

## Factors Influencing Consumers' Purchase Intention Mediated by Immersive Experience: A Research Agenda

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### ARTICLE INFORMATION

#### Publication information

#### Research article

#### HOW TO CITE

Putri, A. J., Rubiyanti, N. R., Widodo, A., & Silvianita, A. (2024). Factors influencing consumers' purchase intention mediated by immersive experience: A research agenda. *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 7(1), 55-66

#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v7i1.3114>

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Received: 13 March 2024

Accepted: 14 April 2024

Published: 16 May 2024

### ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of internet technology has revolutionized everyday life, making online shopping a common phenomenon. Apart from that, the development of technology can change several habits in human life, for example, shopping in shops can now be done via smartphone (online). Technological advances and the development of online shopping have certainly increased competition between business actors, thereby encouraging them to implement innovative digital promotional strategies. Live streaming features on e-commerce platforms have emerged as a popular tool for businesses to showcase their products and interact with potential buyers. This research aims to determine the influence of social presence on purchase intentions mediated by immersive experiences in Indonesian consumers involved in live video commerce. The population of this research is Indonesian people with an age range of 14–29 years (1995–2010) and belonging to Generation Z. This research introduces a versatile model that can measure a person's tendency to buy not only through e-commerce but also by considering relevant factors. This research highlights a previously unexplored area: how a seller's online presence and the creation of an immersive experience can influence a customer's decision to purchase. In this way, this research can provide new insights for further research.

**Keywords:** E-Commerce; Immersive Experience; Live Streaming; Social Presence; Purchase Intention

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid advancement of internet technology has revolutionized daily life, making it easier for people to access goods and services (Sukmaningrum, 2022). This has led to a continuous increase in internet users in Indonesia. A recent study by Aprilia (2021) highlights the positive impact of rapid technological growth on our ability to manage work and daily tasks. This trend is reflected in Indonesia, where the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII, 2024) reported a significant increase in internet users in February 2024. With a total population of 278.7 million in 2023, APJII's data indicates that over 221.5 million Indonesians now have access to the internet, signifying a growing reliance on technology for various aspects of life. The results of the 2024 Internet Penetration Survey released by APJII indicate that the current internet penetration rate is 79.5%, an increase of 1.4% compared to the previous period (APJII, 2024). Building on the substantial internet user base in Indonesia, as reported by APJII (2024), this data presents a compelling opportunity for e-commerce to flourish. Research by Prasetio et al. (2021) confirms that internet users constitute the core target audience for e-commerce businesses. Therefore, Indonesia's expanding internet penetration signifies a fertile ground for the e-commerce sector to thrive.

The proliferation of internet users has prompted businesses to adopt more innovative strategies for promoting their products through digital platforms, as noted by Ellis-Chadwick and Chaffey (2012). Digital promotion encompasses marketing strategies that leverage digital media such as websites, social media, email, databases, mobile/wireless, and digital TV. Its objectives include enhancing brand awareness, gaining insights into consumer profiles and behaviors, fostering customer loyalty, and boosting purchase intention. In addition to creating engaging content, businesses must master all available features across all platforms, including e-commerce. E-commerce serves as a crucial tool for disseminating product information and expanding market reach to achieve global profitability and competitiveness (Srisadono, 2018). Building on existing research, a prior study by Sutiono et al. (2024) found a significant connection between social media use and the likelihood of Indonesian consumers making purchases through online shopping apps. The research findings highlight the significant influence of social media on the purchase intention of this demographic group. In other words, social media platforms play a key role in shaping how this particular group of consumers makes choices about what to buy.

The meteoric rise of live video commerce on e-commerce giants like Shopee, TikTok, Tokopedia, and Lazada has transformed marketing landscapes, positioning it as a cornerstone for brand advocacy and sales acceleration. Live streaming has emerged as a captivating force, not only igniting consumer spending sprees but also establishing itself as an indispensable strategy for businesses of all scales. The introduction of live-streaming features has revolutionized customer interactions, enabling direct engagement to fulfill their needs and potentially enhance purchase interest. Shopping through live streaming has emerged as a captivating trend gaining significant popularity in Indonesia (Ratnawati & Hanoky, 2023). Live streaming marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for e-commerce, allowing sellers to directly showcase their products through real-time video. This interactive format fosters a sense of social presence for consumers, enabling them to engage in real-time communication and pose quick questions. A study by Corrêa et al., (2020) suggests that live streaming provides a more comprehensive product experience compared to traditional methods. This enhanced engagement ultimately translates to a higher likelihood of purchase.

There's a strong case to be made for the positive impact of live streaming on e-commerce in Indonesia, especially considering the social aspects it offers. Research by Chen et al. (2023) suggests that the live, interactive nature of these streams can enhance the overall shopping experience for consumers. This can be achieved by reducing feelings of uncertainty (a common hurdle in online shopping) and ultimately boosting interest and purchase decisions. Furthermore, Yim et al. (2017) highlight the potential for personalized shopping guidance from live streamers. By tailoring their recommendations to individual customer needs, streamers can grab attention and create a more immersive experience, further driving purchase intent. Additionally, online shopping is intrinsically linked to purchase history and directly impacts customers' online shopping behavior (Weisberg et al., 2011). An immersive experience arises when an individual undergoes a seamless process in fulfilling their needs. The perception of an immersive experience can assist customers in identifying the value and benefits they can derive from an activity. Consequently, customers are more likely to develop purchase interest and make purchasing decisions when they perceive greater value and benefits (Chen et al., 2023). Prior research has established a positive correlation between social presence, immersive experience, and purchase intention in online environments. In simpler terms, as consumers feel a stronger sense of social connection and become more immersed within a live video commerce setting, their likelihood of purchasing products or services offered during the stream increases. This highlights the importance of fostering these factors to drive sales within the live-streaming marketplace (Huang et al., 2023).

Compelled by the captivating possibility that social presence influences purchase intention among live streaming shoppers, researchers are eager to explore this dynamic within the e-commerce realm. The study will utilize immersive experience as a mediating factor, directing its focus toward Generation Z consumers in Indonesia.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Social Presence**

The concept of social presence was first introduced by Short et al. (1976) and revolves around the perception of an individual as a genuine person during mediated communication. This encompasses two key aspects: firstly, the degree to which others perceive them as a real person despite the lack of physical interaction, and secondly, the level of emotional connection that is fostered through the communication channel. Building on the concept of social presence, Aqilah et al. (2023) emphasize its specific application within video conferencing. They define social presence in this context as the perception participants form about each other during online interactions. This perception centers on the feeling of interacting with actual people, rather than mere digital representations. It encompasses not only the level of satisfaction with the video call itself, but also the sense of emotional connection established with others on the call. Zhang and Shi (2022) further define social presence as "the extent to which the social commerce environment allows customers to build personal, warm, intimate, and easy-going interactions with others. Social presence theory emphasizes the idea that during communication, we form an impression of how much a person feels like a real, physical presence. This perception is influenced by the communication medium being used. In other words, social presence theory suggests that face-to-face interaction creates a stronger sense of being with another person compared to communication through text-based channels or video calls (Bhatti et al., 2020). According to Hou et al. (2020), social presence is an individual's awareness of others and interpersonal relationships in interaction, which is related to the level of psychological closeness, sensitivity, and

human warmth. Social presence is a crucial factor influencing the way online shopping platforms interact with and gain the trust of users. Research by Ogonowski et al. (2014) builds on the concept of social presence, the theory suggests that consumers are more likely to trust websites that feel more personal and interactive. This means websites that make users feel like they are communicating with actual people, rather than just a faceless platform, are perceived as more trustworthy. With the increasing presence of short video platforms, trust among users will be enhanced by their human and social attributes, which will ultimately influence purchase intentions. However, when the platform becomes weaker, users feel more isolated and lack trust. Therefore, the quality of interactions between platforms and users is influenced by the platform's level of social presence, which in turn influences the platform's purchase intentions (Shen & Wang, 2024).

### **Immersive Experience**

The complexity of the concept of "immersion" is reflected in the diversity of its meanings. Careful system design and creation are necessary, but the user's mindset and abilities must also be considered. Immersion in technology is associated with a certain level of sensory diversity that facilitates isolation from the real world. The human experience is unique in that immersion causes a series of psychological changes that occur at the attentional, affective, cognitive (facial), sensory/perceptual, and memory levels in parallel. In marketing, immersive experience is an implicit feeling (something contained in the consumer's mind that is not stated openly or implied) about closeness to an idea, which is often associated with plunging deep into something but in fact is only in place (Maharani & Dirgantara, 2023). It is also said that the immersive experience of live streaming makes users feel as if they are in the live stream and forget about the real world. Immersive experience refers to an individual's experience in an activity while ignoring other things, which will result in a feeling of pleasure. According to Lee (2004), immersive experience can give users the feeling of experiencing a virtual product as an authentic product, which is called a product experience. The concept of immersion describes a mental state where individuals become completely absorbed in an activity or environment. This intense focus makes them lose track of time and surroundings (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Research suggests that achieving this state of immersion leads to positive outcomes, with individuals experiencing high levels of joy and satisfaction (Huang et al., 2023).

### **Purchase Intention**

According to Belch et al. (2020), purchase intention is generally based on the match between purchase motives and brand characteristics considered by consumers. The creation of a purchase intention involves many processes that are felt by consumers, such as motivation, perception, attitude formation, and integration. Purchase intention is different from actual purchases, when consumers feel an interest in buying a product, they still have to implement the decision of when to buy and how much money to spend to make the actual purchase. Purchase intention shows a consumer's possibility to buy a particular product in the future (Moslehpour et al., 2021). Another opinion, according to Guha et al. (2021), the concept of purchase intention is used as a predictor of consumer behavior. By understanding a consumer's willingness to purchase a particular product or brand, business people can gain insight into which option is most likely to be chosen in the near future. This information is critical for companies looking to optimize their marketing strategies and product offerings. Purchase intention is a customer's tendency to take actions related to purchasing, and purchasing interest in online commerce is defined as a situation where consumers are willing and involved in an online

transaction (Maharani & Dirgantara, 2023). According to Priansa (2017), purchase intention is generally divided into four dimensions, namely transactional, or consumers always tend to buy a product (goods or services) from a company or brand, which is based on a high level of trust in the company or brand. Referential or consumers tend to recommend their products to other people, and concerns will arise after consumers gain experience and information about their products. Furthermore, preferential or consumer tends to describe the behavior of someone who has a primary preference for the product. Consumer behavior can be characterized by a strong exploratory drive. This means that consumers actively seek out information about products that pique their interest. Consumers will engage in research to gather details and confirmation of the product's positive attributes, essentially building a case to justify their potential purchase.

### **Relationship Between Social Presence and Purchase Intention**

Social presence refers to the extent to which an individual perceives the presence of others during online interactions. This encompasses the feeling of being connected to and interacting with other individuals within a virtual environment. On the other hand, purchase intention signifies the likelihood of an individual purchasing a product or service. It represents the probability that an individual will make a purchase intention (Lu et al., 2016). A study has established a positive and significant relationship between social presence and purchase intention (Huang et al., 2023). The research suggests a key takeaway for e-commerce businesses: fostering a strong sense of social presence within their online experiences can significantly impact consumer behavior. When websites or platforms cultivate this feeling of interacting with real people, rather than just a faceless interface, consumers are more likely to become engaged with the products or services offered. This heightened interest can ultimately translate into increased purchase intention, leading to positive business outcomes. In other words, feeling like they are interacting with real people, rather than just a website, can make consumers more receptive to making a purchase. Apart from that, according to Ming et al. (2021), a factor that can influence purchase intentions when trading via live video is social presence. Previous research by Gao et al. (2021) also emphasizes the importance of real-time interaction between viewers and live streamers. This two-way communication strengthens the feeling of social presence within the e-commerce platform. By fostering a sense of connection and addressing audience needs in real-time, live streamers can significantly impact consumer behavior. This impact is particularly evident in purchase intention, where a positive and engaging interaction can nudge viewers toward making a purchase. The following is the theory:

H1: Social presence to have an effect on purchase intention.

### **Relationship Between Social Presence and Immersive Experience**

Social presence and immersive experience are two crucial concepts in online communication. Social presence theory delves into how we perceive the "realness" of others during communication that takes place through technology. In essence, it focuses on the extent to which someone feels like they are interacting with another actual person, despite the use of a mediating platform like a website or social media app. While social presence theory explores the feeling of interacting with others in a digital space, immersive experience takes a different approach. Here, the focus is on the individual's sense of being fully engaged within a virtual environment. The concept described is immersive experience, this refers to the intensity of a person's involvement with the virtual environment. When someone feels deeply immersed, they become completely engrossed in the virtual world, potentially losing awareness of the physical environment and even the passage of time. They may feel surrounded by the virtual world and its elements as if they are truly present in it (Huang et al., 2023). Social presence can

capture a sense of humanity, warmth, and sensitivity in a virtual environment (Yang et al., 2022). According to research by Grinberg et al. (2014), when it comes to crafting engaging social virtual worlds, fostering a strong sense of social presence is crucial. This means users need to feel like they're interacting with other real people, not just digital avatars. By creating this perception of social connection, virtual environments can become more immersive, drawing users deeper into the experience. Social presence can give the audience the feeling that they are really there and are interacting in real terms with other people in the virtual space.

In addition, research by Fang et al. (2019) in the context of online learning and Huang et al. (2023) in the context of live video commerce validates the positive and significant influence of social presence on immersive experiences. Research suggests a fascinating interplay between social presence and immersive experience. They seem to build on each other in a positive way. When users feel a strong social presence in an online environment, meaning they perceive themselves as interacting with real people, they are more likely to become fully immersed within that virtual world. This sense of social connection appears to act as a springboard, deepening their engagement with the environment itself. Conversely, the more immersed an individual is in an online environment, the more likely they are to perceive the presence of others. This interplay between social presence and immersive experience can significantly impact various aspects of online interactions, including learning, commerce, and training. By fostering a sense of connection and engagement, both concepts can enhance the effectiveness of online experiences. In conclusion, social presence and immersive experience are intertwined concepts that play a pivotal role in shaping online interactions. Understanding their relationship can enable the creation of more meaningful and impactful online experiences. The following is the theory:

H2: Social presence to have an effect on immersive experience.

### **Relationship Between Immersive Experience and Purchase Intention**

In the realm of e-commerce and digital marketing, immersive experience, and purchase intention stand as two crucial and interconnected concepts. Immersive experience refers to the extent to which an individual feels immersed within a virtual environment, such as a website or application. The higher the level of immersion, the more real and present the individual feels within this virtual world. On the other hand, purchase intention signifies the likelihood of an individual purchasing a product or service. High purchase intention indicates a strong tendency on the part of the individual to make a purchase (Ganguly et al., 2010). According to Fang et al. (2019), immersive experience perception can help users identify the value and benefits that can be obtained from an activity. It will be easier for customers to create interest in purchasing a product when they perceive greater value and benefits. In live video commerce, one of the things that makes viewers interested in making purchases is a deep and immersive sense of involvement when shopping (Sun et al., 2019). Previous research (Maharani & Dirgantara, 2023) validated that there is a significant positive relationship between immersive experience and purchase intention. In addition, prior research by Ganguly et al. (2010) has revealed a positive correlation between immersive experiences and purchase intention within the online shopping landscape. In other words, when online stores can create a truly immersive experience for consumers, it leads to a greater likelihood of those consumers actually making a purchase. This suggests that online retailers who can develop engaging and interactive experiences that draw users in may see a significant boost in sales. The following is the theory:

H3: Immersive experience to have an effect on purchase intention.

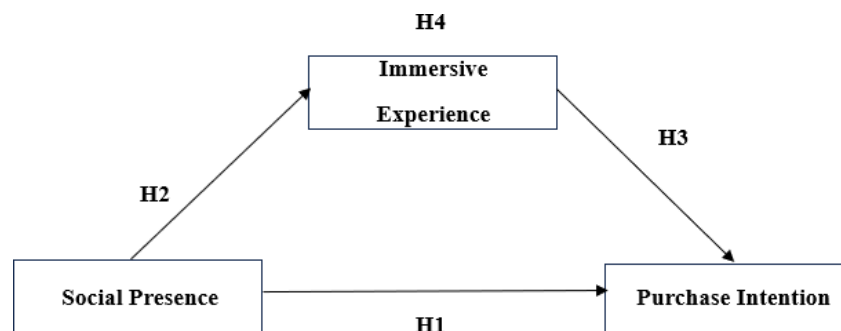
### Relationship Between Social Presence and Purchase Intention Mediated by Immersive Experience

In the realm of e-commerce, three key concepts influence consumer behavior: social presence, immersive experience, and purchase intention. Social presence describes the feeling of interacting with others online, while immersive experience captures the degree to which someone feels absorbed in a virtual environment. Finally, in the realm of consumer behavior, purchase intention refers to the probability of a customer buying a particular product or service. It essentially gauges a consumer's level of interest and willingness to make a purchase. From a business perspective, grasping purchase intention is a vital tool. By understanding how likely consumers are to buy a product or service, businesses gain valuable insights into customer behavior. This knowledge empowers them to make informed decisions about their marketing strategies. By tailoring their approach to address factors that influence purchase intention, businesses can increase their chances of attracting and converting potential customers (Lu et al., 2016). Research suggests a fascinating interplay between these concepts. Studies by Huang et al. (2023) and Aqilah et al. (2023) have confirmed that social presence can significantly boost purchase intention. This effect is believed to be mediated by immersive experience (Fang et al., 2019). E-commerce platforms that effectively create a feeling of interacting with real people (social presence) can lead to users becoming more deeply absorbed in the online shopping experience. This heightened sense of connection can act as a bridge, drawing users further into the virtual world and fostering a more immersive experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). This immersive state, characterized by forgetting surroundings and time (Lim & Childs, 2020), paves the way for increased purchase intention. Effectively, creating an interactive and clear website design that fosters social presence can ultimately lead to more sales through the power of immersive experiences. The following is the theory:

H4: Social presence has an effect on purchase intention mediated by immersive experience.

In this study, the conceptual framework can be described as follows:

**Figure 1.** Theoretical Framework



Source: Processed by the Researchers (2024)

In order to evaluate and describe the impact of social presence on purchase intention mediated by immersive experience, this conceptual framework offers four hypotheses. The following are the four hypotheses:

H1: Social presence to have an effect on purchase intention.

H2: Social presence to have an effect on immersive experience.

H3: Immersive experience to have an effect on purchase intention.

H4: Social presence has an effect on purchase intention mediated by immersive experience.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a quantitative approach with a sampling technique, namely nonprobability-purposive sampling. Data was obtained by distributing forms on social media and then processed using SmartPLS version 3.9 software with a Likert scale starting from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (agree), 3 (somewhat agree), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree). This study focuses on understanding how live streaming on e-commerce platforms influences the buying behavior of Indonesian consumers. Specifically, the research targets Generation Z in Indonesia. This age group, born between 1995 and 2010 (29-14 years old as of 2024), is known for being digitally native and familiar with using live features online. By focusing on this demographic within a specific Indonesian province, the research aims to gain deeper insights into the impact of live streaming on consumer purchase intention in this particular context. Live video streaming on e-commerce in Indonesia. Apart from using primary data in the form of questionnaires, this research also uses secondary data such as books, journals, and trusted websites.

## **RESULTS**

The explosion of the internet has ignited a wave of creativity in e-commerce, leading to the development of innovative strategies that captivate customer attention and drive purchasing decisions. Live streaming has become a powerful tool, not just for boosting customer engagement, but also for Indonesian businesses to establish a strategic foothold. E-commerce companies must prioritize streamlining the online shopping experience and minimizing distractions. This fosters positive customer perceptions of social commerce and ultimately, translates into increased purchase intent (Hassan et al., 2018). Live e-commerce, though rooted in behavioral marketing principles, stands apart from traditional offline marketing. By cultivating a strong social presence, businesses can effectively overcome existing limitations. Immersive experiences, in a similar vein, can enhance purchase intention both online and in physical stores. Notably, in the realm of online shopping, immersive experiences hold particular value. Viewers tend to be more receptive and enthusiastic while engaged with live streams on e-commerce platforms (Wang et al., 2022). This research presents a conceptual paper that will be further developed into an empirical study building upon prior research findings.

## **DISCUSSION**

This research investigates the growing phenomenon of live streaming within Indonesian e-commerce. Live streaming e-commerce has emerged as a powerful new marketing strategy in recent years. It offers advantages beyond simply showcasing products, allowing stores to interact with customers in real time, address their inquiries swiftly, and even convert that interaction directly into a sale (Wang et al., 2022). Indonesia boasts a thriving landscape for live video streaming within e-commerce, with popular platforms like Shopee, TikTok, Tokopedia, and Lazada leading the charge. This study is designed to have a lasting impact on the future of e-commerce, e-business, and social commerce within Indonesia. The research model developed here will serve as a tool for measuring not only purchase intention towards e-commerce but also other relevant factors. Furthermore, the research aims to illuminate the influence of social presence and



immersive experiences on a customer's decision to purchase. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by exploring how these elements shape purchase intention for products presented through live streaming on e-commerce platforms.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research investigates how live streaming on e-commerce platforms influences consumer purchase intention in Indonesia. By incorporating live streams into the online shopping experience, the study aims to understand how this feature impacts purchase intention. Live streaming offers several potential benefits for consumers. It can streamline product discovery by allowing them to easily search for desired items. Additionally, the live format facilitates direct interaction with the host, enabling consumers to ask questions and receive personalized guidance throughout the shopping journey. Apart from that, the benefit of live streaming is that consumers have the opportunity to get cheaper prices or discount vouchers, which are only valid when the shop is live. This research uses social presence as an independent variable, immersive experience as a mediator, and purchase intention as a dependent variable. These variables have been widely studied by previous researchers, and several studies related to this research have been found. This research proposes an update to the current understanding of how social presence influences purchase intention in e-commerce. Previous studies have established a positive relationship between these two factors. However, this research suggests that immersive experience acts as a mediator in this connection. It is also hoped that this research can be used as supporting data by future researchers and can be used by managers as a strategy to attract customers to continue using e-commerce and evaluate shortcomings when running live streaming.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

N/A

## **DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest.

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