

Does Santa Have a Great *Job*? Gift Shopping Value and Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

For good or bad, shopping and gifting are intertwined. This research looks at sources of gratification associated with shopping for gifts. More particularly, the roles played by general and specific shopping orientations in shaping gift shopping value and satisfaction are examined. Results from testing a theoretical model suggest that gift shopping orientations, such as agape, may dominate general shopping orientations, such as price consciousness. Also, the important role played by utilitarian shopping value is consistent with gift shopping more as a job than as a source of leisure. However, the results fall short of suggesting a negative relationship between gift shopping and hedonic shopping value. So gift shopping may be a job, but a job that is not so horrible after all. © 2007 Wiley Periodicals, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

Marketers are increasingly recognizing that shopping itself is a value creation opportunity. Research examining shopping environments helps

explain important exchange outcomes including consumer spending, consumer value perceptions and retailer share of customer (Babin & Attaway, 2000; Dawson, Bloch, & Ridgway, 1990). Consumers' in-store experiences help determine the success of retailers and service providers, but taken together, they also help drive the GNP of developed nations. In fact, retail purchases account for over \$3 trillion out of the \$9 trillion U.S. economy.

Just as retail shopping in general contributes greatly to the economy, gift shopping drives a substantial portion of all retail sales (Holstein, McDonald, Soners, & James Young, 2000). In 2006, the typical American family spent around \$4,000 on gift purchases and total U.S. retailing during the Christmas shopping season approached half a trillion dollars (Whitehouse, 2006). Christmas season sales alone account for as much as one-fourth of all retail clothing, houseware, and other department store sales (Wahl, 2001). The concentration of retail sales around gift seasons suggests quite certainly that consumers put great amounts of time, effort, and money into gift shopping. Additionally, many consumers feel stressed out about gift shopping (Stratton, 2005). As a research topic, however, gift shopping has received disproportionately little attention in psychology and marketing research relative to its economic and psychological impact.

How different is shopping when a consumer is trying to buy a gift? The research reported here examines how both shopping and gifting motivations shape shopping behavior and shopping value, all of which affect shopper satisfaction. Although both utilitarian and hedonic shopping value play prominent roles in non-gift shopping (Babin & Attaway, 2001), previous research stresses the utilitarian nature of gift shopping (Caplow, 1984; Fischer & Arnold, 1990). Gift shopping, and in particular Christmas gift shopping, is complicated by numerous social rules and interpersonal expectations that can render the pursuit of a gift into a quite arduous task (Sherry, 1983; Caplow, 1984; Otnes, Lowrey, & Kim, 1993; Laroche, Chankon, Saad, & Browne, 2000; Wooten, 2000; Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004). In keeping with this interpretive theme, gift shopping has been characterized as a "labor of love" (Fischer & Arnold, 1993). Conversely, when interpreting comments from two upscale gift store shoppers, a hedonic or "ludic" theme emerges (Sherry & McGrath, 1989).

Is gift shopping work or fun? This question has managerial importance because shopping environments and retail merchandising can be constructed or modified to offer more functional or affective quality (Darden & Babin, 1994). Retailers annually invest substantial resources in decorating for the holidays with the hope of creating a more hedonically rewarding shopping experience. Is this wise or should they place as much effort on functionality? The answer can be explained by the relative roles of utilitarian and hedonic shopping value.

Not all shoppers experience shopping value in the same way. Shoppers have different orientations, and these orientations may determine

the type of shopping value desired and obtained. The role of key shopping orientations can be contrasted from multiple perspectives: (1) Everyday or general shopping orientations like price and brand consciousness can be compared with situational specific gift shopping orientations; (2) From another viewpoint, “economic” orientations can be compared with more “emotion”-laden shopping orientations. What roles do gift shopping orientations play in shaping the shopping experience? Do everyday shopping orientations such as price and brand consciousness still influence shoppers in light of potentially stronger situational factors? What roles do economic orientations such as price consciousness and reciprocity play in the gift shopping experience in relation to more emotional orientations such as brand consciousness and agape?

A parsimonious gift shopping satisfaction model is introduced here. Although a more exhaustive model may evolve eventually, this model involves key constructs addressing a consumer’s approach to gift shopping. The final dependent variable is consumer satisfaction with the gift shopping experience. Satisfaction is an outcome determined directly by personal shopping value and spending (money, time, and effort), which are predicted by two gift shopping orientations and two general consumer orientations. The selection of these constructs allows an account of both situation specific (gift-giving) and nonspecific consumer orientations. Figure 1 depicts the model developed conceptually later in this paper.

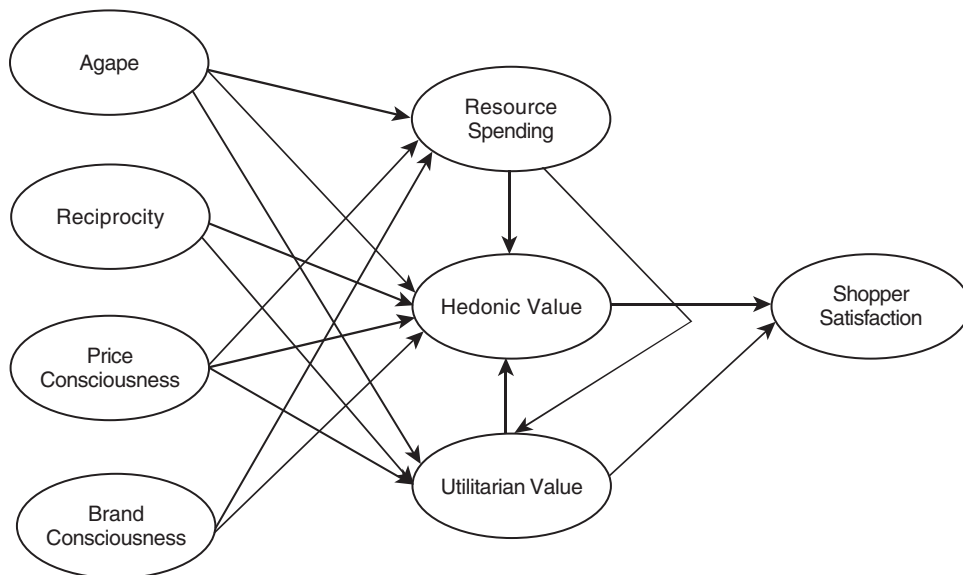


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of gift-shopper motivations, value, and satisfaction.

SHAPING THE GIFT SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Shopping motives help explain shopping and consumption, including consumers' general search behavior, retail store choice and affective shopping outcomes (Bloch, Sherrell, & Ridgway, 1986; Bloch, Ridgway, & Sherrell, 1989; Dawson, Bloch, & Ridgway, 1990; Tauber, 1972). Motivations provide an orientation around which shoppers organize their behavior. Shopping orientations can be distinguished in at least two relevant ways: (1) everyday shopping versus gift (situational) shopping and (2) "economic" (price is important) versus "hedonic" shopping (price is irrelevant). As such, the model includes four motivational constructs that allow a contrast between gift shopping orientations and non-gift shopping orientations and between "rational" orientations (reciprocity and price consciousness) and "psycho-emotional" orientations (brand consciousness and agapic orientations).

Gift-Giving Orientations

Gift-giving has been conceptualized along a continuum ranging from pure gift, "an altruistic act where an expected 'exchange' of gifts does not influence the decision," to total reciprocity, "an act oriented by the need to fulfill the implicit [and mutual] obligation resulting from a gift exchange" (Banks, 1979, p. 319). Generalized reciprocity lies between these two "ends." It is "a bond of goodwill and social indebtedness between people. [. . .] Givers, by intention, remain continually in each other's debt and trust that they can rely on each other for future favors" (Belk & Coon, 1993, p. 402). Reciprocity is motivated by a belief that failing to return the favor of a gift leads to social sanctions and a possibility that the provider will no longer supply future gifts. Thus, gift shoppers become oriented toward providing an exchange in-kind.

Christmas, graduation, and wedding gifts can involve a sense of obligation and reciprocity. For example, Caplow (1984) states: "Participants in this gift system should give (individually or jointly) at least one Christmas gift every year to their mothers, fathers, sons, daughters, any spouses of these persons, and to their own spouse. By the operation of this rule, participants expect to receive at least one gift in return from each of these persons excepting infants" (p. 1315). Gifts to siblings are often accompanied by a spending rule that can even be explicitly stated in some families. If one expects a \$50 gift from a sibling, they provide a \$50 gift to that sibling in return. Reciprocity also is a key factor in understanding gifting in business to business contexts (Bodur & Grohmann, 2005).

By contrast, another dimension of gift-giving is demonstrating love and affection (Belk & Coon, 1993; Wolfinbarger & Yale, 1993). In such an agapic love paradigm, gifting is driven by deeply held emotions and a gift is given to both demonstrate love and reward affection. A gift

shopper willingly sacrifices both time and money to obtain a special and unique gift that adequately expresses love (Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004). The gift purchase is now evaluated based on how well these feelings are expressed and how much happiness is displayed by a receiver.

Gift-giving researchers generally *contrast* gifting based on (1) reciprocity and (2) agape. In contrast to viewing these as opposing ends of a continuum, no reason is evident to conclude that the presence of agape excludes the presence of reciprocity. Gift-giving is a way to strengthen or create relationships (Godbout, 2000; Larsen & Watson, 2001). Although not always involving a “material” reciprocation, a gift can involve a “relational” reciprocation, strengthening and affirming a relationship with a recipient (Ruth, Brunel, & Otnes, 2004; Huang & Yu, 2000; Lowrey, Otnes, & Ruth, 2004). Even when a consumer is driven by a desire to buy a gift that demonstrates true affection, he or she may still be concerned about spending the “right” amount.

In budding romantic relationships, for instance, a shopper may be concerned about selecting a gift so expensive that he or she seems overly aggressive and risks embarrassing the recipient. A St. Valentine’s day gift can be given to show love to a partner, but an additional reason is that the partner believes he/she is expected to do so or *else* (Otnes, Ruth, & Milbourne, 1994). Thus, because gift shopping may be associated with both high (low) agape and high (low) reciprocity in some situations, the presence of agape may not exclude the presence of reciprocity. Indeed, things such as cultural aspects may influence the way these two motivations are intertwined.

In summary, consumer gift shopping involves different amounts of both orientations. *Agapic orientations* come about from romantic love, spiritual love, brotherly love, parental love or familial love (Belk & Coon, 1993). Agape does not preclude an *exchange* of gifts; however, an in-kind exchange is no longer a primary orientation; love becomes the primary orientation. *Reciprocity* reflects an obligation for a gift-giver to reciprocate for an expected gift by providing the other party a similarly appropriate gift (usually matching price) (Sherry, 1983; Belk & Coon, 1993; Otnes, Lowrey, & Kim, 1993). A net zero-sum gift exchange can result from pure reciprocity.

Price Consciousness and Brand Consciousness

A consumer’s habitual shopping mode also should affect gift shopping experiences. Price and quality are certainly among the most pervasive evaluative criteria used by shoppers. Thus, price and brand consciousness are included as general consumer orientations allowing parsimony while still capturing robust individual differences. Although other shopper orientations could be included, such as an “ethical” or hometown orientation (see Darden & Reynolds, 1971), these two orientations help determine how consumers react to ubiquitous concerns.

Price consciousness reflects how diagnostic the *negative role* of price is in a consumer's decision making. "Price conscious consumers may not necessarily pay the lowest price available but tend to pay a lower price when the distinguishing features of more expensive alternatives cannot be justified" (Lichtenstein, Bloch, & Black, 1998, p. 245). The perception of price in its negative role affects price conscious shoppers' behavior and results in them actively shopping for low prices (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993).

Brand consciousness is defined as a sensitivity to *brand* as a criterion in decision making. Highly brand conscious consumers find relatively prestigious name brands highly desirable (Sproles & Kendall, 1986). Thus, brand conscious consumers rely highly on brand prestige when making decisions. These two constructs are included in the model here to represent generalized shopping orientations. Should they lose diagnosticity in this gift shopping context, the evidence would suggest that gift shopping does not involve "normal" shopping orientations.

SPENDING, SHOPPING VALUE, AND SATISFACTION

Retail atmospherics research often focuses on the consumer resources expended while shopping. Previous atmospherics research labels these behaviors "approach-avoidance" (cf. Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). They include perceived willingness to spend money, desire to remain in the environment, and desire to spend time with and affiliate with retail employees (Dawson, Bloch, & Ridgway, 1990; Dubé & Chebat, 1995). Because the focus here is on gift shopping outcomes, behavior is operationalized using reports of actual money, time, and effort spent, as well as reported affiliation with store employees.

In contrast to reflective measures, spending is operationalized with formative indicators because (1) things like money, time, and effort spent are more appropriately viewed as causing resource spending rather than vice versa, and (2) given the nature of these indicators, they may not "move together" in the same sense that reflective indicators are conceptually interchangeable (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). Someone could select an expensive gift but do so with very little time and effort. By contrast, a consumer could spend a great deal of effort as a way of trying to buy a gift at a low price.

Personal Shopping Value

Resources spent during a shopping trip directly influence personal shopping value (PSV) (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994; Babin & Darden, 1995). PSV captures the outcome of shopping experiences. Like shopping in general, gift shopping may create both hedonic and utilitarian value

(Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Value is a central component of the gift shopping experience (Larsen & Watson, 2001).

Hedonic shopping value results from the *immediate personal gratification* derived from the entertainment, emotional, social and other sensate benefits provided by shopping activities. Gift shopping hedonic value, therefore, is derived from relatively intangible aspects including recreation, escape, a “thrill of the hunt,” immersion in the season, or an “enjoyment” resulting from finding “the” perfect product. Hedonic value represents how much experiential benefit is obtained from the activity of shopping.

Utilitarian shopping value is realized when a shopping task is completed successfully. Gift shopping utilitarian value is derived from relatively tangible results of the shopping experience, such as efficient product acquisition. As a task is completed more effortlessly, utilitarian value generally increases (Griffin, Babin, & Modianos, 2000). Utilitarian value represents the extent to which the shopping “job” is done well.

Consumer Satisfaction

This research studies links between gift shopping value and consumer satisfaction with the gift shopping experience. Consumer satisfaction is a positive, affective consumer reaction to appraisals of consumption outcomes (Babin & Griffin, 1998). The positive relationship between value and satisfaction has been demonstrated in various service contexts including museum visits, restaurant experiences, and routine shopping experiences (de Ruyter, Wetzels, Lemmink, & Mattsson, 1997; Lemmink, de Ruyter, & Wetzels, 1998).

THEORETICAL MODEL PREDICTIONS

This theory can be used to make several specific predictions. The following section highlights these links.

Gift-Giving Orientation Relationships with Behavior and Shopping Value (H1–H5)

H1. Gift-giving orientations should influence resources spent and personal shopping value directly. Greater love means lower price sensitivity. Additionally, as one is motivated more by true love, meaning an orientation toward agape, he/she will likely spend more time, money and extend more effort while gift shopping. Thus, the following prediction is offered:

H1: Agapic orientation is related positively to resource spending.

H2. Agape is likely accompanied by strong, self-transcending emotions that affect behavior and value (Belk & Coon, 1993). Under “normal” shopping conditions, actions associated with pure love may lead to increased resource investments and greater hedonic value (Babin & Darden, 1995). Consumers wish to continue doing things they love. Similarly, the pursuit of a perfect gift for a loved one can produce excitement and anticipation. Gift shoppers may find the shopping experience particularly valuable when a special gift for a special occasion is involved (Areni, Kiecker, & Palan, 1998). Elements including surprise and sacrifice can enhance shopping value in these situations. Thus, a *shopping as fun* explanation can be construed as one possibility.

However, in the context of loving relationships, the expressive value of the gift becomes critical. Gifts “express” something about the relationship with the receiver: “Objects become containers for the being of the donor, . . . an element of self identity is passed from the gift giver to the gift recipient through the gift itself” (Larsen & Watson, 2001, p. 894). More specifically, in the context of romantic love, gifts become “clues to the suitability of the relationship” by which romantic partners “evaluate the values, tastes and intentions of prospective partners” (Larsen & Watson, 2001, p. 899).

Thus, another possibility emerges. High agape could mean intense pressure based on apprehension associated with making a bad gift selection (Ruth, Brunel, & Otnes, 2004). This view contrasts sharply with the *shopping as fun* explanation. The potential risk associated with a poor gift purchase interferes with what could otherwise be a pleasant experience. Gift-giving situations often provide the setting and sometimes the impetus for conflict that can erode or even end relationships (Sherry & McGrath, 1989; Huang & Yu, 2000). As a result, gift shopping often turns out to be anything but recreational (Fischer & Arnold, 1990). Thus, competing hypotheses can be offered. Perhaps though a somewhat stronger case can be made suggesting that high agape negatively impacts gift shopping hedonic value. Gift shopping is not so much pure love but a *labor of love—shopping as work*. This may be particularly true when the gift is given as part of “formal events” or rituals such as weddings, Christmas, Valentine’s Day, or birthdays (Larsen & Watson, 2001, p. 897).

H2: Agapic orientation is related negatively to gift shopping hedonic value.

H3. The *shopping as work* orientation associated with gift-giving, and particularly at Christmas time (Fischer & Arnold, 1990), places greater emphasis on utilitarian shopping aspects. Because loving relationships usually involve familiar people, the giver has a greater awareness of the recipient’s tastes and characteristics. Moreover, in such situations, the gift-giver may take on a mission-like orientation in which the task

of matching a gift with these tastes and characteristics simply must be accomplished (Otnes, Lowrey, & Kim, 1993). Thus, the shopper is seeking utilitarian shopping value to a far greater degree than hedonic shopping value.

H3: Agapic orientation is related positively to gift shopping utilitarian value.

H4 and H5. Reciprocity may affect both shopping value dimensions negatively. The shopper is guided by a desire to get the job done but match the worth of a recipient's gift (Belk & Coon, 1993; Bodur & Grohmann, 2005). When reciprocity is a dominant orientation, buying something for the *right* amount becomes more important than making some important statement about a relationship. Gifting situations can involve simultaneous exchange, creating "mutuality" in exchange, and a natural comparison of the gifts. This heightens the chances of embarrassment a consumer faces by potentially spending the wrong amount on a gift partner (Wooten, 2000). The gift shopper experiences high anxiety, and as a result, hedonic shopping value is diminished. Moreover, obligation reduces pleasure associated with gift shopping and receiving (Godbout, 2000a; Godbout, 2000b; Larsen & Watson, 2001). For example, gift shoppers have expressed the following: "I disliked the tension I felt from trying to find the right gift . . . buying cards or even thinking I had to buy something or else I would feel guilty" (Otnes, Ruth, & Milbourne, 1994, p. 161). The tension and resentment associated with filling an obligation to reciprocate should reduce gift shopping hedonic value.

H4: Reciprocity orientation is related negatively to gift shopping hedonic value.

Likewise, a giver is less particular about matching a product perfectly with the receiver's characteristics and tastes. The gift-shopper may not have "to get it just right" and decide to buy something less than a perfect gift. In addition, previous research suggests that negative emotion, like anxiety, reduces utilitarian and hedonic shopping value (Babin & Attaway, 2001). Thus, utilitarian value should be reduced directly by an increasingly strong reciprocity orientation.

H5: Reciprocity orientation is related negatively to gift shopping utilitarian value.

Price and Brand Consciousness Relationships with Behavior and Value

H6. Price consciousness has an apparent utilitarian or transactional nature. Highly price-conscious consumers need to pay lower prices so

their shopping generally requires more time and energy. Clearly, this means a positive price consciousness–resources spent relationship, leading to this hypothesis:

H6: Price consciousness is related positively to resource spending.

H7 and H8. Highly price-conscious consumers are more devoted to the task of shopping to the extent that a better price exists elsewhere. Deal-prone shoppers retain this characteristic when gift shopping (Bodur & Grohmann, 2005). When these consumers find bargains, they experience utilitarian shopping value. Far from being only utilitarian though, saving money also can produce hedonic value. For example, paying lower prices is integral to the consumer identity among the highly price conscious, therefore, the thrill associated with saving money becomes gratifying and should manifest itself in higher hedonic shopping value (Ailawadi, Neslin, & Gedenk, 2001; Chandon, Wansink, & Laurent, 2000). In this research, price consciousness affects both gift shopping utilitarian and hedonic value positively because price-conscious consumers: (1) being more skilled (Lichtenstien, Bloch, & Black, 1998), will report greater success in their shopping experiences and (2) are more likely to enjoy the shopping process as a way of confirming who they are:

H7: Price consciousness is related positively to gift shopping hedonic value.

H8: Price consciousness is related positively to gift shopping utilitarian value.

H9 and H10. Highly brand conscious consumers are more willing to pay relatively high prices and are highly brand loyal (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993). Brand loyalty and a general orientation toward considering only prestigious brands make buying tasks simpler. Thus, brand consciousness should reduce shopping time and effort, improving utilitarian value. Furthermore, the greater appreciation and affiliation with prestigious brands enhances affective quality (Darden & Babin, 1994), producing higher hedonic value. Therefore, the following hypotheses will be tested:

H9: Brand consciousness is related negatively to resources spending.

H10: Brand consciousness is related positively to gift shopping hedonic value.

Endogenous Relationships among Resources Spent, Value, and Satisfaction

H11 and H12. Previous research has demonstrated relationships between spending and shopping value (Babin & Darden, 1995). Activities

high in hedonic value are to be savored. Therefore, time is a requirement of hedonic value. Conversely, utilitarian shopping value involves completion of a task. The more quickly and efficiently the job can be done, the greater the utilitarian shopping value. Thus, resources spent should relate positively to hedonic value and negatively to utilitarian value as stated here:

H11: Resources spending is related positively to gift shopping hedonic value.

H12: Resources spending is related negatively to gift shopping utilitarian value.

H13–H15. Consumers expect and pursue value in shopping experiences. Highly valuable shopping experiences are more satisfying (Taher, Leigh & French, 1996). Therefore, positive relationships are expected between both value dimensions and customer satisfaction.

The model, considered simultaneously, reflects the duality between gift shopping as work or fun (Fischer & Arnold, 1990). An orientation toward work (play) would suggest that satisfaction is driven more strongly by utilitarian (hedonic) shopping value. In testing these relationships, this research examines which aspect of the gift shopping experience most determines consumer satisfaction. This discussion suggests the following predictions:

H13: Gift shopping utilitarian value is related positively to gift shopping hedonic value.

H14: Gift shopping hedonic value is related positively to satisfaction with the gift shopping experience.

H15: Gift shopping utilitarian value is related positively to satisfaction with the gift shopping experience.

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample

Respondents were provided by a convenience sample of consumers comprised of both students and other consumers from the University community. The survey was administered via self-completion questionnaires distributed by students as part of a class project. Names and phone numbers of potential respondents were provided to the researcher, but they were not used to identify responses. Respondents received a follow up phone call either thanking them for completing the questionnaire

or reminding them to do so. All respondents reported extensive experience in purchasing gifts.

Completed questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher. Two hundred fifty questionnaires were distributed. A total of 214 completed questionnaires were returned. Four of these were deleted because of invalid response patterns.

Data were collected in the first half of January. Respondents were asked to describe a recent gift purchase. Although respondents were allowed to recall any gift purchase, nearly all respondents described a Christmas gift. The average respondent was 31 years of age and reported an annual household income of \$45,000. Fifty-three percent of respondents were male.

After describing the gift in detail, including where it was purchased, for whom it was intended, and how much it cost, all respondents completed structured items containing the scales described below. Items within each response format were randomized to prevent order bias. The average reported price for a gift was \$109. Eighty-five percent of gifts were intended for a spouse, dating partner, parent or same-sex (nonromantic) friend.

Measures

Agape and reciprocity represent specific and conceptually disparate gift-giving orientations. Four Likert items were used to measure agape as a shopping orientation. These items reflect true felt attachment toward a gift recipient (Belk & Coon, 1993). Three items reflecting the economic exchange dimension of gift-giving captured an orientation toward reciprocity (Banks, 1979; Caplow, 1984; Belk & Coon, 1993; Wolfenbarger & Yale, 1993).

Two constructs represent general purchase orientations. Price consciousness is measured using six items reflecting an orientation to focus on price's negative role (Lichtenstein, Ridgway, & Netemeyer, 1993). Brand consciousness represents an orientation to purchase well-known brands and prioritize brand name over price. Five items capturing a consumer's focus on price in its positive (prestige) role were included (Sproles & Kendall, 1986).

Gift shopping behavior is captured by a construct representing resources expended while shopping. Three formative items provide an index of the resources spent. Each represents a different behavioral resource element consistent with the approach/avoidance measures from atmospherics research (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982). These items are formative because theoretically, they can be thought to cause or form an index of resource spending more than they are thought to reflect a latent psychological construct. In addition, the correlation between them may not (and need not) be as high as is expected with reflective indicators. In this case, one item represents how much time is spent shopping, another

represents how much one spent on the gift described, and the third formative item represents how many stores were visited before the item was eventually purchased. Additionally, two reflective items representing perceived shopping effort and affiliation are linked to the construct to help statistically identify the formative scale (Hair et al., 2006).

Shopping value is captured using items from the PSV scale (Babin, Darden, & Griffin, 1994). Six items reflect hedonic shopping value and four represent utilitarian shopping value. Finally, satisfaction with the gift shopping experience is captured using the four-item multimethod consumer satisfaction scale (Babin & Griffin, 1998).

RESULTS

Measurement Results

A covariance matrix between the 36 items was used to test the measurement model. The model provided adequate fit with a χ^2 of 783.0 with 560 degrees of freedom, a comparative fit index (CFI) of .94, a standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) of .044, and a parsimony normed goodness of fit (PNFI) index of .75. All loadings are highly significant and no correlation estimate between constructs suggests a lack of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2006). The strongest correlations between constructs occurs between utilitarian shopping value and *cs/d* ($\varphi = .53, p < .001$), and between hedonic value and *cs/d* ($\varphi = .45, p < .001$).

Table 1 shows the items, their standardized loadings, and construct reliability estimates. Although four reflective items have significant loading estimates that are below .5, they all were retained based on theoretical considerations and the fact that including them did not diminish the overall CFA fit. Thus, the measurement model was used to build and test the theoretical model.

Theoretical Results

The corresponding structural model was estimated by constraining the model consistent with the theoretical predictions. The model fit statistics generally remained consistent with that of the CFA. The model χ^2 is 783.8 with 567 degrees of freedom, the CFI is .94, the RMSEA is .044, and the PNFI is .76. All suggest an adequate theoretical fit. The increase in PNFI in particular suggests that the theoretical paths are accounting for most of the covariation between latent constructs. Path estimates are detailed in Table 2.

Path estimates from the orientations constructs suggest that both gift-giving and general consumer orientations play a role in the gift shopping experience. Consistent with expectations (H1 and H3), agape

Table 1. Scale Items and Standardized CFA Loading Estimates.

| | | A | R | PC | BC | RE | HV | UV | CS/D |
|------------------|--|------|------|------|------|------|----|----|------|
| A1 | It is very important that I get just the right gift for this person. | 0.71 | | | | | | | |
| A2 | I bought this gift as a means of expressing my affection for the recipient | 0.62 | | | | | | | |
| A3 | The gift had to be a reflection of the recipient's personality | 0.46 | | | | | | | |
| R1 | I have to buy a gift for this person because he/she will buy one for me | | 0.75 | | | | | | |
| R2 | I would not buy a gift for this person if he/she was not buying something for me | | 0.60 | | | | | | |
| R3 | I spent about as much as I thought the person would spend on me | | 0.50 | | | | | | |
| PC1 | A person can save a lot of money by shopping around for bargains | | | 0.58 | | | | | |
| PC2 | I am willing to spend more time shopping if I might find a bargain | | | 0.79 | | | | | |
| PC3 | In general, I shop a lot for "specials" or discounts | | | 0.77 | | | | | |
| PC4 | I don't mind checking multiple places in an effort to save money | | | 0.74 | | | | | |
| PC5 | I buy as much as possible at sale prices | | | 0.65 | | | | | |
| PC6 | I look carefully to find the best value for the money | | | 0.71 | | | | | |
| BC1 | I prefer buying the best selling brands | | | | 0.78 | | | | |
| BC2 | The most advertised brands are usually very good choices | | | | 0.61 | | | | |
| BC3 | The brand name is a very important factor in selecting a clothing item | | | | 0.87 | | | | |
| BC4 | The well-known brands are for me | | | | 0.89 | | | | |
| BC5 | The more expensive brands are usually my choices | | | | 0.78 | | | | |
| RE1 ^a | Amount spent on gift | | | | | 0.36 | | | |
| RE2 ^a | Time to purchase gift | | | | | 0.63 | | | |
| RE3 ^a | Amount of interaction w/ retailer | | | | | 0.51 | | | |
| RE4 | I expended a lot of effort while shopping for this gift. | | | | | 0.80 | | | |
| RE5 | Shopping for this gift took a lot out of me | | | | | 0.40 | | | |

| | | |
|------------------|---|---|
| HV1 | Compared to other things I could have done, the time spent shopping was truly enjoyable | 0.79 |
| HV2 | I enjoyed the shopping trip for its own sake, not just for the items I may have purchased | 0.74 |
| HV3 | I had a good time because I was able to act on the spur-of-the-moment | 0.43 |
| HV4 | While shopping, I felt a sense of adventure | 0.64 |
| HV5 | The shopping trip was truly a joy | 0.87 |
| HV6 | While shopping, I was able to forget my problems | 0.60 |
| UV1 | I accomplished just what I wanted to on this shopping trip | 0.61 |
| UV2 ^b | I was disappointed because I had to go to another store to complete my shopping | 0.47 |
| UV3 ^b | I couldn't buy what I really needed | 0.65 |
| CS/D1 | 100 point satisfaction rating | 0.69 |
| CS/D2 | I feel very satisfied with my gift buying experience | 0.81 |
| CS/D3 | 'Felt' satisfaction rating | 0.54 |
| CS/D4 | 5-point satisfaction rating | 0.79 |
| | Δ reliability | 0.64 0.65 0.86 0.89 0.50 0.84 0.59 0.73 |
| | Σ reliability | 0.60 0.67 0.87 0.91 0.54 0.88 0.61 0.83 |

Abbreviations: (A = Apathy Orientation, R = Reciprocity Orientation, PC = Price Consciousness, BC = Brand Consciousness, RE = Resources Spent, HV = Hedonic Shopping Value, UV = Utilitarian Shopping Value, CS/D = Consumer Satisfaction).

^aFormative Indicator Items—excluded from Reliability calculations.

^bReverse coded.

Table 2. Standardized Structural Path Coefficients.

| Path to: | Resources | Hedonic value | Utilitarian value | CS/D |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Path from: | | | | |
| Agape orientation | 0.19 | 0.07 | 0.40 | |
| <i>t-value</i> | 1.86 ^c | 0.82 | 3.36 ^b | |
| Reciprocity orientation | | -.04 | -0.35 | |
| <i>t-value</i> | | -0.51 | 2.36 ^b | |
| Price consciousness | 0.12 | 0.23 | -0.28 | |
| <i>t-value</i> | 1.45 | 2.88 ^b | 2.76 ^b | |
| Brand consciousness | 0.07 | 0.15 | | |
| <i>t-value</i> | 1.45 | 1.85 ^c | | |
| Resources spent | | 0.37 | -0.20 | |
| <i>t-value</i> | | 2.94 ^b | 1.80 ^c | |
| Hedonic value | | | | 0.34 |
| <i>t-value</i> | | | | 4.24 ^a |
| Utilitarian value | | 0.30 | | 0.46 |
| <i>t-value</i> | | 2.75 ^b | | 4.38 ^a |
| <i>R</i> ² | 0.71 | 0.27 | 0.40 | 0.39 |

^a $p < .001$ (one-tailed for all).

^b $p < .01$.

^c $p < .05$.

($\gamma = .19, p < .05$) influences both resources spent and utilitarian value ($\gamma = .40, p < .001$) positively. In contrast, agape is not related significantly to hedonic shopping value (H2, $\gamma = -0.07, ns$). Out of two direct effects predicted for reciprocity (H4 and H5), only the negative relationship with utilitarian shopping value is supported ($\gamma = -.35, t < .01$). The path from reciprocity to hedonic shopping value is not significant ($\gamma = -.04, ns$).

The model predicts direct paths from price consciousness to resources spent, hedonic value and utilitarian value (H6–H8). The path from price consciousness to hedonic shopping value is supported ($\gamma = .23, p < .01$), but the path from price consciousness to utilitarian shopping value ($\gamma = -.28, p < .01$), although significant, is opposite the predicted direction. Price consciousness did not significantly effect resource spending significantly ($\gamma = .12, p > .05$).

Predictions dealing with brand consciousness also show mixed results. Brand consciousness did not influence resource expenditures significantly (H9, $\gamma = .07, p > .05$), but the path from brand consciousness to hedonic value is significant and positive, as predicted (H10, $\gamma = .15, p < .05$).

H11 and H12 predicted outcomes of resource expenditures. Results suggest a significant, positive path between resource expenditures and hedonic shopping value ($\beta = .37; p < .01$), and a significant, negative path between resource expenditures and utilitarian shopping value ($\beta = -.20, p < .05$). Both findings are consistent with theoretical expectations.

Also consistent with expectations, a positive relationship between utilitarian shopping value and hedonic shopping value is observed (H13, $\beta = .30, p < .01$). Finally, as predicted in H14 and H15, both value dimensions influence customer satisfaction significantly. The utilitarian value—customer satisfaction path ($\beta = .46; p < .001$) is slightly stronger than the hedonic value—customer satisfaction path ($\beta = .34, p < .001$). A χ^2 difference statistic ($df = 1$) of 10.3 ($p < .01$) is produced when these two relationships are constrained to be equal and the model reestimated. This result suggests that the utilitarian value—consumer satisfaction relationship is significantly stronger than the hedonic value—consumer satisfaction relationship.

The strength of mediation in the orientation—satisfaction relationships was also examined. Additional models were run estimating the direct paths between each shopping orientation and customer satisfaction. These paths proved insignificant and did not significantly alter the other path estimates. Other model diagnostics failed to suggest that substantial improvements to the model could be found by freeing any constrained path. Thus, the effect of shopping orientations on satisfaction appears to be mediated as depicted in the model.

DISCUSSION

This research addresses the relatively underresearched area of gift shopping experiences. Results suggest that both specific gift-giving orientations and more general consumer orientations each play a role in shaping patronage outcomes. Alternatively, both economic and emotional drivers affect gift shopping. Thus, gift shopping is unique in some ways but also retains aspects of everyday shopping. The research also contributes by offering many other research avenues to pursue as a theory of consumer gift shopping develops.

The Role of Orientations

Agape displayed a significant, positive influence on resources spent. Not surprisingly, consumers generally expend greater effort when driven by altruistic motives. Perhaps not as intuitively, agape did not influence hedonic shopping value. The anxieties resulting from gift shopping in general may be prescient enough to interfere with experiential elements that might otherwise produce positive hedonic value. However, agape also does not reduce hedonic shopping value as would be suggested if buying a gift for a loved one represents “the dark side” of gift shopping (Fischer & Arnold, 1990).

Agape is positively related to utilitarian shopping value. Consumers are likely to derive value from successfully accomplishing the gift shopping task when driven by agape. Thus, an orientation motivated by agape

means the consumer is highly involved in finding not just *a* gift, but a *perfect* gift. Agape's effects on utilitarian shopping value suggest a task oriented shopper epitomizing "shopping as work."

Reciprocity also failed to influence hedonic shopping value significantly. The predicted direct path is negative but not significant. However, the expected negative relationship between reciprocity and utilitarian shopping value is supported by the data. Perhaps with this orientation, consumers settle for something that does not match their initial intention. For instance, simply finding something that might do within the correct price range is sufficient. Consumers are more interested in a gift's economic role than in the product itself. Further exploration of this issue is left for future research.

Taken together, the gift-giving orientations do little to explain hedonic shopping value. Christmas shopping may involve a goal-directedness that is so salient as to change the shopping experience so that the normal amount of hedonic value is not found. Perhaps an experimental design could be implemented in future research that examined consumers buying the same item for either a gift or for personal consumption. A comparison of hedonic value between these conditions could test this idea. Likewise, an experiment might contrast truly special Christmas gifts with other Christmas gifts that may not quite be truly special. This may resolve potentially conflicting evidence regarding gift shopping under high agape (Areni, Keicker, & Palan, 1998).

Our results support positive relationships between both brand and price consciousness and hedonic value. Both orientations lead to more hedonically rewarding shopping experiences. Price consciousness, in particular, may convert a shopping experience into a treasure hunt that ultimately produces both low prices and an emotional payoff. Surprisingly, price consciousness affects gift shopping utilitarian value negatively. A highly price-conscious consumer may have greater difficulty in purchasing the gift that they want to buy because they believe the price is simply too high. Thus, this consumer may tend to be less successful than other consumers.

Value and Satisfaction

The relationships between resources spent and both shopping value and satisfaction are consistent with previous research. As resources are expended, hedonic value increases and utilitarian value decreases. This is consistent with the conceptual nature of shopping value. Experiential benefits require the passage of time, although hedonic value is produced, the same passage of time lowers utilitarian value. A risk that a gift shopper runs is that if he/she finds a retail store very exciting, he/she actually may be detracted from gift shopping. The results presented here show a moderately stronger relationship between utilitarian value and customer satisfaction. This finding has potential implications for

retailers. Indeed, gift shopping may be more like work than other shopping trips (cf. Babin & Attaway, 2001). Retailers may consider more functional merchandising and promotion during peak gift shopping seasons.

Additionally, the model supports a mediating role for PSV. In this role, PSV supports several significant, indirect relationships. For example, agape has a positive, indirect influence on customer satisfaction. In contrast, reciprocity orientation has a negative, indirect relationship on customer satisfaction. Thus, retailers that can attract customers driven to buy gifts out of true love may expect more satisfied consumers.

Limitations and Further Study

This study has a number of limitations. First, although the descriptive design adds some external validity, a true test of causality is not provided. Experimental designs might present ways of manipulating consumer orientations. Furthermore, although the initial goal here is to present a relatively parsimonious framework from which to base further work, several potential theoretical complications are apparent. For example, given that the gift-giving orientations were not related significantly to each other, consumers could be grouped into four categories of gift orientations each with quite different patterns of relationships (see Figure 2). This finding also suggests a unique contribution to the gifting literature. Consumers can be motivated by both agape and reciprocity. In the case of consumers high in both, the presence of altruism does not rule out concerns that a gift would be economically insufficient. Indeed, this particular condition may present very high anxiety.

Potential moderators exist. Future research might consider the relative efficacy of Christmas shopping as opposed to other gift-giving occasions. For example, do birthday gifts or other seasonal holiday gifts evoke the same shopping patterns as do Christmas gifts? Nonobligated gift occasions or even obligated gift occasions such as birthdays or St. Valentine’s Day might be less goal-directed and allow for greater hedonic value. Researchers might consider the effect of a recipient’s facial reaction on opening a gift on a gift-giver’s satisfaction with the gift exchange process. Although other research may address the personal relationship outcomes between a gift-giver and gift-receiver, the focus here is more on the consumer-retailer exchange process based on its high relevance to marketing management.

| | | |
|-------------|-------|------|
| | Agape | |
| Reciprocity | Low | High |
| | High | Low |

Figure 2. Typology of gift-shoppers by motivation type and level.

Additionally, many other potential model antecedents should be considered in the future. Other individual characteristics come to mind, including religiosity and cultural identification. Other potential situational variables also may play an important role, including time pressure (Miyazaki, 1993). These effects include those due to a gift deadline or the time pressure experienced during a specific shopping trip. In normal shopping conditions, time pressure should reduce hedonic and utilitarian shopping value and shopping satisfaction. The anxiety associated with gift shopping may exaggerate these effects. Likewise, future research should focus more specifically on the service environment. A study of critical incidences during gift shopping trips might reveal other important determinants of gift shopping satisfaction. These might include a more detailed account of shopper emotions. Gift shopping research should also address potential differences between the processes involved in online social communities as opposed to more traditional consumer communities (Hollenbeck, Peters, & Zinkhan, 2006). Hopefully, this model proves useful in pursuing these and other related gift shopping research studies.

CONCLUSIONS

This research demonstrates the role of shopper orientations in creating a valuable and satisfying gift shopping experience. Gift-giving orientations play an important role in attracting customers and creating a willingness to spend. They also eventually influence the value and satisfaction perceived by customers. Based on path coefficients produced here, the two gift shopping orientations contribute more to utilitarian shopping value, whereas the two general shopping orientations contribute more to hedonic shopping value. Furthermore, the relatively dominant role of utilitarian value in the gift shopping model relative to a non-gift shopping model suggests that gift shopping is less playful than personal shopping episodes. This finding reinforces the gift shopping as work theory for both male and female gift shoppers (Fischer & Arnold, 1990). However, given that agape is not negatively related to hedonic shopping value, gift shopping is not quite as dark as previous theory would predict.

Such a finding suggests that retailers who manipulate the store environment to increase functionality and lessen anxiety will create value and satisfy the gift shopping consumer. Retailers catering to gift shoppers should use atmosphere (lighting, smell, music, or color) (Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Baker, Levy, & Grewal, 1992; Babin & Darden, 1995; Turley & Chebat, 2002), store personnel (Menon & Dubé, 2000) and layout (legibility) (Titus & Everett, 1995) to prevent negative emotions (anger, anxiety), create positive emotions (joy, delight, pleasure) and facilitate the functionality of the retail environment.

Another tool to increase functionality is a gift-registry allowing for a pleasant shopping experience without the hassle of an extended choice

process. Gift registries are now available online and they are also available in stores. Retailers should encourage their customers to take advantage of a gift-registry to increase gift shopping utilitarian value—by providing a means of gift shopping efficiently—as well as increasing gift shopping hedonic value—by allowing consumers to enjoy a hassle free gift shopping experience in a pleasant store. Things such as this can play an important role in facilitating the job that is gift shopping.

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