

Factors Influencing Consumers' Continued Purchase Intention of Health Foods through Live-Streaming Shopping: An Extension of the Value Model for Price Discounts

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Abstract—The market opportunities for health foods have continuously grown due to the impact of Covid-19, prompting health food businesses to actively explore new sales channels, including live-streaming shopping (LSS). This study proposes a research model to examine the unique values offered by LSS, including real-time audiovisual streaming, multi-party real-time interaction, and low-price strategies, in enhancing consumers' intention to continue purchasing health foods through LSS. The study employs an online survey method and utilizes PLS-SEM for data analysis. The results demonstrate that the real-time audiovisual streaming in LSS and the support for real-time interaction between streamers and consumers enable streamers to provide high-quality information about health foods to consumers. This not only enhances consumers' perception of product quality and perceived savings in LSS but also facilitates their acquisition of product knowledge. Although positive word-of-mouth shared by co-viewers in the chat room can also increase consumers' product knowledge and perceived savings in LSS, it does not significantly enhance consumers' perceived product quality. The information directly provided by streamers has a stronger impact on the perceived value of LSS compared to the information shared by co-viewers. Furthermore, this study reveals that the perceived savings value has the greatest influence on enhancing consumers' continued purchase intention through LSS, followed by product knowledge, while perceived product quality has the least impact. The study concludes by providing practical suggestions for streamers in formulating sales strategies for health foods in the context of LSS.

Keywords—Live-streaming shopping, health foods, price discount, consumer value, perceived savings, perceived quality, product knowledge

I. INTRODUCTION

Influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic, consumers are seeking to enhance their immune system through the consumption of health foods, leading to a continuous increase in the demand for health foods [1]. Even in the post-pandemic era, the sales of health foods continue to show a growing trend. According to the market trend research firm Kantra Consumer Index, the sales revenue of the health food market in Taiwan grew by 21% in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period last year [2]. Among the sales channels, online shopping has experienced the fastest growth, with online sales increasing by 37% compared to the same period last year [2]. This indicates the significant sales potential of health foods on online platforms. In particular, live-streaming shopping (LSS) channels have gained favor from health food businesses due

to their ability to generate impressive sales volumes in a short period, making them another good choice for online sales channels. However, different online sales channels possess distinct characteristics. Therefore, for health food businesses, understanding the distinct characteristics of LSS that make it more suitable for selling health foods compared to other channels and understanding how to use these distinct characteristics to create unique values for consumers is an important topic that cannot be overlooked.

Health foods are defined as all food and drink products that consumers deem advantageous or beneficial to their health [3]. In physical channels, health foods are typically perceived as requiring higher monetary investments to acquire [4]. In contrast, since LSS primarily adopts large discounts as its main sales strategy, low prices become their primary appeal when streamers sell health foods. Therefore, consumers purchasing health foods through LSS can benefit from cost savings.

Moreover, health foods are considered credence goods [5] as their effects are not immediately discernible even after consumers purchase and continuously use them. In such cases, health foods typically rely on face-to-face explanations from professionals to ensure their safety, effectiveness, quality, and consumption guidelines. However, when purchasing health foods through conventional e-commerce websites, consumers only engage in one-way interactions with the website, lacking real-time customer service personnel to explain precautions and consumption guidelines for purchasing health foods. This limitation may reduce consumers' willingness to purchase health foods online.

However, unlike conventional e-commerce websites, LSS is characterized by real-time multi-party interactions, including interactions between streamers and viewers and interactions among viewers. The real-time multi-party interaction nature makes LSS more suitable for selling health foods compared to conventional e-commerce websites. In terms of the interaction between streamers and viewers, streamers can use real-time audiovisual streaming to introduce and explain information about health foods, demonstrate how to consume them, and provide immediate responses to viewers' questions. The interactions among viewers include real-time two-way interactions and one-way observations. Real-time two-way interactions involve viewers asking questions about health foods to co-viewers or providing immediate assistance in responding to co-viewers' questions. One-way observations involve observing other viewers' shopping experiences,

recommendations, and behaviors regarding the health foods being sold. Therefore, through the real-time multi-party interaction characteristics of LSS, the information about health foods provided by streamers through real-time audiovisual streaming is considered to have higher information quality. Combined with the real-time positive word-of-mouth (WOM) regarding health foods shared by other co-viewers, it can satisfy consumers' need for immediate confirmation of safety, ingredients, effectiveness, and consumption methods when purchasing health foods.

In the past, value theory has suggested that consumers' perceived value is determined by their perceptions of price and quality [6]. Lee and Chen-Yu [7] extended the value theory and pointed out that although significant discounts can enhance consumers' perception of saving money, they may also negatively affect consumers' perception of product quality. On the other hand, perceived monetary savings and product quality can enhance consumers' perceived product value and further increase their purchase intention. However, the multi-party real-time interaction of LSS allows streamers to provide high-quality information about health foods to viewers. The interactions among viewers in the chat room can also provide real-time WOM to viewers. These pieces of information can not only serve as clues for consumers to judge product quality but also as an observational learning source for consumers to enhance their knowledge of health foods.

Based on the value model for price discounts proposed by Lee and Chen-Yu [7], the purpose of this study is to propose a research model to explore the values that the real-time multi-party interaction of LSS can bring to viewers in terms of purchasing health foods, thereby influencing their intention to continue purchasing health foods. This study argues that the real-time audiovisual streaming in LSS enables streamers to provide high-quality information about health foods to viewers. The positive user experiences shared among viewers in the chat room can also serve as positive WOM for health foods. Both high-quality information and positive WOM can contribute to monetary savings, high product quality, and the acquisition of product knowledge, reinforcing viewers' intention to continue purchasing health foods through LSS. The findings of this study can provide health food businesses with insights into the important values that LSS offers to consumers in purchasing health foods, serving as a reference for channel and sales strategy development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Live-streaming Shopping

The emergence of LSS has revolutionized the shopping experience by combining live broadcasting and e-commerce, resulting in enhanced interactivity, visual appeal, and shopping guidance [8, 9]. LSS allows streamers to showcase products through engaging video demonstrations and personalized interactions, utilizing facial expressions, gestures, and tones to tailor the shopping experience to individual viewers [9]. Moreover, LSS facilitates real-time multi-party interaction among viewers, encompassing two-way interactions (such as viewers asking and receiving answers to product-related questions) and one-way interactions (where viewers observe and learn from other viewers' shopping experiences) [8]. LSS often attracts consumers by emphasizing "low prices" [10].

Prior research on LSS has explored various topics, including purchase motivations and values [11-15], factors influencing engagement [15, 16], factors affecting purchase intention [9, 17-20], and factors influencing continued purchase intention [21, 22]. The literature highlights the diverse benefits associated with LSS, including utilitarian and convenience values, enjoyment, emotional and entertainment values, social values, financial or monetary values, functional values, and personalized values [12, 13, 15, 23-25].

Despite the wealth of research on LSS, the factors influencing consumers' continued purchase intention in the context of LSS remain understudied. Also, the impact of different types of goods, such as search goods, experience goods, and credence goods, on purchasing decisions within the realm of LSS has not been examined. Similarly, there is a dearth of studies exploring the values derived from the sales strategies of significant discounts and the real-time multi-party interaction characteristics of LSS, particularly among consumers with a high demand for professional assistance or consultation in health foods. Consequently, how such values might shape consumers' continued purchase intention of health foods in the context of LSS remains unexplored.

B. Lee & Chen-Yu's Value Model for Price Discounts

Zeithaml [6] introduced the means-end chain model to explore the interrelationship between consumers' perceptions of price, quality, and value. The means-end model suggests that price influences the perception of monetary value, which, in turn, affects perceived sacrifice and perceived quality. When combined, these factors influence the overall perceived value, subsequently impacting purchase intentions.

Building upon the value theory, Lee & Chen-Yu [7] extended Zeithaml's [6] means-end chain model by incorporating the three dimensions of price discount effects on consumer purchase decisions proposed by Raghbir et al. [26]. Raghbir et al. [26] identified three paths through which price discounts influence consumer purchase decisions: economic, informational, and affective effects. The economic effects of price discounts involve providing a monetary gain or incentive to encourage consumers to make a purchase. Informational effects arise from the communication of direct or inferred knowledge derived from exposure to a price discount, often leading to quality inference. Affective effects refer to the emotions and feelings evoked by receiving or missing out on a promotion.

In Lee & Chen-Yu's [7] value model for price discounts, perceived monetary savings serve as an indicator of the economic effects, perceived quality measures the informational effects, and price discount affect represents the affective effects. Lee & Chen-Yu's [7] value model indicates that price discounts have a positive impact on perceived monetary savings and price discount affect, while exerting a negative influence on perceived quality. These three paths collectively shape the perception of product value, ultimately influencing purchase intentions.

III. RESEARCH MODEL AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

A. Research Model

Given the significant emphasis on substantial product discounts in LSS, this study builds upon Lee & Chen-Yu's [7]

value model, which focuses on price discounts, as the theoretical foundation. We extend this model by considering the unique characteristics of health foods and LSS. Recognizing previous research that has highlighted the affective benefits of LSS, such as flow, emotional value, and hedonic value, this study specifically investigates two key values: perceived monetary savings and perceived quality, with a specific focus on health foods. Additionally, we expand the factors influencing the information path by incorporating the value of acquiring product knowledge. We further examine the impact of these three values on the continued use of LSS for purchasing health foods.

Furthermore, in light of the real-time multi-party interactivity characteristics of LSS, we incorporate the perceived information quality about health foods provided by the streamer through real-time audiovisual technology, as well as the positive WOM shared by other viewers regarding the use of health foods. These factors significantly influence the aforementioned perceived values. The research model proposed in this study is illustrated in Figure 1.

B. Hypotheses Development

1) The Influence of Information Quality Provided by LSS Streamers on Perceived Savings, Perceived Product Quality, and Product Knowledge

Information quality of LSS encompasses usefulness, believability, vividness, relevance, accuracy, timeliness, and comprehensibility [27]. Perceived savings refer to consumers' perception of how much money they can save through price-related promotions [28]. This perception is influenced by factors such as regulatory focus and promotional strategies. Among them, price discounts are widely used as a popular sales promotion strategy.

Perceived product quality is the consumer's perception of the superior attributes or features of a product that make it meet their requirements for intended usage [29]. Consumers' evaluation of the information presented by a medium or channel affects their perception of information quality [27]. Additionally, the information quality perception of product-related content, such as product interpretation and evaluation provided by sellers, influences consumers' perception of product quality [30].

Product knowledge represents the understanding and familiarity that consumers have regarding the features, benefits, and attributes of the product [31]. Qi et al. [32] have indicated that the understandability of courses on MOOC platforms and vivid expression by teachers are positively associated with students' learning achievement, suggesting the quality of courses on MOOC platforms is helpful in enhancing students' knowledge.

Similarly, streamers use real-time streaming technology to deliver vivid explanations of health food ingredients, demonstrate proper consumption methods and quantities, and provide consultations for audience inquiries, all through expressive body language and facial expressions. Additionally, streamers assist in comparing prices with other online retailers. Using such rich and real-time audiovisual streaming information to introduce health foods leads to high levels of information comprehension, usefulness, accuracy, timeliness, and relevance to users' needs. This enhances the audience's perception of the quality of health food information, subsequently improving their perception of the product

quality offered by the streamers and simultaneously increasing their knowledge of health foods. The provision of substantial discounts and price comparison information by streamers also contributes to consumers' perceived savings. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H1-3: Information quality positively influences (1) perceived savings, (2) perceived quality, and (3) product knowledge of health foods sold on LSS.

2) The Influence of Positive WOM Shared by Co-viewers on Perceived Savings, Perceived Product Quality, and Product Knowledge

Positive WOM refers to consumers engaging in informal oral discussions, recommendations, or sharing of information related to product consumption without any commercial intent [33]. Consumer endorsements are perceived as more persuasive to potential consumers [34]. The sharing of shopping experiences by other consumers can also assist in evaluating and comparing product attributes and the time required for purchase, thereby enhancing convenience, shopping efficiency, satisfaction, and perceived value for consumers [35, 36].

Zhang et al. [37] suggested that when consumers encounter more positive reviews, they tend to perceive the hotel's overall quality as better. Similarly, positive eWOM from peer consumers has positively impacted perceived product quality [38]. Furthermore, previous research has indicated that when consumers increase their understanding of a product and alleviate concerns about product quality through searching for product-related eWOM or reviews [39]. This implies that positive eWOM can strengthen consumers' perception of product quality and enhance their product-related knowledge.

Similarly, for the sale of health foods in LSS, viewers also engage in real-time positive WOM sharing in chat rooms, including testimonials of physical improvements after product use, praising product quality, and mentioning affordable prices. By observing other consumers' positive WOM, viewers can enhance their perceived savings and perceived quality of the health foods sold by the streamers while also gaining product knowledge. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H4-6: Positive WOM positively influences (4) perceived savings, (5) perceived quality, and (6) product knowledge of health foods sold on LSS.

3) The Influence of Perceived Savings, Perceived Product Quality, and Product Knowledge on Continued Purchase Intention

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the significant impact of price savings [28, 40], product quality [30, 41], and product knowledge [39, 42] on purchase intention or repeat purchase intention. For instance, Shin et al. [43] found that consumers' knowledge of restaurant meals positively influenced their purchase intention. In the context of online retail stores, Saprina et al. [41] found that consumers' perceived product quality positively influences their intention to repurchase. Zhang et al. [40] demonstrated that price promotions have a positive effect on consumers' perceived savings, subsequently increasing their purchase intention.

Similarly, when consumers perceive that they can obtain values such as perceived savings, perceived product quality, and product knowledge through LSS for health foods, their

continued purchase intention is likely to be higher. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H7-9: (7) Perceived savings, (8) perceived quality, and (9) product knowledge of health foods sold on LSS positively influence continued purchase intention.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. Research Method and Samples

This study employed an online questionnaire survey method to collect data. The sample targeted individuals who had made a minimum of two purchases from the same health food streamer in the past three months and actively engaged in the streamer's LSS. To ensure eligibility, participants were required to pass a screening question before proceeding to answer the subsequent questionnaire items.

A total of 183 valid responses were collected and analyzed. The majority of participants identified as female ($n = 116$, 63.4%). Most sample fell within the 31-35 age range ($n = 43$, 23.5%). Additionally, many respondents reported visiting live-streaming channels for shopping once a week ($n = 45$, 24.9%), and the average viewing time per session typically ranged from 30 to 60 minutes ($n = 73$, 39.9%).

B. Measurement Model Test

To ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument, previously validated items from relevant studies were adopted. Participants were asked to rate each item on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from "1" (strongly disagree) to "7" (strongly agree). The measurement and structural models were analyzed using SmartPLS (v.4.0.9.2), a widely employed software tool for conducting partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis.

Convergent validity was assessed through several indicators, including composite reliability (CR), average variance extracted (AVE), and rho_A. The AVE values for each construct exceeded the threshold of 0.5, and the CR values and rho_A values for each construct exceeded 0.7. These results indicate strong convergent validity of the instrument (Hair et al., 2019). To evaluate discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio of correlations (HTMT) method was employed. The HTMT values presented in Table 2 were all below the established threshold of 0.9, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity of the instrument [44].

TABLE I. THE MEAN, STANDARD DEVIATION, RHO_A, AVE, CR OF EACH CONSTRUCT

Const	Mean	SD.	rho_A	CR	AVE
IQ	5.095	0.720	0.797	0.860	0.552
PWOM	4.973	0.774	0.756	0.858	0.668
PS	5.033	0.917	0.811	0.886	0.722
PQ	5.090	0.875	0.711	0.873	0.774
PK	5.079	0.825	0.810	0.875	0.636
CPII	5.262	0.891	0.761	0.892	0.805

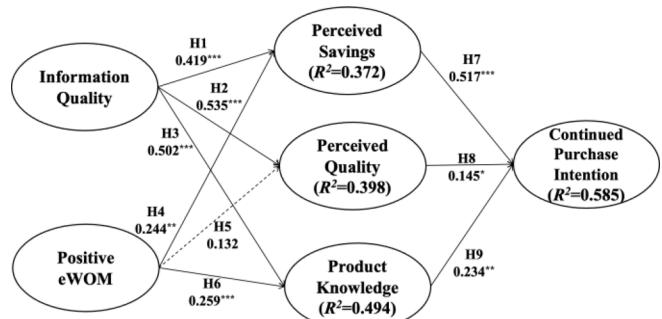
^a Note: (1) IQ: Information Quality; (2)PWOM: Positive WOM; (3)PS: Perceived Savings; (4) PQ: Perceived Quality; (5)PK: Product Knowledge; (6) Continued Purchase Intention; (7) SD.: Standard Deviation; (8) Const: Constructs

TABLE II. HTMT VALUE FOR DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Constructs	PWOM	PS	PQ	PK	CPII
PWOM	0.863				
PS	0.726	0.671			
PQ	0.829	0.668	0.548		
PK	0.843	0.759	0.711	0.786	
CPII	0.814	0.756	0.890	0.678	0.789

C. Structural Model Test

Figure 1 shows the structural model testing, which supports most of the hypotheses proposed in this study, except for H4. Consistent with the predictions, the information quality provided by the streamer significantly influences perceived savings ($\beta= 0.419$, $p<0.001$), perceived quality ($\beta= 0.535$, $p<0.001$), and product knowledge ($\beta= 0.502$, $p<0.001$), thus supporting H1, H2, and H3. Positive WOM from co-viewers has a positive impact on perceived savings ($\beta= 0.244$, $p<0.001$) and product knowledge ($\beta= 0.259$, $p<0.01$) but not on perceived quality ($\beta= 0.132$, $p>0.05$), indicating support for H4 and H6, but not H5. Information quality and positive WOM from co-viewers collectively explain 37.2%, 39.8%, and 49.4% of the variances in perceived savings, perceived quality, and product knowledge, respectively. Furthermore, perceived savings ($\beta= 0.517$, $p<0.001$), perceived quality ($\beta= 0.145$, $p<0.05$), and product knowledge ($\beta= 0.234$, $p<0.01$) significantly influence continued purchase intention, accounting for 58.5% of the variances in it. Thus, H7, H8, and H9 are all supported.



Note: *** $P<0.001$; ** $P<0.01$ * $P<0.05$

Fig. 1. Structural Model Test Result

V. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

A. Discussion of Research Implications

This study represents the first investigation into LSS focusing on health foods, providing a deeper understanding of the values of health food products to consumers who engage in LSS and how the real-time multi-party interaction characteristic of LSS influences their perception of values. The findings of this study reveal that consumers with LSS experience perceive the information quality of health foods provided by the streamer and the positive WOM shared by co-viewers as positive, with average scores of 5.095 and 4.973, respectively. This indicates that the real-time audiovisual streaming characteristic and the real-time multi-party interaction characteristic of LSS are suitable for introducing health foods, allowing consumers to perceive the information presented in LSS as easily understandable, accurate, relevant, and timely, with a sense of vividness in interacting with a real person.

Furthermore, building upon Lee & Chen-Yu's [7] value model for price discounts, this study delves deeper into the effects of the heavy discount sales strategy and the interactive information generated by the multi-party real-time interaction characteristics of LSS on perceived savings, perceived quality, and acquiring product knowledge values. The results indicate that, compared to positive WOM shared by co-viewers, the quality of health food information shared by the streamer has a greater impact on perceived savings, perceived product quality, and product knowledge. This suggests that for

consumers who have purchased health foods through LSS channels, the quality of health food information shared by the streamer is more likely to generate a higher perceived value. Specifically, it has the greatest impact on perceived product quality, followed by product knowledge and perceived savings.

This finding differs from the results of Lee & Chen-Yu's [7] value model for price discounts, which showed that price discounts enhance consumers' perceived savings when purchasing jeans through online stores but also negatively affect their perception of product quality. In contrast, this study found that for consumers who have purchased health foods from a specific streamer through LSS, when high-quality health food information is presented through real-time audiovisual streaming and real-time multi-party interaction, consumers can perceive both monetary savings and high product quality. This highlights that real-time audiovisual streaming and real-time multi-party interaction are distinctive characteristics of LSS that differentiate it from conventional one-way interactive shopping websites. Additionally, both characteristics can reduce consumers' concerns about product quality when purchasing health foods through online channels. On the other hand, the positive WOM shared by co-viewers does not have a significant impact on perceived product quality. One possible explanation is that the research sample in this study consisted of consumers who have already purchased health foods from the streamer, and their judgment of product quality may be based more on their own experience.

Moreover, this study further extends Lee & Chen-Yu's [7] value model for price discounts by proposing that, in addition to perceived savings and perceived quality, product knowledge is an additional value that consumers can gain from watching the streamer's health foods selling content on LSS. The findings reveal that both the information about health foods provided by the streamer and the positive WOM shared by co-viewers can enhance consumers' perceived product knowledge. Furthermore, our structural model test results also support our proposition, demonstrating that the unique characteristics of LSS, such as real-time audiovisual streaming and real-time multi-party interaction, can strengthen consumers' knowledge about health foods, thereby enhancing their intention to continue purchasing health foods through LSS.

Finally, this study explores the influence of the three aforementioned values on the intention to continue purchasing health foods through LSS. The results indicate that perceived savings have the greatest impact, followed by perceived knowledge, and finally perceived product quality. This implies that for consumers who have purchased health foods from a specific streamer through LSS several times, they may already possess a certain level of product knowledge ($\mu=5.079$, $SD=0.825$) and understand the product quality of health foods sold by the streamer ($\mu=5.090$, $SD=0.875$), making the value of monetary savings a primary factor increasing their continued purchase intention through LSS compared to product knowledge and perceived product quality. This finding reveals that the low-price strategy employed in LSS brings perceived savings value to consumers who have prior experience purchasing health foods. Eventually, this value serves as a driving force behind their continued use of LSS as a purchasing channel for health foods.

B. Practical Suggestions

Based on our research findings, we propose several practical suggestions for LSS streamers selling health foods.

- Continuously adopt product discount strategies

The results of this study indicate that the low-price strategy in LSS has the greatest impact on enhancing consumers' intention to continue purchasing health foods. Therefore, LSS streamers could emphasize the extent of product discounts or promotional offers to enhance consumers' perception of the monetary savings value. For example, by highlighting the economic affordability of their prices compared to other sales channels, streamers can increase consumers' perception of perceived savings and generate a continued purchase intention.

- Utilize the real-time audiovisual streaming and interactivity characteristics of LSS to provide detailed information about health foods

Due to consumers' need for information regarding the ingredients, effects, safety, and expert guidance when purchasing health foods, LSS streamers are suggested to make full use of the real-time audiovisual streaming and interactive features to provide detailed and vivid information about health foods. They can even invite professionals to provide real-time consultation services during the livestream, addressing consumers' questions and enhancing the information quality of health foods. This approach strengthens consumers' perception of product quality and serves the purpose of educating consumers. The acquired product knowledge and perceived product quality can further drive their continued purchase intention.

- Encourage viewers to share their consumption experiences of health foods in the chat room

The results of this study indicate that positive WOM about health foods shared by viewers in the chat room has a positive impact on consumers' perceived savings and product knowledge. Therefore, LSS streamers could utilize this finding by combining promotional activities with viewers' positive WOM sharing behavior to generate a synergistic effect. Streamers can design promotional activities where viewers can witness the products being sold and share their experiences related to product prices, consumption methods, or effectiveness. For instance, as more viewers share their experiences, the discount level of the promotional activity increases. This approach increases the content and quantity of viewers' shared WOM, thereby enhancing consumers' perceived savings, product knowledge, and ultimately their intention to continue purchasing health foods.

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