

GIFT TO ME FROM ME AS A REWARD OR THERAPY

Akinori Ono, Keio University, Japan

Ryohei Maeda, Keio University, Japan

Bokyoung Park, Keio University, Japan

Yuya Saruwatari, Keio University, Japan

Kento Yamaguchi, Keio University, Japan

Rin Shimizu, Keio University, Japan

SUMMARY

In recent years, self-gift behavior has been drawing more attention from many researchers and practitioners. Researchers try to identify the antecedents of self-gift behavior, and practitioners are eager to create and sustain this new consumption practice for profit. However, previous studies have revealed several problems and there is still room for further research. First, previous studies have introduced the concept of outcome as a key determinant based on the notion that self-gift consumers exchange outcome with self-gifts. However, it can be seen that consumers exchange between effort and the outcomes plus self-gifts: They may purchase a self-gift if and only if prior effort has not been balanced by the outcomes. Second, previous studies have introduced the concepts of success and failure as other key determinants of self-gifting behavior (Mick and Faure, 1998). They have modeled both outcomes in the same way: Both success and failure cause high levels of self-gift deservingness and emotions (of wanting to purchase). However, reward and therapeutic self-gift behavior may have different specific mechanisms. Third, although previous studies have introduced affective routes or moods for self-gift giving in their self-gifting intention models, they have not been successful in their statistical tests. Further research is needed for empirical validation. Thus, this study develops a comprehensive self-gifting intention model which includes the following notions: (1) exchange between effort and the outcomes plus self-gifts, (2) relationship between efforts and emotions caused by the outcomes, and (3) the impacts of positive/negative moods of self-gifting intentions.

To identify the whole psychological process of self-gifting and causal relationship among the antecedents of self-gifting behavior, we propose three hypotheses: (1) individuals purchase self-gifts in recovery for personal efforts in case of success and failure. In addition, necessity of recovery is reduced by happiness of success, whereas it is reinforced by sadness of failure. (2) the amount of effort positively affects happiness of success /sadness of failure.

(3) happiness of success/sadness of failure causes positive/negative moods, which in turn positively affects self-gifting intention.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the proposed hypotheses. For SEM, we employed multiple scales from previous research. The items for the other constructs were originally developed due to lack of relevant literatures. Some indices like SCR and AVE suggest good reliability and validity. Subjects were 355 university students who were asked to recall their experiences about their college entrance examinations and consequent self-gifting behavior in the positive outcome situation or negative outcome situation. With the data set, both in case of success and failure, absolute, incremental, and parsimony fit indices (GFI, CFI, and PNFI, respectively) were within acceptable ranges. All parameter estimates have adequate signs as previously hypothesized and were significant at the 1% level, except one hypothesis: self-gifting intention on necessity of recovery with negative outcome.

The results of the structural equation modeling showed that, *first*, individuals purchase self-gifts in recovery for personal efforts in case of success, whereas they do not in case of failure. In addition, necessity of recovery is reduced by happiness of success, whereas it is reinforced by sadness of failure. *Second*, the amount of effort positively affects happiness of success as well as sadness of failure. *Third*, happiness of success/sadness of failure positively affects positive/negative moods, which in turn positively affects self-gifting intention.

In conclusion, our study successfully identified the entire psychological process of self-gifting and causal relationship among the several antecedents of self-gifting. We believe that the self-gifting intention model we developed is very fruitful for understanding the different psychological mechanisms between reward and therapeutic self-gift behavior in success or failure situation.

For further information contact:

Akinori Ono

Keio University

Mita Minato 2-15-45

Tokyo 108-8345

Japan

Phone: 81.3.5427.1566

E-Mail: akinori@fbc.keio.ac.jp
