

Dynamic Platforms and Strategic Interactions: Traffic Acquisition Strategies Through Short Videos in Live Streaming Commerce

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ABSTRACT

Live streaming commerce, integrating real-time interaction with online retailing, is reshaping consumer behavior. While prior studies have focused on sales drivers, how to attract viewers remains underexplored. This study fills this gap by analyzing how short videos drive traffic acquisition in live streaming commerce, using a large Douyin dataset and OLS regressions with multiple robustness checks. Results show that sociability (likes, comments) and demographic match between streamers and viewers (gender, geography) enhance traffic acquisition, whereas commercialization through sponsored ads weakens it. The interval between video release and live streaming shows an inverted U-shaped effect on traffic acquisition. Moreover, streamer influence dampens the positive effects of sociability and matching, while production input mitigates the negative impact of commercialization. This study advances research on short video marketing and live streaming commerce and offers guidance for global digital commerce participants to optimize short video strategies for greater engagement and value.

KEYWORDS

Short Video, Live Streaming Commerce, Traffic Acquisition, Sociability, Sponsored Ad, Streamer-Viewer Match

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INTRODUCTION

Live streaming commerce has rapidly emerged from the intersection of live streaming technologies and the evolution of e-commerce, allowing sellers to showcase, explain, and promote products in real time (H. Chen et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2023). By integrating dynamic demonstrations and immediate interactions, this business model surpasses traditional e-commerce's reliance on static images and text, facilitating personalized shopping experiences and reinforcing trust between sellers and buyers (Gu et al., 2023; Lo et al., 2022). Recent market data further underscore its rapid rise as a new commercial model within the global e-commerce landscape. In China, the user base has reached 816 million, with 597 million engaging specifically in live streaming commerce, driving a market size of 4.9 trillion yuan in 2023 (China Internet Network Information Center, 2024; iResearch Services, 2024). An industry report by Statista (2022) projects the U.S. market, despite starting later than China's, to expand to \$55 billion by 2026. Collectively, these trends not only demonstrate the rapid commercial rise of live streaming commerce but also establish it as a pivotal setting for examining global digital engagement, transmedia information flows, and technology-enabled value co-creation across diverse markets.

In light of these developments, an increasing body of literature has explored how to utilize the distinctive advantages of live streaming commerce as an emerging marketing channel to enhance sales performance (Liu et al., 2023; Xiong et al., 2024). These studies have highlighted that strategies such as building trust, offering interactive experiences, and providing personalized recommendations are effective in promoting consumer purchase decisions (Q. Yang et al., 2023; M. Zhang et al., 2022). However, there exists a notable scarcity of in-depth discussion of the initial and crucial step for the success of live streaming commerce—how to attract viewers to the live streaming session. High viewership not only boosts the potential buyer base but also enhances engagement, serving as a crucial catalyst for marketing products, building streamer influence, and stimulating revenue (W. Zhang et al., 2022). While a few studies have underscored the importance of high traffic for successful live streaming commerce (W. Zhang et al., 2022), there remains a notable absence of systematic research in the current literature on developing practical and effective tools for traffic acquisition.

Currently, live streaming commerce platforms exhibit considerable diversity, ranging from traditional e-commerce leaders such as Taobao and Jingdong to social media-based short video platforms like TikTok, YouTube, and Kuaishou (Lu & Chen, 2021; Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). These platforms enable streamers to attract viewers through integrated short video channels, where they act not only as live presenters but also as content creators. Short videos can quickly capture viewers' attention and sustain their interest in the streamer and upcoming live sessions through effective information delivery. As scalable and content-based promotional tools, they transcend live streaming's temporal limitations and have become a prevalent means of driving traffic in the industry (Mousavi et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). Despite their recognized importance, systematic evidence on what makes short video strategies effective for attracting viewers remains limited. This study therefore aimed to fill this gap by empirically examining how short video attributes and target viewer characteristics influence the efficiency of traffic acquisition in live streaming commerce, offering a comprehensive understanding of how streamers can optimize short video campaigns to enhance viewer attraction (Y. Cheng et al., 2023).

Short video platforms are integral to today's digital social ecosystem, offering users a highly interactive environment that fosters sociability and broadens content reach through likes, comments, and sharing (Zhang et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2019). At the same time, these platforms also serve as a key commercial arena: while sponsored short videos enable direct monetization for creators, excessive commercialization risks alienating viewers (Banerjee & Pal, 2023). Balancing overt advertising with subtler traffic acquisition tactics is thus pivotal for sustaining viewer engagement and maximizing commercial value. Moreover, viewer attributes—particularly how closely they match the streamer—further influence traffic acquisition effectiveness, as individuals tend to align with

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