

## ***MOTIVATIONS, EMOTIONS, AND FEELINGS OF SELF-GIFTING IN ENTREPRENEURS: A CROSS CULTURAL STUDY***

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*Received September 2014; accepted December 2014*

### **Abstracts**

**Purpose-** This study explores the self-gifting customer behavior of entrepreneurs across two cultures, Eastern and Western of districts of Iran, and identifies the motivations and feelings associated with the self-gifting practice.

**Design/methodology/approach-** The research includes a literature review of feelings and motivations in the buying context, culture and the importance of cross-cultural studies in the consumer behavior context, and the concept of self-gifting and its evolution. An empirical research undertaken to explore the feelings and motivations for self-gifting among consumers from six different providences divided in an equal numerical manner to represent the two different cultures. The findings of this qualitative research are analyzed by categorizing the responses into five dimensions or themes which have been identified as most relevant. This was followed by a cross-cultural comparison for each of the previously identified themes.

**Findings-** With the exception of two interviewees who by the nature of their job pay attention to advertisements the rest of the respondents ignored any commercial in this respect. Taking into consideration the findings that motives and feelings vary across cultures it can be suggested that ads that try to encourage a self-gifting behavior in Eastern provinces should not follow solely the Western approach. In contrast with the Western individual prioritization, Eastern people are group-oriented thus a self-gift is meant to be shared.

**Research limitations/implications-** In order to avoid any cultural mistake and a low target rate of response self-gifting message customization is advisable. For instance, in West durable and expensive products can be advertised as self-gifts while in the East consumable products and products suitable for sharing can benefit from self-gift-oriented messages. In contrast, experiential self-gifts such as trips can be marketed in a similar way in both East and West. Due to the lack of financial support and time constraints the interviews were not preceded by a complete series of pilot studies. In addition to this, the qualitative analysis as such is vulnerable from the point of view of generalisability, validity and reliability. The interpretivist research philosophy adopted that focuses on the uniqueness of the individuals can also be considered a barrier towards absolute generalisability. Thus, no universal application of the studies' results has been assumed. However, the study gives some useful insights into the nature of self-gifting behavior across the division East-West and as such provides material for future research on the topic.

### **Research paper**

**Keywords:** Motivations, emotions, feelings, self gifting, entrepreneurs, cross-cultural study

**Reference** to this paper should be made as follows: JamehBozorgi, M. J., Hashemi Dashtaki, S.H. (2014). "Motivations, emotions, and feelings of self gifting entrepreneurs: A cross-cultural study", Journal of Entrepreneurship, Business and Economics, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 98–120.

## **Introduction**

### **Motivations and feelings in the consumer behavior context**

Motivation is a basic concept in human behaviour and also in consumer behaviour. As 'perpetually wanting creatures' (Abraham Maslow cited in Chisnall 1995:123) the individuals are characterized by a state of tension, internal conflicts resulted from the unfulfilled needs which consequently breaks the psychological equilibrium (Evans, Jamal, Foxall 2006). In their attempt to restore a balanced situation individuals use a series of methods that range from inward to outward-oriented actions.

From a theoretical point of view motivation is defined as the driving force within individuals that impels them to action (Chisnall 1995; Arnould, Price, Zinkhan 2004; Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard 1999; Schiffman, Kanuk 2007) but it does not exist in a vacuum. On the contrary, it is intertwined with concepts such as: needs (biogenic, psychogenic), wants and a state of tension, aspirations, relevance and involvement. Individuals, consciously or subconsciously, strive to reduce any tension (approach - approach conflict, avoidance - avoidance conflict, approach-avoidance conflict Statt 1997) that may occur through a buying process perceived as a way to fulfill their needs and stress relief.

The process of purchasing is a highly emotional moment since it means for consumers the pursue of their goals. Thus motivated consumers, in their way towards the achievement of their goals, may experience a range of feelings (interest, excitement, anxiety, passion, engagement, and flow) (Arnould, Price and Zinkhan 2004).

## **Motivation theories**

Motivation is a time-sensitive concept that evolved in direct connection with the marketing theoretical approach. During the mechanistic marketing period the consumer was portrayed as a mythical 'homo economicus' (Alfred Marshall cited in Chisnall 1995:200). This perspective stressed the rationality of consumers who were assumed to be guided in their buying behaviour solely by objective criteria to obtain a maximum utility. Along with Maslow's pyramid of needs the theory of drive reduction which stated that first biogenic needs have to be fulfilled so as the individual can move towards other needs gained territory.

According to Sigmund Freud consumers are the subject of hidden reasons that originate in the unconscious layers. The Austrian psychanalist launched the concepts of Id (naughty, unconscious, instinctive, hedonistic), Superego (nice, the internal representation of moral values) and Ego (naughty but nice, mediator between the Id and reality) in order to support its theory that behind 'good', socially accepted motives lie the 'real', subliminal reasons (Evans, Jamal, Foxall 2006).

In the course of time the explanatory framework of motivation theories widened to include the consumers' environment (the theory of incentive). Motivation was not seen anymore as just purely instinctive but started to take into consideration factors such as beliefs and attitudes as well as social and group membership (Chisnall 1995). On the development scale of motivation theories it was reached the conclusion that individuals are driven not only by internal motives but also by external reasons that are mainly under the influence of the outer environment (Evans, Jamal, Foxall 2006). The evolution of the theories of motivation proves that the way the

individual is perceived changed. Thus, research has to outstrip the perspective of consumer integrated solely in numbers in order to develop a hollistic approach ('the mood marketing' Tungate 2005).

### **Shopping motivation**

Even if sheer buying has been generally correlated with buying behaviour there are various reasons for which people visit shopping malls (Antonides, van Raaij 1998). Individual motives for shopping range from learning about product supply, the new fashion, innovations, bargain hunting, physical activity, entertainment and recreation, role playing sensory stimulation to avoiding boredom and self-gratification. It is a general agreement upon the idea that the motivation of shopping depends by a number of personal and social needs. The personal motives include the needs for role-playing, diversification, self-gratification, learning about new trend, sensory stimulation. On the other hand, social motives may be social experiences, communication with others, peer group attraction, status and authority and pleasure in bargaining (Evans, Jamal, Foxall 2006; Nejati et al., 2011)

Tauber, Westbrook and Black, Arnolds and Reynolds cited in Evans, Jamal, Foxall (2006:100) made an extensive description of various types of shopping motives (Radovic Markovic et al., 2012, 2013). From the overview of their explanations it can be concluded that the reasons behind self-gratification can be both positive and negative (Zarea and Salamzadeh, 2012). The positive motivation can be explained by individuals search to enrich their lives and their strive for worthwhile goals. People are oriented towards developing a positive mood, pleasure, gratification. On the other

hand, negative motivation drives the individuals away from the negative situations, negative mood, pain (Evans, Jamal, Foxall 2006).

### **Motivation and culture**

Consumer behaviour and its driver - the motivation - is dependent on the consumers' cultural context. Psychogenic needs which are at the basis of motivation are considered to be reflecting the priorities of a culture, and their effect on behaviour will consequently vary in different environments. For example, a French consumer may be driven to devote a good chunk of its income to products that permit him to display his health and status, while his Scandinavian counterpart may work equally hard to ensure that he does not stand out from his group (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard 1999; Sooreh et al., 2011; Farsi et al., 2014).

An important role in shaping human motivation and goal-striving is played by the cultural and social context (Arnould, Price, Zinkhan 2004). Each individual is a cultural product of his environment – human minds are dynamic entities defined by their unique relationship to the world which, according to the Freudian perspective, is more or less an unconscious process (Salamzadeh et al., 2013).

Moreover, motives are time and culturally sensitive since they are prone to change as the world around transforms. Consequently consumers will adapt their motives and actions to fit with the new environment rules. The influence of culture is so extensive that particular motives are better supported in some cultures than in others. Local context and social networks also influence consumer motives and goals. The specific goals that consumers wish to achieve and the courses of action they take to attain these

goals are selected on the basis of their thinking processes (cognition) and previous learning (experience) which undoubtedly carry the touch of culture (Salamzadeh et al., 2014; Schiffman, Kanuk 2007).

The relation between motivation and culture has profound implications for marketers' activities since the necessity to be culturally literate is more evident taking into consideration the internationalisation of business. In addition to this, it requires them to develop a cultural consumers' map besides demographics.

### **Culture and cross-cultural studies in the consumer behavior context**

There are several factors which influence consumer behaviour. One of them is culture. Culture can have many definitions depending on the context it is used in. In the field of social sciences one of the most recent definitions is the one of De Mooij (2004: 26) which says that culture is “shared beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, and values found among speakers of particular languages who live during the same historical period in a specific geographical region.”

According to Solomon culture is the “accumulation of shared meanings, rituals, norms and traditions among the members of...society” (Solomon *et al.* 2006: 498-9). Probably one of the most popular definitions is the one Hofstede and Hofstede (2005: 4) give “...the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others.” Hence culture defines the behaviour of people within a society and their purchasing decisions as one of those behavioural patterns.

Understanding how and why people from different districts act the way they do vis-à-vis their buying behaviour means comprehending first their culture.

According to the definitions above understanding the consumer involves understanding their value system, i.e. understanding how their mind has been wired by the society they live in. Values are such a strong determinant for behaviour that they can be used not only to explain but also to predict consumption patterns (Henry 1976).

In order to understand better how values vary across different cultures there is a need of a model that categorizes values and attitudes into analyzable groupings sharing similar features and characteristics. One such approach is “cultural dimensions”. First a high vs. low context dimension is suggested by Edward T. Hall in the 1980s in relation to Japanese cultural concepts (Rogers, Hart and Miike 2002: 17) and is today widely accepted as a key model especially when studying the Eastern versus Western cultures framework. Used immensely in cross-cultural research and developed by authors such as Edward Hall, Geert Hofstede and Fons Trompenaars the dimensions theory suggests that cultures can be definable with the aid of value constructs. Acknowledged generally as a central figure in the dimensions idea, Hofstede proposes five such dimensions: power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term vs. short-term orientation (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005). Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner in their book “Riding the waves of culture”(2000) develop a seven-dimensional model including universalism vs. particularism, individualism vs. collectivism, neutral vs. emotional, specific vs. diffuse, achievement vs. ascription, sequential vs. synchronic, and internal vs. external control. As it can be seen the dimensional concept suggests several bipolar models where there are

offered two extremes and districts are ascribed places in between those two poles according to their cultural values.

In this research the selection of cultural dimensions was based on their applicability to the proposed hypotheses. Thus, the second of Hofstede's dimensions, individualism/collectivism, was found to be most useful when discussing the nature of self-gifts across the cultures of the East and the West. It refers to the degree to which the interest of the group is prevalent over the interest of the individual. In the words of Hofstede: *“Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout peoples' lifetimes continue to protect them in exchange for unquestionable loyalty.”* (Hofstede and Hofstede 2005: 76). In general Western cultures are considered individualistic whereas Eastern cultures are collectivistic.

### **The concept of self-gifts**

It has been discovered by some researchers in the mid eighties such as Mick (1986), that consumer behavior towards some types of personal purchases resembles the act of interpersonal gift giving, only to the self. This phenomenon was on the rise and there was little research on it. This realization led to the emergence of research on self gifts (Mick, Faure 1998). Among the earliest insights gathered about self gifting is the Sherry and McGrath's (1989) research on the ethnography of gift shops, which included interviews with customers and yielded some responses like “a gift



from me to me” and “I’m giving it to myself” which revealed the reality that self gifting is indeed practiced (Mick DeMoss 1990; Zo & Ramamurthy, 2009).

Self gifts are defined as “products or services bought by consumers for their own use as a reward or consolation” (Solomon, Bamossy, Akegaard et al 2006). Mick and DeMoss (1990) cited in Mick and Faure (1998: 293) view them as “symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and highly context bound”. Among the most prevailing contexts for self-gifting are personal accomplishments, disappointments, depression and holidays (Mick, DeMoss 1990).

Self gifts are also considered to be a means of regulating behavior (Solomon, Bamossy, Akegaard et al 2006). Grunert (1993) cited in woodruffe (1997: 148) includes self gifts among other types of compensatory consumption and describes it as a common activity not restricted to depressed, suppressed or under-privileged consumers. However, the therapeutic role of self-gifting has not been ignored and was highlighted by Mick and DeMoss (1990). Luomala and Laaksonen concluded from a study they conducted on mood regulatory self gifting behavior, that while self-gifting may be successful in relieving or neutralizing bad moods, it does not work as effectively in severe cases. They even went further to saying that it might aggravate the situation because of the frustration associated with the wasted time and effort (Luomala, Laaksonen 1999).

As a phenomenon, self-gifting is important to be observed and studied thoroughly as it embodies massive marketing opportunity. While it is not passing unobserved by advertisers, as demonstrated in MacDonald's "You deserve a break today" and Andes candies "The perfect little thank me"

(Mick, DeMoss 1990; Zhao et al., 2014), it is still not fully exploited and further research is called for.

### **Research methodology**

For the purpose of this research an interpretivist philosophy is adopted close to a social constructionism (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2006). Situations and respondents have been considered unique and due attention to details in order to understand the reality has been paid. The key element in deciding upon the research philosophy was the consideration that individuals do not have a neutral interaction with the environment but develop and live according to different meanings which have a personal source. Thus, the research effort is focused on understanding the subjective reality of the individuals so as to be able to make sense of their motives and state of being.

The research inductive approach (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill 2006) facilitated a closer relation with the interviewees. The focus was not on gathering a large amount of data in order to develop generalisations but to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' reasons and feelings from various cultural contexts towards self-gifting. In this respect the starting point was not a theoretical platform but the reality. The theory regarding the variation of feelings and motivations regarding self-gifts across cultures was built step by step through the process of collecting data and interpretation. Due to a less structured approach a better understanding of how each individuals interpret their social world was possible.

By adopting a cross-sectional exploratory study of reasons and feelings towards self-gifting of participant from Eastern and Western cultures, the

development of insights and assessment of phenomena in a new light was possible. In addition to this, and due to the highly flexible approach used, there was a constant openness to change the direction as a result of new data and insights.

The research strategy utilized was grounded theory which combined with an inductive approach has the advantage of generating theory based on the data collected. As research tactic in-depth semi-structured interviews on a one-to-one basis were considered the best option. The questions (attached in the appendix) were completed during the interview process with further explanations requests. In addition to this the collection of data through interviews was associated with observations regarding the nonverbal and paraverbal aspects of communication. For the purpose of this research five hypotheses have been formulated open to confirmation or infirmation. They are as follows:

H1: Self-gifting context varies between Eastern and Western cultures.

H2: Feelings towards self-gifting vary between Eastern and Western cultures.

H3: With regard to the privacy of self gifting, the behavior of consumers from Eastern cultures varies from those from Western cultures.

H4: The type of self-gifts preferred varies between Eastern and Western cultures.

H5: Cultural influence on self-gifting varies between Eastern and Western cultures.

With a view to the symmetrical outcome of the research, it was assumed that the results are of significant importance for marketing departments and

communication agencies that are in charge of global brands in their consumer behaviour understanding effort.

To reduce as much as possible any content inconvenient before the start of the primary data collection, one pilot in-depth interview was conducted. The sample used was represented by colleagues that appertain to the cultures under investigation and further adaptations were made. The official sample used was chosen with the constraints of time, cost and convenience from amongst consumers who fit the desired profile. The main criteria was that the interviewee should have their own independent income. Several sources of bias in the research tactic were identified to be: respondents may have been under the influence of the interviewer, were inclined to offer socially accepted answers and the possibility of leading interview questions.

The field generated data were managed according to the noticing and coding- collecting and sorting instances- thinking scheme (Seidel 1998). Coding units (Hair Jr. *et al.* 2007), categorisation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2006) in the form of themes have been formulated (e.g. self-gift context, self-gift feelings, self-gift privacy, self-gift type, culture) by using the big sheet of paper method. Consequently, the data were displayed by assigning related excerpts to the units.

For the purpose of this research not only primary data have been used but also secondary from specialized literature (e.g. consumer behaviour, cultural studies). Eventually, the literature review was the support of correlations made while interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

Constant summaries of the key points identified while undertaking the data collection and the literature review have been used. Furthermore, self-memos and check-up lists proved albeit organising the large amount of

information of a vital importance. Taking into consideration the type of research conducted and the small size of the sample used limitations regarding aspects such as generalisability, validity and reliability are admitted.

## **Discussion**

### **Interviewee profiles**

In this research are used results from six in-depth interviews with respondents from six different districts. Three of them were from the so-defined East (Mashhad, Semnan, and Sistan) and three from the West (Kurdistan, Azerbaijan and Zanjan). They were selected on the basis of being entrepreneurs and therefore have their own income so as to ensure that the decisions about self-gifts and purchases were made as independently from external circumstances as possible. They are all with university education and active members of the society, i.e. have similar level of education and consumer behaviour preconditions. Their profiles are as follows:

#### **West:**

- 1) **Kurdistan**- male, 23 years old, single, Christian, entrepreneur and student. Describes himself as active, open-minded and “a bit of a spender”.
- 2) **Zanjan**- female, 44 years old, single, Muslim, marketing director in a bank, with entrepreneurial spirit. Describes herself as active but reserved.

- 3) **Azerbaijan**- female, 40, single, Muslim, entrepreneur and engineer. Describes herself as optimistic and open-minded.

**East:**

- 4) **Sistan**- male, 30 years old, married, Muslim, engineer and entrepreneur. Describes himself as independent and conservative.
- 5) **Mashhad**- female, 29, single, Human Resources Officer. Describes herself as a positive and optimistic person.
- 6) **Semnan**- female, 24 years old, single, Muslim, Pharmaceutical entrepreneur and student. Describes herself as optimistic, adventurous and extremely liberal.

**Discussion**

**H1: Self-gifting context varies between Eastern and Western cultures.**

By self-gifting context it is understood both the reasons and the occasions of self-gifting behaviour. The comparison of contexts that according to the interviewees facilitate it revealed notable differences. Among the reasons for self-gifting Western interviewees mentioned the need for offering a 'reward' or 'pleasure'. On the contrary, the Eastern respondents did not mention such personal motives that correspond to the individuals' desires satisfaction. Consequently, it can be concluded that in the Western cultures people are oriented towards a more individualistic and hedonistic behaviour. Self-motivation was largely accepted in both cultures as a good reason for self-gifting. This can be explained by taking into consideration the generally spread motivation methods used during childhood when children received

rewards for their good deeds. Later on, this sense of motivation became a strong inner need that prove that this behaviour is universally spread with no cultural boarders.

The self-gifting occasions also differ widely from specifically to generally-oriented. One Eastern interviewee said that both family occasions and academic achievements encourage her towards self-gifting while Western participants did not identify any particular moment (e.g. 'special occasions'). With a view to the Eastern culture it can be concluded that the 'family' element is part of the cultural ethos embedded in the individuals mind set while the Western have a looser and with less conviniences life approach. Another observation that can be made regarding the Eastern culture is its particularisation capacity proved by naming situations. On the other hand the interviewees pointed out several similar occasions for self-gifting: successful projects, after good news, after hard word, after achievements. These events prove the self-gifting implications for the self-motivation process. As it can be seen the hypothesis with the data available can not be either confirmed or denied but interesting insights have been gathered.

## **H2: Feelings towards self-gifting vary between Eastern and Western cultures.**

When asked about their feelings prior or after self gifting, all our respondents associated self-gifting with positive feelings. Motivation was the one common feeling expressed by both our Eastern and Western culture repondents. While participants from the East mentioned satisfaction, relaxation, consolation, motivation and self actualization, those from the

West mentioned success appreciation and pride. Despite the obvious difference between the feelings, they all fall within the positive or good pool of feelings, with a complete absence of negative feelings like guilt or dissatisfaction. The presence of pride and success appreciation as can be considered as indicators of the competitive environment promoted in the West culture. This comparison rejects the hypothesis but it has its limitations which will be mentioned in the conclusion.

**H3: With regard to the privacy of self gifting, the behavior of consumers from Eastern varies from those from Western cultures.**

Some of our interview questions were aimed at shedding light on how explicit consumers are with regard to their self-gifting behavior. Most of our respondents from the East said they would share their intention to buy a self-gift. They also said they would tell other people that they bought a self-gift because they think sharing boosts the good feeling. Some said they would share the gift itself as a means of “*Sharing the happiness and the success*”. Only one respondent said that she would not share the information as she describes her self-gifting behavior as impulsive and unplanned. Responses from our Western respondents varied between not sharing the information to sharing it modestly to bragging about it and showing it off. One respondent said it is common and expected in his culture to brag about how you treated yourself “*..they like to buy big stuff and want to share it with everyone; if it's big enough you can even invite people over and show off*”. Another respondent mentioned that sharing the information is again, their way of sharing the happiness.



From the above comparison it can be observed that privacy does not follow one pattern in either of the two cultures explored. In both, some consumers from the same culture responded in favor of privacy and some were against. Therefore the hypothesis with regard to privacy can neither be proved nor rejected. This apparent limitation may be due to the small sample size.

#### **H4: Types of self-gifts vary across Eastern and Western cultures.**

We asked our subjects to elaborate on the types of gifts they usually buy for themselves with the purpose of discovering buying patterns in terms of expenditure levels and usage intentions. First we suggested 4 categories- durable, consumable, experiential and symbolic. We found out that the respondents from Eastern cultures prefer to buy consumable and experiential gifts which financial value is comparatively low. Examples include sweets, drinks and cosmetics. The motives given were ready availability of such products and possibility of purchasing without doing a lengthy planning or researching process. Furthermore, consumables such as food or alcohol are shareable thus one can use them with others and which is an important motivational reason for people from Eastern societies. Finally, maybe due to their consumability these self-gifts are forgotten quickly and easily and the positive feeling they provide do not last long. *“I share with others, I mean most of the time my gift is something like a special drink or food or sweets.. and I buy them tp celebrate my success with others”*. In the West in contrast gifts tend to be durable, experiential and expensive. Examples include trips abroad, laptop and Blackberry. These types of purchases are characterized by being more personal thus not

intended for sharing with others “*plane ticket to somewhere nice, Mac laptop, Blackberry was my last big purchase*”.

The purchases generally take a long time to be planned and researched suggesting that Western people tend to be more cautious when choosing self-gifts. Accordingly, these gifts provide a long-term satisfaction and memory related to the occasion they were bought to celebrate. The above comparison shows a clear difference between gift type preference between the two cultures examined and therefore supports the hypothesis.

**H5: Cultural influence on self gifting varies between Eastern and Western cultures.**

The analytical process of the in-depth interviews answers concerning the impact of cultural elements on self-gifting behaviour revealed that there are significant differences as a result of culture. For instance, respondents from Eastern cultures identified the religious factor as the driver against self-gifting while in the Western case nothing similar was mentioned. The fact that the Islamic religion is strongly embedded in the mind set of an individual was taken into account by the Muslim interviewee from Zanjan. In her case, even though she was born and raised in a Western culture her religion outrules the majoritarian customs adopted in the district she has been living.

With a view to the frequency of self-gifting it can be argued that in Eastern districts self-gifting is not as common as in Western districts. For example, the Sistani interviewee confessed that he rarely practice it. Moreover according the Islamic rules people are not allowed to drink alcohol during special months which it was admitted to affect self-gifting decisions. The

Islamic religion encourages people to be more outward oriented, to think primarily about the group needs thus self-gifting being considered a peripheral behaviour. With a view to motivation in the case of members from the Eastern culture it can be assumed that one (unconscious) reason for self-gifting is to share the joy with the others since 'we' is than stronger 'I'. On the other hand, another Eastern respondent, the Kurd interviewee did not mention her religion as a barrier in her self-gifting behaviour adding that one possible explanation lies in the generation changes or the differences among geographical regions. Taking into consideration that the Christian religion does not have such strict rules, people are encouraged to consider 'the self' as a priority. Consequently, a rewarding behaviour through self-gifting is widely accepted without any religious restrictions. In both cultures the criticism against those people who practices self-giftin was about the money spent. According to the Christian religion spending money with the purpose of showing-off is not encouraged because believers should think about other people and be humble.

## **Conclusion**

According to the interviews' results it can be assumed that notable differences exist in terms of consumers motivation and feelings across cultures. The interviewees suggested that the way self-gifting is perceived in their own cultures influences their behaviour. For instance, members of the American culture are expected to brag about their belongings thus self-gift decisions will follow this pattern. On the other hand, Eastern people are induced a sharing mentality which is reflected when deciding upon the self-gift type (e.g. consumable).

With regard to theory self-gifting can be interpreted with the help of the Hofstede's division of collectivist versus individualist society because it corresponds very literally to the division East versus West. The results of this study support this dimension of Hofstede as they show that people from Eastern cultures are inclined to sharing their success and deem appropriate and desirable to also share the spoils of their victories, including self-gifts. In other words success is not felt as such if friends and family do not participate in it. On the other hand, Westerners do not need participation but might need recognition from others in order to feel their achievement. Therefore the resulting information sharing about the self-gift value and "showing-off" (the latter term in itself does not include participation but only demonstration) in front of friends or family.

In conclusion, members of the two society types behave as they are expected to- Easterners try not to stand out from the group by buying expensive presents for themselves and by offering to share their possessions. Westerners, as individualists, want to attract the attention to themselves by buying expensive and durable gifts and expecting to be congratulated from others for being outstanding. Overlapping of the two cultures is present only when purchasing experiential self-gifts suggesting that the nature of such products is comparatively more universal.

Culture manifests itself also in the way other people react to one's self-gifting behaviour. Eastern districts do not encourage it and often criticize it as it is seen as rude to be praising yourself while in the West such conduct is supported from an early childhood. Therefore, even though the respondents in this study all practised self-gifting they have very different attitude- in Eastern districts this is not a subject to be discussed often and sometimes

self-gifts are consciously left unannounced and unnoticed whereas in the Western societies self-gifts are viewed as part of the norm and connected with only positive feelings.

With a view of the self-gifting motives and feelings classification it can be concluded that positive motivation is present with no exception across the two cultures. On the other hand, the self-gifting drivers identified are both intrinsic and extrinsic; their source being in direct connection with the cultural provenance of the respondents.

We can conclude further that self-gifting behaviour is clearly influenced by culture also when looking into the exceptional cases such as the “mixed” case of an Eastern respondent living in a Western district. This type of people actually appears to be double-influenced by the two cultures at the same time creating unstable behavioural patterns when purchasing self-gifts. The same result can be observed in the case of the respondent who was raised in different parts of her own district thus acquiring buying habits from different cultural areas and subsequently deviating from the typical consumer behaviour of her society.

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