

SMILE, YOU'RE ON CAMERA: A MULTI-METHOD STUDY OF GIFT-GIVING MOTIVATIONS IN SOCIAL LIVE STREAMING SERVICES

*Zhenya Tang, Department of Management and Information Systems, College of Business,
Mississippi State University, MS 39762, zt192@msstate.edu*

*Tao "Eric" Hu, Department of Systems and Operations Management, David Nazarian College
of Business & Economics, California State University at Northridge, 18111 Nordhoff Street,
Northridge, CA 91330, eric.hu@csun.edu*

*Merrill Warkentin, Department of Management and Information Systems, College of Business,
Mississippi State University, MS 39762, m.warkentin@msstate.edu*

ABSTRACT

The social live streaming service (SLSS) is an online service platform that facilitates public broadcast of live video streams over the Internet. Gift-giving is a business model that has been uniquely developed in the SLSS context. Attracting SLSS users to purchase and send digital virtual items as gifts is critical to the success of the SLSS. Built upon the Bekkers & Wiepking framework of philanthropy, this study uses a multi-method design to capture a comprehensive inventory of SLSS gift-giving motivations which include tipping awareness, solicitation, price fairness, socializing, status-seeking, perceived enjoyment, and herding. Strong empirical evidences have been found supporting the reliability and convergent and discriminant validity of the multidimensional conceptualization of SLSS gift-giving motivations. The findings extend the current literature of the SLSS and particularly online gift-giving motivations and behaviors. The results of the study provide practical guidelines for social media (particularly SLSS) firms and managers to improve service effectiveness and generate revenue for the long-term survival and marketing extension.

Keywords: social live streaming services, gift-giving, virtual gifts, the framework of philanthropy.