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An Analysis of Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention in E-commerce Live Streaming: A Case Study of Enterprises in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract: The e-commerce live-streaming market in Saudi Arabia is expanding rapidly, necessitating systematic examination of the mechanisms underlying consumers' purchase intention. Drawing on the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) framework, this study builds an analytical model of streamer characteristics, interactive experiences, and trust perception. Integrating Saudi cultural norms and regulatory conditions, it explores the pathways through which these factors influence purchase intention. Using industry surveys and public statistics, it analyzes two domestic platforms, Siin and Rwaj. Findings indicate that streamer professionalism and interactivity significantly affect purchase intention, with cultural alignment and institutional safeguards as critical moderators. Seller verification, payment guarantees, and information quality collectively reduce perceived risk, fostering a trustworthy environment for live-streaming commerce.

Keywords: E-commerce live streaming; Purchase intention; Saudi Arabia; Perceived trust; Stimulus–organism–response (S–O–R) framework

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1. Introduction

Saudi Arabia's digital economy is transforming rapidly under Vision 2030, with e-commerce live streaming reshaping shopping behaviors. Grand View Research estimates the country's live-streaming e-commerce revenue at approximately USD 3.2 billion in 2025, with a 24% CAGR projected from 2026 to 2033 [7]. DHL reports TikTok's shopping penetration rate in Saudi Arabia at 77% [8], while YouGov surveys show that 20% of Saudi consumers believe live-streaming shopping can stimulate consumption [9]. This growth, however,

has raised challenges in developing consumers' purchasing intent. Consequently, domestic enterprises are integrating live-streaming into their retail operations; platforms such as Siin and Rwaj are piloting seller verification, secure payment guarantees, and real-time interaction, providing empirical samples for research.

2. Theoretical framework and the context of the Saudi market

2.1. Review of theoretical frameworks on live-streaming purchase intention

Research on purchase intention in live-stream e-commerce has shifted from technological acceptance to social interaction. The charisma, professionalism, interactivity, and popularity of live streamers correlate significantly with consumers' impulsive purchase intention, exerting varying indirect effects through perceived arousal, pleasure, and serial pathways [1]. Viewers' trust and purchasing behavior stem not only from informational exchange and emotional resonance but also from digital validation of peer evaluations [2]. Each dimension of an e-commerce streamer's persuasion strategies can enhance online purchase intention, with emotional trust mediating 20.21% of the total effect [3]. This aligns with the S–O–R framework: streamer characteristics, platform functionalities, and live-streaming ambiance act as external stimuli; trust perception and immersive experience are internal organismic states; and purchase intention is the behavioral response.

Social presence theory holds that greater interactivity, non-verbal cues, and consistent meaning presentation enhance immersion; the stronger the sense of presence, the more likely purchase intention emerges [5, 6].

2.2. Foundational conditions for the development of live-stream

2.2.1. E-commerce in Saudi Arabia

Driven by Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia has continuously enhanced its digital infrastructure; the widespread adoption of smartphones and high-speed networks provides technical support for live-streaming e-commerce. Key market indicators are summarized in **Table 1** [7-11].

Table 1. Key data on live-stream e-commerce in Saudi Arabia

Category	Key Metrics	Data
Market Size	Live streaming market revenue in 2025	3.2 billion dollars
Market Growth	Compound annual growth rate from 2026 to 2033	24%
Platform Penetration	TikTok shopping penetration rate	77%
Consumer Behavior	Users who have experienced live-stream shopping in the past year	
Trust and Risk	Consumers place greater trust in influencer reviews than in traditional information sources.	91%
Trust and Risk	Fraud incidents occurring on social media platforms.	51%

Fashion and apparel have historically held the highest revenue share, while health and wellness products are projected to grow fastest. A June 2026 Visa report shows that 73% of Saudi consumers purchase goods via social media [10]. Enterprises leverage platforms such as TikTok, Snapchat, and Instagram for live-streaming.

2.3. Saudi cultural institutions and consumption characteristics

Islamic commercial ethics in Saudi society emphasize trust and anti-fraud practices, and consumers are highly sensitive to seller integrity and transaction transparency. The Saudi E-Commerce Law permits returns within seven days for unused products, yet inadequate seller verification standards remain institutional barriers to trust. A survey found that 13% of consumers are willing to purchase limited-edition collaborative products [9]. A joint survey by Snapchat, Publicis Media, and NRG found that 89% of travelers are influenced by online influencers in booking decisions [11]. A 2026 Visa study reported that 41% of Saudi consumers encountered financial fraud in the past year, with 51% occurring on social media [10]—making trust in live-streaming shopping an urgent priority.

3. Study design and data source description

3.1. Variable definition and operationalization design

Purchase intention denotes a consumer's propensity to buy a product or service after watching a live stream. The stimulus dimension comprises streamer professionalism, live-stream interactivity, and platform information quality—respectively reflecting product mastery and delivery credibility, viewers' participation through bullet comments, likes, and questions, and the completeness and accuracy of product information. The psychological variable is trust perception: whether the streamer is trustworthy and transactions are secure. Cultural fit—the alignment of live-stream content with Saudi societal norms and Islamic values—and institutional safeguards (return rights, escrow payments, seller verification) serve as moderating variables.

3.2. Data sources and sample characteristics

The data were primarily derived from industry surveys in Saudi Arabia's e-commerce live-streaming sector and publicly available statistics. A web-based questionnaire on December 9, 2024 yielded 1,023 Saudi respondents, serving as the source for the 2025 Ramadan Consumer Insight Report [9]. The sample was drawn from an opt-in panel via sample matching and, after weighting, represented Saudi adults (18+) online by age, gender, region, and education (weighting formula: wi = Tk/Sk). Percentages are weighted estimates with a sampling error of approximately ±3% at the 95% confidence level; representativeness is limited to the internet-access population. Grand View Research provides revenue forecasts for the live-streaming market [7], and DHL offers penetration data for TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook in Saudi Arabia [8].

A joint study by Snapchat, Publicis Media, and NRG covers consumer electronics, food & beverage, apparel, and tourism [11]; the 2026 Visa study analyzes Saudi consumers' trust and security behaviors in digital commerce [10].

4. Analysis of influencing factors and pathways of effect

4.1. Streamer characteristics and trust transmission mechanisms

A live streamer's professional competence and credibility are primary determinants of purchase intention. Serving both demonstration and trust-mediation roles, a streamer with domain knowledge who conveys information clearly reduces perceived uncertainty and enhances purchase intention. Survey data show Saudi consumers rely heavily on credible influencers—especially electronics buyers—while online influencers also influence travelers.

Streamer appeal and perceived similarity foster trust, while local language and local life scenarios reduce psychological distance. The Saudi platform Siin makes verified sellers its core mechanism: streamers must pass rigorous vetting before broadcasting [13], providing institutional support for trust transmission. Enterprises should select streamers for product knowledge, communication skills, and cultural adaptability, and train them in product accuracy, after-sales responsibilities, and Islamic commercial ethics.

4.2. Interactive experiences and immersive perception pathways

Real-time interaction distinguishes live-stream e-commerce from traditional e-commerce, leveraging presence to influence purchasing decisions. The immersive experience—built on interactivity, non-verbal cues, and conveyed intent—enhances emotional affinity toward the streamer and products. In Saudi Arabia, live-stream interactivity positively affects consumer trust, fostering engagement and impulse purchases.

Visa's 2026 data show that 93% of Saudi consumers find AI tools make online shopping faster, and 57% discover new brands during shopping [10]. Live-stream Q&A, product demonstrations, and time-limited offers create urgency, shortening decision time and strengthening purchase intent. Siin, a Riyadh-based marketplace, has expanded to six Gulf countries with $3 million in funding [13], using real-time interaction and gamification to boost engagement. Businesses can adopt segmented explanations, real-time voting, and trial feedback to align interaction pace with consumers' attention spans.

4.3. Cultural alignment and institutional safeguards

Saudi social and cultural norms and e-commerce regulations constitute the boundary conditions of the live-streaming–purchase-intention relationship. Islamic commercial ethics stress trust and anti-fraud practices, making consumers sensitive to seller integrity. Institutionally, the Saudi E-Commerce Law grants a seven-day return right, and the Ministry of Commerce's Balagh application enables real-time reporting of violations—both fundamental constraints [4]. When content aligns with Saudi cultural values, consumers develop trust; 13% are willing to purchase Ramadan-themed limited-edition collaborative products [9].

A Visa study shows that 84% of Saudi consumers believe AI will protect them from fraud, yet only 33% trust AI agents to complete checkout [10], revealing a gap between institutional safeguards and consumer trust. Enterprises should combine cultural respect with institutional transparency—localized content, clear return policies, and secure payment channels—to enhance purchase intent.

4.4. Platform information and decision support functions

Platform information quality is a foundational stimulus in live-stream shopping: consumers receive the host's presentation, textual specifications, and user reviews simultaneously, and their completeness and accuracy directly affect purchasing decisions. A YouGov survey found that 61% of Saudi consumers might shop via social media, and 20% believe live-stream shopping stimulates consumption [9]. DHL reports TikTok penetration at 77%, compared with 58% for Instagram and 38% for Facebook [8].

A joint Snapchat–Publicis–NRG study showed that 83% of electronics shoppers and 79% of QSR customers purchase directly through social platforms [11], indicating that in-content product information facilitates decisions. High-quality information reduces uncertainty and enhances trust. Rwaj requires live-stream product information to match platform records, while Siin relies on seller vetting to ensure authenticity [12, 13]. Companies should refine specifications, inventory status, and after-sales information on live-stream pages.

4.5. Purchase intention impact path model

Based on the above causal pathways, this study constructs a conceptual model of live-streaming purchase intention in Saudi Arabia. Grounded in the S–O–R framework, the model sets streamer professionalism, live-stream interactivity, and platform information quality as stimulus-level variables; trust perception as the organism-level mediator; and cultural fit and institutional safeguards as moderators. The model is formulated as follows:

Purchase intention = $\alpha + \beta 1 \times$ Streamer professionalism + $\beta 2 \times$ Live-stream interactivity + $\beta 3 \times$ Platform information quality + $\beta 4 \times$ Perceived trust + $\beta 5 \times$ (Perceived trust × Cultural fit) + $\beta 6 \times$ (Perceived trust × Institutional safeguards) + ε (1)

Perceived trust = $\gamma 0 + \gamma 1 \times$ Streamer professionalism + $\gamma 2 \times$ Live-stream interactivity + $\gamma 3 \times$ Platform information quality + $\varepsilon 1$ (2)

Perceived trust serves as the mediator, with cultural fit and institutional safeguards as moderators, consistent with the operationalization above. The influence framework is presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Framework of factors influencing purchase intention in Saudi e-commerce live streaming

Impact Level	Core Variable	Action Path	Data Basis
Stimulus layer	Streamer's professionalism	Influencing purchase intention through trust	
Stimulus layer	Live-streaming interactivity	Influencing purchase intention through perceived trust	
Stimulus layer	Platform Information Quality	Foster trust by reducing uncertainty	83% of electronics consumers make purchases based on social media content [11].
Organism layer	Perceived trust	Mediating the effects of streamer characteristics on purchase intention	91% of electronic product consumers trust influencer reviews [11].
Moderating layer	Cultural fit	Facilitate the transformation of trust into purchase intention	13% of respondents are willing to purchase limited-edition Ramadan products [9].
Moderating layer	Institutional safeguards	Modulating Perceived Risk and Purchase Intention	The Saudi E-Commerce Law stipulates a seven-day return period.

5. Case study and mechanism analysis of domestic platforms in Saudi Arabia

5.1. Analysis of the trust mechanism of the Saudi Siin platform

Siin is a Saudi live-streaming e-commerce platform whose core mechanism relies on seller verification and real-time interaction. Sellers must provide identity details and product qualifications before broadcasting, mitigating false advertising at its source [13]. Positioning itself as a trust and security layer in social commerce, Siin integrates gamified interactions—likes, questions, and voting—while streamers adjust pace to feedback, fostering social presence and trust. Its experience shows that seller verification and interactive design jointly support trust transmission. Saudi enterprises should therefore prioritize rigorous seller verification and integrate it with real-time interactive features.

5.2. Analysis of payment protection on the Saudi Rwaj platform

Rwaj, headquartered in Jeddah, announced a $1.2 million pre-Seed round in September 2026 [12]. Positioning

itself as a live-streaming marketplace integrating social commerce and auctions, its core mechanism is guaranteed payment: buyer funds are held until delivery is confirmed, with local payment methods such as Mada and Apple Pay integrated, reducing perceived transaction risk. Rwaj also requires identity and product verification, ensuring live-stream information matches platform records. Together, guaranteed payments and seller verification shift trust from the streamer's personal reputation to institutional safeguards. Rwaj arbitrates disputes, determining liability from verification records and playback footage, elevating trust from interpersonal to institutional and providing a stable foundation for purchase intent. Saudi enterprises may draw on Rwaj's payment escrow as a critical prerequisite for fostering purchase intent.

6. Conclusion

The rapid growth of Saudi Arabia's live-streaming e-commerce market has provided an invaluable setting for examining the mechanisms behind consumers' purchase intentions. Following the S–O–R framework, this study investigates how streamer professionalism and interactive experience influence purchase intentions via trust perception, alongside the moderating effects of cultural fit and the institutional environment.

In formulating live-streaming strategies, enterprises should prioritize trust building by elevating streamer competence, refining interactive design, and strengthening institutional safeguards. Experiences from Siin and Rwaj demonstrate that institutional innovations—seller certification and guaranteed payment systems—foster a trustworthy transaction environment.

Future research should expand data sources with platform operational data, user behavior records, and multi-case studies to examine how these mechanisms differ across product categories and consumer segments.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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