Do People Perceive Products Differently when Buying for Self Versus for Others? Malleable Brand Personality in Gifting

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Abstract

According to social identity theory, people behave differently in a social context than when they are by themselves because of social identity salience. Like people, brand personality changes depending on situations and context. There is 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 gifting situations of others, a social identity is activated which leads to change in the perceived brand personality of the same product purchased for self-gifting. Within the Japanese context, the hypothesis states that the excitement of brand personality dimension is more prominent in self-gifting than in gifting others, while competence and sincerity brand personalities are more prominent in gifting others than in self-gifting scenarios. 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. The paper concludes with managerial implications and future research directions.

Introduction

The recent 'one for you, one for me' marketing campaigns that promote simultaneous self-gifting and gifting others motivated this research to investigate the complexity of simultaneous gifting of self and others. While earlier research reported that gifting others is mostly a positive emotional experience for both the gift-givers and the receivers (Sherry, 1983), recent research showed that buying gifts for others could be a negative emotional experience for the gift-giver. This is because 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 research knowledge of gifting self and others is 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 to 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 and one for her colleagues at work. However, is it possible that she perceives Shiroi-Koibito as an exciting brand for her own gift and a sincere brand for her colleagues? Furthermore, since brands have personalities that are interrelated to consumers' emotional attachment (Malar et al., 2011), including multi-dimensional personalities (Aaker, 1997), is it possible that the prominence of certain dimensions of brand personality may vary depending on self-gifting and gifting others?

The argument toward the variance of brand personalities of the same brand in the context of gifting self versus others is possible when merging the literature on two things: role identity salience and brand personality malleability. First, for role identity salience, it is proposed that a consumer plays two different roles in gifting self versus others. Identity salience is a temporary state in 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). While adapting identity salience in a gifting situation, this research proposes that when a consumer engages in purchasing gifts for others, their role as social self is activated. This leads to behavior that is subject to expectations from their group and social norms. Contrarily, when they purchase a gift for themselves, their social role identity is not invoked, and they behave as their unique individual self.

Second, it is proposed that the difference in perceived brand personalities can happen even within the same brand in two gifting scenarios. Past research mainly relies on implicit theory which explains the personality of self being malleable (Aaker, 1999). Subsequently, brand personalities

become malleable in the case of product extension of the same brand (Yorkston et al., 2010). Nevertheless, this paper argues that the situation of gifting others, compounded with role salience of social role when purchasing gift for others, is the reason why the perceived brand personality of the same brand becomes malleable and differs between gifting others and self-gifting.

The proposed difference in brand personalities in two gifting situations hinges on the emotions surrounding these activities and behavior difference surrounding the social self. More specifically, previous research has reported that self-gifting mostly elicits positive emotions of excitement and happiness (cf. Heath & Tynan, 2015). The emotions surrounding gifting others are a bit more complex and include negative feelings of "self" being threatened (Ward & Broniarczyk, 2001) or downplaying the maximization of happiness when compared to self-gift (Baskins et al., 2014). When role salience of people is activated in social context, they behave in ways that are consistent with what is expected of them (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). Based on this prior literature, this paper hypothesizes that the excitement of a brand's personality is stronger (weaker) in self-gifting (gifting others) situation. Conversely, in gifting others (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, gifting self and others, and brand personality malleability. This is 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 an 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 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 and readily available. 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 because of reducing incongruency between their own internalized

identity standards and how others perceive them (Hogg et al., 1995). For example, a non-Japanese in a group of Japanese people will try to avoid the negative implications of self-categorization.

An individual has many role identities that are essentially multiple components of self (Brewer, 1991). At the core of these many identities or social identities resides personal identity (Brewer, 1991). The identity a person chooses to use in a 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 and the ones positioned at the top of the hierarchy are 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. Therefore, the higher the position a role identifies, the more likely it is being invoked in a particular situation, thus leading closely to behavior.

Social Context and Personality

It must be noted that in their social roles, people do not lose their own self or self-identity *per se*. This means that they choose to change from their own unique individual identity to group identity (Brewer, 1991). The mechanism of this change is based on the depersonalization of self in a social group by way of a contextual change in the level of identity. This allows a unique individual to become a group member that chooses the prototype of group attributes (Brewer, 1991). The reason behind the selection choice of group attributes over unique individual attributes rests in the fundamental needs for people to see themselves in a positive light, alongside other relevant individuals in their in-group. As a result, they behave in ways that are consistent with their role (or social) identities (Hogg & Abrams, 1993). Recent research reported that personal identity and collective identity work differently when it comes to consumers' purchasing decision on a foreign product (Irini et al., 2015). More specifically, these authors reported that collective identity positively impacted attitude, preference, liking, and intention to purchase. Thus, the personal identity had no impact at all. They concluded that purchasing a foreign product was collectively influenced but not personally influenced. The coexistence of personal and collective identities and the variance in the salience of these identities are evident among emigrants from Latvia (Mierina & Koreleva, 2015) and Kazakhstan (Bokayev, 2013). Mierina and Koreleva (2015) found that Latvian emigrants living in other European countries hold personal identity and collective or social identity, which is exhibited in the form of national identity and supra-national identity,

respectively. Therefore, the strong sense of identity toward host country was contextual depending on when they emigrated (e.g., during crisis).

When it comes to the relationship between social context and personality, there are two camps about personality (Dweck et al., 1995). First, the entity theorists believe that personality once formed is stable and cannot be changed. The second camp of incremental theorists posits that personality is malleable and can be changed depending on situations. In addition, social environment can change the personality. However, their philosophy on social constructivism was originally put forward by Lev Vygotsky and others (Khmil & Popovych, 2019). According to the social constructivists, people are subject to and able to fluidly calibrate their personality with social expectation or allow the social context to influence their individual personality (Khmil & Popovych, 2019). The mechanism of this lies in an interaction effect of the collective personalities of groups members and the expression of the group personality in the individual (Webster & Ward, 2011). In other words, one's personality varies depending on social context. This forms the foundation of brand personality malleability that will be discussed later.

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

Self-gifting is defined as 'personal symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that tend to be premeditated and highly context-bound". It is categorized into two main motivations: reward and therapeutic motivations (Mick & DeMoss, 1992).Although self-gifting is premeditated, some reported that it can be impulsive (Atalay & Meloy, 2006). In contrast, the motivation for giving gifts to others ranges from altruistic to agnostic reasons (Sherry, 1983). These can be categorized in the following multiple dimensions: 1) obligation (i.e., guilt driven, expectation, reciprocity) to improve, maintain, or exchange social relationships (Belk, 1979), 2) utilitarian purposes for practicality or usefulness (Wolfinbarger & Yale, 1993), and 3) self-extension to fulfil a giver's positive experience when the giver exerts extensive effort to choose gifts for others. This is essentially giving a portion of '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 effect (cf. Heath & Tynan, 2015), while the emotions surrounding gifting others are more complex. Whether the motivation is about reward or therapeutic, people experience positive emotions such as joy, excitement, contentment, delight, and happiness when they buy gifts for themselves. These positive emotions supersede negative emotions such as remorse, guilt, and worry for purchasing inappropriate gifts for oneself (Heath & Tynan, 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1992, Mick et al., 1992). From a mood regulatory argument, research findings are

mixed. This implies that intense bad mood makes self-gifting worse (Luomala & Laaksonen, 1999). Self-gift is more expressive than gifting others as the people gifting themselves are psychologically closer to oneself than to others (Baskins et al., 2014). Self-gifting is often an exciting and happy occasion. It is an impulsive action (Atalay & Meloy 2006). Impulsive action or purchase elicits excitement for brand personality (Sundar & Noseworthy, 2016).

Research in emotional display, which is not influenced by gift context, also explains the emotions of happiness in gifting situations of self and others. 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, expressing emotions of happiness is more prominent at private-self environment than at public display. However, competition emotions are acceptable for public display.

The emotions surrounding gifting others include both positive and negative feelings. Earlier research reported the following positive emotions of a giver: a) feelings of excitement when the gifts surprises and delights the receivers (Belk, 1996) and b) the giver was pleased to have extended their own self-image or self-identity while choosing a gift (Sherry, 1983). In this stream of research, choosing gifts for others is confounded with the givers' own predisposition. However, it was believed to maximize pleasure for both the giver and the receiver (Sherry, 1983). Recent research 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. This is contrary to self-gifting that allows maximum happiness for oneself (Baskins et al., 2014). When buying gifts for others, people choose features of gifts or brands that represent the desired social image of the givers (Gupta et al., 2023). For example, for a friend's birthday, instead of purchasing a coffee mug from a discount store, givers would choose one from Starbucks even if the giver does not go to Starbucks normally. Starbucks in this case represents a socially acceptable brand that fits in as a desirable social image. This concept is closely related to the literature of social role theory, social identity salience, and social context and personality mentioned above.

Malleable Brand Personality

Brand personality is defined as a basket of adjectives that describe the emotional and symbolic perceptions one has toward a certain brand, which is malleable (Yorkston et al., 2010). There are two main reasons for malleability of brand personality. The first reason is because consumers make inferences regarding the malleability of their own self and other people's personality traits (Aaker, 1999). Therefore, they 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, which differs from the brand personality of the original product.

Another reason for malleability of brand personality is situational, depending on the role a brand plays. Based on role theory, a brand plays different roles that change their brand personality and malleability, depending on their roles. Azoulay (2005) put forward a notion that consumers will find the personality of a brand different 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. On the other hand, a consistent purchase is associated with sincerity brand personality. Self-gifting is considered an impulsive purchase (Atalay & Meloy, 2006). Regarding the association between brand attribute and gifting, Baskins et al. (2014) found that self-gifting has less ambiguous brand attributes than gifting others. This is because the psychological distance to self-gifting is smaller than that of gifting others.

Gift Giving in Japan

Japan has a rich and ritualistic culture of gifting others. 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, Japanese celebrates formal gift-giving occasions, such as 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 of Japanese people. In general, Japanese people view gift giving as an obligatory and reciprocal gesture to nurture and maintain positive social relationships (Witkowski & Yamamoto, 1991). Asian consumers are particularly impacted by situational influence in gifting (Lotz et al., 2003). At the same time, self-gifting has recently become an important ritual and research topic in Japan (Kanno & Suzuki, 2019). Self-gifting on 'singles' day' is a worldwide phenomenon (Kusek, 2016), with many advertisers aggressively pushing this new retail opportunity. In Japan, an example of this is depicted in an All Nippon Airways (ANA) magazine ad published in 2019. Recent survey conducted by Statista reported that gifting others is more common than self-gifting in Japan (Engelmann, 2019).

Japan Brand Personality

Aaker et al. (2001) developed brand personality dimensions specifically for Japan. They used the original five brand personality dimensions (Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, Ruggedness)

that were developed in the U.S. and replicated for Japan (Aaker, 1997). However, they were unable to replicate the dimension of Ruggedness and created a new dimension of Peacefulness. Based on the brand personality of Japan, the five dimensions and their adjectives include Excitement Dimension – talkative, funny, optimistic, positive, contemporary, free, friendly, happy, likeable, youthful, energetic, and spirited; Competence Dimension – consistent, reliable, responsible, dignified, confident, determined, patient, tenacious, and masculine; Peaceful Dimension – peaceful, shy, mild mannered, naïve, dependent, childlike; Sincerity Dimension – warm, thoughtful, and kind; Sophistication Dimension – elegant, smooth, romantic, stylish, sophisticated, and extravagant.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

Merging the research streams reviewed in the previous section, a new conceptual framework is proposed in Figure 1. The first hypothesis H1 proposes that the brand personality of the same brand differs in self-gift versus giving gift to others. H2 proposes that in self-gifting situation the social role is not salient, and the brand personality exhibits traits that align with oneself. Furthermore, H3 proposes that the brand personality takes up a social role in gifting others and exhibits traits that align with the expectations of social norm.
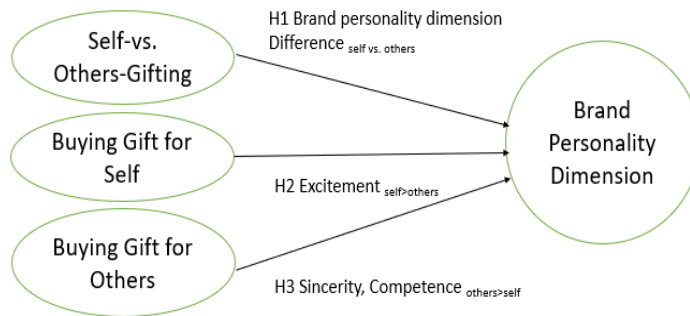

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses
Source: Authors' own

In situations of gifting others, the social identity is activated. As a result, the social-self surfaces at a higher hierarchy than the personal self, thus resulting in the salience of a structural social role that prioritizes socially expected emotions and behavior. This situational demand of a social role prompts the person who is engaging in gifting others to shift their perception of brand personality toward the traits of the brand with their socially expected and acceptable brand personality. This is because brands have personalities just like people and brands personalities are essentially adjectives that describe the brands as perceived by consumers.

Contrarily, in self-gifting, the social role is not activated. Therefore, 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 in self-gifting. As reported in prior literature, the malleability of brand personality is subject to change depending on the situation. However, there is reason to believe that the salience of each brand personality dimension will differ between gifting self and others. Based on this argument, the following hypothesis is formed:

H1. Based on the malleability of brand personality, the difference in role salience, and the emotions activated in each role, brand personality of a product is perceived differently in two gifting situations.

According to previous research, excitement is prominent and happiness is maximized in self-gifting but not in gifting others. Thus, brand personality in self-gifting will more likely consist of stronger emotions of excitement than in gifting others. On this basis, the following hypothesis is formed:

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

According to prior research, gifting others is seldom impulsive or inconsistent purchase when compared to self-gifting. When it comes to gifting others, sincerity brand personality is prominent for consistent purchase. In addition, role salience is activated in gifting others, 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. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formed:

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

Data and Methodology
Survey Design

A questionnaire-based survey was developed to evaluate the brand personality of Japanese products that are popular among Japanese consumers. In addition to the questionnaire items of Japan brand personality from previous studies (Aaker et al., 2001), items for purchasing specific Japanese products as gifts for self and others were added. This aligns with purchase experience, product knowledge, and geographic origin of subjects in the survey. 280 subjects on campus were recruited from undergraduate students at a university in Japan during the month of January 2019. Details of the stimuli, instruments, and procedure of data collection are described below.

Stimuli

Gifts stimuli were selected from four popular tourist destinations: Tokyo, Kyoto, Hokkaido, and Okinawa. From each region, the two most recognized souvenir food gift products were selected based on a national survey conducted in Japan (Neo Marketing Inc., 2017). The brands presented include Tokyo Banana (sponge cake) and Kaminari Okoshi (crispy rice cake) from Tokyo, Nama Yatsuhashi (glutinous rice cake) and Seigoin Yatshuhashi (glutinous rice cake) from Kyoto, Shiroi Koibito (chocolate) and Jyagapokurru (potato chips) from Hokkaido, and Sata Andagi (donut) and Chinsuko (shortbread) from Okinawa. Using food products as stimuli to capture the perceived brand personality of a product is appropriate as food carries cultural identity. In addition, their contextual meanings are embedded at individual level and are not subject to the boundary of physical place (Borrero, 2014).

Brand Personality Instruments and Other Measurement

To measure brand personality, thirty-six adjectives categorized in five brand personality dimensions by Aaker et al. (2001) was applied. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which a product describes each personality trait in a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). Two questions were asked to examine intention to gifting self and others: 1) Intention to purchase for self (scale 1-4) and 2) Intention to purchase gift for others (scale 1-4). Respondents were also asked their gender, the region they were from (8 regions in Japan, 1 region outside 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 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, two sets of survey questionnaire of 4 brands from 4 regions per subject were prepared (Aaker et al., 2001). The two sets were administered within the same week and no students participated more than once. Each subject evaluated four brands from four regions, and 144 (36×4) personality traits were rated. After data cleaning, the number of valid responses was 251, with 139 for one set and 112 for another set.

Analysis and Results

The extraction of the brand personality dimensions for 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 percent)
- 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 components extracted are 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).

Accordingly, 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 that of Aaker et al. (2001) is presented in Figure 2. 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).
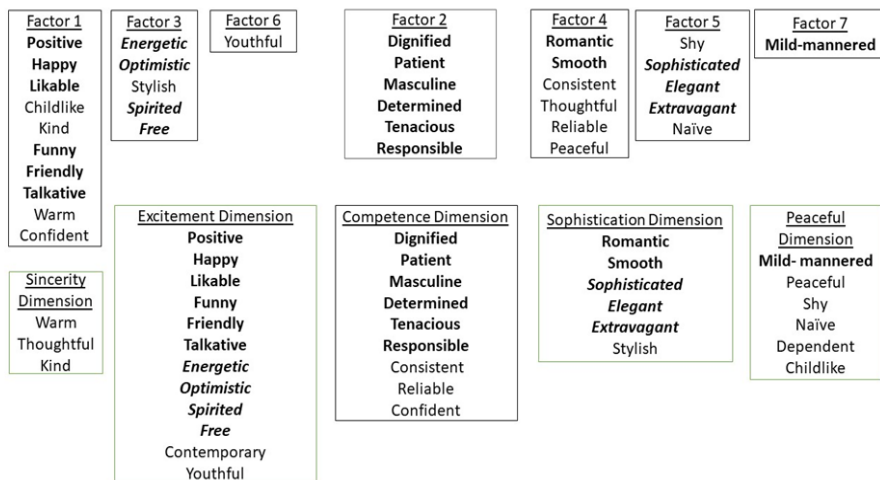
Figure 2. A Comparison of 7 factors extracted in this study and original 5 dimensions

Note:
1. In 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 brand personality dimensions (Aaker et al., 2001), which are placed below the factors. For example, in Factor 1, Positive, Happy, Likable, Funny, Friendly, and Talkative are identical to the adjectives in Excitement Dimension as reported by Aaker et al. (2001).
3. Factors 1, 3, and 6 are clustered to the left of the figure since they are close to the original Excitement and Sincerity Dimensions (Aaker et al., 2001).
4. Factors 1 and 2 extracted in this study is the same as the first two dimensions of Excitement and Competence (Aaker et al., 2001)

Hypotheses Testing

After seven brand personality factors were extracted, seemingly unrelated regression analysis was conducted using the factor scores as independent variables under multiple specifications. Seemingly unrelated regression analysis is appropriate to compare the difference between the coefficients of the factors in the two models of self-gifting and gifting others (Devlieger et al., 2016; Scott, 1966).

Consider the following equation for the model:

$$y_i = \alpha + [\![x_i]\!]^{\wedge'} \gamma + \varepsilon_i \qquad \text{(Equation 1)}$$

where

yi is purchase intention for self or for others,

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

εi is idiosyncratic unobservable error terms for individual *i*

Results of seemingly unrelated regression analysis are presented in Table 3. Column 1 reports self-gift scenario and Column 2 reports gifting others, which is derived from Equation 1.

Table 3. Seemingly Unrelated Regression Results

Dependent Variable	(1) Self-Gift	(2) Gifting Others
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

To test H1, based on the difference of the importance of brand personality in two gifting situations, a Wald test was conducted to ascertain the null hypothesis of the coefficients. This is obtained from the seemingly unrelated regression of the two models (Table 3) which are equal (UCLA statistical methods and data analytics, n.d.). The Wald test is appropriate for overall model comparison as it runs all the coefficients together (Stata.com, n.d.). The results of the Wald test are reported in Table 4. Since the *p*-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that the coefficients are not simultaneously equal to zero. Thus, H1 is supported. The results are in line with prior studies of Ward and Broniarczyk (2011). Although they did not measure brand personality but found that in the process of purchasing gift for others, consumers experience different emotions than if they were self-gifting. In addition, Irini et al. (2015) reported that when purchasing a product, the personal and collective identity impacts the decision differently.

Table 4. Wald Test Results for Testing H1

Chi square	Prob >Chi square
14.61	0.04

To test the hypothesis of H2 and H3, the coefficient obtained from the seemingly unrelated correlations (Table 3) was used to compare the coefficient of each factors. The relevant results of chi-square test and their *p*-value are reported in Table 5 below. Factors 4, 5, 6, and 7 were omitted as they were not in the hypotheses.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing for H2 and H3

Dependent Variable	(1) Self-Gift	(2) Others-Gift	Chi-square Prob > chi-square (p-value)
F1 Excitement -Happiness	.04** (.02)	.01 (.01)	H2, 4.96, *p*=0.03
F2 Competence	-.00 (.02)	-.03* (.01)	H3. 3.39, *p*=0.07
F3 Excitement - Energetic	.02 (.02)	.03* (.01)	H2. 1.18, *p*=0.28

H2 hypothesized that the dimension of brand personality of excitement is stronger in self-gifting than gifting others. The comparison of the coefficients of Factor 1 Excitement-Happiness is statistically significant (Coefficient $_{Self =.04}$, $_{others=.01}$, $p = 0.03$) but not significant for Factor 3 Excitement-Energetic (Coefficient $_{Self =.02}$, $_{others=.02}$, $p > 0.10$). Therefore, H2 is partially supported. The significant results of Excitement-Happiness for self-gifting are consistent with prior studies. The dyadic gifting experiments of Baskins et al. (2014) took place in the U.S., and it was reported that people express happiness when gifting themselves a product. However, the same level

of happiness may not be maximized when gifting others. Nonetheless, people will choose a happier gift when they were first asked to consider their own preference of a gift for themselves before being tasked to choose a gift for others. The results are in line with that of Atalay and Meloy (2006), which was collected from undergraduate subjects and mall shoppers in the U.S. It was found that self-gifting increases subjects' overall effect. Similarly, Heath and Tynan (2015) analyzed 112 incidents, which was collected from 16 interviewed subjects. It was found that 83% of the incidents were classified as positive effect, which reflects immediate intensive arousal of emotions such as happiness, excitement, and delight after self-gifting. The results of Excitement-Energetic that did not find significant impact on self-gifting will be elaborated in the discussion section.

H3 hypothesized that sincerity and competence brand personality are stronger in gifting others than in self-gifting. While comparing the coefficients of sincerity, it was not found to be more prominent in gifting others than in self-gifting. In competence, the comparison yielded a marginally statistically significant difference, but the sign of the coefficient was negative (Coefficient $_{Self}$ =-.00, $_{others}$= -.03, $p = 0.07$). Therefore, H3 is not supported. Prior studies, not related to the gifting context, have reported that sincerity is an important brand personality in the U.S., Japan, and Spain (Aaker et al., 2001). On the other hand, competence is an important brand personality in the U.S. and Japan (Aaker, 1997; Aaker et al., 2001), but not in Spain (Aaker et al., 2001). The interpretation of these results will be elaborated further in the discussion section.

Discussion

While the results supported some of the hypotheses, the interpretation of some of the results deserves some elaborations. According to H3, Factor 2 Competency is found negatively and statistically significant when it applies to gifting others. This means 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 this study and that of Aaker et al. (2001). According to Aaker et al. (2001), 10 global brands (e.g., McDonald, Chanel, Levi) were evaluated across product categories in Japan and Competence was found to be prominent. This may imply that Competence is contextual since Aaker et al. (2001) did not link brand personalities to purchase. Japanese cultural norms play an important role, which significantly results in the negative association of Competence when it comes to gifting others. The results of this study also showed that Competence brand personality did not matter in self-gifting. Recent research shows that brand personality of competence (i.e., ability and initiative) and warmth (i.e., trustworthy and friendliness that are closely related to sincerity) are vital to

identify intention and brand loyalty (Kervyn et al., 2021). This implies that these two dimensions of brand personalities are product specific (Phau & Lau, 2000) but did not fit into the food souvenir product in this study.

The results supporting H2 confirm that in self-gifting, brand personality traits that include adjectives such as positive, happy, and likable are prominent. This brand personality and their adjectives were not found to impact gifting others. The importance of the emotion of happiness has been reported constantly 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-gifting which is distinct from gifting others.

In gifting others, brand personality that includes adjectives such as energetic and optimistic are found. Although energetic is categorized under 'excitement' (Aaker et al.,2001), Aaker (2016) reported that it is a separate dimension from excitement. It is possibly the most important dimension in differentiating a brand in the long term based on a large-scale longitudinal study conducted by the consulting firm Brand Asset Value. Regarding gifting others, apart from the confirmation of lack of happiness brand personality and the negative impact of competency, there are many more emotions or perceived brand personalities. Although the psychological distance between self-gifting seems to be smaller, it is larger in gifting others (Baskins et al., 2014).

Conclusion

This paper hypothesized that the activation of social role will lead to brand personality malleability, which results to different brand personalities of the same brand in gifting situations of self versus others. Empirical data was obtained from 8 brands in Japan and the responses of 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 gifting self and others in general. By empirically analyzing two gifting situations, the use of brand personality malleability adds clarity to when consumers evaluate products differently. The second contribution of this research 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. The results indicate that consumers vary their emotional attachments to the same brand even when they are purchasing one for themselves and one for others. Based on these results, managers can craft

separate messages for self-gifting (e.g., happy) and gifting others (e.g., energetic). Simultaneously, this will support the marketing campaigns of 'one for you, one for me'.

The findings of energetic traits, within the excitement brand personality dimension, are exclusive for gifting others but not self-gifting. This is regarded as both strength and weakness in this paper. It is seen as strength since Aaker (2016) mentioned energetic as a separate dimension from Excitement (Aaker et al., 2001). It is however a weakness since there is lack of theoretical linkage of energetic to gifting others. Apple and Nike were cited as energetic brands (Aaker, 2016). Future research should explore energetic emotions more within the context of gifting. However, a puzzling finding in the research is the negative impact of competency in gifting others. This study used low-cost food-based gift items as stimuli, and this may be the reason for these results. Since Disney and Microsoft were cited as high competence brand personality (Aaker, 2016), future study should consider using higher-priced gift categories.

Human Studies

This research 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.

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