

# Predicting future gift behavior by using the valence-agency framework.



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*For quality of life*

Bachelor thesis (YSS81812)

BSc Business and Consumer Studies

Major: Management Studies

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January 2016

7078 words

## **Abstract**

Number of studies have researched the effect of different emotions on the gift giving process. The effect of the emotions, that arises before the recipient receives the gift, on the gift evaluation, future gift behavior, and the relationship development has never been studied before. The emotions a receiver felt before he got a gift have an influence on the gift evaluation, and the relationship development between the giver and the receiver. This study shows that positive emotions, independent whether these emotions are caused by the receiver or by the giver, have a positive influence on the gift evaluation and the relationship development. This means that the gift is more positive evaluated than when you are emotion neutral, and that the relationship between the giver and the receiver becomes stronger through the gift. The negative emotions are dependent of their agency. So, the negative emotions, caused by the receiver himself, have also a positive effect. In contrary, the negative emotions, caused by the giver of the present, have a negative influence on the gift evaluation and the relationship development. Together, the positive emotions are not dependent of their agency, while the negative emotions are dependent of their agency.

For helpful comments and suggestions I am grateful to dr. I. E. de Hooge and Henk Haans.

## **Introduction**

Imagine that it is your birthday and you get a gift from a very good friend. At the moment you receive the gift, it is difficult to be emotion-neutral. For example, when you have been recently very angry at a person, it is in that view more likely that you perceive the gift more negatively from that person, than when you have feelings of love to the same person. So, the evaluation of the gift and subsequent feelings towards the giver of the present can be dependent on the emotions that the receiver at that moment feels. Emotions are an important part of the gift giving concept. Gifts are defined as goods or services that are voluntarily provided from one person to another person or to a group (Belk, 1979). In today's society, gift giving is a very important concept. Gift giving is for consumers a sizable economic activity (Household Spending, 1999). Besides that, gift giving is helpful in maintaining social ties and serves as a means of symbolic communication in social relationships (Belk, 1976; Caplow, 1982; Cheal, 1988). Moreover, gift -giving and -receiving is associated with a wide rang of positive and negative emotions (Ruth, 1996).

The success of a gift depends on the responses of the receiver. For example, receiver responses have been shown to influence relationship development. Ruth (1996) claimed that the gift giving process is associated with a wide range of positive and negative emotions. In the current research we will have a closer look on the receiver responses and how it depends on their emotions. Thus, receiver responses are an important aspect of the gift giving process. Therefore, we need a good understanding of how receivers arrive at such responses. We suggest that emotions before the gift giving process have influence on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior of the receiver, and the relationship between the giver and the receiver.

Ruth (1996) suggests that future research can explore the impact of time on giver-recipient relationships. Taking this into account, how did the receiver evaluate and treat the gift? Did the receiver keep the gift and used it, did he disposal it or did he pass on the gift to somebody else. Besides that, taking the impact of time into account, what happens if the tables are turned and the initial receiver needs to buy a gift for the initial giver? Does he give a similar gift back, or have the emotions such an impact that he buys more or even less than what seems to be normal. In other words, have the emotions effects on the future purchases of the receiver?

It is interesting to know if the emotions, felt by the receiver towards the giver before the gift exchange, have influence on the relationship between the giver and receiver. If this is true, we can predict the development of a relationship even more. We already know that the receivers view of the relationship (between the giver and receiver) influences the perceptions of the gift experience

and that this has an impact of the relationship development between the giver and receiver (Ruth, Otnes & Brunel, 1999).

We assume that emotions of the receiver, outside the gift giving setting, have influence on (1) the evaluation of the gift, (2) the future gift behavior of the receiver and (3) the relationship between the giver and the receiver. Influences of emotions that have arisen out of the gift giving setting on the gift evaluations, future gift behavior, and the giver-recipient relationship have never been studied before. We aim to answer the following problem statement:

*What is the effect of emotions of the receiver that arises before the exchange of gifts on the evaluations of the gift, subsequent future behavior, and the giver-recipient relationship?*

The following research questions contribute to answering the problem statement:

- How do receiver emotions influence receiver evaluations of gifts?
- How do receiver emotions influence future gift behavior of the receiver?
- Does the relationship between the giver and receiver change through the emotion felt by the receiver towards the giver before the gift evaluation?

When we know what the effect of emotions of the receiver is, it will be easier for marketers and academics to understand emotion influences in the gift giving process. When you know how the receiver evaluates his gift, taking his emotions into account, it can help to forecast what the receiver will do with the gift. Furthermore, the amount of money spend on future gifts of the receiver can have a relation with the receiver emotions that are dominant before the exchange of gifts. Finally, it is interesting to know how the relationship between the giver and the receiver will change or just stay the same.

## **Literature review**

Gifts are defined as goods or services that are voluntarily provided from one person to another person or to a group (Belk, 1979). A gift is a symbolic communication in social relationships (Belk, 1976, 1979; Caplow 1982; Cheal 1988). The gifts can be physical gifts, immaterial gifts or cash gifts. Belk (1979) stated that the exchange of gifts takes place in rites de passage / ritual-like situations, like birthdays, weddings, or Christmas settings. The perfect gift has six characteristics (Belk, 1996): the gift is *luxurious*, the gift is *appropriate* to the recipient, the recipient is *surprised* by the gift, the recipient is *satisfied* with the gift, the *giver wishes that the recipient is happy* through the gift and, finally, the gift illustrate that the giver is willing to *sacrifice*. The gift receiver

is the ultimate consumer of the product, so the success or failure of the product depends on the receiver.

The gift giving process has three major stages (Sherry, 1983). The first stage is the *Gestation* stage: the giver searches, creates and buys gifts. The exchange of the gift happens in the *Prestation* stage. The *Reformulation* stage is the stage where the gifts are consumed or rejected. Furthermore, in this final stage the relationship between the giver and the recipient may change. In this study we will focus on the emotions during the *Prestation* stage and the *Reformulation* stage.

The gift giving process is an important process in several ways. It has a prominent economic significance with over one hundred billion dollars spent per year in the United States (Household Spending, 1997). De Hooge (2014) claimed that the gift giving process is a social process because it involves at least one other person. Moreover, the gift exchange is a form of communication that contributes to the maintenance of the social relationship (Areni, Kiecker, & Palan, 1998; Belk, 1976; Cheal, 1988; Lotz, Shim, & Gehrt, 2003). Summarizing this, that the gift giving process has an economic and social contribution.

One central element in the gift giving process is emotions. Especially, by the exchange of gifts there are a lot of emotions involved (Sherry, McGrath, & Levy, 1992). Numerous studies have shown how specific emotions can influence consumer behavior. A consumption emotion is a subjective feeling state that occurs when considering, buying or using a product (Cohen & Areni, 1991). Recipients of a gift experience emotions during the *Prestation* and *Reformulation* stages (Sherry 1983; Sherry et al 1992, 1993). A number of gift studies have observed certain specific emotions that are dominant in these two stages: gratitude (Tesser, Gatewood & Driver, 1968), love (Belk & Coon, 1993; Fisscher & Arnold, 1990), pride (Mick & DeMoss, 1990), fear and uneasiness (Schwartz, 1967), embarrassment (Sherry et al., 1993), and sadness (Belk, 1991; Mick & DeMoss, 1990). Richins (1997) stated that the emotions experienced by consumers involve ambivalence emotions. Ambivalence is defined as the experience of positive and / or negative emotions in one consumption action (Otnes, Lowrey & Shrum, 1997). These ambivalence emotions occur in consumption experiences, such as gift exchange (Otnes, Ruth & Milbourne, 1994). So, in other words, the gift giving process can involve both positive and negative emotions (Sherry et al, 1992, 1993). Evaluative judgements and interpretations of events that are relevant for consumers' well-being will cause emotions (Bagozzi, Gopinath and Nyer, 1999; Nyer, 1997). Evaluative judgements are often called cognitive appraisals and provide insight into the similarities and differences between emotions. Ruth, Brunel & Otnes (2002) stated that cognitive appraisals can be used to classify consumption emotions. Valence (in the study of Ruth, Brunel & Otnes (2002) also called

pleasantness), the extent to which an emotion is positive or negative (De Hooge, 2014), is the best appraisal that is used to classify consumption emotions (Ruth, Brunel & Otnes, 2002). Second best is agency (Ruth, Brunel & Otnes, 2002): the extent to which an emotion is caused by oneself or caused by another person (De Hooge, 2014). De Hooge (2014) showed that emotion effects of the giver in the gift giving process can predict with the cognitive appraisals valence and agency without using specific emotions.

The gift giving process involves also relational developments (Bagozzi, 1995; Guerrero, Andersen & Trost, 1998). Ruth, Otnes & Brunel (1999) showed that the recipient's view of the relationship influences the perceptions of the gift experience. Furthermore they showed in the same study that the past and future expectations of the relationships are important antecedents of the present relationship trajectory and the gift experience itself. The gift recipient perceived six relational outcomes in the Reformulation stage (Ruth, Otnes & Brunel, 1999).

- Strengthening: gift receipt improves the quality of the giver-recipient relationship, feelings of connection and shared meaning are intensified.
- Affirming: gift receipt validates the positive quality of the giver-recipient relationship but does not take it to a higher level.
- Negligible effect: gift receipt has a minimal effect on perceptions of relationship quality.
- Negatively confirming: gift receipt validates an existing negative quality of the giver-recipient relationship. Lack of connectedness and shared meaning.
- Weakening: gift receipt harms the quality of the giver-recipient relationship. There is a new or newly intensified perception that the relationship lacks connection and shared meaning.
- Severing: gift receipt so harms the quality of the relationship between the giver and recipient, that the relationship is dissolved.

Important to realize is that gift experiences that lead to the relation outcome strengthening, are often accompanied by both positive and negative emotions (Ruth, Otnes & Brunel, 1999). This is because there exist also some emotion of fear and uncertainty, in other words, there is a chance of failure. In 2002, Ruth, Brunel & Otnes concluded that it is the balance of positive and negative emotions that determines the specific relationship outcome. So, if the relationship outcome between the giver and the receiver is affirming or strengthening than there are high levels of positive emotions, but it can be the case that there are also some lower levels of negative emotions involved.

## **Hypotheses**

Until now, no one has taken into account that the emotions before the gift giving process can influence receiver responses to gifts. In sum, we predict that the emotions before the gift giving process influence (1) gift evaluations, (2) future gift behavior of the receiver and (3) development of the giver-recipient relationship. Without using specific emotions, we can predict emotion effects by using cognitive appraisals (De Hooge, 2014). The appraisals *valence* and *agency* are the most accurate appraisals to predict the emotion effects (Ruth, Brunel & Otnes, 2002). We will use these two appraisals in this research.

*Hypotheses 1: Positive emotions, compared to neutral emotions, have a positive effect on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior, and the development of the giver-recipient relationship.*

Positive emotions provoke social behavior and actions that maintain or strengthen social relationships (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Fredrickson, 1998, 2001; Frijda, 1986). This suggests that positive emotions have a positive effect on the gift evaluation, future gift behavior and the development of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. Because the receiver wants to maintain or strengthen the relationship, he evaluates the gift more positive, he spends more money on a gift for the initial giver and the receiver thinks that through the gift the relationship is stronger. De Hooge (2014) concluded that positive emotions (independent whether the emotions were self-caused or other-caused) have a positive effect on gift giving. Therefore, we hypothesize that positive emotions, independent who caused the emotion, have a *positive* effect on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior of the receiver, and the evaluation of the giver-recipient relationship.

*Hypotheses 2: Negative emotions, caused by the receiver himself, have a positive effect on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior, and the development of the giver-recipient relationship.*

We think that negative emotions, caused by the recipient himself, have also a *positive* effect on the three dependent variables of this research (gift evaluation, future gift behavior of the receiver, and evaluation of the giver-recipient relationship). De Hooge (2014) stated that negative self-caused emotions, have a positive effect on gift giving. Shame and guilt, negative self-caused emotions, indicate that you have done something wrong by yourself. Negative self-caused emotions can stimulate behaviors of the receivers that are positively regarded by others in order to avoid more wrongdoing, and thus motivate prosocial behavior (De Hooge, Breugelmans & Zeelenberg, 2008; De Hooge, Zeelenberg and Breugelmans, 2007; Ketelaar & Au, 2003). This would result in a more positive gift evaluation, more positive future gift behavior, and a positive development of the relationship between the giver and receiver.

*Hypotheses 3: Negative emotions, caused by the giver, have a negative effect on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior, and the development of the giver-recipient relationship.*

Negative emotions, caused by somebody else, have a negative effect on the gift giving process. (De Hooge, 2014). Examples of these emotions are anger and fear. Negative other-caused emotions, will induce conflict-creating behaviors in relationships (Sanford & Rowatt, 2004), this can cause a more negative gift evaluation of the receiver, negative future gift behavior of the receiver, and a more negative development of the relationship. Finally, we hypothesize that negative valence, caused by somebody else than the recipient himself, will have a *negative* influence on the evaluation of the gift, the future gift behavior and the evaluation of the giver-recipient relationship.

## **Method**

### **Participants and design**

One hundred twenty-four respondents from the Netherlands participated voluntarily in this study ( 58 males and 66 females,  $M_{age} = 33$ ,  $SD = 14,35$  ). There was not a specific target group, so the questionnaire was online and spread to family, friends, colleagues and class mates. The participants were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions. There was a 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (agency: self-caused vs. other-caused) between subjects design and one control condition. Twenty-three people were randomly assigned to the control condition, twenty-three people to the negative other-caused condition, twenty-six people to the negative self-caused condition, twenty-five people to the positive other-caused condition, and, finally, twenty-seven people to the positive self-caused condition. The dependent variables were: the evaluation of a gift, the future behavior of the recipient, and the relationship development between the giver and the recipient.

### **Procedure and variables**

The questionnaire of De Hooge (2014) was the basis of our questionnaire (see appendix). To manipulate the appraisals valence and agency, we used the autobiographical recall procedure. The participants were asked to recall a personal incident in which they experienced a certain emotion (De Hooge, Zeelenberg and Breugelmans, 2007; Ketelaar & Au. 2003; Roseman, Wiest and Schwartz, 1994; De Hooge, 2014).

To manipulate my independent variable appraisals, participants were asked to recall a situation in which they felt negative due to the behavior of other people (negative other-agency condition), negative due to their own behavior (negative self-agency condition), positive due to the behavior of other people (positive other-agency condition), or positive due to their own behavior (positive self-agency condition). In the control condition people described a normal weekday, so they were



emotion neutral. It was very important that they described at least one person in this section.

Participants spent approximately 10 minutes on this part.

After this, we did an emotion check. We asked the participants to what degree they felt positive, negative, you were the cause of the event, another person was the cause of the event, passive, active, certain, and uncertain in the described situation (1 = not at all, 7 = very strongly). We added the appraisals passive vs. active and certain vs. uncertain as an extra emotion check.

Next, participants were asked to type the name of the person towards whom they experienced the feeling (in the other-caused conditions) or someone who was present in the described event (in the self-caused conditions). Each respondent filled in a name.

After this, the participants imagined that a week after the event they just had described it is their birthday and the participants get a gift of person they described before. The gift was a cookbook and the gift was in each condition the same. To measure the evaluation of the gift, one of our main dependent variables, participants were asked how much they appreciate the gift, how grateful they would feel, how thankful they would feel, how pleased they would feel, and how much they liked the gift (1 = not at all, 7 = very much). A factor analysis on these five questions showed a clear one factor solution. The factor 'evaluation of the gift' (Eigenvalue = 4.38) explained 87.55% of the variance. The reliability analysis was successful ( $\alpha = .96$ ).

Another dependent variable was future gift behavior of the participants. To measure this we asked the following: (1) If it was possible to regift the present to somebody else (1 = certainly not, 7 = definitely), (2) If the present would be disposed within 5 years (1 = unlikely, 7 = very likely), and (3) How much the participants intend to spend to the birthday of the initial giver if the present that they received was 20 euros (filled in amount in euros).

Finally, we asked what the influence was of the gift on the relationship between the recipient and the giver. The relationship development was our last dependent variable. The participants had six choices: the gift makes the relationship stronger, the gift confirms the strong relationship, the gift has no effect on the relationship, the gift confirms the weak relationship, the gift is the end of the relationship.

## **Results**

### Emotion manipulation check

The emotion manipulation for the positive self-caused condition, negative self-caused condition and negative other-caused condition was successful. The positive other-caused condition was less successful than the other three conditions.

*Positive self-caused condition:* The participants in the positive self-caused condition felt more positive than the participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 3.36, p = .001$ ), than the negative

self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 26.28, p < .001$ ), and than the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 24.11, p < .001$ ). With respect to the valence, there was not a significant difference with the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.10, p = .925$ ). Moreover, the participants in the positive self-caused condition felt more often that they were the cause of the event instead of another person than participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 1.76, p = .081$ ), the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.49, p < .001$ ), the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 3.13, p = .002$ ). With respect to the agency, there was not a significant difference with the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.42, p = .679$ ). Within the positive self-caused condition participants felt more positive than negative ( $t(26) = 33.55, p < .001$ ) and they had more the feeling that they were the cause of the event instead of another person ( $t(26) = 2.35, p = .027$ ).

*Positive other-caused condition:* The participants in the positive other-caused condition felt more positive than the participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 3.39, p = .001$ ), the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 41.21, p < .001$ ), and the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 42.03, p < .001$ ). With respect to the valence, there was not a significant difference with the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.10, p = .925$ ). The participants in the positive other-caused condition felt more often that another person was the cause of the event instead of themselves than participants in the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.49, p < .001$ ), the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 4.28, p < .001$ ). With respect to the agency, there was not a significant difference with the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.46, p = .148$ ) and with the control condition ( $t(119) = 1.07, p = .287$ ). Because the positive other-caused condition differed not significant from the control condition, the emotion check was not successful for the agency part. We had to keep in mind that the results of the positive other-caused condition were not that reliable as they had to be. Within the positive other-caused condition participants felt more positive than negative ( $t(24) = 16.11, p < .001$ ) and they had more the feeling that the other person was the cause of the event instead of themselves ( $t(24) = 2.49, p = .020$ ).

*Negative self-caused condition:* The participants in the negative self-caused condition felt more negative than the participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 16.72, p < .001$ ), the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 19.84, p < .001$ ), and the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 18.76, p < .001$ ). With respect to the valence, there was not a significant difference with the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.46, p = .644$ ). Besides that, the participants in the negative self-caused condition felt more often that they were the cause of the event instead of another person than participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 2.15, p = .034$ ), the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.84, p < .001$ ), the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 3.51, p = .001$ ). With respect to the agency, there was not a significant difference with the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.42, p = .679$ ). Within the negative self-caused condition

participants felt more negative than positive ( $t(25) = 17.33, p < .001$ ) and they had more the feeling that they were the cause of the event instead of another person ( $t(25) = 3.64, p = .001$ ).

*Negative other-caused condition:* The participants in the negative other-caused condition felt more negative than the participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 16.68, p < .001$ ), the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 19.68, p < .001$ ), and the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 18.64, p < .001$ ). With respect to the valence, there was not a significant difference with the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.46, p = .644$ ). The participants in the negative other-caused condition felt more often that another person was the cause of the event instead of themselves than participants in the control condition ( $t(119) = 2.48, p = .015$ ), the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 6.84, p < .001$ ), the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.67, p < .001$ ). With respect to the agency, there was not a significant difference with the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.46, p = .148$ ). Within the negative other-caused condition participants felt more negative than positive ( $t(22) = 14.35, p < .001$ ) and they had more the feeling that the other person was the cause of the event instead of themselves ( $t(22) = 8.62, p < .001$ ).

### Gift evaluation

We expected that the positive conditions and the negative self-caused condition would have a more positive gift evaluation compared to the control condition and that the negative other-caused condition would cause for a more negative gift evaluation compared to the control condition. The control condition is neutral, and so it has no value in valence or agency. This control condition was only included in the contrast analyses. The most important results of this study can be found in table 1.

A 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (agency: self-caused vs. other-caused) ANOVA with gift evaluation as dependent variable showed a main effect of valence,  $F(1, 119) = 55.75, p < .001$ , and agency  $F(1, 119) = 56.63, p < .002$ . It also shows a two-way interaction,  $F(1, 119) = 52.82, p < .001$ . Participants in the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.69, p = .008$ ), the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.46, p = .015$ ), and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.53, p = .013$ ) all evaluated the gift more positively than in the control condition. The results between the positive self-caused condition and positive other-caused condition were not significant ( $t(119) = 0.19, p = .854$ ), between the positive self-caused and negative self-caused, ( $t(119) = 0.144, p = .886$ ), and positive other-caused and negative self-caused, ( $t(119) = 0.42, p = .967$ ) were also not different from each other. The participants in the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 7.55, p < .001$ ) evaluated the gift more negatively than in the control condition. The negative other-caused condition compared with the positive self-caused condition, ( $t(119) = 10.53, p < .001$ ),

positive other-caused condition, ( $t(119) = 10.17, p < .001$ ), and the negative self-caused condition, ( $t(119) = 10.30, p < .001$ ), all were significant different.

**Table 1. Gift evaluation, future gift behavior and relationship means and standard deviations as a function of the conditions.**

Dependent variable	Control M (SD)	Positive Self-caused M (SD)	Positive Other-caused M (SD)	Negative Self-caused M (SD)	Negative Other-caused M (SD)
Gift evaluation	5.56 (0.80) <sup>a</sup>	6.34 (0.89) <sup>b</sup>	6.29 (0.622) <sup>b</sup>	6.30 (1.053) <sup>b</sup>	3.27 (1.57) <sup>c</sup>
Future gift behavior					
• Regifting		1.78 (1.53) <sup>a</sup>	1.36 (1.25) <sup>a</sup>	1.35 (0.85) <sup>a</sup>	3.74 (1.94) <sup>b</sup>
• Dispose	1.70 (1.26) <sup>a</sup>	2.04 (1.51) <sup>a</sup>	1.48 (0.92) <sup>b</sup>	2.42 (1.75) <sup>a</sup>	4.70 (2.10) <sup>c</sup>
• Future gift	2.43 (1.56) <sup>a</sup>	20.22 (7.50) <sup>b</sup>	26.04 (8.21) <sup>a</sup>	25.85 (15.95) <sup>a</sup>	15.04 (5.61) <sup>c</sup>
30.0 (23.8) <sup>a</sup>					
Relationship development	2.52 (0.59) <sup>a</sup>	2.19 (0.83) <sup>a</sup>	1.88 (0.78) <sup>b</sup>	1.88 (0.91) <sup>b</sup>	3.22 (1.00) <sup>c</sup>

*Note.* Gift evaluation was on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Regifting was on a scale from 1 (certainly not) to 7 (definitely). Dispose was on a scale from 1 (very unlikely) to 7 (very likely). The future gift was measured in euro's. Relationship development was on a scale from 1 (gift makes the relationship stronger) to 6 (gift is the end of the relationship). Means with a different superscript differ significantly from each other within each study with all  $ps < .05$ .

### Future gift behavior

We hypothesized that the positive conditions, independent of the agency, and the negative self-caused condition would have a positive effect on future gift behavior, and that the negative other-caused condition would have a negative effect on future gift behavior.

The first question of future gift behavior was if the participants would regift the present. A 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (agency: self-caused vs. other-caused) ANOVA showed two main effects and a interaction effect. Valence,  $F(1, 119) = 12.15, p = .001$ , and agency,  $F(1, 119) = 12.50, p = .001$ , were both significant and also the interaction effect was significant,  $F(1, 119) = 25.31, p < .001$ . Participants in the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.21, p = .837$ ), in the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.83, p = .409$ ), and participants in the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.87, p = .385$ ), all did not significant differ from the control condition. Furthermore, the positive self-caused condition with the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.07, p = .285$ ), the positive self-caused condition with the negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.12, p = .264$ ), and the positive other-caused condition with the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.04, p = .972$ ) all differed not significant. The negative other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 4.95, p < .001$ ), was significant more negatively than the control condition. The positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 4.93, p < .001$ ), the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.88, p < .001$ ),

and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.97, p < .001$ ) all differed significant more positively from the negative other-caused condition.

After this, the question was if the participants would dispose the gift between five years. A 2 (valence: positive vs. negative) x 2 (agency: self-caused vs. other-caused) ANOVA with gift evaluation as dependent variable showed a main effect of valence,  $F(1, 119) = 31.73, p < .001$ , and agency,  $F(1, 119) = 7.20, p = .008$ . It also shows a interaction effect between valence and agency,  $F(1, 119) = 19.58, p < .001$ . The positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.06, p = .042$ ) was significant more positively than the control condition. The positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.87, p = .384$ ) and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.025, p = .980$ ) differed not significant from the control condition. The positive other-caused condition differed not significantly from the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.25, p = .213$ ) and the positive self-caused condition differed not significantly from the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.88, p = .383$ ). But the positive other-caused condition and the negative self-caused condition differ significant from each other ( $t(119) = 2.10, p = .038$ ). The negative other-caused condition differed significant more negatively from the control condition ( $t(119) = 4.78, p < .001$ ). This condition also differs significant more negatively from the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 5.84, p < .001$ ), positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 6.94, p < .001$ ), and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 4.95, p < .001$ ).

The future expense of the gift is the last part of future gift behavior. There were not significant main effects on valence,  $F(1, 119) = 0.96, p = .330$ , and agency,  $F(1, 119) = 0.82, p = .366$ . But the interaction effect between valence and agency was significant  $F(1, 119) = 9.16, p = .003$ . Two respondents in the control condition answered 100 euros, while expected 20 euros, as a result of this the mean and standard deviation are proportional higher than the other conditions (see also table 1). The positive self-caused condition spent significant less on the gift than in the control condition ( $t(119) = 2.51, p = .013$ ). Also the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.07, p = .289$ ), and the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.01, p = .316$ ), spent less on the gift than in the control condition, but these two were not significant. The positive self-caused condition and the positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.52, p = .131$ ), the positive self-caused condition and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.49, p = .140$ ), and the positive other-caused condition and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 0.05, p = .960$ ) differed all non significant from each other. The negative other-caused condition spent also significant less on the gift than the control condition ( $t(119) = 3.69, p < .001$ ). The negative other-caused condition spent also less on the gift than the positive self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 1.33, p = .188$ ), positive other-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.76, p < .007$ ), and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(119) = 2.74, p = .007$ ).

We repeated the analysis, but now we excluded the two outliers. The new mean of the control condition was now 23.38 euros. Again, there were not significant main effects on valence,  $F(1, 117) = 2.41, p = .124$ , and agency,  $F(1, 117) = 2.11, p = .149$ . However, the interaction effect between valence and agency was significant,  $F(1, 117) = 16.24, p < .001$ . The participants in the positive self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 0.84, p = .402$ ) spent less on the gift than in the control condition. The participants in the positive other-caused condition ( $t(117) = 0.91, p = .365$ ), and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 0.85, p = .397$ ) spent more on the gift than in the control condition. All these three conditions compared to the control condition were not significantly different. The positive self-caused condition and the positive other-caused condition ( $t(117) = 1.85, p = .067$ ), the positive self-caused condition and negative self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 1.80, p = .075$ ), and the positive other-caused condition and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 0.07, p = .944$ ) differed not significant from each other. The participants in the negative other-caused condition spent significantly less than in the control condition ( $t(117) = 2.80, p = .006$ ). The positive self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 2.11, p < .037$ ), positive other-caused condition ( $t(117) = 3.85, p < .001$ ), and the negative self-caused condition ( $t(117) = 3.82, p < .001$ ), spent all significant more on the gift than in the negative other-caused condition.

### Relationship development

A chi-square test with relationship development as dependent variable supported our hypotheses. In the control condition 56.5% of the respondents chose for the option 'the gift has no effect on our relationship', 39.1% of the respondents for the option 'the gift confirms our strong relationship', and 4.3% of the respondents for the option 'the gift makes our relationship stronger'. In the positive self-caused condition 59.3% of the respondents chose for the option 'the gift confirms our strong relationship', 22.2% of the respondents for the option 'the gift has no effect on our relationship', 14.8% of the respondents for the option 'the gift makes our relationship stronger', and 3.7% of the respondents for the option the gift makes the relationship weaker. In the positive other-caused condition 40.0% of the respondents chose for the option 'the gift confirms our strong relationship', 36.0% of the respondents for the option 'the gift makes our relationship stronger', and 24.0% of the respondents for the option 'the gift has no effect on our relationship'. In the negative self-caused condition 46.2% of the respondents chose for the option 'the gift makes our relationship stronger', 34.6% of the respondents for the option 'the gift has no effect on our relationship', and 19.2% of the respondents for the option 'the gift confirms our strong relationship'. In the negative other-caused condition 52.2% of the respondents chose for the option 'the gift has no effect on our relationship', 17.4% of the respondents for the option 'the gift confirms our weak relationship', 13.0% of the respondents for the option 'the gift makes the relationship weaker', 13.0% of the respondents for

the option ‘the gift confirms our strong relationship’, and, finally, 4.3% of the respondents chose for the option ‘the gift makes our relationship stronger’.

## **General Discussion**

Emotions in combination with the gift giving concept is a widely studied topic. However, the emotions a receiver felt before the gift is given and the influences of this on the gift evaluation, future gift behavior, and the relationship development between the giver and the receiver remains, to the best of my knowledge, undiscovered. The main purpose of this bachelor thesis was to investigate the effect of the emotions of the receiver that arises before the exchange of gifts on the gift evaluation, the future gift behavior, and on the relationship between the giver and receiver. This influence was examined by the following research question:

*What is the effect of emotions of the receiver that arises before the exchange of gifts on the evaluations of the gift, subsequent future behavior, and the giver-recipient relationship?*

This study provides support for the idea that these emotions have an effect on the gift giving concept. With two cognitive appraisals, valence and agency, the results indicate that we can predict effects on gift evaluation and relationship development. So, how negative or positive you are (valence) and who caused this emotion (agency) can influence your behavior and thoughts around the gift giving process. The positive emotions you felt before you get a gift, independent whether it is self-caused or through somebody else, have a positive effect on your gift evaluation and the development of the relationship. The negative emotions which are caused through the person him- or herself have also a positive effect on the gift evaluation of the receiver and the development of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. The negative emotions which are caused through somebody else have a negative effect on the gift evaluation of the receiver and the development of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. Together, the positive emotions are not dependent of the agency, while (on the contrary) the negative emotions are dependent of the agency.

The findings of this study can help academics, practitioners in managing consumer emotions, but also the consumers. The present findings constitute an important contribution to consumer behavior in general. The results can be added by the valence-agency framework. De Hooze (2014) stated that many emotions can be predicted with the valence-agency framework. Moreover, De Hooze (2014) proved that the positive emotions and negative self-caused emotions increase gift giving, and the negative other-caused emotions decrease gift giving. This is called the valence-agency framework, which is in line with the findings of our research. Future consumer behavior can be (partly)

explained with this framework. So, the good evaluation of a consumer can be explained through emotions the consumer felt before he buys the product. In that case, the emotion has to be positive, or negative self-caused.

The results of this study can provide some new insights in gift giving research. According to gift giving research, gift receiving is associated with a wide range of positive and negative emotions. The current research have some findings about the future life of a receiver of a gift, that can be spelled out through a valence-agency framework. Through this, the behavior of the receiver in the future is more developed and is less unexpectedly.

The results of this study can contribute to the research of emotion effects on gift giving. There has been a lot of research about the consequences of different emotions on the gift giving process. Yet, no one has taken into account the emotions of a receiver that arise outside the gift giving setting and the influence of this. The current research addressed this gap by presenting a study on the role of receivers' emotions and the effect of this emotions. The effect of this emotions on a gift evaluation, but also how the gift behavior would change through different emotions and what for impact the emotions have on the relationship between the giver and the receiver.

The results of this study can be used by companies. The companies can apply the valence-agency framework if they want to know the reasons behind the evaluation of the customers. Furthermore, this study can help consumers in general. If the consumer wants to give a present to a friend. They know, by reading this study, what the effect of the present is on the relationship. For example, if the consumer and the future receiver of the present were recently very mad at each other, the present will have no effect or a negative effect on the relationship. So in that case, it is not recommended to buy any present.

Most of the results are in line with the hypothesis. However, in this research it was difficult to find a big difference between people who felt really positive through somebody else and people who felt emotion neutral. The autobiographical recall procedure was less successful and so the results of this study are through this complication not that strong as it should be. In future research I recommend to explain verbally the condition where the participants are selected for, so that they really understand what is asked from them. Another option could be to give an answer-example for each condition. Besides that, we also expected to find a strong effect of valence and agency on the future gift behavior of the receiver. This was unfortunately not the case. The positive emotions and the negative emotions, which where self-caused, differed most of the time not from the neutral



emotions. This is the reason why future gift behavior is not mentioned in the conclusion. The questions about future gift behavior were maybe too extreme. People who feeling positive or people who feeling negative caused through him- or herself, will not easily regift or dispose their gift. The same applies for people who were emotion neutral. As a result of this there was not a big difference between the people who were emotion neutral and the people who felt positive and the people who felt negative through him- or herself. However, the results of the negative other-caused condition were considerably more negatively than the other conditions. Future research is needed to explore more about future gift behavior.

A large number of studies have taught us the effects of emotions on consumer behaviors. There is a valence-agency framework that captures most emotion effects on gift giving. The emotions the receiver feels, before the gift exchange takes place, and the effects of these emotions in the future are now identified in the same kind valence-agency framework. From now on, people who receive a gift know how they will behave in the future with respect to the gifts and the giver of the present.

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## Appendix

### Survey: General part

# Welcome to this research!

Thank you for participating in this study. In this study you will be asked to describe an event and answer questions about it. You may either answer in English or Dutch.

Your responses are extremely important for our research. Please pay attention to all questions and answer them carefully. There are **no right or wrong** answers. We are only interested in your opinion. All answers will be processed **confidentially**.

The study will take **15 minutes**.

Participating in this survey is **entirely voluntarily**, therefore you are allowed to quit the survey at any point in time.

Please read all the instructions and questions carefully.

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Purpose of the research study: In this survey we are interested in how people behave after a emotional event.

What you will be asked to do in this session: You will be asked to recall and describe a specific emotional event and indicate what kind of decisions you would make.

Time required for this study: Approximately 15 minutes.

Risks and benefits: We do not anticipate that you will receive any direct benefit from participation. In case you feel that you are experiencing any risk or discomfort arising out of this experiment, you are free to withdraw from further participation at any stage of the study.

Confidentiality: Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law. Your information will be assigned a code number. We will not connect your name to the data you provided. Your name will not be used in any report.

Voluntary participation: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no penalty for not participating.

Rights to withdraw from the session: You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalties.

Who to contact if you have questions about the session: If you have any questions regarding this session following your participation, please contact Marieke Haans (marieke.haans@wur.nl)

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**Control condition:**

## Feelings on a normal weekday

In this research we are interested in the feelings that people experience on a normal weekday. Therefore we would like to ask you to give a description of all important events on a normal weekday. We want you to describe a normal weekday on which you saw at least one friend or family member. (NOTE: The friend or family member should still be alive today)

Please describe this weekday as precisely as possible. We understand that the details of the day may contain very sensitive or personal information. For that reason we guarantee that your answers will be anonymous and the data will be treated strictly confidential.

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## Feelings on a normal weekday

Now think back of a normal weekday on which you saw at least one friend or family member. Put yourself into the day as if you are experiencing it at this very moment. Take your time and try to remember the day in detail.

You can think of for example what happened, what you exactly did, who were present, how the day developed, and how the day ended. Please describe the day in a short way below. Describe the day

in such a way that someone who was not present can imagine it very well.

---

**Negative other-caused condition:**

## Feeling negative

People often feel very negative towards other people because of something that other people did. In this research we are interested in situations in which people feel very negative due to the actions or behaviors of a friend or family member. Therefore we would like to ask you to remember a situation in which you felt very negative towards a friend or family member who did (or did not do) something to/for you. (NOTE: The friend or family member should still be alive today).

Please describe this situation as precisely as possible. We understand that the details of the situation may contain very sensitive or personal information. For that reason we guarantee that your answers will be anonymous and the data will be treated strictly confidential

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## Feeling negative

Now think back of a situation in which you felt very negative towards a friend or family member after (s)he did (or did not do) something to/for you. Put yourself into the situation as if you are experiencing it at this very moment. Take your time and try to remember as many details of your behavior and of the feeling as possible.

You can think of for example the situation before the person did anything, what the person exactly did (or did not do), who were present, the consequences of the person's actions, and how you felt afterward. Please describe the event in a short way below. Describe the event in such a way that

someone who was not present can imagine it very well.

---

### **Negative self-caused condition:**

## Feeling negative

People often experience negative feelings because of something that they do. In this research we are interested in situations in which people feel very negative due to their own actions or behaviors towards other people. Therefore we would like to ask you to remember a situation in which you felt very negative about yourself after having done (or after having not done) something to/for a friend or family member. (NOTE: The friend or family member should still be alive today).

Please describe this situation as precisely as possible. We understand that the details of the situation may contain very sensitive or personal information. For that reason we guarantee that your answers will be anonymous and the data will be treated strictly confidential.

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## Feeling negative

Now think back of a situation in which you felt very negative about yourself after having done (or after not having done) something to/for a friend or family member. Put yourself into the situation as if you are experiencing it at this very moment. Take your time and try to remember as many details of your behavior and of the feeling as possible.

You can think of for example the situation before you did anything, what you exactly did (or did not do), who were present, the consequences of your actions, and how you felt afterwards. Please describe the event in a short way below. Describe the event in such a way that someone who was

not present can imagine it very well.

---

**Positive other-caused condition:**

## Feeling positive

People often experience very positive feelings because of something that other people did. In this research we are interested in situations in which people feel very positive due to the actions or behaviors of a friend or family member. Therefore we would like to ask you to remember a situation in which you felt very positive after a friend or family member did (or did not do) something. (NOTE: The friend or family member should still be alive today).

Please describe this situation as precisely as possible. We understand that the details of the situation may contain very sensitive or personal information. For that reason we guarantee that your answers will be anonymous and the data will be treated strictly confidential.

---

## Feeling positive

Now think back of a situation in which you felt very positive towards a friend or family member after (s)he did (or did not do) something. Put yourself into the situation as if you are experiencing it at this very moment. Take your time and try to remember as many details of your behavior and of the feeling as possible.

You can think of for example the situation before the person did anything, what the person exactly did (or did not do), who were present, the consequences of the person's actions, and how you felt afterwards. Please describe the event in a short way below. Describe the event in such a way that someone who was not present can imagine it very well.

**Positive self-caused condition**

## Feeling positive

People often feel very positive about themselves because of something that they do for another person. In this research we are interested in situations in which people feel very positive about themselves due to their own actions or behaviors done for another person. Therefore we would like to ask you to remember a situation in which you felt very positive about yourself after having done (or after having not done) something to/for a friend or family member. (NOTE: The friend or family member should still be alive today).

Please describe this situation as precisely as possible. We understand that the details of the situation may contain very sensitive or personal information. For that reason we guarantee that your answers will be anonymous and the data will be treated strictly confidential.

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## Feeling positive

Now think back of a situation in which you felt very positive about yourself after having done (or after not having done) something to/for a friend or family member. Put yourself into the situation as if you are experiencing it at this very moment. Take your time and try to remember as many details of your behavior and of the feeling as possible.

You can think of for example the situation before you did anything, what you exactly did (or did not do), who were present, the consequences of your actions, and how you felt afterwards. Please describe the event in a short way below. Describe the event in such a way that someone who was not present can imagine it very well.

---



**General part:**

In the event you described you can experience multiple feelings. Below we have enlisted a number of feelings. For each feeling, please indicate how strongly you experienced it in the event you just described. The answers range from not at all (1) to very strongly (7).

How strongly did you feel...

	Not at all						Very strongly
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
negative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
you were the cause of the event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
another person was the cause of the event	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
passive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
active	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
certain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
uncertain	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

You described an event that had to do with a friend or family member. What is the name of this friend or family member? (NOTE: ONLY type in the first name of the person AND if you don't want to say the real name type a random name)

**Imagine the following**

Very shortly after the event that you have just described it is your birthday. Because it is your birthday, [name] has bought you a gift: a book.

How much would you appreciate [name]'s gift?

<i>Not at all</i>								<i>Very much</i>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	

How grateful would you feel for [name]'s gift?

*Not at all*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Very much*

How thankful would you feel for [name]'s gift?

*Not at all*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Very much*

How pleased would you feel about receiving [name]'s gift

*Not at all*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Very much*

How much do you like [name]'s gift?

*Not at all*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Very much*

---

### Imagine the following

Very shortly after the event that you have just described it is your birthday. Because it is your birthday, [name] has bought you a gift: a book.

Would you consider using [name]'s book as a regift for somebody else?

*Certainly not*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Definitely*

How likely is it that you will dispose [name]'s book within 5 years after your birthday?

*Very unlikely*

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

*Very likely*

The book that you received from [name] was worth €20. Next month it's [name]'s birthday. How much money do you intend to spend on [name]'s birthday? (In euro's)

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The gift you received from [name] can influence your relationship with [name]. How would the gift influence your relationship with [name]?

- The gift makes our relationship stronger
- The gift confirms our strong relationship
- The gift has no effect on our relationship
- The gift confirms our weak relationship
- The gift makes the relationship weaker
- The gift is the end of our relationship

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What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

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Thank you for completing this survey!