

## **SOCIAL PRESENCE IS NO LONGER A FACTOR IN CUSTOMER TRUST IN SHOPPING FOR LIVE STREAMING E-COMMERCE**

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**Abstract:** The surge in online shopping via e-commerce live streaming, particularly evident since the COVID-19 pandemic, has transformed consumer behavior. Data shows that a staggering 83.7% of Indonesians were engaged in this activity in 2022. This study aims to examine the factors influencing purchase intent among Makassar students within this context. It also explores the interrelationships between these variables and purchase intention. Specifically, the research investigates the impact of interaction, entertainment, social presence, and trust on consumer trust and subsequent purchase behavior. Employing a quantitative methodology with a sample size of 215 students, the study found that interaction and entertainment positively correlated with consumer trust. Conversely, social presence exerted no significant influence. Importantly, trust emerged as a key determinant of purchase intention.

**Keywords:** *Live streaming e-commerce, Interactivity, Social presence, Purchase intention, Trust*

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### **1. Introduction**

Online shopping has become a popular choice for consumers around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically altered various facets of life, including shopping habits. Notably, the popularity of live streaming shopping has persisted. According to the 2022 JakPat survey, a substantial 83.7% of Indonesians have engaged with e-commerce live streaming platforms (Databoks.katadata.co.id, 2022). Shopee and TikTok emerge as dominant players in this space, with Shopee leading the market at 83.4% and TikTok following closely at 42.2%. From this percentage, it can be concluded that the use of e-commerce live streaming features has become one of the popular marketing trends because it is widely used by Indonesians.

During the pandemic, people are encouraged to stay at home and reduce social interaction (Oktora et al., 2020). This has led to public interest in online shopping. One of the increasingly popular forms of online shopping is live streaming on e-commerce platforms. Live streaming platforms, including TikTok and Shopee, have enabled a new form of online shopping known as e-commerce live streaming (Clement et al., 2021a). Customers who watching the live streaming can interact with sellers directly to get information and recommendations on products being sold. The efficiency of online shopping is what makes many sellers market their products to e-commerce platforms.

Technological advancements are continually reshaping the dynamics of retail and customer service interactions (Khasanah & Kuswanto, 2023). Within this landscape, live streaming has emerged as a novel channel for e-commerce marketing (Hu & Chaudhry, 2020). This innovative approach fosters direct, real-time engagement between buyers and sellers. With extensive marketing, the live streaming strategy in Indonesia has expanded rapidly. This has led many stores on e-commerce platforms to market their products through live streaming. This provides a more personalized and entertaining shopping experience from consumers.

In its development, live streaming has been widely used in several social media and e-commerce platforms. Live streaming will reduce the use of some technical requirements, which are broadcasted directly through the internet network without editing and post-production processes (Primadewi & Fitriasari, 2022). In live streaming, sellers can introduce products, interact with customers, conduct promotions, and build two-way communication. Live streaming can also help businesses reduce the gap between products and buyers. This can encourage sellers to better understand the needs and wants of customers, so that they can provide more personalized services. The burgeoning technological landscape is anticipated to fuel sustained growth in e-commerce live streaming. This projection is corroborated by the proliferation of e-commerce platforms integrating live streaming capabilities, as well as the increasing public interest in online shopping (Lu & Chen, 2021).

Previous studies have identified various factors that drive purchase intent in live streaming contexts (Qin & Jin, 2022). The interaction between sellers and buyers is one of the keys to gaining trust from customers. In the e-commerce market, sellers need to increase the trust and credibility of their customers (Chen et al., 2023b). When customers start to trust the seller, customers will be more likely to start buying the product being sold. Product demonstrations and real-time interactions with sellers during live streams can significantly influence consumers' decisions to purchase. Starting to market products through the live streaming feature is certainly not easy, because it must have good communication skills and have sufficient product knowledge (Meng & Zhao, 2022). In addition, businesses or sellers need to think about interesting marketing strategies during live streaming so that customers do not feel bored (Wang et al., 2021).

Of course, every customer has certain criteria, when dealing with the products they like and the assessment of the services they receive (Suama, 2022). But businesses can conduct surveys to increase the credibility of their business. Given the importance of understanding these factors, this research aims to investigate the impact of interaction, entertainment, and social presence on customer trust in live streaming shopping. In addition, they need to build trust and improve the shopping experience. In this case they need to build interaction, entertainment, social presence, and trust factors to increase customer purchase intentions (Ma et al., 2022).

From the explanation above, digital developments in shopping have diversified and created new shopping behaviors. Furthermore, it explores the relationship between customer trust and purchase intent within this context. By examining these factors, this study seeks to contribute to the evolving understanding of purchase intent in e-commerce live streaming, potentially challenging the long-held belief that social

presence is a primary determinant. This study explains that respondents prefer physical presence compared to social presence. This research provides implications that can be useful as a reference for marketing strategies when opening an online business using the live streaming feature. By utilizing interaction and entertainment factors, it can increase customer confidence in buying products. The range of respondents in this study were students in the city of Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. Ultimately, this research aims to identify the key factors influencing purchase intent among Makassar students who engage in live streaming shopping.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Interactivity**

E-commerce live streaming facilitates a two-way communication channel between sellers and buyers, enabling direct interaction and potentially initiating the purchasing process (Yu & Zhang, 2010; Clement et al., 2021a). Providing comment services on live streaming triggers interaction so that viewers and sellers can effectively exchange product and service information. Viewers can directly ask about the visual form of the product, product recommendations, similar types of products, prices, promos, and even the advantages of products that the audience is interested in.

### **2.2. Entertainment**

Entertainment in the context of live streaming refers to the psychological gratification and stress relief experienced by consumers (Wang et al., 2020). It also refers to interesting topics, activities, and good personalities. Good entertainment can make buyers feel more comfortable and at home watching live streaming so that they are more interested in learning more about the products offered. A series of entertaining activities held by e-commerce, such as regular raffles, distribution of virtual red envelopes, etc. will be considered attractive by buyers (Liu et al., 2020).

### **2.3. Social Presence**

Social presence is the feeling that there is direct interaction despite not meeting in person. Social presence can be created through social media, video calls, and online games. Social presence in live streaming creates a sense of virtual togetherness, allowing viewers to experience a feeling of warmth and social connection similar to physical interactions (Ma et al., 2022). Viewers will thus feel the warmth and enjoy social communication as if they were in an actual environment. The activity of forming an online community in Society, the activity of discussing in groups, feeling the presence and evoking emotional reactions to each other, and gradually building social relationships (Clement et al., 2021a). When streamers acknowledge the presence of consumers, it will indirectly build social relationships and build trust.

### **2.4. Customer Trust**

Consumers rely heavily on relevant information provided by sellers who are considered trusted and reliable sources. Consumer trust will encourage consumers to make further decisions in making online purchases. Therefore, consumer trust is an important element in realizing this (Liu et al., 2022b). E-commerce platforms have various types of vendors or foreign sellers who are new and do not have good brand

awareness, causing an increase in the level of uncertainty for consumer purchases because they are not necessarily trusted. Doing live streaming marketing can be a good answer to the previous statement. Buying and selling activities on live streaming of a product can have an impact on consumer buying intentions because they are able to build trust through providing information and product visuals that are displayed live or directly (Xin et al., 2023).

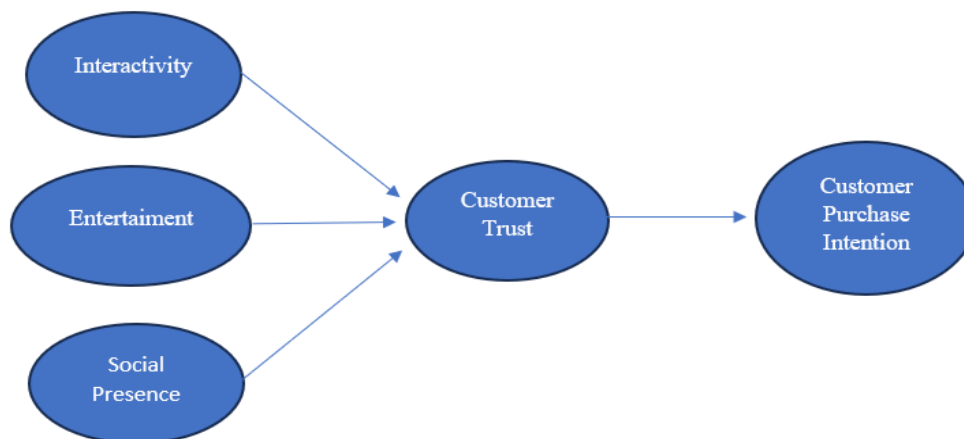
## 2.5. Customer Purchase Intention

Purchase intention is the most important step for a product, which is very important in buying and selling activities. Purchase intention is a person's mental decision how someone intends to buy a product or service (Dong et al., 2022). A higher willingness to buy equals a higher probability (Jakwatanatham et al., 2022). In e-commerce, live streaming of a product can have a big impact on consumer purchase intention because it can build trust through the product information provided in the live stream (Xin et al., 2023). The live streaming feature in e-commerce will also be a means of free question-and-answer communication and is able to provide a sense of satisfaction in the services provided so as to increase the buyer's purchase intention. Shopping experience through this feature creates trust and builds a good perspective for the seller's brand (Sun et al., 2019).

## Research Models and Hypothesis

### Research Model

Based on the reviewed literature, the following conceptual model was developed for testing:



### Hypothesis

#### Interactivity Towards Customer Trust

Interaction refers to the process by which people communicate in Society. Interactions have an effect on each other and influence each other to perform certain activities. In the case of online purchasing, online interaction is a useful technique in obtaining more information when it is able to increase trust in making online purchasing decisions (Liu et al., 2022a). User-to-user and user-to-broadcaster interactions during live streaming enhance consumers' comprehension of products and related activities (Tao & Zi, 2017). The trust formed due to real time interaction and closer

acquaintance with the buyer can make customers feel more confident in the products and services offered by the seller.

Consequently, the first hypothesis of this study is:

H1: Interactivity is significantly positively related to Customer Trust.

### **Entertainment Towards Customer Trust**

Previous research has explained that entertainment value has a significant influence on customer trust (Ma et al., 2022). Sometimes, watching streamers marketing their products creates fun bargain hunting. With pleasant and comfortable presentations, seller's can make buyers feel confident in making purchases. Entertainment can improve the relationship between sellers and buyers thereby enabling positive brand perceptions of the brand or store (Brakus et al., 2009).

Consequently, the second hypothesis of this study is:

H2: Entertainment is significantly positively related to Customer Trust.

### **Social Presence Towards Customer Trust**

Prior research indicates that social presence can positively influence customer trust (Dong et al., 2022). Consumers experiencing a strong sense of social presence with the streamer are more inclined to trust the company or store and make a purchase (Ma et al., 2022). By building a good relationship, customers will tend to feel comfortable and confident to make purchases.

Consequently, the third hypothesis of this study is:

H3: Social Presence is significantly positively related to Customer Trust.

### **Customer Trust Towards Customer Purchase Intention**

Several studies have demonstrated a positive correlation between customer trust and purchase intention (Wu & Huang, 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Buyer trust is the cornerstone of any successful business, especially in the competitive e-commerce space. Trust not only drives individual purchases, but can foster long-term loyalty, turning new buyers into loyal customers who will return to shop. Without trust, shoppers are more likely to turn to competitors who offer guarantees and a more reliable shopping experience.

Consequently, the fourth hypothesis of this study is:

H4: Customer Trust is significantly positively related to Customer Purchase Intention.

## **3. Research Method**

### **Respondent Sample**

The research used is a quantitative approach using a questionnaire as a source of information from respondents. Data collection for this study employed both online and offline methods. Online surveys were conducted using Google Forms and disseminated through social media platforms (WhatsApp, Instagram), while paper questionnaires were distributed to students in Makassar city.

The study sample consisted of 215 Generation Z students residing in Makassar city who had prior experience shopping via e-commerce live streaming. Frequency and presentation will be measured for demographic data from respondents including age and gender. The number of respondents with age criteria of 16-19 years were 154 respondents (71.63%) and age 20-22 years were 61 respondents (28.37%). The

number of respondents with male gender criteria was 92 respondents (42.79%) and 123 respondents (57.21%). The respondent demographic primarily comprised female students aged 16-19.

**Measurement & Analysis**

A 5-point Likert scale questionnaire was utilized to assess customer purchase intention related to live streaming features. Responses ranged from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5) for each item measuring independent and dependent variables. This research uses 5 variables (interactivity, entertainment, social presence, customer trust, customer purchase intention). Each variable is measured using several indicators/items. The following indicators/items were employed in this study:

**Table 1. Measurement Indicator**

Abbr.	Measurement Item		References
Interactivity (I)	I1	I feel that through watching live streams, I get relevant information from audience questions	[Ma et al., (2022); Jakwatanatham et al., (2022); Liu et al., (2022)]
	I2	I feel that streamers always answer questions from the audience	
	I3	I feel that through watching live streams I can exchange opinions with streamers and other viewers easily	
	I4	I feel that through live streaming I am closer to the streamer	
	I5	I feel that the streamers provide interesting explanations so that the audience will make it an addictive experience	
Entertainment (E)	E1	I like watching Live Streaming because it is entertaining	[Ma et al., (2022); Li & Peng, (2021); Li et al, (2023)]
	E2	I spend time watching live streaming	
	E3	I like watching Live Streaming to reduce boredom	
	E4	I like watching live streaming because it makes me relaxed	
Social Presence (SP)	SP1	I feel the presence of other viewers	[Sun et al., (2019); Liu et al., (2022)]
	SP2	I have a personal impression when shopping and	

		watching live streaming	
	SP3	I experience a sense of companionship while watching live streams.	
	SP4	Watching live streams makes me feel at ease.	
Customer Trust (CT)	CT1	I trust the product or service information provided by the streamer	[Ma et al., (2022); Liu et al., (2022); Wu & Huang, (2023)]
	CT2	I have confidence in the quality of products sold during these live streams.	
	CT3	I am confident that I will be satisfied with the products I purchase.	
	CT4	I believe the products and services recommended by the streamer offer good value.	
	CT5	I trust that the products I receive will match the live stream demonstrations.	
Customer Purchase Intention (CPI)	CP1	I will consider live streaming as a shopping option for future purchases.	[Ho et al., (2022); Liu et al., (2022); Wang et al., (2022)]
	CP2	I intend to shop through live streaming platforms more frequently in the future.	
	CP3	I am likely to purchase products recommended during live streams.	
	CP4	I would like to recommend live streaming e-commerce to my family and friends	
	CP5	I feel the recommended products are worth buying	

This study employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for data analysis, utilizing WarpPLS software version 8.0.

#### **4. Results and Discussion**

##### **4.1. Results**

##### **Validity and Reliability**

Measurement models were evaluated using loading factors, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Cronbach's alpha, and composite reliability. Validity was assessed based

on loading factors and AVE, while reliability was examined using composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. All loading factors exceeded the 0.70 threshold, with values between 0.40 and 0.70 considered acceptable when internal consistency validity is strong (Hair et al., 2017). Although indicator I5 exhibited a loading factor below 0.70, it was retained due to its AVE value exceeding 0.50, indicating acceptable validity. Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values surpassed the 0.70 criterion, signifying adequate internal consistency. While the interactivity variable's Cronbach's alpha was 0.692, this value is still considered acceptable (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The loading factor and AVE values for all indicators exceeded the 0.50 threshold, confirming overall validity (Table 3).

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity**

	I	E	SP	CT	CPI
I	(0.723)	0.527	0.590	0.480	0.557
E	0.527	(0.891)	0.658	0.538	0.669
SP	0.590	0.658	(0.802)	0.465	0.575
CT	0.480	0.538	0.465	(0.773)	0.576
CPI	0.557	0.669	0.575	0.576	(0.777)

Table 2 shows the correlation between variables and shows whether the variable is valid. Discriminant variables are seen from the square root value of each variable's AVE value (Bahjat et al., 2017). The AVE value can be seen in Table 3. The squared AVE value must be higher than the maximum squared variance (MSV). So based on the results of the discriminant validity test, all variables are declared valid.

**Table 3. Measurement Model**

<b>Variable &amp; Indicator</b>	<b>Loading Factor</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>
Interactivity		0.52	0.813	0.692
I1	0.707			
I3	0.732			
I4	0.797			
I5	0.646			
Entertainment		0.79	0.939	0.913
E1	0.861			
E2	0.882			
E3	0.918			
E4	0.937			
Social Presence		0.64	0.878	0.814
SP1	0.773			
SP2	0.783			
SP3	0.858			
SP4	0.821			
Customer Trust		0.59	0.881	0.831
CT1	0.759			
CT2	0.766			
CT3	0.774			
CT4	0.776			
CT5	0.788			



Customer Purchase Intention			0.883	0.834
CPI1	0.701	0.60		
CPI2	0.844			
CPI3	0.747			
CPI4	0.802			
CPI5	0.781			

**Table 4. Hypothesis and Results**

Hypothesis	Result	Description
H1= Interactivity $\square$ Customer Trust	$\beta= 0,295; \rho<0,001$	H1 accepted
H2 = Entertainment $\square$ Customer Trust	$\beta= 0,337; \rho<0,001$	H2 accepted
H3 = Social Presence $\square$ Customer Trust	$\beta= 0,073; \rho=0,140$	H3 not accepted
H4 = Customer Trust $\square$ Customer Purchase Intention	$\beta= 0,579; \rho<0,001$	H4 accepted

Based on the hypothesis table shown, it can be concluded that the third hypothesis is the only hypothesis that is rejected.

#### **4.2. Discussion**

Based on the Makassar student sample, the findings indicate that interactivity and entertainment significantly enhance customer trust in e-commerce live streaming, while social presence exerts no significant influence. Furthermore, customer trust was found to positively impact purchase intention. This is because interactivity and entertainment can provide a more enjoyable and interactive experience for customers, so they feel a bond of trust with the seller (Xu et al., 2020).

#### **The Effect of Interactivity towards Customer Trust**

The two-way interaction that occurs directly in live streaming is key in building customer trust. This is because customers can judge the seller's credibility through the interaction. In the world of e-commerce, there are many sellers offering the same product. Consequently, fostering customer trust is crucial for sellers to drive product purchases (Meng et al., 2021). The interactive nature of live streaming facilitates direct product inquiries from customers to sellers. This can help customers to assess whether the seller is knowledgeable about the product, and whether the seller is trustworthy (Liu et al., 2022a). The seller can provide product recommendations directly and can show the product directly when the live stream is running. In this case, students in Makassar city can see the product being sold directly and will believe in the seller's shop and indirectly increase their trust in the seller. Two-way interaction in live streaming can positively influence customer trust. This can increase customer purchase intention and encourage repeat purchases.

#### **The Effect of Entertainment towards Customer Trust**

Interaction and entertainment are two complementary factors in live streaming. Interaction allows customers to assess the credibility of the seller, while entertainment can increase customer interest and trust in the seller. Sellers can improve interaction with customers by providing clear information and answering questions in a friendly manner. Good entertainment can make customers feel comfortable and at

home while watching the live stream, so they are more likely to follow the stream and buy the products offered (Lakhan et al., 2021). Sellers can increase interaction in the form of entertainment by holding quizzes or giveaways. Sellers can also increase entertainment by creating interesting and creative content, or by inviting artists or celebrities to promote products. Interesting and creative content can make viewers feel happy and entertained, so they are more likely to follow the live stream. Famous artists or celebrities can increase the number of live streaming viewers and increase customer trust in the seller. Students in Makassar city who are entertained and trust the seller will be more likely to buy the products offered. Based on this explanation, entertainment can also increase customer purchase intention.

### **The Effect of Social Presence towards Customer Trust**

Social presence was shown not to significantly affect customer trust in e-commerce live streaming. This is because social presence only creates the perception that customers are interacting with others, but does not guarantee that the interaction results in trust. Research by Xu et al. (2021) shows that the physical presence factor is more effective than the social presence factor in increasing sales results. Physical presence is a human perception of the physical presence of others while social presence is a human perception of the social presence of others. While social presence in e-commerce live streaming can positively influence purchase intentions, it does not significantly impact customer trust. However, the author still does not find any research that says that social presence does not significantly affect customer trust. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that students in Makassar city are more likely to like physical presence than social presence. This is evident from the results of the research on social presence variables that do not significantly affect customer trust.

### **The Effect of Customer Trust towards Customer Purchase Intention**

Customer trust is the belief that the seller and the products sold are reliable and meet customer expectations. This trust can be built through various factors, such as good interactions between sellers and customers, high product quality, and responsive customer service. Customer trust is an important factor in building long-term relationships between sellers and customers. Customers who want to buy certainly need to trust the seller and the products sold have to meet customer expectations. Building customer trust is pivotal for driving repeat purchases (Wang et al., 2021). Customer trust as a mediator in influencing customer purchase intention can be said to be positive. Sellers who interact and are able to hook customers well will certainly gain customer trust (Wu & Huang, 2023). The trust possessed by customers certainly has a tendency to lead them to buy products from a given seller. Based on this explanation, it can be concluded that trust can affect the purchase intention of STIE Ciputra Makassar students. This is because students in Makassar city are a group of smart and critical consumers. They will be more likely to buy products from sellers they trust.

The results of this study show that e-commerce live streaming can be an effective seller strategy to increase online store sales. Online store sellers who still haven't tried selling using the live streaming feature can think about trying it. This is because it can

have a positive impact on the sales level of their online store. Sellers need to pay attention to several factors in creating customer trust. As in this study, which focuses on interaction and entertainment during live streaming. While social presence may not directly impact customer trust, it remains a significant driver of purchase intention (Ming et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023a). Live streaming platforms offer opportunities for interactive and entertaining experiences, which can indirectly contribute to trust building. To cultivate deeper customer relationships and trust, sellers should prioritize product quality, exceptional customer service, and robust product guarantees.

## **5. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study is:

1. The results showed that social presence is not a factor that increases people's trust when shopping through the live streaming feature. Digital developments in shopping live streaming create new shopping behavior. Interaction and entertainment drive student engagement in live streaming shopping, fostering trust in both products and sellers. It is this sense of trust that increases customer purchase intention in buying products. Therefore, online businesses that have not tried the live streaming feature as one of their strategies can try to do so. When starting to sell using live streaming, it is necessary to have good interactions and sellers need to hold events that can entertain customers. This is done so that customers are interested in buying and want to watch until the live stream ends.
2. This research has limitations with possible information gaps. This is because no similar research was found that discussed the effect of social presence not having a significant effect on customer trust. Further research can be conducted to examine the effect of social presence on customer trust in different contexts, such as product type, customer demographics, or culture. In addition, this study has limitations on the generalizability of the study results due to the sampling design. This study uses data from 215 respondents who are university students and have conducted buying and selling activities using e-commerce live streaming features. Therefore, it is suggested that future research should be expanded to cover a large population. This study requires further research in a wider scope and diverse respondents and from various backgrounds.
3. For example, further research could involve respondents of different ages, genders, occupations, and income levels. Research can also be conducted in various regions in Indonesia, not just in Makassar city. Further research can be conducted longitudinally, that is, by conducting research over a longer period of time. In addition, further research can also examine the influence of other factors that may affect customer purchase intentions in e-commerce live streaming. This follow-up research aims to deepen our understanding of the factors influencing customer purchase intentions within the context of e-commerce live streaming.

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