The Role of Streamer Popularity and Attractiveness in Building Consumer Trust and Stimulating Electronic-Word of Mouth in Streaming Commerce

Namon Promnara
Digital Marketing, School of Business Administration, Bangkok University, Bangkok, Thailand
Corresponding author, E-mail: namon.p@bu.ac.th

Abstract

The rapid expansion of live-streaming commerce has positioned streamers as pivotal influencers who shape consumer behaviour through dynamic, real-time interactions. This study investigates the dual roles of streamer popularity and attractiveness in fostering trust in products and driving electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). Grounded in Source Credibility Theory, the research conceptualizes streamer popularity as a reflection of expertise and trustworthiness, while attractiveness embodies emotional appeal and relatability. The study posits that both popularity and attractiveness significantly boost trust in products, which, in turn, amplifies positive eWOM. The research adopts a quantitative approach, using purposive sampling with a sample size of 242 valid responses. Data were collected via an online survey distributed through social media channels and live-streaming communities. Furthermore, the direct impacts of popularity and attractiveness on eWOM are analyzed. Regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. Key statistical results show that streamer popularity accounts for 25.6% of the variance in trust in products, while trust in products explains 52.5% of the variance in eWOM. By synthesizing these relationships into a comprehensive conceptual model, the research enhances theoretical insights into the drivers of consumer trust and advocacy in live-streaming commerce. Practical recommendations are offered for marketers and brands to refine influencer selection strategies, leveraging streamers' unique attributes to strengthen product trust, stimulate eWOM, and boost consumer engagement.

Keywords: *Live-streaming Commerce, Streamer Popularity, Streamer Attractiveness, Trust in Products, eWOM, Source Credibility Theory*

1. Introduction

Live-streaming commerce has rapidly become a significant component of digital marketing, blending real-time interaction with online shopping to enhance consumer engagement (Gumilang, 2024; Joo & Yang, 2023). Unlike traditional e-commerce, this format allows streamers to actively present products, respond to audience inquiries, and influence purchasing decisions through direct communication (Chu, 2024). Platforms such as TikTok, Twitch, and YouTube have elevated streamers to influential roles, acting as intermediaries between brands and consumers (Bankova & Stancheva, 2021; Li et al., 2023).

As the sector continues to grow and generate substantial online retail revenue (Chen & Xie, 2023), a critical challenge remains: the lack of physical product interaction often leads to consumer uncertainty. In this context, trust in the promoted product becomes essential in reducing perceived risk and encouraging purchase behaviour (Phan, 2023). Streamers play a pivotal role in shaping consumer perceptions, not only through product presentation but also through the credibility and appeal they convey (Shih et al., 2024).

Grounded in Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990), which highlights the persuasive influence of a communicator's trustworthiness, expertise, and attractiveness, this study explores the impact of streamer characteristics—specifically popularity and attractiveness—on consumer trust and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). It examines both the indirect effects of these attributes on eWOM through product trust and their

potential direct influence. The findings aim to provide insights for brands and marketers seeking to optimise influencer strategies within the live-streaming commerce environment.

2. Objectives

1) To analyze the influence of streamer popularity and attractiveness on consumer trust in products in live-streaming commerce.
2) To evaluate the role of trust in products as a mediating factor between streamer characteristics and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).
3) To examine the direct impact of streamer popularity and attractiveness on eWOM in live-streaming commerce.
4) To provide practical recommendations for brands and marketers on optimising influencer selection strategies to enhance consumer trust and eWOM.

3. Literature Review

Live-streaming commerce has revolutionized digital retail by blending real-time audience engagement with e-commerce functionality to create an interactive shopping experience (Wang, 2024; Chu, 2024). Live streaming provides a novel shopping environment that motivates potential consumers to engage in shopping behaviors through dynamic, real-time interaction (Wang et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2020). Platforms such as TikTok, Twitch, and YouTube have been instrumental in accelerating this trend, positioning streamers as crucial intermediaries between brands and consumers (Xiong & Feng, 2024). Unlike traditional e-commerce, live-streaming commerce relies heavily on the personal attributes of streamers—particularly their popularity and attractiveness, which profoundly shape consumer perceptions and behaviour (Todd & Melancon, 2018). Research indicates that streamer popularity and product popularity can trigger consumers' impulse purchases by enhancing perceived streamer reputation and perceived competition, respectively (Lou et al., 2022). These qualities are critical in building trust, a fundamental driver of purchase intent and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) (Phan, 2023; Shih et al., 2024). Trust plays a pivotal role in the consumer decision-making process, mitigating uncertainty and enhancing confidence in both the streamer and the products they promote (Li et al., 2023). Moreover, consumer trust fuels eWOM, empowering viewers to share positive experiences and amplifying a streamer's influence, fostering greater engagement and sales (Jiao et al., 2024).

Theoretical frameworks, such as Source Credibility Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory, provide valuable perspectives on how streamer attributes shape consumer behaviour. These frameworks highlight the importance of perceived expertise, trustworthiness, and likability—elements often linked to streamer popularity and attractiveness—as critical drivers of trust and eWOM (Ohanian, 1990; Zhang et al., 2022).

Previous research has highlighted the importance of trust and eWOM in e-commerce and influencer marketing contexts (Ahn & Kwon, 2020; Casaló et al., 2020; Lou & Yuan, 2019). However, there is a critical need to explore the specific pathways through which streamer popularity and attractiveness contribute to trust and stimulate WOM in live-streaming commerce. This review addresses this gap by synthesizing recent literature, aligning findings with proposed hypotheses, and providing a deeper understanding of how streamer

attributes foster consumer trust and advocacy. By doing so, it offers a nuanced perspective on the pivotal role that streamers play in driving engagement and success within the live-streaming commerce landscape.

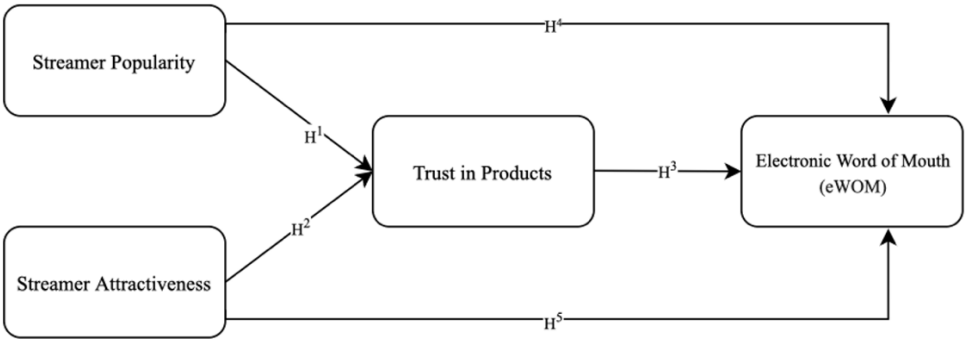

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

3.1 Source Creditability Theory

In the context of live-streaming commerce, Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) provides a framework for understanding how streamer popularity and attractiveness influence trust in products. The theory identifies three critical dimensions that enhance message persuasiveness: expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness.

Streamer popularity aligns with the expertise and trustworthiness dimensions, as widely recognized and frequently followed streamers are perceived as credible sources of product information. Xiong and Feng (2024) emphasize that popularity signals competence and moral reputation, reducing perceived risks and enhancing trust in the promoted products. Similarly, Shih et al. (2024) highlight that popular streamers act as social proof, as their high visibility and wide reach create the perception that endorsed products are reliable and high-quality.

Streamer attractiveness corresponds to the attractiveness dimension of Source Credibility Theory, influencing trust in products by fostering emotional and parasocial connections with viewers. Liu et al. (2023) explain that attractive streamers evoke a sense of familiarity and relatability, creating emotional bonds that reduce perceived social distance. This connection makes consumers more receptive to product endorsements, as they associate the streamer's appeal with product quality. Additionally, Zhang et al. (2022) highlight that attractive streamers capture attention more effectively, generating positive emotional responses that lead to greater trust in product recommendations.

H1: Streamer popularity positively influences trust in products.
H2: Streamer attractiveness positively influences trust in products.

3.2 Trust in Products

Trust in products is a key mediator linking streamer attributes to consumer behaviour. Consumers who trust both the streamer and the products are more likely to feel confident in their purchasing decisions. Casaló, Flavián, and Ibáñez-Sánchez (2020) highlight that trust mitigates perceived risks, enabling consumers to make decisions based on streamer recommendations. Trust influences downstream behaviours, such as the willingness to share positive experiences through word-of-mouth (Haenlein et al., 2020). Shih et al. (2024) emphasize the mediating role of trust, showing that trust built through streamer credibility directly drives consumer advocacy and product recommendation. Jiao et al. (2024) support this finding, demonstrating that

trust fosters repeat engagement and encourages viewers to share their experiences with others. Despite its critical importance, research remains limited on how different streamer attributes—popularity and attractiveness—specifically contribute to trust in live-streaming commerce.

H3: Trust in products positively influences eWOM.

3.3 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

eWOM refers to the online sharing of product recommendations and experiences, a critical outcome of trust and streamer influence in live-streaming commerce (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Both streamer popularity and attractiveness have direct and indirect impacts on eWOM through their effects on trust. Streamer popularity directly stimulates eWOM by creating social buzz and enhancing product visibility. Popular streamers generate collective excitement within their communities, motivating viewers to share recommendations with their networks (Shih et al., 2024). Woodcock and Johnson (2023) emphasize that interactive strategies employed by popular streamers, such as real-time responses to viewer questions and personalized acknowledgements, foster loyalty and encourage eWOM. Viewers of popular streamers feel compelled to engage in WOM due to the social proof associated with the streamer's high visibility and influence.

Streamer attractiveness also plays a significant role in driving eWOM (Zhang et al., 2022). Zhang et al. (2022) demonstrate that attractive streamers generate positive emotional responses, encouraging viewers to advocate for the promoted products. Attractiveness fosters stronger emotional bonds, which lead to higher levels of viewer participation and WOM sharing (Phan, 2023). Similarly, Li et al. (2023) note that attractiveness reduces barriers to engagement, making viewers more willing to share their experiences within their networks. While the direct influence of streamer characteristics on eWOM is well-established, streamer popularity and attractiveness are hypothesised as follows:

H4: Streamer popularity positively influences electronic word of mouth (e-WOM).
H5: Streamer attractiveness positively influences electronic word of mouth (e-WOM).

4. Research Methodologies

This study used a quantitative research approach to investigate the impact of streamer popularity and attractiveness on product trust and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in the realm of live-streaming commerce. The theoretical framework is based on Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990), which delineates knowledge, trustworthiness, and attractiveness as essential factors influencing audience perceptions and the persuasiveness of messages. The popularity of streamers in this study reflects their perceived knowledge and trustworthiness, whereas streamer attractiveness encompasses both physical allure and interpersonal characteristics that facilitate emotional bonds. The model of influencing factors of live streamers' characteristics and perceived value has been established to test how they influence online satisfaction and trust (Meng & Lin, 2023). Trust in products serves as a mediating variable that connects streaming qualities to customer advocacy behaviours, including electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). This theoretical framework facilitates a comprehensive examination of how credibility elements augment product trust and promote customer advocacy behaviours.

The subject population of this study consisted of individuals actively engaged in live-streaming commerce, particularly those who interact with influencers and make purchasing decisions during live-streamed sessions. A total of 242 valid responses were collected using a purposive sampling method, targeting

young, digitally literate consumers who regularly engage with live-streaming platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitch, and YouTube. These platforms were selected based on their prominence in live-streaming commerce, with participants being active consumers of products marketed during live-streams on these platforms. Data collection was conducted through an online questionnaire, which was distributed via social media channels and live-streaming community platforms. The questionnaire was pre-tested for clarity and reliability, and translated into Thai to ensure accessibility for the target population. Construct validity was confirmed through factor analysis, ensuring that the measures used were appropriate for assessing the constructs of interest.

4.1 Participants and Sample Selection

The study adopts a purposive sampling technique to target individuals actively engaged in live-streaming commerce. Participants were required to have prior experience watching live-stream product promotions on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitch, and to have made purchasing decisions influenced by streamers. Data were collected through an online survey and distributed through social media channels and live-streaming communities to ensure accessibility to a relevant and representative sample.

A total of 242 valid responses were obtained, providing a robust dataset for analysis. The demographic profile of participants, as summarised in Table 1, indicates a predominantly female sample, accounting for 67.4% of respondents, while males represented 30.6%, and a smaller group identified as others, at 2.1%. The majority of participants fell within the age range of 15–22 years, comprising 78.1% of the sample, followed by 16.9% aged 23–30 years, reflecting the significant role of younger, digitally literate consumers in live-streaming commerce. Regarding educational background, 95% of respondents held a bachelor's degree, while 2.9% reported education below this level, and 2.1% above it. Occupation-wise, 91.7% identified as students, while smaller proportions included company employees (6.6%) and business owners (1.2%). The time spent on live-streaming platforms was also measured, with 82.2% of participants indicating they spent less than three hours per day engaging with live streams, while 12% reported between three to seven hours of daily engagement. These findings provide important context for understanding the sample population, which consists predominantly of young, highly educated consumers who are active participants in live-streaming commerce.

Table 1

Constructs	Items	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Gender	Male	74	30.6
	Female	163	67.4
	Other	5	2.1
Age (Year)	Below 15	2	0.8
	15 - 22	189	78.1
	23 - 30	41	16.9
	31 - 40	3	1.2
	41 - 50	6	2.5
	More than 60	1	0.4
Status	Single	236	97.5
	Married	6	2.5

Education	Lower than Bachelor's Degree	7	2.9
	Bachelor's Degree	230	95
	Higher than Bachelor's Degree	5	2.1
Occupation	Students	222	91.7
	Company Employee	16	6.6
	Business Owner	3	1.2
	Other	1	0.4
Time Spent	Lower than 3	199	82.2
	3 - 7	29	12
	8 - 14	6	2.5
	More than 14	8	3.3

4.2 Measurement of Constructs

The key constructs in this study—streamer popularity, streamer attractiveness, trust in products, and eWOM—were measured using previously validated scales, tailored to the context of live-streaming commerce. All items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Streamer popularity was measured as the perceived visibility, expertise, and trustworthiness of the streamer, drawing on studies by Shih et al. (2024) and Xiong and Feng (2024). Streamer attractiveness encompassed both physical appeal and personality-driven traits such as charisma and effective communication, aligning with the dimensions outlined in Source Credibility Theory and supported by research from Phan (2023) and Li et al. (2023). Trust in products reflected the confidence viewers placed in the reliability and quality of products promoted by streamers, as defined by Shih et al. (2024). Finally, eWOM was measured in terms of consumers' likelihood to share product recommendations, frequency of discussing products with others, and overall advocacy behaviours, following frameworks presented by Jiao et al. (2024).

The reliability of these constructs was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, as shown in Table 2, with all values surpassing the acceptable threshold of 0.70. Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha for eWOM was recorded at 0.892, indicating excellent internal consistency, while streamer attractiveness achieved a value of 0.913, reflecting very high reliability. Streamer popularity and trust in products also demonstrated strong reliability, with values of 0.868 and 0.882, respectively. These results confirm that the measurement items for each construct are internally consistent and suitable for further statistical analysis.

Table 2

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level	Interpretation
eWOM	0.892	High	Excellent internal consistency
Streamer Attractiveness	0.913	Very High	Excellent internal consistency
Streamer Popularity	0.868	High	Good internal consistency
Trust in Products	0.882	High	Excellent internal consistency

4.3 Data Analysis

To examine the relationships among streamer popularity, streamer attractiveness, trust in products, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), this study employed regression analysis to test the proposed hypotheses. The analysis aimed to assess the statistical significance of each predictor variable, evaluate the explanatory power of the model, and determine the extent to which trust in products mediates the effects of streamer characteristics on eWOM. The results, as summarized in Table 3, indicate that four out of the five hypotheses were supported, while one hypothesis (H2) did not reach statistical significance. A path diagram

with annotated coefficients in Figure 2 is included to visually illustrate both the direct and mediated relationships among the variables, helping to clarify the strength and significance of each pathway.

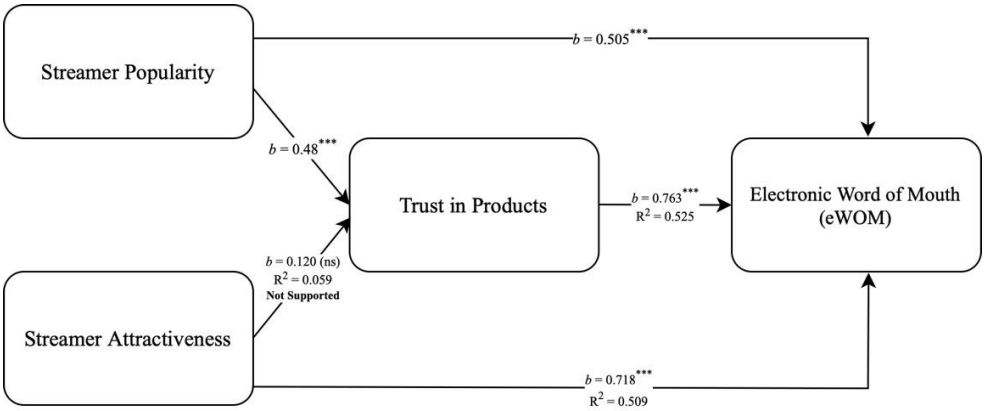

Figure 2 Path Diagram of Relation ships for Each Hypothesis

The results for Hypothesis 1 (H1, which proposed that streamer popularity positively influences trust in products, demonstrated a statistically significant relationship, with a regression coefficient (b) of 0.48, a standardized beta (β) of 0.506, and a t-value of 9.079 ($p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.256 suggests that streamer popularity accounts for approximately 25.6% of the variance in trust in products, indicating that while popularity contributes to consumer trust, other factors likely play a role in shaping perceptions of product credibility. In contrast, Hypothesis 2 (H2), which posited that streamer attractiveness positively influences trust in products, was not supported in Table 3. The regression results indicate that $b = 0.120$, $\beta = 0.105$, with a t-value of 1.478 and a p-value of 0.138, which exceeds the conventional threshold of statistical significance ($p < 0.05$)**. The lack of statistical support for H2 is also represented in the path diagram with a dashed arrow and an annotation indicating "ns" (not significant), helping to distinguish it from supported hypotheses. Additionally, the R^2 value of 0.059 suggests that streamer attractiveness explains only 5.9% of the variance in trust in products, highlighting its limited predictive power in this context.

These results suggest that although streamer attractiveness may enhance viewer engagement and entertainment value, it does not necessarily translate into increased trust in the promoted products. This finding challenges previous assumptions that attractiveness alone can directly enhance credibility and suggests that, in the context of live-streaming commerce, factors such as product expertise, authenticity, and interactive engagement may be more influential in shaping consumer trust. The streamer's behaviour, including effort and social media promotion, is associated with increased popularity and success (Netzorg et al., 2018).

Table 3

Hypothesis	b	Beta	t-value	p-value	R^2	F-value	Result
H1	0.48	0.506	9.079	< 0.001	0.256	82.433	Supported
H2	0.120	0.105	1.478	0.138	0.059	3.451	Not supported
H3	0.763	0.725	16.288	< 0.001	0.525	265.307	Supported
H4	0.505	0.504	9.049	< 0.001	0.254	81.881	Supported

H5	0.718	0.713	15.766	< 0.001	0.509	248.553	Supported

Despite the lack of a direct effect of attractiveness on trust, the results provide strong support for Hypothesis 3 (H3), which examined whether trust in products positively influences eWOM. The analysis revealed a statistically significant relationship, with a b-value of 0.763, a β of 0.725, and a t-value of 16.288 ($p < 0.001$), indicating that trust in products serves as a strong predictor of eWOM. The R^2 value of 0.525 suggests that trust in products explains 52.5% of the variance in eWOM, highlighting the critical role of consumer confidence in driving product recommendations. The path diagram clearly illustrates this mediating effect by showing trust in products as an intermediary between streamer popularity and eWOM, as well as between attractiveness and eWOM, though only the former is statistically supported. These findings reinforce the notion that trust serves as a central mechanism in online consumer decision-making, wherein individuals are more likely to share positive feedback about products they perceive as reliable and high-quality. The significant effect of trust also suggests that while streamer attributes may initially attract consumer attention, it is ultimately the trust established in the product that determines whether consumers engage in eWOM. In evaluating the direct effects of streamer characteristics on eWOM, the findings reveal mixed patterns. Hypothesis 4 (H4), which proposed that streamer popularity directly influences eWOM, was supported, with a b-value of 0.505, a β of 0.504, and a t-value of 9.049 ($p < 0.001$). The R^2 value of 0.254 suggests that streamer popularity accounts for 25.4% of the variance in eWOM, indicating that while popularity contributes to the likelihood of product recommendations, it is not the sole determinant. This direct relationship is marked in the diagram with a solid arrow and annotated significance (*). This result aligns with prior research suggesting that well-known streamers generate more engagement and visibility, leading to increased word-of-mouth activity.

However, the moderate R^2 value implies that other factors, such as the streamer's engagement strategy, credibility, and the nature of the product being endorsed, may also play a crucial role in driving eWOM. Similarly, Hypothesis 5 (H5), which examined the direct influence of streamer attractiveness on eWOM, was strongly supported. The regression analysis revealed a b-value of 0.718, a β of 0.713, and a t-value of 15.766 ($p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.509, indicating that streamer attractiveness accounts for 50.9% of the variance in eWOM. Notably, the path diagram helps clarify the dual role of streamer attractiveness: while it does not significantly influence trust (as seen in H2), it exerts a strong direct influence on eWOM (H5), as shown by the bold, annotated arrow. This visual differentiation is crucial in understanding the distinction between mediated and direct effects. These findings suggest that attractiveness, while not a significant predictor of trust in products, plays a crucial role in stimulating eWOM. This aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the emotional appeal of attractive streamers, who may encourage viewers to share their experiences and recommendations due to the positive affective responses they generate. Unlike popularity, which primarily serves as a form of social proof, attractiveness appears to enhance audience engagement and relatability, thereby increasing the likelihood of consumers discussing and recommending the endorsed products.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study contribute to the understanding of how streamers' popularity and attractiveness influence consumer trust and eWOM in live-streaming commerce. The results confirm that popularity significantly enhances trust in products, whereas attractiveness does not have a significant effect

on trust. Streamer trust, attractiveness, and expertise are critical factors steering consumer purchase decisions (Kim & Park, 2024). However, both popularity and attractiveness play crucial roles in driving eWOM.

Furthermore, the study highlights the role of trust in products, reinforcing the importance of credibility in shaping consumer advocacy behaviors. The results support Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) by demonstrating that popularity enhances perceived expertise and trustworthiness, making consumers more confident in endorsed products (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017). The moderate explanatory power of popularity ($R^2 = 0.256$) suggests that while it contributes to trust, additional factors such as authenticity and engagement style may also play a role (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This finding is in line with Schouten et al. (2020), who noted that attractiveness often triggers emotional responses rather than cognitive evaluations of credibility. Similarly, while Reinikainen et al. (2020) proposed that visual appeal could positively affect trust through perceived familiarity, the current study challenges this by showing that in fast-paced, transactional streaming contexts, trust formation appears to rely more on expertise and authenticity than on appearance alone. Despite its limited effect on trust, streamer attractiveness significantly influenced eWOM, suggesting that attractive influencers encourage consumers to share recommendations due to emotional and social influence (Sokolova & Kefi, 2020). The high explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.509$) indicates that attractiveness fosters engagement, leading to increased product discussions and recommendations.

Lastly, trust in products was a strong predictor of eWOM, explaining 52.5% of the variance, reinforcing the idea that consumer confidence in product reliability is essential for driving word-of-mouth (Casaló et al., 2020). These findings suggest that while popularity contributes to credibility and attractiveness fosters engagement, trust remains a key factor in consumer advocacy behaviours, similar to findings in the study by Haenlein et al. (2020). This finding is also consistent with prior research emphasizing that popularity serves as a form of social proof, wherein widely recognized and frequently followed streamers are perceived as more credible sources of information due to their high visibility and perceived expertise. Moreover, the path diagram clearly shows the mediating role of trust between popularity and eWOM, supporting the interpretation that trust partially transmits the effect of streamer popularity onto consumers' willingness to recommend. However, the relatively moderate explanatory power suggests that additional factors, such as streamer engagement style, expertise, and perceived sincerity, may also be crucial in fostering consumer trust in endorsed products.

6. Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into how streamer popularity and attractiveness influence consumer trust in products and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in live-streaming commerce. The findings demonstrate that popularity significantly enhances trust in products, whereas attractiveness does not have a direct impact on trust. However, both popularity and attractiveness play significant roles in driving eWOM. Furthermore, trust in products serves as a crucial factor, enhancing the confidence in product quality. Consequently, consumers are more likely to engage in word-of-mouth recommendations. These results contribute to the application of Source Credibility Theory (Ohanian, 1990) in the context of live-streaming commerce, emphasizing that credibility plays a more significant role than visual appeal in building trust. While attractiveness fosters engagement and social influence, it does not necessarily enhance product trust, suggesting that consumers prioritize expertise and authenticity when making purchasing decisions (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). These findings underscore the importance of credibility-driven marketing strategies in influencer marketing. Live-streaming commerce has emerged and shows great potential as a novel business model that adds dynamic real-time interaction among sellers and consumers (Xu et al., 2020). From a managerial perspective, the results highlight that brands should not rely solely on visually

appealing streamers but should instead prioritize those with perceived expertise and authenticity to build consumer trust. Attractiveness remains an important factor in stimulating eWOM, indicating that brands can benefit from influencers who engage emotionally with their audience, even if they do not significantly enhance trust in the promoted products. The integration of both credibility and engagement-driven strategies can maximize influencer marketing effectiveness in live-streaming commerce.

7. Limitations, Future Research Recommendations, and Business Implications

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged, particularly in terms of its sample composition. Since the data were collected primarily in Bangkok and predominantly from teenagers and young adults, the findings may not be generalisable to older consumers or those in other regions of Thailand, particularly working professionals who have greater purchasing power and may exhibit different behaviours in live-streaming commerce. Future research should explore a more diverse sample to examine whether age, income, and shopping behaviour influence trust and eWOM differently.

Additionally, this study relied solely on quantitative survey data, which, while statistically valid, does not capture the deeper psychological and emotional factors influencing consumer perceptions. A mixed-methods approach incorporating qualitative techniques, such as in-depth interviews or focus groups, would provide richer insights into how trust in streamers is formed and why attractiveness does not significantly enhance credibility. Furthermore, this study did not account for product-specific factors, such as category differences or product involvement levels, which may moderate the effects of streamer characteristics on trust and eWOM. Since visually engaging products like fashion and beauty may generate stronger emotional appeal in live commerce compared to necessity goods, future studies should examine whether the effectiveness of streamer attributes varies across different product types.

Beyond these research considerations, the findings offer practical implications for marketers, influencers, and live-streaming platforms in optimising influencer marketing strategies. For brands, the results suggest that selecting streamers based solely on popularity or attractiveness may not be the most effective approach to building trust, as credibility and engagement quality play a more significant role in influencing purchase decisions. Marketers should prioritize influencers who demonstrate expertise, transparency, and authenticity rather than relying solely on high follower counts or physical appeal, while also recognizing that attractiveness still plays a crucial role in encouraging eWOM, making it essential to balance both credibility-driven and engagement-driven strategies. For influencers, the study highlights the importance of fostering trust through interactive engagement, product knowledge, and real-time audience interaction, as visual appeal alone is insufficient to establish credibility in a highly competitive digital marketplace. Meanwhile, live-streaming platforms should enhance their influencer selection algorithms by incorporating credibility and engagement metrics rather than relying on popularity-based rankings, while also integrating AI-driven sentiment analysis and interactive shopping features to improve consumer engagement.

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