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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF SELF-ESTEEM ON SELF-GIFTING CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

ABSTRACT

The idea that gifting can be directed not only between individuals but also toward self is discussed in the consumer behavior literature. People can make purchases for themselves outside of their routines for the purposes of reinforcing positive situations or getting rid of negative situations. Studies conducted on factors affecting this phenomenon, which has been proven in different studies, will contribute to understanding this aspect of consumer behavior, which has not been studied much, and to develop recommendations for businesses in this regard. In this study, after the literature review on the subject, the "self-esteem" variable, which is known to be an important factor in predicting behaviors in various theories, as a variable that affects self-gifting behavior, is examined. In order to test the effects of self-esteem on self-gifting behavior, primary data were collected using convenience sampling method in Kırıkkale province and the main hypothesis of the research which is "self-esteem affects the self-gifting behavior" is tested. As a result of the research, it was determined that self-esteem is a variable, affecting all dimensions of self-gifting behavior. Finally, the research results were interpreted and recommendations were developed for firms and researchers.

Keywords: Self-gifting, self-esteem, consumer, consumption

BENLİK SAYGISININ, KENDİNE HEDİYE DAVRANIŞINA ETKİSİ ÜZERİNE BİR ARAŞTIRMA

ÖZET

Hediye vermenin sadece bireyler arasında değil, bireyin kendine yönelik de olabileceği fikri tüketici davranışları literatüründe tartışılmaktadır. İnsanlar, olumlu durumları pekiştirmek veya olumsuz durumlardan kurtulmak için rutinleri dışında kendileri için alışveriş yapabilmektedir. Araştırmalarda ispatlanan bu olguyu etkileyen faktörler üzerine yapılan çalışmalar, tüketici davranışının fazla araştırılmayan bu yönünün anlaşılmasına ve bu konuda işletmelere yönelik öneriler geliştirilmesine katkı sağlayacaktır. Bu çalışmada, konu ile ilgili literatür taraması gerçekleştirildikten sonra, kendine hediye verme davranışını etkileyen bir değişken olarak çeşitli teorilerde davranışları öngörmede önemli bir faktör olduğu bilinen "benlik saygısı" değişkeni incelenmiştir. Benlik saygısının kendine hediye verme davranışına etkisini test etmek için Kırıkkale ilinde kolayda örnekleme yöntemi kullanılarak birincil veriler toplanmış ve araştırmanın "benlik saygısı kendini hediye verme davranışını etkiler" olan temel hipotezi test edilmiştir. Araştırma sonucunda benlik saygısının kendine hediye verme davranışının tüm boyutlarını etkileyen bir değişken olduğu belirlenmiştir. Son olarak, araştırma sonuçları yorumlanmış ve firmalar ve araştırmacılar için öneriler geliştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kendine hediye, benlik saygısı, tüketici, tüketim

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the gift theory focuses on interpersonal relationships by its nature and it seems that research on gift-giving mostly deals with interpersonal gift-giving (Davies, Whelan, Foley & Walsh, 2010), people can also purchase gifts for themselves and the idea that individual can receive gifts for himself/herself, is discussed in the marketing literature (Schiffman & Cohn, 2009). Unlike gift exchanges with other people, self-gift behavior is an issue that draws attention in the sense that the receiver and the giver is the same person (Schwartz, 1967).

Nowadays, individuals have difficulty in finding time for themselves, they need to live in a fast pace, the increase in welfare, the rise of individualism, the increase in the number of people who live alone, get married late and get divorced easily cause an increase in people's expectations regarding their needs

and purchasing gifts for themselves (Heath, Tynan & Ennew, 2011: 127). For example, in the study of Ward and Tran (2008), it was found that individuals, especially women, receive an average of 6 to 10 self-gifts per year.

Businesses that are aware of self-gifting behavior carry out marketing communications to encourage this behavior. Marketing communication messages such as "a special gift for you who working hard", "a healing trip for stressful myself", "give yourself an unforgettable gift this summer season", "new year's gift for me" and "a present for me" show that the gift messages are used by businesses (Hur & Choo, 2016). Moreover messages like "feel good, enjoy yourself, celebrate yourself, be a loved one, be appreciated" can be conveyed to the consumer in several communication channels. At this point, messages such as "treat yourself well" are used frequently (Heath et al., 2011: 127). Negative emotions caused by gift consumption can be reduced by using the characteristics of the gift, comparisons with the positive consumption of the user and others in marketing communications. Especially when the consumer perceives the gift as a practical or necessary product, has the intention of using the product, and the product is welcomed by others, negative feelings arising from purchasing can be reduced (Lee-Wingate & Corfman, 2010).

In short, people can buy and consume extraordinary products for themselves, such as rewarding themselves in positive situations or getting better in negative situations, and businesses encourage these behaviors. Therefore, researching the subject is important in terms of knowing the factors that can be used in promoting this consumption behavior and shedding light on this dimension of consumer behavior that has understudied.

2. SELF-GIFTING BEHAVIOR

Self-gifting; is expressed as the permission given to the individual, tolerance or the chance of spoiling or a personal symbolic self-communication through products in a certain context (Mick & DeMoss, 1992). For example, especially for young people and adults (Kuoppamäki, Wilska & Taipale, 2017); consumers can reward themselves with non-routine products such as luxury fashion brands (Kauppinen-Räsänen et al., 2014).

When a friend reaches an important goal or on his birthday, we are motivated to buy gifts for purposes such as showing our devotion and care, and we can behave similarly when we experience these situations ourselves. The most important criterion used in describing a purchase made for one's own needs as a gift to himself/herself is that the gift is "special" or the purchasing/purchased product is excluded from daily routine purchases. Especially in the face of success, effort or negativity; consumers can do something nice for themselves or reward themselves (Mick & DeMoss, 1990).

Research on self-gift behavior is mainly exploratory in order to understand the phenomena. But the scientific interest shown in the subject has increased due to the realization of the importance of customers' seeking rewards and therapy. In the study of Mortimer, Bougoure & Fazal-E-Hasan (2015), which first developed a scale about the self-gifting, the dimensions of the behavior are depicted as a reward, personal disappointment, celebratory, therapeutic motivation, negative mood reduction, positive mood reinforcement and hedonic.

3. REASONS OF SELF-GIFTING BEHAVIOR

Research shows that self-gifting behavior can result from reasons such as; rewarding oneself, having extra money to spend, cheering, evaluating special days, reducing stress, being pleasant, and encouraging oneself for a purpose (Ward & Tran, 2008; Weisfeld-Spolter & Thakkar, 2012). Faure and Mick (1993), who is one of the leading researchers on the subject, concluded that success and failure can lead to self-rewarding.

In addition, due to the stress and anxiety experienced as a result of the increase in situations such as economic crisis, overworking, fear of losing the job, and inability to reach goals, people perform consumption behaviors for themselves as one of the self-regulating behaviors to correct their negative mood (Luomala, 1998). For example, when consumers are stressed, depressed or angry, they can eat more snacks, drink special coffee or go to an above-average restaurant for themselves (Luomala, 2002). In addition, it is possible for emotions to deter self-gift behavior. For example, the feeling of guilt can make it difficult for consumers to consume non-essential and self-indulgent consumption (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002).

In the study conducted by Atalay and Meloy (2006) based on the fact that the self-gifting was carried out for mood management (relaxing food, a bouquet of flowers, etc.), it was found that celebration and mood repair plays an important role in this behavior. First of all, in the study carried out with students, it was found that the gifts purchased to restore the mood were more functional and less durable; and it was determined that the items taken for the celebration reflected the self-purpose, personal originality and hereditary characteristics. As a result of the application of the mentioned study in the shopping environment, it was determined that the promotion focus of the buyers for mood repair (the level of being affected by certain promotion activities) was higher than others.

Kauppinen-Räsänen et al. (2014) showed in his qualitative research that besides being self-centered, self-gifting behavior can be motivated by the reactions of others. In other words, similar to gift-giving, which includes reciprocity, gifting to oneself is not only for the individual but also includes a kind of self-communication, motivation and reactions of others. In the mentioned study, it was concluded that consumers communicate themselves by self-gifts by thinking like "the product is practical, I wanted to reward myself when I worked hard for something, I gave myself permission, I need to take care of myself, I felt better, for my birthday". In addition to these, the fact that the consumers use expressions such as "to influence someone, social acceptance, I have received feedback" shows that they are motivated to self-gifting as a social communication tool.

In Hur & Choo's (2016) study, while people prefer more self-enhancing products (providing charm, improving well-being; wearing jewelry, etc.) for self-rewarding and more problem-solving products (wearing underwear for body shape, using deodorant to prevent bad odor, etc.) are used for therapy. This situation gives an idea that there may be different motivational elements for customers in different situations like working hard, getting tired, having a special day, etc.

In the research of Park (2018), it is understood that the thought that a person spent a lot of effort and time to complete a job and that the person thinks himself as a successful example affects his desire to receive gifts. Therefore, it is understood that a person's self-evaluations (hardworking, effortful, worthy, deserving, etc.) are important factors in his self-gifting behavior.

Another group of variables emphasized in studies examining the factors affecting self-gift behavior is related to cultural and personal characteristics. At this point, although it has been suggested that gift-giving is more common in individualist societies and less in collaborative societies due to the sensitivity towards others, studies conducted in relatively solidaristic countries on the subject show the existence of this phenomenon (Lee & Yi, 2013). For example, in the qualitative research of Tynan, Heath, Ennew, Wang & Sun (2010), it was concluded that self-gifting behavior is also present in China and this behavior is less self-centered than the British. For example, in the study mentioned, a consumer made statements such as "I bought a moisturizer for my mother and a wallet for myself when I got my first salary." In addition, it was observed that people felt relaxed by choosing to drink coffee in Starbucks, which they normally do not prefer, after working hard (Tynan et al., 2010).

4. SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-GIFTING BEHAVIOR

Self-esteem is studied as a factor influencing human behavior in various theories. For example, in Adler's Theory of Individual Psychology, it is stated that human beings are seeking compensation for self-esteem and can display behaviors such as using the internet to compensate for negative feelings such as loneliness/stress (Tan, 2019). Similarly, in the Theory of Identity and Social Identity Theory, it is accepted that people evaluate their roles or groups positively in order to improve their self-esteem and increase their self-esteem depending on having a noticeable identity and meet the needs of feeling valuable or effective (Stets & Burke, 2000). In Bem's Self Perception Theory, it is assumed that human beings want to improve their self-esteem and act in accordance with self-consistency. In terms of consumer behavior, it is known that personality can be supported and shown by-products, products can be used as communication elements, and in short, self-esteem motivation can affect purchasing motivation (Sirgy, 1982).

Since self-gifting behavior is primarily a behavior towards the individual by its nature, it can be expected that those with high self-esteem will act more this behavior. As a matter of fact, Weisfeld-Spolter and Thakkar's (2007) quantitative research has shown that people with an independent self-structure is more directed towards the self-gifting and have positive attitudes toward self-gifting advertising slogans (Andies candy: the perfect little gift for myself, L'Oreal: Because I am worth it). In the research of

Weisfeld-Spolter, Rippe & Gould (2015), it was concluded that self-gifting behavior is related to the self-focus of the individual (focusing on one's own work regardless of what others think, etc.). Therefore, the hypothesis that self-esteem may be an important variable in self-gifting behavior is put forward within the scope of this research and tested by a field study.

5. FIELD STUDY

In this study, which was conducted to find an answer to the question of "Does self-esteem affect self-gifting behavior?" primary data were collected from 393 people in Kırıkkale province of Turkey between 10.05.2020-15.8.2020. Due to time and resource constraints, data was obtained using a convenience sampling method in the determined city. Scales had been used to measure the research variables, were used in the design of the questionnaire. To determine the self-gifting behavior, the scale developed by Mortimer et al. (2015) was used. In order to measure the self-esteem variable, the scale developed by Rosenberg (1965) and used in Aslan's (2006: 120) study was used.

5.1. Analysis of Participants' Demographics and Self-Gifting Behavior

A total of 393 people participated in the study. Among those participating in the research, 46.4% of those who answered the question of gender are women (156 people), 53.6% of them are men (180 people). 35.4% (122 people) of those who answered the age question were in the 20-27 age range, 31.9% (110 people) in the 28-35 age range, 16.8% (58 people) in the 36-43 age range. 15.9% are in the age range of 44 and over. When the skewness and kurtosis values are examined, it is understood that the participants do not exhibit an excessively unbalanced distribution in terms of demographic characteristics.

163 of the respondents answered yes (48.2%), and 175 (51.8%) answered no to the question of "in some cases (where you feel happy, unhappy, successful) do you buy products (goods or services) specifically for yourself?". Therefore, it is understood that almost half of the people purchasing gifts to themselves. When the answers to the open-ended question on what product people buy the most for them are examined; clothing, apparel and jewelry products took the first place (45 people). In addition, it was determined that the food responders were in the second place (34 people), and the personal care / perfume / make-up material responders were in the third place (17 people).

5.2. Normal Distribution Analysis

The skewness and kurtosis values were calculated to examine the suitability of the research variables to the normal distribution. If these values are lower than +/- 1.5 (Bayram, 2010: 49), +/- 2.58 (Field, 2009) or +/- 3 (Jondeau & Rockinger, 2003), it is possible to accept that the data are distributed normally. It has been determined that the relevant values vary between -1,08 and -0,074. Accordingly, it was assumed that the research variables had a normal distribution. Table 1 shows the skewness and kurtosis values:

Table 1. Skewness and Kurtosis Values

	Minimum	Maximum	Skewness	Kurtosis
Self-gifting/ Reward	1,00	5,00	-,168	-1,048
Self-gifting/Personal disappointment	1,00	5,00	-,240	-,937
Self-gifting/Celebratory	1,00	5,00	-,074	-,967
Self-gifting/Motivation	1,00	5,00	-,338	-,817
Self-gifting/Negative mood reduction	1,00	5,00	-,217	-,920
Self-gifting/Positive mood reinforcement	1,00	5,00	-,297	-,741
Hedonic	1,00	5,00	-,344	-,694
Self-esteem	1,00	5,00	-,369	-,338

5.3. Analysis of Structural Validity

Confirmatory factor analyzes (CFA) were conducted to test the structural validity of the research variables. According to the CFA performed for the self-esteem variable, the standardized regression coefficients of the expressions that make up the scale within the variable were found to be the lowest 0.791 and the highest 0.874. As a result of the modifications made by making associations between the error terms, it was determined that the goodness of fit values were high. Table 2 shows the confirmatory factor analysis results regarding self-esteem:

Table 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis/ Self-esteem

			St. Reg.
I am usually proud of myself	<-	Self-esteem	,823
Usually I think I have useful.	<-		,865
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself	<-		,876
I take positive attitude toward myself	<-		,845
I am able to do some things as well as most other people	<-		,815
In general I see myself as a successful person	<-		,744
I think I have positive qualities	<-		,749
I feel that I'm a person of worth at least other people	<-		,739
χ^2 /sd: 0,935, GFI: 0,996, CFI: 1,000, RMSEA: 0,000			
Items used in Turkish version and retranslated from Turkish			

According to the confirmatory factor analysis conducted for items used to measure self-gifting behavior; the goodness of fit values of the measurement model was found to be sufficient. Accordingly, it was understood that the regression coefficients of the items that make up the factors of the self-gifting were at least 0.774, and therefore it was decided not to exclude any item from the analysis. Table 3 shows the results of the confirmatory factor analysis performed for self-gifting behaviors:

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis/ Self-gifting

			St. Reg.
I buy gifts for myself when I achieve goals	<-	Self-gifting/ Reward	,883
In order to reward me, I would buy something special			,898
I think it is rewarding to buy a gift for myself when I get a promotion			,838
When I get sudden bad news, I buy things to make me feel beter	<-	Self-gifting / Personal disappointment	,833
If I get unexpected criticism, I will go out and buy myself something nice			,866
I feel buying a gift for myself would help me deal with a sudden or unexpected loss			,839
Purchasing a gift for myself makes a special occasion more memorable	<-	Self-gifting / Celebratory	,856
I will buy things for myself as memorabilia of events in my life			,876
I would not buy gifts for myself to remind me of special times in my life			,783
Buying something special for myself motivates me to do more	<-	Self-gifting / Therapeutic motivation	,843
I buy gifts for myself which inspire me to work harder			,868
If I've been feeling down for a while, I will buy things to make myself feel better	<-	Self-gifting / Negative mood reduction	,816
In order to make myself feel brighter, I would buy something for myself if I was having a really bad week			,868
When my self-esteem has been low for some time, I would buy a present to cheer myself up			,883
I would purchase something small for myself when I've been feeling sad			,796
I buy gifts for myself because owning something new reinforces positive feelings	<-	Self-gifting / Positive mood reinforcement	,849
When I am feeling great, I buy special things for myself			,844
When I feel good about myself, I will purchase an item for myself to maintain my positive mood			,808
buy things for myself because I find shopping to be an exciting form of entertainment	<-	Self-gifting / Hedonic	,789
I enjoy shopping for myself because I like the feeling of finding a bargain			,817
I buy special gifts for myself in order to feel exhilarated			,774
χ^2 /sd: 2,762, GFI: 0,917, CFI: 0,960, RMSEA: 0,067			
Items in original English version translated to Turkish, translated version used in the study, reversed items changed to positive			

5.4. Regression Analysis

Regression analyzes were conducted in order to test the research model. Accordingly, it was determined that self-esteem significantly explained the variability in all sub-dimensions of self-gifting behavior. Relationship levels are seen to vary between medium to high. These findings support the idea that self-esteem is an important variable in predicting self-gift behavior.

Table 4. Regression Analyses

Independent variable	Beta	Sign.	Ad. R ²	F	Dependent variable
Self-esteem	0,704	0,000	0,337	197,838	Self-gifting / Reward
	0,616	0,000	0,281	149,076	Self-gifting / Personal disappointment
	0,594	0,000	0,277	147,176	Self-gifting / Celebratory
	0,712	0,000	0,365	221,688	Self-gifting / Therapeutic motivation
	0,667	0,000	0,327	184,545	Self-gifting / Negative mood reduction
	0,686	0,000	0,369	223,498	Self-gifting / Positive mood reinforcement
	0,716	0,000	0,402	260,839	Self-gifting / Hedonic

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As a result of the research, it was determined that self-esteem significantly affects all dimensions of self-gifting behavior. This result is similar to the results of the research showing that attitudes towards self-gifting are related to independent self-structure (Weisfeld-Spolter & Thakkar, 2007) and self-oriented identity structure (Weisfeld-Spolter, Rippe & Gould, 2015). However, although self-esteem tested as an independent variable in this study is similar to independent and self-focused self-structure variables, it is a different variable and can be expressed as an original variable that affects self-gifting behavior at a significant and high level.

In short, it is possible to expect an increase in self-gifting behavior as an increase in self-esteem. It is possible for businesses to increase the effectiveness of the messages by emphasizing self-esteem in the communication messages, that market self-gifting related products. It is possible to use messages that will encourage people to buy products for themselves outside of their routine and to remind people that they are as valuable as others who buy the products, and that will enable them to develop positive feelings and thoughts about themselves.

In terms of suggestions to researchers, examining the self-gifting behavior by using different theories will be useful in terms of revealing the different factors that affect this behavior. For example, in terms of Identity Theory, it is possible that the consumer's positive assessment and identification of with his/her role (an educator who builds the future, a scientist who contributes to scientific development, information worker who makes people have fun, etc.) may increase self-gifting behavior.

In terms of the limitations of this research; first of all, the fact that the research is descriptive or not experimental prevents it from concluding that self-esteem is the cause of self-gifting behavior. In addition, the fact that the research is conducted in a narrow geographic area prevents generalization of the results. However, the study is thought to be useful in terms of providing evidence for an important variable that affects self-gifting behavior, which has been noted to be important in the consumer behavior literature. It is hoped that the research findings will provide useful information for further research on the subject.

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