

To buy or not to buy? A customer's outlook on mobile live stream shopping



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The days of watching a host on television present the newest household device that "halves your cooking time" or "makes cleaning more exciting" are long gone. The foundation of home shopping has been revived into an industry valued at over \$70 billion, mostly unnoticed by countries outside of Asia. Mobile live-stream shopping (MLSS) is that industry.

MLSS is the trading of a wide array of products and services in real-time via a live stream demonstrated by a seller. You, the customer, have an opportunity to interact with the seller by viewing and asking questions about the product and deciding if the product is worth your spend, thereafter purchasing directly on the live stream platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to a hyper-dependency on online services, so it is no surprise that TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram have all remodelled their businesses to accommodate MLSS functions. With over 22 million smartphone users in South Africa, it is surprising that there are limited platforms for MLSS commerce and limited studies on the country's interest in the MLSS market.

A study was conducted by Henrietta Amofa, a [Master's](#) student in the [Department of Marketing Management](#), to examine whether customers' level of optimism, perceived

innovativeness, insecurity, and discomfort towards technology affect their purchase decision via MLSS. While optimism and perceived innovativeness are considered drivers, insecurity, and discomfort are regarded as inhibitors. Data was collected via Qualtrics and a total sample of 3515 was realised over six weeks.

Findings showed that optimism, innovativeness, and insecurity are significant determinants of customers' intent to purchase via MLSS, with optimism emerging as the most significant determinant. With MLSS being a relative enigma in the African context, findings from this study can help managers create a seamless and convenient experience for their customers to start engaging in MLSS by capitalising on users' optimism and innovativeness and finding ways to mitigate insecurity fears.

Implementing practices such as consistent streams to create familiarity, effective interactions with customers during the live stream, and leveraging the seamless MLSS payment method can create a unique user experience. Combining that experience with a good search engine optimisation strategy could guarantee the attention of the desired target market.

This research was conducted as part of the fulfilment of the [Master's degree](#) in Marketing Management in 2023 with the [Department of Marketing Management](#) by Henrietta Amofa under the supervision of [Dr. Michael Humbani](#).