

Real-Time Viewer Comments in Live Streaming E-Commerce
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Abstract

Live streaming e-commerce blends shopping, entertainment, and social interaction, and now accounts for a substantial share of China's e-commerce sales. Despite its rapid growth, research on the key drivers of success in live streaming e-commerce remains limited. This paper examines the role of real-time viewer comments in shaping live streaming sales performance.

Drawing on two empirical studies, this research first develops a scalable AI-assisted method for categorising large volumes of real-time viewer comments and validates the categorisation through comparison with human and machine coding. The comment categories include product-focused comments, social comments, and incentivised comments. The second study then applies these categories to examine how different types of viewer comments influence sales performance, and how these effects are moderated by live streamers' selling styles.

The findings show that spontaneous viewer comments are important drivers of sales performance, particularly when live streamers adopt more professional or value-based selling styles. This research contributes to the literature on live streaming e-commerce by highlighting the role of real-time consumer interaction in driving sales outcomes. It also offers a methodological contribution by introducing a generative AI-assisted approach for analysing large-scale unstructured interaction data in digital commerce contexts.

Keywords: Live streaming e-commerce; viewer comments; sales performance