

Platform Ecosystems and Value Co-Creation in Chinese Livestream Commerce: A Scoping Review

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ABSTRACT

Livestream commerce is a new type of digital retail in China, where live video, social interactions, product presentation and in-stream selling coexist in platform-based ecosystems. Existing studies on the co-creation of value between platforms, creators, merchants and consumers are still scattered across marketing, e-commerce and communication and information systems. This scoping review outlines the features, theoretical frameworks, value co-creation processes, competitive landscape, and research gaps of Chinese livestream commerce. A search of SciSpace, SciSpace Full-Text, and Google Scholar was conducted and resulted in the identification of 1,196 records from 2016 to September 2026, guided by PRISMA-ScR and JBI guidance, and the Population-Concept-Context framework. 743 unique records were found after removing 453 duplicates. The pragmatic relevance-ranking cutoff moved 500 records to title and abstract screening, 22 sources to full text assessment and 17 sources to the descriptive and thematic evidence mapping. Five themes were identified, which were platform ecosystem architecture, value co-creation through interaction and community, consumer behaviour and purchase intention, competitive strategy and business-model innovation and theoretical applications. Evidence focused on Douyin and consumers, with little focus on merchants, platform operators, governance, longitudinal change, and the creation of markets. Since 243 records were not screened for eligibility, the search excluded major international and Chinese-language databases, screening and charting was undertaken by a single assessor and no formal quality appraisal was undertaken, the findings are presented as a provisional map and not in an exhaustive or quality weighted fashion.

Keywords: Chinese livestream commerce; platform ecosystem; value co-creation; social commerce; Blue Ocean Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Live streaming commerce is a unique type of digital commerce in China that combines live video, social communication, product demonstration, algorithmic discovery and embedded transactions. Taobao Live, Douyin, and Kuaishou have all built up their respective ecosystems where platforms, creators, merchants, service providers and consumers share complementary resources. Livestream commerce is not just a virtual shopping method, it is a symphony orchestrated in which attention, trust, entertainment, community engagement, and transactions are all created simultaneously.

Livestream commerce revolutionizes the way shoppers find goods and companies communicate with audiences. While traditional e-commerce may start with identifying a need and searching for a product, livestream

commerce can start with entertainment or social interaction. A creator does not need the viewer to click away from the platform to demonstrate and explain an offering, react to viewers, and guide the viewer to purchase the offering. This format not only alters the customer path, but also influences who commands the power on which platforms and by which creators, merchants and consumers.

There are also different logics to the Chinese livestream-commerce platforms. The literature mostly describes the characteristics of Douyin as algorithmically driven discoveries, polished content, and wide-reaching campaigns, Kuaishou as authentic and grassroots creators, and Taobao Live as an established marketplace and merchant infrastructure. Evidence-based comparisons are helpful in discussing platform orchestration and differentiation, but because the number of studies for each platform is not evenly distributed, they do not allow for definitive conclusions.

Conceptual Background

Platform Ecosystem Theory describes a digital platform as an organizing structure that facilitates the interactions between the various groups of interdependent participants. Governance rules, interfaces, algorithms, incentives, platform offers and facilitation of participation across groups are all of critical importance to ecosystem value. The technical infrastructure and discovery systems, transaction systems, content and credibility, products and commercial resources, and attention, data, engagement, and purchasing power are all provided by different parties in the context of livestream commerce (Hu & Ye, 2024; Sun, 2025).

Value Co-Creation Theory focuses on the value that can be created from the product as it is used, interacted with and integrated with resources (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In the world of livestream commerce, this can manifest itself through the ability to pose questions, watch demonstrations, chat and share opinions, and shape the livestream's trajectory. Creators convert product qualities to contextual experiences and platforms evoke immediacy and social presence. Value is thus co-produced in an interaction of technological, commercial and relational resources.

Social presence, parasocial interaction, emotional contagion, perceived value and community commitment are concepts that can be used to explain engagement and purchase intention within social-commerce and Stimulus-Organism-Response theories. An additional strategic question is if platform differentiation and content-to-commerce integration drives better competition in an existing market or generates new demand. The studies included did not necessarily implement Blue Ocean. Therefore, value innovation and the redefinition of market boundaries and the non-customer demand are research propositions that can be tested in the future, not proven facts (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

Rationale

China's livestream commerce research exists in various fields, such as marketing, information systems, consumer psychology, communication, operations, and strategy. Individual studies tend to focus on purchase intention, streamer influence, platform architecture or business-model innovation and do not sufficiently develop the relationships between these aspects. Furthermore, the evidence is also methodologically inconsistent and can only be meaningfully combined if the questions are more specific and the outcomes are similar. A scoping review is thus timely for mapping the field, clarifying the conceptual structure and identifying under-researched areas (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005; Peters et al., 2020; Tricco et al., 2018).

Objectives and Review Questions

The purpose of this scoping study was to systematically chart the subject matter, distribution and gaps in the current body of knowledge of Chinese live-stream commerce. Following the study's focus on platform ecosystems, value co-creation, stakeholder involvement, and competitive strategy, the review of existing evidence explored the distribution of existing evidence across various livestream commerce platforms, academic disciplines, and research methods; key platform ecosystem stakeholders that have been studied; mechanisms for value co-creation in Chinese livestream commerce ecosystems; and how competitive strategy and business-model innovation have been explored in the literature.

METHODS

Review Design and Report

This study employed a scoping review design guided by the Arksey and O'Malley (2005) guidelines for scoping reviews, guidance for conducting scoping reviews (Peters et al., 2020) and the PRISMA extension for scoping reviews (Tricco et al., 2018). It was designed to illustrate concepts, characteristics of the evidence, and gaps and not to generate pooled effects or to draw quality-weighted causal inferences. The review questions, eligibility and search concepts, and charting categories were defined prior to synthesis. There was no prospective registration of a review protocol.

Eligibility Criteria

To create eligibility criteria, the Population-Concept-Context framework was used. The population consisted of Chinese livestream-commerce platforms and major ecosystem players, such as creators or streamers, merchants, and platform operators. Platform ecosystems, value co-creation, social-commerce mechanisms, consumer engagement and purchases, competitive strategy, and business-model innovation were part of the concept. The context was the commerce-based livestream in China, such as Taobao Live, Douyin, Kuaishou and similar or multi-platform.

Scholarly journal articles, conference papers, dissertations, working papers and research derived from institutions that were published between January 2016 and September 2026 were eligible sources. Sources needed to include empirical, theoretical, comparative, and/or analytical evidence that directly addressed at least one of the review questions. Papers which were purely technical, lacking an ecosystem, behavioural or strategic dimension were not reviewed, nor were those that were not of a scholarly nature and lacked any identifiable provenance.

Information Sources and Search Strategy

The combinations of the focal phenomenon, named platforms, stakeholders, and review concepts, were searched in SciSpace, SciSpace Full-Text, and Google Scholar. The core terms encompassed Chinese livestream commerce, live streaming e-commerce, Taobao Live, Douyin, Kuaishou, platform ecosystem, value co-creation, social commerce, purchase intention, competitive strategy, business model and market creation. The syntax was adapted to each interface. The search blocks are not available for Scopus, Web of Science, ACM Digital Library, AIS eLibrary, CNKI, and Wanfang. Appendix A is thus not a full log of all searches, but an account of the search combinations used.

Source Selection

A total of 1,196 records were found in the searches. A total of 743 unique records were left after 453 duplicates were deleted. The remaining 243 records were not subjected to the eligibility criteria, and the top 500 records were advanced to the title/abstract screening. The ranking method was not validated with a random sample of lower-ranked records, and so the recall of the method is unknown. There were 500 records screened against the PCC criteria and 22 of those sources were advanced to full-text assessment. Five sources were excluded at full text because they did not sufficiently match the review concept and/or context, and 17 sources were charted and synthesized. One assessor screened and charted, thus no consensus process or interrater reliability statistics were available. The process is not fully independent or comprehensive, as these departures from it limit the completeness and reproducibility of the review.

Data Charting and Synthesis

The form was structured and recorded publication information, platform, study design, theoretical framework, stakeholders, findings, and gaps in the research were stated. Descriptive evidence mapping was carried out to summarize information on platform, method, stakeholder and theoretical coverage. Themes at the higher order level were identified through framework analysis and grouped into recurring themes (Ritchie & Spencer, 2003) which could be multiple for one source. Charting and thematic classifications were not independently verified

but were done by one assessor. There was no formal risk-of-bias or methodological-quality appraisal because the aim of the review was to map a heterogeneous field not to estimate effects. However, because there is no appraisal, the synthesis is limited to describing the presence of claims and cannot prove that they are credible or have a strong evidential basis. If measures and designs are sufficiently comparable, a future systematic review of a narrower question, such as determinants of purchase intention, should employ duplicate screening, an appropriate appraisal tool, and meta-analysis.

Table 1. Summary of the Source-Selection Process

Selection stage	Records
Records identified	1,196
Duplicates removed	453
Unique records	743
Not screened after relevance-ranking cutoff	243
Title and abstracts screened	500
Title and abstracts excluded	478
Full texts assessed	22
Full texts excluded for insufficient concept or context alignment	5
Sources included	17

RESULTS

Study Selection and Corpus Profile

A total of 17 sources were reviewed, with all that had been published between 2022 and 2025. The recent publications suggest that systematic scholarly attention has been given to live streaming commerce after the rapid institutionalization of live streaming commerce. The selection of the corpus included journal articles, conference papers or edited volume chapters, specialist interdisciplinary publications and one doctoral dissertation. Lead authors were mainly from China with others from the United Kingdom, Japan, and Hong Kong. The characteristics of the included corpus cannot be taken as a comprehensive picture of the literature.

Platform Coverage

The use of platforms was not consistent around the globe. Seven sources mentioned Douyin (41%), Taobao Live (18%), Kuaishou (12%), niche platforms for sports (12%) and other or more than one platform (18%). The evidence map is thus skewed toward research on Douyin. Both Kuaishou's rural and community-oriented model and Taobao Live's marketplace-centric model were under-represented. This distribution does not enable direct or explicit comparison of alternate ecosystem architectures. Figure 1 illustrates the coverage of platforms as observed in the 17 sources included.

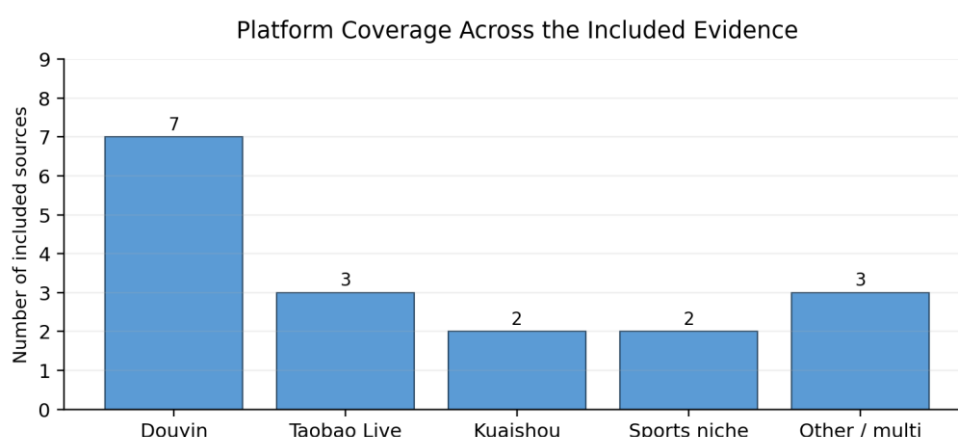


Figure 1. Platform Coverage Across the 17 Included Sources

Methodological Distribution

24 percent of the studies (five) were quantitative surveys with structural equation modelling; four (24%) were case-study or archival; three (18%) were qualitative, netnographic or other; three (18%) were conceptual or exploratory; and two (12%) were review or mixed-method designs. This methodological diversity provides alternative views, but all quantitative research was conducted cross-sectionally. The corpus, therefore, does not yield evidence for temporal ordering, causality or ecosystem evolution but rather associations and reported mechanisms. The methodological approaches are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of Research Methods Across the Included Studies

Methodological approach	n	%
Survey with SEM	5	29
Case study or archival analysis	4	24
Netnography or qualitative	3	18
Conceptual or exploratory	3	18
Review or mixed methods	2	12

Stakeholder Coverage

There were 14 consumers (82%), 10 creators (59%), five platform operators (29%) and four merchants (24%) examined. This imbalance has restricted ecosystem-level inferences due to the interactions among the merchants, which influence product variety, service quality, and commercial results; the interactions between creators and their content supply and audience relationships; and how the platform operates governs visibility, monetization and acceptable conduct. The review can thus be more definitive regarding mechanisms the consumers can see rather than claims about value distribution, merchant viability, and platform governance. Figure 2 shows the coverage of each stakeholder group.

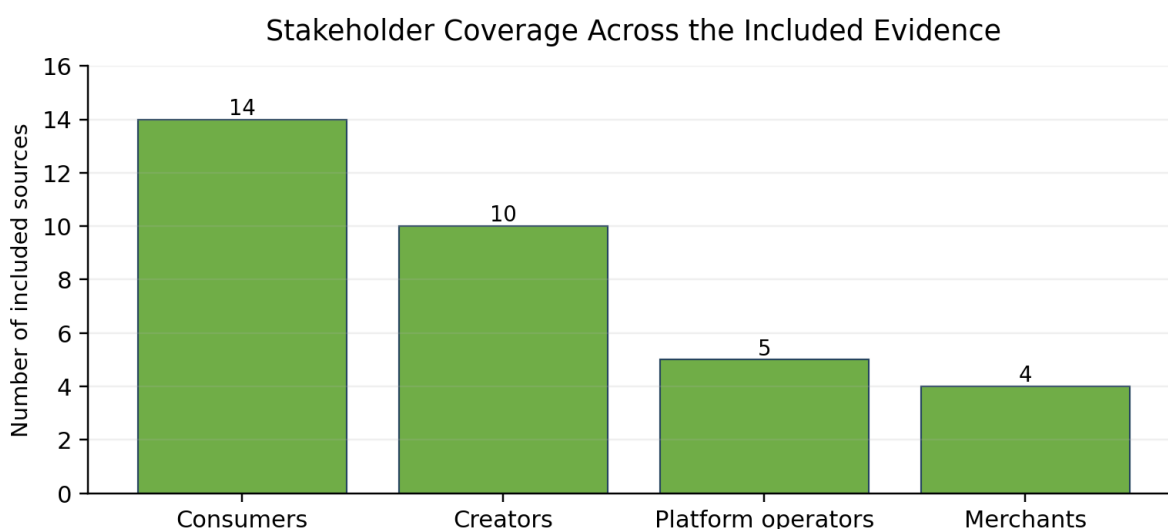


Figure 2. Research Coverage Across Key Stakeholder Groups

Theoretical Coverage

All 17 sources adopted at least one of the theoretical perspectives. The most prominent was Value Co-Creation Theory, which was cited in nine sources. Five sources contained Social Commerce Theory and Social Exchange Theory, and three sources contained Platform Ecosystem Theory and three contained Stimulus-Organism-Response. There were two sources for contextual and cue-based theories. One study included each of Porter's Competitive Advantage, microfoundations, symbolic interactionism, and relational entrepreneurship. This diversity has the potential to be productive, but most theories have been used at a single level of analysis and are very seldom linked through explicit cross level propositions.

Thematic Evidence Map

Table 3 and Figure 3 indicate that the widest spread understanding of theoretical frameworks was observed, followed by value co-creation, ecosystem architecture, consumer behaviour and competitive strategy. As shown in the distribution, the field focuses on the theoretical and interaction-based explanations, and the strategic and business-model aspects are less developed. Thematic counts are not mutually exclusive as sources can contribute to more than one theme.

Table 3. Distribution of Key Themes Across the Included Studies

Theme	Sub-themes	Sources (n)
Platform ecosystem architectures	Multi-sided roles; orchestration; algorithmic curation; creator empowerment	8
Value co-creation mechanisms	Parasocial interaction; emotional contagion; community; content-commerce integration	9
Consumer behaviour and purchase intention	S-O-R pathways; perceived value; engagement; impulse purchasing	7
Competitive strategy and business models	Platform differentiation; relational entrepreneurship; advantage; market-creation analogues	6
Theoretical frameworks	Value co-creation; social commerce; platform ecosystem; S-O-R; microfoundations	17

Thematic Coverage Across the Included Evidence

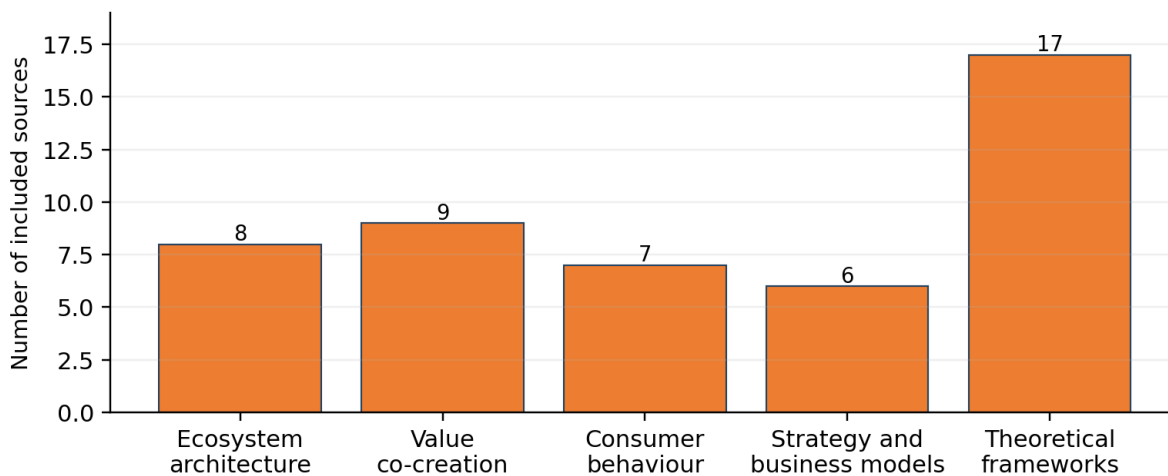


Figure 3. Thematic Coverage Across the Included Evidence

Platform Ecosystem Architectures and Stakeholder Dynamics

There were eight sources that included the ecosystem structure. Together they portray the Chinese livestream platforms as multi-sided platforms where participants play different yet complementary roles. Platforms offer accessibility for the audience, rules, payment links and recommendation systems. Creators deliver fun, product demo and social validation. Merchants offer products, brand assets and promotional materials. Consumers give attention, interaction, behavioral and monetary data. Thus, the value of an ecosystem relies on the nature of complementarities between actors as well as on each actor's capability (Hu & Ye, 2024; Liang et al., 2025; Sun, 2025).

Orchestration links together groups of participants and helps to balance out the tensions between them. Create content for low costs, edit in apps, share content and get creator monetization benefits, and algorithmic amplification reduce the difficulty of participation on Douyin (Tan, 2023). The same platform mechanisms also impact whose content will be visible and the distribution of traffic. The architecture of the platform is thus a closely related aspect to governance and value distribution.

Comparative evidence does not provide any evidence of a single better ecosystem model. The reviewed studies link Douyin to the sense of polished content, professional or celebrity influencers, algorithmic recommendations, and urban placing. The attributes of Kuaishou are linked with grassroots creators, authenticity, users in lower tier cities and rural areas and community relationships (Inoue et al., 2022). These contrasts provide examples of different technology, identity and social structure configurations, but are not numerous nor statistically consistent enough to allow for causal statements about platform advantage.

Value Co-creation Through Interaction and Community

Value Co-creation was discussed in nine sources. The mechanism that is consistently reported is parasocial interaction, which includes repeated exposure, a sense of intimacy, responsiveness and authenticity of the creators or brands, leading to increased engagement, community commitment and customer citizenship behaviour (Zhu, 2025; Jiang et al., 2024). Real-time chat can help promote this process by enabling viewers to ask questions, see how others react to them, and get acknowledgment from streamers.

The second pathway is emotional contagion. The affective reaction of the viewer to a broadcaster, their enthusiasm and social cues can influence participation or purchasing. Bonding cohesive sentiments could be strengthened by perceived homophily among community members. The results indicate that the value of livestream goes beyond the functional product information to hedonic, emotional, and social experience for users.

The third route is contextual integration. Mukbang and sports broadcasts are examples of meaningful contexts where products are not presented as stand-alone catalogued items but are part of a larger activity (Liu et al., 2022; Chen et al., 2024; Yu et al., 2024). Fourth is community co-creation. Jiazu communities provide an example of how a sense of collective identity, reciprocity and relational entrepreneurship can facilitate commerce, and how platform-policy shifts can destabilize community-based business models (Lu & Wang, 2022).

Consumer Behaviour and Purchase Intention

There were seven sources that addressed consumer responses. They linked engagement, loyalty or intention to purchase with AV quality, interactivity, social presence, aesthetics, verbal communication, perceived value and streamer credibility. There were a few studies that employed Stimulus-Organism-Response models where the platform or broadcast cues would influence internal states, which in turn would influence behaviour. Social and emotional values sometimes outweigh or equal functional and economic values. The relationships were not causally confirmed as the primary studies were cross-sectional.

The evidence also brings the picture of customer experience as a relational one. Zhu (2025) found that the antecedents of fashion consumers' social-commerce experience included parasocial interaction, and Ye et al. (2024) discovered that mediated service pathways were correlated with the engagement and loyalty of fashion consumers. The results indicate that discounts are not enough to explain the conversion; the value proposition also contains the elements of trust, entertainment, quality of interactions, and perceived community membership.

Competitive Strategy and Business-Model Innovation

Six sources discussed strategy or business models. By integrating short video, live streaming, recommendation and embedded commerce, Douyin indicates an ecosystem-level approach to business-model innovation and a streamlined process from content discovery to persuasion and transaction (Hu & Ye, 2024). Kuaishou's strength is its network of relationships and community identity (Lu & Wang, 2022), while Taobao Live relies on its existing e-commerce platform, seller network, and transaction system. The descriptions are based on the studies included, and the uneven platform coverage makes comparisons difficult.

There was no systematic use of Blue Ocean Strategy in any study included. Some results are like elements of value innovation, such as transforming entertainment attention into product discovery and purchase, and engaging grassroots creators and consumers in the process. In contrast, the corpus did not measure conversion that was not from customers, reconstructed market boundaries, cost-value trade-offs, or market longevity for new demand. The review thus only considers Blue Ocean Strategy as an analytical tool to look at in the future

but does not consider it to be a confirmed explanation based on the mapped evidence.

Personalized recommendation, easy content production tools, multiple monetization, payment and logistics integration, community cultivation, and cross-platform coordination were related to competitive advantage (Liang et al., 2025; Tan, 2023). There are also trade-offs created in these mechanisms. Personalization can help with the matching process, but also heighten privacy and transparency issues, while also raising the possibility that creators may be more exposed to changes in platform traffic or community involvement. Creating value and distributing risk are thus two critical aspects of ecosystem strategy.

Theoretical Foundations and Integration Opportunities

Theories in the corpus work at varying levels of analysis. Theories of Value Co-Creation and Social Commerce at the individual level are responsible for the explanations of interaction, perceived value, and relational outcomes. Platform Ecosystem Theory is about roles, complementarities, orchestration and governance at the platform level. Microfoundations can link individual actions with capabilities of the organization and/or the ecosystem, and competitive-strategy perspectives can deal with differentiation and positioning in the market. There were few studies that identified how one level of variables affects another level of variables.

It may be possible to connect three stages in a concrete multilevel model. At a micro level, viewers could be more inclined to trust and engage with streamers when they are responsive and interactive in real-time. On the micro level, this information about aggregated engagement can affect the assortment of merchants, investment by creators, and platform recommendations. At the ecosystem level, these successive decisions can impact ecosystem participation, value distribution and differentiation of platforms. This model can be tested with nested viewer-stream-platform data, longitudinal designs and cross-level interactions. A second model might explore whether community trust makes its users customers and whether that increases the market in the long term. These are research hypotheses based on the gaps within the corpus and not findings that have been confirmed by the studies included.

Research Gaps

Table 4 is a list of identified gaps in platform and stakeholder coverage, market creation, governance, longitudinal data, multi-platform strategies, and behavioural data. The focus on consumers and Douyin has left merchants, creator-career, platform-operator and regulatory questions particularly open. These gaps provide a basis for a future research agenda focusing on comparative, multi-stakeholder, longitudinal and governance designs.

Table 4. Priority Gaps Derived from Evidence Density and Source-Level Gap Statements

Priority gap	Required research direction
Platform balance	Only two sources primarily examined Kuaishou; Taobao Live and niche platforms also need deeper comparative research.
Stakeholder balance	Merchant, creator-career, and platform-operator perspectives remain secondary to consumer research.
Market creation	No included study systematically applied Blue Ocean Strategy or measured demand creation among non-customers.
Governance and regulation	Algorithmic accountability, licensing, privacy, consumer protection, and competition policy are not studied systematically.
Temporal evidence	Cross-sectional designs dominate; longitudinal and panel evidence is needed for relationships, capability development, and ecosystem change.
Multi-homing	Merchant and creator portfolio strategies across Taobao Live, Douyin, and Kuaishou remain largely unexamined.
Behavioural trace methods	Clickstream, watch-time, cart, chat-sentiment, network, and experimental data are absent or rare.

DISCUSSION

Principal Interpretation

Evidence suggests that the Chinese livestream commerce is a new retailing ecosystem organized around platform in which algorithms, creator-consumer engagement, merchant involvement, and transaction systems collectively contribute to value creation. Platforms are not just a matching service for buyers and sellers, but also for allocating attention, creating a social presence, regulating content, and enabling product meaning to be linked to commercial exchange. This calls for an ecosystem perspective, albeit the consumer-centric corpus offers partially informative insights on merchant impacts, platform choices and value splitting.

The five themes can be interpreted as a linked process. Ecosystem architecture determines roles for participants and flows of resources. Orchestration mechanisms provide visibility and orchestrate participation. Consumer, creator, merchant and platform outcomes are associated with co-creation processes that are activated through interaction and community. Each link is differentiated and governed through platforms, and resources and orchestration may evolve based on feedback from outcomes. This sequence is a set of organization, not an established causality.

Integrated Ecosystem Framework

The review suggests four interrelated layers of an integrated framework. Platform infrastructure, algorithms, creator abilities, merchant offers, community and relationship-building, and additional payment or logistics services are all examples of resource inputs. Mechanisms of orchestration include visibility allocation, participation incentives, governance rules, matching and interface integration. Elements of co-creation processes are parasocial interaction, emotional contagion, contextual demonstration, real-time feedback and community participation. The outcomes mapped are engagement, perceived value, purchase intention, loyalty, merchant conversion, creator monetization and platform differentiation. These layers are displayed in Table 5 in a sequence of resource inputs, orchestration, co-creation processes, and outcomes.

Table 5. Integrated Ecosystem Framework Derived from Scoping Evidence

Framework layer	Components identified in the evidence
Resource inputs	Platform infrastructure; algorithms; creator capabilities; merchant offerings; communities; payment and logistics complements
Orchestration	Visibility allocation; incentives; governance rules; matching; payment and logistics integration
Co-creation processes	Parasocial interaction; emotional contagion; contextual demonstration; feedback; community participation
Mapped outcomes	Consumer engagement and purchasing; creator monetization; merchant conversion; platform differentiation

Also, there are feedback loops in the framework. Data collected from consumer interaction can impact their recommendations, creators can change practices based on data performance results, merchants can tweak assortments and promotions, and platforms can make governance and monetization rule changes. The dynamic-capabilities perspective looks at the capacities of the actors to sense, seize and reconfigure over time. The framework is not a validated causal model, rather it is evidence organizing device.

Theoretical Implications

The first theoretical implication is that the value of livestream commerce cannot be sufficiently understood when considering just one individual consumer or one single company. The outcomes are based on complementarities of content, trust, products, algorithms and transaction services. Second, value co-creation is experiential and infrastructural because emotional and social value can be co-created through viewer interaction and discovery, monetization, and exchange can be shaped by platform design.

Third, platform governance should be integrated in the theory of social commerce as algorithms, content rules, monetization thresholds and enforcement shapes the production and reward of social influence. Fourth, market creation claims can only be measured directly. The possibility of non-customer conversion, reconstructed market boundaries, cost-value trade-offs, and persistence of new demand should be tested in the future applications of Blue Ocean Strategy, and future studies should not label something as value innovation if it is simply an act of differentiation.

Lastly, a multilevel explanation should detail how individual interactions result in an ecosystem outcome. For instance, streamer responsiveness could lead to greater trust by viewers, trust and engagement aggregated could impact merchant investments and allocation of recommendations, and those investments and allocations could impact participation and differentiation within the ecosystem. These cross-level relationships could be tested using a longitudinal data set with nested data that would help to consider whether the cross-level relationship is strengthened or weakened by governance changes. Dynamic capabilities and microfoundations are complementary concepts to explain how actors change relationships and commercial practices when platform rules change (Teece et al., 1997).

Managerial Implications

Platform managers need to watch on the health of the platform, consumers, creators, and the merchants. There are several useful indicators that include consumer retention and complaints, creator retention and income stability, merchant conversion and repeat participation, and finally concentration and fairness of traffic allocation. However, sustained viewer engagement doesn't indicate ecosystem health if merchants' returns are consistently low, or if creators are not getting consistent income. The quality of recommendation should thus be evaluated in conjunction with transparency and procedural fairness and the distribution of opportunity.

When assessing creators, merchants should consider the fit of audience, the credibility of creators, content format, conversion economics and governance risk, and not just the number of followers. While a multi-platform portfolio might decrease reliance on one algorithm or one set of policies, it also brings up the challenge of coordination costs and adapting to the norms of the platforms. To mitigate this risk, creators can work on honing their production capabilities, cultivate and manage audience connections (where feasible) and diversify their revenue sources. These recommendations are tentative due to the lack of representation of merchants and platform operators in the corpus.

Policy Implications

Due caution should be used when interpreting policy implications, as only five sources discussed platform operators, and the review did not perform a specific regulatory search. However, the evidence mapped suggests that there are different stakeholder groups that may be impacted by algorithmic recommendation, advertising disclosure, product authenticity, data privacy, labour conditions and competition policy. Policymakers should consider the effects of rules on the distribution of visibility, compliance costs, bargaining power and consumer risk between the different platforms, creators, merchants and viewers. Future research needs to employ longitudinal and/or quasi-experimental designs to evaluate the impact of regulatory changes, not just assume that they occurred.

LIMITATIONS

There are six limitations of this review that have a material effect on the completeness and reliability of the review. Initially, the search was restricted to SciSpace, SciSpace Full-Text and Google Scholar. Major international databases (such as Scopus, Web of Science, ACM Digital Library, AIS eLibrary) and Chinese databases (such as CNKI, Wanfang) were not searched. This could mean that relevant English- and Chinese-language scholarship is absent or incomplete, and that the results should not be interpreted as a full picture of research in China. Future updates to include Chinese readers and Chinese language search terms.

Second, only the top 500 of 743 unique records were progressed to the title and abstract screening; 243 records were not assessed for eligibility. The ranking procedure was not validated, and there is no way to quantify selection bias and missed studies. Third, screening and charting were done by a single assessor, without

independent verification, consensus process, or interrater reliability statistic. Fourth, the numbers of full-text exclusions by reason were not stored beyond the concept-or-context decision. Fifth, full text was not available for some sources and abstracts, and metadata were used to create charts. Sixth, there was no methodology-quality appraisal performed. This option works well for a descriptive scoping purpose, but it does not allow for confidence judgments and quality weighted interpretation. All counts are for the included corpus only and not effect estimates. Combined these constraints imply that any conclusions about ecosystem-level dynamics, merchants, platform operators, governance and platform comparisons are tentative.

FUTURE RESEARCH AGENDA

Future research would be beneficial to compare Douyin, Kuaishou, and Taobao Live with common constructs, sampling frames, and outcome measures to uncover platform-specific impacts and more general livestream-commerce mechanisms. Longitudinal panels should track the response of consumers, creators and merchants to market and policy changes. Multilevel models could be used to examine how viewer reactions to streamer behavior coalesce into investment on the merchant level, participation on the platform level, value distribution, and ecosystem health.

Research should be conducted from a merchant and creator perspective on bargaining power, income stability, commission structures and dependence on algorithms, multi-homing, career trajectory and exit. Transparency of recommendations, enforcement consistency, product-quality controls, privacy and visibility allocation should be considered in platform-governance studies. Computational research may integrate clickstream, watch-time, conversion, chat-sentiment, network and experimental data and mitigate consent, privacy and platform access.

One point that should be tested in the strategy research is whether livestream platforms create new market space and under which circumstances. While comparisons of search-based, entertainment-led, and community-led commerce could benefit from strategy canvases and claims could be backed up with non-customer conversion, new-use occasions, cost-value trade-offs, and the durability of demand, there is little evidence to support this. Future review can use Scopus, Web of Science, ACM Digital Library, AIS eLibrary, CNKI, and Wanfang as the source databases to search articles, screening the entire deduplicated articles, using double independent screening and charting, keeping search logs of each source and the reasons for exclusion, and using an appropriate appraisal tool. But for more similar quantitative studies on purchase intention, a smaller systematic review and meta-analysis may be possible.

CONCLUSION

The mapping of 17 sources in this scoping review revealed the field of platform ecosystems and value co-creation in Chinese livestream commerce. In the corpus included, value creation was related to the orchestration of the platform, algorithms, creators, merchants, communities, and transaction services. The evidence was arranged in five themes: Platform ecosystem architecture, interaction or community-based value co-creation, consumer behaviour and purchase intention, competitive strategy and business-model innovation, and theoretical applications. The dominant was Douyin, consumers, cross sectional designs and social psychological explanations, while the under-represented were Kuaishou, merchants, platform operators, governance, longitudinal change and market creation theory.

The results suggest three tentative conclusions. Comparative, multi-stakeholder and longitudinal studies should be conducted to test explicit cross-level relationships. Consumers, creators, and merchants' outcomes should be used to assess the health of the ecosystem, not engagement alone. Policymakers need to evaluate the impacts of governance and regulatory intervention on the distribution of visibility, opportunity, compliance costs, and risk. Blue Ocean Strategy is not the endpoint of this review, rather it is a research proposition. There were no quality appraisal and screening and charting were done by one assessor, and major international and Chinese-language databases were not searched, so the synthesis should be taken as provisional. A comprehensive bilingual update is needed before any definite conclusions can be made regarding the broader Chinese livestream-commerce literature.

DECLARATIONS

The study was not funded, and there is no conflict of interest. Ethical approval was not necessary since this study is based on literature. The charting dataset and search documentation of the same is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. Order of authorship will be based on the requirement of the target journal.

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APPENDIX A

Table A1. Illustrative search combinations

Search block	Illustrative combination
Phenomenon and ecosystem	("Chinese livestream commerce" OR "live streaming e-commerce") AND ("platform ecosystem" OR orchestration OR governance)
Named platforms	("Taobao Live" OR Douyin OR Kuaishou) AND (commerce OR shopping) AND (ecosystem OR strategy)
Value mechanisms	(livestream OR "live commerce") AND ("value co-creation" OR parasocial OR "social commerce" OR engagement)
Strategy and market creation	(Douyin OR Kuaishou OR "Taobao Live") AND ("business model" OR differentiation OR "Blue Ocean" OR "market creation")
Stakeholders	("live commerce" AND China) AND (creator OR streamer OR merchant OR consumer OR "platform operator")

Note. Syntax was adapted to the search capabilities of SciSpace, SciSpace Full-Text, and Google Scholar. These combinations document the available search blocks but do not provide a complete source-specific search history. Future updates should retain exact search strings, execution dates, applied filters, and result counts for every database.