

TRANSFORMING DIGITAL CONSUMPTION VIA LIVE STREAMING COMMERCE: PRODUCT INFORMATION QUALITY AND PLATFORM SERVICE QUALITY, PERCEIVED VALUE, TRUST AND PURCHASE INTENTION IN CHINA'S HOME FITNESS EQUIPMENT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT:

Live streaming commerce is reshaping digital consumption in China and has become especially salient in the fast-growing home fitness equipment sector. Focusing on home fitness equipment, this study investigates how product information quality and platform service quality drive purchase intention through the mediating roles of perceived value and trust. Grounded in the Stimulus-Organism-Response (S-O-R) framework and informed by Media Richness Theory and the Engel-Kollat-Blackwell (EKB) consumer decision model, we analyze cross-sectional survey data from 554 Chinese fitness enthusiasts using structural equation modeling (SEM). Results show that both product information quality and platform service quality significantly enhance trust and purchase intention, while product information quality also exerts a strong positive effect on perceived value. Moreover, perceived value and trust serve as significant pathways linking these livestreaming factors to purchase intention, supporting their mediating roles. The study advances theory by integrating S-O-R with media richness and EKB perspectives in a durable-goods livestreaming context, and it highlights how richer information and dependable services foster more informed, responsible, and sustainable consumer choices. Managerially, the findings recommend investing in rich, accurate, and clear product demonstrations and in reliable, responsive platform services to build trust, enhance perceived value and convert viewers into buyers.

Keywords: Live Streaming Commerce; Home Fitness Equipment; Product Information Quality; Platform Service Quality; Perceived Value; Trust; Purchase Intention;

I. INTRODUCTION

Live streaming commerce (LSC) has rapidly transformed digital consumption by fusing synchronous video, real-time interaction, and instant checkout into one immersive retail experience ^{[1][2]}. Unlike conventional e-commerce, where product pages rely on static images and text, LSC allows dynamic demonstrations, two-way Q&A, and socially embedded persuasion that together reduce information asymmetry and heighten perceived presence^{[3][4]}. China has been the epicenter of this transformation, with livestreams hosted on platforms such as Douyin, Taobao Live, and JD Live becoming daily shopping destinations.

Yet, for high-involvement, utilitarian categories—such as home fitness equipment—conversion remains challenging because consumers must process complex specifications, evaluate long-term value, and trust claims about performance, safety, installation, and after-sales service. While prior research on LSC has examined host credibility, interactivity, and social entertainment effects, the literature has been comparatively quieter on the dual roles of information and service quality in the high-involvement domain.

To address this issue, this study focuses on two central antecedents that are highly actionable for managers and measurable for researchers—Product Information Quality (PIQ) and Platform Service Quality (PSQ)—and examines their effects on Perceived Value (PV) and Trust (TU) leading to Purchase Intention (PI) in the LSC of home fitness equipment.

Theoretically, we use the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework. We conceptualize PIQ and PSQ as stimuli that influence internal organismic states—PV and TR—which in turn drive the response, PI^{[5]–[8]}. Because high-involvement decisions typically activate central-route processing per the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), we expect diagnostic information and credible service assurances to outweigh purely hedonic cues in determining intention^[9]. Media Richness Theory (MRT) further suggests that livestreaming’s multimodal, synchronous channel should enhance message diagnosticity, improving value inferences and trust formation when informational and service cues are strong^[10]. Therefore, this study addresses five research questions. By doing so, it integrates multiple theoretical perspectives and extends understanding of consumer decision-making in home fitness equipment e-commerce.

This study addresses five research questions:

1. To what extent do streamer credibility, product information quality and platform service quality influence perceived value and trust in home fitness equipment live streaming marketing?
2. To what extent do these same factors influence trust in home fitness equipment live streaming marketing?
3. Do product information quality, platform service quality, perceived value and trust influence purchase intention in home fitness equipment live streaming marketing?
4. Do perceived value mediate the relationship between product information quality and platform service quality and purchase intention?
5. Do trust mediate the relationship between product information quality platform and service quality and purchase intention?

Based on theories and literature review, this study build a research model to solve the questions, as shown in the following figure:

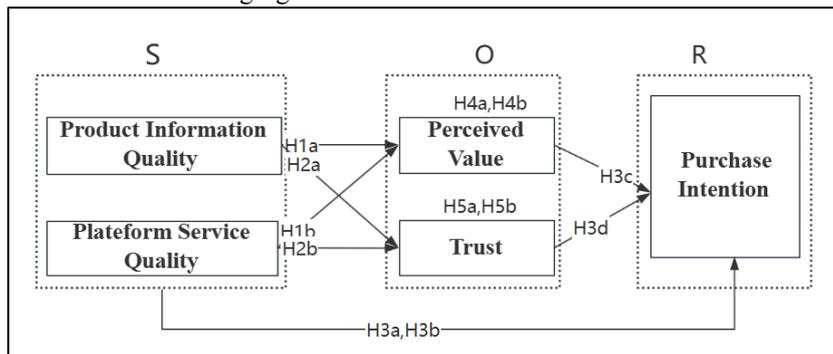


Figure 1: Research Model

The research model is based on S–O–R theory, and include 12 hypothesis, which show the influence of product information quality and platform service quality on purchase intention and the mediating role of perceived value and trust.

This paper makes three contributions. First, it extends LSC research to high-involvement, performance-sensitive products, moving beyond the entertainment-dominant narrative. Second, it clarifies how PIQ and PSQ operate through PV and TU to shape PI, offering an integrated cognitive-relational mechanism under S–O–R. Third, it provides managers with concrete levers—improving technical detail, clarity, accuracy, delivery/returns transparency, and after-sales responsiveness—to increase conversion in livestream channels for home fitness equipment.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Live Streaming Commerce (LSC) fuses synchronous video demonstration, real-time interaction, and in-stream checkout, creating a high-richness environment where platform and content cues act as stimuli that shape internal evaluations (organism: perceived value, trust) and, in turn, responses (e.g., purchase intention)^[11]. The Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, initially proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), provides a useful lens for examining how environmental stimuli in live streaming commerce affect consumers’ internal psychological states and subsequent behavioral intentions. In this model, marketing stimuli such as product information quality and platform service quality serve as external stimuli (S) that influence internal organismic states (O)—including trust and perceived value—which then lead to responses (R) such as purchase intention or loyalty^{[12], [13]}.

Recent studies have applied the S–O–R paradigm to digital commerce and confirmed its explanatory power in live-streaming contexts. For high-involvement products such as home fitness equipment, the S–O–R framework helps explain how informational and relational stimuli influence decision-making. Rich product demonstrations, expert explanations, and reliable after-sales assurances enhance both perceived diagnosticity and trust, thereby increasing perceived value and purchase intention^[14].

In the context of live-streaming e-commerce, Product Information Quality (PIQ) refers to the overall excellence of real-time information regarding the features, performance, and attributes of home fitness equipment. Because consumers cannot physically experience products, high-quality information becomes a crucial bridge connecting products with trust and purchase intention^{[15][16]}. PIQ is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct including completeness, accuracy, vividness, and clarity^[17]. In traditional online shopping, information asymmetry limits consumers' ability to evaluate product quality^[15], but detailed and accurate information can reduce perceived risk and enhance trust^{[16][18]}. In live streaming, vividness and interactivity—such as multi-angle demonstrations or real-time Q&A—strengthen perceived value and authenticity^{[19][20][21]}. When information is clear, rich, and immersive, consumers feel as if they experience the product firsthand, increasing both functional and emotional value. Therefore, PIQ acts as a key stimulus within the S-O-R framework, shaping perceived value and trust that ultimately drive purchase intention for high-involvement products like home fitness equipment. In live-streaming e-commerce, Platform Service Quality (PSQ) plays a pivotal role in shaping consumers' online shopping experiences and purchase decisions. The platform functions not only as a transactional medium but also as a service provider that ensures the reliability and smoothness of the entire process. First, PSQ has a significant impact on perceived value. Consumers' evaluations of platform reliability, customer service responsiveness, delivery efficiency, and data privacy protection directly influence their overall perception of shopping value^[24]. Second, PSQ is a critical determinant of consumer trust. In e-commerce environments, website service quality—including page design, information accuracy, customer support, fulfillment, and privacy protection—has been identified as a major factor influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty^[22]. Finally, PSQ influences purchase intention both directly and indirectly through perceived value and trust^[25]. When buying large fitness equipment such as treadmills, consumers are more likely to choose platforms offering free home installation and comprehensive after-sales service, as these commitments reduce perceived risks and build confidence in the transaction. Research also indicates that different dimensions of service quality exert varying effects across online markets^[23]. Therefore, PSQ not only enhances perceived value and trust but also serves as a cornerstone for customer satisfaction and a key driver of purchase behavior in the live-streaming commerce context.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to empirically examine how product information quality and platform service quality influence perceived value, trust, and purchase intention in the context of China's live streaming commerce (LSC) for home fitness equipment. Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is well-suited for testing complex theoretical models involving mediating variables and latent constructs measured through multiple indicators. The target population comprised Chinese fitness enthusiasts who had watched at least one live streaming session promoting home fitness equipment such as treadmills, rowing machines, or multifunctional strength trainers. Purposive-snowball sampling across Douyin, Taobao Live, JD Live, keep and social medias platforms. Data were collected via an online self-administered questionnaire distributed using the Questionnaire Star platform, a leading survey tool in China. Before formal distribution, a pilot test ($n = 167$) was conducted to refine wording, improve item clarity, and verify scale reliability. The pilot achieved Cronbach's α values above 0.70 for all constructs, confirming internal consistency. To reduce common method variance (CMV), several procedural remedies were implemented, including anonymity assurance, randomization of item order, and separation of constructs within the questionnaire. Post-hoc statistical checks, such as Harman's single-factor test and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) analysis, confirmed that CMV and multicollinearity were not problematic (all $VIF < 3.0$).

Product Information Quality (PIQ) scale adapted from Tian et al.^[26] and Ho^[27], five items capturing two-way engagement (e.g., "The streamer responds promptly to viewers' questions"). Platform Service Quality (PSQ) scale adapted from Ho^[27], seven items are included to measure this construct (e.g., "Even if many customers enter the live room at the same time, there will be no delays or errors"). Perceived Value (PV): adapted from Niu et al.^[28], five items evaluating overall value (e.g., "The product I would buy would meet my usage needs."). Trust (TU): adapted from Niu et al.^[28] and Wu & Huang^[29], 5 items measuring trust in the streamer (e.g., "I believe the products are backed by a comprehensive after-sales guarantee."). Purchase Intention (PI): adapted from Ma et al.^[30], 3 items capturing purchase willingness (e.g., "I intended to purchase products from this live streaming studio"). Procedural remedies (anonymity, randomization) and post-hoc checks indicated that common method variance was unlikely to bias estimates. VIFs suggested no multicollinearity concerns.

IV. RESULTS

A. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

A total of 554 valid responses were analysed. The demographic profile of the sample reflects the diversity of Chinese fitness enthusiasts engaged in live streaming purchases of home fitness equipment. As shown in Table 1, the majority of respondents were young adults, with a male-skewed gender distribution and varying levels of education and income.

TABLE 1. DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS (N = 554)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	371	66.97%
	Female	183	33.03%
Age Group	Below 20 years	88	15.88%
	21–30 years	300	54.15%
	31–40 years	104	18.77%
	40-50 years	34	6.14%
	Above 50 years	28	5.05%
Education Level	High school or below	68	12.27%
	Bachelor’s degree	98	17.69%
	Master’s degree or above	264	47.65%
	High school or below	124	22.38%
Occupation	Students	89	16.06%
	Company employees	268	48.38%
	Company managers	26	4.69%
	Public institution staff	10	1.81%
	Self-employed individuals	25	4.51%
	Freelancers	65	11.73%
	General workers	62	11.19%
	Other	9	1.62%
Average monthly income	Below 2000	23	4.15%
	2001-4000 RMB	16	2.89%
	4001-6000 RMB	35	6.32%
	6001-8000 RMB	168	30.32%
	8001-10000 RMB	217	39.17%
	Above 10000 RMB	95	17.15%
Live streaming e-commerce platforms frequently watching	Taobao	127	22.92%
	Jingdong	117	21.12%
	Keep	115	20.76%
	TikTok	100	18.05%
	Xiaohongshu	40	7.22%
	Pinduoduo	19	3.43%
	Other	36	6.50%
Purpose for watching live streaming of home fitness equipment	Have a clear need to purchase fitness products	395	71.30%
	Unintentionally saw a discount on a fitness product livestream	336	60.65%
	Want to experience the athletic atmosphere and feel involved	325	58.66%
	Save time selecting fitness products	344	62.09%
	Curious about fitness product livestreams	336	60.65%
	Like a particular fitness product brand	347	62.64%
	Learn more about fitness products	326	58.84%
	Other	182	32.85%
Frequency of viewing per week	2 times or less	55	9.93%

	2-4 times	211	38.09%
	5-7 times	195	35.20%
	7 times or more	93	16.79%
Purchasing product while watching a live streaming of home fitness equipment	Frequently purchased	364	65.70%
	Occasionally purchased	174	31.41%
	Never purchased, but will purchase in the future	10	1.81%
	Never purchased, will not purchase in the future	6	1.08%
Total		554	100.00%

The sample is male-skewed (66.97% male; 33.03% female). Nearly half hold a master’s degree or above (47.65%), with a further 17.69% bachelor’s—indicating a generally well-educated cohort. Most respondents report >6,000 RMB/month (86.64%)—30.32% at 6,001–8,000; 39.17% at 8,001–10,000; and 17.15% above 10,000—signaling strong purchasing power. Usage is diversified across Taobao (22.92%), JD (21.12%), Keep (20.76%), and TikTok/Douyin (18.05%), with no single platform dominating. For viewing frequency, 73.29% watch 2-7 times per week, and 16.79% watch 7+ times, evidencing high engagement. Besides, 97.11% have purchased at least occasionally during livestreams and 65.70% report frequent purchases—implying strong conversion among viewers. Top motivations cluster around goal-driven and efficiency-seeking behaviors: a clear need to purchase (71.30%), liking a particular brand (62.64%), saving time selecting products (62.09%), plus curiosity and discounts (~60%). Therefor, the demographic profile is young, educated, higher-income, and digitally active, with frequent live stream exposure and high purchase conversion—a highly relevant segment for examining live stream marketing of home fitness equipment.

B. Hypothesis Testing Results

Focusing on the predictors (PIQ and PSQ), the paths to PV and TU are positive and significant, and both mediators significantly predict PI. Direct paths from PIQ and PSQ to PI remain significant, indicating partial mediation. The result is shown in table2.

Table 2. Structural Equation Modeling results

Path	β	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
PV <--- PIQ	0.120	0.070	2.806	0.005	Supported
PV <--- PSQ	0.226	0.079	5.160	***	Supported
TU <--- PIQ	0.134	0.038	3.129	0.002	Supported
TU <--- PSQ	0.255	0.044	5.686	***	Supported
PI <--- PV	0.132	0.040	3.114	0.002	Supported
PI <--- TU	0.136	0.075	3.137	0.002	Supported
PI <--- PIQ	0.166	0.062	4.147	***	Supported
PI <--- PSQ	0.128	0.072	3.030	0.002	Supported

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, Model fit indices: $\chi^2/df = 1.271$; GFI= 0.916; RMSEA = 0.022; CFI = 0.983; NFI= 0.925; AGFI=0All reported paths are statistically significant ($p \leq .01$). These results indicate strong explanatory power and confirm that product and service-related cues in livestream commerce significantly shape cognitive (PV) and affective (TU) responses that drive consumer purchase intention for high-involvement products.

To test the mediation effect, the bootstrapping method with 5000 samples was employed. The mediating result is shown in table 3.

Table 3. Mediation Test Results

Path	Parameter	Estimate	95%CI	P	Result
PIQ→PV→PI	Direct Effect	0.187	[0.096, 0.275]	0.000	Supported
	Indirect Effect	0.018	[0.005,0.042]	0.004	Supported
	Total Effect	0.205	[0.113,0.294]	0.000	Supported
PSQ→PV→PI	Direct Effect	0.132	[0.042,0.212]	0.004	Supported
	Indirect Effect	0.006	[-0.007,0.025]	0.318	Supported
	Total Effect	0.138	[0.047,0.219]	0.003	Supported
PIQ→TU→PI	Direct Effect	0.187	[0.096,0.275]	0.000	Supported

	Indirect Effect	0.017	[0.004,0.040]	0.005	Supported
	Total Effect	0.204	[0.115,0.291]	0.000	Supported
PSQ→TU→PI	Direct Effect	0.132	[0.042,0.212]	0.004	Supported
	Indirect Effect	0.023	[0.006,0.050]	0.007	Supported
	Total Effect	0.155	[0.064,0.237]	0.001	Supported

Regarding the mediating role of trust (TU), PIQ and PSQ showed significant direct and indirect effects through TU, with total effects of 0.204 and 0.155 respectively, indicating that trust partially mediates their impact on purchase intention.

V. DISCUSSION

A. Theoretical and Practical Implications

At the theoretical level, this study integrates multiple theoretical perspectives—including the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) model, Perceived Value Theory, Consumer Trust Theory, Media Richness Theory, and the Engel–Kollat–Blackwell (EKB) consumer decision-making model—to construct a refined and comprehensive analytical framework tailored to the context of China’s live streaming commerce for home fitness equipment. The findings not only enrich the literature on live streaming marketing for high-involvement products but also provide actionable strategic insights for platform operators, home fitness equipment brands, and livestream marketing practitioners, helping them gain competitive advantages in an increasingly dynamic market.

For Live Streaming Platform Operators: Building a Trust Ecosystem and Optimizing Service Experience. Platforms should prioritize the enhancement of their core service capabilities to foster consumer trust and strengthen perceived value. First, invest in advanced live streaming technology infrastructure to ensure smooth and stable broadcasts, secure payment systems, and minimal technical disruptions. For instance, adopting load-balancing technologies and multi-backup mechanisms can help handle unexpected traffic surges effectively. Then, establish a professional multi-channel customer service system—covering in-stream instant chat, in-app support, and hotline services—supplemented by AI-based intelligent assistance to provide timely, effective, and personalized responses. For issues specific to home fitness equipment (such as installation or calibration), technical support teams with professional expertise should be available. What’s more, collaborate closely with professional third-party logistics companies specializing in large-scale items to deliver efficient, accurate, and safe shipping services. Offer value-added options such as home installation, equipment calibration, and even old-equipment recycling. Transparent tracking information and estimated delivery times can further enhance customer satisfaction. Besides, implement clear and transparent privacy policies that explicitly inform consumers about the scope and purpose of data collection, usage, and sharing. Apply industry-leading encryption and cybersecurity measures to protect personal and health-related data, thereby strengthening consumers’ trust in the platform’s data integrity and security.

For Home Fitness Equipment Brands and Livestream Marketers: Refining Content Strategy and Building Trust Bridges. Brands and streamers should leverage the unique characteristics of live streaming commerce to refine their content strategies, enhance product information quality, and cultivate trustworthy streamer personas. First, provide comprehensive demonstrations of all key specifications, functions, usage scenarios, installation steps, maintenance instructions, and after-sales policies. For example, when introducing a smart treadmill, the presentation should cover details such as motor power, running belt width, shock absorption system, AI coaching functions, and folding mechanism. Second, validate the authenticity of product information through live testing, professional certification, and authoritative data reports. Streamers should avoid exaggeration and ensure that all presented information is entirely consistent with the actual product. Third, use multi-angle camera work, close-ups, slow-motion demonstrations, live training by professional fitness coaches, user testimonials, and simulated scenarios to make presentations vivid and engaging, offering consumers an immersive experience. Complex technical specifications should be explained in simple and accessible language, supplemented with clear visual aids such as concise text overlays, charts, or animations to ensure information clarity and comprehension.

B. Future Research Directions

Given the rapid evolution of live streaming commerce, there remains broad space for further investigation. Based on the findings and limitations of this study, several future research avenues are proposed:

Firstly, future research could focus on specific subcategories of home fitness equipment—such as strength-training machines, cardio equipment, yoga and Pilates accessories, and smart wearables—to

examine differentiated demands for information and service quality. For instance, strength equipment may emphasize the completeness of customization options, while smart wearables may prioritize data privacy and security. Secondly, while this study focuses on purchase intention, future studies may extend to the long-term effects of product information quality and platform service quality on customer loyalty, repurchase behavior, and word-of-mouth advocacy. Longitudinal research could track consumers' post-purchase experiences, satisfaction with after-sales services, and changes in recommendation behavior over time. Thirdly, as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), and Augmented Reality (AR) become increasingly integrated into live streaming commerce, future research should explore how these technologies reshape product information presentation, platform service models, and consumer perception and behavior. For example, VR can enable virtual trials of fitness equipment, AI hosts can influence trust formation, and AR can help consumers visualize how equipment fits into their home spaces. Fourthly, applying this research framework to live streaming commerce in other countries or cultural settings could reveal how cultural dimensions—such as collectivism vs. individualism and high-context vs. low-context communication—affect consumer trust and decision-making, particularly in areas of relationship-building and social exchange.

Finally, future studies may examine the impact of false advertising, after-sales disputes, data breaches, and algorithmic bias on consumer trust and purchase intention. Establishing risk identification, early warning systems, and resolution mechanisms will be essential to ensuring the healthy and sustainable development of the live streaming commerce industry.

VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this research demonstrates that in the high-involvement livestreaming market, accurate information and reliable service are the twin pillars that build value, trust, and ultimately, purchase intention. As China's digital economy evolves toward richer, more immersive commerce, these insights provide both theoretical advancement and practical guidance for creating transparent, trustworthy, and consumer-centric livestream ecosystems. First, it extends LSC research to home fitness equipment, moving beyond the entertainment-dominant narrative. Second, it clarifies how PIQ and PSQ operate through PV and TU to shape PI, offering an integrated cognitive-relational mechanism under S-O-R. Third, it provides managers with concrete levers—improving technical detail, clarity, accuracy, delivery/returns transparency, and after-sales responsiveness—to increase conversion in livestream channels for home fitness equipment. And platform can should prioritize the enhancement of their core service capabilities to foster consumer trust and strengthen perceived value. Therefore, product information quality and platform service quality are decisive levers for converting attention to intention in live streaming of home fitness equipment.

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