Gift Sharing on Social Media: What Drives It?

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Abstract

This study examines factors influencing gift sharing on social media. An online survey gathered data from American adults. It investigates how motivations for social media content posting, gift attributes, giver characteristics, and recipient reactions affect gift-sharing behavior. Findings show self-expression motives in content posting drive sharing, while social interaction motives do not. Gifts perceived as experiential and expensive are more likely to be shared. Recipient-centric gifts positively influence gift sharing, while giver-centric gifts hinder sharing. Attitude towards the gift predicts sharing, while appreciation does not. The study enhances understanding of gift sharing on social media and offers marketing insights for leveraging this behavior.

1. Introduction

Gift posting on social media platforms has become a prevalent phenomenon, with individuals frequently sharing the gifts they receive on various occasions. Gift posts on social media can trigger envy among viewers, leading to increased brand value and purchase intention of the posted items (Lin 2018). Moreover, when individuals choose to share their received gifts on these platforms, they commonly employ brand- and product-related hashtags alongside a general identifier like #gift. Given that numerous gift seekers turn to social media platforms to uncover gift ideas, this act of gift posting can enhance brand awareness, amplifying the reach and impact of shared gifts across broader audiences.

In the realm of gift research, the majority of studies have centered on the expectations and psychological responses of both gift givers and recipients (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Flynn and Adams 2009; Givi 2021; Givi and Das 2023; Givi and Galak 2022; Givi and Mu 2022; Luo et al. 2019; Rixom, Mas, and Rixom 2020). However, there has been a dearth of attention paid to the public and behavioral responses of gift recipients as they engage in the practice of gift sharing on social media. While a limited number of recent studies have begun to uncover aspects of gift recipients' reactions on social media (Chinchanachokchai and Pusaksrikit 2021), a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted factors that contribute to the phenomenon of gift sharing on social media remains lacking.

This study aims to bridge the gap in our understanding by investigating the factors that drive the act of sharing received gifts on social media platforms. The sharing of gifts on social media is a multifaceted behavior influenced by various factors that shape individuals' responses to gift-related variables. First, it is vital to investigate how the characteristics of a gift impact the probability of it being shared on social media. While prior studies suggest that the monetary value of a gift is not necessarily correlated with recipient appreciation (Flynn and Adams 2009), it is worth noting that the perceived price can still function as a means of conveying its significance on social media. Additionally, research has shown that gift recipients tend to develop a stronger connection with the giver and experience greater joy when receiving experiential gifts as opposed to material goods (Chan and Mogilner 2017; Goodman and Lim 2018). Furthermore, previous investigations have indicated that gifts aligning with the recipient's image are more likely to elicit appreciation compared to gifts that align with the giver's image (Luo et al. 2019).

It is intriguing to explore whether these preferences for experiential gifts and gifts aligned with the recipient's image, as highlighted in the existing gift literature, extend to the act of sharing them on social media.

Second, the significance of the social bond shared between the giver and the recipient cannot be overstated. Research has emphasized the impact of this bond on gifting behaviors and reactions (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Givi and Galak 2017). Sharing a gift on social media may become a means not only to express gratitude to the giver but also to showcase the intimate bond between the giver and recipient to a broader network.

Furthermore, recipients' psychological and attitudinal responses, such as feelings of appreciation and their attitude toward the gift, have been frequently examined as recipients' reactions to both the gift and the giver in gift-related literature (Flynn and Adams 2009; Luo et al. 2019; Rixom, Mas, and Rixom 2020; Zhang and Epley 2012). It is intriguing to assess whether these variables will yield observable public and behavioral responses on social media.

In addition to gift-related variables, the act of sharing gifts on social media can also be motivated by factors that drive general social media content posting. Understanding why people choose to share their gifts on social media is crucial, as motivations play a pivotal role in shaping their behavior. Among various motivations for using social media (Lee et al. 2015; Sheldon et al. 2017), this study specifically focuses on two primary drivers for posting content: social interaction and self-expression. These motivations are examined in terms of their impact on the likelihood of sharing gifts on social media.

In summary, this study seeks to examine the multifaceted drivers, including social media content posting motivations and gift-related factors such as the attributes of gifts, the relationships with the giver, and the psychological responses of recipients, building upon previous research to shed light on the intricate interplay that governs the sharing of gifts on social media. To achieve this objective, we employed an online survey targeting American adults. The insights discovered from this study will make significant contributions to both the literature on social media posting and the gift-related research. Furthermore, the findings of this study will offer valuable insights for marketers. Marketers can craft campaigns centered around aiding gift givers in discovering the perfect gifts for their recipients. This approach not only enhances the chances of recipients liking the gifts but also encourages them to share their gifts across social media platforms.

2. Literature review and hypotheses

2.1. Motivation behind social media content posting

Social media platforms create a dynamic space for ongoing interpersonal communication. Within these digital realms, users interact with one another, choosing to share and exchange information publicly or privately. User behavior on social media varies from passive content consumption to actively sharing personal thoughts and experiences. Motivations for using social media are equally diverse, including the pursuit of social interaction, self-expression, documenting life events, seeking escapism, and indulging in voyeurism (Kang and Wei 2020; Lee et al. 2015). Of these motivations, social interaction and self-expression are the primary reasons for posting content, rather than just passively consuming it, on social media.

Previous research has investigated how motivations for posting content on social media are related with variables like time spent on platforms, hashtag usage, and the extent of social connections (Sheldon et al. 2017). Furthermore, other studies have explored the relationships between motivations and reactions to visual content on Instagram, including activities such as sharing images and interacting with others' visuals (Lee et al. 2022) as well as tagging behavior (Kang et al. 2022). These investigations underscore the associations between users' behaviors and the motivations that drive their engagement with social media.

Likewise, an individual's motivations for social media content posting can also influence the act of sharing gifts they have received from others. Given social media's ability to facilitate connections and interactions, sharing a gift can act as a means to inform others about special occasions and experiences, encouraging positive feedback and interactions such as likes and comments. Furthermore, individuals tend to present an idealized version of themselves while concealing their flaws (Goffman 1956). This inclination extends to social media, where users meticulously curate their profile information and visual content to convey their preferences, interests, and viewpoints (Boyd and Ellison 2007). In essence, individuals aim to communicate the image they want to project through their shared content on social media (Mehdizadeh 2010; Zhao, Grasmuck, and Martin 2008). Sharing gifts on social media can thus become a way to express their desired self-image. For instance, individuals can convey their identity by sharing gift items that align with their envisioned self-images. Moreover, they can demonstrate the intimacy of their relationships with gift-givers or portray themselves as individuals

valued by others. Taking these factors into consideration, we posit that as individuals' motivations for enhancing social interaction and expressing themselves through social media posts increase, so does the probability of sharing gift-related experiences on these platforms.

H1. *Increased levels of motives for social interaction in social media content posting will be related to a higher likelihood of sharing gifts on social media.*

H2. *Greater levels of motives for self-expression in social media content posting will correlate with a higher likelihood of sharing gifts on social media.*

2.2. Material gifts vs. experiential gifts

The decision to share gifts on social media can be influenced by the attributes of the received gift. Gifts can be classified into two types: material goods and experiential goods. Material goods include physical objects that individuals can possess, such as flowers, jewelry, or clothing. Conversely, experiential goods relate to events in which the recipient actively participates, like concert tickets or vacations. Experiential gifts lack tangible presence and are fleeting in nature, making them difficult to compare with other alternatives (Chan and Mogilner 2017). Research suggests that experiential goods tend to provide individuals with more satisfaction and happiness during the consumption process in comparison to material goods (Nicolao, Irwin, and Goodman 2009; Van Boven and Gilovich 2003). In the context of gifting, experiential gifts, such as concert tickets, require a deeper understanding of the recipient's preferences to make a suitable selection. Consequently, gift givers might exhibit reluctance in choosing experiential goods if they possess limited knowledge about the recipient's tastes. Conversely, recipients of experiential gifts often feel a greater sense of closeness with the giver and experience heightened delight compared to receiving material goods due to the positive emotions evoked throughout the gift experience (Chan and Mogilner 2017; Goodman and Lim 2018). The presence of heightened positive sentiments towards both the experiential gift and the giver may encourage recipients to actively express their emotions and engage with others by sharing their encounter on social media. In fact, a study exploring gift-giving scenarios among romantic partners discovered that Americans exhibited a greater tendency to share experiential gifts like concert tickets on social media compared to material gifts like watches (Chinchanachokchai and Pusaksrikit 2021). As a result, we posit that the inclination to share gifts on

social media will be more pronounced when individuals receive experiential items rather than material possessions.

H3. *The greater the experiential nature of the gift (as opposed to material), the higher the likelihood that it will be shared on social media.*

2.3. Perceived gift price

Research within the realm of gift behavior has examined the dynamics surrounding gift amounts and how they are perceived by both givers and recipients. Previous studies indicate that gift givers often overestimate the relationship between the monetary value they invest in a gift (its price) and the level of appreciation experienced by the recipient (Flynn and Adams 2009; Givi and Galak 2022; Park and Yi 2022). As a result, givers anticipate that recipients will express greater appreciation and perceive a gift as thoughtful when it is expensive or holds a high value (Flynn and Adams 2009). Interestingly, research exploring the relationship between gift prices and recipient reactions suggests that the link between gift prices and the recipient's emotional response is not as strong. For instance, an investigation focused on engaged couples' relationships found that while engaged men believed that their fiancées would value and appreciate a more expensive ring, the women who received the ring did not necessarily feel more appreciative of the pricier option (Flynn and Adams 2009). Similarly, in the context of exchanging birthday gifts, gift givers expected recipients to prefer and appreciate higher-priced gifts, yet the recipient's level of appreciation was not significantly influenced by the gift's price (Adams, Flynn, and Norton 2012). The majority of gift behavior studies demonstrate that recipient appreciation, perceived thoughtfulness, or caring does not exhibit a linear relationship with the monetary value of the gift (Ames, Flynn, and Weber 2004).

Nevertheless, reactions to gift prices might assume a distinct role in the realm of social media gift posts. Sharing a gift on social media serves as a means of publicly associating oneself with both the gift itself and the person who gave it to them. However, effectively conveying the gift's significance or the sentiment behind it can be challenging. In such instances, the perceived monetary value of the gift might provide a more accessible way to communicate the significance of the gift or the giver-recipient relationship within the realm of social media. Furthermore, posting an expensive gift on social media, which functions as a channel for self-expression, can inherently project one's values and social standing as someone "worthy of such luxury." In this particular

context, we anticipate that the higher the perceived price of the received gift, the greater the likelihood of engaging in gift-posting behavior on social media.

H4. *A positive relationship exists between the perceived gift price and the likelihood of sharing the gift on social media.*

2.4. Recipient-centric gifts vs. giver-centric gifts

Individuals desire their self-concept to be recognized and understood by others (Swann Jr and Read 1981; Swann 1987). In interpersonal relationships, individuals tend to favor interactions with those who exhibit a clear understanding of them, foreseeing positive future exchanges (Human et al. 2013). Similarly, existing research within the realm of gift behavior underscores the challenges that can arise in the relationship between gift givers and recipients when the giver is perceived as not exerting effort to understand the recipient's preferences (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel 1999).

Recipients assess gifts based on their alignment with their individual tastes and preferences. Specifically, Luo et al. (2019) examined the impact of gifts aligned with the recipient's or giver's image in a romantic relationship and found that gifts consistent with the recipient's image were more likely to elicit appreciation compared to those matching the giver's image. Additionally, Gino and Flynn (2011) explored how recipients and givers evaluate and respond to solicited and unsolicited gifts, respectively. Their findings indicated that gift givers often intend to convey their effort and thoughtfulness through gifts, occasionally even selecting items not included in the recipient's requested list. However, when recipients share their preferences (e.g., a wish list) and receive a gift aligned with those preferences, they perceive the gift as more thoughtful and experience a heightened sense of appreciation compared to receiving an unsolicited gift.

In the realm of social media gift posts, a gift that resonates with their image or preferences can mirror how individuals aim to present themselves on social media platforms. Conversely, a gift that does not align with their image might run counter to their online persona, potentially dissuading them from sharing it on social media. Consequently, it can be inferred that the more a gift caters to the recipient's preferences, the more likely they are to share it on social media.

Conversely, a gift that resonates with the giver's image can evoke a sense of symbolic value for the recipient, as gift givers often give presents as a way to express their own identity. People generally respond positively to alignment between others' attitudes and actions, interpreting disparities as lacking authenticity (Guadagno and Cialdini 2010; Luo et al. 2019; Sheldon et al. 1997). Especially within intimate relationships, gifts that mirror the giver's sense of self can nurture a feeling of closeness between the giver and the recipient (Aknin and Human 2015). Consequently, gifts that harmonize with the giver's image can be perceived as truly authentic by the recipient. However, given that social media serves as a personal outlet for sharing self-relevant information and identity, gifts reflecting the giver's image or identity are unlikely to be posted, regardless of their level of appreciation. In this context, it can be inferred that gifts tailored to the giver's tastes or preferences are less likely to find their way onto social media posts.

H5. *The better the gift matches the recipient's preferences, the greater the likelihood of it being posted on social media.*

H6. *The more closely the gift aligns with the giver's preferences, the lower the likelihood of it being shared on social media.*

2.5. Giver-recipient relationship closeness

Gifting behavior is a form of social interaction that occurs within the context of interpersonal dynamics (Antón, Camarero, and Gil 2014). Gifting behaviors are used by individuals to convey their emotions (Sherry Jr 1983; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011) or to convey specific significance to the recipient (Giesler 2006; Skågeby 2010). For example, gifts can embody a range of symbolic meanings, including indicators of relationship status, affection, ongoing interaction, and emotional expression (Poe 1977; Sherry Jr 1983; Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). As a result, gifts function as symbolic communication tools between givers and recipients (Belk 1976; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1987). Previous studies underscore the significance of the social bond shared between the giver and the recipient in shaping gifting behaviors and reactions (Ward and Broniarczyk 2011). Research demonstrates that when gift givers share a close social connection with the recipient, their gift selections often serve as a means for nurturing the continuity of their relationship (Larsen and Watson 2001; Wagner, Ettenson, and Verrier 1990). In such instances, gift givers tend to opt for higher-priced gifts and invest more effort in gift selection (Caplow 1982; Joy 2001; Saad and Gill 2003). Correspondingly, gift recipients anticipate receiving more thoughtful gifts from individuals they

share close relationships with and are predisposed to favor these gifts (Zhang and Epley 2012).

Furthermore, the degree of intimacy shared between a gift's giver and receiver can result in various effects, impacting not just the evaluation of the gift but also the subsequent behavioral response of the recipient. Generally, when individuals experience a sense of closeness, they endeavor to express their emotions to the other person, aiming to cultivate a deeper connection. Additionally, individuals are more compelled to precisely express and communicate their emotions within close relationships, while they may exhibit less concern about accurately conveying or sharing their feelings in less intimate connections (Xu, Yi, and Xu 2007).

In essence, social media platforms function not only as tools for establishing new social bonds with unfamiliar individuals but also as spaces for nurturing and reinforcing established social connections (Boyd and Ellison 2007; Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe 2007). The individuals within their social media circles are frequently those with whom they maintain close social proximity. Thus, it is highly plausible that the giver of a gift would be included in their social media friends list. As a result, the closer the relationship between the giver and the recipient, the more probable it is for the recipient to openly express gratitude to the giver within the context of social media.

Furthermore, when individuals experience a sense of closeness to the giver, they endeavor to make this connection more visibly evident in the social realm to reinforce its solidity. The act of sharing a gift on social media not only exposes the intimate bond between the giver and recipient to the broader network but also anticipates positive responses from others concerning the relationship. In this context, we propose that the level of closeness in the relationship with the giver positively influences the likelihood of posting about a gift on social media.

H7. *Greater closeness to the gift giver corresponds to a heightened likelihood of posting about gifts on social media.*

2.6. Psychological and attitudinal reactions to the gift

Most gifts are given with the intent of bringing joy to the recipient (Belk and Coon 1993; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim 1993), often eliciting feelings of gratitude towards the giver. While many studies on gift-giving have explored factors that influence recipients' psychological and attitudinal responses, such as feelings of appreciation (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Flynn and Adams 2009; Gino and Flynn 2011; Luo et al. 2019; Zhang and Epley 2012) and their attitude towards the gift (Givi and Das 2022; Polman and

Maglio 2017; Rixom, Mas, and Rixom 2020), there has been less research into specific behaviors that follow the evaluation of both the gift and the giver. Although Guido, Pino, and Peluso (2016) has examined post-gift behaviors, it mainly pertains to re-gifting in a more 'private' context and does not address how positive psychological and attitudinal responses to gifts manifest in subsequent behaviors or how these responses are expressed in 'public' settings.

Feelings of gratitude for a gift often drive individuals to express this appreciation to the giver. Social media platforms provide a means to publicly convey gratitude for a gift by mentioning or tagging the giver in a post. Consequently, higher levels of gratitude for a gift might correlate with a greater likelihood of expressing it to the giver and sharing it with one's social media connections. Additionally, individuals frequently align their attitudes and behaviors with respect to objects (Festinger 1957). Therefore, it is not surprising that people engage in behaviors like posting about their favorite brands or products on social media. In a similar vein, one's positive attitudes towards gifts could influence their tendency to post gift-related content on social media platforms.

H8. *Increased feelings of appreciation for a gift correlate with a heightened propensity to post about the gift on social media.*

H9. *A more positive attitude towards a gift is associated with an increased likelihood of posting about the gift on social media.*

3. Method

3.1. Sample and data collection procedure

In order to identify factors influencing the act of posting gifts on social media, an online survey was conducted during the first week of February 2023. We enlisted 317 American adults with prior experience of posting content on Instagram or Facebook through the Prolific platform. Four participants failed an instructional manipulation check (Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko 2009) and additional seven participants did not complete the questionnaire. This left us with a total of 306 participants for analysis. The participants' age range spanned from 19 to 74 (M = 37.37, SD = 13.19). Among the participants, 59.2% identified as female. The largest group identified as White/Caucasian (69%), followed by Black (11.1%), Asian (10.1%), Latino/Hispanic (7.5%), and those of mixed ethnicity (2.3%).

Respondents were randomly assigned to one of the following occasions: 1) birthdays, 2) anniversaries,

Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, or Father's Day, 3) Christmas or winter holidays, or 4) no special occasion (without a specific reason). We chose this approach not to distinguish differences among these occasions, but rather to provide a comprehensive representation of various gifting occasions. The goal was to minimize potential bias that might arise from a prominent occasion occurring in close proximity to our study's timeline. Once participants consented to partake in the study, they were prompted to indicate the frequency and motivations behind their social media content postings. This study centered its focus on Facebook and Instagram, as these two platforms ranked within the top three social media platforms in terms of regular users in the United States during 2022 (Statista 2023). Subsequently, participants were requested to recollect a gift they had received within the last 12 months for one of the aforementioned gifting occasions. In instances where no such gift was received for the assigned occasion, respondents were asked to recall the most recent gift they had received. Employing the approach outlined by Flynn and Adams (2009), participants were guided to mentally visualize the gift, including details such as its appearance, characteristics, the giver's identity, their emotional response upon receiving the gift, and to describe the gift itself. Following this, participants completed a series of questions including the attributes of the gift, the giver, the gifting occasion, and their reactions towards the gift, as well as whether they chose to share the gift on either Facebook or Instagram. The questionnaire also included demographic inquiries.

3.2. Measures

The present study investigated the predictors associated with sharing gifts on social media. These predictors included participants' motivations for posting content on social media, along with variables relating to the gift, the giver, and their reactions to the gift. In relation to motivations for social media content posting, two distinct types of motivations were measured using a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The social interaction motive was gauged through two items: "To connect with people who share some of my values" and "To connect with people who are similar to me" (α = .94, M = 4.94, SD = 1.63) (Alhabash and Ma 2017). The self-expression motive was assessed with four items: "Because posting content says something about me," "Because posting content is a form of self-expression," "Because posting content creates a certain image" and "Because posting content is part of my self-image" (α = .86, M = 3.71, SD = 1.50) (Zhu et al. 2019).

Moving on to the characteristics of the gift, whether the gift was material or experiential was measured using a single item: "To what extent did you perceive the gift as being material or experiential?" (1 = more material, 7 = more experiential) (M = 2.41, SD = 1.85). In order to assist participants in comprehending the notions of material and experiential products, the subsequent definitions were furnished: "tangible products that are retained over time" for material products and "intangible events that a person lives through" for experiential products (Goodman and Lim 2018; Tully, Hershfield, and Meyvis 2015). The perceived gift price was assessed with the item: "How expensive was the gift?" (1 = not expensive at all, 7 = very expensive) (M = 3.75, SD = 1.58) (Guido, Pino, and Peluso 2016). Receiver-centric gift and giver-centric gift were both measured on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = to a great extent) with these respective items: "To what extent do you think the gift revealed the giver's knowledge of you (e.g., your interests, passions)?" (M = 5.75, SD = 1.40) and "To what extent do you think the gift revealed the giver's true self (e.g., the giver's interests, passions)?" (M = 5.01, SD = 1.63) (Aknin and Human 2015).

Concerning the giver, the level of closeness between the receiver and the giver was measured using a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) including two items: "We are very close" and "We know each other very well" (α = .91, M = 6.09, SD = 1.26) (Givi and Galak 2017). Subsequently, participants' reactions to the gift were assessed. Appreciation was measured on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all, 7 = very much) using three items: "How much did you appreciate the gift?" "How much were you grateful for the gift?" and "How much were you thankful for the gift?" (α = .94, M = 6.43, SD = .92) (Kupor, Flynn, and Norton 2017). Attitude toward the gift was assessed on a 7-point scale across three dimensions: negative/positive, bad/good, unfavorable/favorable (α = .92, M = 6.38, SD = .96) (Lee and Aaker 2004).

The study incorporated several control variables to account for their potential influence on the findings. These variables include gender, age, frequency of social media content posting, and the specific type of gifting occasions. Frequency of social media content posting was assessed using an 8-point scale: 1 = never, 2 = a few times a year, 3 = once a month, 4 = two to three times a month, 5 = once a week, 6 = multiple times a week, 7 = once a day, 8 = multiple times a day (M = 4.52, SD = 1.90). Lastly, the specific type of gifting occasions was categorized as follows: Valentines' Day, Mother's Day/Father's Day, Christmas/winter holiday, birthdays, thank-you, anniversaries, and other (For participants who selected

Table 1. Summary of gifting occasions and giver characteristics.

	Posting		No posting		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Type of Gifting Occasion						
Christmas/Winter Holiday	36	43.4%	103	46.2%	139	45.4%
Birthday	26	31.3%	50	22.4%	76	24.8%
Just Because	5	6.0%	9	4.0%	14	4.6%
Valentine's Day	5	6.0%	7	3.1%	12	3.9%
Thank-You	3	3.6%	23	10.3%	26	8.5%
Mother's Day/Father's Day	3	3.6%	3	1.3%	6	2.0%
Anniversaries	2	2.4%	4	1.8%	6	2.0%
Other (Just Because)	5	6.0%	9	4.0%	14	4.6%
Other	3	3.6%	24	10.7%	27	8.8%
Type of Giver						
Romantic Partner	37	44.6%	61	27.4%	98	32.0%
Family	31	37.3%	102	45.7%	133	43.5%
Friends	13	15.7%	52	23.3%	65	21.2%
Acquaintances/Colleagues	1	1.2%	5	2.2%	6	2.0%
Other	1	1.2%	3	1.3%	4	1.3%
Total	83	27.1%	223	79.1%	306	100%

the "other" option, they were asked to specify the occasion).

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive characteristics of givers and gifting occasions

Among all participants with experience in posting content on Instagram or Facebook, only 27.1% reported sharing the gift they had envisioned following the study's aforementioned instructions. Illustrated in Table 1, the prevalent gift-giving occasion within this study was Christmas/winter holiday (45.4%), followed by birthday (24.8%), thank-you (8.5%), just because (4.6%), Valentines' Day (3.9%), Mother's Day/Father's Day (2.0%), anniversaries (2.0%), and other occasions (8.8%). When specifically considering participants who confirmed sharing the gift on social media, the most commonly referenced gift-giving occasion remained Christmas/winter holiday (43.4%), followed by birthday (31.3%), just because (6%), Valentine's Day (6%), Thank-You (3.6%), Mother's Day/Father's Day (3.6%), anniversaries (2.4%), and other occasions (3.6%).

Turning to the primary gift givers, family emerged as the most frequently mentioned (43.5%), followed by romantic partners (32.0%), friends (21.2%), and acquaintances/colleagues (2.0%), and others (1.3%). When narrowing the focus to participants who reported sharing the gift on social media, the most frequently identified gift giver was the romantic partners (44.6%), family (37.3%), friends (15.7%), acquaintances/colleagues (1.2%), and others (1.2%).

4.2. Hypotheses testing

Prior to hypothesis testing, an assessment of multicollinearity was undertaken. As depicted in Table 2, the diagnostic indices for multicollinearity, which included correlation coefficients (<0.71), tolerance (>0.45), and VIF (<2.23), indicated the absence of concerns related to multicollinearity within the models.

To investigate the factors that influence the likelihood of sharing a gift on social media, we conducted a hierarchical logistic regression analysis. In Model 1, we included several control variables as predictors, including gender, age, frequency of content sharing on social media, and the type of specific gifting occasions. To handle the multicategorical nature of the type of gifting occasions, we generated two dummy variables: one for Christmas/winter holidays (in comparison to all other occasions) and another for birthdays (in comparison to all other occasions). These categories were found to be the most commonly mentioned and were notably substantial, whereas other categories were represented by smaller instances. In Model 1, statistical significance was demonstrated (χ^2 (5) = 37.025, p < .001). Model 1 accounted for 16.5% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in the inclination to post a gift on social media. The association between content sharing frequency on social media and the likelihood of gift posting was positive and significant (p < .001). Specifically, an increase of one unit in content sharing frequency corresponded to a 51.1% (OR = 1.511) rise in the odds of sharing a gift on social media. However, other variables such as gender (p = .440), age (p = .491), Christmas/winter holidays (p = .704), and birthdays (p = .164) did not demonstrate a

Table 2. Correlation coefficients, tolerance, and VIF.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Tolerance	VIF
1											.931	1.074
2	.20										.784	1.276
3	.12	.38									.648	1.543
4	.09	.37	.54								.661	1.514
5	−.09	.02	−.04	.10							.949	1.054
6	.00	.11	−.00	.05	.09						.930	1.075
7	.06	.08	.00	.01	.04	.18					.590	1.694
8	.13	.08	.08	.07	.09	.20	.45				.752	1.329
9	.06	.08	.06	−.01	.09	.11	.33	.23			.809	1.236
10	.01	.07	.12	.03	.02	.10	.49	.27	.38		.448	2.233
11	−.02	.04	.08	.01	.02	.06	.50	.22	.34	.71	.457	2.187

Note: 1. Age, 2. Social Media Posting Frequency, 3. Social Interaction Motive, 4. Self-expression Motive, 5. Material/Experiential Gift, 6. Perceived Gift Price, 7. Recipient-Centric Gift, 8. Giver-Centric Gift, 9. Social Closeness, 10. Appreciation, 11. Gift Attitude.

significant relationship with the probability of posting gifts on social media.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 postulated the impacts of social interaction posting motive and self-expression posting motive on gift sharing on social media, respectively. Model 2 integrated these two types of motivations for sharing content on social media as additional predictors, and it demonstrated statistical significance (χ^2 (7) = 42.486, p < .001). Model 2 explained 18.8% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in the likelihood of sharing a gift on social media. The self-expression posting motive predicted the probability of posting a gift on social media (p = .038). Specifically, an increase of one unit in the self-expression posting motive led to a 26.6% (OR = 1.266) rise in the odds of sharing a gift on social media. However, the social interaction posting motive (p = .980) did not emerge as a significant predictor of the probability of gift posting on social media. Hence, while H2 garnered support, H1 did not find support.

Model 3 incorporated characteristics of the gift (Hypotheses 3–6), the giver (Hypothesis 7), and reactions to the gift (Hypotheses 8–9) as additional predictors and achieved statistical significance (χ^2 (14) = 87.215, p < .001). Model 3 accounted for 36.0% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in the probability of posting a gift on social media. In relation to gift-related variables, we found that the material/experiential nature of the gift (H3) (p = .036), the perceived gift price (H4) (p < .001), and the recipient-centric gift (H5) (p = .033) had a positive impact on the probability of sharing a gift on social media. Conversely, the relationship between the giver-centric gift and the likelihood of gift posting was negative and marginally significant (H6) (p = .087). Specifically, a one-unit increase in the material/experiential nature of the gift led to an 18.8% (OR = 1.188) rise in the odds of sharing a gift on social media, suggesting that the higher the perceived experiential nature of a gift, the greater the chance of

it being shared on social media. Moreover, a one-unit increase in the perceived gift price and the recipient-centric gift corresponded to respective increments of 48.5% (OR = 1.485) and 41.0% (OR = 1.410) in the odds of gift posting on social media, respectively. Conversely, a one-unit increase in the giver-centric gift resulted in a 17.3% (OR = 0.827) reduction in the odds of sharing a gift on social media. Thus, H3, H4, and H5 were supported, while H6 did not find support.

Further, the degree of social closeness between the gift giver and recipient did not demonstrate statistical significance in predicting the likelihood of participants sharing gifts on social media (H7) (p = .179). Lastly, concerning variables tied to the recipient's reactions to the gift, the attitude toward the gift significantly predicted the likelihood of gift posting on social media (H9) (p = .018), while feelings of appreciation (H8) (p = .210) did not exhibit significance. Specifically, a one-unit increase in the attitude toward the gift resulted in a 101.1% (OR = 2.011) rise in the odds of gift posting on social media. Thus, H9 garnered support, whereas H7 and H8 did not find empirical support. The outcomes of the hierarchical logistic regression analysis are detailed in Table 3.

5. Discussions

5.1. Discussions of findings

Our goal was to reveal the factors influencing the practice of sharing gifts on social media platforms. To accomplish this, we conducted an online survey specifically targeting American adults with prior experience in posting content on Instagram or Facebook. Our investigation examined the relationships between sharing gifts and a range of variables, including the motivations that drive individuals to post content on social media, the characteristics linked to

Table 3. Results of hierarchical logistic regression for gift sharing on social media.

	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3		
	B	Wald	OR	B	Wald	OR	B	Wald	OR
Control Variables									
Gender (1 = male)	−.221	.595	.802	−.242	.703	.785	−.538	2.637	.584
Age	.007	.474	1.007	.006	.341	1.006	.013	1.141	1.013
Posting Frequency	.413	27.784	1.511***	.357	18.262	1.428***	.362	15.292	1.436***
Christmas	.127	.144	1.136	.171	.253	1.186	−.123	.103	.884
Birthdays	.516	1.937	1.675	.524	1.964	1.689	.181	.184	1.198
Posting Motive									
Social Interaction				−.003	.001	.997	−.015	.015	.985
Self-Expression				.236	4.309	1.266*	.275	4.393	1.316*
Gift-Related									
Material/Experiential							.172	4.385	1.188*
Gift Price							.396	13.985	1.485***
Recipient-Centric							.344	4.538	1.410*
Giver-Centric							−.189	2.921	.827+
Social Closeness							.217	1.809	1.243
Appreciation							−.373	1.574	.688
Gift Attitude							.698	5.640	2.011*
Constant	−3.331	31.028	.036***	−3.932	30.337	.020***	−10.439	34.558	.000***

Note: Dependent variable: Posting of a gift on social media (1 = no, 2 = yes), OR: odds ratio.
$^+ p < .1$, $^* p < .05$, $^{**} p < .01$, $^{***} p < .001$.

both the gift and the giver, as well as the psychological and attitudinal responses to the gift.

Our investigation sheds light on several key factors influencing the likelihood of sharing gifts on social media. First, we found a significant positive relationship between self-expression motives and the likelihood of sharing gifts. This result is consistent with previous studies emphasizing the role of social media as a means of self-expression (Alhabash and Ma 2017; Lee et al. 2015). Participants may view gift sharing as a way to express themselves, whether by projecting an image of being loved or revealing their desired self-image through the symbolism of the gifts. Surprisingly, social interaction motives did not predict gift-sharing behavior on social media, challenging the assumption that gift-sharing aligns with motives linked to social interaction. These findings suggest that individuals prioritize self-expression over seeking positive reactions or interactions with others when deciding whether to share gifts on their social media profiles.

We also observed that gifts perceived as experiential, as opposed to material, had a positive association with sharing likelihood. This may be because experiential gifts are seen as a more precise reflection of one's identity than material possessions, as supported by Carter and Gilovich (2012). They observed that people tend to closely identify with experiential goods, frequently mentioning them when describing their lives, and regarding them as offering a more accurate representation of their identity compared to material possessions.

Gifts resonating with the recipient's interests and passions motivated gift sharing, while those centered around the giver's preferences had a counterproductive impact. These findings align with Luo et al. (2019) study, indicating that gifts congruent with the recipient's image were more likely to garner appreciation in contrast to those matching the giver's image. In light of our findings, it can be inferred that the preference for sharing recipient-centric gifts, and the lower likelihood of sharing giver-centric gifts, both stem from individuals' inclination to prioritize self-relevant content on their social media platforms.

In addition, our study revealed that the perceived price of a gift positively influences the recipient's likelihood of sharing it on social media. This result is noteworthy, especially in light of previous research in the field of gift-giving, which suggested that recipients' appreciation for a gift or perceived thoughtfulness were not influenced by its monetary value (Flynn and Adams 2009). Our finding suggests that individuals may view such gifts as status symbols. Sharing an extravagant gift on social media could potentially serve as a means for individuals to convey their social standing within their social circle.

Unexpectedly, we found that the level of social closeness between the gift giver and recipient did not emerge as a predictor of gift-sharing behavior on social media. We had anticipated that as the relationship between the gift giver and recipient grew closer, the giver would become a part of the recipient's social media friends list, and this closer relationship

would increase the likelihood of the recipient expressing gratitude openly on social media by mentioning or tagging the giver. However, these expectations were not met. Equally surprising, there was no significant relationship between appreciation and the likelihood of sharing gifts. This result is particularly unexpected, as appreciation is typically seen as an important aspect of successful gift-giving interactions (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Flynn and Adams 2009; Kupor, Flynn, and Norton 2017; Luo et al. 2019; Zhang and Epley 2012). As mentioned previously, these findings might be attributed to the fact that individuals tend to regard gift postings on social media primarily as a means of self-expression, with the focus being on showcasing the gift itself rather than highlighting the giver.

Finally, a positive attitude towards the gift significantly increased the likelihood of sharing it. When individuals hold a favorable view of the gift, they are more inclined to share it as a way to express their preferences and interests within their social circle, promoting deeper understanding.

In summary, our research reveals that when individuals share gifts on social media platforms, their primary focus tends to be on themselves. All significant findings, including self-expression motives, the experiential nature of the gift, perceived gift price, and recipient-centric gifts, as well as non-significant findings such as social interaction motives, the relationship closeness with the giver, and feelings of appreciation, underscore that individuals primarily utilize gift-sharing as a means to showcase and express their own identity and preferences on social media platforms.

5.2. Theoretical contributions and managerial implications

The findings of this study carry several significant theoretical implications that contribute to the broader understanding of social media content posting and gift-giving dynamics. First, previous research has predominantly focused on understanding the motivations and factors driving the posting of travel experiences (Kang and Schuett 2013), purchases (Duan and Dholakia 2018), or food (Atwal, Bryson, and Tavilla 2019; Javed et al. 2021; Zhu et al. 2019) on social media. However, a noteworthy gap exists when it comes to investigating the factors influencing the posting of gifts. By examining this under-researched area, this study fills a gap in the literature and extends our understanding of the diverse array of content shared on social media.

Second, when considering the perspectives of gift recipients, previous studies in gift-giving interactions have predominantly focused on recipients' expectations and psychological perceptions. Specifically, scholars have investigated the impacts of gift-related factors on recipient responses such as perceived thoughtfulness (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Flynn and Adams 2009; Givi 2020; Givi and Das 2023; Kupor, Flynn, and Norton 2017; Park and Yi 2022; Zhang and Epley 2012), appreciation (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Flynn and Adams 2009; Givi 2021; Kupor, Flynn, and Norton 2017; Luo et al. 2019), happiness (Baskin et al. 2014; Givi and Galak 2022; Givi and Mu 2022), perceived offensiveness (Cavanaugh, Gino, and Fitzsimons 2015; Givi and Das 2023, 2022), relationship satisfaction (Aknin and Human 2015), and gift liking or evaluation (Givi and Galak 2022; Givi, Galak, and Olivola 2021; Park and Yi 2022; Rixom, Mas, and Rixom 2020; Zhang and Epley 2012). Most of these responses have centered on the psychological and private aspects of recipients' responses (Chinchanachokchai and Pusaksrikit 2021). However, there has been limited recent attention given to the investigation of a more public and behavioral response to gifts, which is the phenomenon of sharing gifts on social media. (Chinchanachokchai and Pusaksrikit 2021). By identifying the drivers behind gift sharing on social media, this research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of gift-giving interactions.

A particularly interesting observation emerged from this study is that the factors influencing recipients' perceptions of and reactions to the gift demonstrated in previous studies may not always align with the factors driving their decision to post the gift on social media. This insight underscores the dynamic interplay between offline experiences and their digital manifestations. The distinction between these two sets of factors clarifies the distinct motivations that shape how individuals navigate gift-sharing within the context of social media platforms. In summary, this study's theoretical implications extend the boundaries of existing research by exploring gift sharing as a unique form of online self-expression. By examining the factors that prompt individuals to share gifts on social media, this study not only enhances our understanding of digital behavior but also enriches the broader understanding of gift-giving dynamics.

The insights derived from this study's findings hold significant implications for marketers aiming to leverage the power of social media for product promotion and enhancing brand visibility. Marketers can curate product collections that align with the study's insights on shared gifts, particularly experiential products, and promote these selections as "Gifts Worth Sharing." This approach caters to gift givers

seeking items that are not only liked but also likely to be shared on social media platforms. Moreover, recognizing the importance of gift congruence with the recipient's interests and passions, marketers can encourage consumers to create wish lists, streamlining the process of receiving desired gifts destined for social media sharing. Lastly, by strategically positioning high-value gifts as symbols of luxury or status, marketers can tap into this perception to stimulate increased sharing activity.

5.3. Limitations and future research

Despite its significant contributions, this study does have several limitations that warrant consideration. First, the study's exclusive focus on American adults may restrict the generalizability of its findings to diverse cultural contexts. In alignment with the findings of Chinchanachokchai and Pusaksrikit (2021), who identified cultural differences in gift-sharing behaviors on social media between Americans and Thais, future research could replicate our investigations with diverse samples representing various cultures. Furthermore, our study focused exclusively on the platforms of Facebook and Instagram. To comprehensively capture the spectrum of social media dynamics, future research endeavors could incorporate a broader range of social media platforms, including TikTok and Twitter, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of gift-sharing behaviors. Lastly, while content posting motivations and gift-related characteristics are found to correlate with gift sharing on social media, the study's design does not enable us to determine whether these factors directly cause gift sharing behavior. To enhance our understanding, future investigations could adopt experimental research methodologies to explore the causal effects of motivations and gift-related attributes on the propensity to share gifts on social media.

Conflict of interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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