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**THE INFLUENCE OF LIVE E-COMMERCE FACTORS ON  
ONLINE SHOPPING BEHAVIOUR AMONG FEMALE DOUYIN  
USERS IN CHINA**



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## **Abstrak**

E-dagang secara langsung telah mengubah cara membeli-belah dalam talian dengan memperkenalkan interaksi serta hiburan secara masa nyata. Kajian ini meneliti kesan Ciri Tingkah Laku Interaktif, Imej Pempengaruh, Pengindividualan Produk, dan Promosi terhadap tingkah laku membeli-belah wanita di platform Douyin, yang semakin penting bagi pemasaran bertarget. Berdasarkan Teori Kredibiliti Sumber, kajian ini menjelaskan bagaimana petunjuk kredibiliti daripada pempengaruh dan kandungan secara langsung mempengaruhi tahap kepercayaan dan keputusan pembelian pengguna wanita. Data dikumpul melalui soal selidik berstruktur yang disasarkan kepada pengguna wanita Douyin yang menyertai sesi membeli-belah secara langsung. Analisis dilakukan menggunakan statistik deskriptif dan inferens. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa keempat-empat faktor tersebut memberi pengaruh positif dan signifikan secara statistik terhadap tingkah laku membeli-belah wanita, dengan Promosi mencatat kesan paling kuat, menunjukkan bahawa insentif harga dan tawaran masa terhad memainkan peranan penting dalam keputusan pembelian. Penemuan ini memberikan implikasi praktikal kepada perniagaan serta sumbangan teori dengan memperluas penerapan Teori Kredibiliti Sumber dalam konteks e-dagang secara langsung dan tingkah laku pengguna wanita. Kajian masa depan boleh meneliti faktor tambahan, seperti tahap kepercayaan terhadap platform atau bukti sosial, untuk memahami motivasi pengguna dengan lebih mendalam dalam landskap digital yang sentiasa berkembang.

**Kata Kunci:** E-dagang secara langsung, Tingkah laku membeli-belah wanita, Platform Douyin, Strategi pemasaran

## **Abstract**

Live e-commerce has transformed online shopping by introducing real-time interaction and entertainment. This study examines how Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Influencer Image, Product Individualization, and Promotion influence female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform, which has become increasingly important for targeted marketing. Guided by the Source Credibility Theory (SCT), this research explains how credibility cues from influencers and live content shape female consumers' trust and purchasing decisions. A quantitative method was adopted, and data were collected through structured questionnaires. The respondents consisted of female Douyin users who participate in live shopping. The dataset was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results reveal that all four factors, that is, Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Influencer Image, Product Individualization, and Promotion, have a positive and statistically significant influence on female online shopping behaviour. Promotion demonstrated the strongest effect, suggesting that price incentives and time-limited offers play a critical role in driving purchase decisions. These findings provide practical implications for businesses and theoretical contributions by extending the application of the Source Credibility Theory to the context of live e-commerce and female consumer behaviour. Future studies could explore additional influencing factors, such as platform trust or social proof, to gain a deeper understanding of consumer motivations in this evolving digital landscape.

**Keywords:** Live E-Commerce, Female Online Shopping Behaviour, Douyin Platform, Marketing Strategies

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## Table of contents

|                                                         |          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Permission to Use .....                                 | i        |
| Abstrak .....                                           | ii       |
| Abstract .....                                          | iii      |
| Acknowledgement .....                                   | iv       |
| List of tables .....                                    | ix       |
| List of figures .....                                   | x        |
| List of appendices .....                                | xi       |
| <b>CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION .....</b>                   | <b>1</b> |
| 1.1 Introduction .....                                  | 1        |
| 1.2 Research Background .....                           | 1        |
| 1.3 Problem Statement .....                             | 7        |
| 1.4 Research Questions .....                            | 11       |
| 1.5 Research Objectives .....                           | 11       |
| 1.6 Significance of the Study .....                     | 12       |
| 1.6.1 Practical .....                                   | 12       |
| 1.6.2 Theoretical .....                                 | 12       |
| 1.6.3 Methodological .....                              | 14       |
| 1.7 Scope of the study .....                            | 15       |
| 1.8 Definition of key terms .....                       | 16       |
| 1.8.1 Interactive Behaviour Characteristics (IBC) ..... | 16       |
| 1.8.2 Public Image of Influencers (PII) .....           | 17       |
| 1.8.3 Product Individualization (PI) .....              | 18       |
| 1.8.4 Promotion (PM) .....                              | 19       |
| 1.8.5 Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) .....     | 19       |
| 1.8.6 Douyin platform .....                             | 20       |

|                                                 |           |
|-------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.9 Organization of the Thesis .....            | 21        |
| <b>CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>      | <b>23</b> |
| 2.1 Intrduction .....                           | 23        |
| 2.2 Interactive Behaviour Characteristics ..... | 23        |
| 2.3 Public Image of Influencers .....           | 26        |
| 2.4 Product Individualization .....             | 28        |
| 2.5 Promotion .....                             | 32        |
| 2.6 Female Online Shopping Behavior .....       | 34        |
| 2.7Theoretical Framework .....                  | 40        |
| 2.8 Conceptual Research Framework .....         | 42        |
| 2.9 Research Hypothesis .....                   | 47        |
| 2.10 Conclusion .....                           | 48        |
| <b>CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY .....</b>          | <b>49</b> |
| 3.1 Introduction .....                          | 49        |
| 3.2 Research Design .....                       | 49        |
| 3.3 Population and Sample .....                 | 50        |
| 3.4 Questionnaire Design .....                  | 53        |
| 3.5 Data Collection Procedure .....             | 58        |
| 3.6 Data Analysis Procedure .....               | 61        |
| 3.7 Pilot test .....                            | 63        |
| 3.8 Conclusion .....                            | 63        |
| <b>CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS .....</b>              | <b>65</b> |
| 4.1 Introduction .....                          | 65        |
| 4.2 Response Rate .....                         | 65        |
| 4.3 Respondents' Demographic Profile .....      | 66        |
| 4.4 Reliability and Validity Analysis .....     | 69        |
| 4.4.1 Reliability Analysis .....                | 69        |
| 4.4.2 Validity Analysis .....                   | 70        |

|                                                                                                                                                          |           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 4.5 Normality Analysis .....                                                                                                                             | 71        |
| 4.6 Correlation Between Overall Live E-commerce Factor and Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                                        | 71        |
| 4.6.1 Correlation Between Individual Factors of Live E-commerce and Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                               | 72        |
| 4.7 Multiple Regression .....                                                                                                                            | 73        |
| 4.7.1 Relationship Between Interactive behaviour Characteristics with Female Online Shopping behaviour .....                                             | 74        |
| 4.7.2 Relationship Between Public Image of Influencers with Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                                       | 75        |
| 4.7.3 Relationship Between Product Individualization with Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                                         | 76        |
| 4.7.4 Relationship Between Promotion with Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                                                         | 77        |
| 4.7.5 The Most Significant Influence Factor in Live E-Commerce on Female Online Shopping Behaviour .....                                                 | 78        |
| 4.8 Conclusion .....                                                                                                                                     | 82        |
| <b>CHAPTER FIVE DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION .....</b>                                                                                      | <b>83</b> |
| 5.1 Introduction .....                                                                                                                                   | 83        |
| 5.2 Discussion of Key Findings .....                                                                                                                     | 83        |
| 5.3 Discussion of Hypothesis 1: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform ..... | 84        |
| 5.4 Discussion of Hypothesis 2: Public Image of Influencers positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform .....           | 87        |
| 5.5 Discussion of Hypothesis 3: Product Individualization positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform .....             | 90        |
| 5.6 Discussion of Hypothesis 4: Promotion positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform .....                             | 94        |

|                                                                                    |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5.7 Discussion of Hypothesis 5: Identification of the Most Significant Factor .... | 97         |
| 5.8 Theoretical and Practical Implications .....                                   | 100        |
| 5.8.1 Theoretical Implications .....                                               | 100        |
| 5.8.2 Practical Implications .....                                                 | 101        |
| 5.9 Limitations of the Study .....                                                 | 103        |
| 5.10 Recommendations for Future Research .....                                     | 104        |
| 5.11 Conclusion .....                                                              | 106        |
| <b>REFERENCES .....</b>                                                            | <b>108</b> |
| <b>APPENDICES .....</b>                                                            | <b>131</b> |



## List of tables

|                                                                                                                   |    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Table 3.1 Five (5) Point Likert Scale .....                                                                       | 54 |
| Table 3.2 Cronbach Reliability Analysis .....                                                                     | 63 |
| Table 4.1 Response Rate from Target Respondent .....                                                              | 66 |
| Table 4.2 Demographic of information respondents (n=408) .....                                                    | 68 |
| Table 4.3 Reliability Analysis .....                                                                              | 70 |
| Table 4.4 Validity Analysis .....                                                                                 | 71 |
| Table 4.5 Normality Analysis .....                                                                                | 71 |
| Table 4.6 Correlation Between Overall Live E-commerce Factor and Female<br>Online Shopping Behaviour .....        | 72 |
| Table 4.7 Correlation Between Individual Factors of Live E-commerce and<br>Female Online Shopping Behaviour ..... | 73 |
| Table 4.8 Coefficient Analysis of Interactive Behaviour Characteristics .....                                     | 75 |
| Table 4.9 Coefficient Analysis of Public Image of Influencers .....                                               | 76 |
| Table 4.10 Coefficient Analysis of Product Individualization .....                                                | 77 |
| Table 4.11 Coefficient Analysis of Promotion .....                                                                | 78 |
| Table 4.12 Coefficient Analysis of Factors of Live E-commerce and Female<br>Online Shopping Behaviour .....       | 80 |
| Table 4.13 Research Questions & Objectives & Hypothesis Summary .....                                             | 81 |

## **List of figures**

|                                                      |    |
|------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Figure 2.1 Source Credibility Theory Framework ..... | 41 |
| Figure 2.2 Conceptual Research Framework .....       | 43 |
| Figure 3.1 Krejcie and Morgan Table .....            | 52 |



## **List of appendices**

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| APPENDICES ..... | 131 |
|------------------|-----|



# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of this research. It comprises the background, the problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, scope, and the definition of the key terms. This research investigates the factors that influence female online shopping behaviours on the Douyin platform, which is a frontrunner platform of the live e-commerce market.

### **1.2 Research Background**

Female consumer online shopping behaviour has gradually evolved into a research priority area within e-commerce due to the distinctive purchase patterns and preferences they exhibit. Across the globe, women have emerged as a strong economic force in the online markets, affecting product trends and strategies for digital marketing. Chen et al. (2022) reported that women account for more than 85% of all consumer purchases, whether it is a product related to health or technology.

It is important to notice that a key characteristic of female online shopping behaviour is the tendency to seek out as much information about a product as possible and read user reviews before making a purchase. A large-scale data study has shown that women are more inclined than men to look up detailed product descriptions, side-by-side comparisons, and customer reviews before finalizing a purchase

(Davenport, 2017). This behaviour underscores the importance for e-commerce platforms and sellers to ensure their product information is complete, accurate, and easily accessible to better cater to this audience.

Secondly, social media has been integrated into the purchasing behavior experience of female customers. Social media platforms like Instagram, Pinterest, and Douyin /TikTok have become virtual shopping gateways where users can purchase a product almost directly after seeing its photo or video. The Global Web Index (2021) further reported that 42% of female users use social media for researching products before making a purchase; therefore, brands need to maintain a strong and engaging social media presence to capture this key demographic.

This trend of "shoppertainment" is a global phenomenon, not confined to China. Platforms like TikTok, the global counterpart to Douyin, have aggressively integrated e-commerce features, popularizing live shopping in Western markets (Si, R. 2021). In Southeast Asia, platforms such as Shopee and Lazada have built massive user bases around live-streaming e-commerce, where interactive features and influencer-led sales drive significant revenue (Qi, 2023). The global live-streaming market is expanding rapidly, with consumer behaviours showing parallelisms in the demand for authenticity and real-time engagement. However, while these platforms share common features, their implementation and the specific consumer behaviours they foster are deeply mediated by cultural and technological contexts. The rapid,

high-intensity, and algorithmically-driven ecosystem of China's Douyin presents a unique case study. This distinction necessitates a focused analysis, as strategies effective on Lazada or TikTok may not directly translate to the specific socio-technical environment of Douyin, justifying the study's specific focus after acknowledging the global trend.

Recently, Douyin has emerged as a key platform for live e-commerce in China, fundamentally reshaping the online shopping landscape. Its influence is particularly significant in engaging female consumers, who are avid users of the platform for both social and shopping purposes. As of 2023, Douyin holds one of the largest shares in China's live-stream shopping market, distinguished by high interactivity and the seamless integration of short videos with live streaming. Douyin offers an immersive shopping experience in which live hosts and influencers showcase products in real time, making it especially appealing to female shoppers who value visual demonstrations, social interaction, and the immediacy of feedback during the purchasing behavior process. This study focuses on Douyin live streaming as it provides a relevant context to examine female consumer behaviour in a rapidly growing and highly interactive medium, which aligns closely with the preferences identified in recent research on female online shopping patterns.

On top of this, female are more likely to choose brands that they believe (and can prove) do the right thing and have a social or environmental commitment. Females

will spend more money on brands that are engaged in sustainability and environmental practices (Muksininna & Ratnasari, 2022). Younger females lead this trend, and they also tend to favor brands that have a purpose in social justice causes. Female customers prefer more transparency in purchases, and they need e-commerce businesses to integrate these choices into their values.

Likewise, public image influencers also possess a significant influence on female consumer online shopping behaviour. This phenomenon can be effectively examined through the lens of Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), which posits that individuals learn behaviours through observation and modeling. In the context of live e-commerce, influencers act as potent models. Their followers observe the product demonstration (vicarious experience) and the positive reactions from other viewers (vicarious reinforcement), which shapes their own outcome expectancies and self-efficacy regarding the purchase (Huang & Su, 2022). One of social media's most important aspects is that it relies heavily on influencers, who carry much more credibility among potential buyers than direct brand communication.

Research by Huang and Su (2022) reveals that female followers are most influenced when they see an influencer mention a brand or product in their posts, making it clear for business owners to undertake influencer marketing strategies as part of their e-commerce efforts. In addition to these general features, the contiguity properties of interactive behaviours are critical factors. This aligns with the SCT framework, where

the live-stream environment itself constitutes a key "environmental factor" in the triadic reciprocal causation model (Bandura, 1986). The concept of interactive behaviour characteristics, such as real-time comments, likes, and direct Q&A with the host, provides immediate social feedback and environmental reinforcement. This interactivity is not merely a feature but a mechanism that enhances observational learning and perceived social norms (Liu et al., 2023). Liu et al. (2023) found that a more enjoyable and reciprocal interactive experience (a favourable environment) can significantly improve consumer satisfaction (a personal or cognitive factor), leading to increased purchase intentions (a behavioural factor).

Another thing that matters significantly is product individualization, which refers to the customization and personalization of products to match individual preferences. Female shoppers often look for items that are unique and tailored specifically to them. E-commerce platforms offering customization options can attract and retain more female customers by catering to their desire for individuality. According to a study by Zhang et al. (2022), customization features can increase the perceived value of products, resulting in higher customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Promotion, such as discounts, coupons, and special offers, plays an important role in shaping female online shopping behaviour. Women are generally more sensitive to price than men, so they are more likely to look for these kinds of deals and discounts. As a result, female consumers are more likely to make purchases when promotion

adds value and creates a sense of urgency.

Live e-commerce, which involves live streaming of product presentations and demonstrations, has become increasingly popular in the online shopping landscape. Live E-Commerce combines shopping with entertainment, offering a fun and interactive purchasing behavior experience for consumers. Female consumers, in particular, are drawn to Live E-Commerce as it appeals to their social, visual, and real-time needs for viewing products and asking questions with immediate responses. According to Wang et al. (2023), live streaming sessions often enhance consumer satisfaction, with many women reporting higher satisfaction and confidence in their purchases after participating in live streams.

In conclusion, understanding female consumers' online shopping behaviour is important for e-commerce businesses that want to improve their strategies and offerings. This demographic often prefers detailed product information, uses social media when shopping, is sensitive to price and promotions, and values ethical consumerism. Moreover, factors such as interactive behaviour characteristics, public image of influencers, product individualization, and promotion have a strong impact on their shopping behaviour. To stay competitive, e-commerce platforms and retailers need to respond to these preferences in order to attract, engage, and retain female shoppers.

### 1.3 Problem Statement

Despite the explosive growth of live streaming e-commerce platforms like Douyin, there is a noticeable lack of empirical research focused on the factors that specifically influence female consumers' purchasing behaviours within this digital ecosystem (Mao et al., 2022). While it is widely assumed that interactive features, influencer engagement, and product personalization positively affect consumer purchasing behaviour, the exact nature and extent of these influences remain largely unquantified and not fully understood.

Live-streaming e-commerce has grown quickly on platforms such as Douyin, and this rise has reshaped the online shopping landscape. The change raises key questions about which factors guide female consumers' purchasing behavior choices, because this group drives a large share of global e-commerce revenue. Interactive behaviour characteristics, the public image of digital celebrities, and product individualization interact in complex ways; together, these elements can either encourage or discourage female engagement and purchasing decisions (Blasco et al., 2016). However, traditional SCT models were not designed for the high-velocity, para-social, and algorithmically-driven environment of Douyin. Therefore, the core research problem is how these theoretical constructs, interactive behaviour characteristics (environment), the public image of digital celebrities (models for observational learning), and product individualization (personal cognitive factor), interact in this unique digital context to encourage or discourage female engagement and purchasing

decisions.

Yet, even with the rapid expansion of platforms like Douyin, empirical work that pinpoints the factors shaping female consumers' purchasing behaviour in this digital context is still scarce (Mao et al., 2022). Researchers generally agree that interactive features, influencer engagement, and product individualization promote purchases, However, it remains conspicuously superficial in explaining the mechanisms, the "how" and "why", through which these factors operate and interact, particularly within the specific socio-technical ecosystem of Douyin. The problem is not merely a lack of studies, but a lack of theoretical depth. Most research fails to move beyond identifying simple correlations to investigate the complex causal pathways. This is a significant omission, as the exact nature and extent of these influences, especially on the distinct female consumer demographic, remain largely unquantified and critically misunderstood.

Interactive behaviours, such as engaging directly with content through likes, comments, and shares, are considered to enhance the shopping experience by increasing consumer immersion, which may correlate with purchase likelihood. Research by Li et al. (2018) shows that platforms fostering higher user engagement generally report stronger sales outcomes. However, this research is critically insufficient. It often treats 'engagement' as a monolithic construct, failing to differentiate the distinct behavioural impacts of passive interactions (e.g., 'liking' a

stream) versus active, high-intent interactions (e.g., asking product-specific questions). From an SCT perspective, these different interactions represent vastly different forms of environmental feedback and reinforcement. The exact nature of these specific interactive mechanisms and their correlation with purchasing decisions, particularly among female consumers who value information seeking (Davenport, 2017) on platforms like Douyin, remains critically underexplored.

Similarly, the impact of influencers' public images represents another significant area that warrants closer examination (Vrontis et al., 2021). Influencers shape consumer perceptions and decisions through their endorsements and shared content. Cooley et al. (2019) found that influencer credibility can influence consumer behaviour, but this finding is too general. The literature fails to adequately dissect the mechanisms of this influence on Douyin: Is the influence driven by the influencer's perceived expertise (credibility), their perceived authenticity (a personal factor), or the strength of the para-social relationship they cultivate? Further research is urgently needed to better understand the specific pathways through which female consumers on Douyin process these model-based cues and how perceived authenticity moderates their response.

In addition, product individualization is increasingly acknowledged as a key factor in consumer engagement on online platforms. Personalized experiences are associated with higher consumer satisfaction and loyalty, potentially influencing conversion rates. Yang (2022) highlighted that customization is a prominent factor in purchasing

behaviour; however, insights into how product individualization affects female consumers specifically on Douyin are limited.

While studies have documented the effects of loyalty and promotions on consumer purchasing behaviours, the particular impact of these factors on female consumers within the distinct context of Douyin's live-streaming and short video platform has yet to be thoroughly investigated (Wang, 2024). Douyin's combination of entertainment, social interaction, and e-commerce offers a unique setting that may influence consumer behaviour in ways that differ from traditional e-commerce models. Promotions are widely recognized as powerful tools for driving purchases. On Douyin, strategies such as flash sales, limited-time offers, and exclusive discounts create a sense of urgency and enhance perceived value. Although these tactics are generally effective, their impact on the purchasing decisions of female consumers on Douyin has not been specifically quantified. Chaudhuri (2019) notes that promotional activities can increase sales volume, but their effects on consumer loyalty and satisfaction are complex, suggesting a nuanced influence between short-term engagement and sustained interest.

Given these critical research gaps, this study moves beyond simply identifying which live e-commerce factors correlate with purchasing. It aims to develop a more nuanced, theoretically-grounded understanding by exploring the influence and mechanisms of these factors. This study will focus on how key environmental cues (interactivity,

promotions) and model-based factors (influencer image), as conceptualized within an SCT framework, shape the personal-cognitive and behavioural purchasing tendencies of female users on Douyin.

#### **1.4 Research Questions**

This study addresses the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between Interactive Behavior Characteristic and Female Online Shopping Behavior?
2. Is there a relationship between Public Image Influencer and Female Online Shopping Behavior?
3. Is there a relationship between Product Individualization and Female Online Shopping Behavior?
4. Is there a relationship between Promotions Tools and Female Online Shopping Behavior?
5. What is the most factor Live E-Commerce influence Female Online Shopping Behavior?

#### **1.5 Research Objectives**

The purpose of this study is to conduct research based on the research questions:

1. To determine the relationship between interactive behaviour characteristics and female online shopping behaviour.

2. To determine the relationship between public image of influencers and female online shopping behaviour.
3. To determine the relationship between product individualization and female online shopping behaviour.
4. To determine the relationship between promotion and female online shopping behaviour.
5. To identify the most significant factor in live e-commerce that influences female online shopping behaviour.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

### **1.6.1 Practical**

The practical significance of this research lies in enhancing strategic and operational frameworks within the e-commerce sector, particularly on platforms like Douyin. By identifying the key factors influencing female consumers' shopping behaviours, this study offers actionable insights for refining marketing strategies, improving user engagement, and optimizing sales approaches. For instance, insights into effective influencer traits and personalized product strategies enable businesses to tailor their offerings more precisely, enhancing consumer satisfaction and potentially increasing sales volumes.

### **1.6.2 Theoretical**

This study integrates a key theory: the Source Credibility Theory (SCT), which provide a foundation for understanding how various factors influence female online

shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

The Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953) explains that how much a message source is trusted can influence whether people accept its content. This idea is especially useful when looking at how Douyin influencers affect purchasing behavior, since they often serve as key information channels for consumers. Under this theory, influencers are considered credible when they show expertise, trustworthiness, and attractiveness, which can influence how consumers feel about the products they promote. This link supports research question 2, which explores the relationship between an influencer's public image and female consumers' online shopping decisions.

SCT also relates to research question 1, where interactive behaviours (likes, comments, shares) play a role in building perceived credibility and trust around influencers or products. Positive engagement with influencers increases consumer trust and acceptance, supporting the notion that interactive behaviour characteristics can positively influence online shopping behaviour on Douyin.

The theory further supports research question 3 by suggesting that influencers who promote individualized or customized products can enhance their credibility through a perception of expertise and alignment with audience needs. This aligns with SCT's premise that credible sources—those who understand and meet consumer

preferences—are more persuasive, making product individualization an influential factor in purchasing behaviour.

Finally, SCT provides indirect support for research question 4, regarding the influence of promotions on purchasing behaviour. When credible influencers endorse time-limited promotions or exclusive discounts, the urgency and appeal of these offers are enhanced. This aligns with SCT's concept that credible sources amplify the persuasiveness of their messages, making promotions more compelling and encouraging consumer engagement.

By incorporating SCT, this study offers a theoretical framework to understand the influence of interactive behaviour, influencer credibility, product individualization, and promotions on female online shopping behaviour on Douyin. This framework provides valuable insights into the mechanisms driving consumer actions on live e-commerce platforms.

### **1.6.3 Methodological**

This study's methodological innovation stems from its application of quantitative research techniques, which provide a more objective and generalizable understanding of the factors driving female consumer behaviour on Douyin. Employing structured surveys and advanced statistical analyses enables the study to rigorously test theoretical models and quantify the influence of various marketing strategies. This

approach not only strengthens the reliability of the findings but also provides a concrete basis for e-commerce platforms to fine-tune their strategies for maximum impact.

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

This study investigates the factors influencing female consumers' online shopping behaviour on the Douyin live e-commerce platform, specifically focusing on interactive behaviours, influencer credibility, product individualization, and promotions. By applying Source Credibility Theory (SCT), the research identifies the key variables linked to purchasing decisions among female users, providing actionable insights for marketers to create more engaging and personalized shopping experiences.

The research specifically targets Chinese female consumers on Douyin due to their significant engagement and unique purchasing behaviours in the online shopping context. Female consumers, particularly in China, actively participate in online shopping activities and frequently respond positively to interactive features, influencer endorsements, and personalized content (Chen et al., 2023). This demographic significantly impacts trends and marketing strategies in the live-streaming e-commerce space (Alshehri et al., 2022).

Moreover, the study exclusively examines Douyin, intentionally excluding platforms

like WeChat and Taobao. Douyin 's distinctive combination of entertainment, short-form video content, and live-streaming commerce creates a unique social shopping environment attractive to young female consumers (Yang & Ha, 2021). Limiting the scope to Douyin allows for a detailed examination of factors unique to this platform without the complexity of cross-platform variations. Although this limitation reduces generalizability, it ensures clarity and practical relevance of the findings.

In summary, this research aims to produce focused and practical insights beneficial to marketers, platform developers, and policymakers who seek to effectively leverage female consumer behaviours within Douyin 's unique live-stream e-commerce context.

## **1.8 Definition of key terms**

To help clarify the main objectives of this study, the following parts explain the key terms used throughout the research.

### **1.8.1 Interactive Behaviour Characteristics (IBC)**

According to Sharma and Singh (2023), interactive behaviour characteristics on social media platforms encompass various user actions that contribute to socially responsible engagement, such as liking, commenting, and sharing content, which are influenced by behavioural intentions and attitudes. Similarly, Achen, Stadler-Blank, and Sailors (2023) found that consumer engagement actions, including liking, commenting, and

sharing, are significantly affected by the type of social media platform and the thematic content of the messages. These actions are critical in understanding how users interact with digital content across different platforms. Moreover, according to Pedalino and Camerini (2022), interactive behaviour on social media platforms such as Instagram influences body dissatisfaction through social comparison processes among young females. This concept is similarly applicable to Douyin, where user engagement plays a critical role in shaping consumer behaviour. In the context of the research, interactive behaviour characteristics refer to the actions taken by users that involve direct interaction with content on digital platforms. These behaviours include actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, and participating in polls or other engagement features offered by the platform.

### **1.8.2 Public Image of Influencers (PII)**

According to Crespo and Tille (2023), the public image of influencers is strongly linked to the perceived credibility of the influencer, which includes dimensions such as expertise, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. These elements are crucial in establishing the influencer's authority and opinion leadership, thereby shaping their public image on social media platforms. Similarly, Chekima, Chekima, and Adis (2020) emphasize that the attractiveness and expertise of an influencer significantly impact their effectiveness in advertising, which in turn influences how the public perceives them. The credibility of influencers, therefore, plays a central role in constructing their public image. Yang et al. (2023) highlight that the characteristics of

streamers on Douyin significantly impact sales performance, indicating that the public image of influencers can drive consumer behaviour. In the context of the research, the public image of influencers is defined as the perception held by the audience regarding the credibility, attractiveness, and authority of influencers on social media platforms. This image is constructed through the content posted by the influencers, their interactions with followers, and the endorsements they make.

### **1.8.3 Product Individualization (PI)**

According to Wang, Zhao, and Wan (2021), product individualization in the form of mass customization is increasingly significant as it allows for the efficient production of goods that meet the specific needs and preferences of individual customers. Their study emphasizes the role of configurators that enable customers to personalize products based on their unique requirements. Similarly, Li et al. (2020) found that in the context of online shopping for customized garments, consumers highly value the ability to purchase products tailored to their preferences, which influences their purchasing decisions and enhances perceived value. Koren et al. (2015) discuss the concept of mass-individualization in product design, emphasizing the importance of customizing products to cater to individual preferences in enhancing consumer satisfaction. These findings align with the broader understanding that product individualization is a critical factor in modern marketing strategies. In the context of the research, product individualization refers to the customization of products to meet individual customers' preferences and needs. This term encompasses a variety of

practices, from personalized marketing messages based on user behaviour to the creation of unique products tailored to individual tastes.

#### **1.8.4 Promotion (PM)**

According to Chandra, Mazumdar, and Suman (2018), promotions in the retail sector, particularly in apparel retailing, significantly influence consumer purchase decisions by creating a perception of value through tools such as discounts, coupons, and buy-one-get-one-free offers. Similarly, Krisyanti and Rahanatha (2019) highlight that promotional activities, especially those involving discounts and coupons, enhance brand awareness and positively impact consumer purchase intentions, thereby reinforcing the effectiveness of promotions in driving sales. The findings of Liu et al. (2023) on Douyin suggest that promotional activities significantly influence user engagement and marketing performance, underlining the critical role of promotion in driving consumer behaviour. These perspectives underscore the importance of promotions in increasing consumer awareness and influencing purchasing behaviour. In the context of the research, promotion in marketing refers to any activity that increases consumer awareness of a product or brand and enhances the propensity to purchase. Promotions can take various forms, including discounts, coupons, buy-one-get-one-free offers, and limited-time sales.

#### **1.8.5 Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB)**

According to Allan et al. (2022), female online shopping behaviour is significantly influenced by social media interactive marketing activities, such as electronic

advertising (e-Ads) and electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), which play crucial roles in shaping their purchase decisions. Similarly, Rittiboonchai, Kriwuttisom, and Ngo (2019) found that female students' online shopping behaviour, particularly for clothing, is influenced by various factors, including product offerings and pricing strategies on different online platforms. Lu and Shen (2023) explore the engagement strategies of fact-checking videos on Douyin, providing insights into how female consumers' shopping behaviours are influenced by the platform's interactive features and promotional content. These studies indicate that interactive and marketing factors on digital platforms like Douyin can strongly impact female consumers' purchase intentions. In the context of this study, female consumer's online shopping behaviour specifically refers to their expressed intention to purchase products after interacting with the Douyin platform. Purchase intentions are quantified by the likelihood of transitioning from browsing to purchasing behavior, which can be influenced by multiple interactive and marketing factors present on the platform.

#### **1.8.6 Douyin platform**

According to Liu (2023), the Douyin platform, also known as Chinese TikTok, has revolutionized the marketing landscape in China through its unique corporate marketing strategies, emphasizing factors such as interaction and individuality. The platform's ability to cater content precisely to user preferences has made it a powerful tool in consumer engagement. Similarly, Yan (2023) highlights how Douyin's influencer marketing strategies significantly impact consumer behaviour, particularly

among younger demographics. The platform's interactive features, coupled with its influencer-led content, create a dynamic environment that fosters consumer trust and engagement. In the context of this research, the Douyin platform refers to a leading Chinese short video social media platform that leverages interactive and personalized content strategies to engage users and influence consumer behaviour, particularly through influencer marketing.

### **1.9 Organization of the Thesis**

There are five (5) chapters in this dissertation. Chapter 1 gives an overview of the research by outlining the background, problem statement, research questions, objectives, significance, and definitions of key terms. It also introduces the scope of the study, with a focus on female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

Chapter 2 reviews past studies related to the factors that shape online shopping behaviour in the live e-commerce setting, especially among female consumers. It further explains the theoretical and conceptual foundations that support the research and outlines the research hypotheses.

Chapter 3 explains the research methodology, including the research design, target population, sampling strategy, questionnaire development, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures.

Chapter 4 presents the results of data analysis, covering descriptive statistics, reliability and normality tests, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Tables and graphs are used to visually support the findings.

Chapter 5 discusses the key findings in relation to the hypotheses and prior literature, and provides theoretical and practical implications, along with recommendations for future research.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Intrduction**

An overview of the influencing factor of Live E-Commerce and female shopping behaviour is provided in this chapter.

#### **2.2 Interactive Behaviour Characteristics**

Interactive behaviour characteristics, such as likes, comments, and shares, play a critical role in shaping female online shopping behaviour, particularly on platforms like Douyin. The rise of short-form video platforms has transformed traditional e-commerce by embedding interactive elements that enhance consumer engagement. For instance, real-time comments and live interactions not only enrich the media experience but also foster a sense of community, which is especially influential for female users who often prioritize social validation and emotional connections in their purchasing decisions (Sreethi & Thomas, 2025). However, while existing studies highlight the positive correlation between interactivity and engagement, critical gaps remain. For example, Lu and Shen (2023) demonstrated that interactive features like likes and comments in fact-checking videos significantly improve audience engagement, yet their findings primarily address informational content rather than commercial contexts. This limitation suggests that the transferability of these results to product-centric platforms like Douyin requires further empirical validation.

The mediating role of trust in interactive behaviours cannot be overlooked. Female

consumers, who are often more sensitive to social proof, rely heavily on peer-generated interactions to mitigate perceived risks associated with online purchases (Rao et al., 2018). For instance, Wongkitrungrueng et al. (2023) observed that streamers who actively respond to comments and encourage participation see higher sales performance, as these interactions build relational trust. Nevertheless, this relationship is not universally straightforward. Critical analysis reveals that excessive interactivity, such as an overwhelming number of notifications or repetitive interactions, may lead to cognitive overload, thereby reducing purchase intentions among women who value streamlined shopping experiences (Huang et al., 2024). This contradiction underscores the need to examine the quality rather than merely the quantity of interactions.

Beyond trust-building, interactive features also facilitate emotional contagion, a mechanism aligned with SCT. Through observational learning, female users emulate the behaviours of influencers or peers, with likes and shares serving as visible indicators of social approval. For example, studies note that women exhibit higher levels of "phone obsession" and social media engagement, making them more susceptible to interactive cues that trigger impulsive buying (PMC, 2024). However, this susceptibility varies across demographics. Research by Rao et al. (2018) highlights that older female shoppers prioritize utilitarian benefits over interactive engagement, contrasting with younger users who derive hedonic satisfaction from social interactions. Such demographic disparities challenge the homogenized

application of SCT in explaining female online behaviour and call for nuanced, segment-specific analyses.

Empirical studies further illustrate the dual impact of interactivity on autonomy and social compliance. While interactive features empower women to curate personalized shopping experiences (e.g., through tailored comments or queries), they may also inadvertently foster herd behaviour. For instance, live streaming data show that products with artificially inflated likes and comments can create a "bandwagon effect," overshadowing objective product evaluations (Yang et al., 2023). This phenomenon aligns with SCT's concept of vicarious learning but also exposes its limitations: when social cues dominate, individual critical thinking may be suppressed. Thus, the theoretical framework must account for both the empowering and coercive potentials of interactivity.

In summary, interactive behaviour characteristics on Douyin are pivotal in shaping female online shopping behaviour, primarily through trust-building, emotional engagement, and social validation. However, critical analysis reveals significant contradictions in existing research, including contextual limitations of interactivity studies, demographic variances in engagement patterns, and the tension between autonomy and social compliance. Future research should prioritize cross-cultural comparisons and longitudinal designs to better resolve these discrepancies and refine SCT's application in e-commerce contexts.

### **2.3 Public Image of Influencers**

The public image of influencers, comprising credibility, attractiveness, and perceived authenticity, plays a pivotal role in shaping trust and purchasing decisions among female users on Douyin. While existing studies emphasize that influencer credibility (trustworthiness and expertise) positively affects consumer trust and brand attitudes, a critical analysis reveals nuanced gendered mechanisms. For instance, female consumers, who constitute 61.67% of Douyin's Gen Z user base, demonstrate heightened sensitivity to influencers' authenticity and relational cues, aligning with SCT. SCT posits that individuals learn behaviors through observational learning and model reinforcement, where influencers serve as role models whose public image facilitates vicarious learning and emotional connection. However, the transfer of SCT to influencer marketing necessitates scrutiny, as influencers' expertise and trustworthiness foster self-efficacy in female consumers' purchase decisions, and their attractiveness may trigger social comparison, potentially undermining autonomy.

Empirical evidence highlights contradictions in how public image dimensions operate across contexts. Lou and Yuan (2019) and Wu & Huang (2023) affirm that attractiveness and credibility enhance engagement and purchase intention, particularly in live-streaming environments where real-time interactions deepen parasocial relationships. Yet, this relationship is not universal. Studies note that excessive curation of influencers' public image can erode authenticity, leading to consumer

skepticism. For example, some consumers rely on influencer recommendations, but persuasion knowledge, awareness of persuasive intent, negatively moderates the link between PSRs and brand credibility. This is critical for female shoppers, who prioritize genuine connections over idealized portrayals. In Douyin's live-streaming e-commerce, influencers' authenticity and source credibility mediate marketing effectiveness, but virtual influencers (e.g., human-like avatars) exhibit reduced impact in for-profit contexts due to perceived authenticity deficits. Such findings challenge the direct application of SCT, suggesting that model-observer similarity (a core SCT tenet) may be disrupted by commercialization.

The integration of SCT further elucidates how public image drives behavior through self-regulation and outcome expectations. Female consumers emulate influencers who embody aspirational traits, internalizing product endorsements as social rewards. However, cross-cultural studies highlight variances: Chinese female users value influencers' ability to provide emotional connection and social validation, whereas Western consumers prioritize expertise and transactional transparency. These differences underscore the need to contextualize SCT within cultural frameworks. Moreover, while influencer authenticity boosts trust, its overemphasis may paradoxically constrain female consumers' critical evaluation. For instance, some TikTok users purchased products discovered in-feed, yet younger demographics (e.g., Gen Z) display rising resistance to overtly polished images. This contradiction underscores the duality of SCT's model reinforcement: it can empower informed

decisions or foster herd behavior.

Critical gaps persist in linking public image to SCT's constructs. First, most studies focus on short-term effects, ignoring how prolonged exposure to idealized images impacts female self-efficacy and consumption autonomy. Second, demographic disparities remain underexplored; for example, older female shoppers prioritize utilitarian benefits over relational cues, contradicting assumptions of uniform gender effects. Lastly, algorithmic curation on Douyin amplifies homophily between influencers and followers, potentially reinforcing filter bubbles that limit critical persuasion knowledge. Future research should investigate how SCT's triadic reciprocity (personal, behavioral, environmental factors) interacts with influencers' public image in shaping gendered consumption pathways, particularly through longitudinal and cross-cultural designs.

## **2.4 Product Individualization**

Product individualisation, propelled by technological advancements and rising consumer expectations, has indeed become a core feature of modern e-commerce. However, the narrative that it is a universally positive force requires a more critical examination. Female consumers on platforms like Douyin are often characterized as particularly responsive to personalised products and content that align with their preferences and values (Pangarkar et al., 2022). While this holds truth, this responsiveness is not unconditional and is mediated by complex factors elucidated by

SCT, which posits a dynamic, reciprocal interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and behavior.

From an SCT perspective, product individualisation functions as a powerful environmental factor that shapes personal cognitions and, ultimately, shopping behaviors. The platform's algorithm, which delivers customised content and product recommendations based on user behavior, creates an environment that reinforces specific consumer habits and preferences. Pangarkar et al. (2022) demonstrated that personalised offerings enhance purchase intention and engagement, a finding that can be interpreted through the SCT concept of reciprocal determinism: a user's interaction with personalised content strengthens their interest and self-efficacy in navigating the platform for shopping, which in turn increases their purchasing behavior, thereby feeding more data back into the algorithm. This continuous loop creates a highly tailored environment that can powerfully shape consumer behaviour. According to SCT, environmental conditions, personal cognitions, and behavioural outcomes mutually influence one another. This reciprocal interaction helps explain how personalised content strengthens user engagement and purchasing behaviour on Douyin.

Defined as tailoring products at scale to match individual preferences, product individualisation is made possible through advances in mass customisation technology. Klaput et al. (2023) highlight that such innovations improve consumer

satisfaction and retention, while Yang et al. (2022) found that personalisation significantly increases purchase likelihood. Yet, a critical contrast emerges in the literature regarding the nature of this satisfaction. For instance, Zaggl et al. (2025) argue that the success of mass customization toolkits is heavily contingent on "product design typicality," suggesting that overly unique designs may paradoxically deter adoption unless they fit within recognizable category norms. This highlights a potential contradiction: while consumers seek individuality, they are also cognitively anchored in familiarity, a tension that must be acknowledged.

Beyond physical goods, this approach also includes customised recommendations and content. Bielozorov et al. (2019) emphasised the emotional value of personalised experiences, which is particularly important for female consumers who seek shopping journeys that reflect their identities. This aligns with the SCT construct of observational learning; when users see content and products aligned with their values (e.g., through influencers or peer-generated content), they are more likely to model that purchasing behavior. However, this strength is also its primary vulnerability. A consumer insight report by the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) revealed that two-thirds of consumers have terminated their relationship with a brand following a negative personalised experience, which they often perceived as "inaccurate or invasive" (Geng et al., 2024). This is a crucial argument: when the environmental cue of personalisation is misaligned with the user's actual self-concept, it can trigger a negative emotional reaction and erode trust, thereby negatively impacting behavior.

Platforms like Douyin further reinforce individualisation through algorithmic content delivery based on behavioural and emotional cues. Although concerns about data privacy persist, Gouthier et al. (2022) observed that users often accept this trade-off in exchange for more relevant and engaging experiences. This trade-off can be framed as a cost-benefit analysis within SCT, where the perceived outcome expectations (relevant experiences) outweigh privacy concerns. Furthermore, the platform's predominantly young, female user base is not a passive recipient but actively engages in shaping this environment through user-generated content and hashtag challenges, embodying the agency component of SCT (Chen, 2018).

In summary, while product individualisation encompassing customised goods, tailored content, and personalised recommendations can enhance satisfaction, emotional connection, and loyalty, making it a key driver of female online shopping behaviour on Douyin, its efficacy is not guaranteed. A critical synthesis reveals that its power is moderated by the accuracy of the personalisation, the user's perceived agency and privacy boundaries, and the typicality of the customised offerings. The SCT framework provides the necessary logic to explain this nuanced relationship, moving beyond a simplistic report of positive effects to a more robust, argument-driven analysis.

## 2.5 Promotion

Promotions on Douyin, including discounts, limited-time offers, and product bundles, significantly influence female consumers' purchasing decisions by leveraging psychological principles of scarcity and social validation. However, a critical analysis reveals that the effectiveness of these strategies is not universal and is mediated by contextual factors and consumer cognition, which can be comprehensively understood through the lens of SCT. SCT posits a triadic reciprocal causation between personal cognitive factors, environmental influences, and behaviour. In the context of Douyin promotions, the platform's promotional environment shapes female shoppers' personal cognitions, such as perceived urgency and self-efficacy in securing deals, which in turn drives their purchasing behaviour.

The pervasive use of limited-time offers and scarcity tactics, such as flash sales and low-stock alerts, directly taps into the SCT concept of outcome expectations. Female consumers, anticipating the potential regret (loss) of missing out on a valuable deal, are motivated to act quickly. Batra et al. (2016) rightly note that this can boost immediate sales. However, a critical contrast emerges when considering the online context. Hmurovic et al. (2023) found that the efficacy of time-scarcity promotions is significantly weaker online than in physical stores, primarily because online consumers activate higher persuasion knowledge, they are more acutely aware that the retailer is strategically trying to influence them. This suggests that the environmental cue of a countdown timer may not uniformly trigger the desired personal cognitive

response of urgency but can instead trigger scepticism, thereby inhibiting purchase behaviour. This effect can be mitigated when the scarcity is justified by an exogenous reason, such as a holiday season, which reduces the perception of manipulative intent.

Furthermore, product bundling strategies function as an environmental tool that simplifies the decision-making process, thereby reducing cognitive load. This aligns with the SCT construct of self-efficacy; by presenting a curated bundle, the platform reduces the complexity of choice for the consumer, enhancing their confidence in making a satisfactory purchase decision. Bundles lessen the "pain of paying" by consolidating multiple transactions into one, making the financial loss feel less frequent and severe. Nevertheless, a critical argument against indiscriminate bundling is the "presenter's paradox," where adding a lower-value item can decrease the perceived overall value of a high-value product. This highlights a crucial boundary condition: the promotional environment must be aligned with the consumer's cognitive valuation to produce a positive behavioural outcome.

Douyin amplifies these promotional mechanics through its interactive formats. Short-form videos and live-streaming sessions create a powerful environment for observational learning. Female shoppers observe influencers—credible models—demonstrating products and receiving real-time feedback, which strengthens their own outcome expectations and boosts self-efficacy in product selection. The findings of Chen et al. (2023) and Yang et al. (2023) on the importance of influencer

credibility are thus supported. However, a critique of this integrated model is that it may foster impulsive buying, where the intense social environmental stimulus overrides more deliberate personal cognitive processing, potentially leading to post-purchase regret. This is a significant research gap, as few studies have examined the long-term emotional and financial impact of such impulse-driven shopping behaviour among female consumers on Douyin.

In summary, while promotions on Douyin are potent drivers of female shopping behaviour, their success is critically dependent on a nuanced interplay. The SCT framework provides the logical pathway: the platform's promotional environment must be designed to positively influence personal cognitions like trust, self-efficacy, and value perception without triggering persuasion knowledge or cognitive backlash. Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of these promotional tactics on consumer well-being and brand loyalty.

## **2.6 Female Online Shopping Behavior**

Female online shopping behavior in live e-commerce environments such as Douyin can be understood as a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that begin with exposure to live content and extend to purchase intention, actual purchase, and post-purchase reactions. In this study, female online shopping behavior is treated as a latent dependent variable that reflects how likely female Douyin users are to convert from viewing to purchasing after interacting with live streaming features, influencers,

individualized products, and promotional tools. Empirical work in live-streaming e-commerce consistently positions purchase intention as the key behavioral outcome because it is a strong predictor of actual sales performance and a practical indicator for platform operators and merchants to optimize their strategies.

Existing research on live-streaming e-commerce has largely operationalized online shopping behavior in terms of purchase intention measured by multi-item Likert scales, including items such as “I intend to buy products introduced in this live stream” or “I am willing to purchase from this streamer in the near future.” Zhang et al. (2024) conceptualize purchase intention as viewers’ readiness to buy based on perceived functional, social, emotional, conditional, and self-gratification values generated during live streaming sessions. Yang et al. (2024) similarly apply a structural equation model and show that attributes of the live streamer, product, and streaming field all have significant positive effects on consumers’ purchase intentions in the Chinese e-commerce sector. These studies indicate that online shopping behavior in live-stream contexts is not a single action but an integrated outcome of value perceptions, trust, and emotional responses formed during the interaction with the stream.

A smaller but growing body of research focuses specifically on Chinese female consumers and shows that their online shopping behavior in live-streaming e-commerce is systematically shaped by live room characteristics. Kang and Tarofder

(2023) examine Chinese female consumers' purchase intention in live streaming e-commerce using the stimulus–organism–response framework and find that live atmosphere, product value information, price discounts, brand awareness, and platform popularity are all positively related to purchase intention, with live atmosphere and product value information exerting the strongest influence. Their regression results suggest that female purchase behavior in this setting is highly sensitive to cues that reduce information asymmetry (rich product information) and to environmental cues that make the live room feel engaging, trustworthy, and socially comfortable. This aligns with the broader characterization of female online shoppers as information-seeking and risk-sensitive, but it grounds these patterns in concrete, measurable live-stream features.

From a gender perspective, research on social media shopping shows that female consumers are more likely than males to rely on social platforms and electronic word of mouth when evaluating online purchases. Jeljeli et al. (2022) demonstrate that gender significantly mediates the relationship between social media usage, electronic word of mouth, and online shopping acceptance, with women showing stronger dependence on social media cues in forming online shopping decisions. This finding is directly relevant to female Douyin users, whose shopping behavior is heavily embedded in social signals such as comment streams, peer reviews, and influencer endorsements. In Social Cognitive Theory terms, these social signals function as environmental feedback that shapes outcome expectations and reduces perceived risk,

thereby increasing the likelihood that intention is translated into purchase behavior.

Studies on live commerce also highlight that online shopping behavior in live-stream contexts frequently includes impulsive components, especially among users exposed to high levels of social and emotional stimulation. Lee and Chen (2021), using the stimulus–organism–response framework, show that live streaming stimuli such as limited-time offers, social interaction, and entertainment value can trigger impulse buying behavior by increasing arousal and reducing cognitive control. Although their sample is not restricted to women, their findings are relevant to female Douyin users because cosmetics, fashion, and lifestyle categories—where women are often overrepresented—are precisely the categories in which impulse buying is most frequently observed. In practice, this implies that female online shopping behavior on Douyin is a mix of planned, information-driven purchases and spontaneous purchases induced by entertainment and urgency cues in the live room.

Recent value-based research further refines how female online shopping behavior should be conceptualized and measured in live-stream environments. Zhang et al. (2024) show that purchase intention in live-streaming e-commerce is driven by multiple value dimensions, including functional value (product usefulness and quality), social value (social approval and identification), emotional value (enjoyment and excitement), conditional value (temporary benefits such as discounts), and self-gratification value (stress relief and self-reward). Although the study does not

isolate female respondents, these value dimensions correspond closely to factors that prior gender-focused work identifies as particularly salient for women, such as social approval, emotional resonance, and alignment with self-identity. For a female Douyin audience, functional assurance (clear demonstrations, detailed explanations) and emotional gratification (feeling entertained and socially connected) are therefore both integral parts of shopping behavior rather than separate constructs.

At the theoretical level, these empirical findings are consistent with Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes triadic reciprocal causation between environment, personal cognition, and behavior. In the Douyin live e-commerce context, interactive features (likes, comments, Q&A), influencer image (credibility, authenticity, attractiveness), product individualization (fit with personal preferences), and promotional tools (discounts, flash sales) constitute environmental stimuli that are continuously processed by female viewers. These stimuli shape personal cognitions such as perceived value, trust, perceived risk, and self-efficacy in making good purchase decisions. The resulting online shopping behavior is expressed through a sequence of actions: staying in the live room, following the influencer, adding products to the shopping cart, placing an order, and recommending products to friends or family. When SCT is applied, female online shopping behavior can be modelled as the behavioral endpoint in a chain that begins with exposure to live-stream cues and passes through these mediating cognitive states.

At the same time, several gaps remain in the current literature. Many live-streaming

e-commerce studies treat consumers as a gender-neutral group and report average effects of interactivity, streamer attributes, or promotions on purchase intention without testing whether these effects differ for women. Even when female samples are examined, as in the study of Chinese female consumers by Kang and Tarofder (2023), the analysis tends to emphasize which factors are significant rather than how environmental cues and personal cognitions interact over time. In addition, most studies focus on short-term purchase intention and impulse buying, while less attention is paid to longer-term behavioral outcomes such as repeat purchase, advocacy, or post-purchase regret among female users in live-stream environments. There is also limited work that explicitly connects the SCT framework to female shopping behavior on Douyin, especially when multiple live e-commerce factors—interactivity, influencer image, product individualization, and promotion—are modelled simultaneously.

In summary, the existing literature indicates that female online shopping behavior in live e-commerce is best conceptualized as a multi-dimensional dependent variable encompassing both deliberate and impulsive purchase intentions, shaped by social, emotional, and value-based evaluations formed in highly interactive environments. For the purposes of this study, female online shopping behavior among Douyin users is operationalized as the self-reported likelihood of purchasing products after exposure to Douyin live e-commerce, including intentions to buy immediately, to repurchase in the future, and to recommend the products or live room to others. This

operationalization is consistent with prior work that measures purchase intention as the primary behavioral outcome in live-streaming e-commerce, while allowing the model to capture how interactive behavior characteristics, public image of influencers, product individualization, and promotions jointly shape the purchasing tendencies of female Douyin users within a Social Cognitive Theory framework.

## **2.7 Theoretical Framework**

Source Credibility Theory (SCT) was first proposed by Hovland, Janis, and Kelley (1953) and is still widely applied in contemporary communication and marketing research. The theory argues that the impact of a message is primarily determined by the receiver's judgment of the communicator's credibility, which is typically operationalised through expertise and trustworthiness (Hovland et al., 1953; Priester et al., 2003). These two dimensions shape how audiences process and accept information, a process that is particularly salient in digital settings.

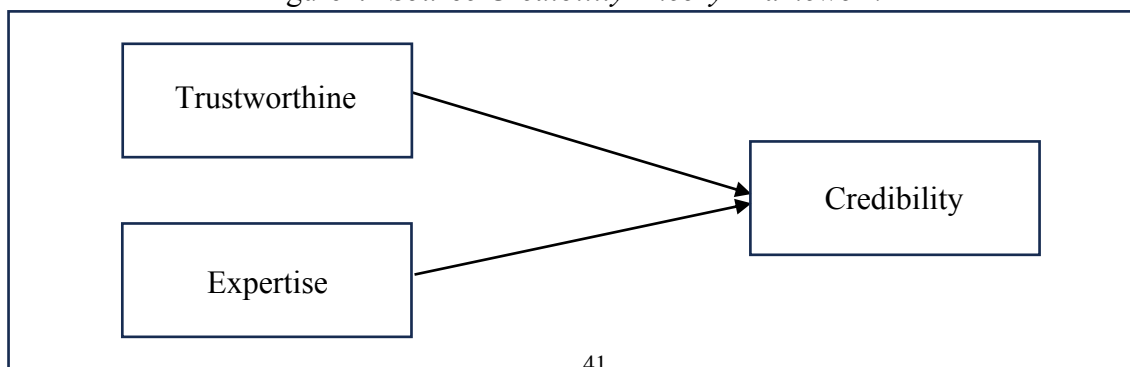
Recent scholarship underscores SCT's value for explaining online consumer behaviour. Zhang and Watts (2021) note that, amid the flood of digital content, consumers use credibility cues as cognitive shortcuts when deciding whether to trust marketing messages. This mechanism is pronounced on social-media and e-commerce sites where influencers become primary information channels for users. Wang et al. (2022) report that higher perceived credibility markedly boosts engagement and purchase intention.

Live-commerce platforms such as Douyin therefore offer an ideal arena for applying SCT. The continuous, real-time interaction between influencers and viewers showcases expertise and sincerity, fostering trust (Lin et al., 2023). Because female consumers often value relational trust and emotional connection in social shopping, influencer credibility is a key determinant of their purchase decisions (Chen & Zhao, 2021).

SCT also interacts with constructs such as subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, both of which shape intention and behaviour in online contexts. Liu et al. (2021) found that credibility-based social norms strongly affect consumers' willingness to follow recommendations in live-shopping environments, indicating that credible sources influence not only message acceptance but also behavioural intention.

In summary, SCT provides a theoretical foundation for examining how the credibility of influencers—defined by trustworthiness and expertise—along with interactive behaviours, public image, product individualisation, and promotions, shapes female consumers' trust, attitudes, and shopping behaviour on Douyin.

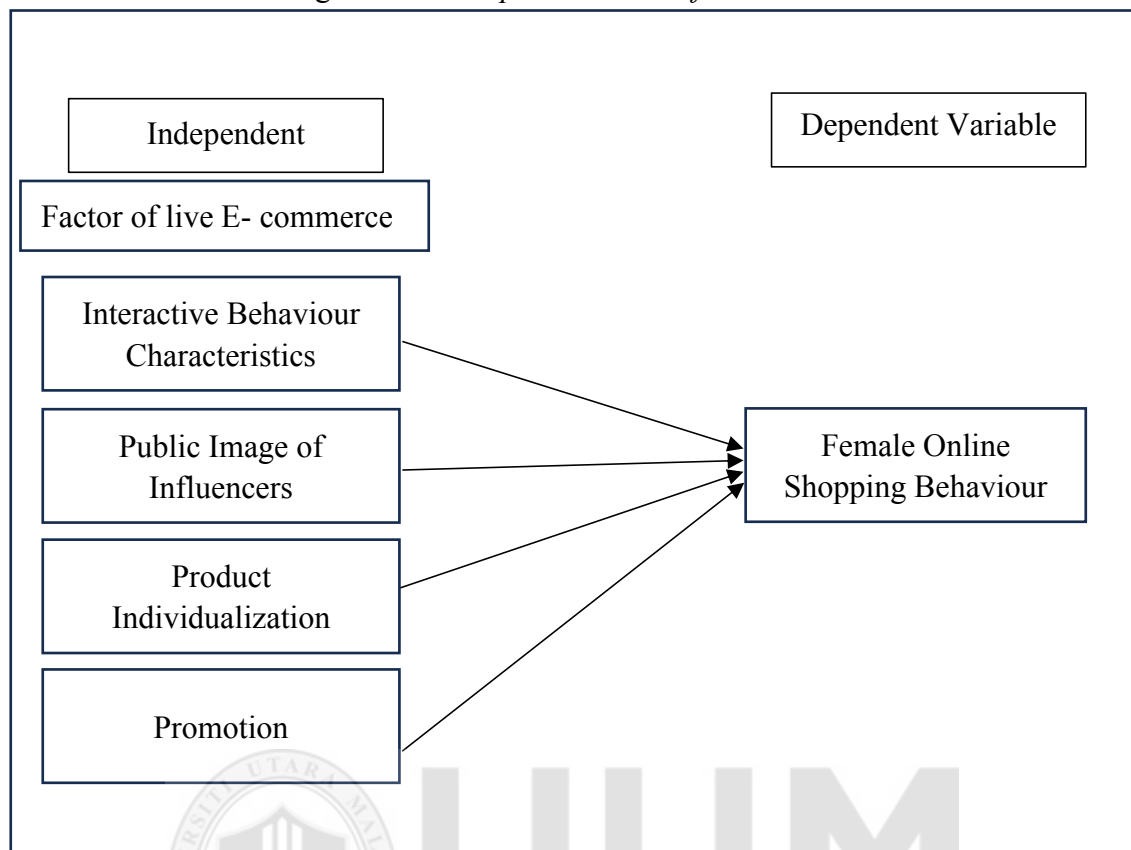
Figure2.1 *Source Credibility Theory Framework*



## 2.8 Conceptual Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study posits that four key independent variables (IVs)—Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion—collectively influence the dependent variable (DV), Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform. This relationship is theoretically anchored by Source Credibility Theory (SCT), which elucidates how the perceived credibility of a source, encompassing dimensions of competence (expertise), trustworthiness, and goodwill, shapes audience attitudes and behaviors. The framework argues that each IV functions as a conduit through which SCT's core dimensions operate to build trust, reduce perceived risk, and ultimately drive purchasing decisions among female Douyin users. SCT, originating from the work of Hovland and his colleagues, asserts that a communicator's positive characteristics significantly affect a receiver's acceptance of a message. Its persuasiveness is heavily influenced by the perceived credibility of the source. In the context of Douyin's live e-commerce, the "source" is multifaceted, encompassing the influencer, the brand, and even the platform's interactive features. The theory's dimensions are not merely additive but interact dynamically. This framework critically applies SCT by mapping these dimensions onto the IVs and highlighting both supportive and contradictory empirical findings.

Figure2.2 Conceptual research framework



To further clarify how SCT operates within the model, the following subsections briefly explain how each independent variable activates different dimensions of source credibility.

### 1. Interactive Behaviour Characteristics and SCT

Interactive features such as likes, comments, and shares function as quantitative signals of social proof. This form of peer validation strengthens the trustworthiness dimension of SCT by indicating collective approval. Jin, Muqaddam, and Ryu (2019) demonstrate that such interactions enhance both engagement and perceived credibility, while Tseng (2023) notes that platforms like Douyin further intensify these effects

through their real-time interactive affordances. A critical contradiction, however, emerges: interaction metrics can be artificially inflated (e.g., through “like-buying”), and once detected, they may undermine rather than reinforce trustworthiness. Moreover, whereas Western studies often prioritise the volume of engagement as a credibility cue, research in Asian contexts such as Douyin suggests that the sentiment and authenticity of comments may serve as more meaningful indicators of trust. This divergence points to a research gap regarding cultural variability in how social proof contributes to source credibility within SCT.

## 2. Public Image of Influencers and SCT

An influencer’s public image embodies the core dimensions of SCT. Credibility and expertise correspond to competence, while attractiveness and relatability contribute to perceived trustworthiness and goodwill. Lou and Yuan (2019) report that trustworthiness and expertise significantly enhance consumer trust, and Wu and Huang (2023) find that influencer attractiveness elevates perceived product value. These observations align with McCroskey’s conceptualisation of credibility, which includes competence, character, and sociability. A critical tension arises, however, when these dimensions do not reinforce one another. For instance, an influencer may possess high competence (e.g., a certified dermatologist) but lack sociability or relatability, limiting their persuasive impact compared to a less expert yet more charismatic counterpart. This tension is theoretically important because SCT often assumes that credibility dimensions function synergistically, yet influencer marketing

reveals that they may compete or operate unevenly across contexts. This raises a research gap concerning how different weightings of SCT dimensions influence female consumers' responses across product categories on Douyin.

### 3. Product Individualization and SCT

Product individualization enables consumers to tailor products to their specific preferences, thereby enhancing the perceived competence of the brand by signalling its nuanced understanding of consumer needs. Leung et al. (2022) argue that personalization strengthens trust and reduces perceived risk, while Yang et al. (2022) show that it increases satisfaction and perceived control. From the SCT perspective, a brand that successfully personalizes offerings is viewed both as an expert and as trustworthy in its commitment to consumer needs. Yet this mechanism presents a contradiction: deep personalization often requires extensive data collection, and perceived intrusiveness may erode trustworthiness even as competence increases. Studies suggest that Western consumers exhibit high sensitivity to this trade-off, whereas Chinese consumers may tolerate greater data usage in exchange for improved personalization. This cultural divergence highlights an under-explored theoretical space regarding how SCT's trustworthiness and competence dimensions interact with privacy perceptions in personalization processes.

### 4. Promotion and SCT

Promotion such as discounts and limited-time offers primarily activate the

competence dimension of SCT by signalling the brand's ability to deliver value and respond to market dynamics. Weismueller et al. (2020) argue that such tactics enhance perceived behavioural control. When communicated by a credible influencer, as demonstrated by Chen et al. (2023) and Mutmainah & Romadhon (2023), promotional messages benefit from a transfer of credibility that strengthens their persuasive effect. However, a critical paradox arises: excessive reliance on promotions can diminish perceived trustworthiness and competence by implying that products lack intrinsic value, thereby weakening long-term credibility even if short-term behavioural nudges are achieved. This tension is theoretically significant because SCT emphasises the cumulative development of credibility, whereas heavy promotional usage may interrupt or reverse this process.

The conceptual framework, visualized in Figure 2.2, thus integrates SCT to provide a robust, yet critically examined, model. It highlights several key research gaps: 1) the relative importance of SCT dimensions (competence, trustworthiness, goodwill) in the Chinese live-streaming commerce context for female shoppers; 2) the potential contradictions and negative feedback loops between the IVs (e.g., how promotions can undermine brand trustworthiness); 3) the cultural specificity of how SCT mechanisms operate on Douyin compared to Western platforms; and 4) the long-term impact of interactive metrics versus authentic engagement on source credibility. By grounding each pathway in empirical research and explicitly highlighting these tensions and gaps, this framework moves beyond a descriptive report to form a critical

foundation for investigating the drivers of female online shopping behaviour on Douyin.

## **2.9 Research Hypothesis**

In this section, we outline five research hypotheses derived from the objectives to explore the factors live e commerce influencing the online shopping behaviour of female consumers on the Douyin platform. Each hypothesis corresponds to specific aspects of user interaction, influencer impact, product customization, and promotions, aiming to provide a structured inquiry into their respective influences on consumer behaviour. Therefore, the hypotheses of this study are as follows:

H1: Interactive behaviour characteristics positively influence female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

H2: The public image of influencers positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

H3: Product individualization positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

H4: Promotion positively influence female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

H5: Among the identified factors (interactive behaviour characteristics, public image influencer, product individualization, and promotions), one exerts the most significant influence on female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter examined the main factors influencing female consumers' online shopping behaviour on Douyin, focusing on interactive behaviour, influencers' public image, product individualization, and promotions. Interactive features like likes and comments, backed by SCT, enhance engagement and drive purchases, especially among female users.

The credibility of influencers, essential for consumer trust, significantly affects purchasing decisions, as discussed under SCT and Attraction Theory. Personalized products boost consumer satisfaction and loyalty, while effective promotions, such as discounts, create urgency and spur immediate purchases.

In conclusion, this chapter integrates insights from key theories to provide a strategic overview for marketers on maximizing engagement and sales on Douyin. These findings set the stage for the methodology outlined in the next chapter, which aims to deepen the investigation into these determinants.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research design used in this study, population and sampling techniques, questionnaire design, data collection procedures, data analysis procedures and pilot test will all be covered in more detail in this chapter. Every chapter is followed by a chapter summary.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), research design is a framework that provides a plan for the procedures of research including the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. A well-structured design ensures reliability, validity, and generalizability in quantitative research, which involves collecting and analyzing numerical data.

This study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the factors of live e-commerce that influence female consumers' online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform. The quantitative approach allows precise measurement of variables using statistical methods, which is suitable for testing hypotheses and analyzing patterns across large datasets (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Hair et al., 2010).

Data for this study will be collected entirely through an online questionnaire,

distributed via Douyin at the end of Live E-Commerce sessions using a professional survey tool (e.g., Wenjuanxing). This method is chosen due to its efficiency, reach, and relevance to the target population, ensuring that respondents are actual Douyin users who engage in live e-commerce. The online distribution also enables automated data collection, reduces errors from manual entry, and preserves respondents' anonymity.

This research design is particularly appropriate for the study objectives because it allows for systematic quantification of key independent variables (Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion) and their impact on the dependent variable (Female Online Shopping Behaviour). The design ensures data reliability through standardized items, and validity is supported by using previously validated instruments adapted for the Douyin live e-commerce context.

### **3.3 Population and Sample**

The target population of this study consists of female users on Douyin who participate in online shopping activities. To ensure adequate representation of different generational cohorts, stratified random sampling was applied, with age selected as the primary stratification variable. Prior research has shown that age is a key demographic factor influencing live e-commerce engagement (Yang et al., 2022; Wu & Huang, 2023), making it an appropriate basis for stratification. Douyin and female

users were specifically chosen based on empirical evidence demonstrating that women constitute the primary consumer force in China's live e-commerce market and that Douyin leads all platforms in livestream-driven purchases.

The predefined age strata (under 18, 18–24, 25–34, 35–44, and 45 and above) were established with reference to widely adopted demographic classifications in industry reports, including the Douyin E-commerce Ecosystem Development White Paper (2023), QuestMobile's China Mobile Internet Annual Report (2024), and the 54th CNNIC Statistical Report on Internet Development in China (2024). These sources indicate that Douyin users are concentrated primarily within younger and middle-aged cohorts, thereby supporting the selection of age as the stratification framework. This stratification scheme was determined prior to data collection, and the actual respondent distribution across age groups is presented in Chapter Four (Table 4.2).

While age was used as the sole stratification variable, other demographic variables, such as education level and income, were collected to profile the sample and support further interpretation of consumer behaviour. These variables were not used as stratification criteria due to the absence of reliable population-level statistics for the broader female Douyin user base, and their descriptive outcomes are therefore reported in Chapter Four (Table 4.2).

The appropriate sample size was calculated using the formula developed by Krejcie

and Morgan (1970), which provides a standardized method for determining sample size based on population size, confidence level, and margin of error. Although the exact number of female Douyin users is not publicly available, the total population is estimated to be in the millions. For populations exceeding 100,000, the Krejcie and Morgan table recommends a minimum of 384 respondents at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. The sample size recommendation from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) is summarized in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Krejcie and Morgan Table

| <i>Total</i> | <i>Sample</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Sample</i> | <i>Total</i> | <i>Sample</i> |
|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|
| 10 ⇒         | 10            | 220 ⇒        | 140           | 1200 ⇒       | 291           |
| 15 ⇒         | 14            | 230 ⇒        | 144           | 1300 ⇒       | 297           |
| 20 ⇒         | 19            | 240 ⇒        | 148           | 1400 ⇒       | 302           |
| 25 ⇒         | 24            | 250 ⇒        | 152           | 1500 ⇒       | 306           |
| 30 ⇒         | 28            | 260 ⇒        | 155           | 1600 ⇒       | 310           |
| 35 ⇒         | 32            | 270 ⇒        | 159           | 1700 ⇒       | 313           |
| 40 ⇒         | 36            | 280 ⇒        | 162           | 1800 ⇒       | 317           |
| 45 ⇒         | 40            | 290 ⇒        | 165           | 1900 ⇒       | 320           |
| 50 ⇒         | 44            | 300 ⇒        | 169           | 2000 ⇒       | 322           |
| 55 ⇒         | 48            | 320 ⇒        | 175           | 2200 ⇒       | 327           |
| 60 ⇒         | 52            | 340 ⇒        | 181           | 2400 ⇒       | 331           |
| 65 ⇒         | 56            | 360 ⇒        | 186           | 2600 ⇒       | 335           |
| 70 ⇒         | 59            | 380 ⇒        | 191           | 2800 ⇒       | 338           |
| 75 ⇒         | 63            | 400 ⇒        | 196           | 3000 ⇒       | 341           |
| 80 ⇒         | 66            | 420 ⇒        | 201           | 3500 ⇒       | 346           |
| 85 ⇒         | 70            | 440 ⇒        | 205           | 4000 ⇒       | 351           |
| 90 ⇒         | 73            | 460 ⇒        | 210           | 4500 ⇒       | 354           |
| 95 ⇒         | 76            | 480 ⇒        | 214           | 5000 ⇒       | 357           |
| 100 ⇒        | 80            | 500 ⇒        | 217           | 6000 ⇒       | 361           |
| 110 ⇒        | 86            | 550 ⇒        | 226           | 7000 ⇒       | 364           |
| 120 ⇒        | 92            | 600 ⇒        | 234           | 8000 ⇒       | 367           |
| 130 ⇒        | 97            | 650 ⇒        | 242           | 9000 ⇒       | 368           |
| 140 ⇒        | 103           | 700 ⇒        | 248           | 10000 ⇒      | 370           |
| 150 ⇒        | 108           | 750 ⇒        | 254           | 15000 ⇒      | 375           |
| 160 ⇒        | 113           | 800 ⇒        | 260           | 20000 ⇒      | 377           |
| 170 ⇒        | 118           | 850 ⇒        | 265           | 30000 ⇒      | 379           |
| 180 ⇒        | 123           | 900 ⇒        | 269           | 40000 ⇒      | 380           |
| 190 ⇒        | 127           | 950 ⇒        | 274           | 50000 ⇒      | 381           |
| 200 ⇒        | 132           | 1000 ⇒       | 278           | 75000 ⇒      | 382           |
| 210 ⇒        | 136           | 1100 ⇒       | 285           | 100000 ⇒     | 384           |

Considering the potential for non-response or incomplete questionnaires, it is

advisable to increase the initial sample size to compensate for any data loss. In this study, an additional 20% is added to the target sample to account for possible invalid or incomplete responses. As a result, the total number of questionnaires distributed will be 460. This adjustment helps ensure that at least 384 valid and complete responses are obtained for robust statistical analysis.

### **3.4 Questionnaire Design**

Data for this study were collected using a structured questionnaire, which was developed based on an extensive review of previous studies and relevant literature in the field.

The questionnaire serves as the primary research instrument to examine the factors influencing female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin live e-commerce platform. Respondents in this study represent a range of demographic backgrounds, including age group, geographical location within China, education level, and income level.

The questionnaire is divided into four main sections. The first section collects demographic information, such as age, marital status, education level, employment status, average monthly income, and monthly expenditure. The second section consists of 40 items covering four independent variables: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and

Promotion. The third section includes 10 items measuring the dependent variable—Female Online Shopping Behaviour.

All scale items used in the questionnaire were adapted from validated instruments developed in previous empirical studies to ensure content validity and reliability.

Where necessary, the wording was slightly modified to fit the specific context of Douyin’s live e-commerce environment.

A five-point Likert scale was adopted for all items, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), as shown in Table 3.1 (Allen & Seaman, 2007).

Table 3.1 *Five (5) Point Likert Scale*

| Judgement          | Scale |
|--------------------|-------|
| Strongly disagree  | 1     |
| Disagree           | 2     |
| Agree nor disagree | 3     |
| Agree              | 4     |
| Strongly Agree     | 5     |

The Live E-Commerce Influence Factor covers four factors. The factors are as follows:

1. Interactive Behaviour Characteristic (IBC)

This IBC item was adapted from the studies by Cai and Wohn (2019), Zhang et al. (2020), Sun et al. (2019), Hochstein et al. (2023), and Wang et al. (2021), from which a total of 10 items were developed. The Items are as follows:

| Code  | Item                                                                                                                             |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| IBC1  | I find the real-time interaction with hosts during live streams to be highly engaging.                                           |
| IBC2  | I am influenced by the ability to interact with other viewers during live streams when deciding to purchase products.            |
| IBC3  | I am more likely to purchase products that are demonstrated and recommended by the hosts during live streams.                    |
| IBC4  | I trust the product reviews and feedback provided by other viewers during the live stream.                                       |
| IBC5  | I am enhanced in my overall shopping experience on Douyin by interactive features such as live polls and Q&A sessions.           |
| IBC6  | I feel that interactive elements in live streams help me discover products I wouldn't have considered otherwise.                 |
| IBC7  | I feel that participating in live stream interactions helps me better understand the products being showcased.                   |
| IBC8  | I think live e-commerce sessions with interactive features make it easier to compare products before making a purchase decision. |
| IBC9  | I perceive the interactive nature of live streams to build trust with the host and their product recommendations.                |
| IBC10 | I believe that the overall quality of interaction during a live stream affects my impression of the brand or store.              |

## 2. Public Image Influencer (PII)

This PII item was adapted from the study by Jin & Ryu (2020), Hwang & Zhang (2018), Audrezet et al. (2020), Casaló et al. (2018), and Lou & Yuan (2019), from which a total of 10 items were developed. The Items are as follows:

| Code | Item                                                                                                                           |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PII1 | I trust the product recommendations made by influencers with a positive public image on Douyin.                                |
| PII2 | I am more likely to purchase products endorsed by influencers who are perceived as experts in their field.                     |
| PII3 | I am influenced by the authenticity of an influencer's public image in my willingness to follow their product recommendations. |
| PII4 | I feel more connected to influencers who share personal stories and experiences related to the products they endorse.          |
| PII5 | I am affected in my perception of the quality and reliability of products by the public image of the influencer.               |
| PII6 | I am more likely to purchase products recommended by influencers who                                                           |

|       |                                                                                                                                 |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|       | engage directly with their audience during live streams.                                                                        |
| PII7  | I trust influencers who consistently maintain transparency about their partnerships when endorsing products.                    |
| PII8  | I feel more inclined to buy products promoted by influencers who demonstrate a genuine passion for the items they endorse.      |
| PII9  | I believe that an influencer's ability to communicate product benefits clearly impacts my purchase decisions.                   |
| PII10 | I am influenced by the consistency between an influencer's public image and the products they endorse in my shopping decisions. |

### 3. Product Individualization (PI)

This PI Item was adapted from the study by Kumar et al. (2023), Wei et al.(2023), Shu (2022), Askar, Aboutabl, & Galal (2022), Bushara et al. ( 2023), from which a total of 10 items were developed. The Items are as follows:

| Code | Item                                                                                                                                    |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PI1  | I prefer purchasing products that can be customized according to my personal preferences.                                               |
| PI2  | I am more likely to engage with live streams that offer personalized product recommendations based on my past purchases or preferences. |
| PI3  | I believe that personalized products offered during live streams are of higher quality compared to standard products.                   |
| PI4  | I am enhanced in my shopping experience on Douyin by the ability to customize products during Live E-Commerce sessions.                 |
| PI5  | I am willing to pay a premium for products that can be customized to my preferences during live streams.                                |
| PI6  | I find live streams more appealing when they highlight how products can be tailored to individual needs.                                |
| PI7  | I am more likely to trust a product when I have the option to customize it during the purchasing process.                               |
| PI8  | I feel more satisfied with my purchase when I can personalize the product features to suit my preferences.                              |
| PI9  | I believe that customization options offered during live streams demonstrate the brand's attention to customer needs.                   |
| PI10 | I am more likely to recommend products to others when they can be personalized during live e-commerce sessions.                         |

#### 4. Promotion (PM)

This PM item was adapted from the study by Chen & Zhang (2015), Rosyihuddin & Hendra (2023), Li, Li, & Kambele(2012), Stremersch & Tellis (2002), Dunn & Nisbett (2023), from which a total of 10 items were developed. The Items are as follows:

| Code | Item                                                                                                                                               |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PM1  | I am more likely to participate in a Live E-Commerce session on Douyin if there are exclusive promotional offers available.                        |
| PM2  | I am significantly influenced by promotional discounts during Live E-Commerce events on Douyin when deciding to purchase products.                 |
| PM3  | I am encouraged to buy products immediately due to the sense of urgency created by limited-time promotions during live streams.                    |
| PM4  | I am more likely to purchase products that are part of a promotional bundle during Live E-Commerce events on Douyin.                               |
| PM5  | I am positively affected in my perception of the brand by the promotional messages and advertisements before and during the live stream on Douyin. |
| PM6  | I am motivated to attend live e-commerce sessions on Douyin when exclusive gifts or samples are offered with purchases.                            |
| PM7  | I find flash sales during live streams on Douyin highly effective in influencing my purchase decisions.                                            |
| PM8  | I am more likely to buy products during live streams that offer loyalty points or rewards as part of the promotion.                                |
| PM9  | I believe that free shipping promotions during live streams significantly impact my decision to make a purchase.                                   |
| PM10 | I feel more engaged with a live stream when the host emphasizes the unique benefits of promotional offers compared to regular sales.               |

This FOSB Item was adapted from the study by Dholakia (2015), Chiu, Wang, Fang, & Huang (2014), Cai & Wohn (2019), Cheung, Lee, & Rabjohn (2008), Gao & Feng (2016), from which a total of 10 items were developed. The Item are as follows:

| Code   | Item                                                                                                                                          |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| FOSB1  | I frequently shop online because it saves me time compared to traditional shopping.                                                           |
| FOSB2  | I prefer shopping online because I can easily compare prices and find the best deals.                                                         |
| FOSB3  | I am enhanced in my shopping experience by Live E-Commerce sessions on Douyin, which provide detailed product information and demonstrations. |
| FOSB4  | I am influenced by social media reviews and recommendations when making online purchases.                                                     |
| FOSB5  | I feel more confident purchasing from brands that are active on Douyin and engage with their audience regularly.                              |
| FOSB6  | I prefer online shopping because it offers a wider variety of products than traditional stores.                                               |
| FOSB7  | I feel that shopping on Douyin is more engaging due to the interactive and entertaining nature of live e-commerce sessions.                   |
| FOSB8  | I am more likely to shop online when I can see real-time product reviews or testimonials during live streams.                                 |
| FOSB9  | I trust brands more when they provide transparent information about their products through live e-commerce sessions.                          |
| FOSB10 | I am influenced by the convenience of accessing exclusive online deals that are not available in physical stores.                             |

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The selection of target respondents is critical to assessing the impact of Live E-Commerce on female consumer behaviour. This study focuses specifically on female users of the Douyin platform, as they represent the dominant consumer group in China's live e-commerce sector, possessing significant purchasing power and unique shopping motivations that warrant specific investigation (CNNIC, 2024). Douyin was chosen due to its massive user base and its market leadership in integrating e-commerce with short-video content, making it an ideal environment to observe the phenomena under study.

The primary criterion for respondent selection is their engagement with Live E-Commerce sessions on Douyin. Respondents must meet the following criteria: (1) female; (2) aged 18 years and above, covering the most active digital consumer cohorts on Douyin; and (3) have a history of viewing or purchasing products via Douyin Live E-Commerce. Although a small number of respondents under the age of 18 were included, they represent a very limited proportion of the sample and were retained only to reflect the actual user composition of the platform.

To ensure a representative sample, a stratified sampling approach was employed.

Consistent with the sampling design described in Section 3.3, age was the only variable used for stratification, as prior empirical studies and industry reports identify age as the most influential demographic factor affecting engagement in live e-commerce.

Other demographic variables, including geographic location and educational background, were collected to support descriptive analysis but were not used as stratification criteria due to the absence of reliable population-level distribution data for female Douyin users.

This approach maintains methodological rigor while ensuring that the sample adequately represents key behavioural segments relevant to this study.

The data collection will be conducted entirely online through an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be distributed through the Douyin platform, where users will be invited to participate via pop-up invitations at the end of Live E-Commerce sessions. This approach targets actual consumers at the point of engagement. Participation will be voluntary to safeguard privacy and ensure fairness in response, with no incentives that could potentially bias the responses. Anonymity will be strictly maintained by not collecting any personally identifiable information. Instead, participants will be assigned a unique identifier that does not relate to their account details.

Since the questionnaire was distributed entirely online, the study does not involve any specific geographical data collection location; respondents participated from various regions across China.

Data collection will be automated via a professional online survey tool (e.g., Wenjuanxing) to distribute the questionnaire and collect responses. This tool will be integrated into the Douyin platform for respondents to have ease of access and maintain high engagement levels. To ensure data integrity, several quality control measures will be implemented. The survey tool will be equipped with capabilities to detect and prevent multiple entries from the same user. Furthermore, criteria for identifying and screening invalid questionnaires will be established. These include: (a) questionnaires completed in an unreasonably short time (i.e., speeding), (b) responses

with significant missing data, and (c) responses exhibiting nonsensical patterns, such as "straight-lining" (e.g., selecting 'Agree' for all items). Such invalid responses will be excluded from the final dataset prior to analysis.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Procedure**

This study will use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to analyse the data. The analysis will proceed in several key stages: (1) data screening and cleaning, (2) descriptive statistical analysis, (3) assessment of the measurement model (reliability and validity), and (4) structural model analysis for hypothesis testing.

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarise the demographic profile of the sample and the dataset, reveal its central tendencies and dispersion, and identify trends and outliers, thereby providing an initial overview of the data.

Prior to hypothesis testing, the quality of the measurement instrument will be rigorously assessed. Reliability analysis will examine the internal consistency of the survey items using Cronbach's alpha. A value of 0.70 or higher will be considered acceptable (Pallant, 2020). Furthermore, construct validity will be assessed through convergent validity and construct reliability, using Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values. These indicators are commonly applied in quantitative studies to confirm that the measurement items adequately represent their intended constructs.

Normality analysis will assess whether the data meet the assumptions for parametric statistical testing. Together, these tests will confirm that the data are statistically suitable for further analysis and aligned with the study's objectives.

Correlation analysis will identify relationships among interactive behaviour, influencer image, product individualisation, and promotions, thereby laying the groundwork for subsequent investigation.

Regression analysis will be employed to assess the impact of multiple independent variables on the dependent variable of female online shopping behaviour. This approach helps quantify the relative influence of each factor and determine which has the most significant effect within the Douyin live e-commerce environment.

SPSS was selected for this study due to its robust data management capabilities and comprehensive suite of statistical tools. As highlighted by Pallant (2020), SPSS is widely used in social science research for its user-friendly interface and effective functionality, which facilitates accurate data analysis while allowing researchers to concentrate on interpreting results. This made it particularly suitable for analyzing the quantitative data collected in this study.

### 3.7 Pilot test

In this section, the results of the pilot test, conducted using 150 completed questionnaires, are presented in detail. The purpose of this pilot test was to evaluate the reliability. The findings ensure that the measurement scales are well-defined and aligned with the theoretical framework of this study.

The reliability analysis demonstrates strong internal consistency across all constructs, as indicated by Cronbach's alpha coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) for each scale. Notably, IBC ( $\alpha = 0.931$ ), PII ( $\alpha = 0.933$ ), PI ( $\alpha = 0.926$ ), PM ( $\alpha = 0.925$ ), and FOSB ( $\alpha = 0.926$ ) all exhibit excellent reliability.

Table 3.2 *Cronbach Reliability Analysis*

| Variables                             | Question Code  | Number of Questions | Cronbach Alpha Coefficient |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------------|
| Factor of Live E-Commerce             |                |                     |                            |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics | IB 1-IBC 10    | 10                  | 0.931                      |
| Public Image of Influencers           | PII 1- PII 10  | 10                  | 0.933                      |
| Product Individualization             | PI 1- PI 10    | 10                  | 0.926                      |
| Promotion                             | PM 1-PM 10     | 10                  | 0.925                      |
| Female Online Shopping Behaviour      | FOSB1- FOSB 10 | 10                  | 0.926                      |

### 3.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research methodology employed to investigate the influence of Live E-Commerce on female consumers' online shopping behavior on the Douyin platform. A quantitative approach was adopted, supported by the Source Credibility Theory (SCT) as the theoretical foundation. The study utilized stratified random

sampling to ensure demographic representativeness and employed a structured questionnaire as the primary data collection instrument. The pilot test confirmed the instrument's reliability and validity. Overall, the methodology provides a solid framework for analyzing the relationships between the identified variables, which will be further examined in Chapter 4.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the results of data analysis to investigate the influencing factors of live e-commerce on female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform. Several statistical analyses were conducted, including descriptive statistics, reliability and normality assessments, correlation analysis, and regression analysis. Descriptive statistics offer a general overview of the dataset, highlighting its distribution and representativeness. The reliability and validity tests assess the internal consistency and accuracy of the questionnaire, confirming that it effectively measures the intended constructs. Correlation analysis is used to examine the linear relationships between the independent and dependent variables, offering initial insights into their associations. Lastly, regression analysis is employed to examine the influence of each independent variable on female online shopping behaviour within the context of the Douyin platform.

#### **4.2 Response Rate**

A total of 460 questionnaires were distributed to participants involved in this study. Data collection was conducted over four weeks, from 23 February to 16 March 2025. Out of these, 408 completed questionnaires were received, resulting in an overall response rate of 88.70% (408 / 460). The response rate by work location is summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 *Response Rate from Target Respondent*

| <b>Work Location</b> | <b>Target Respondent</b> | <b>Distributed Questionnaires</b> | <b>Returned Questionnaires</b> | <b>Response Rate (%)</b> |
|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| CHINA                | 460                      | 460                               | 408                            | 88.70%                   |

### 4.3 Respondents' Demographic Profile

The descriptive statistics presented in this study offer a comprehensive overview of the sample's characteristics, as illustrated in Table 4.2, thereby supporting the representativeness and validity of the data. By examining key demographic variables—such as age group, monthly income, education level, and primary device used for online shopping—it is possible to assess whether the collected data is appropriate for understanding female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

Although age was used as the sole stratification variable during sampling, Table 4.2 presents the descriptive profile of the final valid sample. The inclusion of respondents under the age of 18 reflects the actual user composition of the Douyin platform rather than a predefined sampling stratum.

The age distribution of respondents demonstrates a diverse representation of different generational cohorts. The majority of participants belong to the 18–34 age group, with 130 respondents (31.86%) falling within the 18–24 age range and 134 respondents

(32.84%) in the 25–34 age group. This indicates that younger consumers constitute the largest share of female online shoppers on Douyin, which aligns with broader e-commerce trends where younger users exhibit higher engagement in interactive digital platforms. The 35–44 age group accounts for 21.32% (87 respondents), while those aged 45 and above represent 9.31% (38 respondents), and only 4.66% (19 respondents) fall under the category of being under 18. The cumulative percentage shows that 86.03% of the sample consists of individuals below the age of 45, reflecting the dominance of younger to middle-aged women in live e-commerce activities.

Monthly income distribution further solidifies the study's relevance to female consumer behaviour in live e-commerce. The largest group of respondents, 124 individuals (30.39%), falls within the ¥7,000–¥12,000 income bracket, followed closely by 110 individuals (26.96%) earning between ¥3,000–¥7,000. A smaller yet significant portion of the sample, 68 respondents (16.67%), report an income of ¥12,000–¥20,000, while 79 respondents (19.36%) earn less than ¥3,000. Only 27 participants (6.62%) belong to the highest income category of above ¥20,000. The cumulative percentage indicates that 69.61% of respondents earn below ¥12,000 per month, suggesting that the majority of female Douyin shoppers belong to the low-to-middle income group.

The educational background of respondents is another critical factor in understanding

their online shopping behaviours. The highest proportion of participants, 131 individuals (32.11%), have completed high school or below, indicating that a significant portion of female online shoppers may not have pursued higher education. Vocational diploma holders account for 27.45% (112 respondents), suggesting that a notable percentage of respondents possess specialized skills. Bachelor's degree holders make up 25.74% (105 respondents), while only 14.71% (60 respondents) have attained a Master's degree or higher. The cumulative percentage suggests that nearly 60% of respondents have an educational level of high school or below, emphasizing that live e-commerce shopping is accessible and popular among individuals across varying educational backgrounds.

The primary device used for online shopping is an essential factor in understanding consumer preferences. A dominant majority, 286 respondents (70.10%), rely on smartphones for their online shopping activities, highlighting the mobile-centric nature of Douyin's e-commerce ecosystem. Laptops/computers account for 20.34% (83 respondents), while tablets constitute only 6.62% (27 respondents). The "Other" category, comprising 2.94% (12 respondents), indicates minimal use of unconventional devices.

Table 4.2 *Demographic of information respondents (n=408)*

| Name      | Parameter    | Frequency (%) | Percentage |
|-----------|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Age Group | 18–24        | 130           | 31.863     |
|           | 25–34        | 134           | 32.843     |
|           | 35–44        | 87            | 21.324     |
|           | 45 and above | 38            | 9.314      |

|                 |                          |     |        |
|-----------------|--------------------------|-----|--------|
|                 | Under 18                 | 19  | 4.657  |
|                 | Above ¥20, 000           | 27  | 6.618  |
|                 | Below ¥3, 000            | 79  | 19.363 |
| Monthly Income  | ¥12, 000–¥20, 000        | 68  | 16.667 |
|                 | ¥3, 000–¥7, 000          | 110 | 26.961 |
|                 | ¥7, 000–¥12, 000         | 124 | 30.392 |
|                 |                          |     |        |
| Education Level | Bachelor's degree        | 105 | 25.735 |
|                 | High school or below     | 131 | 32.108 |
|                 | Master's degree or above | 60  | 14.706 |
|                 | Vocational diploma       | 112 | 27.451 |
| Primary Device  | Laptop/Computer          | 83  | 20.343 |
|                 | Other                    | 12  | 2.941  |
|                 | Smartphone               | 286 | 70.098 |
|                 | Tablet                   | 27  | 6.618  |

#### 4.4 Reliability and Validity Analysis

To ensure the accuracy and internal consistency of the measurement instruments, this study conducted both reliability and normality assessments prior to performing further statistical analyses. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's alpha to evaluate the internal consistency of each construct, in line with Hair et al. (2010). Validity was assessed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values, following the criteria recommended by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The results of these analyses, including the AVE, CR, and the number of measurement items for each construct, are presented in Table 4.4 and discussed in Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2.

##### 4.4.1 Reliability Analysis

As shown in Table 4.3, the Cronbach's alpha values for the four independent

variables(Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion) ranged from 0.923 to 0.945. The combined 40-item scale for the overall construct of live e-commerce yielded an alpha value of 0.934. Additionally, the reliability coefficient for Female Online Shopping Behaviour was 0.910. All coefficients exceeded the widely accepted threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency and confirming the reliability of the measurement instruments employed in this study.

Table 4.3 *Reliability Analysis*

| Variables                               | Cronbach's Alpha | No of items |
|-----------------------------------------|------------------|-------------|
| <b>Factor of Live E-Commerce</b>        |                  |             |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics   | 0.945            | 10          |
| Public Image of Influencers             | 0.940            | 10          |
| Product Individualization               | 0.928            | 10          |
| Promotion                               | 0.923            | 10          |
| Overall Factor of live-commerce         | 0.934            | 40          |
| <b>Female Online Shopping Behaviour</b> | 0.910            | 10          |

#### 4.4.2 Validity Analysis

As shown in Table 4.4, in the validity analysis of the study, the factor loadings of each measurement item were reported along with their coefficients, standard errors, p-values, and standardized estimates. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) values were also provided for each factor. The results indicate strong validity as all factors: Interactive Behavior Characteristics (IBC), Public Image of Influencers (PII), Product Individualization (PI), Promotion (PM), and Female Online Shopping Behavior (FOSB) show high AVE and CR values, exceeding the commonly accepted thresholds of 0.5 for AVE and 0.7 for CR, suggesting that the constructs are both reliable and valid.

Table 4.4 *Validity Analysis*

| Variables                               | AVE   | CR     | No of items |
|-----------------------------------------|-------|--------|-------------|
| <b>Factor of Live E-Commerce</b>        |       |        |             |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics   | 0.635 | 0.946  | 10          |
| Public Image of Influencers             | 0.612 | 0.94   | 10          |
| Product Individualization               | 0.569 | 0.929  | 10          |
| Promotion                               | 0.548 | 0.923  | 10          |
| Overall Factor of live-commerce         | 0.591 | 0.9345 | 40          |
| <b>Female Online Shopping Behaviour</b> |       |        |             |
|                                         | 0.508 | 0.911  | 10          |

#### 4.5 Normality Analysis

Normality was evaluated through the skewness and kurtosis statistics for each variable, as displayed in Table 4.5. The skewness values ranged from  $-0.358$  to  $0.079$ , and the kurtosis values ranged from  $-0.435$  to  $0.305$ . According to Kline (2011), values between  $-1$  and  $+1$  are generally considered acceptable to assume normal distribution. Since all variables fall within this recommended range, the dataset meets the criteria for approximate normality. This confirms the suitability of the data for subsequent parametric analyses, including correlation and regression tests.

Table 4.5 *Normality Analysis*

| Name                                  | Skewness  |           | Kurtosis  |           |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                       | Statistic | Std.Error | Statistic | Std.Error |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics | -0.279    | 0.121     | -0.435    | 0.241     |
| Public Image of Influencers           | -0.358    | 0.121     | 0.269     | 0.241     |
| Product Individualization             | -0.263    | 0.121     | -0.396    | 0.241     |
| Promotion                             | 0.034     | 0.121     | 0.191     | 0.241     |
| Female Online Shopping Behaviour      | 0.079     | 0.121     | 0.305     | 0.241     |

#### 4.6 Correlation Between Overall Live E-commerce Factor and Female Online Shopping Behaviour

As shown in Table 4.6, the correlation analysis reveals a statistically significant and moderately strong positive relationship between the overall factor of live e-commerce and female online shopping behaviour on Douyin. The correlation coefficient is  $r = 0.502$  ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that increased engagement with live e-commerce features is associated with a higher likelihood of online shopping among female users. This finding offers initial evidence of a meaningful connection between live e-commerce and consumer purchase behaviour, supporting the theoretical assumption that interactive digital commerce environments can enhance consumer engagement and drive shopping intentions.

Table 4.6 *Correlation Between Overall Live E-commerce Factor and Female Online Shopping Behaviour*

|                           | Female Online Shopping Behaviour |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Factor of Live E-commerce | 0.502***                         |
| *** $p < 0.001$           |                                  |

#### **4.6.1 Correlation Between Individual Factors of Live E-commerce and Female Online Shopping Behaviour**

To further understand the contribution of each live e-commerce component, Table 4.7 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients between the four individual factors and female online shopping behaviour. All four factors: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics ( $r = 0.458$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Public Image of Influencers ( $r = 0.465$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Product Individualization ( $r = 0.542$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and Promotion ( $r = 0.543$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), show positive and statistically significant correlations with the dependent

variable. Among them, Promotion and Product Individualization demonstrate relatively stronger correlations, suggesting that promotional incentives and personalized product offerings may exert a more direct influence on female purchasing decisions compared to interactive engagement or influencer credibility alone.

While these results confirm that all four factors are significantly associated with female online shopping behaviour, correlation analysis alone does not indicate which factor has the strongest influence. Therefore, a multiple regression analysis was conducted in the following section to compare the relative impact of each factor when examined together. These correlations establish a basis for evaluating the relative explanatory power of each factor, which is examined next through multiple-regression modelling.

Table 4.7 *Correlation Between Individual Factors of Live E-commerce and Female Online Shopping Behaviour*

| <b>Factor of Live E-commerce</b>     | <b>Female Online Shopping Behavior</b> |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Interactive Behavior Characteristics | 0.458***                               |
| Public Image of Influencers          | 0.465***                               |
| Product Individualization            | 0.542***                               |
| Promotion                            | 0.543***                               |
| ***p < 0.001                         |                                        |

#### **4.7 Multiple Regression**

Section 4.6 applies multiple-regression analysis to determine the unique and

combined effects of the four live-e-commerce factors on female online shopping behaviour. The model includes Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion as predictors, and Female Online Shopping Behaviour as the dependent variable. The regression coefficients for each independent variable are presented in Tables 4.8 to 4.11, and the overall model fit is summarised in Table 4.12.

#### **4.7.1 Relationship Between Interactive behaviour Characteristics with Female Online Shopping behaviour**

H1: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics positively influence female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

As presented in Table 4.8, the regression coefficient for Interactive behaviour Characteristics is 0.114 ( $p = 0.009$ ,  $\beta = 0.128$ ), indicating a statistically significant positive relationship between interactive behaviour characteristics and Female Online Shopping behaviour at the  $p < 0.01$  level. This finding supports H1, confirming that engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares positively influence consumer purchasing behaviour on Douyin. The standardized  $\beta$ -value of 0.128 suggests that Interactive behaviour Characteristics has a moderate impact on shopping behaviour compared to other variables in the model. This indicates that while interactive behaviour contributes to online shopping decisions, it is not the dominant factor driving purchases. This result aligns with existing research that highlights the role of social engagement in fostering trust and product awareness, ultimately

encouraging online transactions. However, since its impact is lower than other variables such as Product Individualization and Promotion, it suggests that while interactivity influences shopping behaviour, it is often complemented by other factors such as influencer credibility and promotional incentives.

Table 4.8 *Coefficient Analysis of Interactive Behaviour Characteristics*

|                                                                | Unstandardized |            | Standardized | t     | Sig.p    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|------------|--------------|-------|----------|
|                                                                | Coefficient    |            | Coefficient  |       |          |
|                                                                | B              | Std. Error | Beta         |       |          |
| (Constant)                                                     | 0.621          | 0.134      | -            | 4.626 | 0.000*** |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics (IBC)                    | 0.114          | 0.043      | 0.128        | 2.635 | 0.009**  |
| a. Dependent Variable: Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) |                |            |              |       |          |
| $R^2=0.432, F(4,403)=76.714, \text{Sig. } p=0.000$             |                |            |              |       |          |

#### 4.7.2 Relationship Between Public Image of Influencers with Female Online Shopping Behaviour

H2: The Public Image of Influencers positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

As presented in Table 4.9, the regression coefficient for Public Image of Influencers is 0.119 ( $p = 0.006$ ,  $\beta = 0.134$ ), indicating a statistically significant positive relationship at the  $p < 0.01$  level. This confirms H2, demonstrating that the public image of influencers plays an important role in shaping Female Online Shopping Behaviour. The standardized  $\beta$ -value of 0.134 suggests that Public Image of Influencers has a slightly greater influence than Interactive Behaviour Characteristics but remains secondary to Product Individualization and Promotion. This result highlights the

growing importance of influencer marketing in live e-commerce. Consumers tend to trust influencers who project a credible, relatable, and authoritative public image, leading to increased engagement and purchasing behaviour. The significant impact of influencer image reinforces the idea that brand collaborations with reputable influencers can enhance consumer trust and drive sales. However, given that its impact is still lower than Product Individualization and Promotion, it suggests that while influencer image is important, consumers may also prioritize tangible product attributes and financial incentives when making purchasing decisions.

Table 4.9 *Coefficient Analysis of Public Image of Influencers*

|                                                                | Unstandardized Coefficient |            | Standardized Coefficient | t     | Sig.p    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|----------|
|                                                                | B                          | Std. Error | Beta                     |       |          |
| (Constant)                                                     | 0.621                      | 0.134      | -                        | 4.626 | 0.000*** |
| Public Image of Influencers (PII)                              | 0.119                      | 0.043      | 0.134                    | 2.750 | 0.006**  |
| a. Dependent Variable: Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) |                            |            |                          |       |          |
| $R^2=0.432, F(4,403)=76.714, \text{Sig. } p=0.000$             |                            |            |                          |       |          |

#### 4.7.3 Relationship Between Product Individualization with Female Online Shopping Behaviour

H3: Product Individualization positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

As presented in Table 4.10, the regression coefficient for Product Individualization is 0.255 ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.279$ ), indicating a highly significant positive relationship at the

$p < 0.001$  level. This strongly supports H3, confirming that product individualization is a key driver of Female Online Shopping Behaviour. The standardized  $\beta$ -value of 0.279 suggests that Product Individualization exerts a stronger influence than both Interactive Behaviour Characteristics and the Public Image of Influencers, underscoring its crucial role in shaping consumer preferences. This result implies that female consumers are more likely to purchase products that align with their personal tastes and needs, especially when customization options are available. The observed importance of Product Individualization in the context of live e-commerce aligns with consumer behaviour theories that highlight personalization as a determinant of purchase intention. These findings suggest that brands and retailers should prioritise tailored recommendations, limited-edition offerings, and personalised marketing strategies to better engage female consumers.

Table 4.10 *Coefficient Analysis of Product Individualization*

|                                                                | Unstandardized Coefficient |            | Standardized Coefficient | t     | Sig.p    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|----------|
|                                                                | B                          | Std. Error | Beta                     |       |          |
| (Constant)                                                     | 0.621                      | 0.134      | -                        | 4.626 | 0.000*** |
| Product Individualization (PI)                                 | 0.255                      | 0.042      | 0.279                    | 6.038 | 0.000*** |
| a. Dependent Variable: Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) |                            |            |                          |       |          |
| $R^2=0.432, F(4,403)=76.714, \text{sig. } p=0.000$             |                            |            |                          |       |          |

#### 4.7.4 Relationship Between Promotion with Female Online Shopping Behaviour

H4: Promotion positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

As presented in Table 4.11, the regression coefficient for Promotion is 0.296 ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $\beta = 0.296$ ), indicating a highly significant positive relationship at the  $p < 0.001$  level. This provides strong empirical support for H4, confirming that Promotion are the most influential factor in determining Female Online Shopping Behaviour on Douyin. The standardized  $\beta$ -value of 0.296 is the highest among all variables, indicating that Promotion has the greatest impact on consumer purchases. This finding aligns with established e-commerce trends, where discounts, flash sales, and limited-time offers play a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions. The strong effect of Promotion suggests that consumers are highly responsive to financial incentives and are more likely to make purchases when promotions are available. Retailers and influencers leveraging strategic promotional campaigns, such as exclusive discounts during live streaming sessions, can significantly boost sales and engagement.

Table 4.11 *Coefficient Analysis of Promotion*

|                                                                | Unstandardized Coefficient |            | Standardized Coefficient | t     | Sig.p    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|----------|
|                                                                | B                          | Std. Error | Beta                     |       |          |
| (Constant)                                                     | 0.621                      | 0.134      | -                        | 4.626 | 0.000*** |
| Promotion (PM)                                                 | 0.296                      | 0.045      | 0.296                    | 6.569 | 0.000*** |
| a. Dependent Variable: Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) |                            |            |                          |       |          |
| $R^2=0.432, F(4,403)=76.714, p=0.000$                          |                            |            |                          |       |          |

#### 4.7.5 The Most Significant Influence Factor in Live E-Commerce on Female Online Shopping Behaviour

**H5:** Among the identified factors (interactive behaviour characteristics, public image influencer, product individualization, and promotions), one exerts the most

significant influence on female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.

As presented in Table 4.12, a comparison of the standardized  $\beta$ -values reveals the relative importance of each independent variable in influencing Female Online Shopping Behaviour: Promotion ( $\beta = 0.296$ ) has the strongest impact, suggesting that Promotion are the primary driver of consumer purchasing decisions. Product Individualization ( $\beta = 0.279$ ) is the second most influential factor, highlighting the importance of product customization and personalized shopping experiences. Public Image of Influencers ( $\beta = 0.134$ ) plays a moderate role, indicating that influencer credibility affects shopping behaviour but is less influential than product attributes and promotions. Interactive Behaviour Characteristics ( $\beta = 0.128$ ) has the least impact among the four variables, suggesting that while interactive engagement is important, it plays a supporting role rather than a primary determinant of purchase decisions. Among these factors, Promotion exhibits the highest  $\beta$ -value (0.296), indicating that it has the strongest influence on female online shopping behaviour. This suggests that promotional incentives such as discounts, limited-time offers, bundle deals, and exclusive live-streaming discounts play a crucial role in driving consumer purchasing decisions.

The dominance of Promotion aligns with behavioural economic theories, where consumers exhibit a strong preference for price advantages and financial incentives.

In live e-commerce, the urgency created by flash sales and countdown promotions

further amplifies the impulse to buy, making Promotion the most compelling factor influencing purchase behaviour (Zhang et al., 2022).

Although Product Individualization also has a strong influence ( $\beta = 0.279$ ), indicating that personalized shopping experiences and product customization are highly valued, its effect remains slightly lower than Promotion. Meanwhile, Interactive Behaviour Characteristics and Public Image of Influencers contribute to engagement and trust but have relatively weaker effects compared to tangible financial benefits.

In conclusion, H5 is supported, with Promotion identified as the most significant factor driving Female Online Shopping Behaviour on Douyin. This insight underscores the importance of strategic pricing and promotional campaigns in maximizing consumer engagement and conversion rates in live e-commerce.

Table 4.12 *Coefficient Analysis of Factors of Live E-commerce and Female Online Shopping Behaviour*

|                                                                | Unstandardized Coefficient |            | Standardized Coefficient | t     | Sig.p    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------------------|-------|----------|
|                                                                | B                          | Std. Error | Beta                     |       |          |
| (Constant)                                                     | 0.621                      | 0.134      | -                        | 4.626 | 0.000*** |
| Promotion (PM)                                                 | 0.296                      | 0.045      | 0.296                    | 6.569 | 0.000*** |
| Public Image of Influencers (PII)                              | 0.119                      | 0.043      | 0.134                    | 2.750 | 0.006**  |
| Interactive Behaviour Characteristics (IBC)                    | 0.114                      | 0.043      | 0.128                    | 2.635 | 0.009**  |
| Product Individualization (PI)                                 | 0.255                      | 0.042      | 0.279                    | 6.038 | 0.000*** |
| a. Dependent Variable: Female Online Shopping Behaviour (FOSB) |                            |            |                          |       |          |
| $R^2=0.432, F(4,403)=76.714, p=0.000$                          |                            |            |                          |       |          |

A summary of the research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and corresponding regression results is presented in Table 4.13. A detailed synthesis of these regression findings and their theoretical implications is provided in Section 4.8.

Table 4.13 *Research Questions & Objectives & Hypothesis Summary*

| Questions                                                                                                   | Objectives                                                                                                           | Hypothesis                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Result    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Is there a relationship between Interactive Behavior Characteristic and Female Online Shopping Behavior? | 1. To determine the relationship between interactive behaviour characteristics and female online shopping behaviour. | H1: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics positively influence female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.                                                                                                                             | Accept    |
| 2. Is there a relationship between Public Image Influencer and Female Online Shopping Behavior?             | 2. To determine the relationship between public image of influencers and female online shopping behaviour.           | H2: The Public Image of Influencers positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.                                                                                                                                  | Accept    |
| 3. Is there a relationship between Product Individualization and Female Online Shopping Behavior?           | 3. To determine the relationship between product individualization and female online shopping behaviour.             | H3: Product Individualization positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.                                                                                                                                        | Accept    |
| 4. Is there a relationship between Promotions Tools and Female Online Shopping Behavior?                    | 4. To determine the relationship between promotion and female online shopping behaviour.                             | H4: Promotion positively influences female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform.                                                                                                                                                        | Accept    |
| 5. What is the most factor Live E-Commerce influence Female Online Shopping Behavior?                       | 5. To identify the most significant factor in live e-commerce that influences female online shopping behaviour.      | H5: Among the identified factors (interactive behaviour characteristics, public image influencer, product individualization, and promotions), one exerts the most significant influence on female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform. | Promotion |

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the factors shaping Female Online Shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform. The statistical analyses confirm that interactive engagement, influencer image, product customization, and Promotion all significantly contribute to online shopping behaviour. However, their relative influence varies, with promotional incentives and product individualization playing the most dominant roles, followed by influencer credibility and interactive behaviours.

These results highlight several key implications for e-commerce practitioners and marketers. Promotional campaigns should be prioritized to attract cost-sensitive consumers, while product customization strategies can enhance user engagement and brand loyalty. Additionally, businesses should collaborate with credible influencers to build consumer trust, as influencer recommendations can strengthen purchasing intent. Although interactive engagement through likes, shares, and comments is beneficial, it should be integrated with compelling product offerings and promotional incentives to effectively drive sales.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter Four. It focuses on interpreting the results related to the research hypotheses (H1–H5) about factors influencing female online shopping behaviour on Douyin. The discussion connects these findings with previous research to clarify their practical meanings. This chapter also provides clear recommendations for businesses and marketers to effectively engage consumers, improve sales performance, and support long-term growth on live e-commerce platforms like Douyin. Each hypothesis is discussed separately, followed by identifying the most influential factor and suggesting specific strategies for practical application.

### **5.2 Discussion of Key Findings**

This section presents a summary of the findings reported in Chapter Four. All four independent variables, including Interactive Behavior Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion, were found to have significant positive relationships with Female Online Shopping Behaviour.

The correlation analysis revealed that the combined factor of Live E-Commerce had a moderately strong positive correlation with female online shopping behaviour ( $r =$

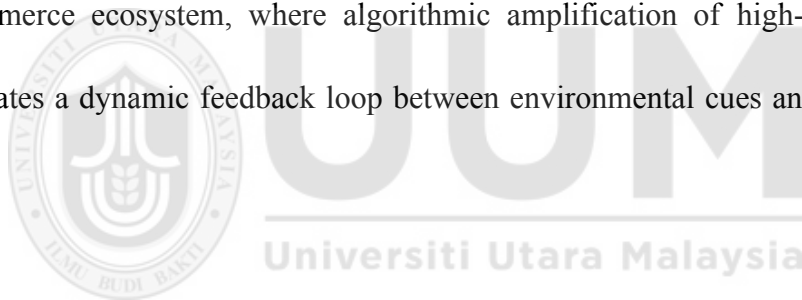
0.502,  $p < 0.001$ ). When examined separately, the four factors also showed significant positive correlations with the dependent variable: Promotion ( $r = 0.543$ ), Product Individualization ( $r = 0.542$ ), Public Image of Influencers ( $r = 0.465$ ), and Interactive Behavior Characteristics ( $r = 0.458$ ), all significant at the  $p < 0.01$  level.

The regression analysis further demonstrated the relative influence of each factor. Promotion emerged as the most influential factor ( $\beta = 0.296$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by Product Individualization ( $\beta = 0.279$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), Public Image of Influencers ( $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), and Interactive Behavior Characteristics ( $\beta = 0.128$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ). These results provide empirical support for Hypotheses H1 through H5.

### **5.3 Discussion of Hypothesis 1: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform**

The confirmation of Hypothesis 1, demonstrating a statistically significant positive relationship between interactive behaviour characteristics and female online shopping behaviour ( $\beta = 0.128$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ), extends beyond mere empirical validation to offer substantive theoretical contributions to SCT in digital commerce contexts. While the findings align with previous research indicating that interactive features enhance product visibility and foster social trust (Zimmer et al., 2020; Chang & Yu, 2023), this study provides a more nuanced understanding of how SCT's triadic reciprocity operates within algorithmic-driven platforms.

The significant relationship substantiates that interactive behaviours such as likes, comments, and shares function as critical environmental factors within the SCT framework, actively shaping female consumers' personal cognitions and subsequent shopping behaviours. This finding challenges the conventional interpretation of SCT in e-commerce literature, which has predominantly emphasized the influencer as the primary environmental factor. Instead, our results demonstrate that peer-generated interactive cues constitute equally powerful environmental inputs that shape female consumers' self-efficacy in product evaluation and purchasing decisions. This theoretical refinement is particularly relevant for understanding Douyin's unique social commerce ecosystem, where algorithmic amplification of high-engagement content creates a dynamic feedback loop between environmental cues and individual behaviour.



Furthermore, the findings reveal a complex interplay between Source Credibility Theory and SCT mechanisms. While Wang and Wu (2019) correctly identified that interactive signals enhance perceived trustworthiness, our results suggest these signals operate through dual pathways: both as external validations of source credibility and as environmental inputs that strengthen observers' self-efficacy in product assessment. This theoretical synthesis explains why female consumers on Douyin demonstrate heightened purchase intention when engaging with content featuring substantial interactions as they simultaneously perceive the source as more credible and their own product evaluations as more confident.

However, this relationship necessitates critical examination beyond the positive correlation. The relatively modest coefficient ( $\beta = 0.128$ ) suggests that interactive characteristics, while statistically significant, represent just one component within a broader constellation of influencing factors. This finding contradicts the technologically deterministic view that social interactions uniformly drive consumption, instead supporting a more nuanced SCT perspective where personal factors (including privacy concerns and individual shopping orientations) and behavioural factors (such as prior experience) moderate the impact of environmental interactive cues.

From a theoretical standpoint, these results substantially extend SCT's application in social commerce literature by demonstrating how algorithmic platforms reconfigure the traditional SCT triad. Unlike organic social environments, Douyin's algorithmically curated space creates an amplified reciprocity cycle where behavioural interactions (comments, likes) immediately reshape environmental conditions (content visibility), which subsequently influence personal factors (trust, purchase intention) in an accelerated feedback loop. This theoretical advancement helps explain the heightened efficacy of interactive characteristics in driving female shopping behaviour on algorithmic platforms compared to traditional e-commerce websites.

For marketing practitioners, these insights suggest that strategies should extend beyond merely accumulating interactions to strategically cultivating meaningful engagement that enhances both source credibility and consumer self-efficacy. Techniques such as gamified interactions and call-to-actions remain valuable, but their effectiveness derives not merely from generating quantitative metrics, but from fostering genuine social validation that strengthens consumers' confidence in their purchasing decisions.

In conclusion, while Hypothesis 1 confirms the positive relationship between interactive characteristics and female shopping behaviour, its primary theoretical contribution lies in refining our understanding of SCT's environmental component within algorithmic platforms and elucidating the psychological mechanisms through which interactive features influence consumer decision-making. Future research should further investigate the boundary conditions of this relationship and explore how different types of interactions vary in their impact across consumer segments.

#### **5.4 Discussion of Hypothesis 2: Public Image of Influencers positively influence**

##### **Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform**

The confirmation of Hypothesis 2, indicating a significant positive effect of influencer public image on female online shopping behaviour ( $\beta = 0.134$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ), provides an opportunity to critically examine and extend the theoretical understanding of source effects within the unique socio-technical environment of Douyin. While the result

aligns with established findings that influencer credibility, trustworthiness, and attractiveness are pivotal in shaping consumer trust and purchase intention (Lou & Yuan, 2019; Spekking, 2020), the present findings empirically support and extend these studies by demonstrating that a favourable public image remains a significant predictor of purchase behaviour even within an algorithmically curated live e-commerce environment. In other words, this study confirms that the classic source-credibility dimensions identified in previous research continue to hold explanatory power in the context of Douyin, while also operating at a larger scale due to algorithmic amplification.

From a SCT perspective, the influencer's public image functions as a potent environmental factor that interacts with personal factors (female consumers' values, trust predispositions) to shape behavioural outcomes (purchase decisions). This triadic reciprocity is particularly pronounced on Douyin, where the line between content and commerce is blurred. The platform's algorithmic architecture amplifies this dynamic, as influencers who project a consistent and authentic persona are rewarded with greater visibility, thereby intensifying their environmental influence on a larger audience of female consumers. This finding extends SCT by illustrating how algorithmic curation modifies the potency and scale of environmental models in digital marketplaces, while simultaneously reinforcing earlier evidence that credible and attractive influencers are central to driving consumer responses.

However, this relationship demands a more critical appraisal than previous literature has offered. The significant, yet modest, beta coefficient suggests that public image, while powerful, is not a monolithic determinant. Its effectiveness is likely contingent on a complex interplay with other variables. For instance, the argument that AI-driven tools can optimally match influencers to niche audiences (Kim et al., 2021; Rajput et al., 2024), while logically sound, may oversimplify the nature of parasocial relationships. An over-reliance on algorithmic matching could potentially undermine the perceived authenticity that forms the bedrock of an influencer's credibility, a key component of their public image. This presents a theoretical tension, as the very technological tools designed to optimize influencer marketing might, if not applied with nuance, erode the authentic human connection that makes it effective in the first place.

Therefore, while Source Credibility Theory logically explains part of the mechanism, in that a credible source enhances message acceptance, our findings suggest a more nuanced pathway on social commerce platforms. The influencer's public image does not merely lend credibility to a single message but builds a sustained, parasocial relationship that continually shapes the consumer's environment, fostering a state of ongoing receptivity to recommendations. This interpretation is consistent with prior work that views influencers as relational figures rather than one-off endorsers, and the present study provides empirical support for this view within the Douyin live e-commerce ecosystem. This shifts the perspective from influencers as transmitters of product information to architects of a trustworthy social-commercial environment.

For practice, this implies that brands must move beyond a transactional view of influencer collaborations. The pursuit of authentic long-term partnerships with influencers whose public image is built on transparency and consistency is not just a marketing tactic but a strategic imperative to build a resilient environmental presence on the platform. This approach directly leverages the SCT principle that consistent, credible models in one's environment are key to shaping and sustaining behavioural patterns.

In conclusion, the support for Hypothesis 2 confirms the importance of influencer public image, and the findings are in line with previous research on source credibility effects in digital marketing. Its greater theoretical contribution, however, lies in re-contextualizing this influence within the SCT framework and the algorithmic reality of Douyin, highlighting that the power of an influencer is not just in their credibility as a source but in their role as a persistent and algorithmically amplified environmental factor that co-shapes female consumers' shopping behaviour through sustained parasocial engagement.

### **5.5 Discussion of Hypothesis 3: Product Individualization positively influence**

#### **Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform**

The confirmation of Hypothesis 3, demonstrating a substantial positive effect of product individualization on female online shopping behaviour ( $\beta = 0.279$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), provides compelling evidence for reconceptualizing personalization mechanisms

within the theoretical framework of SCT. While this finding aligns with previous research emphasizing the emotional and commercial value of customized offerings (Pangarkar et al., 2022; Klaput et al., 2023), the present study empirically supports these conclusions by showing that personalization remains a strong and direct predictor of purchase behaviour among female Douyin users. The relatively high beta coefficient, compared with other predictors in this model, reinforces earlier arguments that tailored products and recommendations significantly enhance engagement and conversion in digital commerce environments.

From an SCT perspective, product individualization operates through a sophisticated triadic mechanism that extends beyond mere message acceptance. The significant beta coefficient, notably stronger than those observed for interactive behaviours and influencer image, suggests that personalization functions as a powerful environmental factor (E) that directly enhances female consumers' self-efficacy (P) in product evaluation, thereby fostering more confident purchasing behaviours (B). This theoretical refinement substantially advances our understanding of why personalized recommendations on Douyin demonstrate such potent effects, as they effectively bridge the environmental complexity of abundant choices with women's personal need for cognitive efficiency and identity expression. In doing so, the findings are consistent with and extend prior studies that highlight personalization as a key driver of perceived relevance and satisfaction in online shopping.

The argument that personalization enhances source credibility, while partially valid, represents an incomplete theoretical explanation. Biełozorov et al. (2019) correctly identified the emotional resonance of personalized experiences, but our findings suggest this emotional connection mediates a deeper psychological process wherein women perceive personalized recommendations as validation of their identity projects and consumption competence. This interpretation aligns with SCT's emphasis on self-efficacy as a critical personal factor driving behavioural outcomes, positioning product individualization not merely as a marketing tactic but as an environmental scaffold that supports women's confidence in their purchasing decisions.

However, this relationship demands critical examination beyond its positive manifestation. The implementation of advanced personalization technologies, such as AI-driven skin analysis (Fatimah & Ratnasari, 2024), user-designed limited editions (Hartono et al., 2023), and social-based recommendation algorithms (Lai et al., 2020), introduces potential theoretical tensions within the SCT framework. While these tools undoubtedly enhance the environmental support for personalized shopping and are broadly consistent with prior evidence on the benefits of personalization, they simultaneously risk creating what might be termed "algorithmic dependency", potentially undermining the very self-efficacy they aim to build if consumers perceive their choices as excessively directed by machines rather than self-determined.

This critical perspective reveals an important theoretical contribution, namely that

effective product individualization on Douyin represents a delicate balance between environmental guidance (algorithmic recommendations) and personal agency (consumer choice). The platform's technological infrastructure provides the environmental component, while female consumers' active engagement with customization features represents the behavioural component that reinforces their personal sense of efficacy and identity expression. This dynamic interplay exemplifies SCT's reciprocal determinism in ways that previous e-commerce personalization research has largely overlooked.

Practically, this refined theoretical understanding suggests that Douyin sellers should implement personalization as an empowerment tool rather than merely a persuasion technique. Interactive customization features during live streams should be designed to enhance women's perceived competence in product selection, positioning them as co-creators rather than passive recipients of recommendations. This approach not only drives immediate conversion but also strengthens long-term loyalty through sustained self-efficacy reinforcement.

In conclusion, while Hypothesis 3 confirms the strong positive relationship between product individualization and female shopping behaviour, its primary theoretical significance lies in advancing our understanding of SCT's environmental dimension within algorithmic commerce. At the same time, the findings are in line with and empirically support prior research on the effectiveness of personalized offerings,

while adding nuance by foregrounding the balance between algorithmic guidance and personal agency as a crucial consideration for both theory development and platform design.

#### **5.6 Discussion of Hypothesis 4: Promotion positively influence Female Online Shopping Behaviour on the Douyin platform**

The robust support for Hypothesis 4 ( $\beta = 0.296$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), identifying promotional tools as the most influential factor in this study, necessitates a critical theoretical examination that moves beyond their established role as economic incentives. While the findings confirm that discounts, coupons, and time-limited offers are highly effective in triggering purchase decisions, aligning with research on perceived value and shopping urgency (Chen et al., 2023; Batra et al., 2016), the present study provides additional empirical support by demonstrating that these promotional mechanisms remain the dominant driver of purchase behaviour in a live-streaming context. In this regard, the results substantively reinforce prior evidence that promotions can significantly enhance consumers' perceived value and accelerate decision-making processes.

From an SCT perspective, promotions function as a powerful environmental factor that dynamically interacts with personal factors (for example, price sensitivity and perceived self-efficacy in securing a good deal) to drive behavioural outcomes (purchase initiation). The high beta coefficient suggests that within Douyin's

fast-paced live-streaming environment, promotions act as a critical environmental cue that rapidly escalates the triadic reciprocal process. This immediacy effect represents a significant extension to SCT in e-commerce contexts, illustrating how real-time environmental stimuli can accelerate the cognition behaviour linkage far more intensely than in traditional retail settings, and thereby offering a theoretical explanation for the strong promotional effects reported in earlier empirical work.

The argument that promotions enhance source credibility (Kopalle et al., 2023), while partially valid, requires critical qualification. Our findings suggest that the relationship between promotions and credibility is not linear but potentially paradoxical. While well-executed deals can reinforce perceptions of an influencer's expertise and generosity, an over-reliance on promotional tactics may inadvertently signal product devaluation or desperation, ultimately undermining the very credibility they seek to build. This critical tension highlights a limitation in applying Source Credibility Theory in isolation and demonstrates how SCT provides a more comprehensive framework by accounting for the complex interpretation (personal factor) of environmental cues.

Furthermore, the implementation of advanced promotional mechanics, such as gamified discounts and tiered flash sales (Wang & Aldave, 2024; Adanyin, 2024), introduces another layer to the SCT framework. These sophisticated tools do more than create urgency, as they actively enhance the consumer's self-efficacy by

providing clear, actionable pathways to obtain value, thereby strengthening the personal factor in the SCT triad. Similarly, loyalty programs (Nowak & Pawłowska-Nowak, 2024) function as sustained environmental structures that systematically reinforce purchasing behaviours over time, which is consistent with prior research on loyalty-building mechanisms and demonstrates how SCT operates across both immediate and longitudinal timeframes.

However, this potent influence demands critical scrutiny regarding its long-term theoretical implications. The dominance of promotional influence raises important questions about the sustainability of consumer engagement patterns built primarily on economic incentives. From an SCT standpoint, while promotions effectively initiate the behaviour environment reciprocity cycle, an overemphasis on this factor potentially risks creating "contingency-dependent" consumers whose continued engagement requires ever-increasing environmental incentives, potentially at the expense of developing genuine brand attachment through other pathways.

In practical terms, this refined theoretical understanding suggests that Douyin sellers should implement promotions not merely as transaction drivers but as strategic tools for building consumers' self-efficacy and sustained engagement. This involves designing promotional frameworks that educate consumers about product value, thereby enhancing cognitive personal factors while providing economic benefits, and creating a more balanced and theoretically grounded approach to behaviour shaping.

In conclusion, while Hypothesis 4 strongly confirms the powerful effect of promotions, the findings are consistent with and further support previous research on the effectiveness of price-based incentives in stimulating online purchases. Its primary theoretical contribution lies in elucidating the accelerated triadic reciprocity within SCT that characterizes live-stream environments and revealing the paradoxical nature of the promotion credibility relationship, thus advancing SCT by showing how time-compressed environmental cues interact with personal factors in digital commerce.

### **5.7 Discussion of Hypothesis 5: Identification of the Most Significant Factor**

Hypothesis 5 aimed to identify the most influential factor affecting female online shopping behaviour on the Douyin platform. Regression analysis revealed that Promotion had the strongest effect ( $\beta = 0.296$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), followed by Product Individualization ( $\beta = 0.279$ ), while Public Image of Influencers ( $\beta = 0.134$ ) and Interactive Behaviour Characteristics ( $\beta = 0.128$ ) showed relatively moderate influence.

This result confirms that promotion-based strategies are the most effective drivers of female consumer purchase intention in live e-commerce. At the same time, the relative strength of product individualization observed in this study supports prior findings that personalization significantly enhances perceived relevance and purchase

likelihood (Pangarkar et al., 2022; Klaput et al., 2023). The overall pattern of results is therefore consistent with Martínez-de-Albéniz et al. (2020) and Khoshtaria et al. (2025), who emphasized that promotions are particularly effective when embedded in trustworthy and engaging environments. However, this does not diminish the importance of the other three factors. Instead, these variables should be understood as mutually reinforcing. Effective promotional activities can be amplified when combined with personalization, credible influencer endorsements, and interactive engagement. This is consistent with the findings of Martínez-de-Albéniz et al. (2020) and further echoed by Khoshtaria et al. (2025), and the present study provides additional empirical support for their argument that promotional impact is maximized when supported by trust, engagement, and relevance.

According to Source Credibility Theory, consumer acceptance depends not only on the content of the message (for example, price or discounts) but also on how it is delivered and by whom. When promotional offers are presented by trusted influencers through interactive and personalized channels, they carry greater persuasive weight. In this context, trustworthiness, perceived expertise, and relevance converge to shape purchase decisions. Strategically, businesses should adopt a layered approach. Promotion should remain the core focus, but be supported by three key pillars:

1. Interactive Behaviour: Incorporate real-time engagement strategies such as polls, comment-triggered flash deals, and gamified actions (e.g., discount unlocks via

shares). These methods increase user participation and visibility, reinforcing perceived popularity and credibility (Chang & Yu, 2023).

2. **Influencer Credibility:** Select influencers based not on popularity alone but on authenticity, audience alignment, and transparency. Exclusive promo codes or personalized endorsements from credible influencers can significantly boost perceived trust (Spekking, 2020; Rajput et al., 2024).
3. **Product Individualization:** Embed personalized offers into live-stream formats—for example, bundle discounts based on browsing history or custom product options available during the stream. These not only increase relevance but also elevate perceived care and professionalism (Fatihah & Ratnasari, 2024; Hartono et al., 2023).

In summary, while Promotion is the dominant factor driving female consumers' live-stream purchases on Douyin, its impact can be significantly magnified when strategically integrated with the other three variables. Businesses are advised to move beyond one-dimensional sales tactics and implement holistic strategies that combine credibility, engagement, and personalization—thereby aligning with both consumer psychology and the core principles of Source Credibility Theory.

## **5.8 Theoretical and Practical Implications**

### **5.8.1 Theoretical Implications**

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of consumer behaviour in live e-commerce by emphasizing not only the individual effects of key influencing factors such as Promotion, Product Individualization, Public Image of Influencers, and Interactive Behaviour Characteristics but also their potential synergistic relationships. While promotions emerged as the most influential factor, their effectiveness was shown to be enhanced when integrated with credible influencers, personalized offerings, and interactive engagement.

From the perspective of Source Credibility Theory, this research deepens the conceptual framework by illustrating that trustworthiness and expertise are not limited to the individual influencer but can be co-constructed through platform design, content strategy, and personalized interactions. For example, when a promotional message is supported by an engaging format, real-time interactivity, and influencer credibility, the cumulative perception of source reliability increases, making the message more persuasive (Bruckner et al., 2024; Ding et al., 2024).

Additionally, this study underscores that the dimensions of credibility, namely trustworthiness and expertise, can be distributed across multiple agents in the live e-commerce environment. This suggests that the SCT framework should be extended beyond one-dimensional “source” analysis to consider credibility as a networked

outcome shaped by the interplay between content, platform, influencer, and audience interaction.

These findings invite future theoretical development that treats credibility as a dynamic construct in digital commerce settings. The integration of promotional content with emotionally resonant delivery (e.g., personalization and interactivity) may activate central processing pathways, aligning with dual-process theories such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM), while remaining rooted in the credibility-based framework.

### **5.8.2 Practical Implications**

The results of this study offer several actionable insights for e-commerce platforms, live-streaming sellers, and marketers aiming to improve female consumer engagement and conversion on Douyin.

First, the dominant effect of Promotion suggests that price-based incentives remain the strongest motivator in live e-commerce. However, the impact of these promotions can be significantly amplified when delivered by credible influencers and enhanced by personalization. Sellers should adopt AI-driven pricing strategies, time-sensitive offers, and loyalty programs, while ensuring that all promotional content is transparently and credibly communicated.

Second, interactive features such as comment-triggered flash sales, real-time Q&A,

and polling should be used not just for engagement but also to enhance perceived credibility. These tools contribute to social validation and platform trust, especially when aligned with influencer-led campaigns (Chang & Yu, 2023; Mantri, 2024).

Third, influencer partnerships should prioritize authenticity, consistency, and transparency. Rather than relying solely on macro-influencers with large followings, Douyin sellers should also consider micro-influencers with high engagement and niche audience alignment. Involving influencers in content co-creation or feedback sessions can foster trust and long-term brand association (Spekking, 2020; Kim et al., 2021).

Finally, product individualization must be elevated from an optional feature to a strategic focus. Real-time customization, co-creation opportunities, and personalized product bundles not only enhance relevance but also communicate attentiveness and professionalism, which are key elements in building perceived credibility and consumer loyalty (Fatihah & Ratnasari, 2024; Yin & Areeprayolkij, 2024).

By holistically integrating promotional power, source credibility, personalization, and interactive design, Douyin sellers and platform developers can create a more trustworthy, engaging, and effective live e-commerce environment tailored to the preferences of female consumers.

## 5.9 Limitations of the Study

While this study offers valuable insights into the factors influencing female online shopping behaviour in Douyin's live e-commerce environment, several limitations must be acknowledged.

1. The research focused exclusively on female consumers using the Douyin platform. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to male consumers, other demographic groups, or users of alternative live e-commerce platforms that possess distinct features and consumer dynamics.
2. The study investigated only four external influencing factors: Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion. Other potentially significant variables, such as internal psychological motivations, technological affordances (e.g., AI interface design), or broader market competition, were not considered and may play a role in consumer decision-making.
3. The use of cross-sectional data provides only a snapshot of consumer behaviour at a single point in time. This limits the ability to track evolving consumer preferences or long-term behavioural changes in response to shifting market trends or platform updates.

4. The study relied on self-reported data collected through questionnaires. While this method is widely used in consumer research, it is vulnerable to biases such as social desirability, recall inaccuracies, and subjective interpretation, which may influence the accuracy of responses.

These limitations should not detract from the significance of the findings, but they do highlight the need for caution in interpreting and generalizing the results. Future research can address these constraints by expanding the scope, employing longitudinal designs, and integrating mixed methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behaviour in the live e-commerce context.

#### **5.10 Recommendations for Future Research**

Building upon the findings and limitations of this study, several directions are recommended for future research to deepen the understanding of consumer behaviour in live e-commerce environments, particularly on platforms like Douyin. Specifically, future studies are encouraged to address the following areas:

1. Future research should refine and expand theoretical frameworks, focusing on the interplay between source credibility, emotional engagement, and interactivity. Constructs such as trust, authenticity, and perceived expertise should be explored in real-time contexts. Integrating dual-process models such as the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) with Source Credibility Theory may offer deeper

insights into consumer decision-making (Bruckner et al., 2024).

2. Studies should assess the role of emerging technologies, like AI, AR, and blockchain, on trust, satisfaction, and purchase intention. Specific areas of interest include AI-driven recommendations, real-time AR try-ons, chatbot performance, and interactive UI/UX design (Ding et al., 2024; Mei et al., 2025).
3. Methodological enhancements, including longitudinal and experimental designs, are encouraged to track evolving consumer behaviours. Combining A/B testing (a controlled experimental method that compares two versions of a content, feature, or promotional strategy to determine which performs better), behavioural tracking, and qualitative interviews can improve the robustness and depth of findings (Mantri, 2024; Hakim & Kusumawati, 2024).
4. Future research should incorporate new variables such as live-stream quality, customer service interactions, and algorithmic curation. Dependent variables may include loyalty, satisfaction, or retention. Cross-platform comparisons, such as Douyin versus TikTok Shop, are also encouraged (Surjandy et al., 2024; Hartono et al., 2023).
5. To improve generalisability, future research should involve male users and diverse age or socioeconomic groups. Cross-cultural analyses can uncover

regional differences in consumer responses, especially important in globally expanding platforms.

### **5.11 Conclusion**

This chapter summarizes the key factors influencing female online shopping behaviour on Douyin's live e-commerce platform. The findings confirmed that all four independent variables, namely Interactive Behaviour Characteristics, Public Image of Influencers, Product Individualization, and Promotion, positively influence purchase decisions, with Promotion emerging as the most significant factor.

This result highlights that future marketing strategies should prioritise Promotion as the core driver, while integrating it with the other three variables to amplify overall impact. Specifically, combining attractive promotional offers with credible influencers, interactive engagement, and personalised experiences can significantly enhance consumer trust and purchase intention.

By applying Source Credibility Theory, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of how trust, expertise, and message relevance influence female consumer behaviour in Douyin's live e-commerce environment.

These findings directly address the research problem identified in Chapter One by responding to the lack of theory-driven and gender-focused empirical research on

female consumers in Douyin live e-commerce. Specifically, this study demonstrates how key live e-commerce factors, including interactive behaviour characteristics, influencer public image, product individualization, and promotion, operate through Source Credibility Theory mechanisms within an algorithm-driven live e-commerce environment, thereby extending the applicability of SCT to contemporary social commerce platforms.



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## APPENDICES

### Part A: Respondents' Demography

Part A includes questions about the respondents' demography

**Age Groups:** Including a wide range of age groups allows for a comprehensive analysis of age-specific trends and preferences in online shopping behaviour.

**Regions:** By selecting participants from the various areas across China (North, East, South, Central, and West), the study will reflect regional differences in economic status, cultural influences, and access to technology, which may affect online shopping behaviours.

**Educational Background:** This criterion helps to understand how education level influences e-commerce usage and preferences, as educational attainment may correlate with digital literacy and purchasing decisions.

**Income Levels:** Different income levels are included to evaluate how disposable income affects purchasing behaviour on e-commerce platforms.

**Gender:** While the study focuses on female behaviour, including other gender options ensures inclusivity and provides baseline data for comparative analysis.

| Description                  | Question                                                                            |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Age Group                    | What is your age group?<br>- Under 20<br>- 21-30<br>- 31-40<br>- 41-50<br>- Over 50 |
| Region of Residence in China | Which region do you currently reside in?<br>- North China<br>- East China           |

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|                        |                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- South China</li> <li>- Central China</li> <li>- West China</li> </ul>                                |
| Educational Background | What is your highest level of education?                                                                                                      |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- High School</li> <li>- Bachelor's</li> <li>- Master's</li> <li>- Doctorate</li> </ul>                |
| Income Level           | What is your approximate monthly income?                                                                                                      |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under 3000 RMB</li> <li>- 3001-6000 RMB</li> <li>- 6001-9000 RMB</li> <li>- Over 9000 RMB</li> </ul> |
| Gender                 | What is your gender?                                                                                                                          |
|                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Female</li> <li>- Male</li> <li>- Prefer not to say</li> </ul>                                       |

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## Part B: Questionnaire

Part B includes questions about the factors that influence female online shopping behaviour.

### Part B(1): Interactive Behaviour Characteristic(IBC)

| Item | Questions                                                                                                             | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| IBC1 | I find the real-time interaction with hosts during live streams to be highly engaging.                                | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| IBC2 | I am influenced by the ability to interact with other viewers during live streams when deciding to purchase products. | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| IBC3 | I am more likely to purchase products that are demonstrated and recommended by the hosts during live streams.         | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|       |                                                                                                                                                           |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| IBC4  | I trust the product reviews and feedback provided by other viewers during the live stream.                                                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC5  | I am enhanced in my overall shopping experience on Douyin by interactive features such as live polls and Q&A sessions.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC6  | I feel more confident about purchasing products when I see the host responding to viewers' questions or concerns during live streams.                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC7  | I am motivated to stay engaged throughout the session by the ability to like or react to live-stream content.                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC8  | I am more likely to trust the host's product recommendations when I observe active engagement from other viewers (likes, comments, and shares).           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC9  | I feel more connected to the live-stream community when I receive replies to my comments from the host or other viewers.                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| IBC10 | I find live polls and surveys conducted during streams helpful for understanding the preferences of other viewers and making informed purchase decisions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part B(2): I Public Image of Influencers (PII)

| Item | Questions                                                                      | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| PII1 | I trust the product recommendations made by influencers with a positive public | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|      |                                                                                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
|      | image on Douyin.                                                                                                                       |   |   |   |   |   |
| PII2 | I am more likely to purchase products endorsed by influencers who are perceived as experts in their field.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII3 | I am influenced by the authenticity of an influencer's public image in my willingness to follow their product recommendations.         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII4 | I feel more connected to influencers who share personal stories and experiences related to the products they endorse.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII5 | I am affected in my perception of the quality and reliability of products by the public image of the influencer.                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII6 | I am more likely to trust influencers who actively engage in charitable or socially responsible activities when recommending products. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII7 | I am influenced by the professional reputation of influencers in their respective industries when deciding to purchase a product.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII8 | I feel confident about purchasing products endorsed by influencers who maintain a consistent and reliable public image over time.      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PII9 | I am less likely to trust product endorsements from influencers involved in controversies or scandals.                                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

|       |                                                                                                        |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| PII10 | I am influenced by the lifestyle portrayed by influencers when considering their product endorsements. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|

Part B(3): Product Individualization (PI)

| Item | Questions                                                                                                                               | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| PI1  | I prefer purchasing products that can be customized according to my personal preferences.                                               | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI2  | I am more likely to engage with live streams that offer personalized product recommendations based on my past purchases or preferences. | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI3  | I believe that personalized products offered during live streams are of higher quality compared to standard products.                   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI4  | I am enhanced in my shopping experience on Douyin by the ability to customize products during Live E-Commerce sessions.                 | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI5  | I am willing to pay a premium for products that can be customized to my preferences during live streams.                                | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI6  | I feel more valued as a customer when live streams offer product customization options tailored to my needs.                            | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PI7  | I am more likely to recommend products to others when I can customize them to fit my preferences during live streams.                   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|      |                                                                                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| PI8  | I trust product recommendations more when they are personalized based on my shopping habits and preferences.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PI9  | I feel a stronger emotional connection to products that I have customized during live streams.                                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PI10 | I am influenced by the ability to see real-time previews of customized products during live streams before making a purchase. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part B(4): Promotions (PM)

| Item | Questions                                                                                                                                          | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| PM1  | I am more likely to participate in a live e-commerce session on Douyin if there are exclusive promotional offers available.                        | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PM2  | I am significantly influenced by promotional discounts during Live E-Commerce events on Douyin when deciding to purchase products.                 | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PM3  | I am encouraged to buy products immediately due to the sense of urgency created by limited-time promotions during live streams.                    | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PM4  | I am more likely to purchase products that are part of a promotional bundle during live e-commerce events on Douyin.                               | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| PM5  | I am positively affected in my perception of the brand by the promotional messages and advertisements before and during the live stream on Douyin. | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|      |                                                                                                                                               |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| PM6  | I am more likely to attend live streams on Douyin that offer flash sales or exclusive deals during the session.                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PM7  | I am influenced by free shipping promotions when making purchasing decisions during live e-commerce events.                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PM8  | I feel more satisfied with my purchases when I benefit from exclusive member-only promotions during live streams.                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PM9  | I am more likely to recommend a product to others if I purchase it at a discounted price during a live e-commerce event.                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| PM10 | I feel more inclined to make an unplanned purchase when there are promotional gifts or bonuses included with the product during live streams. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Part C includes questions about the Female Shopping Behaviour of Douyin

Part C(1): Female Online Shopping Behaviour(FOSB)

| Item  | Questions                                                                             | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Neutral | Agree | Strongly Agree |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------|---------|-------|----------------|
| FOSB1 | I frequently shop online because it saves me time compared to traditional shopping.   | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |
| FOSB2 | I prefer shopping online because I can easily compare prices and find the best deals. | 1                 | 2        | 3       | 4     | 5              |

|        |                                                                                                                                                                |   |   |   |   |   |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| FOSB3  | I am enhanced in my shopping experience by Live E-Commerce sessions on Douyin, which provide detailed product information and demonstrations.                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB4  | I am influenced by social media reviews and recommendations when making online purchases.                                                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB5  | I feel more confident purchasing from brands that are active on Douyin and engage with their audience regularly.                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB6  | I am more likely to make a purchase when I receive personalized product recommendations on e-commerce platforms.                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB7  | I often purchase products during live e-commerce sessions because of the real-time interaction and immediate answers to my queries.                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB8  | I am influenced by the visual appeal and presentation of products during live e-commerce sessions on Douyin.                                                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB9  | I feel more confident shopping online when the platform offers secure payment options and reliable return policies.                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| FOSB10 | I tend to spend more during live e-commerce sessions compared to traditional online shopping because of the interactive and engaging nature of the experience. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |