

SCALE DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO THE INFLUENCE OF GIFTING BEHAVIOR ON STORE CHOICE

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A gift is understood as more an expression of a feeling rather than the monetary value it connotes to. The intangible part of the gift is more valuable and hence customers exercise great care in the process of selection of a gift. This identifies the significance to gifting behavior as an exclusive part of consumer behavior. The descriptive study was carried out with a questionnaire comprised nineteen Likert scales reflecting the components of gifting behavior on which an exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. The survey was carried out with 150 respondents shopping for gift articles in the town of Pondicherry using convenience sampling method. In this paper gifting behavior has been identified to classify under six dimensions namely merchandise, emotion, atmospheric, convenience, social and service. Gift items are a major market for a retailer and this scale would be useful for retailers to check their gift shopper satisfaction preparedness level. This study in future can be extended to other cities in India and can also be carried for specific demographic variables like gender or age.

Key words: Gifting behavior, merchandise, emotion attributes, atmospheric, convenience attributes, service attributes, retailing, store choice

Introduction

Gifting behavior is a niche part of consumer behavior that deals with the behavior exhibited by customers in the process of selection and purchase of gifts. A gift is given as a token of appreciation, love, regard, reciprocity and hope and hence is concerned with a tangible product and an intangible expression. The intangible part of the gift is more valuable and hence customers exercise great care in the process of selection of a gift and this accounts for the major interest in gifting behavior as an area of study. Wolfenbarger

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(1990) found that gifts were more priceless to participants for the meanings involved than for the economic benefits. As customers need to spend time to select the gift they prefer an environment that is homely, peaceful and clean to browse across the possible choice of gifts that convey an unsaid expression. Hence shop managers have to take great care to ensure their shop remains the automatic choice of gift buying process.

The purchase and sale of gift items has no dull season as every day there would be a reason for someone to purchase a gift to celebrate a success or an event or a simple visit. Belshaw (1965) gave a conservative estimate that gifts makes up 10% of all retail sales in North America. Customers often feel the gifts that they give are an extension of their personality and hence portray themselves as who they are through the gifts they give. Mauss (1954) indicated gifts to have more than material features and that presenting a gift is equated to offering a part of one-self. The depth of merchandise, the readiness of sales people to search items that are yet to be removed from packing's, the image of the shop, the readiness and professionalism in providing gift wrappings, shop location and a grandeur for quality are major factors that contribute to the shop being a choice destination for gifting.

Review of Literature

Lowes, Turner and Wills (1971) divulged that the major difference in gifting between primitive and modern society is the incidence of self-sacrificial motives in giving. Banks (1979) identified the self perpetuating characteristic of gift giving that involved giving, receiving and repaying thereby becoming a major influence of acquisition and consumption. Wolfenbarger (1990) recognize gifts more for its intangible benefits and revealed that they are estimated more for their imagery than for the shift of material benefits. Sherry (1983) explained the enthusiasm behind gift giving as selfless and agonistic; the selfless intent directed towards delivering recipient happiness and a show of power and enrichment of the giver being the focus of agonistic intent. Camerer, (1988) recognized the process of giving gifts as a collective, cultural, monetary experience and represents a collective communication reciprocation found across human civilization and helpful in safeguarding mutual relationships and to communicate feelings. Robben and Verhallen (1994) found appropriateness in gifting as selecting the gift and its wrapping that is precise for the receiver or one that the receiver would like. Mick and DeMoss, (1990) explained the act of giving gifts as a constructive

experience that tends to increase the self concept of the giver. Langer (2000) pointed out the benefit of gift giving and made out that the act of giving provides a feeling of being more effective, useful and generous to the gift giver

Objective

To develop a comprehensive scale and identify the dimensions of gifting behavior that influence store choice

Method

The questions were based on gifting behavior that influences the choice of stores. This scale was developed on a five point Likert scale anchored at 1 indicating strongly disagree at one end and anchored at 5 representing strongly disagree at the other end. The components were built using the theoretical base of the dimensions of gifting behavior and the appropriate basis of focus group results. The resultant questionnaire comprised nineteen Likert scales reflecting the different dimensions of gifting behavior on which the exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. The descriptive study was carried out with 150 respondents shopping for gift articles in the town of Pondicherry using convenience sampling method.

Table 1 Components of gifting behavior that influence store choice behavior

	Components of gifting behavior	Dimension	Loading
g10	would like to shop where a choice of gift items are available	Merchandise	.964
g1	Would prefer a shop that stocks branded gift items		.953
g2	Would shop where gift articles are rightly priced		.952
g19	Would shop where special occasion gifts are available		.915
g6	Would like to buy gifts that are remembered for a long time	Emotion	.981
g17	The gift should convey my warmth and feeling		.959
g16	The gift should be a reflection of my self-image		.944
g14	prefer a shop where gifts are properly arranged	Atmospherics	.975
g3	The humidification arrangements should be good		.949
g15	Prefer the shop to be neat and clean		.933
g8	prefer to buy where gift wrappings are made with care		.971

g13	prefer to buy gifts from a shop that is centrally located	Convenience	.942
g12	prefer to buy from shops where there is comfortable parking		.929
g9	Prefer a shop that is perceived as upscale	Social	.959
g7	Like to shop with a matching clientele		.925
g4	Like to shop where my peers shop for gift items		.922
g11	Prefer shops with sales people who are knowledgeable	Service	.859
g5	shops where sales people show me gifts that are not yet displayed		.800
g18	prefer shops with sales people who can suggest me alternatives		.770

Table 2 Eigen Value and Variance of dimensions of gifting behavior that influence

Summary Statistics	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5	F6
Eigen Values	3.514	3.092	2.774	2.414	2.355	1.716
% of variance explained	19.521	17.180	15.414	13.411	13.085	9.532
Cum % of variance explained	19.521	36.702	52.115	65.526	78.611	88.143
N =150	Sample = All respondents			Unit = Factor loadings		

Source: Primary data

The first factor identified as merchandise dimension concerned statements such as gift choice, brand and pricing of gifts. This factor accounts for 19.52 percent of variance. Customers prefer shops with a wide array of gifting items and usually have a feeling that branded items make a better impression as a gift. Customers usually prefer shops that sells special occasion gifts such as Easter pastries, mother's day gift etc. Olshavsky(1985) revealed that the image of the brand provides an identity prompt used by buyers to conjecture the quality of the store's merchandise. Young (2010) divulged shoppers often walk away if they are unable to find what they are looking for in 8-10 seconds`.

The second factor identified as emotional (intangible) attributes include components concerning remembrance and warmth the gift is intended to convey. This factor accounts for 17.18 percent of variance. Larson and Watson (2001) indicated that sentiment in conjunction with monetary value can establish the predominant appeal the gift has to the receiver. Sharma, Negi& Kapoor(2015) stated that people valued those gifts that are

deeply expressive and have emotional connotation more than gifts with high economic worth. Cheal (1987) explained gift as a custom based offering showing a sense of attachment and feeling of bonding to one another.

The third factor recognized as atmospherics contributed to 15.41 percent variance and included statements such as proper arrangement of gift items, humidification arrangement and neat and clean environment. Frasquet, Vallet& Gil (2002),revealed that the design of pleasant environments turns into a viable retail strategy to draw a higher number of customers to the shop and to enhance experience felt by customers in the shop.

The fourth factor separated as convenience attributes concerns components on gift wrappings, location and parking. The value of the gift gets enhanced by the way it is delivered in its packing. Packing adds value to the gift by camouflaging the mystery behind what is inside. Howard (1992) found that the wrapping sets apart the gift from a package. Larson and Watson (2001) made out that a sumptuously draped gift with manifold layers and trappings was a sign of larger respect or love. The convenience dimension accounts for 13.41 percent of variance

The fifth factor distinguished as social dimension includes statements on shop being perceived as upscale, matching clientele and shop being frequented by peers. Gift carries inherent meanings and the value of the gift tends to move based on how the store is perceived by the gift receiver. Belk (1979) found a costly gift as appropriate in the case of an intimate relationship. Vincent and Zikmund (1975) identified that social risk was perceived as much larger when an article was purchased as a gift than when it was bought for use at home. The same gift bought from different stores may convey different levels of happiness to receiver. Persons buying gifts often prefer stores where peers prefer to buy gift that helps them buy matching gifts. This factor explains for 13.08 percent of variance. Bäckström and Johansson (2006) wrote that consumers opt shopping as one of the options for socializing.

The sixth factor identified as service dimension includes statements such as knowledgeable sales staff, and staff being willing to display items that are yet to be removed from cartons. The act of convincing the customer that the gift article is worthy

is often left to the sales men and they also provide inputs on what sort of gifts others buy in the present scenario. Bearden(1977) recognized friendliness of salespersons as an important process of selling goods.

Fig 1 Confirmatory factor analysis with six dimensions of gifting behavior

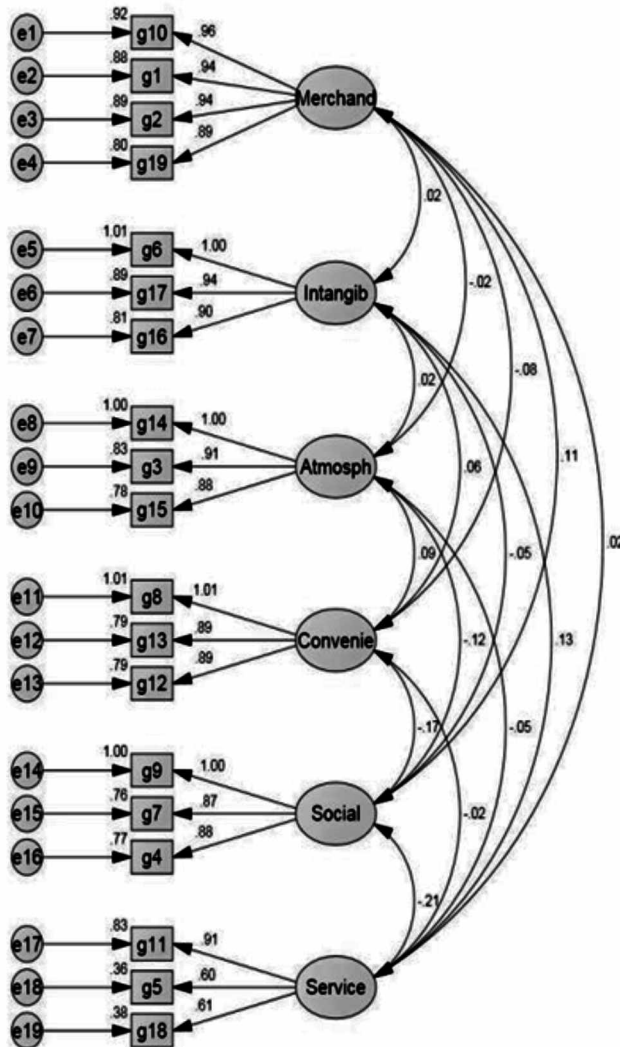


Table 3 Model fit indices for the six dimensions gifting behavior that influence store choice behavior

GFI	AGFI	CFI	NFI	IFI	TLI	RMSEA	$\chi^2 / d.f$	P value
.868	0.817	0.992	0.925	0.992	0.989	0.034	1.116	0.000

Confirmatory Factor Analysis was carried out for the six dimensions of gifting behavior. The AMOS output on the six dimensions of gifting behavior gave a Chi-square value (χ^2) of 152 with 137 degrees of freedom. The CMIN/DF ratio was 1.116 which is within the agreed range of less than 2 (Carmines and McIver 1981) and hence indicative of an acceptable fit between the sample data and hypothetical model. The GFI (goodness of fit index) recognized by Joreskog and Sorbom (1984) value is 0.868 where a value of one identifies an ideal fit. The RMSEA value is 0.034 and as per Stieger (1990) the model is acceptable if the value is less than 0.05.

Chronbach alpha was used as a test to calculate the reliability of the six attributes.

Table 4 Reliability Coefficient

Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha
Merchandise dimension	0.964
Emotional dimension	0.963
Atmospheric dimension	0.951
Convenience dimension	0.949
Social dimension	0.940
Service dimension	0.744
Total	0.70

The value of the attributes ranged from 0. 0.74 – 0.96 and hence was considered internally consistent. Since the value is more than 0.70 as suggested by Nunnally (1978), it indicates that the instrument is sufficiently reliable.

Conclusion

In this paper gifting behavior has been identified to classify under six dimensions namely merchandise, emotion, atmospheric, convenience, social and service. Among this merchandise dimension is more prominent. Hence shop managers should take care to stock their shops with a wide array of gift articles across different brands and at different price bandwidths. The shopper more often than not comes over to buy and transfer an emotion rather than articles. Hence gift shopping is not done in urgency and

customers take time to look at the choices before selecting the gifts. Hence the shop managers should make the experience comfortable by proper humidification arrangement, clutter free management of articles and a neat environment. The sales men should be capable of finding the real need of gift shopper and be able to provide the items even if they are not on display.

Gift items are a major market for a retailer and this scale would be useful for retailers to check their gift shopper satisfaction preparedness level. This paper has tried to classify gift shopping behavior into its dimensions from an Indian context. This paper has studied gifting behavior in particular to Puducherry market and hence in future can be extended to other geographical areas. The study can in future be carried out targeted at a certain age group and as a gender based study. The list of the final set of components that measure the six dimensions of gifting behavior is given in appendix 1

Appendix 1-Gifting behavior Scale

Components of gifting behavior	Mean	SD	Dimension	Mean	SD
would like to shop where a choice of gift items are available	3.59	1.39	Merchandise	3.54	1.37
Would prefer a shop that stocks branded gift items	3.52	1.50			
Would shop where gift articles are rightly priced	3.51	1.41			
Would shop where special occasion gifts are available	3.52	1.48			
Would like to buy gifts that are remembered for a long time	2.85	1.49	Emotion	2.88	1.43
The gift should convey my warmth and feeling	2.91	1.47			
The gift should be a reflection of my self image	2.87	1.50			
prefer a shop where gifts are properly arranged	2.59	1.47	Atmospherics	2.61	1.41
The humidification arrangements should be good	2.62	1.51			
Prefer the shop to be neat and clean	2.61	1.46			
prefer to buy where gift wrappings are made with care	2.92	1.51	Convenience	2.92	1.44
prefer to buy gifts from a shop that is centrally located	2.93	1.53			
prefer to buy from shops where there is comfortable parking	2.92	1.51			
Prefer a shop that is perceived as upscale	3.11	1.54	Social	3.11	1.45
Like to shop with a matching clientele	3.11	1.51			
Like to shop where my peers shop for gift items	3.12	1.55			
Prefer shops with sales people who are knowledgeable	3.75	1.36	Service	3.72	1.11
shops where sales people show me gifts that are not yet displayed	3.81	0.50			
prefer shops with sales people who can suggest me alternatives	3.60	.23			

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