the variance in eWOM.

Table 6 Results of the Regression Coefficients for eWOM

Variable	Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig
LSEF	.578	9.688	.000*

R = .435 R² = .189 SEE = .612 F = 93.867

*p value < .05

Path Analysis

Table 7 shows LSEF has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .572$, $P < 0.05$), LSEF has a significant positive effect on CE ($\beta = .776$, $P < 0.05$), and CE has a significant positive effect on purchase intention ($\beta = .397$, $P < 0.05$).

In terms of indirect influence, LSEF has a significant indirect effect on PI through CE ($\beta = .308$, $P < 0.05$), indicating that LSEF can indirectly influence purchase intention through CE.

Table 7 Results of the Causal Effect of the Predictors on PI

Paths	Causal effect		
	Direct	Indirect	Total
LSEF → PI	.572*		.572
LSEF → CE	.776*		.776
CE → PI	.397*		.397
LSEF → CE → PI		.308*	.308

*p value < .05

Mediation Analysis

The Sobel test was employed to test the mediator role of customer engagement. As shown in Table 8, the Sobel test statistic value is 6.783 with $p < 0.01$, so the mediating effect of customer engagement is significant. CE mediates the relationship between LSEF and PI, showing that LSEF affects CE, which in turn affects PI. So, this study's findings show that LSEF has the greatest effect on CE, while LSEF to PI and LSEF to eWOM have nearly equal

effects. Meanwhile, LSEF has a significant positive effect on CE, eWOM, and PI. Therefore, CE is considered a partial mediator.

Table 8 Sobel Test

Input		Test statistics	p-value
a.776	Sobel test	6.783	<.001
b.398	Aroian test	6.771	<.001
Sa.053	Goodman test		
Sb.052	Goodman test		

7. Discussion

This study investigates the effects of live streaming e-commerce features, customer engagement, and eWOM on purchase intention, in addition to the effects of live streaming e-commerce features on purchase intention through customer engagement and eWOM.

The results of this study indicate that live streaming e-commerce features have the biggest effect on customer engagement, explaining 77.6 percent of the variance in customer engagement. The study conducted by Jiang et al. (2022) found that live streaming e-commerce features can enhance live viewers' trust in the event and affect customer engagement. The study by Kang et al. (2021) also showed that live streaming e-commerce features have a positive impact on customer engagement.

This is followed by eWOM, with live streaming e-commerce features explaining 57.8 percent of the variance in eWOM. This is consistent with the findings of Deng et al. (2023), who find the experience of live streaming e-commerce interactivity can influence eWOM, thus increasing the ability of live viewers to share their experiences and opinions about products and services with other viewers.

Finally, live streaming e-commerce features explain 57.2 percent of the variance in purchase intention. Live streaming e-commerce features have a significant positive effect on purchase intention. A series of studies have found that live streaming e-commerce features influence the purchase intention of live viewers, such as Dong et al. (2022), Guo et al. (2021), and Liu et al. (2022).

The path analysis shows that live streaming e-commerce features and customer engagement have a positive effect on the purchase intention of live viewers, but eWOM does not have a significant effect on the purchase intention of live viewers. Customer engagement has a significant mediation effect between live streaming e-commerce features and purchase intention. According to SOR theory, live streaming e-commerce features serve as external stimuli, and live streaming e-commerce features stimulation produces cognitive and emotional changes in live viewers.

8. Conclusion

This study used purposive sampling and snowball sampling methods to survey respondents through Google online questionnaires, and a total of 404 valid samples were obtained. The final hypothesis testing results are shown in Table 9. The results show that all hypotheses are accepted except Hypothesis 5.

Table 9 Summary of Test Results for The Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Outcome
H1: LSEF has a positive effect on PI	Accepted
H2: LSEF has a positive effect on CE	Accepted
H3: LSEF has a positive effect on eWOM	Accepted
H4: CE has a positive effect on PI	Accepted
H5: eWOM has a positive effect on PI	Rejected

9. Recommendations

This study identifies the factors that influence the purchase intention of live viewers, which has important implications for live merchants. If the exposure of the live stream is improved, more consumers will be attracted to watch it, which will bring more purchases or attention to the store. In order to attract consumers to watch, live merchants should focus on customer management and push live streaming previews appropriately. Given the importance of customer reviews, live merchants are advised to respond quickly to facilitate purchase decisions. Live merchants are advised to arrange sufficient customer service staff to handle product inquiries. Customer reviews are a key indicator of purchase behavior, and e-commerce merchants should take advantage of these key opportunities to improve the effectiveness of conversion from live streaming to sales. Consumers communicate with each other through the comment section of the live streaming interface. It is recommended that live merchants encourage consumers to share their buying experience, which will provide social support to other consumers and motivate them to participate in the live stream.

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