SOCIAL MEDIA LIVE STREAMING ENGAGEMENT TOWARDS PURCHASE INTENTION AND CUSTOMER ACQUISITION IN KLANG VALLEY

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Abstract

Social media live streaming enables real-time video broadcasting to online audiences, revolutionizing interactions by fostering immediacy and engagement. Unlike pre-recorded videos, live streams create a personal connection through authenticity. Despite its popularity, research on live streaming in Malaysia is limited, leading to lack of awareness among local businesses about the potential benefits of this marketing channel. This study attempts to address this gap by employing a quantitative survey to identify the level of live streaming engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition in Klang Valley. SPSS were used to analyse the data which comprises 224 respondents who are social media users aged between 18 to above 50 years old. The findings of the study reveal that there is a strong positive correlation between engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition. These results provide valuable guidance for businesses and marketers seeking to harness the power of social media live streaming to effectively engage Malaysian audiences and drive meaningful interactions, highlighting the need for tailored marketing strategies.

Keywords: Social Media, Purchase Intention, Live-Streaming, Customer Acquisition, Engagement

1.0 Introduction

Social media usage statistics for 2024 show that 28.68 million people, or 83.1% of Malaysia's population, have a social media presence. In the past year alone, an additional 4.8 million users joined social media, leading to a 20% increase from the previous year. On average, users spend 2 hours and 48 minutes per day on social media [1]. This consistency highlights a well-established trend of social media engagement among Malaysians, underscoring the platform's integral role in daily life and its potential for influencing consumer behaviour.

Social media live streaming has revolutionized the way businesses and individuals communicate with their audiences by providing a level of immediacy and engagement that traditional media cannot match [2]. It enables users to broadcast live and promote and sell products to Internet audiences simultaneously. This real-time interaction fosters a sense of authenticity and personal connection, making it a highly effective marketing tool [3]. The immediacy and interactive nature of live streaming have not only enhanced viewer engagement but also opened new avenues for direct consumer interaction and commerce [4].

Research in countries such as China and the United States has shown that live streaming can significantly enhance consumer engagement and drive purchase intentions due to its interactive nature and real-time feedback mechanisms [5], [6] . Studies in Western and East Asian markets have also highlighted the role of social media live streaming in building customer loyalty and increasing sales conversion rates, further emphasizing its potential as a powerful marketing tool [7]. Despite its growing popularity, there is a notable gap in research specific to the Malaysian context, particularly regarding how live streaming influences consumer engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition. While global studies have highlighted the effectiveness of live streaming in various markets, the unique socio-cultural dynamics of Malaysia necessitate localized research to understand its specific impact. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the effects of social media live streaming on these variables

within the Klang Valley, a region known for its diverse and dynamic consumer base. The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide actionable insights for local businesses and marketers. Understanding how live streaming affects consumer behaviour in the Klang Valley can help businesses optimize their marketing strategies, enhancing customer engagement and driving purchase intentions. Additionally, it contributes to successful customer acquisition, where then businesses can develop more targeted and effective campaigns, ultimately leading to increased market share and profitability.

Hence, the rapid growth of social media usage in Malaysia presents a valuable opportunity for businesses to leverage live streaming as a marketing tool. By identifying the impact of live streaming on consumer engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition in the Klang Valley, this study aims to offer practical recommendations for local businesses. The insights gained from this research could significantly influence marketing practices, enabling businesses to harness the full potential of social media live streaming in their efforts to connect with and convert their audience.

2.0 Literature Review & Conceptual Framework

2.1 Social Media Live Stream

Social media live streaming has become an important part of the digital landscape in Malaysia, reflecting broader global trends while also showcasing unique local characteristics. This medium has significantly impacted how Malaysians consume content, engage with brands, and interact with each other online [3]. In Malaysia, several platforms dominate the live streaming scene. Facebook Live, Instagram Live, YouTube Live, and TikTok Live are particularly popular, each offering different features that cater to various audience preferences. Additionally, local platforms like Shopee Live and Lazada Live have gained traction, especially for e-commerce live streaming [9]. The content available through live streams in Malaysia is diverse, reflecting the eclectic interests of the population. Common types of live streams include entertainment and music, gaming, e-commerce, lifestyle and influencer content, and educational workshops. Live concerts, DJ sets, and casual performances by local artists often attract a younger audience and foster a sense of community around shared musical tastes. Gaming live streams, particularly on platforms like Facebook Gaming and Twitch, have a substantial following. Malaysian gamers stream a variety of games, from popular titles like Mobile Legends and PUBG to niche indie games [10].

E-commerce live streams are a booming trend in Malaysia, where sellers present their products in real-time, interact with viewers, and offer special discounts. Platforms like Shopee Live, Lazada Live Facebook Live and TikTok are at the forefront of this trend, capitalizing on the convenience and engagement of live streaming to drive sales. Influencers and content creators often use live streaming to connect with their followers, share daily routines, beauty tips, travel experiences, and more [8]. This content is highly interactive, with viewers frequently asking questions and making comments in real time. Live streams have also become a valuable tool for education, with tutors, coaches, and professionals conducting workshops, classes, and Q&A sessions on various topics.

Malaysians have developed distinct habits when it comes to consuming live stream content. Live streaming offers a level of interactivity that traditional media cannot match. Malaysian viewers enjoy engaging directly with content creators through comments, likes, and shares, which enhances the viewing experience and fosters a sense of community and connection. The convenience of accessing live streams from any device, anywhere, has contributed to their popularity. Audiences appreciate the convenience to being able to watch live streams on their smartphones, tablets, or computers, whether they are at home, commuting, or taking a break at work [11]

Live streaming has also become a preferred way for Malaysians to participate in events they cannot attend in person. From major concerts and sports events to local festivals and religious ceremonies, live streams provide them with a front-row seat to important happenings. Moreover, the integration of live streaming with online stores has revolutionized the shopping experience. Malaysians are increasingly comfortable with making purchases during live streams, where they can see products in action, ask questions, watch the demonstration, and benefit from exclusive deals. Live streams also serve as a platform for building and nurturing communities, whether it's a fan group of a particular influencer, a support group for a hobby or interest, or a community of learners.

Thus, social media live streams have become a significant part of Malaysian digital culture, influencing how people consume content, interact with each other, and engage. As technology continues to evolve and user habits mature, the live streaming landscape in Malaysia is poised for even greater growth and diversification.

2.2 Engagement by Social Media Users

The focus on attracting customer engagement has gained generous attention across different fields, including marketing, organizations, and service management. It is believed that customer engagement goes beyond the scope of transactions and is an outcome measure of a company's activities. It can be seen as a series of actions that consumers perform on social media in response to brand-related content, such as reacting, commenting, sharing, and posting user-generated content.

The rise of the Internet and new technologies has transformed both customer and business roles in the customer engagement process, elevating the study of engagement to a transformational level. Based on the available literature and the objectives of this study, considering the complexity of interactions in live streaming, a multidimensional view of customer engagement behaviors may best capture the dynamics in this context

Customer engagement behaviors are defined as ongoing, voluntary actions by online audiences that are valuable to online stores and beyond the transaction [5]. There are a range of customer behaviors that impact businesses and brands categorized into the customer engagement behavior framework. These behaviors include sales and transaction metrics, retention and cross-buying, customer recommendations, blogs, online postings, and word of mouth [6]. Many studies have classified engagement behaviors based on this definition, for example, [7] explained that there are four different engagement behaviors, augmenting, co-developing, influencing, and mobilizing behaviors. [8] described them into cooperation, compliance, helping other customers, feedback, and positive word-of-mouth. In the context of brand-related social media content, [9] categorized the engagement into consuming content, contributing to existing content, and creating new content. In [10] from the perspective of the subject of engagement, there are two forms of customer engagement, consumer-to-consumer customer engagement and consumer-brand customer engagement. [11] mentioned that customers mostly engage in activities in live streaming that involve emotions, the audience's rewards, likes and comments. While [12] identified customer's active participation in chats and the time spent on the platform positively influence purchase intention on live streaming platforms by fostering a sense of community, trust, and increased product familiarity

The empirical research on the level of customer engagement and its relationship with purchase intention and customer acquisition in the context of social media live streaming in Malaysia is lagging and vague.

Therefore, this study attempts to address the gap in the literature by proposing the following research objectives:

RO1. To identify the level of social media live-streaming engagement among customers.

RO2. To identify the level of customer purchase intention during live streaming.

RO3. To identify the level of customer acquisition during live-streaming.

RO4. To determine the relationship between social media live-streaming engagement and customer purchase intention.

RO5. To study the relationship between live-streaming engagement and customer acquisition.
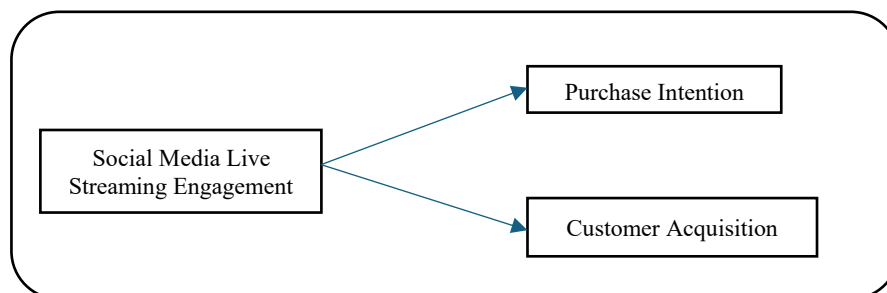
2.3 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.4 User Gratification Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), was developed by researchers Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch. This theory emerged in the 1970s as a reaction to traditional mass communication research, which focused on the effects of media on passive audiences. Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch shifted the focus to understanding how and why active audiences use media to satisfy specific needs and desires. The theory emphasizes the active role of the audience in selecting and using media based on individual motivations. UGT provides a valuable framework for understanding how social media live streaming engagement can influence purchase intention and customer acquisition, particularly in dynamic digital markets like the Klang Valley. UGT suggests that individuals actively select media channels and content to fulfil specific needs and desires [19]. This theoretical framework helps explain the relationship of customer engagement with social media live streams and how it can influence their purchasing decisions and lead to customer acquisition.

Studies leveraging UGT emphasize that consumers engage with live-streaming e-commerce platforms to satisfy specific needs, such as entertainment, social interaction, and information-seeking. Enjoyment is a primary motivation for live-streaming engagement. The interactive and dynamic nature of live streams, particularly those hosted by influencers or engaging personalities, creates an entertaining experience that increases user retention and engagement. This positive experience can encourage viewers to spend more time on the platform and lead to spontaneous purchases due to the enjoyable environment created by live hosts. For example, research found that live-stream viewers tend to stay longer and are more likely to make impulse purchases when entertained during the stream [20].

Live streaming often allows for real-time communication, creating a sense of community and connection between viewers and the host. Studies indicate that this social interaction, facilitated by live comments and responses, fosters a sense of belonging, which positively impacts purchase intention. When consumers feel connected to the presenter, especially if they perceive the presenter as relatable or trustworthy, they are more likely to trust their recommendations and make purchases [21]. Live streaming also meets consumers' need for immediate, detailed information about products, which they can gather through live demonstrations and Q&A sessions. Many viewers use live streams as an opportunity to examine products virtually, benefiting from the authenticity and transparency of real-time product showcases. This substitutes the traditional in-store experience, allowing consumers to evaluate products from the comfort of their own space, which enhances purchase confidence and can lead to higher purchase intentions [22].

Businesses in the Klang Valley can leverage UGT insights to optimize their live streaming strategies. Tailoring content to meet specific gratifications, integrating interactive features, and using trusted hosts can enhance engagement and build relationships with potential customers. Analysing viewer data from live streams enables businesses to refine their approaches, ensuring that their content resonates effectively and drives meaningful customer acquisition. Overall, the gratification obtained from these elements of entertainment, social interaction, and information-seeking not only drives engagement but also fosters trust and a sense of community, ultimately influencing purchase intention and aiding in customer acquisition in e-commerce live streaming. The application of UGT in live-streaming e-commerce underscores how a better understanding of user motivations can help brands tailor their live-streaming content to meet these needs, thereby enhancing engagement and driving sales.
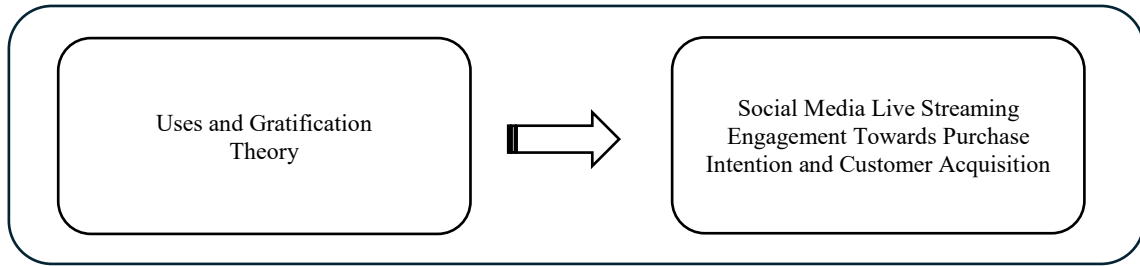
Figure 2: Theoretical Framework

3.0 Methodology

A quantitative research method was employed for this study. Malaysian social media users were chosen as the population of this study, and the selected sample was randomly selected throughout Klang Valley. Before being distributed for the study, this research instrument underwent a comprehensive review, evaluation, and necessary modifications Then, the questionnaire was distributed via Google form by using social media and Whatsapp. Data collection involved informing participants about the study, with assured anonymity. The sample size acquired was 224 respondents with diverse backgrounds in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, income range and whether they an active user of social media. The questionnaire contains four main sections, namely 1) demographic information, 2) independent variables (social media live-streaming engagement and 3) dependent variable (purchase intention and customer acquisition). The research is particularly interested in identifying the level of social media live streaming engagement, level of customer purchase intention, level of customer acquisition during live-streaming, relationship between live-streaming engagement and customer purchase intention and relationship between live-streaming engagement and customer acquisition. A Likert scale was used to measure each item in the questionnaire.

4.0 Findings

4.1 Demographic Profile: Age

TABLE 1
Demographic profile: age

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18 - 30 years old	63	28.1
31 - 40 years old	89	39.7
41 – 50 years old	56	25.0
51 and above	16	7.1
Total	**244**	**100**

Based on Table 1, there are 63 (28.1%) social media users are aged from 18 - 30 years old. 89 (39.7%) social media users who participated in this study are 31 – 40 years old, 56 (25%) are between 41 – 50 years old, and 16 (7.1%) respondents are aged 51 and above.

4.2 Demographic Profile: Gender

TABLE 2
Demographic profile: gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	68	30.4
Female	156	69.6
Total	**224**	**100**

Based on Table 2, there are 68 (30.4%) are male respondents. While there are 156 (69.6%) female respondents participated in this study.

4.3 Demographic Profile: Ethnicity

TABLE 3
Demographic profile: ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Malay	177	79.0
Chinese	19	8.5
Indian	16	7.1
Others	12	5.4
Total	**244**	**100**

Based on Table 3, there are 177 (79%) respondents are Malays. 19 (8.5%) respondents who participated in this study are Chinese, 16 (7.1%) are Indian and 12 (5.4%) respondents are categorized as other ethnicity.

4.4 Demographic Profile: Salary Range

TABLE 4
Demographic profile: salary range

Salary Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1000 -3000	62	27.7
3001 - 5000	76	33.9
5001 and above	86	38.4
Total	**244**	**100**

Based on Table 4, 62 (27.7%) respondents who participated in this study have salaries between RM1000 to RM3000. 76 (33.9%) respondents have RM3001 to RM5000 of salary and 86 (38.4%) of respondents have RM5001 and above salary.

4.5 The Level of Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement Among Customers.

TABLE 5

The level of social media live-streaming engagement among customers.

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	75	33.5
Moderate	105	46.9
High	44	19.6
Total	**224**	**100**

        Table 5 presents the findings on the level of social media live streaming engagement. According to the data, 44 social media users (19.6%) had a high level of engagement during live streaming. Meanwhile, 105 social media users (46.9%) have a moderate level of engagement and another 75 users (33.5%) reported a low level of engagement during social media live streaming.

4.6 The Level of Customer Purchase Intention During Live Streaming

TABLE 6

The level of customer purchase intention during live streaming.

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	62	27.7
Moderate	100	44.6
High	62	27.7
Total	**224**	**100**

        Table 6 illustrates the level of purchase intention among customers during live streaming. The high level of frequency, 62 social media users (27.2%) rated their intention to purchase during media live streaming. 100 social media users (44.6%) reported a moderate level of purchase intention and finally, 62 social media users (27.2%) indicated to have a low level of purchase intention during live streaming.

4.7 The Level of Customer Acquisition During Live-Streaming.

TABLE 7

The level of customer acquisition during live streaming.

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	62	27.7
Moderate	109	48.7
High	53	23.7
Total	**224**	**100**

        Table 7 presents the level of customer acquisition during live stream. The highest percentage, 53 social media users (23.7%) stated their level of acquisition of the products promoted during live streams. 109 social media users (48.7%) reported a moderate level of acquisition and then, 62 social media users (23.7%) had a low level of acquisition of products during live stream.

4.8 The Relationship Between Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement And Customer Purchase Intention.

TABLE 8

The relationship between social media live-streaming engagement and customer purchase intention.

Variable	Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement	
Customer Purchase Intention.	r value .788	p value <.001

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Findings from Table 8 show a strong relationship between social media live streaming engagement and customer purchase intention. The results indicate a strong positive correlation, with (r =.788, p<0.01, suggesting a significant potential for online stores and businesses to leverage live streaming on social media platforms to connect and engage with their customers.

4.9 The Relationship Between Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement And Customer Acquisition.

TABLE 9

The relationship between social media live-streaming engagement and customer purchase intention.

Variable	Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement	
Customer Acquisition	r value .835	p value <.001

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Findings from Table 9 present a significant relationship between social media live streaming engagement and customer acquisition. The results demonstrate a very strong positive correlation, with (r =.835, p<0.01, highlighting the substantial opportunity for online stores and businesses to maximize their utilization of social media live streaming for product promotion and marketing.

5.0 Discussion

This study aimed to explore several key elements of social media live-streaming, focusing on engagement, purchase intention, customer acquisition, and the relationships among these variables. The objectives were to identify the levels of customer engagement during live streaming, determine the purchase intentions and customer acquisition, and analyse the relationships between engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition.

The analysis presented in Table 5 (The Level of Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement Among Customers) indicated varying levels of engagement among social media users during live streaming. Out of the 224 respondents, 19.6% (44 users) demonstrated a high level of engagement, actively interacting with the content. The majority, 46.9% (105 users), exhibited a moderate level of engagement, indicating a fair amount of interest and interaction. Meanwhile, 33.5% (75 users) reported low engagement, suggesting that a significant portion of users is either passively viewing the content or not engaging at all. These findings underscore the diverse ways in which users interact with live-streaming content on social media platforms.

Meanwhile, the findings from Table 6 (The Level of Customer Purchase Intention During Live Streaming) focuses on the level of purchase intention among customers during live streaming. The data indicates that 27.2% (62 users) had a high intention to purchase products showcased during live streams, highlighting the potential for instant sales.

Additionally, 44.6% (100 users) expressed a moderate purchase intention, suggesting that while they are interested, other factors may influence their final decision. 27.2% (62 users) reported a low level of purchase intention, indicating that nearly a third of the audience may not be immediately persuaded to make any purchase during these sessions. This suggests that while live streaming can drive significant interest among viewers, converting them into buyers may require additional strategies.

As demonstrated in Table 7 (The Level of Customer Acquisition During Live-Streaming.), the highest percentage, 23.7% (53 users), indicated a high level of product acquisition, directly translating engagement into sales. The majority, 48.7% (109 users), reported a moderate level of acquisition, reflecting a significant yet varied influence of live streaming on purchasing behaviour.

Meanwhile, 23.7% (53 users) had a low level of acquisition, mirroring the findings related to purchase intention. These results suggest that while live streaming is effective in acquiring customers, there is still room for improvement in maximizing its potential.

Table 8 (The Relationship Between Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement And Customer Purchase Intention.) shows a strong positive correlation ($r = .788$, $p < 0.01$) between social media live-streaming engagement and customer purchase intention. This substantial relationship recognises the importance of interactive and engaging content in influencing purchase decisions. High engagement levels during live streams are likely to enhance customers' intention to purchase, presenting compelling evidence for online stores and businesses to invest in social media live-streaming sessions as part of their marketing strategy.

Finally, the findings in Table 9 (The Relationship Between Social Media Live-Streaming Engagement And Customer Acquisition) present a very strong positive correlation ($r = .835$, $p < 0.01$) between social media live-streaming engagement and customer acquisition. This finding highlights the substantial opportunity for online stores and businesses to utilize live streaming as a critical tool for product promotion and customer acquisition. The data suggests that the more engaged users are during live streams, the higher the likelihood they will become customers [15].

Based on these findings, online stores and businesses can implement several strategies to maximize the effectiveness of social media live-streaming. For instance, to engage with dominant platforms like Facebook Live, Instagram Live, YouTube Live, TikTok Live, and local e-commerce platforms like Shopee Live and Lazada Live, as these cater to varying audience preferences and offer diverse features. Businesses should also leverage the interactive nature of live streaming by encouraging real-time viewer participation through comments, questions, discussions, and product demonstrations which fosters a sense of community. This engagement not only sustains interest but also enhances their likelihood of making a purchase [16] Then, develop a varied content types that appeal to different interests, such as entertainment, gaming, lifestyle, and educational workshops to attract a broader audience. In addition, understanding the demographic profiles and preferences of viewers enables businesses to create more relevant and appealing live-streaming content that resonates with their audience.

Establishing a consistent streaming schedule may help build a loyal audience base as viewers anticipate and plan to join these sessions [17]. This can lead to higher levels of engagement and improved conversion rates over time. Moreover, trying to incorporate incentives and promotions such as exclusive deals, discounts, or limited time offers during live streams can create a sense of urgency among viewers. Incentives like these not only encourage immediate purchases but also stimulate

customer acquisition by capitalizing on heightened excitement and engagement during live-streaming events [18].

Businesses with bigger budget allocations may collaborate with social media influencers or personalities who have a significant following which can extend the reach of live-streaming sessions [19]. These influencers can lend credibility to the content and attract a wider viewer base. Leveraging their influence can amplify the impact of live-streaming efforts and enhance overall engagement levels [20].

6.0 Limitations

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample size and diversity of participants could restrict the applicability of the findings. The study involved a specific number of social media users, which may not represent the wider population of online consumers. Variations in patterns of geographical locations, demographics, and social media usage could influence level of engagement, purchase intentions, and acquisition differently [21]. Future research should consider a larger and more diverse sample to enhance the generalizability of the results.

Secondly, the study did not account for temporal factors that could affect engagement and purchasing behaviors. For example, marketing campaigns, seasonal trends, or external events may impact users' interactions with live-streaming content. Longitudinal studies that track engagement and purchase behaviors over time could offer a more comprehensive understanding of these dynamics.

Thirdly, another limitation is the potential variation in live-streaming effectiveness across different social media platforms. The study did not differentiate between platforms, which might have unique features and user demographics influencing engagement and purchase behaviors. Future research could compare the effectiveness of live streaming across various social media platforms and channel to provide more in-depth insights.

Additionally, the study did not account for the variability of social media live stream content. Different styles of presentation, types of products, and the characteristics of live stream host could influence user engagement and purchase intentions [22]. A more detailed analysis considering these factors could help identify specific content strategies that are most effective in driving engagement and sales.

Acknowledging these limitations provides a clearer context for interpreting the study's findings. While the results highlight significant correlations and opportunities for leveraging social media live streaming, future research addressing these limitations could further validate and refine the strategies proposed. Despite these limitations, the finding of this study is hoped to offer valuable initial insights into the role and impact of social media live streaming in online marketing and customer engagement, laying the groundwork for more in-depth research.

7.0 Conclusion

This study illustrated that social media live-streaming is a powerful tool for engaging customers, influencing their purchase intentions, and driving customer acquisition. The findings reveal that while a significant portion of users engage moderately with social media live-streaming content, there is substantial potential to enhance engagement and increase conversion rates. The strong positive correlations between engagement, purchase intention, and customer acquisition highlight the importance of interactive and captivating live-streaming sessions.

By implementing strategies to enhance interactivity, personalize content, maintain a consistent streaming schedule, offer incentives, and collaborate with influencers, businesses can maximize the potential of live streaming on social media platforms. Apart from that, they must stay abreast of the current trend and developments and continuously refine marketing strategies to ensure that they remain competitive and effectively in engaging their audience in the ever-changing digital environment.

These insights provide a strategic advantage for online businesses seeking to connect and engage with their customers effectively, ultimately driving growth and success in the digital marketplace. As social media platforms continue to evolve rapidly, it becomes imperative to implement

targeted marketing strategies to address potential outcomes associated with their social media live streaming [22].

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