ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

Factors Influencing Gen Z's Purchasing Intention and Behaviour in Livestreaming E-commerce

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DOI: 10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i08.027 URL: https://doi.org/10.46609/IJSSER.2024.v09i08.027

Received: 7 August 2024 / Accepted: 24 August 2024 / Published: 29 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Live-streaming E-commerce is a form of sale in the digital era. Most customers who purchase live-streaming E-commerce products belong to Generation Z (Gen Z). This research examines factors influencing Gen Z's purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce. Seven hypotheses were tested using survey data and the SmartPLS technology. The data supported six of the seven hypotheses, including price promotion, streamer's trustworthiness, streamer's expertise, design of live-streaming E-commerce platform, consumer-streamer interaction, and consumer-consumer interaction. Two crucial of the six factors are Streamer Expertise and Streamer Trustworthiness. This research provides practical implications regarding effective live-streaming E-commerce.

Keywords: Gen Z's purchasing intention and behavior, live streaming, scandal-free influencers

1. Introduction

Live-streaming E-commerce has emerged in Vietnam since the end of 2018 (Trần et al., 2021). This form of sales has existed parallel with the traditional one. Most of customers who buy products in live-streaming E-commerce belong to Generation Z (Gen Z). Identifying factors affecting Gen Z's purchasing behavior in live-streaming E-commerce is of great importance for companies because of the significant impact of Gen Z on households' purchases. Three main parts of the article include a literature review on Gen Z and factors influencing Gen Z's purchasing behavior in live-streaming E-commerce and the research model proposed, this is followed by the research method and results, and then a part of conclusion and practical implications.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

2. Literature review

2.1 Gen Z and its purchasing habits

Generation Z is the demographic cohort born from the mid-to-late 1990s to the early 2010s (Merriam-Webster, 2024). Most members of Generation Z are children of Generation X. As the first social generation to have grown up with portable digital technology devices and access to the internet from a young age, they have been dubbed "digital natives". They feel comfortable with the internet, digital technology portable devices such as laptops, and mobile phones, and social media, including Facebook, Google, YouTube, Instagram, etc.

The significant difference between members of Gen Z and their predecessors of previous generations when they were their age is Gen Z tends to live more slowly. Gen Z teenagers are more concerned with academic performance and job prospects and are better at delaying gratification. Generation Z is described as more educated, well-behaved, stressed, and depressed (Petridis, 2014; Watts, 2017; The Economist, 2019).

As consumers, members of Gen Z rely on the Internet to research their options and to make orders. They tend to be skeptical and shun firms having contradictory actions and values (The Economist, 2023). Their purchases are heavily influenced by trends promoted by "influencers" on social media, as well as the fear of missing out (FOMO) and peer pressure (Lovejoy, 2023). The need to be "trendy" is a prime motivator (Kale, 2021).

Gen Z In Vietnam accounts for about 25% of the country's workforce, equivalent to about 15 million people (AIA, 2023). Gen Z's shopping habits in Vietnam have been summarized by Brands Vietnam as follows.

- Shopping online. Gen Z customers prefer searching for products and comparing their prices on E-commerce websites and platforms on social media to make orders. E-commerce is especially more popular with Gen Z compared to previous generations. This allows them to undertake online payments and save time and money.
- Review products and read other's reviews. Through the E-commerce platform, they can evaluate the product quality and sellers, follow articles, and video reviews from influencers to make purchasing decisions, and review products themselves.
- Search for deals and discounts. Whether buying in traditional stores or online, young people are also attracted by price promotion policies.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

- Appreciate shopping experience and brand. Shops that allow product trying and provide good customer care and consulting services have been chosen by Gen Z customers. Moreover, young people prefer personalized and influential products.
- *Use mobile applications*. These applications allow them to make product choices conveniently and flexibly.
- Concern sustainable and meaningful products. Gen Z is increasingly interested in the origin of the product and its impact on the environment and society. Gen Z customers are willing to pay a high price for durable products with premium quality.

Gen Z is willing to speak up and share their opinions, courageously break old rules and stereotypes, choose their path, and make a difference. Therefore, they have created new consumption trends. Due to the attractiveness of new products, there are more and more forms of postpaid purchases, so the spending habits of Gen Z today are somewhat "risky".

Gen Z, which loves speed, convenience, and new experiences, now chooses technology to meet their shopping needs and, therefore are the most important E-commerce customers.

2.2. Live streaming E-commerce

Live-streaming E-commerce is a broadcasting practice that brings video and audio of real-time happenings to viewers over the Internet. The most prominent feature of live-streaming E-commerce is real-time interaction through video- and text-based chat functions, by which streamers can interact with customers instantaneously, and promote products (Li et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022; Liao et al., 2023). Live-streaming E-commerce enables consumers to understand better the product, and decide whether to purchase it (Hu and Chaudhry, 2020; Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut, 2020; Gao et al., 2021). Live-streaming has been performed on E-commerce platforms such as Shopee, Lazada, Amazon, Tiki, etc., and applications for mobile devices, and social networking platforms such as Facebook, Zalo, Instagram, TikTok, etc. In addition, live-streaming has been performed on specialized platforms providing live-streaming services. Convenience, interactivity, and enjoyment of live-streaming shopping make it more and more attractive to consumers.

Nowadays live-streaming shopping in Vietnam is an increasingly successful form of E-commerce. According to Phuong Thao (2022) the reasons for that are the following.

• The purchasing process is shortened: buyers view, interact directly, and order products in real-time of broadcast.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

- Consumers can experience products quasi-truly and increase trust as live streamers provide close-up shots and test product features.
- Orders are made by viewers emotionally.
- Viewers are encouraged to purchase: live streamers offer viewers discount codes and vouchers.
- Closer contact with customers: live streamers can chat and answer customers' questions using the comment tool.
- Use influencers to live stream: In this way, products and brand images easily get closer to customers.

2.3. Factors influencing consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

2.3.1. Factors influencing consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live streaming E-commerce

Numerous studies focused on factors influencing consumers' engagement in live-streaming and their purchasing intention and behavior. According to a review by Gao et al. (2023), there are five groups of factors: streamer-related factors, IT factors, product-related factors, platform-related factors, and consumer-related factors. However, they focused on the effect of virtual streamer characteristics in live-streaming commerce as one of the crucial factors. Liu (2022) summarized four representative factors of existing literature, including price promotion, streamers' credibility, design of platforms, and interactivity. According to Hua et al. (2022), factors affecting shopping behavior are the platform effect, anchor influence, propaganda strategy, and service convenience.

2.3.2 Research model and hypotheses

Inheriting previous studies, the research model used in this article is Lingfei Liu's summary (2022).

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

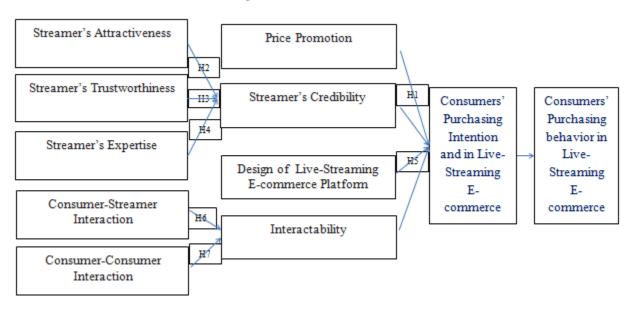


Figure 1. Research model

Price Promotion

Price promotion in live-streaming commerce is often undertaken via discount, coupon, full reduction, cash return, time-limited low-price, additional gifts, etc. In general, buyers are price-sensitive, therefore price promotion has an important impact on consumers' buying intentions and behavior. Price promotion makes consumers trust the products offered on live-streaming platforms, and make impulse purchases (Zhang et al., 2022; Zhong et al., 2022) proved that price promotion raises college students' trust in live-streaming shopping and significantly improves their purchasing intentions due to their limited purchasing power. Trần et al. (2021) found price suitability significantly impacts consumers' purchasing intention and behavior. We make a hypothesis.

H1: Price promotion is positively related to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce.

Streamer's credibility

Using celebrities to develop brand recognition is a popular marketing strategy. Numerous companies use key opinion leaders (KOLs) to perform live-streaming E-commerce. This is a way to attract more customers and get the attention of potential ones (Khan and Lodhi, 2016). In live-streaming E-commerce, celebrity endorsers introduce and display the products to the viewers. This may affect consumer behavior. Streamer's credibility could reduce consumers' perceived risk and raise consumers' purchase intention (Song and Liu, 2021; Trần et al., 2021).

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

The attractiveness of a streamer is shown in physical attractiveness, such as appearance and voice, personality, streaming style, specialties, and skills. Streamer's attractions positively affect viewer's cognitive and emotional states. The streamer makes viewers enjoy the entertainment process so they like to engage in live E-commerce. Gao et al. (2021) and Tran et al. (2021) found a positive relationship between streamers' attractiveness and consumers' perceived persuasiveness. The hypothesis is

H2: The attractiveness of a streamer is positively related to streamer credibility and thus to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

A streamer's trustworthiness is the perceived honesty, integrity, and believability of the streamer by viewers. If viewers believe in streamers, they will find the product worth buying. Therefore, the hypothesis is

H3: The streamer's trustworthiness is positively related to streamer credibility and thus to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

Streamer's expertise is the degree of his/her knowledge of the product. In live-streaming E-commerce, the streamer introduces and displays products, if he/she has enough knowledge to provide accurate information about products, consumers will be persuaded to buy. The streamer's knowledge of the products impacts his/her trust perceived by viewers and stimulates them to engage in live-streaming shopping (Hu and Chaudhry, 2020). The hypothesis is:

H4: The streamer's expertise is positively related to streamer credibility and thus to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

Design of live-streaming E-commerce platform

Consumers are interested in buying products and shopping experiences. The easy-to-use design of a live-streaming E-commerce platform brings comfortable shopping. The live-streaming E-commerce platform design directly impacts consumers' sensory experiences. The friendly design encourages consumers to undertake impulse purchases and promotes their self-efficacy, and ownership psychology. Images and video play an important role. The attractive exterior design of the platform creates a good impression of streamers and products, which increases viewers' willingness to buy (Lee and Chen, 2021). The hypothesis is

H5: The design of live-streaming E-commerce platform is positively related to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

Interactability

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

The advantage of live-streaming E-commerce over traditional online shopping is that consumers can interact with streamers and other viewers in real time, which makes the shopping process vivid. While watching, viewers can ask questions and share their feelings by sending screen bullets (Meng et al., 2021). Thus, streamers can instantly change their presentation to viewer requests. That interaction will encourage viewer purchasing behavior. According to Zhang et al. (2022), real-time comments from consumers can improve the perceived value of products because it reduces uncertainties toward products. However, the comments do not significantly affect consumers' perceived trust due to the fact that it is difficult to grasp meaningful information when comments are scrolled quickly on the screen. Furthermore, there may be malicious comments from competitors. The authors found three determinants of interactivity potentially improve consumers' trust in streamers and products, which inspires consumers to purchase again, they are active control, two-way communication, and synchronicity.

Consumer-Streamer Interaction

In live streaming E-commerce, consumers can evaluate products intuitively through the streamer's words, facial expressions, and body language. Consumers can also ask questions about products by sending screen bullets. Active interactions between streamers and consumers give consumers an impression and engagement, thus making online shopping more attractive and encouraging consumers' purchasing intentions and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce. Sun (2020) found that a high frequency of consumer-streamer interactions makes viewers willing to discuss, stay longer in the chat room, and make purchases. Huang (2021) demonstrated that consumer-streamer interaction reduced customers' perceived risk of the product and inspired impulse buying behavior. The hypothesis is

H6: The consumer-streamer interaction is positively related to interactivity and thus to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

Consumer-Consumer Interaction

In live streaming E-commerce, viewers chat with each other, share their feelings, and make comments in real time on products using screen bullets. Viewers take account of others' comments in the purchasing decision-making process. Consumer-consumer interaction reduces the perceived risk of a product and encourages consumer purchasing behavior (Huang, 2021). Consumers trust in products because they trust in community members (Gao et al., 2021). Trần et al. (2021) proved that electronic word of mouth impacts consumers' trust. In live-streaming E-commerce, herd behavior, or animal spirit, significantly influences consumers' purchasing intention (Yin, 2020). The hypothesis is

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

H7: The consumer-consumer interaction is positively related to interactivity and thus to consumers' purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce

3. Research method

Our hypotheses were tested by data collected through an online questionnaire using structural equation modeling. The research was designed as follows. Firstly, we reported the description of the development of the survey instrument. Secondly, we provided the test of the measurement model. Then, the structural modeling results were represented.

Survey instruments

Based on the literature review, we conducted a preliminary survey with which students were asked to write down factors influencing their purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce. 41 responses received were used as references for designing a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of 3 parts. The first is an introduction to the purpose of our research. The second part consists of four multivariate/item scales measuring factors influencing Gen Z's purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce, using a 5-point Likert scale with increasing agreement from "Not agree at all" to "Completely agree".

The main survey was conducted online applying the Google Form application. The online questionnaire address (URL) was sent via e-mail and uploaded to groups on social networks (Facebook, Zalo, MS Teams, LMS...). Participants are informed that the information collected will always remain safe and anonymous. The data for this research is gathered by a snowball sampling procedure. The survey was carried out from November 2023 to April 2024. 449 valid responses have been collected, providing a desirable sample size (Hair, 2014). The sample's characteristics are shown in Table 1.

Research methods

We applied PLS-SEM implemented with SmartPLS software version 3.2.9 to conduct the data analysis. The reason for that is our work belongs to exploratory research in which PLS-SEM fits. In addition, the data of our study do not meet the requirements of normal distribution, implicating that PLS-SEM is more suitable than the CB-SEM, moreover, PLS-SEM can yield greater statistical power than the CB-SEM (Hair, 2014).

The sample characteristics are shown in Table 1. Most respondents are college/university students with relatively low incomes/allowances.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample

Category		Percentage	Number
Gender	Female	68.2	306
	Male	31	139
	Other	0.9	4
Title	High school students	.7	4
	College/university students	92	413
	Undergraduate students	6.9	31
	Other	.4	2
Age	Under 17	.4	2
	From 17 to under 22	91.5	411
	From 22 to under 27	5.1	23
	Over 27	2,9	13
Income allowance	Less than VND 5 million	86.6	389
	From VND 5 to less than 10 million	6.9	31
	From VND 10 to less than 15 million	2.4	11
	From VND 15 to less than 20 million	.9	4
	More than VND 20 million	3.1	14

Source: authors

Measurement model estimation

The first step in data analysis is model estimation. First, all observed variables are included in the model estimation. The results showed that one reflective variable (Streamer's Trustworthiness, ST4, and one latent variable (Consumer-Consumer Interaction) did not fit, so they were eliminated. The results of the second model estimation were used to assess the measurement model and structural model. The measurement model was tested by conducting an estimation of the internal consistency and the convergent and discriminant validity of the instrument items. All reliability measures (Table 2) were above the level recommended of .70 demonstrating internal consistency (Fornell and Bookstein, 1981; Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The AVE values, ranging from 0.70 to 0.81 (Table 2) were above the target of .50 (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Chin, 1998). For all model constructs the measures of the variance shared with the construct were greater than the error when AVE > .50, this level is reached.

All items load highly on their associated factors, ranging from .811 to .931 (loading is greater than .50), indicating that convergent validity is present. All individual reflective measures are accepted as reliable because they correlate more than .70 with the construct they intend to measure.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Table 2. Convergent and discriminant validity of the model constructs

Variable	Outer loading
Buying Behavior	
IC = 0.918	
AVE = 0.788	
BB1	0.897
BB2	0.895
BB3	0.871
Buying Intention	
IC = 0.903	
AVE = 0.7	
BI1	0.843
BI2	0.858
BI3	0.821
BI4	0.823
Consumer-Streamer Interaction	
IC = 0.892	
AVE = 0.735	
CSI1	0.855
CSI2	0.832
CSI3	0.884
Design of Live-Streaming E-commerce Platform	l
IC = 0.892	
AVE = 0.735	
DES1	0.895
DES2	0.909
DES3	0.862
DES4	0.846
Intractability	
IC = 0.919	
AVE = 0.79	
INTER1	0.912
INTER2	0.888
Price Promotion	
IC = 0.895	
AVE = 0.81	
PP1	0.887
PP2	0.89
PP3	0.839

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

Streamer's attractiveness	
IC = 0.905	
AVE = 0.761	
SA1	0.859
SA2	0.931
SA3	0.893
Streamer's Credibility	
IC = 0.91	
AVE = 0.771	
SC1	0.831
SC2	0.903
SC3	0.899
Streamer's Expertise	
IC = 0.892	
AVE = 0.735	
SE1	0.885
SE2	0.766
SE3	0.913
Streamer's Trustworthiness	
IC = 0.907	
AVE = 0.764	
ST1	0.898
ST2	0.911
ST3	0.811

IC = internal consistency (Composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted

Source: authors

Discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct with the correlation between the construct and other constructs in the model (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Chin, 1998). Table 3 demonstrates that all constructs in the estimated model satisfied the condition of discriminant validity.

Table 3. Correlation among construct scores (Discriminant validity - Fornell-Larcker criterion)

	BB	BI	CSI	DES	INTER	PP	SA	SC	SE	ST
BB	0.888									
BI	0.758	0.836								
CSI	0.429	0.53	0.857							
DES	0.416	0.562	0.665	0.889						
INTER	0.415	0.517	0.669	0.603	0.9					
PP	0.338	0.441	0.475	0.502	0.424	0.872				

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

SA	0.337	0.456	0.545	0.604	0.497	0.466	0.895			
SC	0.424	0.549	0.662	0.726	0.647	0.424	0.592	0.878		
SE	0.45	0.57	0.659	0.757	0.628	0.511	0.658	0.807	0.857	
ST	0.381	0.458	0.581	0.611	0.592	0.406	0.567	0.787	0.711	0.874

Note: The boldface figures in the diagonal represent the square root of the AVE figures. They should be higher than the correlation figures.

Source: authors

All inner VIF values ranging from 1.0 to 2.511, indicating that no collinearity among the model constructs (Table 4).

Table 4. Collinearity statistics - Inner VIF values

	BB	BI	CSI	DES	INTER	PP	SA	SC	SE	ST
BB										
BI	1									
CSI					1					
DES		2.442								
INTER		1.879								
PP		1.381								
SA								1.827		
SC		2.477								
SE								2.511		
ST								2.097		

Source: authors

4. Structural model results

R² for dependent constructs

R Square values indicate that approximate .45%, .40%, and .58% variance of the Streamer's Intractability, Buying Intention, and Buying Behavior of Gen Z, respectively, in live-streaming E-commerce were explained by the model (Table 5). The percentage of variance explained for the dependent variable was greater than 10 percent, indicating the satisfactory value of the PLS model (Falk and Miller, 1992).

Table 5. R Square R Square Adjusted

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
BB	0.575	0.574
BI	0.403	0.397

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"



Source: authors

Structural coefficients

The results of the estimated model show that six of seven constructs hypothesized to have an impact on Gen Z purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce, which includes Consumer-Streamer Interaction (CSI), Design of Live-Streaming E-commerce Platform (DES), Price Promotion (PP), Streamer Credibility (SC), Streamer Expertise (SE), Streamer Trustworthiness (ST), and they were supported at p < .010. The Streamer's Attractions (SA), was not significant (Table 6).

Table 6. Path coefficients

	Path coefficients	T statistics (O/STDEV)	Sig. level
BI -> BB	0.758	24.819	****
CSI -> INTER	0.669	17.492	****
DES -> BI	0.224	3.106	****
INTER -> BI	0.185	2.754	****
PP -> BI	0.167	2.601	****
SA -> SC	0.034	0.876	Ns
SC -> BI	0.197	2.919	****
SE -> SC	0.483	9.600	****
ST -> SC	0.424	9.022	****

**** p < .01, ns = not significant

Source: authors

f square indicates the effect size of independent variables on dependent variables. According to Cohen (1988), f square < 0.02 indicates an extreme small effect, $0.02 \le f$ square < 0.15: shows a small effect; $0.15 \le f$ square < 0.35 implies a medium effect; and f square ≥ 0.35 : represents a large effect. The estimated model results demonstrate that Consumer-Streamer Interaction (CSI) has a large effect on Interactability (INTER), Streamer's Expertise (SE) and Streamer's Trustworthiness (ST) have a large effect on Streamer Credibility (SC), Design of Live-Streaming E-commerce Platform (DES), INTER, Price Promotion (PP) and SC have a small effect on Buying Intention (BI), and BI have a strong impact on Buying Behavior (BB) of Gen Z in live-streaming E-commerce (Table 7).

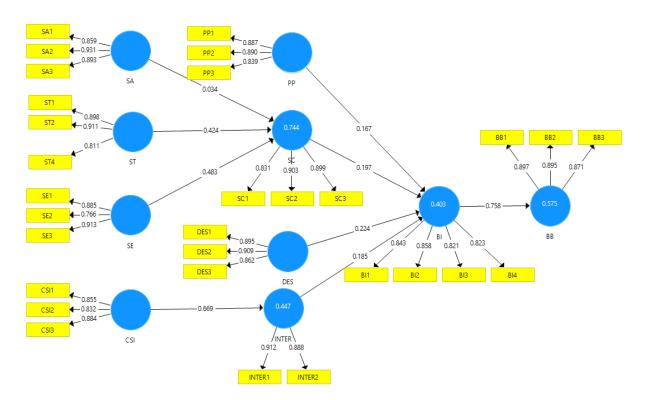
ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

Table 7. f Square

	BB	BI	CSI	DES	INTER	PP	SA	SC	SE	ST
BB										
BI	1.354									
CSI					0.81					
DES		0.034								
INTER		0.03								
PP		0.034								
SA								0.002		
SC		0.026								
SE								0.362		
ST								0.335		

Source: authors



Discussion

This research was conducted to identify factors influencing Gen Z's purchasing intention and behavior in live-streaming E-commerce. SmartPLS technology was applied to test the model on survey data. Six of the seven hypotheses were supported by the data. This indicates that the research's findings are in common with precedent research. The attractiveness of a streamer, by

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

contrast, was insignificant. Two crucial of the six factors are Streamer Expertise and Streamer Trustworthiness.

This shows that Gen Z are smart consumers, fluent in technology, and they know that trustworthiness has to do with character and intent which are hard to change or fake. Streamer Expertise helps viewers make efficient purchasing decisions in live-streaming shops.

Price Promotion meanwhile does not have much meaning because Gen Z is familiar with the art of modern marketing, Gen Z consumers can also easily find price information because they are very good at technology. Interactability has a tinny impact because Gen Z appreciates the quality instead of the frequency of interaction. Streamer Credibility is based on track record or reputation over time while creating SC with the help of technology may not be difficult.

Practical implications

Based on the findings mentioned above we propose the following implications.

Firstly, *choose the right KOLs to do live stream*. Most customers purchasing in live-streaming shops belong to Gen Z, the generation that greatly impacts their household's purchasing. Persuading Gen Z means convincing households with Gen Z members purchase in live-streaming E-commerce. This can be done well by a good live streamer.

The live streamer plays an important role in selling products in live-streaming shops. Streamer's expertise and trustworthiness are key to convincing Gen Z to purchase in live-streaming broadcasts. Therefore, using Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) for live streaming should be carefully considered, and aimed at short-term and long-term benefits. Organizations that heavily focus on lowering hiring costs can lead to the wrong KOLs and may suffer severe consequences such as boycotts. In addition, misuse of KOLs can cause greater consequences for society as it slow down E-commerce development. There are cases KOLs help organizations without integrity sell poor-quality products or intentionally sell fakes. In some instances, KOLs accept remuneration of VND 3 to 4 million for a product with 50,000 to 100,000 followers (VTV, 2024). Thus, for live-streaming sales organizations, scandal-free influencers or KOLs should be of priority, and a specific live-streamer recruitment plan should be in place.

Secondly, train and retrain live-streamers

Gen Z is smart and knowledgeable, they easily recognize unprofessional live-streamers. Live streamers need to be trained and retrained to ensure their expertise.

Thirdly, regarding the legal environment, *improvement of the legal system related to E-commerce* is needed.

ISSN: 2455-8834

Volume:09, Issue:08 "August 2024"

Technological advancement has led to unceasing changes in practice, while the legal system has evolved slowly, leaving legal gaps, especially in E-commerce. To provide a healthy environment for E-commerce, regulations on the responsibilities of KOLs acting as live-streamers in E-commerce should be legitimated. Proactively prevent online fraud to protect consumers, including those who purchase in live-streaming E-commerce. Moreover, sanctions for handling fraud in E-commerce must be deterrent and strictly enforced.

Limitations and directions for further research

No grant was awarded to this research, so the survey was conducted by a non-probability convenient method, which may cause bias. In addition, streamer's attractions naturally affect viewers, in this research, however, it found that SA was insignificant. In future research, we will try to find in what situations streamer attractions affect viewers' purchasing intention and behavior.

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