

Do People Perceive Products Differently When Buying for Self-versus for Others? Malleable Brand Personality in Gifting

Fiona Sussan (MBA, PhD)

Toyo University, Japan

Hideyuki Nakagawa (PhD)

Akita International University, Japan

Doi: [10.19044/esipreprint.9.2023.p140](https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.9.2023.p140)

Approved: 03 September 2023

Posted: 06 September 2023

Copyright 2023 Author(s)

Under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0

OPEN ACCESS

Cite As:

Sussan F. & Nakagawa H.(2023). *Do People Perceive Products Differently When Buying for Self-versus for Others? Malleable Brand Personality in Gifting*. ESI Preprints.

<https://doi.org/10.19044/esipreprint.9.2023.p140>

Abstract

Depending on situation, a person's role identity can be activated and impacts their behavior accordingly. There is a lack of research investigating identity salience within the context of gifting and its subsequent impact on the perceived brand personality of a gift in different gifting situations. This paper proposes that in others-gifting situation, a social identity is activated leading to a change in perceived brand personality of the same product that is purchased for self-gifting. Within the Japan context, we hypothesize that excitement brand personality dimension is more prominent in self-gifting than in others-gifting, while competence and sincerity brand personalities are more prominent in others-gifting than in self-gifting scenario. To test these hypotheses, thirty-six brand personality traits (Aaker et al., 2001) of eight brands were evaluated by 251 respondents in Japan. Factor analysis and multiple regression results support the main hypotheses. These nuanced findings have meanings for brand managers.

Keywords: Role Theory, Brand Personality Malleability, Social Self, Omiyage, Japan

Introduction

The recent ‘one for you, one for me’ marketing campaigns that promote simultaneous self-gifting and others-gifting motivated this research to investigate the complexity of simultaneous self- and others-gifting. While earlier research reported that others-gifting is mostly a positive emotional experience for both the gift-givers and the receivers (e.g., Sherry, 1983), recent research showed that buying gifts for others could be a negative emotional experience for the gift-giver as their own self-identity is threatened in the process of choosing gifts for others (Ward & Broniarczyk, 2011). Furthermore, even if the intention of the gift-giver is to please the receiver of the gift, gift-givers do not choose gifts that maximize the recipient’s happiness (Baskins et al., 2014). The current knowledge of self- and others-gifting research has yet to address the difference in gift givers’ emotional attachment to the same product or brand when they are simultaneously gifting (i.e., one for you, one for me) the same brand to themselves and to others. For example, a tourist who just finished her visit in Hokkaido, Japan purchases two boxes of the most famous Hokkaido-made Shiroi- Koibito (translated in English as “white lovers”) chocolate at the airport – one for herself, one for her colleagues at work. For her own gift, is it possible that she perceives Shiroi-Koibito as more of an exciting brand? Whereas as a gift for her colleagues she perceives it as more of a sincere brand? As brands have personalities that are interrelated to consumers’ emotional attachment (Malar et al., 2011) and they have multi-dimensional personalities (Aaker, 1997), is it then possible that the prominence of certain dimensions of brand personality may vary depending on self-gifting and others-gifting?

The argument toward the variance of brand personalities of the same brand in self-versus others-gifting context is possible when merging the literature on 1) role identity salience, 2) brand-self-congruity versus brand-social-self-congruity, and 3) brand personality malleability. First, for role identity salience, we propose that a consumer plays two different roles in self-versus others-gifting. Identity salience is a temporary state during which a person’s identity is activated (Forehand et al., 2002). Once the identity is activated, it impacts social behavior (Hogg et al., 1995) and judgment (Reed, 2004). Adapting identity salience in a gifting situation, this research proposes that when a consumer engages in purchasing gifts for others, their role as a social self is activated leading to behavior that is subject to expectations from their group and to social norm. Contrarily, when they purchase a gift for themselves, their social role identity is not invoked and they behave as their unique individual self.

Second, we propose that the difference of perceived brand personalities can happen even within the same brand in the two gifting scenarios. While past research mainly rely on implicit theory explaining the

personality of the self being malleable (Aaker, 1999) and therefore the brand personalities are being malleable in the case of product extension of the same brand (Yorkston et al., 2010), this paper argues that it is the situation of gifting others compounded with role salience of a social role when engaging in purchasing gift for others that the perceived brand personality of the same brand becomes malleable and differs between others-gifting and self-gifting.

The proposed difference in brand personalities in the two gifting situations hinges on the emotions surrounding these activities and behavior difference surrounding the social self and the self. More specifically, previous research has reported that self-gifting is mostly positive emotions that consist of excitement and happiness (cf. Heath & Tynan, 2015). The emotions surrounding gifting to others are a bit more complex to include negative feelings of the “self” being threatened (Ward & Broniarczyk, 2001), or downplaying the maximization of happiness when compared to self-gift (Baskins et al., 2014). When people role salience is activated in the social context, they behave in ways that are consistent with what are expected of them in that role (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). Based on this prior literature, this paper hypothesizes that the excitement of a brand’s personality is stronger (weaker) in a self-gifting (others-gifting) situation, while in others-gifting (self-gifting), socially expected brand personality (e.g., sincerity, competence) is stronger (weaker). To test these hypotheses, we collected data from 251 respondents and their evaluation of the brand personalities of eight popular brands.

The rest of the paper begins with a literature review of role identity salience, self- and others-gifting, and brand personality malleability, followed by a new conceptual framework with hypotheses. Results from factor analysis and regressions support most of the hypotheses. The final section of the paper concludes with managerial implications and limitations.

Literature Review

Social Role and Role Identity Salience

Role theory posits that a person plays multiple social roles (e.g., being a professor, a mother attending a PTA meeting, an activist in a NGO) and creates multiple identities (Burke, 1980). Role identities are mental representations (Reed, 2004) that people conceptualize and apply to themselves in response to the structural role positions they occupy. People often invoke their various identities in order to fit themselves in and maximize meaning in a specific social context (Hogg et al., 1995). In so doing, they self-categorize and define themselves as a member of a particular social category (Burke 1980). Self- categorization allows one to engage in whatever categorization that is cognitively most readily available and it is a mechanism that best explains or fits the similarities and differences among people (Hogg

et al., 1995). People usually behave in ways that are consistent with their role identities as a consequence of reducing incongruency between their own internalized identity standards and how others perceive them (Hogg et al., 1995). An example is a non-Japanese in a group of Japanese will try to avoid the negative implications of self-categorization as a non-Japanese.

As to which identity a person chooses to use in what social context depends on identity salience. Identity salience is defined as the likelihood that an identity will be invoked in diverse situations (Stryker, 2007). These multiple role identities are organized hierarchically with the ones positioned at the top of the hierarchy being more likely to be invoked in a particular situation than the identities at the bottom of the hierarchy (Stryker, 2007). When an identity is activated, it impacts social behavior (Hogg et al., 1995) and judgment (Reed, 2004). Essentially, identity salience is tied to the probability that forms the basis for action with the higher the position a role identifies the more likely it is being invoked in a particular situation leading closely to behavior.

An individual has many role identities that are essentially multiple components of the self (Brewer, 1991). At the core of these many identities or social identities resides personal identity (Brewer, 1991). It must be noted that in their social roles, one does not lose their own self or self identity *per se*, rather, they choose to change from their own unique individual identity to that of the group identity (Brewer, 1991). The mechanism of this change bases on the depersonalization of self in a social group by way of a contextual change in the level of identity from a unique individual to become a group member and chooses the prototype of group attributes (Brewer, 1991). The reason behind the selection of choosing group attributes over their own unique individual's attributes rests in the fundamental needs for people to see themselves in a positive light in relation to the relevant others in their in-group and therefore they behave in ways that are consistent with their role (or social) identities (Hogg & Abrams, 1993).

Emotions – Motivational and Emotional Difference in Self- versus Others-gifting

Self-gifting is defined as ‘personally symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and highly context-bound’ and is categorized into two main motivations: reward, therapeutic motivations (Mick & DeMoss, 1992). Instead of premeditated, some reported self-gifting can be impulsive (Atalay & Meloy, 2006). In contrast, the motivation of gift-giving to others has a wider range from altruistic to agnostic reasons (Sherry, 1983), and can be categorized in multiple dimensions. These dimensions include 1) obligation (i.e., guilt driven, expectation, reciprocity) to improve, maintain, or exchange social relationships (Belk, 1979), 2)

utilitarian purposes for practicality or usefulness (Wolfenbarger & Yale, 1993), 3) self-extension to fulfil a giver's positive experience when the giver exerts extensive effort to choose gifts for others, essentially in giving a portion of the 'self-identity' to the recipient in an objectified form of a gift (Belk, 1979; Sherry, 1983).

The emotions of self-gift are mostly associated with positive affect (cf. Heath & Tynan, 2015) while the emotions surrounding gifting to others are more complex. Whether the motivation is about reward or therapeutic, self-gifters experience positive emotions such as joy, excitement, contentment, delight, and happiness more than negative emotions such as remorse derived from guilt and worry from purchasing the inappropriate gifts for oneself (Heath & Tynan, 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1992, Mick et al., 1992). From a mood regulatory argument, research findings are mixed in that when in intense bad mood self-gifting makes it worse (Luomala & Laaksonen, 1999). Self-gift is more expressive than others-gifting as the giver is psychologically closer to oneself than to others (Baskins et al., 2014). Self-gifting is therefore often an exciting and happy occasion. It is an impulsive action (Atalay & Meloy 2006). Impulsive action or purchase elicits excitement brand personality (Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016).

Research in emotional display outside of the gift context can also be extended to explain the emotions of happiness in the self- and others-gifting situations. Researchers compared the expression of emotions in private and in public and found that when subjects triumphed in a competition with peers they would conceal their spontaneous happiness from their peers (Friedman & Miller-Herringer, 1991). In other words, happiness emotion is more prominent at the private-self environment than at public display.

The emotions surrounding gifting to others are a mix of positive and negative feelings. Earlier research reported positive emotions of the gifters as a result of a) feeling excited when the gifts derive surprises and delights from the receivers (Belk, 1996) and b) the giver was pleased to have extended their own self-image or self-identity in the process of choosing a gift or in the gift itself (Sherry, 1983). In this stream of research, choosing gifts for others is confounded with the givers' own predisposition but was believed to maximize pleasure for both the giver and the receiver (Sherry, 1983). Recent research however reported that even when people are aware of the idea of choosing a gift to maximize the receiver's happiness, they often do not choose gifts that maximize happiness for others when compared to self-gifting in which they will maximize happiness for themselves (Baskins et al., 2014).

Malleable Brand Personality

Brand personality, defined as a basket of adjectives that describe the emotional and symbolic perceptions one has toward a certain brand, is

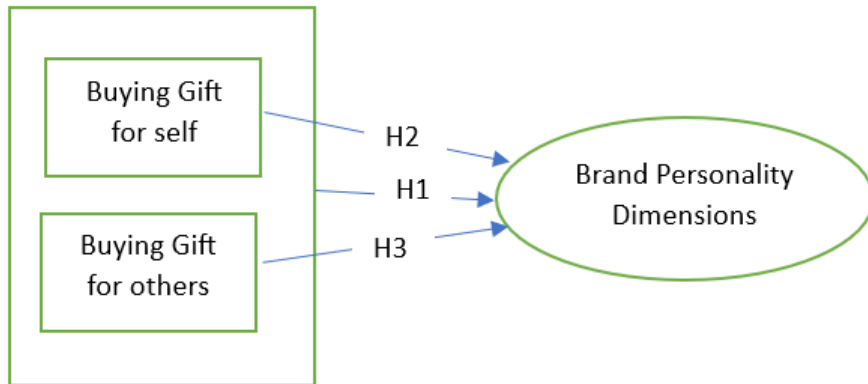
malleable (Yorkston et al., 2010). There are two main reasons for the malleability of brand personality. One, it is because consumers make inferences regarding the malleability of their own self and other people's personality traits (Aaker, 1999) and project such inferences towards brands (Yorkston et al., 2010). Yorkston and colleagues (2010) found that in brand extension, consumers accept a different set of brand personality deviates from the brand personality of the original product.

Another reason of the malleability of brand personality is situational depending on the role a brand plays. Based on role theory, a brand plays different roles and their brand personality thus changes and become malleable depending on their roles. Azoulay (2005) put forward a notion that consumers will find the personality of a brand differs whether they are buying it as a product, buying the stocks of the company, or applying for a job in the company.

Different brand personality also emerges depending on purchase situation. Sundar and Noseworthy (2016) reported that during an inconsistent purchase (e.g., impulse purchase) excitement brand personality is prominent while a consistent purchase is associated with sincerity brand personality. Self-gifting is considered an impulsive purchase (Atalay & Meloy, 2006). When it comes to the association between brand attribute and gifting, Baskins et al. (2014) found that self-gifting have less ambiguous brand attributes than others-gifting because the psychological distance to self-gifting is smaller than others-gifting.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Merging the research streams reviewed in the previous section, a new conceptual framework is proposed in Figure 1 which depicts brand personality of the same brand differs in self-gift versus gift giving to others. Brand personality takes up a social role in others-gifting and exhibits traits that align with the expectations of social norm, whereas in self-gifting the social role is not salient and the brand personality exhibits traits that align with oneself.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Source: Authors' own

In others-gifting situation, the social-self surfaces at a higher hierarchy than the personal self, resulting in the salience of a structural social role that prioritizes socially expected behavior. As such, this situational demand of a social role prompts the person who is engaging in others-gifting to shift their perception of a brand personality toward the traits of the brand with their socially acceptable brand personality. Contrarily, in self-gifting, the social role is not activated so consumers perceive a brand's personality mainly from their individual self perspective. As a result, the brand personality they perceive reflects the emotions of the individual self in self-gifting. Based on this argument, the following hypothesis is formed:

H1. Based on the difference in role salience, brand personality is perceived differently in the two gifting situations.

As previous research reported that excitement is prominent and happiness is maximized in self-gifting but not so in others-gifting, brand personality in self-gifting then will more likely consist of stronger excitement emotions than in others-gifting leading to the following hypothesis:

H2. In self-gifting, the dimensions of brand personality that reflects excitement are stronger than in gifting to others.

Prior research allude to others-gifting is seldom impulsive or inconsistent purchase when compared to self-gifting, for a consistent purchase in others-gifting, sincerity brand personality is prominent. In addition, in others-gifting, role salience is activated and the social self is at the top of the hierarchy of various roles, thus givers will more likely perceive the brand personality with socially acceptable attributes such as sincerity and competence than when they engage in self-gifting when social role salience is not activated. More formally:

H3. In others-gifting, the dimension of brand personality that reflects sincerity and competence are more prominent than in self-gifting.

Data and Methodology

The data collection was conducted in Japan. Japan is an ideal backdrop to study gifting because Japan has a rich and ritualistic others-gifting culture. Recent survey conducted by Statista reported that others-gifting is more common than self-gifting in Japan (Engelmann, 2019). Other than the de facto universal life event-based gifts for birthdays, school entrance/graduation, Father's or Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, Halloween, coming-of-age, weddings, funerals, and Christmas, uniquely Japanese is the formal gift giving occasions of midsummer gift (O-chugen in Japanese), and year-end gift (O-seibo in Japanese), and many informal gift-giving occasions (Lotz et al., 2003). Gift-giving is an institutionalized cultural norm that is interwoven in the daily lives among Japanese. In general, Japanese people view gift giving as an obligatory and reciprocal gesture to nurture and maintain positive social relationships (Witkowski & Yamamoto, 1991). As such, Japanese people and their frequent practice of others-gifting enable us to easily collect data to empirically test our theoretical argument of role salience in others-gifting. Moreover, Asian consumers are particularly impacted by situational influence in gifting (Lotz et al., 2003) which accentuates the proposed model of this paper that situational activated role salience leads to malleable brand personality in others-gifting. At the same time, self-gifting has recently become an important ritual and research topic in Japan (Kanno & Suzuki, 2019). Self-gifting as manifested on 'singles' day' is a worldwide phenomenon (Kusek, 2016) with many advertisers aggressively pushing this new retail opportunity. One such example for Japan is depicted in an All Nippon Airways (ANA) magazine ad published in 2019.

Survey Design

We selected gifts stimuli from four popular tourist destinations: Tokyo, Kyoto, Hokkaido, and Okinawa. From each region, we selected the two most recognized souvenir food gift products based on a national survey conducted in Japan (Neo Marketing Inc., 2017). The brands presented are: Tokyo Banana (sponge cake) and Kaminari Okoshi (crispy rice cake) from Tokyo, Nama Yatsushashi (glutinous rice cake) and Seigoin Yatshuhashi (glutinous rice cake) from Kyoto, Shiroyo Koibito (chocolate) and Jyagapokurru (potato chips) from Hokkaido, and Sata Andagi (donut) and Chinsuko (shortbread) from Okinawa.

Brand Personality Instruments and Measurement

To measure brand personality, we followed Aaker et al. (2001) and use their Japan specific thirty-six adjectives categorized in five brand personality

dimensions. The dimension and adjectives are: Excitement Dimension – talkative, funny, optimistic, positive, contemporary, free; Competence Dimension – consistent, reliable, responsible, dignified, confident, determined, patient, tenacious, masculine; Peaceful Dimension – peaceful, shy, mild mannered, naïve, dependent, childlike; Sincerity Dimension – warm, thoughtful, kind; Sophistication – elegant, smooth, romantic, stylish, sophisticated, extravagant.

Respondents were asked to rate to what extent a product describes each personality trait in a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree), same as Aaker et al. (2001). Two questions were used for intention to purchase: 1) Intention to purchase for self (scale 1-4) and 2) Intention to purchase as gift for others (scale 1-4). Respondents were also asked their gender, the region they were from (8 regions in Japan, 1 for outside of Japan) and their age (>20 or <20 as 20 is the legal age in Japan).

Data collection

A paper-and-pencil survey was conducted in multiple classrooms at a public university in the Northern part of Japan. Participants each signed an informed consent form at the beginning of the survey. The participants were undergraduate students from various parts of Japan. Table 1 reports the geographic distribution and variation of survey respondents.

Table 1. Geographic Distribution of Respondents

Region	Count	Percentage
Hokkaido	10	3.7
Tohoku	47	17.41
Kanto	73	27.04
Chubu	40	14.81
Kinki	28	10.37
Chugoku	41	15.19
Shikoku	6	2.22
Outside of Japan	7	2.59

To avoid errors and blanks due to fatigue from answering too many questions, we prepared two sets of survey questionnaire of 4 brands from 4 regions per subject (Aaker et al., 2001). The two sets were administered within the same week with no students participating more than once. In other words, it is a between subject design with each subject evaluating four brands from 4 regions with $36 \times 4 = 144$ personality traits to rate. After data cleaning, the number of valid responses totals 251 with 139 for one set and 112 for another set.

Analysis and Results

First, the extraction of the brand personality dimensions for the 8 brands was conducted using principal components and a varimax rotation in

STATA 15. As a result, seven-factors were determined based on the following criteria (Aaker, 1997):

- all seven factors have eigenvalues larger than 1
- the seven-factor solution explains high level of variance (62 per cent)
- a significant drop in scree plot until 7th factor

In the first round of factor analysis, two traits (dependent and contemporary) did not have high loading to any factor (value of 0.4). These traits were removed in the next round of analysis. The final seven component extracted is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Brand Personality Dimensions Extracted

Traits	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	Factor 6	Factor 7
Positive	.758						
Happy	.750						
Likable	.591						
Childlike	.566		.449				
Kind	.560						
Funny	.547						
Friendly	.530						
Talkative	.509						
Warm	.488						
Confident	.473				.415		
Dignified		.825					
Patient		.800					
Masculine		.721					
Determined		.712					
Tenacious		.646					
Responsible		.587		.471			
Energetic			.748				
Optimistic			.748				
Stylish			.603				
Spirited			.568				
Free			.566				
Romantic				.720			
Smooth				.641	.404		
Consistent				.633			
Thoughtful			.433	.594			
Reliable			.500	.524			
Peaceful				.410			
Shy					.745		
Sophisticated		.456			.641		
Elegant					.541	.477	
Extravagant					.445		
Naïve					.413		
Youthful						.694	

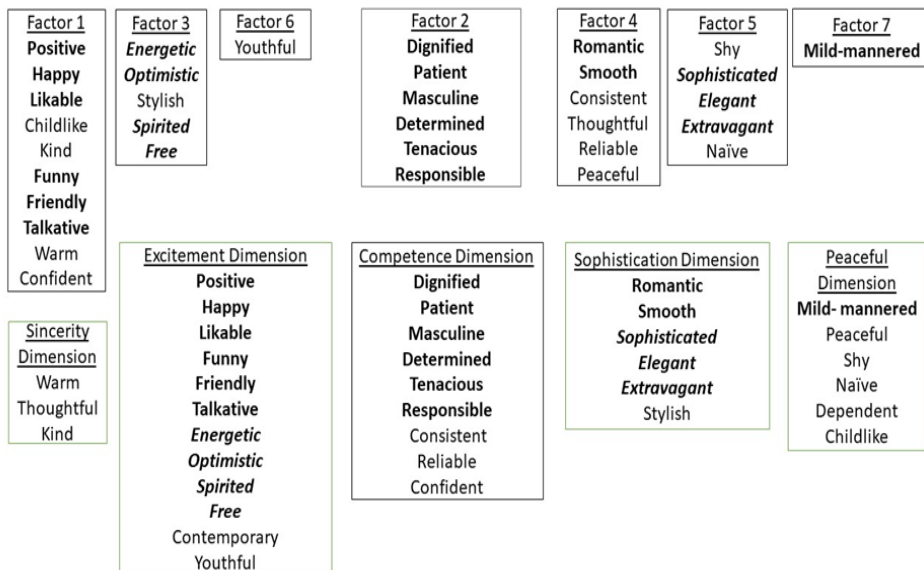
Mild Mannered							.793
---------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	------

Note:

1. Only values above .40 are reported.
2. Factors 1 and 2 extracted here are nearly the same as the first two brand personality dimensions in Aaker et al. (2001).

Next, each factor was labelled based on the adjectives that are prominent within each component (Excitement - Happiness, Competency, Excitement - Energetic, Romantic, Sophistication, Youthful, and mild-mannered). A comparison of the adjectives in each factor extracted from this study and the ones from Aaker et al (2001) is presented in Figure 5. The comparison shows that the most synchronized dimensions are Factor 1 and Factor 2. It is not unusual that brand personality dimensions are not easily replicable (Avis et al., 2013).

Figure 5. A Comparison of 7 factors extracted in this study and original 5 dimensions



Note:

1. Inside each Factor, the adjectives are in descending order with the most important adjective or the factor with the largest coefficient as reported in Table 2.
2. Adjectives highlighted in bold depict matches found in the original Aaker et al. (2001) brand personality dimensions that are placed immediately below the Factors. For example, in Factor 1 Positive,

- Happy, Likable, Funny, Friendly, Talkative are identical to the adjectives in Excitement Dimension reported in Aaker et al. (2001).
3. Factors 1, 3 and 6 are clustered to the left of the Figure as they are close to the original Aaker et al. (2001) Excitement and Sincerity Dimensions.
 4. Factors 1 and 2 extracted in this study is the same as the first two dimensions of Excitement and Competent in the original Aaker et al. (2001)

Hypotheses Testing

After seven brand personality factors were extracted, regression analysis was conducted using the factor scores as independent variables under multiple specifications, mainly contrasting the difference between the intentions for self-gift and gift for others to test the hypotheses (Devlieger et al., 2016; Scott, 1966).

Consider the following equation for the model:

$$y_i = \alpha + \beta [x_i] + \gamma + \varepsilon_i \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

where

y_i is purchase intention for self or for others,

x_i is a vector of factor scores for brand personality dimensions,

ε_i is idiosyncratic unobservable error terms for individual i

Results of regression analysis are presented in Table 3. Column (1) reports self-gift scenario and Column (2) reports others-gifting derived from Equation 1.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Results

Dependent Variable	(1) Self-Gift	(2) Others-Gift
F1 Excitement -Happiness	.04** (.02)	.01 (.01)
F2 Competence	-.00 (.02)	-.03* (.01)
F3 Excitement - Energetic	.02 (.02)	.03* (.01)
F4 Romantic	.03* (.02)	.05** (.01)
F5 Sophisticated	.06** (.02)	.05** (.01)
F6 Youthful	.08** (.02)	.07** (.01)
F7 Mild-mannered	-.04** (.02)	-.06** (.01)
Constant	.62* (.02)	.72** (.01)

Observations	985	985
R-squared	.06	.08

Note

Standard error in parentheses

** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

H1 hypothesized that brand personality of the same brand is malleable leading to the difference between them in self-gifting and gift giving to others. The models in Column (1) and Column (2) in Table 3 report the brand personalities in the two gifting situations. For self-gifting in Column (1), Factors 1, 4, 5 and 6 are positively and statistically significant and Factor 7 negatively statistically significant. For others-gifting in Column (2), Factors 3, 4, 5, and 6 are positively statistically significant, and Factors 2 and 7 are negatively significant. Factor 1 is exclusively statistically significant in the self-gifting model and Factors 2 and 3 exclusively statistically significant in the others-gifting model. H1 is therefore supported. Furthermore, the test of difference in coefficients of factors across the two models yielded the following: Factor 1 ($p=.03$), Factor 2 ($p=.07$), Factor 3 ($p=.28$), Factor 4 ($p=.07$), Factor 5 ($p=.62$), Factor 6 ($p=.40$), and Factor 7 ($p=.19$), suggesting that self-gifting results in different brand personality than others-gifting.

H2 hypothesized the dimension of brand personality of excitement is stronger in self-gifting than gifting to others. This hypothesis is supported as the results of the comparison of the models of Column (1) and Column (2) described above. H2 is supported.

H3 hypothesized that sincerity brand personality is stronger in gifting to others than in self-gifting. In the comparison of the models for the two gifting situations, we did not find sincerity to be more prominent in others-gifting than in self-gifting. In fact, the reverse may be true as 2 out of 3 adjectives in the sincerity dimension of Aaker et al. (2001) subsumed under Factor 1 Excitement-Happiness which is not statistically significant in others-gifting. H3 is not supported. The coefficient of Factor 3 Excitement-Energetic is positively and statistically significant in others-gifting but not in self-gifting. Furthermore, for others-gifting situation, Factor 2 Competency is negatively and statistically significant ($b = -.03$, $p < .05$) in others-gifting but not in self-gifting. The interpretation of these results will be elaborated later in the discussion section.

Discussion

While the results supported H1 and H2, the interpretation of some of the results deserves some elaborations. For others-gifting, Factor 2 Competency is found negatively and statistically significant meaning that

consumers avoid buying gifts that have competent brand personalities. This result is perplexing as Competence is the second most important brand personality dimension in both this study and Aaker et al. (2001). Aaker et al. (2001) evaluated 10 global brands (e.g., McDonald's, Chanel, Levi's) across product categories in Japan and found Competence to be prominent. Perhaps Competence is contextual given Aaker et al. (2001) did not link brand personalities to purchase. It is possible in gifting, Japanese cultural norms play an important role to result in the negative association of Competence when it comes to others-gifting. The results of this study also showed that Competence brand personality did not matter in self-gifting.

The results supporting H1 confirm that in self-gifting, brand personality traits that include adjectives of positive, happy, likable are prominent. This brand personality and their adjectives were not found to impact others-gifting. The importance of the emotion of happiness has been reported repeatedly in self-gifting literature (Atalay & Meloy, 2006; Baskins et al., 2014; Sherry, 1983). The results reported clearly identified happiness as a brand personality for self-gift that is distinct from others-gifting.

In others-gifting, brand personality that includes adjectives of energetic and optimistic are found. Energetic, although categorized under 'excitement' from Aaker et al. (2001), Aaker (2016) reported that energetic is in fact a separate dimension (from excitement) and possibly the most important dimension in differentiating a brand in the long term from a large-scale longitudinal study conducted by the consulting firm Brand Asset Value. For others-gifting, other than the confirmation of the lack of happiness brand personality and the negative impact of competency, there are many more emotions or perceived brand personalities. This could be because the psychological distance between the self and the gifting is smaller in self-gifting when the psychological distance between the gift and others is larger (Baskins et al., 2014).

Conclusion

This paper hypothesized the activation of social role will lead to brand personality malleability that results in perceived different brand personalities of the same brand in self- versus others-gifting situation. Empirical data using 8 brands in Japan in a survey with 251 respondents were collected and analyzed. The results supported two of the three hypotheses. This paper adds two contributions to existing literature. First, the conceptualization based on role salience in consumer research (Reed, 2004) and the relevant empirical results add new lenses to examine the difference between self- and others-gifting in general. By empirically separately analyzing the two gifting situations and the use brand personality malleability add clarity to when consumers evaluate products differently. The second contribution of this

research is it addresses brand personality malleability within the gifting context and adds more empirical evidence to a situational activated personality change in brands.

For managers, the results of this paper give further support to the viability of “one for you, one for me” (Ward & Tran, 2008) marketing campaign in that the results show that consumers vary their emotional attachments to the same brand even when they are purchasing one for themselves and one for gifting others. Based on these results, managers can craft separate messages for self-gifting (e.g., happy) and others-gifting (e.g., energetic) and simultaneously deliver to customers for ‘one for you, one for me’ marketing campaigns.

The findings of energetic traits within the excitement brand personality dimension being exclusive for others-gifting but not in self-gifting is a strength and a weakness in this paper. It is a strength in that Aaker (2016) did mention energetic is a separate dimension from that of Excitement in Aaker et al. (2001). It is however a weakness in that there is a lack of theoretical linkage of energetic to others-gifting. Apple and Nike were cited as energetic brands (Aaker, 2016). However, there is no evidence to suggest these brands are perceived as energetic in the context of others-gifting. Future research should explore energetic emotions more within the context of gifting. Another puzzling finding in our research is the negative impact of competency in others-gifting. Perhaps it was low-cost food-based gift items that this study used as stimuli that brought along these results. Disney and Microsoft as cited as high competence brand personality (Aaker, 2016), future study should consider using higher-priced gift categories.

Conflict of Interest:

The authors reported no conflict of interest.

Data Availability:

All of the data are included in the content of the paper.

Funding Statement:

The authors did not obtain any funding for this research.

Human Involvement Statement:

This research has followed the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in Japan and its Guidelines for Research Ethics Involving Human Subjects, and the Science Council of Japan ‘Code of Conduct for Scientists’. The research was approved by the Institutional Review Board at Akita International University, Japan.

References:

1. Aaker, J. (1997), Dimensions of Brand Personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356.
2. Aaker, J. (1999), The Malleable Self: The Role of Self-Expression in Persuasion”, *Journal of Marketing Research*, 36 (1), 45-57.
3. Aaker, D. (2016). Berkeley Haas Dean's Speaker Series - David Aaker: "The Power of Brand Personality". Accessed July 1, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aOtSIDhwSdM>
4. Aaker, J., Benet-Martinez, J., & Jordi, V. (2001). Consumption Symbols as Carriers of Culture: A Study of Japanese and Spanish Personality Constructs. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 8(3), 482-508.
5. Atalay, S. & Meloy, M. (2006). When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping. An examination of self-gifting behavior. *Advances in Consumer Research Vol. 33*, eds. Connie Pechmann and Linda Price, Duluth, MN. pp. 259-260.
6. Avis, M., Forbes, S., & Ferguson, S. (2013). The brand personality of rocks: A critical evaluation of a brand personality scale. *Marketing Theory*, 14(4), 451-475.
7. Azoulay, A. (2005). The malleable personality of brands: the winning facets. *Proceedings of the 34th EMAC Colloquium, Milan, Italy*.
8. Baskins, E., Wakslak, C., Trope, Y., & Novemsky, N. (2014). Why Feasibility Matters More to Gift Receivers than to Givers: A Construal-Level Approach to Gift Giving. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 41(1), 169-182.
9. Belk, R. (1979). *Gift giving behaviour, Vol.2*, Greenwich: JAI Press.
10. Belk, R. (1996). The Perfect Gift in *Gift Giving: A Research Anthology*, ed. Cele Otnes and Richard F. Beltramini, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 59-84.
11. Brewer, M.B. (1991). The social self: On being the same and different at the same time. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 17(5), 475-482.
12. Burke, P.J. (1980). The Self: Measurement Requirements from an Interactionist Perspective. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 43(1), 18-29.
13. Devlieger, I., Mayer, A., & Rosseel, Y. (2016). Hypothesis Testing Using Factor Score Regression: A Comparison of Four Methods. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 76(5), 741–770.
14. Engelmann, J. (2019), Whom people gifted presents to in the last six months in Japan as of October 2018, by age group. Accessed March 15, 2020 from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1009159/japan-recent-gift-giving-recipient-by-age-group/>

15. Forehand, M.R., Deshpande, R., & Reed, A. II (2002). Identity Salience and the Influence of Differential Activation of the Social Self-Schema on Advertising Response. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 87(6), 1086.
16. Friedman, H. S., & Miller-Herringer, T. (1991). Nonverbal display of emotion in public and in private: Self-monitoring, personality, and expressive cues. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 61(5), 766–775.
17. Heath T.P. & Tynan, C. (2015). Accounts of self-gift giving: nature, context and emotions. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(7/8), 1067-1086.
18. Hogg, M. A., & Abrams, D. (1993). Towards a single-process uncertainty-reduction model of social motivation in groups. In M. A. Hogg & D. Abrams (Eds.), *Group motivation: Social psychological perspectives* (p. 173–190). Harvester Wheatsheaf.
19. Hogg, M., Terry, D., & White, K. (1995). A Tale of Two Theories: A Critical Comparison of Identity Theory with Social Identity Theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 58(4), 255-269.
20. Kanno, S., & Suzuki, S. (2019). Romantic Self-Gifts to the "Hidden True Self: Self-Gifting and Multiple Selves". In R. W. Yuko Minowa, *Gifts, Romance, and Consumer Culture*. New York, USA: Routledge.
21. Kusek, K. (2016, Nov 9). Every Day is a Singles' Day. *Forbes*.
22. Lotz, S.L., Shim, S., & Gehrt, K.C. (2003). A Study of Japanese Consumers' Cognitive Hierarchies in Formal and Informal Gift-Giving Situation. *Psychology and Marketing*, 20(1), 59-85.
23. Luomala, H.T. & Laaksonen, M. (1999), "A qualitative exploration of mood-regulatory self-gift behaviors", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, 20 (2), 147-182.
24. Malar, L., Krohmer, H., & Hoyer, W.D. (2011). Emotional Brand Attachment and Brand Personality: The Relative Importance of the Actual and the Ideal Self. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(4), 35-52.
25. Mick, D.G., & DeMoss, M. (1992). Furthering findings on self-gifts: Products, qualities, and socioeconomic correlates. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 19, 140-46.
26. Mick, D.G., DeMoss, M., & Faber, R.J. (1992), "A projective study of motivations and meanings of self-gifts: implications for retail management", *Journal of Retailing*, 68 (2), 122-144.
27. Neo Marketing Inc. (2017). Ranking of popular souvenirs. Retrieved October 5, 2020, from <https://www.neo-m.jp/investigation/146/>.
28. Reed II, A. (2004). Activating the Self-Importance of Consumer Selves: Exploring Identity Salience Effects on Judgments, *Journal of Consumer Research*, 31(2), 286-295.

29. Scott, J. (1966). Factor Analysis and Regression. *Econometrica*, 34(3), 552-562.
30. Sherry, J. (1983). Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 10(2), 157-168. Sherry, J.F. Jr, McGrath, M.A. and Levy, S.J. (1995), "Monadic giving: anatomy of gifts to the self", in Sherry, J.F. Jr (Ed.), *Contemporary Marketing and Consumer Behavior: An Anthropological Sourcebook*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, pp. 399-432.
31. Stryker, S. (2007). Identity Theory and Personality Theory: Mutual Relevance. *Journal of Personality*, 75(6), 1083-1102.
32. Sundar, A., & Noseworthy, T.J. (2016). Too Exciting to Fail, Too Sincere to Succeed: The Effects of Brand Personality on Sensory Disconfirmation. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(1), 44-67.
33. Ward, C., & Broniarczyk, S. (2011). It's Not Me, It's You: How Gift Giving Creates Giver Identity Threat as a Function of Social Closeness 38(June). *Journal of Consumer Research*, 38(June), 164-181.
34. Ward, C., & Tran, T. (2008). Consumer Gifting Behaviors: One for You, One for Me? *Service Marketing Quarterly*, 29(2), 1-17.
35. Witkowski, T., & Yamamoto, Y. (1991). Omiyage Gift Purchasing by Japanese Travelers in the U.S. *Advances in Consumer Research*. 18, pp. 123-128. Association of Consumer Research.
36. Wolfinbarger, M.F., & Yale, L.J. (1993). Three motivations for interpersonal gift giving: Experiential, obligated and practical motivations. In NA- *Advances in Consumer Research Volume 20*, eds. Leigh McAlister and Michael L. Rothschild, Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research, Pages: 520-526.
37. Yorkston, E., Nunes, J., & Matta, S. (2010). The Malleable Brand: The role of implicit theories in evaluating brand extensions. *Journal of Marketing*, 74(1), 80-93.