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What Drives Gen Z to Buy? Unveiling the Role of Relationship Quality, Perceived Value, and Live Streaming Commerce in Developing Countries

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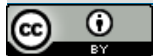
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ABSTRACT

Continuing the pandemic's effect, there has been a notable shift towards online shopping driven by evolving consumer behavior, offering convenience in terms of accessibility, promotions, and direct interaction. Live streaming commerce has seen increased adoption as a result. The study extends the infancy research of live streaming commerce by aiming to develop a conceptual framework that links technological features and customer perceived value with customer relationship quality to influence purchase intentions for fostering economic growth. A total of 403 samples of Indonesian Gen Z were collected through a survey and analyzed using SmartPLS 3. Two main findings emerged. First, technological features significantly influence customers' perceived value (utilitarian, hedonic, social), which directly impacts purchase intention. Second, relationship quality as a mediating variable has a strong and significant impact on customer purchase intention based on the interaction effect of customers' perceived value, emphasizing relationship quality as a pivotal mediating variable. The novelty lies in integrating two exogenous variables, namely technological features and customer perceived value, with the variables of relationship quality and customer purchase intention. The findings provide theoretical and managerial implications for academics and practitioners

INTRODUCTION

The advent of the digital age has reshaped the landscape of global commerce, with mobile devices becoming ubiquitous tools for social interaction and online shopping. Statistics show that approximately 5.5 billion people (68% of the world's population) utilize mobile devices with a significant portion engaging in online shopping, and there has been an 8.3% increase in online purchases from 2022 to 2023, indicative of shifting consumer behavior influenced by the pandemic [1]. Indonesia stands out as a prominent market for e-commerce and social commerce (s-commerce) in Southeast Asia, with approximately 179 million e-commerce users and 191 million active social media users, boasting the second-highest retail purchases conducted online globally with 32%, presenting a lucrative opportunity for businesses [2-3]. However, with the increasing digitalization adoption by Indonesia Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) counting for 83.8%, 70.2% of them face challenges in marketing their products effectively [4], where buying from small sellers without a physical presence carries inherent risks: low-quality, fake, and not receiving the product [5].

To compete in this dynamic market, MSMEs must build trust and satisfaction (relationship quality) among customers [5]. Live streaming commerce presents an opportunity for MSMEs to enhance customer trust through real-time interactions and product demonstrations. Live streaming commerce offers several advantages over traditional e-commerce, including enhanced product presentation, effective transformation of products into tangible entities, mitigating the perceived intangibility of the products for customers, efficient browsing, and a unique shopping experience that captivates viewers in real-time [6]. Moreover, the immersive nature of live streaming commerce often leads to spontaneous purchase intentions without any pre-existing intent to purchase as commonly seen in traditional e-commerce [7], driving immediate sales [8]. This contrasts with the more deliberate and pre-planned nature of e-commerce, where customers typically visit a platform with a pre-existing intention

to shop. Platforms like Shopee and TikTok have witnessed significant adoption of live streaming features, with 69% of Indonesians using Shopee Live with 54% share of revenue, while 25% of Indonesians used TikTok Live with 31% share of revenue, indicating a shift towards more interactive and engaging shopping experiences [9].

Driven by the challenges Indonesian MSMEs face in marketing their products and the rising popularity of live streaming commerce across various platforms, there exists a critical gap in understanding the connection between the technological features of live streaming commerce and consumer behavior [10]. Recent studies by Zheng et al. [26] and Yang et al. [50] have delved into the relationship between m-commerce technological features and consumer behavior, highlighting the need for further exploration. This study examines the impact of these technological features on consumer purchasing behavior through a comprehensive review of existing literature. Prior research has primarily focused on the influence of customer perceived value on purchase intention, revealing a positive correlation between perceived value and purchase behavior [5,8,11-12]. Additionally, the importance of relationship quality as a mediator between perceived value and customer engagement, as well as sustainable intention, has been emphasized [13-14]. Despite these findings, limited research has investigated the role of technological features in shaping purchase intention and the mediation effect of relationship quality within the context of live streaming commerce.

Employing the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework, this study seeks to elucidate how consumer perceived value, stimulated by technological features, influences purchase intention, and further investigate into the relationship quality as the mediator to enhance our understanding. To achieve the objective of this study, the following research questions were posed: (1) How do technological features of live streaming commerce influence customer perceived value? (2) How does customer perceived value influence consumers' purchase intention in live streaming

commerce? (3) Do relationship quality mediate consumers perceived value and purchase intention in live streaming commerce?

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The study employs a quantitative method for primary data collection, utilizing an online questionnaire survey through Google Forms distributed via links on social media channels. The survey conducted from November 1 to 6, 2023, within the Jakarta greater area as central of economy and government of Indonesia, encompassing DKI Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi, Indonesia. The focus was on live streaming commerce, including e-commerce, s-commerce, and SNS platforms such as Shopee, Tokopedia, Lazada, TikTok, and Instagram. Multiple platform inclusion was justified by their comparable shopping features and the connection between s-commerce, social networking sites (SNS), and e-commerce platforms. The study targeted Generation Z consumers, known for their significant impact on global sales and high impulsive buying tendencies. A non-probability sampling procedure, specifically purposive sampling, was employed. Criteria included (1) individuals using or adopting social media and e-commerce; and (2) individuals with live streaming commerce experience on specific platforms.

The questionnaire consists of 4 parts: the 1st part contains the cover letter about the survey; 2nd part contains the pre-screening questions to ensure the eligibility of the sample, experiencing live streaming commerce on the specific platform; 3rd part comprised demographics of the respondents, including the respondent's age, gender, education level, and income; lastly the 4th part covers all of the queries listed. The study employs the inverse square root method for determining the minimum sample size, counting for 155 samples required. With 427 responses received, we obtained 403 usable responses. We had to drop 24 participants during the data selection process because some of them did not engage in social media and e-commerce shopping

activities, and some did not shop via live streaming commerce. Among the 403 Gen Z participants (18-17 years old), 119 (29.50%) were male, and 284 (70.50%) were female. 71.50% of the participants (288) are senior students with 58.30% of the participants having personal income less than IDR 500,000 per month. The demographic of respondents is shown in Table 2. The data analysis will involve reliability and validity tests and t-tests using SmartPLS 3.2.9.

Measures

The questionnaire's list of questions is adapted from previous research to meet the research objective and measured using a five-point (5pt) Likert scale on every 31 queries (see Table 1). Portability was measured using three items from Okazaki and Mendez [60]. Visual Appeal was measured using three items adapted from Parboteeah et al. [61]. Perceived value, including utilitarian and hedonic, was measured using four and five items adopted from Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut [5]. Perceived social value were measured using six items adopted from Ma [11]. Relationship quality was measured using six items adopted from Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut [5] and Wibowo et al. [48]. Purchase intention was measured using three items adopted from Ma [11].

The questionnaire was translated into Bahasa Indonesia, employing the translation-back-translation method to ensure accuracy and consistency with the original English version. Five target subjects reviewed the questionnaire for comprehension, and revisions were made for readability. Subsequently, a pre-test involving 15 subjects validated the questionnaire's quality and response outcomes, with example verification conducted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study adopted the partial least squares (PLS) method for data analysis. A two-step approach was conducted: confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to assess reliability and validity, and structural equation model analysis to empirically test the research hypothesis.

Outer Model Verification

To validate the construct in the outer model, several analyses were used of reliability analysis, where the benchmark used was that the constructed value must be more than 0.7, then convergent validity was used to measure it using the benchmarks from the AVE value, higher than 0.5 [62]. Next, discriminant validity can be found by a latent variable's average variance extracted (AVE) exceeds the squared correlations between the latent variables [63]. Tables 3 and 4 show the details regarding the results of the outer model values. The results show that they meet the specified standard.

Inner Model Verification

During the process of assessing the outcomes of the proposed hypotheses, the methodology employed relies on the Path coefficient benchmark derived from the t-value, which is calculated using bootstrapping. A proposed hypothesis is deemed acceptable if the t-value exceeds 1.96 [64].

The results of the structural path analysis are presented in Table 5 and Figure 2. The structural model suggests that portability ($\beta= 0.251, p < 0.001$) is positively related to perceived utilitarian value (H1 is supported). Portability ($\beta= 0.341, p < 0.001$) is positively related to perceived hedonic value (H2 is supported). Portability ($\beta= 0.243, p < 0.001$) is

positively related to perceived social value (H3 is supported). Visual appeal ($\beta= 0.569, p < 0.001$) is positively related to perceived utilitarian value (H4 is supported). Visual appeal ($\beta= 0.470, p < 0.001$) is positively related to perceived hedonic value (H5 is supported). Visual appeal ($\beta= 0.515, p < 0.001$) is positively related to perceived social value (H6 is supported). Perceived utilitarian value ($\beta= 0.366, p < 0.001$) is positively related to relationship quality (H7 is supported). Perceived hedonic value ($\beta= 0.320, p < 0.001$) is positively related to relationship quality (H8 is supported). Perceived social value ($\beta= 0.243, p < 0.001$) is positively related to relationship quality (H9 is supported). Relationship quality ($\beta= 0.715, p < 0.001$) is positively related to purchase intention (H10 is supported).

Mediation Effects Verification

The study conducted a validation test on the mediation effect using path analysis as the benchmark. This analysis measures the indirect impact and significance of variable x on variable y. Table 6 presents the t-values, which determine whether these variables have an indirect impact. If the t-value on the mediator variable exceeds 1.96 [64], it indicates significance. The results of indirect/mediating effects support the presence of indirect impact between variables.

Table 1. Questionnaire Measurement Items

Questionnaire Measurement Items	
Portability; source: [60]	
Por1	Watching live streaming commerce is easy because i can watch them wherever i am.
Por2	I can watch live streaming whenever i want.
Por3	Watching live streaming using mobile data is convenient because it makes me independent of places.
Visual appeal; source: [61]	
Vap1	By watching live streaming commerce, i saw the product displayed as appealing.
Vap2	The product displays were in pleasing color tones in the live streaming commerce i watched.
Vap3	Most live streaming shows a visible layout of products.
Perceived utilitarian value; source: [5]	
Puv1	Products sold through live streaming commerce appear to be authentic.
Puv2	Via live streaming commerce, the online seller answers my questions immediately.

Puv3	A live streaming commerce feature would make it easier for me to understand the product displayed.
Puv4	How a product is presented on live streaming commerce gives me as much sensory information about the product as i would experience in a store.
Perceived hedonic value; source: [5]	
Phv1	Shopping through live streaming commerce is entertaining.
Phv2	I can do much projecting of the product (fantasizing) while watching live streaming commerce.
Phv3	Shopping through live streaming commerce is a way of relieving stress.
Phv4	Shopping via live streaming commerce is a thrill for me.
Phv5	Activities (e.g., flash sales, freebies) on live streaming commerce excite me.
Phv6	I enjoy getting a great deal when i shop via live streaming commerce.
Perceived social value; source: [11]	
Psv1	The live streaming commerce feature provides me with opportunities to communicate with sellers.
Psv2	The live streaming commerce feature allows me to communicate with other viewers.
Psv3	The live streaming commerce feature commerce enables me to feel part of the community.
Psv4	I like it when other live streaming viewers interact with me.
Psv5	I feel good when other live streaming viewers agree with my comment.
Psv6	When using live stream commerce, i am virtually in a real presence.
Relationship quality; source: [5,48]	
Rq1	I believe in the information that the seller provides through live streaming commerce.
Rq2	I can trust sellers that use live streaming commerce.
Rq3	The product i receive will be as imagined when demonstrated on live streaming commerce.
Rq4	I am pleased with the experience of buying products from live streaming commerce.
Rq5	Overall, i am satisfied with the online shops on live streaming commerce.
Rq6	I am satisfied with the experience of watching the product presented on live streaming commerce.
Purchase intention; source: [11]	
Pi1	I recommend live stream commerce to friends.
Pi2	Live streaming commerce will be my preferred mode of shopping in the future.
Pi3	I plan to use live streaming commerce frequently in the future.

Table 2. Demographic of Respondents

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age		
Generation Z (18-27 years old)	403	100%
Gender		
Male	119	29.50%
Female	284	70.50%
Education Level		
Senior High	288	71.50%
Junior College	55	13.60%
Bachelor	57	14.10%
Master's degree	3	0.70%

Personal income in IDR (monthly)		
Less than IDR 500.000	235	58.30%
IDR 500.000-Rp.1.000.000	76	18.90%
IDR 1.000.001-Rp.2.500.00	25	6.20%
IDR 2.500.001-Rp.4.000.000	17	4.20%
Above IDR 4.000.000	50	12.40%

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigates the factors influencing consumer purchase intention in live streaming commerce, drawing upon the SOR framework and consumer perceived value. The study examines the impact of technological stimuli, namely portability and visual appeal, on consumers' perceptions, both cognitive and affective, and their subsequent behaviors [26,50, 60]. Specifically, the study finds that the portability and visual appeal of live streaming commerce significantly shape consumers' perceived value (PUV, PHV, and PSV). These findings are consistent with previous studies [26, 50]. Then, customer perceived values (PUV, PHV, and PSV) were combined with relationship quality as the influencing factors of customer behavior (purchase intention) on live streaming commerce, aligning with previous research [13, 48]. Good perceived value and good technology features depend on what kind of content is provided on live streaming by the seller. The noteworthy findings have been proficiently ascertained after the comprehensive analysis, both for academics and practitioners.

Theoretical Implication

This study has significant implications for existing research in several ways. Firstly, the study proposes a comprehensive framework that incorporates intrinsic features of mobile devices, such as portability and visual appeal, to assess their impact on consumer purchase intention in live streaming commerce. While previous studies have shown that mobile devices influence impulse buying behavior (IBB) in m-commerce, there is limited research on this phenomenon in the context of live streaming commerce. Secondly, the framework extends previous research by assessing multiple dimensions of value and trust. It confirms that

utilitarian/hedonic value is associated with trust in products, while symbolic value is associated with trust in sellers. By proposing multidimensional perceived value (PUV, PHV, and PSV) and examining their relationship with relationship quality (RQ) in live streaming commerce, this study provides insights into how perceived value influences purchase intention, particularly when relationship quality is high.

Managerial Implication

The study shows that the portability and visual appeal of mobile devices affect customer purchase intention in live streaming commerce through perceived value and relationship quality. These results yield several practical suggestions for practitioners and marketers to attract new customers and retain live streaming commerce customers to this shopping mode.

First, the study finds that mobile devices in live streaming commerce positively influence purchasing decisions through perceived value and relationship quality. Therefore, sellers should consider adopting live streaming commerce to enhance sales performance. They can leverage features like portability and visual appeal to offer real-time information and facilitate on-the-go purchases, providing a seamless shopping experience. Real-time interaction during live streams enhances communication and contributes to consumers' perception of social value, increasing accuracy and satisfaction. Interactive engagement by acknowledging viewers and providing personalized recommendations enhances the live stream experience.

Second, sellers should focus on designing attractive presentations to enhance consumers' perceived value. One effective strategy is to incorporate live streaming features showcasing

visually appealing products, which can help alleviate consumer distrust caused by information asymmetry. These features allow sellers to demonstrate product quality and authenticity, reducing skepticism. High-quality equipment enhances video production, enabling customers to visualize products clearly. Entertaining activities related to products can maintain customer engagement, such as product demonstration shows or incentives like discounts. Additionally, sellers should carefully select fonts, colors, and graphics for the live stream interface to create a visually appealing presentation, fostering a perception of authenticity and enhancing the overall social presence experienced by customers.

Third, the study highlights the significant impact of relationship quality on customer purchase intention. It shows that relationship quality mediates the link between perceived value and purchase intention. Sellers can enhance consumer trust and satisfaction by focusing on relationship quality, which boosts purchase intention. For instance, they can ensure transparent interactions, positive experiences, and create a supportive environment for repeat business. Relationship quality plays a crucial role in building positive connections between consumers and brands, reducing the chance of choosing competing products.

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