


An Exploratory Study on Consumer Purchase Behavior From Live Webcasting E-Commerce: A Means-End Chain Analysis Using Facebook Live Webcasting

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ABSTRACT

Facebook Live has become an important resource for both marketers and online shoppers. It has provided communication opportunities for businesses and changed the habits of consumers. This study adopted the means-end chain (MEC) model and used the laddering method to conduct one-on-one in-depth interviews with 40 Facebook users who have used Facebook Live demonstrations to make buying decisions. The overall hierarchical structure of MEC allowed linking of product attributes, consumption consequences, and final value perceptions to draw a hierarchical value map (HVM). The research results show that affordable prices and fulfilling daily needs are the most important product attributes that customers consider. The live webcast demonstrations generated purchase intention and consumption. The ultimate values to which the participants in this study attached the highest importance were “perception of joy,” “perception of satisfaction,” and “perception of value.” Recommendations are provided for businesses using live webcasting as part of their e-commerce programs.

KEYWORDS

Content Marketing, E-Commerce, Facebook, Internet, Live Video, Means-End Chain, Purchase Behavior, Social Media, Streaming Video, Webcasts

1. INTRODUCTION

Live webcast video has become common in today’s internet environment, and it is of growing importance as part of the content marketing strategy of businesses advertising and promotion via the internet. Content marketing means providing quality content to customers and prospects that goes beyond the simple goal of selling products by creating a bond between the business and the audience. Such content builds credibility and trust, establishes the company brand as a leader in the industry, and builds loyalty to turn customers and prospects into fans and advocates (Bullas, N.D. a).

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One category of content marketing that has taken on growing importance to marketers is live streaming video, or webcasting. Live webcasting is the use of video streaming technology to provide valuable content to customers and prospects (Ma & Mei, 2019). The most significant difference between live webcasting and traditional television or pre-recorded online video is interactivity. Live webcasting enables viewers to provide instant replies, endowing them with a sense of participation. In addition to interactivity, live webcasts fulfill the content marketing goals of building credibility and loyalty among viewers, in a way that is inexpensive, convenient, including in online marketing, daily meetings, and live broadcast of activities.

The Livestream website conducted a survey with New York Magazine, gaining over 1,000 responses, and found that the three top platforms for live video were YouTube (70%), Facebook Live (66%), and Livestream (45%) (Livestream, 2018). But although the professional press contains countless articles about using live video webcasting for content marketing, little attention has been paid in the academic literature to using live video for marketing communication. As a result, there is little peer-reviewed information available about how consumers respond to live video webcasting from businesses, and how well it actually leverages purchases.

As a result, the authors determined that the academic literature would benefit from a scholarly study of the purchasing demands and motivation resulting from live video business webcasting as part of a marketing communications plan.

The researchers chose means-end theory as a framework for understanding the hierarchy of beliefs that guide the consumer's actions and judgements (Gengler & Reynolds, 1995; Grunert et al., 1995; Woodruff & Gardial, 1996). The researchers also choose Facebook Live as its platform for data collection, because is it particularly popular in Taiwan, the site of this study.

The following open research questions guided this study:

1. What are the attributes considered by consumers using live webcasts to decide whether to purchase a product?
2. What are the consequences experienced by consumers using live webcasts to decide whether to purchase a product?
3. What are the value judgements about outcomes made by consumers as a result of using live webcasts to purchase and use a product?

1.1 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it fills a gap in the academic literature about how purchasing demand and Facebook Live use by the consumer affects the way they ultimately assign value. Previous studies have focused on social commerce and live webcasting separately. This study combines these two themes and conducts in-depth interviews with users of Facebook Live based on Means-End Chain theory to understand the consumers' purpose in making their purchases and how they value Facebook Live. The study also provides recommendations for enterprises as they to develop both soft and hard physical facilities and sales channels in the future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Global internet traffic from videos will make up 82% of all consumer video traffic in 2020 and live internet video will grow by 15-fold from 2017 to 2022 (Cisco, 2018). Facebook users spend at least three times more time watching live video compared to videos that are not live (Savage, 2016).

Initially, live online videos were dominated by video games, which not only allowed the audience to watch the tactics of professional-level netizens and unique secret skills of well-known game experts, but enabled players in different places to interact with each other (MIC, 2017). Now, however, the content of internet video is all-encompassing. Live online video includes entertainment viewing (66.5%), sports competitions (25.5%), news (21.2%), and shopping (10.9%) (TWNIC, 2017).

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