



Examining the Effects of Live Streamer and Product Characteristics on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Emotional Trust in Social Commerce

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v5i2.1958>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Live Streamer
Characteristics,
Product
Characteristics,
Emotional Trust

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This study aims to examine the influence of live streamer characteristics and product characteristics on purchase intention, with emotional trust serving as a mediating variable in the context of live streaming commerce for religious products. A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method involving 201 respondents who had previously watched religious product live streaming sessions on a short-video commerce platform. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings reveal that live streamer characteristics—comprising professionalism, attractiveness, and interactivity—have a positive and significant effect on both emotional trust and purchase intention. Similarly, product characteristics, including perceived quality, price fairness, and practicality, significantly influence emotional trust and purchase intention. Emotional trust was found to play a significant mediating role in strengthening the relationship between both live streamer characteristics and product characteristics and consumers' purchase intention. These results imply that in emotionally sensitive product contexts, consumers' purchase decisions are shaped not only by functional and economic considerations but also by the development of emotional trust fostered through credible and interactive live streaming experiences. This study contributes to the social commerce literature by extending the understanding of emotional trust mechanisms in live streaming environments involving high emotional and religious sensitivity products.

Article History:

Received: January 2026; Revised: February 2026; Accepted: March 2026

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Naswa, R., Pebrianti, W., Fitriana, A., Ramadania, & Purmono, B. B. (2026). Examining the Effects of Live Streamer and Product Characteristics on Purchase Intention: The Mediating Role of Emotional Trust in Social Commerce. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 5(2)<https://e-journal.staima-alhikam.ac.id/evaluasi/article/view/4363>, 1871–1878.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid growth of social commerce has transformed how consumers interact with brands, making live streaming platforms a strategic channel for real-time and interactive marketing. This transformation is particularly significant because purchasing decisions are increasingly shaped by digital experiences rather than traditional face-to-face interactions. Platforms such as TikTok enable sellers to communicate product value instantly, respond to consumer questions, and build relational engagement through audiovisual content. Prior research indicates that live streaming enhances consumer immersion and trust formation, thereby influencing purchase intention (Sun et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2023). However, while such mechanisms are widely examined in fashion, cosmetics, and electronics, limited attention has been given to products with high emotional or religious sensitivity. This gap is socially important because products associated with existential themes—such as death and spirituality require not only functional assurance but also emotional reassurance. Therefore, understanding how emotional trust is formed in such contexts becomes essential for both academic inquiry and ethical digital marketing practice.

Despite the technological affordances of live streaming commerce, many sellers struggle to build persuasive and trustworthy communication with audiences. The problem is not merely technological but relational: consumers often experience uncertainty, skepticism, and emotional discomfort when purchasing through live platforms. This challenge becomes more complex when the product category carries symbolic, spiritual, or existential meaning. Products related to religious rituals or end-of-life preparation may evoke anxiety, avoidance behavior, or psychological resistance among viewers. As a result, even if product quality is objectively high, consumers may hesitate to engage or transact. Previous studies emphasize that trust plays a mediating role between online stimuli and behavioral intention (Zhou & Tong, 2022; Huang et al., 2023), yet the process of emotional trust formation in highly sensitive product categories remains underexplored. Consequently, sellers in such contexts face a dual challenge: communicating product value while simultaneously reducing emotional discomfort and existential anxiety among potential consumers.

In practice, the commercialization of religious products through live streaming presents a unique phenomenon. One emerging business model involves selling complete funeral preparation packages through live sessions that combine education, humor, and interactive engagement. The brand actively uses performative demonstrations and religious reminders to attract viewers, creating a paradoxical blend of solemn themes and entertaining presentation. Initially, this strategy generated rapid audience growth and high engagement, demonstrating the potential of emotional framing in live commerce. However, fluctuations in viewer numbers and engagement levels indicate that sustaining trust and interest over time is challenging. Not all live streamers are able to

maintain persuasive communication, credibility, and emotional resonance with audiences. As noted by Zhou et al. (2025), live streamer characteristics such as professionalism, attractiveness, and interaction significantly influence purchase intention. Thus, observable variations in audience engagement suggest that streamer attributes and product communication strategies are critical determinants of emotional trust and subsequent buying intention.

Extensive literature has examined the role of live streamer characteristics in shaping consumer responses. Professionalism enhances perceived expertise and credibility, thereby reducing uncertainty and strengthening purchase intention (Xu et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2022). Attractiveness and entertainment value foster affective engagement and parasocial interaction, which positively influence emotional attachment and buying intention (Kim et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2025). Interaction, particularly real-time responsiveness, increases perceived intimacy and relational closeness between streamer and audience (Jun & Yi, 2020; Meng et al., 2021). These studies collectively support the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) framework, in which streamer attributes function as stimuli that shape emotional and cognitive responses leading to behavioral intention. However, most prior research focuses on hedonic or utilitarian consumer goods, where emotional responses are primarily driven by enjoyment or perceived value. The emotional complexity of religious or mortality-related products has not been sufficiently incorporated into these theoretical models.

Similarly, research on product characteristics highlights the importance of perceived quality, price fairness, and practicality in fostering trust and purchase intention (Azizi et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022; Senali et al., 2024). Visual informativeness during live demonstrations can reduce information asymmetry and enhance consumer confidence (Lu & Chen, 2021). Perceived price fairness also directly influences trust formation (Suksamran et al., 2016). Emotional trust, defined as feelings of safety, comfort, and emotional connection toward the streamer, has been identified as a key mediator in live commerce environments (Sun et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2022). Nevertheless, prior studies generally conceptualize trust as a mechanism to reduce transactional risk, rather than as a mechanism to manage existential anxiety or religious sensitivity. Therefore, there remains a significant research gap concerning how emotional trust operates when consumers confront products that evoke fear, mortality awareness, or spiritual reflection.

This study addresses that gap by integrating live streamer characteristics and product characteristics within a high emotional-sensitivity context, positioning emotional trust as a central mediating construct. Unlike previous research that predominantly examines mainstream consumer goods, this study focuses on religious products associated with end-of-life preparation—an area where emotional discomfort and symbolic meaning are deeply intertwined. The novelty lies in examining whether established live commerce models remain

valid when consumers must overcome not only uncertainty about product quality but also existential unease. By situating the analysis within live streaming commerce on TikTok, this research expands the theoretical application of emotional trust beyond transactional security toward psychological reassurance. This state-of-the-art approach contributes to a more nuanced understanding of trust formation in digital environments characterized by emotional intensity and moral sensitivity.

Based on the identified gaps, this study investigates whether live streamer characteristics (professionalism, attractiveness, and interaction) and product characteristics (quality, price fairness, and practicality) significantly influence purchase intention through the mediating role of emotional trust in a religious live commerce context. The central argument is that in emotionally sensitive product categories, emotional trust becomes the primary psychological mechanism that transforms digital stimuli into purchasing intention. While functional attributes and persuasive communication remain important, they are insufficient without the establishment of emotional safety and authenticity. Therefore, this research hypothesizes that both streamer and product characteristics positively influence emotional trust, which in turn strengthens purchase intention. By empirically testing this model, the study contributes theoretically to social commerce literature and practically to ethical digital marketing strategies in sensitive product domains.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with a causal research design to examine the direct and indirect relationships between live streamer characteristics, product characteristics, emotional trust, and purchase intention. A quantitative method was selected because it allows hypothesis testing and statistical examination of causal relationships among variables using structural modeling. The constructs were adapted from prior validated studies to ensure theoretical robustness: live streamer characteristics (professionalism, attraction, and interaction) were adapted from Zhou and Baskaran (2025) and Yang et al. (2024); product characteristics (quality, price, and practicality) were adapted from Senali et al. (2024), Yang et al. (2024), and Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2020); emotional trust was adapted from Zhou and Tong (2022); and purchase intention was adapted from Zhang et al. (2023). The population consisted of users of TikTok who had watched relevant live streaming sessions. Using non-probability purposive sampling, 201 respondents were selected based on the criteria of being active TikTok users and having viewed the specified live streams, consistent with Hair et al. (2021), who recommend a sample size between 100–300 for SEM analysis.

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via

Google Forms using social media channels. The instrument applied a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All measurement indicators were developed and adapted from prior empirical research to ensure conceptual alignment and construct validity. Prior to full distribution, the questionnaire items were reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and consistency with the research framework.

Data analysis was conducted using SMART SEM-PLS version 4.1.6. The analytical process included data condensation, data display, and data verification. Data condensation involved screening responses to eliminate incomplete or inconsistent data. Data display was conducted by organizing and processing the cleaned dataset within SEM-PLS to generate outer model and inner model outputs. Data verification and conclusion drawing were performed by examining path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and mediation effects using the Sobel test statistic to confirm indirect relationships among variables.

The validity and reliability of the measurement model were assessed through convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and overall model fit evaluation. Convergent validity was confirmed by Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values greater than 0.50, while reliability was established through Composite Reliability (CR) values above 0.70. Discriminant validity was examined through cross-loading and construct correlation analysis. These procedures ensured that the measurement and structural models were statistically sound, reliable, and methodologically robust for explaining the causal relationships within the live commerce environment of TikTok

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following table explains the characteristics of respondents in this survey based on the following demographics:

Table 1. Characteristics Respondents

Category	Item	F	%
Type Sex	Man	84	41.8
	Woman	117	58.2
Total		201	100.0
Age	17 – 25	84	41.8
	26 – 45	83	41.3
	46 – 60	34	16.9
Total		201	100.0
Domicile	Bali	7	3.5
	Papua	1	0.5
	Java	30	15
	Kalimantan	118	59
	Sulawesi	11	5.5

	Sumatra	33	16.5
Total		201	100.0
Last education	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	4	2
	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	104	52
	Diploma (D1/D2/D3/D4)	34	17
	Bachelor (S1)	55	27.5
	Others	3	1.5
Total		201	100.0
Work	Employee Private	63	31.3
	Students	2	1
	Student	61	30.3
	Others	75	37.3
Total		201	100.0
Yes, I Once watch kafani live broadcast on tiktok		201	100.0
Total		201	100.0

Source : Results Processed Researchers (2026)

Based on the results of a survey of 201 respondents, the majority of respondents were female. women (58.2%). The most dominant age group is 17-25 years (41.8%). Seen from domicile area, most respondents came from Kalimantan (59%). Education level dominated by high school/vocational school graduates or equivalent (52%).

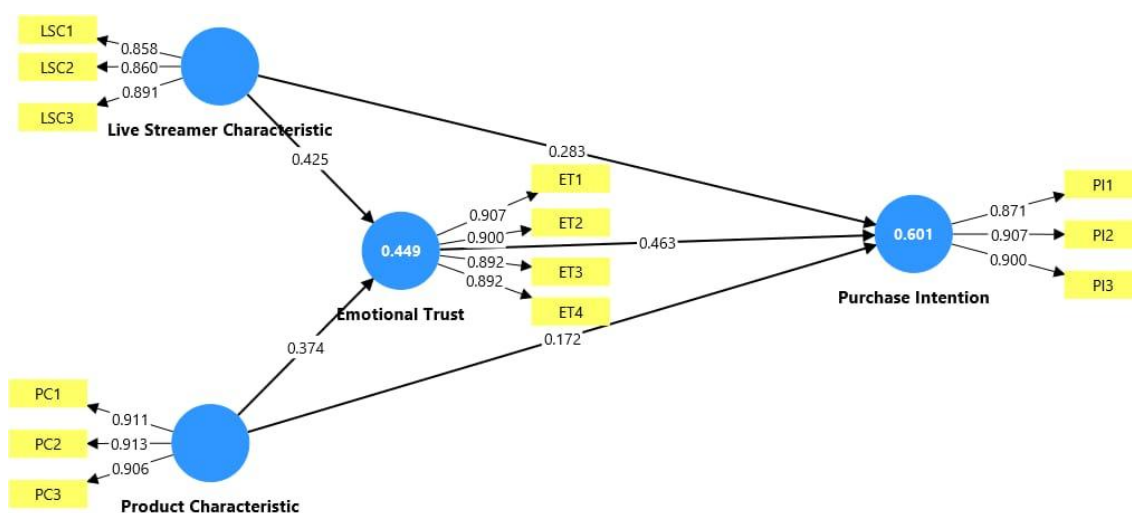
Table 2. Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability

Variables	Items	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Live Streamer Characteristic	I feel that the live streamer kafani has professional knowledge about the products offered.	0.858	0.903	0.757
	I feel that live streamer kafani has a humorous appeal.	0.860		
	I feel that live streamer kafani interacts well during the live stream.	0.891		
Product Characteristic	I feel that the quality of the products offered by Kafani matches the description conveyed in the live stream.	0.911	0.935	0.828
	I feel that the price offered by the seller is appropriate for the item and is worth buying .	0.913		
	I feel the products displayed meet functional needs and appear to offer practical benefits.	0.906		
Emotional Trust	I believe that the product information recommended by live streamer kafani is correct.	0.907	0.943	0.806
	I believe that the product information recommended by live streamer kafani is accurate.	0.900		

	I feel safe relying on sellers on tiktok kafani for shopping.	0.892		
	I believe in the knowledge and abilities of live streamer kafani	0.892		
Purchase Intention	I interested in purchasing products recommended by live streamer kafani.	0.871	0.922	0.797
	I feel confident to buy this product after watching live streamer kafani.	0.907		
	I will consider this product when I need a similar product.	0.900		

Based on Table 2, all indicators in each construct have met the validity and reliability evaluation criteria. The Outer Loading value for each indicator ranges from 0.858 to 0.859. 0.913, Which all of it beyond threshold limit 0.70 as recommended by Hair et al. (2021), thus showing that each indicator has a strong measurement contribution to its construction.

Besides that, Composite value Reliability (CR) on all over constructs are between 0.903 to 0.943, indicating excellent internal consistency. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value was also above 0.50 for all constructs, confirming convergent validity and the construct's ability to explain the variance of its indicators. All outer loading, CR, and AVE criteria have been met so that the construct is declared feasible in terms of measurement and can be continued to the discriminant validity testing stage which is presented in Table 3 and Table 4.



Source: SmartPLS 4
Figure 1. PLS -SEM Algorithm

Table 3. Discriminant Validity – Cross Loading

Emotional	Live Streamer	Product	Purchase
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	Trust	Characteristic	Characteristic	Intention
ET1	0.907	0.520	0.441	0.631
ET2	0.900	0.519	0.507	0.658
ET3	0.892	0.539	0.480	0.635
ET4	0.892	0.488	0.528	0.660
LSC1	0.469	0.858	0.283	0.492
LSC2	0.491	0.860	0.400	0.522
LSC3	0.537	0.891	0.363	0.595
PC1	0.496	0.371	0.911	0.477
PC2	0.464	0.349	0.913	0.480
PC3	0.526	0.378	0.906	0.511
PI1	0.608	0.544	0.458	0.871
PI2	0.628	0.558	0.491	0.907
PI3	0.689	0.556	0.491	0.900

Based on table 3 cross loadings, all indicators in each construct have the highest loading value on the construct they measure compared to other constructs so that they are declared valid and suitable for use in the measurement model. The Emotional Trust indicator (ET1–ET4) has a loading value ranging from 0.892 to 0.907, indicating the highest loading on the Emotional Trust construct, the Live Streamer Characteristic indicator (LSC1–LSC3) has a loading value ranging from 0.858 to 0.891, having the highest loading on the Live Streamer Characteristic construct, the Product Characteristic indicator (PC1–PC3) has a loading value ranging from 0.906 to 0.913, having the largest loading on the Product Characteristic construct, and the Purchase Intention indicator (PI1–PI3) has a loading value ranging from 0.871 to 0.907, indicating the highest loading on the Purchase Intention construct. This shows that each indicator is able to represent its construct better than other constructs, therefore discriminant validity has been met based on the criteria of Hair et, al (2021).

Table 4. Results of Discriminant Validity Test Using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Emotional Trust	Live Streamer Characteristic	Product Characteristic	Purchase Intention
Emotional Trust	0.898			
Live Streamer Characteristic	0.575	0.870		
Product Characteristic	0.545	0.403	0.910	
Purchase Intention	0.720	0.619	0.538	0.893

Table 4 shows that the Fornell - Larcker Criterion value for each construct

is greater than the correlation with other constructs, thus fulfilling the discriminant validity criteria . The \sqrt{AVE} for each construct (Emotional Trust = 0.898; Live Streamer Characteristic = 0.870; Product Characteristic = 0.910; Purchase Intention = 0.893) is greater than its correlation value with other constructs. This indicates that all these values are higher than the correlation between related constructs, so it can be concluded that discriminant validity for all variables has been met according to the recommendations of Hair et al. (2021).

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach Alpha
Emotional Trust	0.943	0.920
Live Streamer Characteristic	0.903	0.840
Product Characteristic	0.935	0.896
Purchase Intention	0.922	0.872

Hair et al. (2021) stated that a construct is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceed 0.70. Based on Table 5, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70, indicating that the measurement instrument in this study is reliable.

Table 6. R Square Value

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Emotional Trust	0.449	0.443
Purchase Intention	0.601	0.595

Based on Table 6, the R-square value for the Emotional Trust variable is 0.449 and Purchase Intention is 0.601, indicating that the independent variables in the model are able to explain 44.9% and 60.1% of the variation in the endogenous variables, respectively. Referring to the R-square assessment criteria according to Hair et al. (2021), values of 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 indicate weak, moderate, and strong levels of influence, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that the model's explanatory ability for Emotional Trust is moderate, while for Purchase Intention it is included in the moderate to strong category, indicating that the structural model has adequate quality to explain and predict the research variables.

Table 7. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Path	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1	ET-> PI	0.463	0.465	0.084	5,507	0.000	Accepted
H2	LSC -> ET	0.425	0.426	0.056	7,521	0.000	Accepted
H3	LSC -> PI	0.283	0.282	0.062	4,551	0.040	Accepted
H4	PC -> ET	0.374	0.374	0.059	6,320	0.000	Accepted
H5	PJ -> PU	0.172	0.171	0.064	2,690	0.007	Accepted
H6	LSC ->ET -> PI	0.197	0.199	0.048	4,073	0.000	Accepted
H7	PC -> ET -> PI	0.173	0.174	0.044	3,912	0.002	Accepted

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing presented in Table 4.1.7, it is known that all relationship paths between variables have positive path coefficient values and t-statistic values above the minimum limit of 1.96 with a p-value of less than 0.05. These results indicate that live streamer characteristics have a positive and significant effect on emotional trust and purchase intention, so the proposed hypothesis regarding this relationship is declared accepted. Furthermore, product characteristics are also proven to have a positive and significant effect on emotional trust and purchase intention, indicating that product quality, price fairness, and practicality have important roles in shaping emotional trust and consumer purchase intention. In addition, emotional trust shows a positive and significant effect on purchase intention, which confirms that emotional trust is a determinant factor in the purchase decision-making process. Thus, the results of the overall hypothesis testing confirm that the developed research model has a good ability to explain the causal relationship between variables in the context of live streaming commerce of religious products.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that emotional trust plays a crucial role in influencing purchase intention, indicating that emotional trust is a primary determinant in encouraging consumers' buying intentions within the live streaming commerce context of religious products. This result is consistent with Sun et al. (2022) and Zhang et al. (2022), who argue that emotional trust formed through positive social interactions during live streaming enhances consumers' sense of security and emotional attachment, ultimately increasing purchase intention. In the context of religious burial products, which carry profound

spiritual and emotional meaning, emotional trust becomes even more significant. Consumers do not rely solely on functional considerations, but also on psychological comfort and spiritual assurance when making purchase decisions.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that live streamer characteristics significantly influence emotional trust. This finding supports Trivedi and Sama (2020), Yang et al. (2024), and Zhou and Baskaran (2025), who emphasize that streamer professionalism in delivering clear, accurate, and consistent product information enhances credibility and fosters emotional trust among audiences. The professionalism shown by the host in educating viewers about religious product usage helps reduce uncertainty and perceived risk, aligning with Liu et al. (2022), who state that streamer expertise transmits reliability to the audience. Thus, professionalism serves not only as an informational factor but also as an emotional reassurance mechanism.

In addition, attractiveness and communication style contribute significantly to emotional trust formation. The use of engaging delivery and contextually appropriate humor strengthens affective attachment between streamer and audience, consistent with Kim et al. (2023) and Zhou et al. (2025), who find that attraction influences emotional trust through affective bonding. Moreover, responsive two-way interaction during live streaming reinforces psychological closeness, as noted by Jun et al. (2020) and Meng et al. (2021). Interactive communication enables viewers to feel acknowledged and valued, which intensifies emotional trust formation within the live commerce environment of TikTok.

The study also reveals that product characteristics significantly affect emotional trust. This finding aligns with Lu and Chen (2021), Wang et al. (2022), and Yang et al. (2024), who highlight the importance of product-related information in reducing uncertainty during online purchasing. In live streaming contexts, where consumers cannot physically examine products, visual demonstrations and transparent explanations become essential trust-building mechanisms. The perceived quality of the product, clearly communicated features, price fairness, and product practicality collectively strengthen consumers' emotional confidence. This supports Azizi et al. (2023), who argue that effectively communicated product quality in live shopping reduces uncertainty and enhances trust, as well as Suksamran et al. (2016), who emphasize the direct influence of perceived price fairness on consumer trust.

Moreover, the findings indicate that live streamer characteristics directly influence purchase intention, beyond their indirect effect through emotional trust. This result is consistent with Zhou and Baskaran (2025) and Zhong et al.

(2022), who demonstrate that streamer attributes directly shape consumer purchase decisions in live streaming commerce. Professionalism enhances perceptions of competence and credibility, thereby increasing consumers' confidence in making purchasing decisions (Trivedi et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2022). At the same time, attractiveness and engaging communication styles stimulate emotional appeal and accelerate the formation of purchase intention (Kim et al., 2023), while responsive interaction creates a personalized shopping experience that encourages immediate buying behavior (Jun et al., 2020).

Finally, product characteristics also directly influence purchase intention, confirming that perceived quality, price fairness, and practicality significantly drive buying intention. These findings are consistent with Chen and Wang (2024), Wang et al. (2022), and Li et al. (2024), who argue that visual product demonstrations, transparent pricing, and clear information during live sessions enhance consumer confidence and purchase intention. The practicality and relevance of the product further facilitate quicker evaluation and decision-making processes (Yang et al., 2024; Fang et al., 2023). Therefore, product characteristics function not only as cognitive stimuli but also as direct determinants of consumer purchase intention in live streaming commerce.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the most important finding lies in the central role of emotional trust as a mediating mechanism between live streamer characteristics, product characteristics, and purchase intention in live streaming commerce. The results demonstrate that professionalism, attractiveness, and interactive communication from the live streamer, combined with transparent product attributes such as quality, price fairness, and practicality, significantly enhance emotional trust, which in turn strengthens consumers' purchase intention. The key lesson of this research is that in emotionally sensitive product categories, persuasive marketing is not solely driven by functional value but by the ability to create psychological comfort, credibility, and ethical communication. The academic contribution of this study lies in extending the stimulus–organism–response (S-O-R) framework within the context of live commerce on TikTok by positioning emotional trust not merely as a transactional risk-reduction mechanism, but as a deeper psychological reassurance factor in high emotional-intensity products. This provides a more nuanced understanding of trust formation in digital marketing environments.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the use of purposive sampling and data collection from a single platform limits the generalizability of

the findings. Second, the cross-sectional design does not capture changes in emotional trust and purchase intention over time. Third, the model focuses only on selected variables, potentially overlooking other relevant factors such as perceived risk, religiosity, or social influence. Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the conceptual model by incorporating additional psychological and contextual variables, apply longitudinal designs, and examine different product categories and live streaming platforms. Such developments would enhance external validity and further enrich empirical studies in live streaming-based digital marketing.

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