Gender and Personality Differences in Self-Gifting Behaviour and the Impact of Locus of Control

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Contents

1. Acknowledgments ......................................................................................................................... 3
2. Abstract........................................................................................................................................ 4
3. Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 5
4. Methodology .................................................................................................................................. 16
   4.1 Participants ................................................................................................................................. 16
   4.2 Design ....................................................................................................................................... 16
   4.3 Materials .................................................................................................................................... 17
   4.4 Procedure ................................................................................................................................... 19
5. Results ........................................................................................................................................... 21
6. Discussion ...................................................................................................................................... 32
7. References ..................................................................................................................................... 39
8. Appendix ....................................................................................................................................... 43
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Abstract

The primary aim of this study is to assess the impact of gender and gender traits on self-gifting behaviour. The secondary aim is to examine whether certain variables predict differences: neuroticism, impulsivity and locus of control. An online sample of convenience was used consisting of 156 participants. A multiple regression returned a non-significant result on the impact of gender and gender traits on self-gifting behaviour. Independent sample t-tests were carried out on the three variables. These indicated statistically significant differences in Neuroticism scores and Therapy scores between females who plan and who impulse purchase. There were no significant differences in therapy scores between females with an internal and an external Locus of Control. Results indicate that consumers are not accessing specific gender traits when they self gift and that gender may not play as key a role in self-gifting behaviour as personality traits and impulsivity.
Introduction

Most people would admit to enjoying retail therapy from time to time; when the purchase is a treat just for the purchaser, the concept of shopping can become much more tolerable! Yet how often do shoppers stop and question why they are buying what is in their hands and whether they really need it? Maslow defined a Hierarchy of Needs (1943) that an individual must fulfil before reaching self-actualization. A person may treat himself or herself to a new coat, fulfilling the needs of the Safety level of the Hierarchy as the coat provides protection against the elements, but if the coat also happens to be from a designer the person emulates or a desirable store, the coat is suddenly fulfilling a very different need. This study aims to examine the possible needs being met by treating ourselves (self-gifting behaviour) and how these can differ depending on a number of variables.

3.1 Consumption

“Hollow hands clasp ludicrous possessions because they are links in the chain of life. If it breaks, they are truly lost” (Dichter, 1964, p. 86)

All consumption fulfils a need. Material objects in today’s society are used by many to contribute to and reflect a sense of identity. The Punk and Goth subcultures where clothing, accessories even music listened to must fit a certain typology, are examples of carefully designed and rigid identities. A certain type of car or mobile phone can feed into the perceived sense of identity of the owner. McCracken develops this concept further into what he calls the “Diderot Effect”, “goods go together because their symbolic properties
bring them together” (McCracken, p. 118). But Material objects can do more than just reflect who we currently are; they can also help us move closer to who we desire to be. (Dittmar et al, 1996). A desired self-image can be incongruent with a current self-image and what is bought can act as a bridge to hopes and ideals, helping cultivate what is just beyond grasp (McCracken 1986). To return to the Diderot Effect for an example; a young man always buys a Ford car as this for him is a complimentary object to his current sense of identity. He aspires to better himself in his career but finds the wait for the right move a long one, so he invests in upgrading his car to a BMW as this is what his boss drives. Through this purchase he is able to entertain the eventual possession of ideals that present circumstances currently deny him.

3.2 Concept of Compensatory Consumption.

Compensatory Consumption “engages whenever an individual feels a lack or need/desire which they cannot satisfy with a primary fulfilment so they seek an alternative means of fulfilment in its place” (Helen Woodruffe-Burton, 2006, p. 260).

This concept was first identified and defined by Dichter in the 1960’s and then further developed in the decades following. Grunert (1993) defined compensatory consumption as a lack of X that could be cured by a supply of X but may also be cured by a supply of Y. The individual may be unwilling or unable to satisfy X directly, e.g. a deceased parents approval or love. In some cases Y ends up as eating, drinking or drug taking but in others it can take the form of impulsive shopping, compulsive/excessive shopping or self-gifting (Woodruffe-Burton, 2006). There are many examples of compulsive or impulsive buying acting as a buffer for deeper psychological issues or as a coping mechanism (Lins et al. 2013, Lucas et al. 2013). Self-gifting can also be used as a substitute action motivated by
a gap between consumers actual and ideal self state. An example of a lack of X being cured by a supply of Y.

3.3 Self-gifting as a form of Compensatory Consumption

“Self-gifting reflects consumer behaviour in some of its most flexible, dramatic and personally meaningful forms” (Mick, 1992, p. 143)

Gift giving is part of many cultures; dyadic gifting (interpersonal gifting) is entwined in ritual occasions from Christmas to weddings but also expressed in smaller more spontaneous acts such as buying flowers for a loved one. Personal values can influence the type of gift purchased and research has shown that givers can be classified into “self-respect givers”, those who want to feel better about themselves through the gift they give, and “relationship givers”, those who give a gift in order to maintain or enhance a relationship (Beatty et al., 1998) Classification is fluid depending on the person and the occasion: a gift for a mother will have a different meaning for the gift giver to a gift for a work colleague.

Self-gifting, on the other hand, is very much a gift for ourselves bought by ourselves. Mick and DeMoss (1991, p. 7) defined it as “any product that constitutes a form of indulgence where the consumer is seeking to communicate a desire that goes beyond human intrinsic needs – a personally symbolic form of self communication that occurs through special indulgences that are premeditated and highly context bound”. Much research indicates that we self-gift for reasons beyond the actual use of what we purchase (McCracken 1998; Atalay and Meloy, 2008; Kauppinen-Raisanen, 2014). As per previous examples, what we buy for ourselves may reflect our ideal self identity as well as fill a gap for us that we cannot currently fill with what we want to: it can be the Y to fill our lack of X. According to Kleine et al (1995), a gift from someone can become a favoured possession as
it symbolises our relationship with the gift giver; while a self-gift is a more personal reflection of who we are and who we want to be. The key unanswered question though, is what is an act of self-gifting compensating for, what is the Y?

The first empirical investigation into Self-Gifting was by Mick and DeMoss in the 1990's. They found that almost everyone self-gifts; that it tends to decline as people age and that men tended to self-gift for different reasons to women (1990, 1991, 1992). In defining the concept of self-gifting behavior, they proposed it operated on three dimensions: Exchange, Communication and Specialness.

**Exchange**: when a person self-gifts as a reward for a goal reached or something achieved. The goal is exchanged for a gift to oneself. This can encourage a self-perception of competency and worth and can even act as an incentive for some to reach a target (Bandura and Schunk, 1981). Self-gifting is likely following achievement task outcomes and achieved goals may encourage some individuals to reach higher levels of performance (Bandura and Perloff, 1967).

**Communication**: is about the search for the ideal self and how this is expressed through self-gift purchasing. Self-gifting is a two-way communication with the consumer acting as both sender and receiver of symbolic messages that have formative implications for the self; it is therefore extremely symbolic and very unique to the individual.

**Specialness**: Improving/reparing mood through purchase. According to Schwartz (1967), gifts to the self often serve as emotional nutrients, elevating or protecting self-esteem. Atalay and Meloy (2008) examined the role of self-gifting in mood management and found it to be a more common motivation for self-gifting than more celebratory reasons such as goal achievement. They stated that individual differences in self-esteem, mood and loneliness were acting as moderators of self-gifting behaviour.
Mick and DeMoss, building on the three dimensions discussed above, claimed reasons for self-gifting could be split into 7 groups: 1) to reward myself; 2) to be nice to myself; 3) because it’s my birthday; 4) to help relieve stress; 5) as an incentive to reach a goal; 6) to cheer myself up; 7) because I had extra money. It is these reasons that may help answer the question posed earlier: what could self-gifting be compensating for? An understanding of whether a gift bought “to be nice to myself” or “to cheer myself up” is compensating for something the person cannot have or is counteracting feelings of sadness, depression, therefore artificially buoying oneself up through consumption, is key in expanding our knowledge of the relationship we have with consumption.

Much gifting research states a gift is chosen because it possesses meaningful properties that the gift giver wishes to see transferred to the gift receiver. However, Tournier (1966) claimed that firstly it is the gift giver’s ideal self concept that is most reflected in the qualities of the gift being given, then the gift giver’s actual self concept and only then are the perceived characteristics of the receiver taken into account. In terms of self-gifting a person need only concern himself or herself with the gift reflecting their own ideal self-concept. As has been discussed in the previous sections, consumption can help create a bridge between the real and the ideal and self-gifts can play a similar role. As McCracken states, “surrounded by our things, we are constantly instructed in who we are and what we aspire to. Surrounded by our things, we are rooted in and visually continuous with our pasts” (1988, p. 124).
3.4 Self-Gifting and Gender

A common spurious claim is that women love shopping a lot more than men and it is tempting to add to this with the presumption that they will be heavier self-gifters also, but while the research does tend to indicate this (Mick and DeMoss, 1990; Ward and Tran, 2007) it is worth noting that research samples are more skewed towards women. According to O’Guinn and Faber (1989), this is because women are more open than men to revealing details about their personal consumption behaviours. But although women do tend to share details about themselves in order to enhance a relationship and men do so depending on how in control they are of the situation, it could be challenged that researchers should endeavour to have more even sample sizes based on gender in order to reduce any skewness of results.

Research on dyadic gift giving found that women give gifts as a means of expressing empathy or sympathy while men are socialized to be more competitive and achievement oriented (Cheal, 1988). Mick (1992) claimed evidence of this in self-gifting as males have a higher propensity to use self-gifts as an incentive to reach a personal goal while females tend to engage in nice-to-self or therapeutic self-gifts (Mick, 1992).

It must be noted that both Cheal’s and Mick’s findings are over 20 years old and Cheal’s deductions are based on a belief that money and resources are more important to men and women have more of a need for interpersonal exchange (1988), which must be challenged as a dated view of women’s role in society and does not take into account their integration into more male dominated areas in recent years.

Previous research looking at gender roles and dyadic gifting found that men shopping for men accessed different gender traits than when they were buying for women. (Gould and Weil, 1991). Weisfeld-Spolter et al, (2005) found that a similar trend occurred
in self-gifting in that gender orientation is triggered differently depending on whether self-gifting is a reward or for therapy. They suggested that people who score highly on the feminine dimension of the Bem sex role inventory are more nurturing while those who score high on the masculine dimension tend to be more instrumental. Findings indicated that in self-gifting scenarios, the therapeutic (reward) situation resulted in higher feminine (masculine) scores than in the reward (therapeutic) one. The first research question, therefore, for this study is whether females access more masculine traits when they self gift for reward and males access more feminine traits when they self gift for therapy? The rationale for this hypothesis is twofold. Firstly, rewarding oneself when goals are achieved can encourage individuals to reach higher levels of performance (Bandura and Perloff 1967), therefore encouraging females to tap into their more masculine traits could help them become more self motivated and use self gifting more as an incentive than a means to help them repair their mood. Secondly, understanding what triggers a shopper to purchase a particular item for themselves will deliver a deeper insight for advertisers/marketers on how to deliver messages. Returning to the needs behind consumption discussed earlier, understanding the role gender and gender traits may play can help us edge closer to understanding the complicated relationship we have with consumption and its relationship with our ideal selves.

3.5 Role of Personality and impulsivity in Self-Gifting

“Whether someone is depressed, frustrated or bored, impulse buying appears to be an effective tactic for breaking out of an undesirable mood state” (Gardiner and Rook, 1988, p. 128).
Impulse purchasing is defined as a spontaneous desire to buy something in a way that is considered emotional and reactive (Rook, 1987). Much research claims self-gifting is planned – Mick and DeMoss (1992) claimed 83% was planned as it was “mentally connected to the context precipitating it” so the intention to purchase the self-gift was formed prior to the actual purchase. Kauppinen-Raisanen et al (2014) and Sherry et al. (1995) both claim that the act of self-gifting can be predetermined but that the specific purchase could be impulsive. For example a person may know they want a new dress but it is when they are out shopping for a present for their friend that they spot the perfect dress and buy it.

As mentioned previously, women are thought to shop and self-gift more than men and this does not change when looking at gender splits for impulse purchasing. Rook (1987), claims that women impulse shop more than men, Verplanken (2005) suggests this could be as a means to improve their mental state as women suffer from anxiety and depression more than men. As a significant proportion of self-gifts are purchased to repair mood it is worth exploring in this study the relationship between self-gifting and impulsivity. The 2nd research question asks whether women who self-gift to improve their mood plan to do so or is it impulsive? The rationale for this hypothesis is to gain a deeper understanding of impulsive self-gifting, as there is research on both of these styles of purchasing but not combined.

In considering possible personality predictors of self-gifting, previous research has indicated a significant positive relationship between Neuroticism on the OCEAN scale and impulse purchasing (Bratko et al, 2013). Neuroticism is a fundamental personality trait that is generally associated with anxiety, angry hostility, depression, self-consciousness and impulsiveness (Goldberg, 1993). This highlights a potential dark side of impulsive purchasing and self-gifting when used for mood repair. An attempt by a neurotic consumer to improve
their mood may lead to them spending beyond their means and actually exacerbate their feelings of emotional angst (Clarke and Mortimer, 2013). The 3rd research question of this study is whether participants who impulse purchase will score high on the Neuroticism scale? A link between neuroticism and impulsive self-gifting could be useful from a therapeutic perspective in helping to gain a deeper understanding of impulse self-gifting behaviour in patients that may have become problematic. There is also limited research examining the role of personality traits in self-gifting so this survey aims to add to this.

3.6 Role of Locus of Control

Locus of control is defined as a tendency of people to believe that control of their lives resides within them (internal) or externally with others or the situation (external) (Rotter, 1990). Sherman et al. (1997) and Slagsvold & Sorenson (2008), claim that females tend to be more external than males. However, given the changing nature of women’s roles and the narrowing of the gender gap in some societies, it could be challenged as to whether this still holds true.

Deci (2000) claims that those with an internal locus of control are more inclined to take action themselves to improve their mood rather than relying on something external. Previously discussed self-gifting research claims that women tend to self-gift for mood repair (therapy) more than men, yet if the above locus of control findings claim that women tend to be more external than men, then are women accessing an internal locus of control when they self-gift to improve their mood? Therefore the 4th research question of this study asks whether women who self gift for therapy reasons have an internal locus of control? Implications of the findings could help alter the perception of women as predominantly having an external locus of control.
3.7 Marketing/Advertising

"Because I’m worth it was our message in 1973, and today we know an astonishing 80% of women recognise and respond to this positive phrase and powerful sentiment". (www.L’orealparis.ca).

Understanding why a shopper buys what they buy is a powerful insight for any marketer or brand owner. Major corporations invest significant amounts of money to understand why and when people buy their brands, because having that knowledge can open the gates to increased sales. As one can deduce from the previous discussions on consumption, this is not an easy insight to garner; shoppers’ needs may be based on ideals rather than actual needs so a marketer would need to be a mind reader in many cases to understand what is driving a particular purchase. Such a gap between a consumers actual and desired self can lead to a negative pattern of excessive and impulsive buying that the marketing world would need to take some measure of responsibility for. “If consumption is a never-ending search for the ideal self then a sufficiency of consumer goods can never be reached, we will never have enough” (McCracken 1986, p. 104). There are a number of implications for advertisers from this study in determining how best to talk to their consumers based on the reasoning behind their self-gifting.

Research Objectives:

The primary objective of this research is to assess the impact of gender and gender traits on self-gifting behaviour. Research Question 1: Do females access more masculine traits when
they self gift for reward and males access more feminine traits when they self gift for therapy?

The secondary objective is to examine whether certain variables impact self-gifting behaviour: neuroticism, impulsivity and locus of control. Research Question 2: Do women who self-gift to improve their mood do so more impulsively than planned? Research Question 3: Do participants scoring high on Neuroticism also answer positively on the impulse purchase question? Research Question 4: Do women who self gift for therapy reasons have an internal locus of control?

Summary of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: a) There will be a significant relationship between self-gifting for reward and Bem sex role inventory scores for women. b) There will be a significant relationship between self-gifting for therapy reasons and Bem scores for men.

Hypothesis 2: There will be a significant difference in therapy scores for females between those who plan and those who impulse purchased their latest self-gift.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant difference in Neuroticism scores between those who plan and those who impulse purchased their latest self-gift.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant difference in therapy scores for females between those with an internal and those with an external Locus of Control.
Methodología

4.1 Participants

A sample of convenience was collected consisting of 156 participants over 18, gathered from the online population through two main sources – LinkedIn and Facebook. Five particular groups were targeted for participants on LinkedIn due to the professional connections of the researcher in areas of psychology, management and marketing. All participants took part voluntarily with no incentives offered and as all were in the same experimental group, no control group was needed.

There were 96 female, n=96 (62%) and 60 male, n=60 (38%) participants in total. Age ranges were broken down as follows: 18-25, 26-35, 36-45, 46-55 and 55+. As ranges were used rather than actual ages, it is not possible to calculate the Standard Deviation. The mean age range was: 22-35 with a frequency of 87.

4.2 Design

A within subjects, quantitative correlational design was used for the first hypothesis and there was no manipulation of the variables by the researcher. Correlational analyses were carried out to determine a relationship between self-gifting for reward in females (therapy scores in males) and Bem masculine (feminine) scores. A multiple regression was then used where the predictor variables (PV) were BEM sex role inventory scores and gender. These were tested to determine whether combined they predicted changes in self-gifting behaviour. The criterion variable (CV) was self-gifting behaviour. Three Independent
Samples T-Tests were used for the second hypothesis to examine for differences amongst variables: neuroticism, locus of control, self-gifting and impulse/planned purchasing.

4.3 Materials

There were Four existing psychological measures questionnaires were used for this as part of this survey.

1) Self-Gifting

The questionnaire on Self-Gifting (Mick and DeMoss, 1992) was adapted to include an open ended question and two demographic questions.

In Self Gifting behaviour, this questionnaire assesses the reasons for it, what was purchased and one’s feelings post purchase. Participants were asked to consider the most recent self-gifting purchase they made and to fill out all questions. There are 7 items in this questionnaire: 2 items relate to reasons for the purchase, 3 items on what was purchased and related emotions and 2 demographic questions. 4 questions are on a Likert Scale, 1 open ended and 2 demographic.

For example: Q2. “Thinking of the most recent gift bought by yourself, for yourself- had you planned to purchase something for yourself at this time? Please choose one response: (Yes it was planned, No it was an impulse, Don’t know, Any other reason, please give details.).

Cronbach’s Alpha was examined to test for reliability. N=156. Total number of questions tested was 7. Cronbach’s Alpha was .75. Above .7 is considered satisfactory. No negative values were recorded for any of the individual items. McKeage et al (1993) also found the items of this questionnaire to have a reliability of .83.
2) **Locus of Control**

Rotter’s *Locus of Control Questionnaire* (Rotter, 1954) was used to determine Internal/External locus of control of the participants. Participants were asked to consider a set of 23 items where each item contained 2 statements, and to choose the statement they most agreed with, either “A” or “B”. For example:

Q1. “A. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much, OR B. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.”

Cronbach’s Alpha was examined to test for reliability. N=156. Total number of questions tested was 23. Cronbach’s Alpha was .73. Above 0.7 is considered satisfactory. No negative values were recorded for any of the individual items. Lange and Tiggemann (1981) found this scale and its two-factor structure to be stable over a considerable period of time. However Pandya and Jogsan (2013) indicate a move towards more specific measures, e.g. Health Locus of Control or more multi dimensional measures.

3) **Sex Roles**

Bem *Sex Role Inventory* (Bem, 1994) was used to measure participants’ gender traits: masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated. The short form version was used which contained 30 items. Participants were asked to consider the 30 personality characteristics and to answer how they felt each characteristic described them on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from “never” to “always true”.

Examples of such characteristics are: 1. Defend my own beliefs, 2. Affectionate, 18. Secretive.

Scoring was done using a split median technique as suggested by Bem (1981); this gives a total result for each trait: Androgynous, Masculine, Feminine and Undifferentiated.
Cronbach’s Alpha was examined to test for reliability. N=156. Total number of questions tested was 44. Cronbach’s Alpha was .76. Above .7 is considered satisfactory. No negative values were recorded for any of the individual items. According to Bem and Lipsitz (1981), the inventory is considered empirically sound with reported co-efficients of .78 for the female scales and .87 for the male scales. The short form used in this study has a strong .9 correlation with the original long form. However there have been some concerns over statistical distortion of data from this questionnaire and the fact that the manual has not been revised in 20 years (Holt and Ellis, 1998; Hoffman and Borders, 2001).

4) Personality Traits

Big 5 Inventory (BFI) Questionnaire (Goldberg, 1993) was used to determine measures of Neuroticism and Extraversion of the participants. Participants were asked to consider 44 items that measure an individual on the Big Five Factors of personality, and to answer whether they agreed with them on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “agree strongly”.

For example: “I see myself as someone who...1.) Is talkative, 3.) Does a thorough job, 23.) Tends to be lazy.”

Cronbach’s Alpha was examined to test for reliability. N=156. Total number of questions tested was 30. Cronbach’s Alpha was .8. Above .7 is considered satisfactory. No negative values were recorded for any of the individual items. Choon Hee (2014) in a Malaysian study stated that the BFI showed excellent internal reliability for each of the subscales with co-efficients above 0.7.
4.4 Procedure

The online survey site Survey Monkey was used. A passworded account was created that only the researcher had access to. The 4 questionnaires were loaded onto this website to create one overall survey. This was then loaded onto the researchers Facebook and LinkedIn pages (as well as the specific LinkedIn groups outlined in the Participants section) with a general request to friends and connections to participate.

Once a participant clicked on the link, they were brought to the survey introduction page, which gave a brief overview of what the study entailed: a study of retail therapy looking at why we purchase gifts for ourselves; and some details about the researcher and course of study. Potential participants were informed at this stage that all answers were completely anonymous and that they could cancel out of the survey at any stage prior to submission. They were informed that completion would take approximately 10-15 minutes (a trial run to confirm an average time had been carried out on 5 participants prior to being launched online). Participants were then guided through the 4 questionnaires on Survey Monkey. Once they had completed these and hit submit, their responses were sent back to the Survey Monkey account, which was accessible only by password.

There were no ethical concerns in relation to this survey so no support information was attached to the questionnaires. On the introduction sheet to the Questionnaires, participants were informed of their anonymity and their right to withdraw from the study at any stage prior to clicking the submit button. Participation was taken as consent for data to be used.
Results

Note: in terms of self-gifting reasons Therapy (mood repair) scores, where mentioned, are a combination of = to be nice to myself+ to help relieve stress + to cheer myself up. Reward scores = to reward myself + incentive to reach a goal.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The total number of participants was 156, (n=156). 96 were female (n=96) and 60 were male (n=60). All participants answered the self-gifting questionnaire indicating how often they purchased a gift for themselves.

Table 1: Self-Gifting Questionnaire Frequency of Response by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 1: Frequency of self-gifting reasons by gender](image-url)
Table 1 indicates that 87.5\% of female participants and 89.5\% of male participants self-gift. 50\% of women self-gift regularly/often, which is greater than the males (31.7\%). This is in line with previous findings by Mick and DeMoss and current consumption trends, which claim that women shop more often than men.

According to findings from Mick and DeMoss (1992), females are more likely to engage in self-gifting behaviour for therapeutic and “nice-to-self” reasons, whereas males are more inclined to self-gift when it is a reward or an incentive to reach a goal. The initial descriptive statistical findings of this study would indicate similarities in terms of the female responses (62\% self-gifting to be nice to oneself/relieve stress/cheer oneself up/birthday). However the male responses would indicate a difference in initial findings with only 26\% self-gifting for reward/incentive reasons. However this is not a statistical test and the Mick and deMoss study was part of a statewide (Florida) study that took place over the phone (n=398) versus this sample which was purely online (n=156).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2: Impulse/Planned responses to most recent self-gift purchase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just picked this on impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I just picked this on impulse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Post purchase feelings on most recently purchased self-gift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>81.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried/Regret</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of both</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>78.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried/Regret</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture of both</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 and Table 3 display level of planned vs. Impulsive self-gifting purchasing and the extent of any post purchase regret. The descriptive statistics indicate that most purchasing was planned rather than impulsive for both genders and that only 15% of males and 15% of females regretted their purchase.

Table 4: Standard Descriptives of Variables split by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-Gifting</th>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Bem Sex Inventory</th>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Mean</strong></td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>11.59</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>22.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male Mean</strong></td>
<td>24.45</td>
<td>9.48</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>20.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female Mean</strong></td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>12.91</td>
<td>2.35</td>
<td>23.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Standard Deviation</strong></td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Male SD</strong></td>
<td>9.74</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Female SD</strong></td>
<td>10.48</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>6.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Equal variances were found for most variables; see Table 4 for descriptive statistics for each variable. Q-Q plots visually showed normally distributed data for all variables. However a Shapiro Wilk test showed up a significant result for the Bem sex role inventory variable (all other variables being non-significant). A search for outliers using Mahalanobis Distance (alpha=.001, df =30, $\chi^2 = 50.89$) highlighted 10 outliers ranging from 51.67 to 85.23. Based on these findings of abnormally distributed data, assumptions for parametric testing of Bem scores are broken so results will be interpreted with caution.

### 5.2 Inferential Statistics

**Hypothesis 1**  
a) There will be a significant relationship between self-gifting for reward and Bem sex role inventory scores for women.  
b) There will be a significant relationship between self-gifting for therapy reasons and Bem scores for men.

As data is not normally distributed, histograms were not run and two non-parametric bivariate correlations were carried out to determine if there was a relationship between Bem scores and self-gifting. Cases were split on SPSS so each correlation was gender specific. The first correlation was to look for a relationship between masculine Bem scores and self-gifting for reward reasons in females. A Spearman’s Rho found no significant association between Bem masculine scores and self-gifting for reward scores in females. ($Rs (96) = .05, p=.616$).

The second correlation was to look for a relationship between feminine Bem scores and self-gifting for therapy reasons in males. A Spearman’s Rho found a weak positive significant relationship between Bem feminine scores and self-gifting for therapy scores in males. ($Rs (60) = .26, p=.042$). The Null cannot be rejected due to the insignificance of findings for females, so must be accepted.
To understand if gender and gender traits combined may predict changes in self-gifting behaviour, a multiple regression analysis was run. Predictor Variables are gender and Bem Sex Role Inventory scores, while the Criterion variable is total Self-Gifting Scores. As data is not normally distributed, scatter plots were not run. As there are outliers, results are to be interpreted with caution. The results of the regression indicated that the two predictor variables explained only 4% of the variance ($R^2 = .36, F (2, 153) = 3.89, p= .023$). It was found that gender traits ($\beta = .05, p=.545, 95\% CI = -1.06 – 2.01$) did not significantly predict self-gifting behaviour while gender ($\beta = .22, p=.006, 95\% CI = -8.15 – -1.39$) did significantly predict self-gifting behaviour.

Results indicate that gender does play some role in self-gifting behaviour but that gender traits do not play a significant role in how people self-gift. Previous research had claimed that the therapeutic (reward) situation resulted in higher feminine (masculine) scores, but this has not been backed up by findings in this study.

---

**Table 10: Spearman’s Rho Correlational values of variables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Reward Scores</th>
<th>Therapy Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female Bem Masculine Scores</td>
<td>.616</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Bem Feminine Scores</td>
<td></td>
<td>.042*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p significant at .05 level

---

**Table 11: values for multiple regression predictor variables where self-gifting is the criterion variable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Bem Sex Role Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$p$</td>
<td>.006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2 = .036$
Hypothesis 2

There will be a significant difference in therapy scores between females who planned and those who impulsively purchased their latest self-gift.

Descriptive statistics indicated that significantly more women than men self-gifted their most recent gift on impulse (38.5% women vs. 16.7% men). This confirms Micks findings on overall self-gifting (1992). Cases on SPSS were split by gender. Looking specifically at self-gifting for therapy reasons, a histogram was run; please see Figures 2. Data was deemed normally distributed. An Independent Samples T-Test was run on two groups: one where female participants answered “planned” (n=59) and one where they answered “on impulse” (n= 37) to the question on how they purchased their last self-gift. The dependent variable is therapy scores. The test was run in order to see which group (planned or impulse) had the higher mean score on the therapy variable. Levene’s test was not significant at .84 so equal variances were assumed. “On impulse” participants (mean=9.62, SD=4.17) were found to have higher a therapy mean than “planned” participants (mean=7.47, SD = 4.03). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables was somewhere between -3.83 and -.46. The independent samples t-test found that there was a statistical significant difference between the therapy scores of planned and impulse self-gifting participants (t(94) = -2.56, p=.012). Therefore the Null can be rejected. These findings support previous research stating that women self-gifting for therapy reason do so impulsively.
Table 5: Independent Samples T-Test displaying the differences in Therapy scores of Planned vs. Impulse groups for Females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-2.56</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>.012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>4.03</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>9.62</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p significant at .05 level

Figure 2: Frequency of self-gifting responses for therapy reasons for females
Hypothesis 3

There will be a significant difference in Neuroticism scores between those who self-gift impulsively and those who plan.

A histogram was run on the Dependent Variable Neuroticism to check for skewness. See Figure 3.

![Histogram of Neuroticism Scores](image)

**Figure 3:** Frequency of Neuroticism scores for total participants.

Distribution was deemed normal so an independent Samples T-test was then carried out. Two groups to be compared were participants who answered “planned” (n=79) and those who answered “on impulse” (n= 76) to the question on how they purchased their last self-
gift. The Dependent Variable, as above, is Neuroticism. The test is run in order to see which group has a higher mean score of the dependent variable. Levene’s test was not significant at .48 so equal variances were assumed. “On impulse” participants (mean=23.67, SD=6.11) were found to have higher Neuroticism scores than “planned” participants (mean=21.28, SD = 5.71). The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables was somewhere between -4.27 and -.52. The independent samples t-test found that there was a statistical significant difference between the Neuroticism scores of planned and impulse self gifting participants (t(153) = -2.53, p=.013). Therefore the Null can be rejected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>-2.52</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>0.013</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned</td>
<td>21.28</td>
<td>5.71</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse</td>
<td>23.67</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: p significant at .05 level.

Hypothesis 4

There will be a significant difference in therapy results between females with an internal and females with an external locus of control

Cases on SPSS were split to differentiate gender. Only female results are shown. An independent samples t-test was carried out to see if females who self-gifted for therapy reasons had a more internal locus of control (n=36) than an external one (n=60). A histogram was previously run to check for skewness in distribution of the self-gifting...
variable, see Figure 2, and distribution was deemed normal. An independent samples t-test was then run. Therapy scores are the dependent variable with locus of control (LoC) the independent variable. Levene’s test was not significant at .089 so equal variances were assumed. Those females with an external locus of control (mean 8.95, SD 3.97) self-gifted for therapy reasons more than those with an internal locus of control (mean 8.17, SD 4.63). However the 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -2.55 and .99 indicating the presence of null. The independent samples t-test found that there was no statistical significant difference between the therapy scores for women with an internal and external locus of control (t(94) = -.88, p=.382), therefore the null cannot be rejected and must be accepted.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy (F)</td>
<td>-.88</td>
<td></td>
<td>94</td>
<td></td>
<td>.382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal LoC</td>
<td>8.17</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External LoC</td>
<td>8.95</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though it was not hypothesised, as the independent samples t-test was run on split cases, it allowed the males responses to also be analysed. Previous locus of control research and the rationale behind this hypothesis, was that those with an internal locus of control tend to self-gift for therapy reasons - taking action themselves to improve their own mood. Added to this the fact that men normally have a more internal locus of control,
one would expect a statistically significant result for the males but this is not the case, please see Table 8. The 95% confidence limit shows that the population mean difference of the variables lies somewhere between -2.63 and 1.07 indicating the presence of the null. The independent samples t-test found that there was no statistical significant difference between the therapy scores for men with an internal and external locus of control (t(65) = -.85, p=.401). Females in this survey group have a more external locus of control than the males (62% of females have an internal LoC while 72% if males have an internal LoC) please see table 9. These results this lend themselves to further analysis in the Discussion section as to reasons why it may not be impacting their self-gifting behaviour.

Table 8: Independent Samples T-Test displaying the differences in therapy scores of internal and external locus of control for males

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Therapy (M)</td>
<td>-0.85</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>0.401</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal LoC</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External LoC</td>
<td>7.06</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

M = Males

Table 9: Locus of Control Descriptive Statistics for total Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locus of Control</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>71.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

Self-gifting and Gender

The primary aim of this study was to examine the role gender/gender traits play in self-gifting behaviour. Previous research had looked at data split by gender but not whether gender predicted certain self-gifting behaviours.

Initial descriptives indicated some gender differences but also a number of similarities: the same % of both genders never self-gift (12%), the most common reasons for self-gifting are the same for both groups: “when I have extra money” and “to cheer myself up”, and the same % of both genders regret self-gift purchases after the fact (15%). However the differences are significant: 39% of females impulse purchase their self-gift compared to only 17% of males. This is in line with current consumption research that claims women shop more than men and do so more impulsively than men. Women also self-gift more often than men, with half of female participants say they do so “regularly/often” compared to only 32% of men. This would make sense if one accepts the premise that women shop more often than men in general. It could also be that women accept self-gifting as a means to repair mood and reward themselves more readily than men do. This is borne out in impulse vs. planned results. Men seem to plan their purchases a lot more than women (83% planned), whether there is a reluctance to “let go” and purchase something impulsively is not part of this study but certainly is worth exploring further.

Inferential tests in relation to the role of gender/gender traits delivered on the whole, mixed results. There was a weak significant relationship identified for men between their feminine Bem scores and their self-gifting for therapy reasons. There was no significance found for female therapy results and the impact of masculine Bem results. The research this hypothesis was based on: Weisfeld-Spolter et al, (2005) claimed that gender
orientation is triggered differently depending on whether self-gifting is a reward or for therapy. Findings indicated that in self-gifting scenarios, the therapeutic (reward) situation resulted in higher feminine (masculine) scores than in the reward (therapeutic) one. Findings of this current study did not support these findings above, however differences in the methodology could be accountable. Weisfeld-Spolter et al. used 85 subjects for their study and their method involved three gift-giving scenarios where participants had to imagine a scenario and then fill out their questionnaires. This study used 156 participants and data came from participants’ recall of their most recent self-gift.

In terms of the multiple regression, it indicated that gender and gender traits only accounted for 4% of variance, although there was a significant result for gender predicting self-gifting behaviour. The concept of gender traits, if one agrees they are culturally based, can be challenged as being out of date. Cultural norms have fundamentally changed over the last 29 years since the Bem sex role inventory was created; the fact that this survey was carried purely on line and therefore has a potential plethora of nationalities indicates that not only do certain boundaries no longer apply, but also that the measure may not be able to cope with a multi-cultural sample.

Aside from methodology differences and looking solely at the findings of this study, the conclusion would have to be reached that there are more significant factors than gender/gender traits predicting self-gifting behaviour. The relationship between women and consumption is an especially fluid one; as per earlier discussed consumption research, women shop more and give into impulsivity in shopping behaviour more than men. It has also been highlighted that consumption fulfils a need and can help us cross the bridge to our ideals, offering a substitute for X when X is in short supply. Women could be more open to accepting Y as mood repair is important to them, but males perhaps prefer to wait until X is
available as seen in the planning that goes into their purchasing. Further research in this area, especially qualitative, could help unlock some of the cognitive processes behind these behaviours.

The secondary aim of this study was to examine whether a number of other variables predicted any differences in self-gifting behaviour: locus of control, neuroticism and impulsivity.

**Self-gifting and Impulsivity**

Descriptive results backed up previous findings: Mick (1992) who claimed that 83% of purchases were planned. This study found that 83% of male purchases were planned and 61% of female. Inferential results found a statistically significant difference in self-gifting for therapy scores depending on whether females had planned or impulsively purchased. These findings support those of Rook (1987) who stated that women impulse shop more than men and of Verplanken (2005) who had claimed women impulse shopped as a possible means to improving their mental state. The fact that more women impulsively purchased to repair their mood possibly indicates that they were reacting to their mood, looking to improve it immediately rather than possibly dealing with the reasons behind it. Only 15% of women regretted their purchase afterwards indicating that in most cases mood was improved, so the purchase may have fulfilled its short-term requirement. The underlying reasons for the need for mood repair are not seemingly addressed through impulse purchasing and this should have implications for those in therapy for low mood, depression etc. Impulse
purchasing may be a quick fix leading the person to feel they are getting better in the short term.

A weakness of this study was that impulsivity was not a scale variable – it was measured through participants being asked whether their latest self-gift was planned or impulsive. It was felt that an impulsiveness measure such as Barratt Impulsiveness Scale would not allow the participants to relate this directly to their most recent purchase. However given the findings of the study it would be certainly worth investigating in the future if those who self-gift impulsively are impulsive by nature or just when they are treating themselves.

**Planned/Impulse Purchasing and Neuroticism**

The findings of this study indicate a statistically significant difference in Neuroticism scores between those who planned to purchase and those who did so impulsively. This supported previous findings (Bratko et al, 2013) of a significant positive relationship between Neuroticism and impulse purchasing. With the known neurotic traits of panic, anxiety and guilt one would expect less planning to go into purchasing. However shopping in an anxious or panicked state may lead neurotic shoppers to spend beyond their means and further exacerbate their negative feelings. This current study did not investigate other personality traits and a comparison in terms of self-gifting could help enlighten on the role personality may play. A profile of an impulsive self-gifting buyer could then be built up and could be used to help raise awareness of peoples own consumption habits.

It would also be a recommendation for future research to investigate for any post purchase regret from those with a high score in Neuroticism as they may feel they had no
choice in their consumption decisions and may regret the purchase afterwards. Neuroticism predicts negative affect which in turn predicts consumer satisfaction and complaint behaviour (Mooradian and Olver, 1992), so from a marketing perspective, there could be an opportunity to integrate personality findings into the domain of consumer behaviour.

**Self-gifting and Locus of Control**

This study found no significant differences in how women with an internal and an external locus of control self-gift for therapy reasons. Previous research from Sherman (1997) and Slagsvold & Sorenson (2008), had claimed that females tend to be more external than males and this was supported by descriptive statistical findings in this survey: 72% of men had an internal locus of control and 63% of women had an external one. Ryan and Deci (2000, p.68) claimed that those with an internal locus of control are more inclined to take action themselves to improve their mood however findings of this study do not support this with no statistical differences found for either men or women. It was hoped that findings from this study would enable the view of women having a predominantly external locus of control to be challenged but this was not the case. What the findings do indicate is that locus of control is not a predictor of self-gifting behaviour.

A possible rationale for these findings is that self-gifting for therapy is alleviating mood no matter what a person’s Locus of control is. Those with an internal one want to take action so purchase to improve their mood while those with an external locus of control could rely on the product they purchase to make them feel better and the actual shopping experience. An area this study has not covered is the importance put on the latter two variables – the actual item purchased and the shopping experience itself. A suggestion for
future research would be to focus on these two areas in order to see if they also fulfil a need for the person as well as the actual act of self-gifting.

**Implications for Marketing**

The L’Oreal tagline mentioned in the introduction “because I’m worth it” was originally created in 1973 and has endured ever since, successfully tapping into women’s desire to feel deserving and helping rationalise their purchase. L’Oreal, the world’s largest cosmetics company, have successfully introduced a process for women to move closer to their ideal - which is what cosmetics and perfume are all about at the end of the day - helping them enhance what they have and taking the guilt out of it. Interestingly the tagline has been kept solely for female campaigns even though L’Oreal do a successful line in male grooming products.

This is an example of how a brand can link in with the strong communication dimension of self-gifting. If a marketer/advertiser can gain insight into why a self-gift is purchased (mood repair, reward, etc.) then communication can be tailored to target specific shoppers. Findings from this study on how women impulse shop to improve their mood (therapy), is a key insight for a marketing campaign. The woman may not feel like she is “worth it” if her mood is down, so another message needs to be used that will resonate with her. Further research on what is actually purchased to repair mood could have significant implications for brand owners.

However there is also a concern that marketing is encouraging the darker side of consumption by playing on this need to bridge our hopes and ideals in order to get nearer to our ideal self - which may never be reached therefore enlarging our consumer appetite.
Findings of this study indicating a link between Neuroticism and impulse purchasing highlight possible concerns where some personalities may find themselves captivated by certain marketing promises. Advertising for online betting sites offering to ‘change your luck here’ or health products that will “change your life”. As people desire to move towards their ideal, some will be more susceptible than others to marketing promises. Society must be careful that consumption does not become the illusory compass for the pursuit of wellbeing.

**Summary**

This study aimed to examine the role of gender in self-gifting behaviour and the impact a number of other variables (locus of control, impulsivity and Neuroticism) may also have. Findings indicate that gender traits do not predict self-gifting behaviour but that gender for males may be an indicator of self-gifting for therapy. Changing gender roles and cultural changes over the last number of decades may mean the concept of gender traits needs to be revisited. Neuroticism and impulsivity both predicted changes to self-gifting behaviour and indicate that further personality traits may also impact. Impulsivity as a type of shopping behaviour in itself is strongly linked to self-gifting for women but men seem to plan more, so impulsiveness as a personality trait may deliver further insights. Locus of control did not deliver any significant predictions of self-gifting behaviour and the possibility is that self-gifting could be fulfilling two different roles depending on whether locus of control is internal or external.
References


Mooradian, T and Olver, J (1994). Neuroticism, Affect and post purchase processes. Association for Consumer Research, 21, pp. 595-600


Appendices

Study: Gender and Personality Differences in Self-Gifting Behaviour and the impact of Locus of Control

My name is Niamh Barden and I am conducting research into self-gifting behaviour (retail therapy) and the reasons why we treat ourselves with purchases. This research is being conducted as part of my psychology degree in Dublin Business School and will be submitted for examination.

You are invited to take part in this study and participation involves completing and returning the attached anonymous survey. All of the questionnaires have been used widely in research.

Participation is completely voluntary and so you are not obliged to take part.

Participation is anonymous and confidential. Thus responses cannot be attributed to any one participant. For this reason, it will not be possible to withdraw from participation after the questionnaire has been collected.

The questionnaires will be securely stored and data from the questionnaires will be transferred from the paper record to electronic format and stored on a password protected computer.

**It is important that you understand that by completing and submitting the questionnaire that you are consenting to participate in the study.**

Should you require any further information about the research, please contact Niamh Barden, xxxxx@yahoo.ie or (087) xxxxxxx My supervisor can be contacted at xxxxx@dbs.ie.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
Mick and DeMoss Self-Gifting Questionnaire

In the past when you have acquired products, services or experiences for yourself, how often have you felt you have purchased them?

- Please indicate from 0 (never) to 8 (very often) for each of the below.
  - To reward yourself (for having accomplished a personal goal)
  - Just to be nice to yourself
  - Because it was your birthday/holiday
  - To relieve stress
  - As an incentive to reach a personal goal
  - To cheer yourself up (because you were feeling down)
  - Because you had extra money to spend

- Thinking of the most recent gift bought by yourself for yourself- had you planned to purchase something for yourself at this time? Please choose one response:
  - Yes it was planned
  - No it was an impulse
  - Don't Know
  - Any other reason? Please give details ……………………………

- Can you please record what you purchased………………………………

- Had you planned to purchase this exact item or did you choose it on impulse? Please choose one response
  - Yes I wanted this exact item
  - I wanted something similar
  - I just picked it on impulse
  - Any other reason? Please give details …………………………………

- Still thinking of the most recent gift bought by yourself for yourself- how did you feel after you had purchased it:
  - Happy
  - Content
  - Worried I had spent too much
  - Regretful

- Please indicate your age:
  - 18-21
- Please indicate your gender:
  - Male
  - Female

- Age Group:
  - 22-35
  - 36-54
  - 55+
Rotters Locus of Control

For each question please place an X beside the statement that you agree with the most (a or b)

1. **a.** Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.  
   **b.** The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. **a.** Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.  
   **b.** People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. **a.** One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.  
   **b.** There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. **a.** In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.  
   **b.** Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard they try.

5. **a.** The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.  
   **b.** Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. **a.** Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.  
   **b.** Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. **a.** No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.  
   **b.** People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

8. **a.** Heredity plays a major role in determining one's personality.  
   **b.** It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9. **a.** I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.  
   **b.** Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

10. **a.** In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.  
    **b.** Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying in really useless.

11. **a.** Becoming a success is a matter of hard work; luck has little or nothing to do with it.  
    **b.** Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
   b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can
do about it.

13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
   b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter
of good or bad fortune anyhow.

14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
   b. There is some good in everybody.

15. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
   b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right
place first.
   b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability. Luck has little or nothing to
do with it.

17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can
    neither understand, nor control.
   b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world
    events.

18. a. Most people don’t realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental
    happenings.
   b. There really is no such thing as “luck.”

19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.
   b. It is usually best to cover up one’s mistakes.

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.
   b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.
   b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.
   b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23. a. Sometimes I can’t understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.
   b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.

24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.
   b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.
   b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26. a. People are lonely because they don’t try to be friendly.
   b. There’s not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like
   you.
27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.  
   b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.  
   b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.  
   b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.
Bem Sex Role Inventory

On this page, you will find listed a number of personality characteristics. We would like you to use those characteristics to describe yourself, that is, we would like you to indicate, on a scale from 1 to 7, how true of you each of these characteristics is. Please do not leave any characteristic unmarked.

Example: sly
Write a 1 if it is *never or almost never true* that you are sly.  
Write a 2 if it is *usually not true* that you are sly.  
Write a 3 if it is *sometimes but infrequently true* that you are sly.  
Write a 4 if it is *occasionally true* that you are sly.  
Write a 5 if it is *often true* that you are sly.  
Write a 6 if it is *usually true* that you are sly.  
Write a 7 if it is *always or almost always true* that you are sly.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Defend my own beliefs</th>
<th>16. Have leadership abilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Affectionate</td>
<td>17. Eager to soothe hurt feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conscientious</td>
<td>18. Secretive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Independent</td>
<td>19. Willing to take risks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sympathetic</td>
<td>20. Warm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Assertive</td>
<td>22. Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Sensitive to needs of others</td>
<td>23. Tender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Reliable</td>
<td>24. Conceited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Strong Personality</td>
<td>25. Willing to take a stand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Jealous</td>
<td>27. Tactful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Compassionate</td>
<td>29. Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Truthful</td>
<td>30. Conventional</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Big Five Personality Inventory

Here are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. For example, do you agree that you are someone who likes to spend time with others? Please write a number next to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with that statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>Disagree a little</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Agree a little</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I see myself as someone who...

___ 1. Is talkative
___ 2. Tends to find fault with others
___ 3. Does a thorough job
___ 4. Is depressed, blue
___ 5. Is original, comes up with new ideas
___ 6. Is reserved
___ 7. Is helpful and unselfish with others
___ 8. Can be somewhat careless
___ 9. Is relaxed, handles stress well
___ 10. Is curious about many different things
___ 11. Is full of energy
___ 12. Starts quarrels with others
___ 13. Is a reliable worker
___ 14. Can be tense
___ 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker
___ 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm
___ 17. Has a forgiving nature
___ 18. Tends to be disorganized
___ 19. Worries a lot
___ 20. Can be moody
___ 21. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
___ 22. Can be cold and aloof
___ 23. Tends to be lazy
___ 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset
___ 25. Is inventive
___ 26. Has an assertive personality
___ 27. Can be cold and aloof
___ 28. Perseveres until the task is finished
___ 29. Can be moody
___ 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences
___ 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited
___ 32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone
___ 33. Does things efficiently
___ 34. Remains calm in tense situations
___ 35. Prefers work that is routine
___ 36. Is outgoing, sociable
___ 37. Is sometimes rude to others
___ 38. Makes plans and follows through with them
___ 39. Gets nervous easily
___ 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas
___ 41. Has few artistic interests
20. Has an active imagination
21. Tends to be quiet
22. Is generally trusting
42. Likes to cooperate with others
43. Is easily distracted
44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature