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Consumption as a Streaming Habit: A Comparative Analysis of Behavioral Patterns 5–10–15 Years Ago and Their Influence on the Microtransaction Structure of Spending

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Abstract: The study analyzes changes in consumer behavior over the past fifteen years and traces the transition from preplanned purchasing to a form of consumption integrated into ongoing digital activity. The temporal framework includes 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2025 because these time points reflect distinct stages in the transformation of digital retail environments, platform infrastructures, and payment practices. The analysis combines a structured review of specialized literature, a comparative interpretation of statistical datasets published by eMarketer and McKinsey, and a case study of a retail business that demonstrates stable product market fit and operates within a documented quality certification framework. The findings show that by 2025, 69 percent of consumers make purchases within an ambient shopping format embedded in media use. This shift is associated with the fragmentation of payment acts, a decline in average order value to 59 USD, and an increase in purchase frequency. The results also support the proposition that algorithmic product discovery has become more influential than search driven purchasing in shaping consumer choice. Verified trust signals, including Lab Tested status, also perform a significant structuring function within digital transaction environments. The study concludes with applied implications for the configuration of D2C strategies in social commerce ecosystems.

Keywords: e-commerce, streaming consumption, social commerce, TikTok Shop, microtransactions, behavioral patterns, ambient shopping, consumer trust, Lab Tested certification, impulse purchases.

Introduction

The contemporary global economy in 2024–2025 enters a stage of pronounced structural reconfiguration in which digital trade loses the character of an "additional" channel and consolidates as a base infrastructure of everyday economic activity. As of 2025, the global e-commerce market volume exceeded USD 6.86 trillion, which is equivalent to approximately 21% of total retail sales [1, 2]. The relevance of the article increases because not only the technological, but also the temporal and psychological nature of the purchasing act is changing: consumption is being rebuilt from a discrete, intention-initiated act into a continuous "streaming" process embedded in the rhythm of media use [19].

This transformation becomes particularly visible when current consumer practices are compared with the earlier stage of digital commerce development represented by 2010. That year serves as an analytical reference point because online purchasing was still structured as a deliberately planned event connected with personal computer use and shaped by relatively high interface friction. By 2025, this model had been substantially reconfigured, as purchasing increasingly emerged within the flow of parallel digital activity rather than as an isolated and search driven action. Data for the first quarter of 2025 show that 69 percent of consumers purchase goods while watching video, listening to podcasts, or interacting on social networks [7]. This pattern reflects a broader restructuring of the purchasing act in which attention is distributed across simultaneous practices, decision cycles become shorter, and transactions become integrated into media consumption. The COVID 19 pandemic accelerated this transition by compressing digital adoption into a much shorter period than earlier trajectories of change had suggested, while the behavioral routines formed during that period persisted after restrictive measures were lifted [3, 4].

At the same time, a substantive academic gap remains: the mechanisms by which the algorithmization of product discovery (discovery-led commerce) reconfigures individual financial discipline and translates the structure of spending into a microtransactional dimension remain insufficiently explored. Under such conditions, classical marketing constructs, most notably the sales funnel model, show signs of functional erosion, yielding to ultrashort conversion trajectories executed directly inside content platforms, where the temporal gap between first contact and payment compresses to seconds [5, 6].

The goal of the study is to conduct a comparative analysis of the transformation of consumer patterns over the last fifteen years and to examine the role of streaming consumption in the formation of a contemporary microtransaction structure of spending. **Academic novelty** lies in the development of the concept of a validated stream, understood as a mode of consumer behavior in which algorithmic product discovery, transactional granularity, and verified quality signals jointly structure the purchasing process. Within this configuration, the Lab Tested marker is treated not as an incidental product attribute but as a trust-based verification mechanism that reduces informational uncertainty, supports purchase decisions in low attention environments, and strengthens the conversion potential of streaming consumption.

The author's hypothesis proceeds from the premise that the dominance of streaming practices in 2025 leads to a lower average order value while total spending increases, driven by the psychological "invisibility" effect of frequent small payments. This logic sets for business the need to shift from a campaign and seasonal influence model to a strategy of continuous presence in the media environment, as well as to instruments of technically verifiable product trust.

Materials and Methods

The methodological basis of the study consists of a comparative retrospective analysis of changes in consumer behavior across four analytical points in 2010, 2015, 2020, and 2025. These years were selected because each of them corresponds to a distinct stage in the transformation of digital commerce. The year 2010 is used as a reference point for a model of purchasing still centered on planned action and desktop interaction. The year 2015 reflects the consolidation of mobile commerce and the expansion of smartphone-based consumption practices. The year 2020 marks the period of pandemic disruption, when digital purchasing intensified and many online routines became normalized. The year 2025 represents the current stage, in which purchasing is increasingly integrated into media consumption and platform interaction.

The comparative design is used to trace changes in a set of indicators that reflect the restructuring of the purchasing act. These indicators include purchase frequency, average order value, the expansion of mobile commerce, and the growing role of purchases made in situations of parallel digital activity. The purpose of this comparison is not to construct a formal time series model, but to identify stable shifts in the organization of consumer behavior across successive stages of digital market development.

The analytical framework combines concepts from behavioral economics, digital marketing, and platform mediated commerce. This combination makes it possible to examine consumer behavior simultaneously as a decision process, as a platform organized interaction, and as a transaction embedded in digital interfaces. Within this framework, the Theory of Planned Behavior is used to explain forms of purchasing in which intention, evaluation, and decision making remain relatively explicit and sequential. This model is therefore relevant for interpreting earlier forms of online consumption, especially those characteristics of the beginning of the period under consideration [8]. The Stimulus Organism Response model is used to analyze situations in which external platform stimuli, including visual cues, interface design, recommendation logic, and social signals, shape immediate purchase reactions. In the present study, this model helps explain why transactions in social commerce and streaming environments often occur under conditions of reduced deliberation and accelerated decision cycles [10, 11]. Uses and Gratifications Theory is applied to clarify why media consumption itself becomes a context for commercial action. It is used here to interpret the connection between entertainment, information seeking, social participation, and conversion into purchase behavior [12].

The source base includes several groups of materials selected according to their analytical function. The first group consists of academic publications indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, IEEE Xplore, and Springer. These publications are used to reconstruct the conceptual discussion on digital consumption, impulsive purchasing, platform behavior, and microtransaction practices, and to provide the theoretical basis for the interpretation of observed changes [4]. The second group includes analytical reports produced by McKinsey and Company, Gartner, eMarketer, and Deloitte. These materials are used to compare market estimates, consumer trend data, and applied interpretations of platform commerce in 2024 and 2025 [5]. The third group includes statistical materials from the United States Census Bureau and Eurostat covering the period from 2010 to 2025. These data are used to contextualize the broader development of digital trade, retail structure, and ecommerce expansion in the United States and Europe [20]. The combination of these sources makes it possible to relate conceptual argument, market analytics, and official statistical observation within a single research design.

The empirical component of the study includes a case analysis of an operating marketplace store with more than 1,000 customer reviews and an embedded Lab Tested verification marker. This case was selected because it makes it possible to examine how general market shifts are reflected in actual platform level practices. The review corpus is important not only as an indicator of transaction volume and customer engagement, but also as a source for assessing patterns of trust formation, perceived product quality, and decision making under conditions of rapid visual consumption. The case materials include conversion related indicators, order dynamics, and the performance of affiliate traffic channels. These data are analyzed in order to determine how product presentation, verification signals, and platform specific communication affect purchasing behavior in a streaming consumption environment. In this context, the Lab Tested marker is treated as a trust signal that reduces uncertainty and supports conversion in situations where the time available for evaluation is limited.

The empirical analysis is complemented by content analysis of platform documentation and technical regulations governing TikTok Shop and other social commerce environments. This part of the study is used to identify the operational conditions under which purchasing is incorporated into content flows, recommendation systems, and interface design. Such analysis helps explain how platform architecture supports shortened decision cycles, fragmented payment practices, and the increasing role of embedded transactions in contemporary consumer behavior.

Results and Discussion

The conducted study makes it possible to reconstruct three basic stages in the evolution of consumer habits over the 2010–2025 period, each accompanied by a shift in the logic of everyday spending and a redistribution of household transactional activity. In 2010, e-commerce operated primarily as a "destination": the customer journey was organized around search engines and direct visits to retailers' websites, while the dominant device remained the desktop computer. The penetration of online sales into retail trade was estimated at 4.4%, and the behavioral profile of consumers was marked by pronounced caution regarding payment security and trust in remote payment [20].

By 2015, a pivot toward mobility is recorded, driven by the technological maturation of smartphones and the expansion of the Android ecosystem; as a result, the mobile device becomes the key instrument for product research and initial choice formation. At this stage, prerequisites for social commerce emerge: the influence of social networks begins to act as a significant decision factor, and up to 81% of purchase choices correlate with social influence; however, transaction completion in many cases still occurred outside the contours of the social platforms themselves [23].

The year 2020 establishes a qualitatively different consumption regime that can be described as a "survival and comfort" model. The pandemic shock accelerated the transition to online channels, and 75% of the population made remote purchases of household goods for the first time, becoming a point of irreversible formation of new habits [24, 25]. This shift normalized increased transaction frequency: the share of weekly online purchases began to grow rapidly, consolidating the practice of regular digital consumption. Observations and statistical contours from 2024–2025 confirm the completion of this trajectory in the form of stable "streaming" consumption, in which purchasing ceases to be a separate event and becomes integrated into continuous scenarios of everyday digital activity.

Table 1 summarizes the structural dynamics of consumer transformation across the selected analytical points and makes it possible to identify several stable trends. First, the growth of online sales volume from USD 0.57 trillion in 2010 to USD 6.86 trillion in 2025 indicates that ecommerce has moved from a peripheral segment of retail to one of its core organizational forms. Second, the share of online sales in total retail increased from 4.4 percent to 21.0 percent, which reflects not only quantitative expansion but also a change in the functional role of digital channels within everyday consumption. Third, the spread of smartphones and the rise in average monthly purchase frequency show that purchasing became more mobile, more regular, and less tied to discrete planning. Finally, the increase in the share of impulse purchases from about 10 percent to 40 to 44 percent suggests a transition from intention driven consumption to behavior shaped to a much greater extent by platform stimuli, embedded offers, and continuous media interaction. Taken together, these indicators show that the period under consideration was marked not by isolated shifts, but by a systemic reorganization of the purchasing act.

Table 1. Dynamics of key consumption indicators over 15 years (compiled by the author based on [1, 26, 27, 29, 30]).

Metric	2010	2015	2020	2025
Online sales volume, USD trillions	0.57	1.55	4.25	6.86
Share of online sales in retail, %	4.4%	~7.4%	17.9%	21.0%
Smartphone penetration, million units	1600 (sales)	~2500	~3500	6900+ (in use)
Average purchase frequency per month	<1	1.2	2.5	4.2+
Share of impulse purchases, %	~10%	~18%	~25%	40–44%

By 2025, purchasing increasingly takes a form in which the act of acquisition is embedded in media consumption and is no longer experienced as a fully autonomous action. In this context, ambient shopping can be understood as a mode of consumption in which purchase decisions arise within the flow of parallel digital practices, including content viewing, scrolling, and online communication, rather than in a separately initiated shopping session [2]. This shift is closely connected with the spread of discovery led commerce, a model in which products are encountered through platform recommendation systems rather than through purposeful search. The logic of this model is particularly visible in ecosystems such as TikTok Shop, where product interest and purchase motivation are often formed during content consumption itself. In such environments, the determinants of demand are displaced from intentional search behavior toward algorithmically mediated exposure, recommendation, and affective engagement.

The defining mechanism of "ambient shopping" is associated with algorithmic personalization, which radically changes the architecture of conversion. The classical AIDA sequence, which describes consumer movement from awareness to interest, desire, and action, loses explanatory adequacy under these conditions and is replaced by a pattern of cyclic responsiveness in which stimulus and purchase action are separated by only a minimal temporal interval. Empirical results indicate that 58% of sales in TikTok Shop are generated through short videos in which the product is presented as an element of everyday context ("lifestyle content"), thereby lowering the critical perceptual barrier and displacing the rational evaluation stage with rapid affective recognition of relevance [6, 17].

The psychological basis of this consumption model can be described through a set of mechanisms that increase the likelihood of impulsive conversion. One of them is cognitive economy. Under conditions of continuous stimulus flow, consumers tend to favor decisions that require minimal attentional effort, while the relatively low cost of a microtransaction reduces the perceived consequences of a mistaken choice. In practical terms, this means that a product encountered while scrolling short form video may be purchased immediately, without extended comparison or deliberate evaluation, because the decision is experienced as low risk and cognitively undemanding. A second mechanism is contextual product visualization, through which the item is presented within an everyday use scenario and thereby facilitates mental projection of ownership. This shortens the transition from observation to purchase. A third mechanism is personalized ranking, which creates the impression that the displayed offer is highly relevant to individual preferences. As a result, the incentive to search for alternatives is reduced, and the probability of immediate transaction completion increases.

On the basis of the patterns identified in the literature and empirical materials, the analysis makes it possible to describe a recurring behavioral sequence that may be termed the Streaming Consumption Loop. This sequence begins with algorithmically delivered exposure to a product within the media environment, continues through an affective assessment of its relevance, and may culminate in an immediate microconversion. When the purchase experience produces a rapid and satisfactory outcome, this reinforces the readiness to make further small expenditures and increases receptivity to subsequent platform stimuli. In this way, shopping can be interpreted as a model in which purchasing becomes embedded in media consumption and the microtransaction logic of spending acquires a stable behavioral character. Figure 1 complements this argument by illustrating the expansion of social commerce and showing that by the end of 2025, its growth rate will be approximately three times that of traditional e-commerce [28].

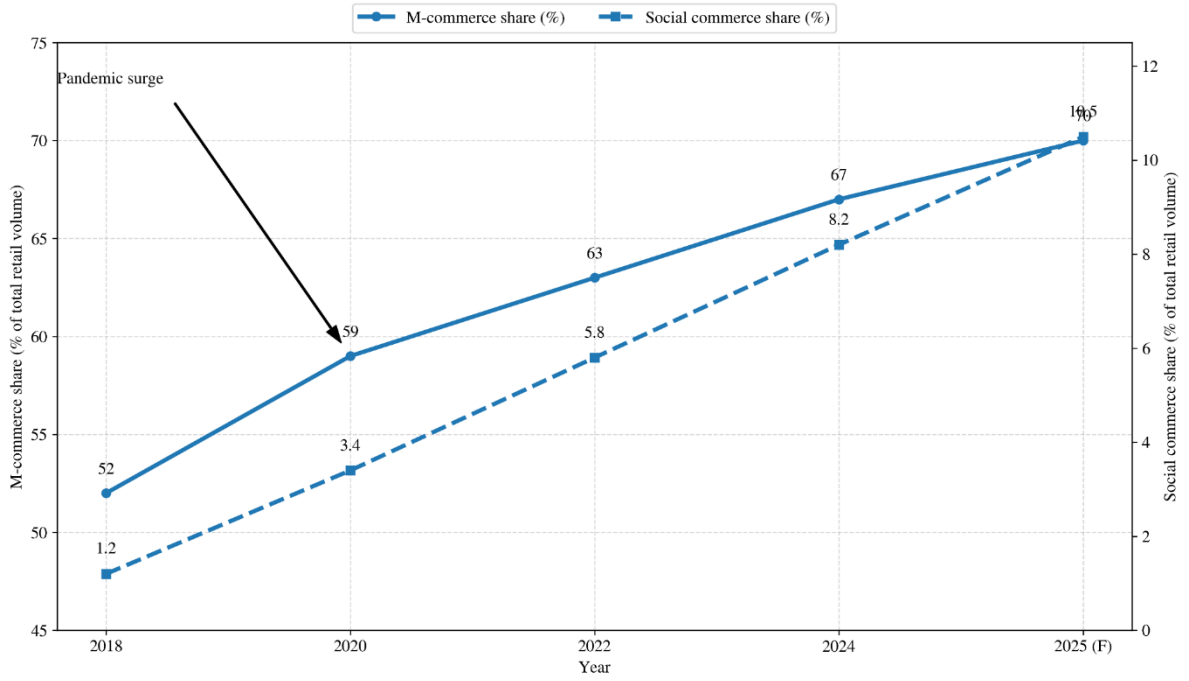

Figure 1. Evolution of the shares of mobile and social commerce in retail (2018–2025) (compiled by the author based on [27, 28]).

By 2025, this format had consolidated as a key mechanism shaping streaming consumer habits, with the strongest concentration of this effect among Millennials and Gen Z. Social commerce thus ceased to function as a peripheral extension of ecommerce and increasingly operated as an environment in which purchasing decisions were initiated by content and sustained by an infrastructure of instantaneous conversion. The shift toward shoppable media and the convergence of discovery and transaction within social platforms are also reflected in recent industry analyses.

The shift toward streaming consumption is accompanied by a restructuring of the financial architecture of spending and by the transfer of behavioral patterns previously characteristic of the gaming industry into spheres of everyday demand. Microtransaction mechanics, initially established as payments for "skins," bonuses, and digital content, are reproduced in FMCG and in product categories linked to health, while retaining a core principle-minimization of friction at the moment of payment [14]. In 2025, a microtransaction is defined not so much by an absolute "low" price (more often within a range up to USD 50–60) as by the seamless passage through the payment contour and by a functional-psychological purpose: obtaining immediate emotional or utilitarian gratification [14].

Indicatively, in TikTok Shop the average order value in the U.S. market is recorded at USD 59 [6]. At the same time, high repeatability of buyer behavior is observed: 49.7% of customers transact monthly, and 10.7% weekly [18]. Fragmentation of spending into a series of small payments reduces the subjective "cost of the decision," because the cognitive focus shifts from the total budget to the affordability of a single charge. An additional explanation may be found in empirical evidence showing that more frequent receipt of small amounts of money, for example in the form of weekly wages, is associated with more distributed consumption patterns and, in some cases, with higher overall spending. Under "stream" conditions, the aggregate amount of expenditure loses salience as an object of control and reflection, whereas an individual payment is perceived as locally acceptable and psychologically minor, which structurally supports the growth of purchase frequency and the stabilization of the microtransaction model of spending (see Table 2).

Table 2. Generational consumption profiles in 2025 (compiled by the author based on [30]).

Characteristic	Generation Z (18–25)	Millennials (26–44)	Generation X (45–60)
Trust in influencers	61% (maximum)	56% (high)	Low (skepticism)
Primary search source	TikTok / social networks (43%)	Amazon / search (57%)	Traditional retail / Google
Attitude toward sustainability	62.7% monitor environmental issues	Balance of price/quality is important	Pragmatism and reliability
Impulse tendency	Very high	High	Medium
Device	Smartphone (96% monthly)	Smartphone / desktop	Desktop / tablet

Table 2 summarizes the results of a comparative analysis of generational differences in consumer motivations and purchasing practices in 2024 and 2025. Its purpose is to show that consumption is structured differently across age cohorts not only at the level of spending intensity, but also at the level of social meaning and behavioral function. The data indicate that for Gen Z and Millennials, purchasing is more often connected with self-presentation, participation in digital communication, and involvement in platform mediated social interaction. For older cohorts, by contrast, consumption remains more strongly associated with utilitarian choice and the satisfaction of functional needs. This divergence corresponds to the author's model in which the intensity of the "streaming" habit is determined by the degree of digital nativeness: the deeper the everyday embeddedness in content platforms and social interfaces, the higher the probability that shopping will be transformed into a form of participation, communication, and symbolic choice, rather than an exclusively rational purchase.

Within this framework, the Lab Tested marker is treated not as an abstract concept but as a product quality verification label that signals the presence of documented testing and shifts evaluation from impression-based judgment to verifiable product information. Deloitte data show that 73 percent of consumers are more willing to engage with a brand that provides transparency regarding the product creation process. Figure 2 illustrates the mechanism through which this verification label operates in a streaming consumption environment. The scheme shows that an initial visual stimulus does not lead directly to purchase but encounters a trust barrier characteristic of rapid platform-based consumption. Reviews and other forms of social proof reduce perceived risk, while the Lab Tested marker strengthens trust by providing an additional basis for product validation. As trust becomes stabilized, the probability of microtransaction increases, and a single purchase can develop into loyalty and repeat purchasing. In this sense, technically verified quality functions as a mechanism that transforms an episodic impulsive purchase into a reproducible behavioral trajectory.

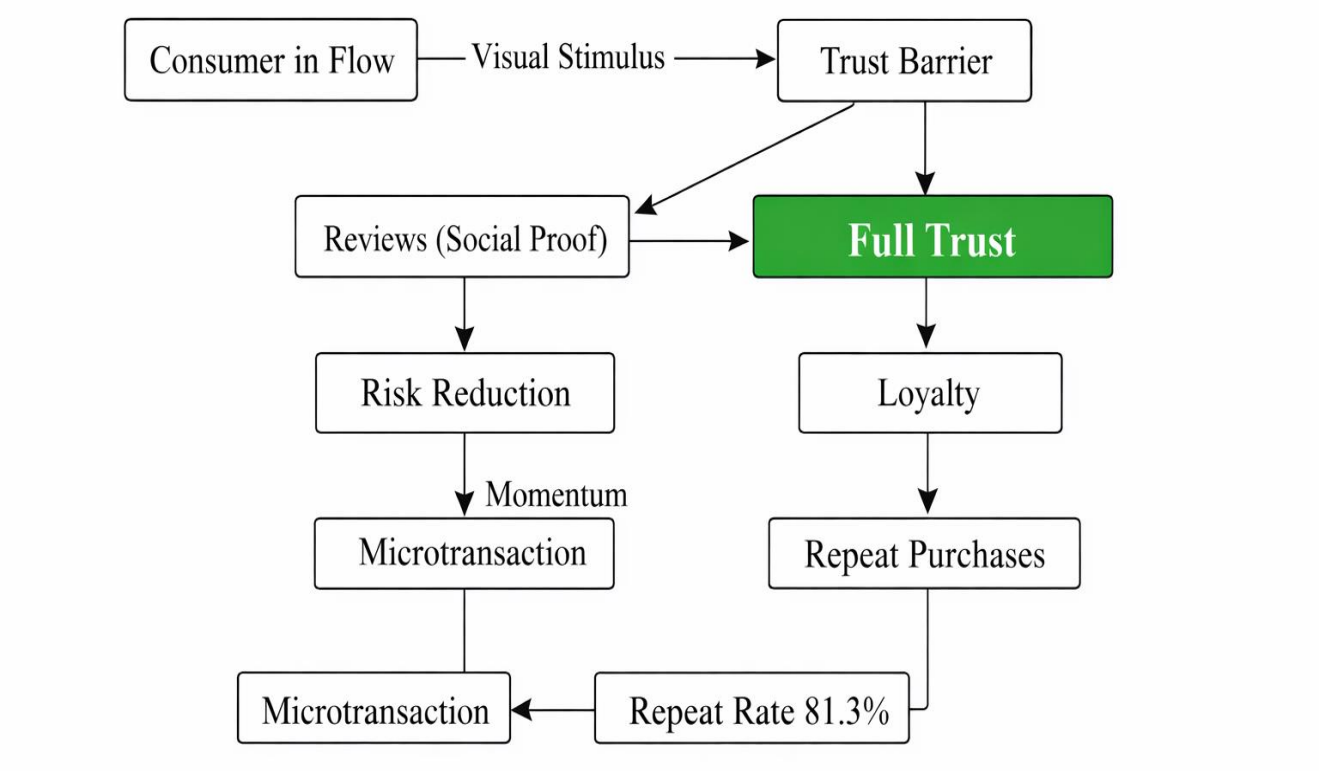

Figure 2. Model of converting trust into a streaming habit (author's original model).

In parallel, the classical sales funnel undergoes visible erosion, as the sequential model of awareness, consideration, and purchase becomes less adequate for describing behavior in an environment of instantaneous content-based conversions, where decision formation and transaction execution occur within a single interface episode. In this context, live commerce should be understood as a format of platform mediated trade in which product presentation, audience interaction, and purchase are integrated within a real time broadcast. It represents one of the clearest forms of streaming consumption because it combines demonstration, social influence, and transaction within a single temporal sequence [13, 15]. In 2024, the live commerce market in China exceeded CNY 5 trillion, while in the United States it reached USD 135 billion [10]. Conversion during live broadcasts is estimated at 8 to 12 percent, which is approximately three to four times higher than comparable indicators in traditional ecommerce.

The effectiveness of the live format is explained primarily by mechanisms of social psychology rather than only by technological advantages. The host of the broadcast functions not as a seller in the classical sense, but as a trusted figure and a "virtual companion," whose role is formed through a long history of interaction with the audience. Parasocial relationships accumulated over time create a sales channel through "emotional resonance," in which quality argumentation is partially displaced by the effect of trust and a felt sense of closeness [9, 22]. An additional contribution to impulsivity is produced by group dynamics: 44.1% of Chinese consumers make unplanned purchases specifically during broadcasts, under the influence of collective arousal and constructed scarcity, including short-term offer mechanics (flash sales) [10].

For a more visual representation of how the live format restructures the customer journey and compresses the distance between stimulus and payment, a corresponding diagram is proposed (see Figure 3).

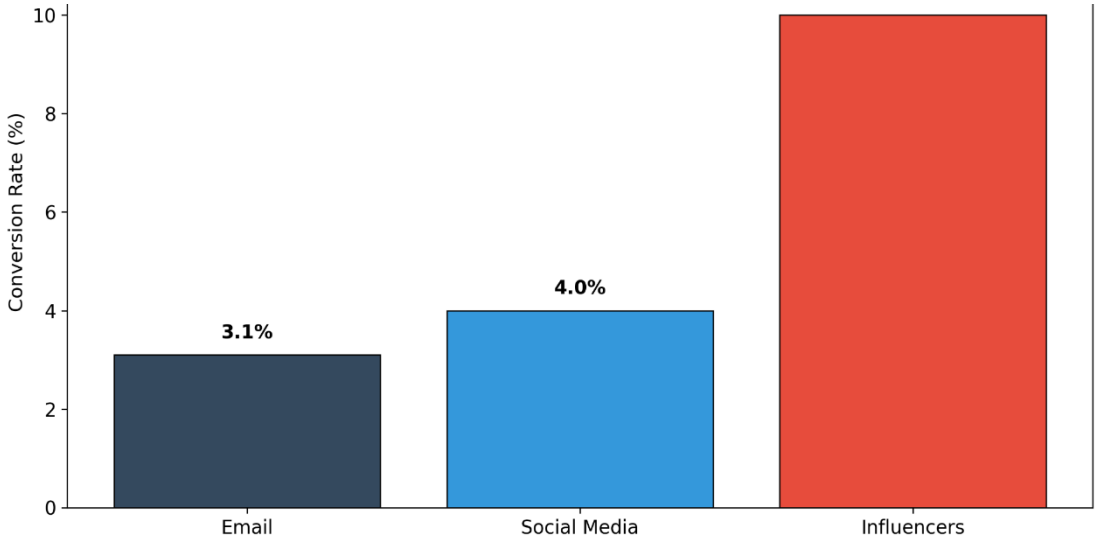

Figure 3. Comparative effectiveness of conversion channels in the streaming economy (compiled by the author based on [6, 21]).

The materials presented in Figure 3 demonstrate that live streaming has the highest potential for "collapsing" the conversion trajectory: in a situation where on the order of 10% of viewers make a purchase immediately, the time gap between stimulus and payment contracts, and the behavioral logic of spending shifts from a model of deferred decision-making and "planned saving" toward a regime of "distributed impulse." In this configuration, consumption begins to take shape as a series of small, rapidly made decisions that, in aggregate, generate a persistently elevated spending frequency and alter the structure of financial discipline.

At the same time, substantial constraints of the streaming model become visible, manifesting both at the level of individual resilience and at the level of trust in the mediating institutions of digital commerce. The most significant barrier is the risk of financial instability: the microtransaction nature of payments lowers the subjective salience of total spending, because control shifts to the acceptability of a single charge, while the aggregated outcome becomes "dissolved" in a stream of small transactions [16]. By 2025, 25% of consumers report that their online shopping expenditures exceed what is financially tolerable for them [25]. Technological seamlessness and the psychological ease of decision-making thus become a vulnerability factor, increasing the probability of overspending.

A second block of risks is linked to an authenticity crisis in content-commerce ecosystems. The expansion of practices involving AI influencers and automated broadcasts begins to produce an alienation effect and to reduce the perceived credibility of recommendations, intensifying demand for the "human factor" and cues of sincerity; studies in 2025 indicate the persistence of live subjectivity as a foundation of trust [2]. In parallel, the high frequency of impulse purchases increases the prevalence of post-purchase regret, which transforms requirements for business models: to retain loyalty, it is no longer sufficient to optimize sales mechanics alone, and the significance of the post-sales contour grows-support, service communication, and simplified return procedures that reduce the psychological costs of an erroneous decision and stabilize repeat consumption (see Table 3).

Table 3. Structure of operational risks and strategies for their minimization (compiled by the author based on [2]).

Risk type	Manifestation in 2025	Mitigation strategy (author's recommendations)
Information overload	Purchase abandonment due to excess choice	AI curation and narrow niche specialization
Trust crisis	Concerns about review falsification	"Lab Tested" certification, blockchain traceability
Logistics barrier	24% abandon carts due to slow delivery	Decentralized warehouses, same-day delivery
Financial risk	Rising indebtedness via BNPL	Ethical marketing, transparent payment schedules
Product returns	Up to 30–40% in Fashion	AR try-on, accurate size grids via AI

The 2026–2030 horizon is described by a tendency toward further "dematerialization" of the purchasing act, in which consumption acquires properties of "invisibility" and increasingly functions as a background feature of the everyday digital environment. The vector of transformation shifts from screen-oriented smartphone scenarios toward ambient interfaces grounded in augmented reality (AR) technologies and the Internet of Things (IoT) contour. Already by 2025 it is recorded that 32% of users employ AR during shopping, and 40% demonstrate willingness to pay a premium for a product that allows virtual testing prior to purchase [1].

Within this paradigm, consumption is rebuilt into an automated continuum: the "smart home" can initiate replenishment of supplies without an explicit act of ordering, while wearable devices can generate microtransaction offers based on biometric signals and the current affective state. The mechanism of decision-making is transferred from the zone of conscious choice into the domain of predictive need management, where algorithmic interpretation of context and state displaces the traditional stage of search and comparison. This reinforces the structural consolidation of the microtransaction model as the dominant form of economic interaction: expenditures normalize not as rare large payments, but as a series of frequent, small, and operationally "seamless" charges integrated into the infrastructure of everyday life.

The social commerce market will reach approximately $8.5 trillion by 2030. This estimate establishes a fundamentally different framework for interpreting ongoing changes: streaming consumption is seen not as a situational fad or a short-term effect of individual platforms, but as an institutionally consolidating form of demand organization in the digital environment. Under these conditions, the trend's stability is determined not only by the expansion of sales channels but also by a profound restructuring of behavioral logic-the transition of the act of purchase to a system of content, algorithms, and seamless transactions, where the regularity of micropayments becomes the basic norm of economic interaction.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of consumer patterns across the fifteen-year period (2010–2025) makes it possible to fix several stable conclusions that reflect not isolated changes in sales channels, but a systemic reconfiguration of consumption and conversion logic within the digital environment.

The fundamental shift is expressed in the replacement of the dominant paradigm: the "search" model characteristic of 2010 has been transformed into a "discovery" model that defines behavior in 2025.

Consumption has been rebuilt from a conscious, situationally initiated action into a background practice embedded in the media stream and sustained by algorithmic personalization. The share of purchases conducted in an ambient-shopping mode reaches 69%, which empirically confirms achievement of the research objective and validates the initial problem framing.

The second conclusion concerns a shift in the financial organization of household spending toward smaller and more frequent payments. By 2025, this pattern is reflected in a lower average order value, which declined to about USD 59, together with a higher frequency of purchases. This transformation does not simply redistribute consumption across a larger number of transactions. It also changes the way expenditure is perceived and controlled at the household level. When payment is embedded in routine media use and completed through stored card data, one clicks checkout, or deferred payment services, each individual outlay appears relatively minor and therefore requires less deliberation. Under such conditions, the consumer is less likely to evaluate the cumulative budgetary effect of repeated purchases. Total spending may therefore increase not because of a deliberate intention to spend more, but because numerous small decisions are experienced as financially insignificant when taken separately. In this sense, the microtransaction shift affects not only the size of individual purchases but also the cognitive conditions under which household spending is monitored and reproduced.

The third position establishes the dominance of content-oriented retail as a new interface of consumption. Ecosystems such as TikTok Shop, as well as live commerce, demonstrate conversion indicators up to 12%, driven not only by instant-purchase technology, but also by mechanisms of emotional resonance and by the parasocial connectedness of audiences with influencers, who assume the function of a trusted mediator between product and consumer.

The fourth conclusion concerns the critical role of verification under conditions of informational oversupply. Competitive advantage accrues to brands capable of providing objectively checkable proof of quality and safety. The case-study results show that “Lab Tested” status, in combination with social confirmations (1,000+ reviews), functions not as an optional attribute but as a necessary condition for overcoming the trust barrier in 2025 and stabilizing repeat purchases.

The practical significance of the study is determined by the applicability of the identified regularities to the design of brand digital-expansion strategies within social commerce ecosystems. Under streaming-consumption conditions, sustainable success correlates with a brand’s capacity to be “integrated” into the customer’s everyday scenarios while simultaneously ensuring impeccable technical quality, verifiability, and instant product accessibility. The author’s hypothesis regarding a transformation of spending structure toward microtransactions under the influence of new media habits received statistical and theoretical confirmation within the comparative and case-based toolkit applied in the study.

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