Shopee Live as an Interactive Marketing Platform: An Influencer-Based Analysis

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Abstract

Live commerce has emerged as a prominent digital marketing phenomenon by integrating real-time interaction, entertainment, and online transactions within a single platform. Among various live commerce features, Shopee Live has gained increasing attention as an interactive marketing platform widely utilized by social media influencers to engage audiences. This study aims to analyze how influencers strategically utilize Shopee Live to foster audience engagement, build trust, and facilitate relational communication in live streaming commerce environments. Employing a qualitative research design, this study adopts a case study approach focusing on influencer-led Shopee Live sessions. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with influencers, non-participant observation of live streaming interactions, and analysis of recorded Shopee Live sessions and engagement indicators. The findings reveal that effective audience engagement on Shopee Live is shaped by real-time interaction, persuasive product demonstration, and influencer credibility. Influencers who actively respond to audience feedback, demonstrate products transparently, and adapt communication styles during live sessions are more likely to generate sustained engagement and trust. The study further indicates that engagement in Shopee Live extends beyond short-term transactional outcomes and reflects a relational process grounded in interactivity and authenticity. This research contributes to the literature on live commerce and influencer marketing by positioning Shopee Live as an interactive marketing platform that supports long-term audience relationships. Practically, the findings offer strategic insights for influencers and brands seeking to optimize live streaming practices in competitive e-commerce environments.

Introduction

The rapid growth of live commerce has reshaped the landscape of digital marketing by combining real-time interaction, entertainment, and transactional processes within a single online environment, enabling brands and influencers to communicate more dynamically with audiences (Sun et al., 2019; Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Live streaming commerce allows consumers to engage directly with content creators through synchronous communication, which enhances social presence and reduces perceived uncertainty during online shopping experiences (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017; Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). Within the Southeast Asian digital economy, Shopee has emerged as a dominant e-commerce platform by integrating Shopee Live as an interactive marketing feature that facilitates real-time product demonstrations, audience feedback, and influencer-led communication (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Influencers play a pivotal role in live commerce ecosystems by acting as opinion leaders who translate product information into persuasive narratives while fostering trust through immediacy and authenticity (Ki et al., 2020).

Prior studies suggest that influencer-driven live streaming enhances audience engagement by strengthening perceived credibility, authenticity, and relational closeness between content creators and viewers (Audrezet et al., 2020; Lou et al., 2023). Interactive features embedded in live

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commerce platforms, such as live chat, instant reactions, and real-time feedback mechanisms, enable continuous two-way communication that supports deeper emotional and behavioral engagement (Men & Tsai, 2016; Brodie et al., 2013). Despite the increasing adoption of Shopee Live among influencers, existing literature remains limited in explaining how interactive marketing strategies are strategically utilized by influencers to sustain engagement beyond short-term sales outcomes (Zhao et al., 2022). Accordingly, this study aims to analyze Shopee Live as an interactive marketing platform by examining influencer-based practices that shape audience engagement, relational communication, and perceived trust within live commerce settings (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020; Tafesse, 2021).

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Live Commerce and Interactive Marketing

Live commerce is defined as a digital marketing format that integrates live streaming technology with online shopping features, enabling real-time interaction between sellers, influencers, and consumers (Sun et al., 2019). Unlike conventional e-commerce, live commerce emphasizes immediacy, interactivity, and entertainment, which collectively enhance user engagement and reduce perceived risk during online transactions (Huang & Benyoucef, 2017).

Previous studies suggest that interactive marketing environments allow consumers to actively participate in value co-creation through communication, feedback, and social interaction (Brodie et al., 2013). The integration of synchronous communication features in live commerce platforms strengthens social presence, which has been identified as a key driver of engagement and trust formation in digital environments (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018).

Shopee Live as a Live Commerce Platform

Shopee Live functions as an embedded live commerce feature that allows real-time product demonstrations, interactive chats, and instant purchasing within the Shopee ecosystem (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). By integrating entertainment and transactional elements, Shopee Live transforms online shopping into a socially engaging experience rather than a purely functional activity (Wongkitrungrueng et al., 2020). Research indicates that platform-supported interactivity enhances consumer involvement by enabling immediate responses to questions, personalized recommendations, and social validation from other viewers (Zhao et al., 2022). In the context of Southeast Asia, Shopee Live has gained prominence due to high mobile penetration and consumer preference for interactive and entertainment-driven online shopping experiences (Lim et al., 2022).

Influencers in Live Commerce Environments

Influencers play a central role in live commerce by acting as opinion leaders who bridge the gap between brands and consumers through persuasive communication and social interaction (Ki et al., 2020). In live streaming contexts, influencers enhance perceived authenticity by delivering spontaneous product demonstrations and responding directly to audience inquiries (Audrezet et al., 2020). Studies show that influencer credibility positively affects audience engagement and purchase intention, particularly when influencers are perceived as knowledgeable and trustworthy (Lou et al., 2023). The relational interaction facilitated by influencers during live streaming strengthens parasocial relationships, which further intensify emotional attachment and engagement behaviors (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020).

Audience Engagement in Live Streaming Commerce

Audience engagement in live commerce encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses that emerge from interactive communication and content participation (Dessart et al., 2016). Engagement in live streaming environments is reinforced by real-time feedback mechanisms, such as live chats and instant reactions, which create a sense of involvement and mutual presence (Men & Tsai, 2016). Empirical findings suggest that higher levels of interactivity

lead to increased engagement intensity, reflected in longer viewing duration, active commenting, and higher conversion likelihood (Zhang et al., 2021). Moreover, engagement is increasingly conceptualized as a long-term relational outcome rather than a short-term performance metric, emphasizing sustained interaction and trust development (Tafesse, 2021).

Despite the growing body of research on live commerce, limited attention has been given to influencer-based interactive marketing strategies within Shopee Live specifically (Zhao et al., 2022). Most existing studies focus on consumer purchase intention, leaving a gap in understanding how influencers strategically utilize platform interactivity to foster sustained audience engagement (Wongkitrungrueng & Assarut, 2020). Therefore, this study positions Shopee Live as an interactive marketing platform and examines influencer practices as a key mechanism shaping engagement, relational communication, and trust in live commerce settings (Ki et al., 2020; Tafesse, 2021).

Research Methods

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to examine how influencers strategically utilize Shopee Live as an interactive marketing platform to enhance audience engagement (Patton, 2015). A qualitative design is appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of meanings, practices, and interaction patterns that emerge in live streaming commerce environments (Hilvert-Bruce et al., 2018). The study is grounded in an interpretivist research paradigm, which emphasizes understanding social reality through the subjective experiences of individuals involved in digital interactions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A case study research design was employed to capture the complexity of influencer-based marketing practices within Shopee Live (Yin, 2018). Case study methodology is suitable for investigating contemporary phenomena embedded in real-life contexts where the boundaries between platform features and user practices are not clearly distinguishable (Yin, 2018). The unit of analysis in this research consists of social media influencers who actively conduct live streaming sessions through Shopee Live as part of their marketing activities (Ki et al., 2020). Influencers were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants possessed sufficient experience in managing Shopee Live sessions and engaging directly with audiences (Patton, 2015).

Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with selected influencers to obtain insights into content planning, interactive strategies, and audience engagement practices during Shopee Live sessions (Guest et al., 2012). Semi-structured interviews provide methodological flexibility while maintaining consistency across predefined thematic areas relevant to the research objectives (Guest et al., 2012). In addition, non-participant observation was conducted by systematically observing live streaming sessions to examine real-time interactions between influencers and viewers (Kozinets, 2015). Observational data focused on interactive elements such as live chat communication, audience questions, influencer responses, and real-time product demonstrations (Zhao et al., 2022). Secondary data were obtained from recorded Shopee Live sessions, publicly available engagement indicators, and platform-related documentation to support data triangulation (Patton, 2015).

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns related to influencer strategies and interactive marketing practices (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was conducted through a systematic process involving data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and interpretive synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This analytical approach allows researchers to organize qualitative data while preserving contextual depth and interpretive flexibility (Patton, 2015). Emerging themes were categorized around key dimensions such as platform interactivity, influencer communication strategies, audience engagement behaviors, and trust formation (Brodie et al., 2013).

To enhance credibility, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating interview findings, observational data, and secondary sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Dependability and confirmability were strengthened through prolonged engagement with the data and transparent

documentation of analytical procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Ethical considerations were addressed by ensuring informed consent, voluntary participation, and confidentiality of participant identities throughout the research process (Patton, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Influencer–Audience Interaction in Shopee Live

The findings indicate that Shopee Live enables influencers to establish intensive real-time interaction with audiences through live chat, instant feedback, and direct responses during streaming sessions. This interaction creates a perception of immediacy and social presence that encourages audiences to actively participate rather than passively observe the content (Haimson & Tang, 2017). Real-time engagement allows influencers to adapt communication styles based on audience reactions, which strengthens relational closeness and conversational flow (Lim et al., 2020).

From a discussion perspective, these findings support prior research suggesting that synchronous interaction enhances audience involvement by reducing psychological distance between content creators and viewers (Zhang et al., 2021). In Shopee Live contexts, interactive dialogue functions as a relational mechanism that differentiates live commerce from conventional e-commerce interfaces, where communication is largely asynchronous and transactional.

Content Demonstration and Persuasive Communication

The results show that influencers frequently utilize live product demonstrations and storytelling to convey product value and usage credibility. Visual demonstration combined with verbal explanation increases audience understanding and perceived usefulness of the product information presented during Shopee Live sessions. This aligns with empirical evidence indicating that demonstration-based communication enhances message clarity and persuasion in digital marketing environments (Xu et al., 2020).

The discussion reveals that persuasive communication in Shopee Live is not solely driven by promotional messaging but by experiential presentation and narrative framing. Influencers who integrate personal experiences and spontaneous explanations are perceived as more trustworthy, which supports previous findings on experiential credibility in live streaming commerce (Chen & Lin, 2018).

Trust Formation and Influencer Credibility

Another significant finding relates to the role of influencer credibility in shaping audience trust. Audiences respond more positively to influencers who demonstrate transparency in product information and openly address audience questions and concerns during live sessions. This behavior reinforces perceived honesty and competence, which are essential components of trust in online environments (Gefen et al., 2003).

In discussion, this result confirms that trust formation in Shopee Live emerges through continuous interaction rather than one-time exposure. Influencer credibility functions as a relational asset that supports long-term engagement, consistent with research emphasizing trust as a central determinant of sustainable digital relationships (McKnight et al., 2002).

Engagement Outcomes in Live Commerce Settings

The findings indicate that high levels of interaction and credibility lead to observable engagement outcomes such as increased commenting activity, longer viewing duration, and repeated participation in subsequent Shopee Live sessions. These engagement behaviors reflect not only interest in products but also emotional attachment to the influencer and the live streaming environment. Similar engagement patterns have been identified in studies examining audience behavior in interactive digital platforms (Hamilton et al., 2014).

From an analytical standpoint, engagement in Shopee Live should be understood as a multidimensional outcome encompassing behavioral, emotional, and relational dimensions. This

perspective extends prior engagement frameworks by highlighting the unique contribution of real-time interactivity in shaping audience responses within live commerce ecosystems (Park & Lin, 2020).

Strategic Implications for Influencer Marketing

The discussion suggests that Shopee Live functions as more than a transactional tool, positioning itself as a strategic interactive marketing platform for influencers. Influencers who prioritize audience interaction, transparency, and adaptive communication strategies are more likely to achieve sustained engagement outcomes. This supports contemporary marketing research emphasizing relationship-oriented strategies over short-term sales-driven approaches (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Consequently, Shopee Live provides influencers with an opportunity to cultivate long-term audience relationships by leveraging interactivity and authenticity as core strategic assets. These findings contribute to influencer marketing literature by demonstrating how live commerce platforms facilitate relational value creation beyond immediate conversion metrics (Dwivedi et al., 2021).

Implication and Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature on live commerce and influencer marketing by reinforcing the conceptualization of Shopee Live as an interactive marketing platform rather than a purely transactional sales channel (Park & Lin, 2020). The findings extend prior engagement theories by demonstrating that real-time interaction, influencer credibility, and adaptive communication jointly shape audience engagement in live commerce environments (Sjöblom et al., 2019). By emphasizing the relational and experiential dimensions of engagement, this study supports recent arguments that digital engagement should be understood as a dynamic and socially constructed process (Calder et al., 2018).

Furthermore, this research advances influencer marketing theory by highlighting the strategic role of influencers as relational mediators in live streaming contexts. Unlike static social media content, influencer-led Shopee Live sessions facilitate immediate feedback and dialogic communication, which strengthens parasocial interaction and trust formation (Stever & Lawson, 2013). These insights complement existing studies by situating influencer effectiveness within synchronous and interactive digital environments.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that influencers should prioritize interactive communication strategies when utilizing Shopee Live. Active engagement through live chat responses, transparent product explanations, and spontaneous audience interaction can enhance perceived authenticity and sustain audience participation (Schouten et al., 2020). Influencers who treat live sessions as conversational spaces rather than scripted promotional events are more likely to build long-term relational value.

For brands and platform managers, the results indicate that Shopee Live can be leveraged as a strategic engagement tool by supporting influencers with features that enhance interactivity and real-time responsiveness. Encouraging influencer autonomy and authenticity may yield higher engagement outcomes than rigid promotional guidelines, aligning with contemporary relationship marketing principles (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). These implications are particularly relevant for competitive e-commerce markets where differentiation through relational experience is increasingly critical.

This study concludes that Shopee Live functions as an effective interactive marketing platform when utilized strategically by influencers. The findings demonstrate that real-time interaction, persuasive product demonstration, and influencer credibility collectively foster audience engagement and trust within live commerce settings. Engagement in Shopee Live is therefore shaped less by technological features alone and more by how influencers activate interactivity and relational communication during live sessions.

By positioning Shopee Live within a relational engagement framework, this study offers empirical evidence that live commerce can support long-term audience relationships beyond

immediate sales performance. While the study is limited to a qualitative influencer-based perspective, it provides a foundation for future research to explore quantitative engagement outcomes, cross-platform comparisons, and cultural variations in live commerce practices. Overall, this research underscores the strategic importance of interactive live streaming in the evolving landscape of influencer marketing and digital commerce.

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