ATTACHMENT STYLE, IDENTITY CONGRUENCE, AND GIFT PREFERENCE:
A DYADIC MODEL OF GIFT EXCHANGE

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Gift exchange has been extensively investigated by social science researchers in fields such as anthropology, sociology, economics, and marketing. Interest in the study of gift exchange may be so widespread because gift exchange is considered a universal social phenomenon that has endured from archaic into modern societies (Mauss, 1924/1990; Caplow, 1982; Adloff, 2006). In accord with Mauss’ (1924/1990) seminal essay on the subject, gift exchange remains a critical element of society because it is a mechanism by which people create, maintain, and manage their relationships with others. As individuals use gift exchange to navigate their social environments, gifts become vehicles through which the identity of the relationship and of the individuals in it are transmitted (Schwartz, 1967). In other words, gifts are representations of relationships.

Individuals engage in gift exchange for the purpose of influencing their relationships with others. However, extant research suggests that a problem exists in gift exchange: the gifts givers prefer to give are often different from the gifts recipients prefer to receive (Teigen, Olsen, and Solas, 2005). Indeed, research has demonstrated that individuals are poor predictors of others’ preferences (Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale, 1986; Menon et al., 2005; Lerouge and Warlop, 2006). Gift exchange research often assumes that givers are universally motivated to please recipients, and asserts that familiarity with the recipient (Menon et al., 2005; Lerouge and Warlop, 2006) or the social expectations of gift giving (Teigen, Olsen, and Solas, 2005) bias the giver’s perception of the recipient’s preference, causing error in the subsequent gift choice. This research claims that bias and error account for the reason givers give gifts that are unliked by recipients.
Despite the relational nature of gift exchange, most prior research has not investigated gift exchange dyadically (for an exception, see Shiffman and Cohn, 2009). Sherry (1983) theoretically developed a dyadic, process flow model of gift exchange that has served as a general framework for understanding gift exchange in consumer behavior. However, most researchers have chosen to investigate the phenomenon from either the giver’s or the recipient’s perspective (Larsen and Watson, 2001). From the giver’s perspective, the bulk of research has focused on giver characteristics and situational influences affecting the giver’s gift selection and/or feelings toward gift giving (Belk, 1976; Warshaw, 1980; Otnes, Lowry, and Kim, 1993; Wooten, 2000; Parsons, 2002; Lowry, Otnes, and Ruth, 2004). Research conducted from the recipient’s perspective has focused on the emotions recipients experience upon gift receipt (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 2004), how these emotions influence the actions recipients take with regard to the gifts they have received (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992), and how gift receipt alters the recipient’s perception of the relationship with the giver (Ruth, Otnes and Brunel, 1999).

While extant research has provided insight into certain factors influencing givers’ gift choices and recipients’ reactions to gift receipt, it fails to dyadically connect givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences within the relationship context. This gap in the literature limits our understanding of how gift exchange is used to manage relationships between people. Indeed, gift exchange can strengthen the intimacy of a relationship, confirm the existence of a relationship at its current level of intimacy, or create distance in the relationship (Mauss, 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967; Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999; Caillé, 2000). Thus, it should not be assumed that givers act with the sole motivation to please the recipient. Rather, it suggests that situations exist in which the level of intimacy givers seek in a relationship exerts greater influence over gift
selection than their perceptions of recipients’ preferences. Further, this also suggests that the level of intimacy recipients seek in relationships should affect the gifts they prefer to receive. If givers’ desired levels of intimacy in relationships influence their preferences toward the gifts they would like to give, and recipients’ desired levels of intimacy in relationships influence their preferences toward the gifts they would like to receive, then bias and error may not fully account for giver-recipient preference asymmetry. In order to gain a deeper understanding of why givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences are often incongruent, givers’ and recipients’ desired levels of intimacy in relationships should be considered. Viewing gift exchange from a dyadic perspective that considers both the giver’s and recipient’s desired levels of relationship intimacy may provide insight into the question of why asymmetry sometimes exists in their gift exchange preferences. In short, since givers and recipients may differ in the level of intimacy they desire in the relationship, they may also differ in their gift preferences.

The majority of the consumer behavior research conducted on gift exchange has been qualitative in nature (see Belk, 1976; Warshaw, 1980; Nguyen and Munch, 2011; Ward and Broniarczyk, 2011 for exceptions). While qualitative research provides a wealth of rich descriptions of gift exchange phenomena, this strong emphasis on qualitative research in the gift exchange literature limits our ability to support predictions regarding givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences. To date, no dyadic, quantitative research has been conducted on gift exchange in the context of consumer behavior. Thus, one goal of this dissertation is to conduct a quantitative investigation into gift exchange that predicts how both the giver’s and recipient’s desired levels of relationship intimacy dyadically affect their gift preferences.

In order to accomplish this goal, this dissertation specifically draws on attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969/1973/1980), a framework developed in contemporary psychology to aid in the
understanding of the formation, management, and quality of relationships between people (Hazan and Shaver, 1993). Attachment theory suggests that givers and recipients may be predisposed to exhibit certain gift exchange preferences in order to exert influence over relationship intimacy in accord with their own attachment style (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996; Guerrero, 1996). Certain attachment styles predispose individuals to chronically create distance in relationships, while other attachment styles predispose individuals to chronically seek to bring relationships closer (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Recipient- and relationship-focused gifts have been generally found to confirm or strengthen relationships, while giver-focused gifts generally serve to weaken them (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen, 1995; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 1999). Therefore, we posit that givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles will affect the levels of identity congruence in the gifts they prefer to give and receive. In doing so, the work in this dissertation emphasizes the importance of integrating the literature on brand identity congruence with the gift exchange literature.

Differences in attachment style provide a potential explanation for the existence of giver-recipient preference asymmetry. Further, in relationships, individuals’ attachment styles have been found to affect one another’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviors regarding events in relationships (Campbell et al., 2001; Bartz and Lydon, 2006; Mikulincer et al., 2010). This suggests that not only will individuals’ own attachment styles affect their gift preferences, but so too will their partner’s attachment style. Thus, the use of attachment style as a predictor of gift exchange preference permits the investigation into how gifts are used to dyadically manage relationships between people.

Nguyen and Munch (2011) provide a preliminary investigation into the effect of attachment style on gift exchange. The authors find that individuals with less secure attachment...
styles perceive gift giving within romantic relationships as less pleasurable and more of an obligation than do securely attached individuals. The work in this dissertation suggests that the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange also applies to non-romantic relationships and has greater predictive power than initially proposed. While Nguyen and Munch (2011) propose that attachment theory can help predict individuals’ feelings toward the act of gift exchange, this dissertation demonstrates that attachment theory can help predict the characteristics of the gifts that individuals prefer to give and receive. Further, this dissertation demonstrates that an individual’s attachment style not only colors his or her own gift exchange preferences, but also functions relationally, such that a relationship partner’s attachment style also impacts the individual’s gift exchange preferences. By taking a dyadic approach to the study of gift exchange, this dissertation demonstrates how individuals use gift exchange to manage intimacy within their relationships.

Thus, the overall goal of this dissertation is to further establish the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange. In doing so, we build a theoretical framework that demonstrates how the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange has the potential for wide applicability to gift exchange phenomena of interest to consumer behavior researchers. We show that this perspective is consistent with respect to research conducted across multiple fields of study which demonstrates that gift exchange is a mechanism by which relationships are altered and maintained.

Our conceptualization of the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange contributes to the gift exchange literature in several ways. By demonstrating the dyadic influence of attachment style on gift preference, we establish the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange as a relationship-level phenomenon and develop predictions relevant to the use of gift
exchange as a relationship management tool. In doing so, we provide a new explanation for
giver-recipient gift preference asymmetry that goes beyond the popular belief that bias and error
fully account for the reasons givers give gifts recipients do not want. We also extend the identity-
congruence literature into the gift exchange context, underscoring the importance of considering
this previously underexplored influence in gift exchange research. Finally, we provide a
practical tactic that marketers can use to influence gift givers’ selection of their brand as a gift.
CHAPTER 2

GIFT EXCHANGE

What is a Gift?

Belk and Coon (1993) define a gift as, “a good or service (including a giver’s time, activities, and ideas) voluntarily provided to another person or group through some sort of ritual prestation,” (p. 394). In other words, a gift is a good or service bestowed by a giver on a recipient that carries with it certain intangible characteristics. When a good or service is given and received as a gift, it becomes imbued with additional properties symbolizing the giver, recipient, and the relationship between them (Mauss 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967). Thus, a gift is not just a good or service in itself. Rather, it is the symbolic, intangible properties conferred from giver to recipient that constitute the meaning of a gift. The perception of such properties by the giver and recipient distinguish a gift from a mere good or service. Further, according to Caillé (2000), a gift is, “every allowance of goods or services made without a guarantee of return, with a view to creating, maintaining, or regenerating the social bond,” (p. 47). From this perspective, the existing or desired characteristics of the relationship in which gifts are given govern the act of gift exchange. Therefore, a gift is a vessel by which relational meaning is conferred by one individual to another, and is shared between them (Mauss 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967), in effort to manage the social relationship to a desired degree of intimacy (Sherry, 1983; Caillé, 2000).
Gift Meaning

Gift meaning provides a mechanism by which gifts alter relational intimacy. Gift meaning is comprised of the symbolic, intangible properties residing in the gift that arise from perceptions of the identity of the giver, recipient, and of the relationship between them (Mauss 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967). The imbuing of a gift with meaning by a giver, and the interpretation of such meaning by a recipient is dependent upon the characteristics of the individuals involved in the gifting situation and of their relationship. Such characteristics have not been explicated in extant literature. However, the levels of value by which gifts may be assessed have been classified into several general dimensions: economic value, functional value, social value, and expressive value (Sherry, 1983; Belk and Coon, 1993; Larsen and Watson, 2001).

*Economic Value of Gifts*

Economic value refers to the valuation of a gift in terms of its monetary price and other marketplace factors such as scarcity and available alternatives (Larsen and Watson, 2001). From a purely economic perspective, cash gifts would always be viewed as the most efficient gifts (Camerer, 1988), enabling recipients to purchase exactly what they want. However, cash gifts are often considered socially inappropriate, perhaps due to a lack of meaning conveyed between giver and recipient. Since gift exchanges are embedded within social relationships, the economic value of gifts is not viewed from a purely economic standpoint. Rather, the basis for the economic valuation of gifts is grounded in social exchange theory (Thibaut and Kelley 1959).
Social exchange theory posits that the individual is self-interested, seeking to maximize rewards and minimize punishments (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). A social exchange is a “voluntary action of individuals that are motivated by the returns they are expected to bring,” (Blau, 1964; p. 91). In order to entice another to provide a reward, the individual has to first give a reward. Therefore, the economic meaning of a gift is the expectation that the recipient will give something in return. The giver embeds into the gift the notion that a return reward is expected, and by accepting the gift, the recipient commits to providing the return reward (Mauss, 1924/1990).

Belk and Coon (1993) cite several extreme examples of the economic valuation of gifts from depth interviews and journals regarding gift exchange conducted with dating couples. In some cases, female recipients reported perceiving that sexual favors were expected in return for the gifts they had received. From this perspective, economically valued gifts may commoditize the recipient, leading to the interpretation that the giver is trying to ‘buy’ the recipient or something from them (Belk and Coon, 1993).

Sherry’s (1983) conceptualization of the economic dimension of the gift is less sinister. The giver seeks to bestow material benefit upon the recipient, and such gifts are used to modulate the relationship. That is, economically valued gifts can be used to manage the relationship to the desired degree of intimacy, a notion supported by Caplow’s (1982) finding that the price of gifts increases with the closeness of the relationship. In this way, the economic value of a gift may be proportionate to the strength of the relationship between giver and recipient. This perspective indicates that givers may attempt to become closer to recipients by giving costlier gifts. However, if the gift is perceived as inappropriately expensive by a recipient,
that recipient may be more likely to attribute ulterior motives to the giver, serving to actually create distance in the relationship (Belk and Coon, 1993).

*Functional Value of Gifts*

Functional value refers to the utility of the gift (Larsen and Watson, 2001). This aspect of the gift is not explicitly discussed in previously developed taxonomies of gift value (e.g., Sherry, 1983; Belk and Coon, 1993). Discussion of functional value is limited in consumer research, likely because the functional value of a gift is the usefulness of the good or service itself, and usefulness is the same whether a good or service is a gift or not. However, meaning may be interpreted (or perhaps, misinterpreted) based on the functional value of gifts, depending on the relationship and the individuals in it. For example, a husband purchasing a food processor for his wife’s birthday can be interpreted with different meanings. If the wife is a chef, she may interpret that her husband is in-tune with her passion for cooking. If she does not have such a passion, she may interpret that her husband is insensitive or unromantic. However, it could be argued that such an interpretation of the functional value of a gift is actually an interpretation of its expressive value (as subsequently discussed). Indeed, functional value, in and of itself, does not serve to distinguish gifts from mere goods or services. Any interpretation of the intended meaning behind a functional gift is, in fact, an interpretation of the expressive value of the gift.

*Social Value of Gifts*

The social value of a gift is the component of a gift that helps individuals create, maintain and manage social relationships (Larsen and Watson, 2001). Gifts can be used to reflect social integration (i.e., membership in a group) or social distance (i.e., relative intimacy in
relationships) (Sherry, 1983). Social value indicates that gift exchange is a mechanism by which individuals can regulate the degree of closeness or intimacy in relationships. Gifts can be used to bring people closer together, or serve to create distance between them. Caplow (1982) finds that gift exchange rituals reinforce or strengthen highly valued but insecure social relationships. Thus, the social value of the gift demonstrates how the act of gift exchange creates and strengthens relational ties, and can be used to manage the closeness of those ties.

The manner in which social gift value functions is detailed by Mauss (1924/1990), who identifies three themes associated with gift exchange: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to reciprocate. These themes are embedded within most cultures and serve to forge and delineate social bonds (or relationships) between its members (Mauss, 1924/1990). Refusing to oblige and obliging with the themes result in differential consequences for the social bond. While Mauss (1924/1990) focused his investigation on archaic societies, his findings have been found to generalize to modern societies (e.g., Caplow, 1982).

According to Mauss (1924/1990), the act of not giving when giving is customary or expected signifies that an individual does not wish to form or continue a social bond with another. However, through the act of giving, the individual may prove, maintain, and strengthen social ties with others. By giving gifts, individuals stake claim to their place within a social relationship.

Individuals also have an obligation to receive gifts that are given to them (Mauss, 1924/1990). Refusing to accept a gift, like refusing to give a gift, serves to weaken or sever the social bond. When a recipient accepts a gift from a giver, both parties perceive that a commitment has been made. The recipient not only commits to reciprocation and communicates a willingness to engage in a social bond with the giver (Mauss 1924/1990), but also indicates an
acceptance of what the gift represents: the giver’s identity, the recipient’s identity, and the relationship shared between them (Schwartz, 1967). The recipient who does not reciprocate goes against social gifting expectations, and is thus acting inappropriately with regard to maintaining the social bond (Mauss 1924/1990).

Social value demonstrates that engaging in gift exchange, repeatedly and over time, helps individuals maintain and manage relational intimacy. Relationships can be brought closer or pushed further apart through the gifting actions of the individuals in them. The social value of the gift serves to help individuals create, maintain, and manage relationships to the desired degree of intimacy (Sherry, 1983; Larsen and Watson, 2001) through the ritualization of gift exchange (Caplow, 1982).

The economic value of a gift may be viewed as part of the social value of a gift, as the core of economic gift valuation relies on transferring the meaning that a return gift is expected (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Blau, 1964; Belk and Coon, 1993). Return gift expectations provide the foundation for gift exchange rituals per Mauss’ (1924/1990) three themes. In addition to setting expectations for return, the economic valuation of a gift also serves to modulate relationships in that higher-valued gifts are associated with closer relationships (Caplow, 1982). The giving and receipt of higher-valued gifts, over time, is associated with relationships becoming closer (Belk and Coon, 1993) and with givers’ attempts to alter the status of a relationship (Mauss 1924/1990). Therefore, the economic value of a gift communicates the obligation to reciprocate (Thibaut and Kelley, 1959; Blau, 1964; Belk and Coon, 1993) and modulates relational intimacy (Sherry, 1983). Being obliged to reciprocate, repeatedly over time, fosters the creation, maintenance, and management of social bonds to the desired degree of intimacy. Economic gift value seems to be grounded in the one-time transaction, while social gift
value seems to be viewed as an accumulation of gifting experiences over time. Thus, the economic value of the gift should be viewed as a part of the social value of the gift.

Expressive Value of Gifts

The expressive value of a gift suggests that the gift can symbolize the relationship and the individuals in it. Indeed, gifts can represent the giver’s identity, the recipient’s identity, and the relationship between them (Schwartz, 1967). The ethnographic findings of Mauss (1924/1990) suggest that the gift, even after it is dispossessed from the giver, carries with it a part of the giver. Thus, making something a gift is to present the self to another; “by giving, one is giving oneself,” (Mauss, 1924/1990; p. 46).

In a marketing context, Belk and Coon (1993) relate the expressive value of gifts to gifts being part of the giver’s extended self (Belk, 1988). Indeed, research has demonstrated that possessions are receptacles for the identity of their owners (Belk, 1988). Presenting one’s own identity in gift form to another is one way individuals can confirm and express their own identities, such as a painter who gives his own artwork as a gift. Importantly, gifts that are extensions of givers’ selves also become extensions of the recipients’ selves once recipients incorporate the gift into their lives (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992). Gifts in this sense become mutual self-extensions, or extensions of the relationship between individuals. Thus, gifts given and received constitute a shared experience between at least two parties (Areni et al., 1998), and longitudinal changes in the types of gifts exchanged have been found to correspond with the evolution of relationships as they grow closer over time (Belk and Coon, 1993). Belk and Coon (1993) suggest that gifts can also symbolize relationship commitment and cues to
compatibility between individuals. Thus, according to expressive gift value, gifts can transmit the identity of the giver, the recipient, and the identity shared between them to differing degrees.

**Gift Meaning and Relationship Intimacy**

Gifts are not just functional or utilitarian goods or services but are also vessels for expressing and managing the identities of givers, recipients, and relationships. Therefore, it is the social and expressive values that distinguish gifts from mere goods or services by transmitting identity and affecting social bonds. The gift valuation taxonomy indicates that the transmission of identity in gifts affects how the social bond is altered. That is, the identity expressed in gifts exchanged between individuals affects the level of intimacy in their relationship.

**What is Gift Exchange?**

Belk and Coon (1993) state that, “the term ‘exchange’ implies giving something in return for something received previously or simultaneously, or in anticipation of future returns… reciprocity is made the key element,” (p. 394). Their definitions of gift and exchange seem, on the surface, contradictory. Gifts are voluntary, yet through the acts of giving and receiving, gifts impose an obligation on the recipient to reciprocate (Mauss, 1924/1990). Indeed, gift exchange “is based on voluntary giving and – at the same time – on the social duty to give back (Adloff, 2006, p. 412).

Reciprocity is a key element of gift exchange. According to Gouldner (1960), “the norm of reciprocity holds that people should help those who help them and, therefore those you have helped have an obligation to help you… if you want to be helped by others, you must help
them,” (p. 173). However, gift exchange cannot be reduced to mere instrumental or economic exchange – giving in order to receive (Adloff, 2006). Reciprocity from a gift exchange perspective does not suggest that individuals’ motivations to exchange are uniquely self-interested. Rather, Sherry (1983) asserts that motivations “range from altruistic, where the donor attempts to maximize the pleasure of the recipient, to agonistic, where the donor attempts to maximize personal satisfaction…gift exchange results from multiple motives that fall between the poles of altruism and agonism on a motivation continuum,” (p. 160-1). Thus, individuals’ gift exchange motivations cannot be reduced to solely economic or altruistic (Adloff, 2006). Rather, gift exchange results from both the giver’s motivation toward the recipient and the giver’s own personal motivation.

The Gift Exchange Process

Sherry (1983) presents a theoretical, dyadic process flow model of gift exchange that is often employed as a framework to understand gift exchange in consumer behavior research. The process consists of three longitudinal stages: gestation, prestation and reformulation. At the end of the process, the giver and recipient are presumed to switch roles to reflect that the recipient reciprocates the gift they have received.

Gestation Stage

The gestation stage refers to all behavior prior to the actual giving of the gift to the recipient. This stage begins with a precipitating condition that motivates the giver to give a gift, such as a holiday or special occasion. The giver proceeds through internal and perhaps external
search, processing information about the recipient, the self, and the relationship. These pieces of information act as inputs to the gift choice decision. Ultimately, the giver decides on a gift to purchase or create and does so.

Givers choose gifts that symbolize the giver’s identity, the recipient’s identity, and/or the identity shared between them (Schwartz, 1967; Belk and Coon, 1993) in order to establish, maintain, and manage the intimacy of relationships with recipients (Mauss, 1924/1990; Sherry, 1983; Larsen and Watson, 2001). A giver may seek to move the relationship with the recipient closer or further apart, or to maintain the relationship at its current level of intimacy. In attempting to achieve a specific relationship intimacy level, a giver differentially chooses how identity (that of the giver, recipient, or both) is symbolized in the gift.

**Giver Identity.** Prior research indicates that givers may seek to express their own actual or desired identities to recipients through gift exchange (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993). Otnes, Lowrey and Kim (1993) suggest that some givers select gifts they want the recipient to have, in order to confer some desired meaning, value, or knowledge from themselves to the recipient, while other givers seek to send a message of their own discontent in the relationship.

Wooten (2000) considers givers’ perceptions of their own identities with regard to their gifting capabilities in gift choice. Gifting capabilities refer to givers’ perceptions of their own capacity to succeed as a giver (Wooten, 2000). Givers’ confidence in their gifting capabilities affects gift selection. Lower confidence givers tend to discount their gifting capacity, which in turn reduces the giver’s perception that a chosen gift will be liked by the recipient. In sum, research on the expression of giver identity through gifts suggests that gift selection may be based not only on givers’ desire to express themselves to the recipient, but also on givers’ self-
confidence. This reveals that lower confidence givers may be less likely to express themselves through gifts than higher confidence givers.

**Recipient Identity.** Givers’ perceptions of the recipient’s identity have been found to affect gift selection (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993; Parsons, 2002). Some givers select gifts they feel will be liked by the recipient, based on their own perceptions of the recipient’s tastes and interests (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993). Other givers choose gifts that they feel the recipient needs, or that they perceive will make up for some loss the recipient has experienced (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993).

The giver’s perception of the recipient’s identity also affects the brands that givers choose as gifts. Parsons (2002) finds that some givers match their perceptions of the recipient’s identity to the associations possessed by a brand. In other words, some givers choose gifts based on the fit between recipient image and brand image. This research indicates that givers do not seek to communicate the same meaning or provide the same benefits to all recipients. Rather, some givers choose gifts that demonstrate some fit with their perceptions of the recipient’s identity.

Givers expend significantly more effort when choosing gifts for recipients with whom the relationship is close (Heeler, et al., 1979). Indeed, givers report feeling more anxious about gift selection when they are motivated to please the recipient, but are pessimistic about their ability to attain a positive reaction to the gift from the recipient (Wooten, 2000). High interpersonal stakes, such as perceiving the recipient as more powerful in the relationship or as highly selective, increase the giver’s motivation to please and impede the giver’s perception of the likelihood of attaining a positive reaction (Wooten, 2000). Thus, gift choice may be affected not only by the
giver’s perceptions of the fit between a particular gift and the recipient’s identity, but also by a relative assessment of selectivity and power within the relationship. Therefore, givers who perceive their recipients as more powerful in the relationship may be more likely to attempt to express recipient identity in their gift choices.

The Relationship between Giver and Recipient. Otnes, Lowrey and Kim (1993) demonstrate that some givers seek to express the acknowledgement of, or a change in, relationship status through gift selection. Indeed, some givers are motivated to select gifts that are intended to confirm the existence of relationships, while other givers are motivated to disconfirm them (Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993). Lowrey, Otnes, and Ruth (2004) suggest that gifts may also be used to delineate the status of the relationship within its larger social network. Givers may seek to calibrate gifts to the appropriate relationship level, or signal that the relationship is equal to other relationships the giver is part of through equitable gift giving (Lowrey, Otnes, and Ruth, 2004). Further, gift exchange may be used to initiate and sever relationships such that new recipients are brought into and/or removed from the social network (Lowrey, Otnes, and Ruth, 2004). Thus, some givers select gifts that express the identity that is shared between giver and recipient.

The Differential Influence of Identity on Gift Selection. While research has demonstrated that givers differentially express their own identity, the recipient’s identity, and the identity shared between them through gift selection (Schwartz, 1967), little attention has been paid to factors that influence the giver to choose a gift that expresses these identities to a greater or lesser extent. Belk (1976) proposes a model that predicts the conditions under which the giver’s tastes or the recipient’s tastes dominate gift selection as well as predicts whether the recipient will be satisfied
with the gift. The model relies on Heider’s (1958) balance theory, which proposes that people are motivated to attain the consistency that results from psychological balance.

Belk (1976) acknowledges that individuals in social relationships may display a tendency toward balance in gift exchange over time. That is, individuals in a social relationship may seek to maintain equality in terms of the gift exchange process – giving, receiving, and reciprocating – over the course of their relationship, in accord with the way reciprocity is defined in the gift exchange context (Sherry, 1983; Adloff, 2006). In Belk’s (1976) model of gift selection, psychological balance is also sought in individual gift choices.

According to Belk (1976), balance is achieved with regard to a particular gift choice when the positive and negative valences between the giver’s self-liking, liking for the recipient, perceived similarity to the recipient, and own liking of the gift, and the recipient’s perceived liking of the gift multiply together to a positive result. In other words, balance occurs when all five elements are positive. Balance also occurs when there is an even number of negative elements, such as when giver’s self-liking and perceived similarity to the recipient are negative, but the other three elements are positive. Balance is thought to result in greater recipient satisfaction with the gift. Unbalanced configurations result from odd numbers of negative elements. A configuration in which the giver likes the self and likes the gift, but the remaining three elements are negatively valenced would result in a less-balanced configuration in which the giver’s tastes dominate gift selection and the recipient is predicted to be less satisfied.

Belk’s (1976) model is the first empirically testable model of gift exchange in consumer behavior research that considers both the giver and the recipient simultaneously. However, it is significantly limited in that the model does not consider recipients’ actual responses to gift receipt. This model views the predictive variables of person-liking, giver-recipient similarity, and
gift-liking from only the giver’s perspective. Importantly, the outcome variable, the recipient’s satisfaction with the gift, is the giver’s perception of such satisfaction, rather than the recipient’s actual satisfaction with the gift. Thus, this model only considers gift exchange from the giver’s perspective. While this model asserts that balance should result in greater recipient satisfaction than imbalance, it also assumes that all five elements (giver’s self-liking, recipient liking, perceived recipient similarity, gift liking, and the perceived gift liking of the recipient) are equally important in determining satisfaction. For instance, Belk’s (1976) model suggests that situations exist in which the giver expects recipient satisfaction despite the giver believing that the recipient will not like the gift. Finally, the model assumes that givers are universally motivated to please recipients. However, extant research has both postulated and demonstrated that some givers purposefully seek to create distance in relationships by giving gifts that are not well-received (Sherry, 1983; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993; Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999). Thus, Belk’s (1976) model is substantially limited in its failure to capture the giver’s and recipient’s desired levels of relationship intimacy in giving and receiving gifts, its assumption that person-liking, giver-recipient similarity, and gift-liking are equally important, all-inclusive factors that determine gift satisfaction, and its inclusion of only the giver’s perceptions of such factors.

It is essential to consider recipients’ actual preferences toward gifts that differentially express identity, as research has demonstrated that givers are often poor estimators of recipients’ preferences. Thus, givers’ perceptions of recipient satisfaction with a particular gift may be incorrect or biased. Indeed, Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale (1986) found that only 53% of spouses more accurately predicted their mates’ preferences than did a hypothetical forecaster basing the prediction on average gender-specific preference alone. Lerouge and Warlop (2006) argue that
familiarity with the person whose preferences are being predicted can actually hurt predictive accuracy when product-specific feedback from that person is available. When familiarity is high, the amount of information stored about the target person is thought to overwhelm the small amount of diagnostic, product-specific feedback, yet this previously stored target information is not expected to be diagnostic for predicting product-specific attitudes. However, when similarity is high between the two individuals, predictors tend to rely on their own attitudes rather than attempting to infer the target person’s attitudes, overcoming this retrieval bias. Davis, Hoch, and Ragsdale (1986) also found that spouses who agreed in preference with their mates were most successful in predicting their mates’ preferences because they relied on their own attitudes.

Taken together, these studies propose that individuals tend to be affected by retrieval bias and/or use nondiagnostic information in attempting to predict others’ preferences. Menon et al. (1995) find that the more individuals in a relationship talk to each other and participate in activities together, the more one partner’s report of the other partner’s preferences converges with that person’s self-reported preferences. It is assumed that this effect is due to the availability of specific, diagnostic information about the recipient’s preferences. This research asserts that the likelihood of using diagnostic information to predict another’s preferences may increase with familiarity, in contrast to the findings of Lerouge and Warlop (2006). Thus, research is inconclusive regarding the extent to which specific, diagnostic preference information is available to and used by partners in relationships.

Teigen, Olsen, and Solas (2005) propose an alternative explanation for preference asymmetry, specific to the gift exchange context. The authors argue that gifts may be more or less attractive depending on whether they are evaluated from the giver’s or recipient’s point of view. That is, the gifts givers prefer to give differ from the gifts recipients prefer to receive. In
this study, givers preferred to give one expensive item to two moderately priced items, and a new but less functional item to a used but more functional item of the same price. Recipients preferred the opposite. If givers are indeed universally motivated to maximize the recipient’s pleasure, then these asymmetries should not exist. However, these differences indicate that givers often want to communicate something about themselves to the recipient, such as their own wealth or status, or may want to impress, rather than please, the recipient (Teigen, Olsen, and Solas, 2005). In other words, situations exist in which givers’ own preferences exert greater influence over gift choice than do their perceptions of recipients’ preferences. Therefore, diagnostic, product-specific information about the recipient’s gift preference is not sufficient to predict a giver’s gift preference, nor is bias sufficient in accounting for giver-recipient preference asymmetry.

In addition to seeking to please recipients with gifts that fit with their identity, the identity that givers seek to hold with respect to recipients and/or the level of intimacy by which relationships are identified also exert influence over gift choice (Mauss, 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967; Sherry, 1983; Belk and Coon, 1993; Ottes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993; Laursen and Watson, 2001; Teigen, Olsen, and Solas, 2005). Indeed, the assertion that givers are neither solely altruistically motivated nor motivated by self-interest in gift exchange is supported in the literature (Sherry, 1983; Adloff, 2006). Factors that determine the extent to which gift preference is determined by each of these identities have not been investigated. Further, little research has been conducted with respect to recipients’ preferences toward gifts that differentially express identity. Incongruence between the relationship intimacy a giver seeks with a recipient and the relationship intimacy a recipient seeks with a giver may provide a previously uninvestigated explanation for the observed differences between givers and recipients gift preferences.
Failure to fully explicate how the expression of the giver’s, recipient’s, or the identity shared between them differentially affect givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences renders Belk’s (1976) model incongruent with the fundamental tenet of social gift exchange: that the identity expressed in the gift (Mauss, 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967; Belk and Coon, 1993) can affect the degree of intimacy in the relationship, for better or for worse (Sherry, 1983; Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999). The level of relationship intimacy that givers and recipients seek in their relationships may be similar or different. Incongruency in the desired level of relationship intimacy between giver and recipient may help explain the observed but not yet fully understood asymmetry in giver-recipient gift preference. Therefore, gift exchange literature in consumer behavior can benefit from modeling gift exchange in a way that specifically considers how givers’ and recipients’ desired levels of relationship intimacy affect their gift preferences.

**Prestation Stage**

During the prestation stage, the giver bestows the gift upon the recipient. The giver’s goal is to attain a response to the gift from the recipient. Based on the recipient’s response to the gift, both giver and recipient are thought to experience an affective outcome (Sherry, 1983).

Recipients’ evaluations of gifts have been viewed through acquisition and exchange utility (Pieters and Robben, 1998). Acquisition utility is the utility that resides in the gift itself, while exchange utility resides in the social relationship between the giver and recipient. Results indicate that acquisition utility and exchange utility interact, such that close relationships may compensate for gifts with low (but positive) acquisition utility, and that recipients may be more disappointed with gifts with negative acquisition utility when they are received in close relationships (Pieters and Robben, 1998). This work, although strongly economically-driven,
underscores the importance of considering how characteristics of the relationship in which gifts are received affect their gift evaluations.

Recipients have reported strong feelings of anticipation and excitement when receiving and unwrapping gifts, and strong feelings of disappointment upon discovering they do not like the gift (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992). Sherry, McGrath, and Levy (1993) found that recipients characterize the gift receipt experience to be stressful, as they are tasked with both responding to the gift as well as attributing a motivation to the giver for the reasons the particular gift was chosen. These attributions suggest that recipients respond to gifts not only affectively, as suggested by Sherry (1983), but also cognitively. This indicates that not only do recipients evaluate gifts based on their feelings toward the gift itself, but also think about what the gift means for their relationship with the giver. Outwardly, responses to an unliked gift may be suppressed, but recipients report that they “suffer in silence…feelings of guilt and/or victimization are managed internally, while obligatory debts of acknowledgement and gratitude are ritually discharged. Repression then gives way to a series of alternatives permitting the recipient to channel hostility,” (1992; p. 53). These alternatives refer to gift disposition strategies that occur in the reformulation stage.

Reformulation Stage

Reformulation is the final stage of Sherry’s (1983) gift exchange process. Here, the recipient does something with the gift – displays it, consumes it, returns it, exchanges it, or refuses it. This act by the recipient, termed disposition (Sherry, 1983), combined with the previously mentioned responses to the gift, affects relationship realignment. Relationship realignment refers to the effect that the gift exchange situation has on the relationship, or social
bond, between the two partners. Relationships can be strengthened, affirmed, attenuated, or even severed as a result of gift exchange. At the end of the process, dependent upon the relationship outcome, the partners may switch roles and proceed back through the stages again.

Disposition. Disposition is fairly straightforward in the case of a liked gift. Sherry, McGrath, and Levy (1992) refer to the disposition of liked gifts as incorporation. Incorporation simply refers to the integration of the gift, and its meaning, into the recipient’s life. However, the psychological stress caused by receiving an unliked gift, coupled with internally suppressed hostility toward the giver, often results in one of three negative disposition strategies: lateral cycling, destruction, or return (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992). Lateral cycling, colloquially called ‘regifting,’ is the giving of an unliked gift to someone else, either to an individual of lower status from whom reciprocity is not expected, or to a person with similar characteristics to the giver who may like the gift. Destruction refers to situations in which recipients rid themselves of the gift, which is often accompanied by high levels of negative emotion (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992). Generally, returning a gift in order to get something more desirable is seen as less acceptable (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992), perhaps because it is a rejection of the meaning the giver intended to confer on the recipient.

Prestation and reformulation stage gift exchange literature indicate that gift exchange is a significant relationship event because it affects the ongoing relationship between giver and recipient. Liked gifts can serve to bring a relationship closer, or to maintain or confirm a relationship at a desired degree of intimacy. Unliked gifts can be problematic, serving to weaken or even sever relationships. The impact of gift exchange on a relationship is referred to as relationship realignment (Sherry, 1983).
Relationship Realignment. According to Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999), relationship realignment is “a snapshot of the effect of the gift-receipt experience on the recipient’s perception of relationship quality. Perceptions of the newly reformed relationship then serve as a foundation for any future interactions,” (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999; p. 386). Importantly, characteristics of the relationship serve as a frame through which the gift experience is interpreted (Pieters and Robben, 1998; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 1999). According to Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999), relationship quality and the gift experience combine to yield different potential effects on the ongoing relationship between giver and recipient.

These relational effects (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999) are summarized in Table 1, including selected experiential themes identified by Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999) which characterize recipients’ cognitive reactions to gift receipt. Table 1 also contains the recipient’s perception of whether the gift is focused on the recipient, the giver, or the relationship, as well as the emotions felt by recipients upon receipt of the gift (Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 2004).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relational Effect</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Selected Themes</th>
<th>Perceived Focus of the Gift</th>
<th>Recipient’s Emotions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strengthening</strong></td>
<td>Relationship quality is improved.</td>
<td><strong>Epiphany</strong>: Gift is a turning point associated with an improved relationship.</td>
<td>Relationship and recipient focused.</td>
<td>High levels of positive emotion; Low/moderate levels of negative emotion about long-term relationship.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Affirmation</strong></td>
<td>Positive relationship quality is validated.</td>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong>: Giver knows what recipient needs/wants; <strong>Adherence</strong>: Gift reinforces shared interests.</td>
<td>Recipient or relationship focused.</td>
<td>Highest levels of positive emotion; lowest levels of negative emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negligible Effect</strong></td>
<td>Minimal effect on relationship quality.</td>
<td><strong>Error</strong>: Gift was a mistake; <strong>Overkill</strong>: Gift is too good for the relationship.</td>
<td>Focus is not dominated by either recipient or giver.</td>
<td>Modest levels of positive and negative emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Confirmation</strong></td>
<td>Existing negative relationship quality is validated.</td>
<td><strong>Absenteé</strong>: Gift is a signal of not being fully understood</td>
<td>Giver focused.</td>
<td>Low levels of positive emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Weakening</strong></td>
<td>The quality of the relationship is harmed, yet the relationship continues.</td>
<td><strong>Burden</strong>: Gift has ‘strings attached.’</td>
<td>Giver focused.</td>
<td>Low levels of positive emotion; Moderate/high levels of negative emotion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Severing</strong></td>
<td>The quality of the relationship is so harmed that the relationship is dissolved.</td>
<td><strong>Threat</strong>: Gift represents harm or breach of expectations; <strong>Nonaffirming Farewell</strong>: Gift symbolizes relationship’s end.</td>
<td>Relationship focused but sinister.</td>
<td>Negative emotions dominate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999); Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes (2004).
The research of Ruth, Otnes and Brunel (1999; Ruth, Brunel and Otnes 2004) makes two important contributions to the gift exchange literature in consumer behavior. First, this work not only outlines recipients’ affective responses to gift receipt (in terms of the emotions they experience) previously postulated by Sherry (1983), but also identifies that recipients cognitively respond to gift receipt (in terms of understanding why a giver has selected a particular gift and what it signifies for the relationship). Second, this research suggests that whether the gift is focused on the recipient, giver, or relationship seems to affect the relationship outcome, such that recipient or relationship focused gifts generally benefit relationships, while giver focused gifts serve to weaken them.

Importantly, this work explicates the existence of relationship-focused gifts. Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999) suggest that relationship focused gifts “reinforce interests or goals shared by both partners,” (p. 391), and that the meaning of such gifts may reside within the dyad. The meaning of a relationship-focused gift is not based on the overall culture (e.g., items that are often viewed as appropriate gifts for a particular gifting situation), but rather through idiosyncratic meaning that giver and recipient share in common (e.g., a gift for which meaning is determined by some prior experience shared between the two partners). This is supported by the earlier findings of Kleine, Kleine, and Allen (1995), who find that recipients’ most favorite gifts are those that represent the recipient’s identity and symbolize something shared between the giver and the recipient. Kleine, Kleine, and Allen (1995) term the relationship focused gift as representing “we,” as opposed to just “me.” In other words, according to the findings of Kleine, Kleine, and Allen (1995) and Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999), relationship-focused gifts are characterized by simultaneously representing the identity of both giver and recipient. However,
extant research does not explain how gifts imbued with giver’s own identity, recipient’s identity, or the identity shared by both partners differentially affect relational intimacy.

Gifts and Identity Congruence

Kleine, Kleine, and Allen (1995) find that identity expression is “fundamental to gift-giving success,” (p. 340). Indeed, the importance of possessions in identity construction, maintenance, and expression is well documented in consumer behavior literature (e.g., Belk, 1988; Ball and Tasaki, 1992). This research has also been extended to include the importance of brands in identity construction and maintenance (Fournier, 1998; Escalas and Bettman, 2003). Indeed, products and brands can be used to construct and maintain self-concept, to socially integrate with others, or to demonstrate individuality and uniqueness from others (Escalas, 2004).

Self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1986) explains how individuals evaluate the identity congruence of products and brands. Self-congruity refers to “the match between consumers’ self-concept (actual self, ideal self, etc.) and the user image (or ‘personality’) of a given product, brand, store, etc.,” (Kressmann et al., 2006, p. 955). Self-congruity theory proposes that, “consumer behavior is determined, in part, by the congruence resulting from a psychological comparison involving the product-user image and the consumer’s self-concept (e.g., actual self-image, ideal self-image, social self-image),” (Sirgy et al., 1997, p. 230). Indeed, self-congruity research has demonstrated that identity congruence predicts such consumer behavior outcomes as product preference, brand preference, brand choice, and consumer satisfaction (Sirgy, 1982;
Claiborne and Sirgy, 1990), brand loyalty (Kressmann et al., 2006) and retailer loyalty (Sirgy, 1982; Sirgy, Grewal, and Mangleburg, 2000).

Self-congruity theory asserts that consumers evaluate products and brands by matching their own identities with the symbolic attributes associated with that product or brand (Sirgy, 1982/1986; Kressmann et al., 2006). The assessment of self-congruity is based on inferences related to how much that brand or product meets consumers’ needs for self-consistency and self-esteem (Kressmann et al., 2006). Consumers’ need for self-consistency motivates them to behave in ways that are consistent with their own identities (Kressmann et al., 2006). Behaviors with respect to image-congruent products and brands allow consumers to minimize the discrepancy between their actual and ideal selves, thereby increasing self-esteem (Kressmann et al., 2006).

In accord with self congruity theory (Sirgy, 1986), the extent to which a giver’s or recipient’s own identity is expressed in a gift is related to that individual’s assessment of how much the gift is consistent with his or her own identity, and/or whether the gift enables the individual’s actual identity to become closer to the identity he or she wishes to assume. The giver’s assessment of whether a gift is congruent with the recipient’s identity, then, is the perception of whether the gift meets these standards for the recipient. The assessment by giver and recipient as to whether the gift expresses the shared identity between them is driven by the extent to which the gift is consistent with both partners’ identity, and/or whether the gift enables both partners to move closer to the identity they both would like to assume with respect to the relationship.

Most research on identity congruence asserts that the greater the congruence between an individual’s image and the brand’s image, the more positive their attitudes and purchase intentions will be (Sirgy, 1986). However, this perspective also indicates that, in addition to
consuming brands that are identity-congruent, consumers might also maintain their self-concepts by avoiding brands that are identity-incongruent (Sirgy, 1982). Only recently has attention begun to be paid to how identity incongruent brands affect consumer behavior.

This developing literature stream investigates the concept of brand avoidance, defined as “the incidents in which consumers deliberately choose to reject a brand,” (Lee, Motion, and Conroy, 2009; p. 170) despite that brand being affordable, available, and accessible. Lee, Motion, and Conroy (2009) identify three categories of brand avoidance: experiential avoidance, moral avoidance, and identity avoidance. Experiential avoidance of a brand is the result of a consumer having a dissatisfying experience with a brand. Moral avoidance involves refraining from buying a brand due to some ideological incompatibility, resulting in behaviors like boycotting a particular brand (Hirschman, 1970) or engaging in consumer resistance movements (Penaloza and Price, 1993) against capitalism or consumerism in attempt to attain moral or ethical cultural change (Kozinets and Handelman, 2004). Identity avoidance is concerned with how the undesired self (Ogilvie, 1987) affects consumer brand choice. Specifically, consumers are posited to avoid products and brands that could “add undesired meaning to their lives, or… (that) they consider to be incongruent with their existing self-concept,” (Lee, Motion, and Conroy, 2009; p. 170).

The concept of identity avoidance is congruent with the three disposition strategies that recipients of unliked gifts report engaging in: lateral cycling (or ‘regifting’ the item to someone else), destroying the gift, or returning the gift (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992). In all three strategies, the recipient is motivated to get rid of the gift. It is possible that some recipients are driven to eliminate identity-incongruent gifts from their lives in order to avoid incorporating identity-incongruent meaning into their identities. Self-congruity theory provides a potential
explanation for the reasons that recipient and relationship identity-congruent gifts serve to confirm or strengthen relationships, while the identity avoidance concept of brand avoidance suggests why gifts that are not recipient or relationship identity-congruent (i.e., giver-congruent) serve to weaken them (Ruth, Otnes and Brunel, 1999; Ruth, Brunel and Otnes 2004).

In the gift registry context, which enables gift recipients to inform givers about the gifts they prefer to receive, Ward and Broniarczyk (2011) find that giving a gift that is incongruent with the giver’s identity but congruent with the recipient’s identity presents an identity threat to the giver. Their results demonstrate that gift giving is highly self-relevant for givers. Further, the authors found that when givers gave a gift that was incongruent with their own identities, they were compelled to engage in subsequent behaviors intended to verify their own threatened identities. Importantly, these results were obtained in relationships that were characterized by close relationship intimacy. While this work demonstrates that gift givers feel an identity threat when giving a gift that is incongruent with their own identities, suggests that such threat varies based on relationship intimacy, and highlights the importance of the expression of identity in gift choices, it is limited in constraining givers’ gift choices to items predetermined by recipients’ gift registry. In other words, it does not permit givers to freely choose the gift they prefer to give.

Taken together, research on identity congruence suggests that the giving and receipt of identity-incongruent gifts can present a threat to givers’ and recipients’ own identities, and implies that the closeness of the relationship alters the impact of gift identity-congruence for both the giver and recipient. However, the ways that relationship intimacy affects preferences toward levels of identity congruence expressed in gifts have not been explicited in the extant literature. In this dissertation, we seek to demonstrate how the level of relationship intimacy sought by each
partner affects the levels of identity congruence exhibited in the gifts they prefer to give and receive.

Summary

Prior research has demonstrated that givers choose gifts that differentially express their own identity, the recipient’s identity, and the identity shared between them (Mauss, 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967; Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim, 1993). Further, the choice is informed by the relationship outcome givers seek to achieve (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 2004): strengthening the relationship, managing or confirming the current level of the relationship, or attenuating or severing the relationship. However, what have not been identified in extant research are the factors that influence givers and recipients to differentially prefer gifts that express either their own identity, the recipient’s identity, or the identity shared between them in order to attempt to achieve the desired relationship outcome. Further, research has demonstrated that givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences are often incongruent (Teigen, Olsen, and Solas, 2005), but has failed to fully explicate reasons for this giver-recipient preference asymmetry.

Incongruency in the desired level of relationship intimacy may help explain why the gifts givers prefer to give differ from the gifts recipients prefer to receive. In other words, the question that arises is, “does a factor exist that predisposes givers and recipients to seek to maintain relationships in a certain way, such that it influences them to differentially prefer a gift that expresses their own identity, the partner’s identity, or the identity shared between them?”
The gift giving and receipt experiences can be significant relationship events (Sherry, 1983; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 1999), and gift choice and evaluation depend upon the relationship in which the gift exchange occurs (Mauss, 1924/1990; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 1999). Therefore, a factor that captures the individual’s tendencies toward behavior with regard to relationships, namely attachment style (Bowlby, 1969/1973/1980), can help to explain the gaps we have outlined in the gift exchange literature. Such a factor can help explain observed asymmetry between givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences and why the identity-congruence of gifts results in differential effects on the giver-recipient relationship. As the giver-recipient relationship is necessarily dyadic by nature and impacts the act of gift exchange, it is further necessary to consider how each individual’s relationship tendencies affect their relationship partner in the gift exchange context. Attachment style permits for such dyadic investigation.
CHAPTER 3

ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment theory provides one of the most important frameworks in contemporary psychology for understanding the formation, management, and quality of social bonds between people across the lifespan (Hazan and Shaver, 1993). In his seminal, three-volume exploration of attachment, separation and loss, Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) conceptualizes attachment theory from an evolutionary-ethological perspective (Ainsworth et al., 1978). This perspective suggests that the attachment behavioral system is goal-driven and innate in infants (Bowlby, 1969). Infants are unable to provide for their own survival and are driven by the goal of maintaining “proximity to significant others (attachment figures) in times of need as a means of protecting (themselves) from threats and alleviating distress,” (Shaver and Mikulincer, 2006, p. 251), also referred to as obtaining “felt-security,” (Collins and Read, 1990; p. 649). In other words, it is instinctual for infants to seek emotional attachments to their caregivers in order to feel secure in their own survival.

However, not all infants are able to emotionally attach to their caregivers, or to do so in the same way, because attachment is based on the availability and responsiveness of the caregiver (Bowlby, 1973). Further, the availability and responsiveness of an attachment figure in infancy are proposed to affect the infant’s relationships with others through the developmental years and into adulthood (Bowlby, 1973). Attachment research is viewed as consisting of two distinct research streams – attachment in childhood and attachment in adulthood (Bartholomew and Shaver, 1998). In childhood attachment research, the focus is on how caregiver interaction
influences the development of a particular attachment style. In adult attachment research, the focus is on the impact of an individual’s attachment style on adult relationships.

Attachment in Childhood

Bowlby postulated that “attachment behavior characterizes human beings from the cradle to the grave,” (1979, p. 129). However, as a child psychoanalyst, the bulk of his work focuses on describing and explaining the formation of emotional attachments between infants and caregivers and the emotional distress infants experience when separated from their caregivers (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). Infants, unable to survive on their own, instinctually seek to emotionally bond with caretakers in order to ensure for their own well-being. Bowlby observed that, when the infant is separated from its caregiver, the infant goes through a predictable series of emotional reactions (Bowlby, 1980). The first is protest, where the infant cries, searches for the caregiver, and rejects attempts to be soothed by others. The second is despair, or passive and obvious sadness. The third is detachment, an active and defensive avoidance of the caregiver when he or she returns.

Bowlby (1973) proposed that relationship quality is built over time between infant and caregiver, as a result of the caregiver’s emotional availability and responsiveness. The quality of the infant-caregiver relationship profoundly impacts the child’s psychological development (Bowlby, 1973). Over repeated infant-caregiver interactions, the infant develops cognitive working models of the self and others (Bowlby, 1973). These working models contain beliefs and expectations about others’ willingness to care and respond, and the worthiness of the self to
receive care and responsiveness (Bowlby, 1973). These working models, built up over a series of repeated interactions, are generally persistent into adulthood (Bowlby, 1973).

Ainsworth, Salter, Blehar, Waters, and Wall (1978) identify three styles or types of attachment that result from the cumulative interactions between infants and caregivers. When the infant perceives the caregiver to be caring and responsive, the infant comes to rely on the caregiver as a source of security, which facilitates the child’s exploration and mastery of the environment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Such infants are characterized as having a secure attachment style (Ainsworth et al., 1978). However, when the caregiver is inconsistently responsive or regularly interferes with the infant’s exploratory activities, the child may exhibit both the need for attachment security as well as anger and anxiety toward the attachment figure (Ainsworth et al., 1978). This style of attachment is termed anxious/ambivalent (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Infants with an anxious/ambivalent attachment style frequently exhibit protest behavior, crying out and searching for the caregiver (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). When the caregiver is generally unresponsive and often rejects the infant’s attempts to establish emotional attachment, the child is likely to form an avoidant attachment style (Ainsworth et al., 1978). The avoidant attachment style is characterized by the infant exhibiting detachment, or purposeful rejection, toward the caregiver (Hazan and Shaver, 1987).

Combining the work of Bowlby (1973) and Ainsworth et al. (1978), attachment styles are viewed a result of cognitive working models built up over a series of interactions between the infant and caregiver during the developmental years. Infant – caregiver interactions influence the development of two cognitive working models: view of others and view of self (Bowlby, 1973). The view of others working model relates whether the individual perceives the others as likely to be responsive and caring, and the view of self working model relates whether the individual
perceives the self as being worthy of receiving responsiveness and care (Bowlby, 1973). Differences in working models of self and other result in individuals’ development of different attachment styles (Ainsworth et al, 1978). Attachment styles are generally persistent into adulthood and affect relationships with others, including the individual’s expectations, perceptions, and behaviors in those relationships (Bowlby, 1973).

Attachment in Adulthood

Hazan and Shaver (1987) provide the seminal extension of attachment theory to adults, using the context of romantic love relationships. In order to capture adult attachment style, Hazan and Shaver (1987) translate Ainsworth et al.’s (1978) three infant attachment styles into terms appropriate for adults. Hazan and Shaver (1987) find that the proportions of each of the three attachment styles in adults are similar to those reported in studies of children. In two studies, the following proportions of attachment styles in adults were reported: 56% secure, 19% anxious/ambivalent, and 25% avoidant in the first study, and 56% secure, 20% anxious/ambivalent, and 23% avoidant in its replication (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). These proportions are similar to proportions from studies of American infant-mother attachment as summarized by Campos et al. (1983): 62% secure, 15% anxious/ambivalent, and 23% avoidant. Subsequent studies using Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) three-style adult attachment classification also report similar proportions: 57% secure, 18% anxious/ambivalent, 25% avoidant (Mikulincer, 1998); 63% secure, 13% anxious/ambivalent, 24% avoidant (Mikulincer, Orbach, and Iavnieli, 1998).
Hazan and Shaver (1987) also report differences in experiences of love, working models of romantic relationships, attachment histories with caregivers, and relationship needs between individuals with different attachment styles. The results of Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) research demonstrate that attachment styles formed during childhood development are persistent into adulthood and affect individuals’ adult romantic relationships. Securely attached individuals, as a result of their close relationships with their caregivers, carry their confidence in self and others into their adult romantic relationships. Individuals with an anxious/ambivalent attachment style, whose caregiver interactions resulted in both a need to be attached and a fear of rejection, report the same ambivalent experiences in their adult relationships. Individuals with an avoidant attachment style, who were distanced from their caregivers during childhood, also seek to distance themselves from their adult romantic relationship partners. The seminal work of Hazan and Shaver (1987) provides the foundation for a large and growing body of research in adult attachment.

Dimensions Underlying Adult Attachment Style

One focus of subsequent research in adult attachment was to investigate the underlying dimensions of adult attachment style (e.g., Collins and Read, 1990; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Collins and Read (1990) develop a multi-item scale to measure adult attachment by decomposing Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) attachment style descriptions and the work of Ainsworth et al. (1978) regarding infant attachment into individual scale items. Collins and Read’s (1990) analysis suggests three factors underlying individuals’ attachment styles: dependency, anxiety and closeness. The extent to which adults are securely attached relate to a willingness to depend on and be close to others with low anxiety, while the extent to which
adults have an avoidant attachment style relate to an unwillingness to depend on and be close to others with relatively low anxiety. The extent to which adults have an anxious/ambivalent attachment relate to a willingness to be close and depend on others with high anxiety.

Collins and Read (1990) are the first to explore the relationship between attachment style and working models of the self and others. While Hazan and Shaver (1987) examined adults’ working model of relationships, examining working models of both the self and of others is more consistent with Bowlby’s (1973) conceptualization. Results suggest that securely attached adults have more positive self-views and other-views than do adults with anxious/ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles (Collins and Read, 1990).

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) further explicate the relationship between working models of self and other to attachment style in their development of a four-category typology of adult attachment style, which importantly, is the first to be expanded to include friendship relationships. Consistent with Bowlby (1973), the authors propose that view of self and view of other can each be dichotomized into positive or negative, resulting in four possible attachment style configurations (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). This work is the first to demonstrate that the working models on which attachment style is based (Bowlby, 1973) are orthogonal and can vary independently. Indeed, Collins and Read’s (1990) scale measuring Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) three-category attachment style model, indicated correlations between its underlying dimensions (dependence, anxiety, and closeness).

Individuals with a negative view of self are motivated to seek self-validation from others, while individuals with a positive view of self maintain their positive self-view internally and do not require external validation from others (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Thus, the authors term view of self as “dependence,” or the extent to which an individual depends on others for
validation of the self. Individuals with a negative view of others expect their social interactions will be negative, which leads them to avoid forming close relationships, while individuals with a positive view of others expect their social interactions will be positive, which fosters a willingness to engage in relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Therefore, the authors refer to an individual’s model of others as “avoidance,” or the extent to which the individual avoids forming close relationships. Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) conceptualize the four attachment styles as prototypes, or standards against which individuals’ attachment styles are judged. Their four-category typology enables researchers to classify individuals into attachment style groups based on their degree of correspondence to each prototype. Bartholomew and Horowitz’s (1991) attachment style typology is depicted below in Table 2.

### TABLE 2: BARTHOLOMEW AND HOROWITZ (1991) FOUR-CATEGORY MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model of Others (Aviodance)</th>
<th>Model of Self (Dependence)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive (Low)</td>
<td>Negative (High)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive (Low)</td>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comfortable with intimacy and autonomy.</td>
<td>Preoccupied with relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative (High)</td>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dismissing of intimacy, counter-dependent.</td>
<td>Fearful of intimacy, socially avoidant.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991).*

Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) provide self-report descriptions of each attachment style. Self-reports of attachment style were found to correspond with interviewer classifications of individuals’ attachment style and friend reports of individuals’ attachment style (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). The descriptions appear below in Table 3.
According to Bartholomew and Horowitz’s (1991) typology, securely attached individuals feel worthy of love and expect that others are generally available and responsive (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Their positive self-view is internally maintained and does not require external validation from others, and their expectations that interactions with others will be positive do not influence them to avoid forming relationships with others (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991).

Adults who are categorized as having a preoccupied attachment style feel unworthy of love, yet evaluate others positively (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). These individuals require external validation of the self from others, and thus do not avoid forming relationships (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Because they view others positively and the self negatively, preoccupied adults obsess about relationships as they strive for others’ acceptance and validation, yet feel inadequate in their ability to attain it. This categorization corresponds to Hazan and Shaver’s (1987) anxious/ambivalent classification.

### TABLE 3: BARTHLOMEW AND HOROWITZ’S (1991) DESCRIPTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attachment Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secure</td>
<td>It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don’t worry about being alone or having others not accept me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dismissing</td>
<td>I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preoccupied</td>
<td>I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don’t value me as much as I value them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991).*
Adults with a dismissing attachment style feel worthy of love, yet have a negative disposition towards others (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Thus, they protect themselves from being rejected by others by maintaining their independence (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Dismissing individuals do not require external validation of their self worth, and thus avoid forming relationships with others in order to protect their positive views of self (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991).

Fearfully attached adults feel unworthy of love and expect that interactions with others will be negative, in that others will be untrustworthy and rejecting (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). They avoid forming relationships with others in order to protect themselves from rejection (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Despite wanting close relationships to validate their view of self, those that are fearfully attached do not trust others enough to engage in them (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991).

The dismissing and fearful classifications are a conceptual decomposition of two different groups that may exist in Collins and Read’s (1990) avoidant attachment classification. While both groups avoid forming relationships because they have negative expectations of interactions with others, their self views differ. Fearful individuals view themselves as unworthy of others’ affection, while dismissing individuals feel superior to others. Similarly, both fearful and preoccupied individuals have negative self views, but since preoccupied individuals perceive others positively, they actively seek others’ approval, while fearful individuals do not. Finally, while both secure and dismissing individuals have a positive, internally maintained view of self, secure individuals’ positive view of others leads them to seek relationships with others, while dismissing individuals avoid them.
The work of Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) makes several important contributions to the literature on adult attachment theory. Theoretically, a four-category typology is more consistent with Bowlby’s (1973) assertion that attachment style arises from working models of self and other. Further, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) used multiple assessment methods (interviews, self-reports, and friend-reports), and found that an individual’s attachment style can be perceived and reported relatively accurately by a friend.

Researchers in adult attachment style choose to follow either the three-category (Hazan and Shaver, 1987) or the four-category typology (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Since attachment styles are prototypes against which an individual’s degree of correspondence is assessed, sole reliance on categorical measures of attachment style is discouraged (Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000). Categorical measurement of attachment style eliminates the unique variance between individuals classified into the same attachment style. Instead, researchers often decompose the attachment styles into the three dimensions of dependency, anxiety, and closeness, per Collins and Read (1990) or the two dimensions of view of self (dependence) and view of others (avoidance), depending upon which view they most agree with. It is important to note that the terminology referring to view of self has been changed to ‘anxiety’ rather than ‘dependence’ as originally termed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) with the advent of subsequent multi-item scales (e.g., Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994; Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1998; Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000). Attachment style is assessed in terms of the extent to which an individual scores positively on these dimensions, enabling researchers to capture the variance between individuals classified into the same attachment style category.
Methods of Measuring Adult Attachment Style

In accord with the differing conceptualizations of the factors underlying attachment style, researchers have utilized several different methods of measurement, such as self-report, single-item descriptions (Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991), interviews regarding attachment to friends, romantic partners (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Main, Kaplan and Cassidy, 1985), and family members (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991), and various multi-item scales such as the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS; Collins and Read, 1990), the Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ; Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994), the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR; Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1998) and the Revised Experiences in Close Relationships Scale (ECR-R; Fraley, Waller and Brennan, 2000).

The multi-item scales correspond to different conceptualizations of the underlying dimensions of attachment style. For example, the AAS (Collins and Read, 1990) captures three underlying factors: dependence, anxiety, and closeness, classifying individuals into the three-style attachment categorization (secure, anxious, and avoidant), while the RSQ (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994), ECR (Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1998), and ECR-R (Fraley, Waller, and Brennan, 2000) all capture the underlying dimensions of anxiety (i.e., model of self) and avoidance (i.e., model of other), classifying individuals into the four-style attachment typology (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and fearful).

Bartholomew and Shaver (1998) investigate whether different measures (e.g., self-reports and interviews) intended to capture adult attachment style converge. Bartholomew and Shaver (1998) conclude that measures of adult attachment have a moderate degree of correspondence in general, indicating “a single representational system or core set of relational tendencies underlie responses to the various attachment measures,” (p. 41). Measures converge best when
they are measured using the same method (i.e., multiple interviews) or importantly, measure the same domain (i.e., romantic relationships, friendship relationships, or familial childhood experiences) (Bartholomew and Shaver, 1998).

Kurdek (2002) compares the four-factor RSQ (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994) to the three-factor AAS (Collins and Read, 1990), and determines that the RSQ is the more psychometrically sound measure of attachment style. This determination is based on the conclusion that attachment styles “are best viewed as distal individual differences variables that have an effect on relationship outcomes by influencing the manner in which schemas relevant to the relationship are constructed,” (p. 832). Thus, this comparison supports the dichotomization of view of self and view of other (Bowlby, 1973; Bartholomew and Shaver, 1991; Kurdek, 2002).

Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) perform an item response theory analysis of the ECR (Brennan, Clark, and Shaver, 1998), the AAS (Collins and Read, 1990), the RSQ (Griffin and Bartholomew, 1994), and Simpson’s (1990) attachment scales. The analysis revealed that all the measures could be improved. Thus, Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000) developed a revised version of the ECR (ECR-R) that increases measurement precision over the original version.

For the reasons previously outlined, in this dissertation we choose to follow the four-category model originally developed by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991), and favor the multi-item scale refined by Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000), the ECR-R.

A Process Model of Attachment and Response

Prior research has established that cognitive working models of self and other, formed during individuals’ developmental years as a result of caregiver-child interactions, guide
individuals’ management of future adult relationships (Bowlby, 1973; Hazan and Shaver, 1987; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991; Mikulincer, 1998; Mikulincer, Orbach, and Iavnieli, 1998). Collins and Read (1994) and Collins (1996) provide the first research to explicate the process by which attachment style functions. This work shows that attachment style shapes individuals’ cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to events that occur in relationships (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996). Indeed, Guerrero (1996) asserts that individuals’ attachment styles lead them to behave in ways that reinforce their mental models of self and other, and cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses are also widely acknowledged in the adult friendship literature as the three friendship processes that occur when individuals interact (Blieszner and Adams, 1992; Kelley et al., 1983; Duck and Sants, 1983). The model, originally developed by Collins and Read (1994) appears below in Figure 1.

**FIGURE 1: MODEL OF ATTACHMENT AND RESPONSE**

![Diagram of Model of Attachment and Response](image)

*Adapted from Collins (1996) and Collins and Read (1994).*
The Functionality of Working Models of Attachment

Individuals with different attachment styles operate based on different working models of self and other (Bowlby, 1973; Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991), or ‘working models of attachment’ (Collins, 1996). Working models of attachment are “highly accessible cognitive constructs that will be automatically activated in memory in response to attachment-relevant events,” (Collins, 1996, p. 812). Based on the working model of attachment, different individuals are expected to construe the same attachment-relevant events in different ways, as they are predisposed to interpret such events in ways that are consistent with their existing expectations and beliefs (Collins, 1996). Therefore, we define an attachment-relevant event as any event that activates an individual’s attachment style in memory. In order to activate an individual’s attachment style, the event must bring relationship thoughts to mind, or make such thoughts salient. Once relationship thoughts are made salient, the attachment style is automatically activated and guides the individual’s appraisal of the event in order to help the individual maintain a consistent and coherent view of the environment (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996; Guerrero, 1996). It is important to note that attachment-relevance is relative to the individual, and is not absolute (Collins, 1996). Any relational event has the potential to activate an individual’s attachment style (Collins, 1996), depending on that individual’s subjective evaluation and interpretation of the event.

Individuals’ working models of attachment affect their cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to attachment-relevant events (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996). Once activated, attachment style directly affects cognitive information processing (‘cognitive response’) and emotions (‘affective response’) (Collins, 1996). Cognitive and affective responses do not function in isolation, but are expected to impact one another (Collins, 1996). Attachment-
style-based responses may be well-learned or readily available as a result of previous experience, and/or the attachment style may influence the individual to construct new, attachment-style-congruent responses on-line (Collins, 1996). Cognitive and affective responses guide an individual’s behavioral responses to the attachment-relevant event (Collins, 1996). Taken as a whole, the model suggests that an individual’s attachment style colors the way they interpret and react to events that occur in a relationship (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996).

Hyperactivation and Deactivation

Two general strategies are often employed in response to attachment-relevant events: hyperactivation and deactivation (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998). Hyperactivating strategies refer to cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that overexcite the attachment system and maximize the impact of the event (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998). Hyperactivating strategies involve preoccupation with and persistent effort until the attachment figure is perceived to be available (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005), attempts to attain the attachment figure’s availability through control, clinging, and overdependence (Shaver and Hazan, 1993), and the perception of the self as helpless and incompetent at controlling these emotions (Mikulincer and Florian, 1998). Hyperactivating strategies are often exhibited by individuals high in attachment anxiety (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998).

Deactivating strategies refer to cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that minimize the impact of the event in order to render the attachment system inactive (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998). Deactivating strategies involve the denial of attachment needs, the avoidance of emotional involvement, intimacy, and dependence, the dismissal of attachment-related events, the suppression of attachment-related thoughts, a greater focus on self-reliance and a refusal to
acknowledge personal faults in order to keep the attachment system inactive (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). Individuals high in attachment avoidance often exhibit deactivating strategies (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998).

The Attachment Theory Perspective of Gift Exchange

Attachment theory suggests that individuals are predisposed to think, feel, and act in ways that are congruent with or reinforce their attachment style (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996; Guerro, 1996) in order to achieve a state of homeostasis or comfort (Bowlby, 1973). The attachment system is automatically activated in response to relationship-relevant events, and guides cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to such events (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996). In other words, the attachment system acts as a monitoring system that rules individuals’ attempts to manage the intimacy of their relationships.

The act of exchanging gifts (Mauss, 1924/1990; Schwartz, 1967; Belk and Coon, 1993) is one mechanism by which individuals manage the degree of intimacy in their relationships (Mauss, 1924/1990; Sherry, 1983; Larsen and Watson, 2001). Attachment theory is a powerful framework for understanding the formation, management, and quality of social bonds between people (Hazan and Shaver, 1987). As gifts are exchanged for such purposes, attachment theory provides a framework through which gift exchange processes and effects may be understood.

Indeed, Nguyen and Munch (2011) are the first to find that gift exchange is an event that activates the attachment system. These researchers find that securely attached individuals view romantic gift giving as more pleasurable and less obligatory than those with insecure attachment
styles. This work demonstrates that attachment style is an appropriate factor by which gift exchange should be investigated.

We seek to establish how an attachment theory perspective of gift exchange can be used to explain how individuals use gift exchange to manage relationship intimacy. Specifically, we argue that the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange can be applied to friendship relationships, can be extended to include gift recipients, and can be used to predict both givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences. Further, we seek to show that the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange functions relationally, such that givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles affect one another’s gift preferences. In doing so, we seek to establish attachment style as a factor that influences how individuals use the identity congruence of gifts to regulate the degree of closeness in their relationships.

The Identity Congruence of Gift Preferences from an Attachment Style Perspective

When the relationship is made salient through a gift exchange event, givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles should influence their preference for gifts that differentially express the identity of the giver, recipient, and of the relationship shared between them. While recipient- and relationship-focused gifts have been generally found to confirm or strengthen relationships, giver-focused gifts generally serve to weaken them (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen, 1995; Ruth, Brunel, and Otnes, 1999).

As self-congruity theory (Sirgy, 1982) proposes, individuals are motivated to approach products and brands that are identity-congruent in order to express their actual identities and/or to attain the self-esteem associated with moving their actual identity closer to their ideal identity
Further, the concept of identity avoidance proposes that individuals are motivated to avoid products and brands that are incongruent with their identities so that they do not incorporate undesired meaning into their identities (Ogilvie, 1987; Lee, Motion, and Conroy, 2009). In a gift exchange context, this indicates that givers and recipients will prefer gifts that communicate the identity they have or desire, and will not prefer gifts that have an undesired identity. Importantly, the identity expressed in the gift must be considered within the context of the relationship, rather than by isolating giver and recipient. Therefore, givers and recipients will prefer gifts that express the identity that conforms not only to the level of relationship intimacy they seek, but will also consider the level of relationship intimacy sought by their partner.

Attachment style, which captures givers’ and recipients’ tendencies toward intimacy in relationships, may explain why asymmetries are observed in givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences. Some givers might use gifts to bring the relationship closer, while others may seek to maintain the relationship at its current level of intimacy or push the relationship further apart, as suggested by Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999). Similarly, the recipient’s desired level of relationship intimacy should affect the gifts they prefer to receive. Since individuals with different attachment styles vary in the extent that they seek closeness and intimacy with others, they should also differ in their preferences toward gifts that differentially communicate identity. Givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles should affect preference for gifts that represent the identity of the giver, recipient, or both, as it symbolizes the closeness or distance they desire in their relationship. As individuals have been shown to be able to accurately assess their friends’ attachment styles, the identity expressed in a preferred gift should also be affected by their perception of the level of intimacy desired by their partner.
CHAPTER 4

THE HYPOTHESIZED EFFECTS OF ATTACHMENT STYLE ON THE IDENTITY
CONGRUENCE LEVELS PREFERRED IN GIFTS

Gift Preference from the Giver’s Perspective

*Giver Attachment Anxiety*

Givers who are high in attachment anxiety are likely to hyperactivate relationship-relevant events (Cassidy and Kobak, 1988) like the gift giving experience, indicating that anxious givers will be especially concerned with obtaining the recipients’ approval (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005) and will be especially attuned to potential threats to the intimacy of the relationship (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005), such as giving a gift the recipient does not like. As hyperactivation preoccupies highly anxious givers with attaining recipient approval, they may perceive their recipient as having more power in the relationship, which in turn increases the giver’s motivation to please the recipient by selecting a liked gift (Wooten, 2000). Further, high anxiety givers have a negative view of self and a positive view of other (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). The threat of giving an unliked gift, coupled with a negative view of self and positive view of other, should render anxious givers unlikely to select a gift that expresses their own identity, opting instead to select a gift they feel the recipient will like. Therefore, the more anxious the giver, the greater the preference toward giving a gift that expresses the recipient’s identity.
Giver Attachment Avoidance

Givers high in attachment avoidance are likely to deactivate relationship-relevant events (Cassidy and Kobak, 1988) like the gift giving experience. Deactivation suggests that more avoidant givers will reject pro-relational, interdependent behaviors, choosing instead to assert their own independence (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). Highly avoidant givers will not seek to signal an understanding of the recipient’s identity, nor will they want to communicate a desire to bring the relationship closer. Therefore, highly avoidant givers, concerned with maintaining relational distance, are likely to select a gift that expresses their own identity rather than the recipient’s identity, in order to exert their independence and maintain distance in the relationship. Thus, the more avoidant the giver, the greater the preference toward giving a gift that expresses his/her own identity.

Fearful and Secure Givers

As described above, givers with a preoccupied attachment style (high anxiety, low avoidance) should prefer to give gifts that express the recipient’s identity, while givers with a dismissing attachment style (low anxiety, high avoidance) should prefer to give gifts that express their own identity. The remaining two interactions between the dimensions describe the fearful attachment style (high anxiety, high avoidance) and the secure attachment style (low anxiety, low avoidance).

Individuals with a fearful attachment style have negative views of both self and other, and are torn between bringing relationships closer and creating distance in their relationships. Due to the opposing pull of the anxiety and avoidance dimensions, fearful givers may prefer gifts that express neither the recipient’s nor their own identity.
Individuals with a secure attachment style are most adept at managing relationships, and are not affected by the insecurities associated with anxiety and avoidance. Therefore, they should be most adept at gift giving, preferring to give gifts that express both the giver’s and recipient’s identities. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

**H1:** Givers’ attachment styles should influence the extent to which the gift they prefer to give reflects the giver’s and the recipient’s identity, such that:

- **H1a:** The preferred gifts of givers who are low in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., secure) should reflect both the giver’s and the recipient’s identity.
- **H1b:** The preferred gifts of givers who are low in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., preoccupied) should reflect the recipient’s identity but not the giver’s identity.
- **H1c:** The preferred gifts of givers who are high in avoidance and low in anxiety (i.e., dismissing) should reflect the giver’s identity but not the recipient’s identity.
- **H1d:** The preferred gifts of givers who are high in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., fearful) should reflect neither the giver’s nor the recipient’s identity.

**Gift Preference from the Recipient’s Perspective**

*Recipient Attachment Anxiety*

The hyperactivation strategies of highly anxious recipients should lead them to maximize the impact of gift receipt on the relationship, as they tend to hyperactivate relationship-relevant events (Cassidy and Kobak, 1998). Highly anxious individuals persistently seek others’
availability toward the relationship (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). Further, high anxiety is characterized by a negative view of self. As it has been demonstrated that gifts expressing giver identity also become incorporated into the recipient’s identity (Sherry, McGrath, and Levy, 1992), receiving gifts imbued with the giver’s identity may help anxious recipients improve their self-view when they incorporate such gifts into their lives. Anxious recipients would potentially attribute gifts expressing the recipient’s identity to a giver’s motivation to deliberately exclude the recipient from the giver’s life, as such gifts may not communicate the giver’s intention toward mutual self-extension. This would likely be perceived as a threat to the relationship by more anxious recipients. Highly anxious recipients should exhibit a preference for receiving gifts that express the giver’s identity, interpreting such gifts as signs that the giver would like to share their own identity with the recipient. Therefore, the more anxious the recipient, the greater the preference toward receiving gifts that express the giver’s identity.

**Recipient Attachment Avoidance**

The deactivation strategies of highly avoidant recipients should influence them to pass on potential pro-relational outcomes in favor of outcomes that favor their own independence (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). Gifts that express the giver’s identity would likely be viewed as a sign of desired or existing interdependence, which these recipients avoid. The signaling of existing or desired interdependence by the giver would be viewed by the avoidant recipient as a threat to his or her independence. Therefore, avoidant recipients are likely prefer to receive gifts that express their own identities. Thus, the more avoidant the recipient, the greater the preference toward receiving gifts that express the recipient’s identity.
Fearful and Secure Recipients

Fearful recipients, who are torn between bringing relationships closer and creating distance in relationships, should exhibit the conflicting pull between attachment dimensions in their preferred gift to receive. Due to the opposing forces of anxiety and avoidance, fearful recipients may prefer to receive gifts that are not particularly congruent with either their own nor the giver’s identity. Secure recipients, who do not exhibit the insecurities associated with anxiety and avoidance and are most adept at managing relationships, should exhibit a preference for a gift that expresses their own as well as the giver’s identity. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

H2: Recipients’ attachment styles should influence the extent to which the gift they prefer to receive reflects the giver’s and the recipient’s identity, such that:

H2a: The preferred gifts of recipients who are low in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., secure) should reflect both the giver’s and the recipient’s identity.

H2b: The preferred gifts of recipients who are low in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., preoccupied) should reflect the giver’s identity but not the recipient’s identity.

H2c: The preferred gifts of recipients who are high in avoidance and low in anxiety (i.e., dismissing) should reflect the recipient’s identity but not the giver’s identity.

H2d: The preferred gifts of recipients who are high in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., fearful) should reflect neither the giver’s nor the recipient’s identity.
Dyadic Configuration Effects

Evidence exists for dyadic configuration effects with regard to how attachment styles affect individuals’ relationships with others (Collins and Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, and Rholes, 2001; Banse, 2004; Bartz and Lydon, 2006; Kane, Jaremka, Guichard, Ford, Collins, and Feeney, 2007). Although most of this research has been conducted with regard to romantic relationships, it suggests that the attachment style of one individual in a relationship may affect their partner in various types of relationships. The interactive effects of attachment style in relationships can be classified as partner selection effects, relationship satisfaction effects, and situational effects.

Partner Selection

Weiss (1982) suggested that people may seek attachment figures for whom their attachment system is prepared to respond, suggesting that certain attachment-style pairs are more likely to naturally occur than others. Indeed, Collins and Read (1990) and Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) find individuals in romantic relationships are nonrandomly paired with regard to attachment style, suggesting that attachment style may influence individuals’ partner decisions. Collins and Read (1990) find that those who are comfortable with closeness and dependency (i.e., securely attached) are more likely to be with a partner who is also comfortable with closeness and dependency. Kirkpatrick and Davis (1994) suggest that certain attachment style pairings are less likely to naturally occur. For example couples comprised of two anxiously or avoidantly attached individuals are less likely to occur than are couples comprised of one avoidant and an anxiously attached individual (Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994). This finding
echoes that of Collins and Read (1990), who also found that individuals with an anxious/ambivalent attachment style (who worry about being abandoned and are preoccupied with becoming close with others) seemed to be with partners who were uncomfortable being close, confirming the attachment-related expectations of each partner. Thus, this research indicates that givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles are likely to be related.

**Relationship Satisfaction**

Attachment styles have been suggested to differently affect general relationship satisfaction. While the pairing of attachment styles has been shown to differently affect individuals’ satisfaction in relationships, these effects have been varied. Collins and Read (1990) suggest that the best predictor of heterosexual relationship quality for women is their male partners’ (low) avoidance, while the best predictor for males is their female partners’ (low) anxiety. Indeed, heterosexual romantic relationships in which the woman is anxiously attached have been shown to result in lower reports of satisfaction (Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994; Kane et al., 2007), as have relationships where the man is avoidantly attached (Kane et al., 2007). Yet relationships in which the husband is avoidant have also been shown to result in higher satisfaction, independent of the wife’s attachment style (Banse, 2004).

These conflicting results indicate that the dyadic effects of attachment style may not reliably predict general relationship perceptions, such as overall relationship satisfaction. However, other work has demonstrated that individuals’ attachment styles do have interactive effects under specific situations (Campbell et al., 2001; Bartz and Lydon, 2006). Thus, it is appropriate to investigate the dyadic interaction effects of attachment style on preferences specific to a gifting situation.
Situational Effects

Avoidant individuals behave more negatively toward their partners when stressed, and their partners, in turn, experience more negative affect and behave more negatively in response than those with less avoidant partners (Campbell et al., 2001). This demonstrates that one individual’s avoidant attachment style can cause even a secure individual to behave uncharacteristically. Further, highly anxious individuals have been shown to engage in communal behaviors (signaling closeness) when a potential relationship partner engaged in exchange behaviors (signals of distance), and to experience significant interpersonal anxiety when the partner engaged in communal behaviors (Bartz and Lydon, 2006). This finding is echoed by Mikulincer et al. (2010) who find that anxious individuals react to partners’ communications of closeness with avoidance, and communications of distance with approach tendencies. Further, it contributes to the understanding of why anxiously attached individuals may be more likely to be involved with an avoidantly attached partner than another anxiously attached partner (Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994). The avoidant partner is likely to exhibit distancing, which the anxiously attached individual is likely to respond to with attempts to establish closeness. Seeking closeness with a partner who is distant further underscores the individual’s tendency to experience relational events in accord with their attachment style (Guerrero, 1996).

Partner Effects in Gift Preference

Taken together, research on dyadic configuration effects demonstrates that individuals’ attachment styles affect relationship partner choice and that individuals’ attachment styles can
affect one another’s relationship experiences. Thus, we expect that relationship partners’
attachment styles will be related. Individuals are able to accurately assess their partners’
attachment style (Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991). Givers’ gift selection is likely to be
affected by recipients’ attachment style, as recipients’ attachment style should provide clues
about how recipients will respond to certain gifts. Therefore, it is expected that givers’ gift
preference will be influenced by their recipients’ attachment style. Recipient’s gift preference is
likely to be affected by their giver’s attachment style, as it informs their expectations about the
type of gift they are likely to receive from the giver. Thus, it is expected that recipients’ gift
preference will be influenced by their givers’ attachment style.

The Partner Effect of Recipient Attachment Anxiety on Givers’ Gift Preference

Givers with anxious recipients should be familiar with their anxious recipients’ attempts
to have the relationship validated. More anxious recipients should prefer to receive gifts that
express the giver’s identity because they view such gifts as attempts to bring the recipient into
the giver’s life. Therefore, givers should be able to anticipate that anxious recipients will prefer
gifts that express the giver’s identity. They are also likely to realize the recipient will react
negatively to gifts expressing the recipient’s identity, as such gifts could be perceived as a
disconfirmation of the closeness of the relationship. Therefore, the more anxious the recipient,
the greater the giver’s preference toward giving a gift that expresses the giver’s identity.

The Partner Effect of Recipient Attachment Avoidance on Givers’ Gift Preference

Similarly, givers should be able to anticipate that avoidant recipients will react negatively
to gifts that express the giver’s identity, as these gifts will threaten the avoidant recipient’s
independence. Givers should be able to anticipate that avoidant recipients persistently exert their own independence, and will react positively to gifts that reinforce their independence. Therefore, the more avoidant the recipient, the greater the giver’s preference toward giving a gift that expresses the recipient’s identity.

*The Partner Effects of Fearful and Secure Recipients on Givers’ Gift Preference*

Givers whose recipients are fearfully attached should recognize that these recipients have difficulty choosing between bringing relationships closer or creating distance in relationships. The more the recipient is both anxious and avoidant, the greater the giver’s preference for giving a gift that expresses neither friend’s identity. Givers whose recipients are securely attached are familiar with their recipient’s ability to successfully manage relationships. Therefore, the less anxious and avoidant the recipient, the greater the giver’s preference for giving a gift that expresses both friends’ identities. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

**H3:** Recipients’ attachment styles should influence the extent to which the gift the giver prefers to give reflects the giver’s and the recipient’s identity, such that:

- **H3a:** The preferred gifts of givers whose recipients are low in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., secure) should reflect both the giver’s and the recipient’s identity.
- **H3b:** The preferred gifts of givers whose recipients are low in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., preoccupied) should reflect the giver’s identity but not the recipient’s identity.
H3c: The preferred gifts of givers whose recipients are high in avoidance and low in anxiety (i.e., dismissing) should reflect the recipient’s identity but not the giver’s identity.

H3d: The preferred gifts of givers whose recipients are high in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., fearful) should reflect neither the giver’s nor the recipient’s identity.

The Partner Effect of Giver Attachment Anxiety on Recipients’ Gift Preference

Recipients’ previous experience with anxious givers should indicate that the anxious individual consistently seeks the recipient’s approval and relational availability (Mikulincer and Shaver, 2005). Thus, the recipient should expect to receive a gift that expresses the recipient’s identity from the anxious giver. Acknowledging that the gift is liked should provide the anxious giver the relational closeness he/she seeks. Therefore, the more anxious the giver, the greater the recipient’s preference toward receiving a gift that expresses the recipient’s identity.

The Partner Effect of Giver Attachment Avoidance on Recipients’ Gift Preference

Recipients with more avoidant givers should also have prior relationship experiences that inform their gift receipt preferences. Avoidant individuals consistently maintain their individuality and suppress relational behaviors. Recipients with avoidant givers should expect to receive a gift that expresses the giver’s identity. Therefore, the more avoidant the giver, the greater the recipient’s preference toward receiving a gift that expresses the giver’s identity.

The Partner Effects of Fearful and Secure Givers on Recipients’ Gift Preference

Recipients with fearful givers should be familiar with the fearful giver’s struggle between creating closeness and distance in relationships, and should expect to receive gifts that express
neither friend’s identity. Recipients with secure givers should be familiar with the secure giver’s aptitude in successfully managing friendships, and should expect to receive gifts that express both their own as well as the giver’s identities. Specifically, it is hypothesized that:

**H4**: Givers’ attachment styles should influence the extent to which the gift the recipient prefers to receive reflects the giver’s and the recipient’s identity, such that:

**H4a**: The preferred gifts of recipients whose givers are low in both avoidance and anxiety (i.e., secure) should reflect both the giver’s and the recipient’s identity.

**H4b**: The preferred gifts of recipients whose givers are low in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., preoccupied) should reflect the recipient’s identity but not the giver’s identity.

**H4c**: The preferred gifts of recipients whose givers are high in avoidance and low in anxiety (i.e., dismissing) should reflect the giver’s identity but not the recipient’s identity.

**H4d**: The preferred gifts of recipients whose givers are high in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., fearful) should reflect neither the giver’s nor the recipient’s identity.
CHAPTER 5

STUDY ONE

The previously outlined hypotheses are investigated in study 1. Study 1 investigates how attachment style dyadically influences givers and recipients to prefer to give and receive gifts that are differentially congruent with the giver’s and/or the recipient’s identity (hypotheses 1a-d – 4a-d). Specifically examined are (1) the relationships between givers’ attachment style and the identity congruence of the gifts they prefer to give, and the relationship between recipients’ attachment style and the identity congruence of the gifts they prefer to receive, and (2) the relationship between recipients’ attachment style and the identity congruence of the gifts givers prefer to give, and the relationship between givers’ attachment style and the identity congruence of the gifts receivers prefer to receive. The first two relationships are referred to as actor effects (H1a-d and H2a-d), and the second two relationships are referred to as partner effects in dyadic analysis (H3a-d and H4a-d) (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006).

The Gift Exchange Context

The gift exchange context explored in study 1 is the exchange of birthday gifts between friends. The birthday gifting situation has been chosen for three reasons. First, birthdays are common social occasions in which gifts are often exchanged. It is important to choose an occasion for which gift exchange predictably occurs because it presents opportunities for marketers to develop specific strategies and tactics for brands and products (in contrast to gifts
that are exchanged spontaneously or for no reason). Second, birthdays often do not involve the simultaneous giving of gifts to one another. Instead, there is one recipient (the individual whose birthday it is), and one giver at a particular time. Social expectations and tradition imply that, at the birthday of the original giver, the original recipient is likely to reciprocate the gift they received, changing roles as suggested by Sherry’s (1983) model. Separating giver and recipient is consistent with Sherry’s (1983) model and our proposed model, simplifies the design and analysis, and permits more clearly interpretable results. Third, it has been shown that gift givers have more latitude in selecting birthday gifts than they do gifts for more formal occasions, like weddings (Scammon et al., 1982). This suggests that gift preferences for birthdays are more likely to be determined by characteristics of the giver, recipient, and relationship than other occasions in which gift preferences may be more strongly biased by social expectations of appropriateness.

Blieszner and Adams (1992) report three dyadic phases of friendship: formation, maintenance, and dissolution. Formation refers to the movement of two individuals from strangers to acquaintances to friends (Blieszner and Adams, 1992). Once a friendship is formed, it must be maintained. Indeed, Neuhauser (1988) asserts that bonds between people are in a constant state of flux: being built, maintained, damaged or repaired; if the relationship is not being built, maintained, or repaired, it is being damaged by default. Gift exchange is one way that relational bonds are formed, managed (Mauss, 1924/1990; Caillé, 2000), strengthened (Caplow, 1982), or severed (Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999).

By considering individuals already in a friendship relationship, the investigation is limited to gifts exchanged in the relational maintenance phase. In relational maintenance, gifts are being used to manage friends’ perceptions of one another and of the relationship, friends are
already familiar with one another’s characteristics (such as each other’s attachment style), and their gifting behaviors, thoughts, and feelings can be interpreted within the context of the existing relationship. Importantly, the relational ties of friendship are especially susceptible to decay (Caplow, 1982), as friendship, as opposed to familial relationships, is voluntary. Therefore, gift exchange may be a more impactful relationship strategy in friendships than in other types of relationships.

Design and Models

Because givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles (operationalized as the dimensions anxiety and avoidance) are expected to affect not only the level of identity congruence in their own gift preferences but also in their friends’ gift preferences, H1a-d through H4a-d will be investigated using the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (APIM; Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006). This model, unlike standard ANOVA or regression, is able to account for non-independence of the outcome variable. The APIM has seen considerable popularity in many social science fields but has yet to be employed in the study of consumer behavior. This investigation proposes that the levels of identity congruence in givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences will be non-independent, or jointly-determined.

Two Actor-Partner Interdependence Models (see Figure 2) were estimated – one for each dependent variable. APIM estimation considers the dyad, rather than the individual, is the unit of analysis (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006). The dependent variable in model 1 is (givers’ and recipients’ perceptions of) the level of self-congruence exhibited in the preferred gift, and the dependent variable in model 2 is (givers’ and recipients’ perceptions of) the level of partner-
congruence exhibited in the preferred gift. The effects that were estimated in each model (in accord with H1a-d – H4a-d) are outlined below in Tables 4 and 5. Importantly, the effects are estimated uniquely in the APIM, controlling for the effects of all other independent variables in the model.

**TABLE 4: EFFECTS TO BE ESTIMATED IN MODEL 1 (SELF-CONGRUENCE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor Effects</th>
<th>Partner Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers' anxiety on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path a).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers’ avoidance on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path e).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ avoidance on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path h).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path b).</td>
<td>The effect of givers’ anxiety on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ avoidance on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path f).</td>
<td>The effect of givers’ avoidance on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path g).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path i).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path k).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path j).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of giver identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path l).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 5: EFFECTS TO BE ESTIMATED IN MODEL 2 (PARTNER-CONGRUENCE)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor Effects</th>
<th>Partner Effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers’ anxiety on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path a).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path d).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers’ avoidance on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path e).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ avoidance on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path h).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety on the level of giver identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path b).</td>
<td>The effect of givers’ anxiety on the level of giver identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path c).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ avoidance on the level of giver identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path f).</td>
<td>The effect of givers’ avoidance on the level of giver identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path g).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of givers’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path i).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path k).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of recipient identity congruence of the recipient’s preferred gift (Path j).</td>
<td>The effect of recipients’ anxiety x avoidance interaction on the level of recipient identity congruence of the giver’s preferred gift (Path l).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A correlation (represented as path m in Figure 2) occurs between the disturbances (represented as \(E_G\) and \(E_R\) in Figure 2) of the outcome variables, or the residual non-independence between the outcome variables. A disturbance represents the variance in an endogenous (outcome) variable that is not accounted for by the exogenous (independent) variables.
variables specified in a model as its causes (Kline, 1998). Thus, disturbances represent the variance in the outcome variables that is left over after accounting for the variance explained by the independent variables. The paths from the disturbance to the endogenous variable are set to 1, to force the disturbance into the same units as the endogenous variable it causes (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006). Correlated disturbances in the dyadic model relate the amount of left-over non-independence not explained by the APIM (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006). Correlated disturbances allow for non-independence of the data and can be viewed as partial correlations between outcome variables (controlling for both partners’ independent variables) (Kenny, Kashy, and Cook, 2006).
FIGURE 2: AN ACTOR–PARTNER INTERDEPENDENCE MODEL OF THE EFFECTS OF GIVERS’ AND RECIPIENTS’ ANXIETY AND AVOIDANCE ON THE IDENTITY CONGRUENCE OF PREFERRED GIFTS

In Figure 2, the (G) and (R) depicted in the independent variables indicate givers’ and recipients’ attachment dimension scores and interactions, respectively. The (G) and (R) depicted in the dependent variables indicate givers’ and recipients’ perceptions of the level of identity congruence of their preferred gifts (self-congruence in model 1 and partner-congruence in model 2), respectively.
Pretesting

In effort to standardize the product and instead rely on participants’ perceptions of self- and partner-congruence to the brand, gift cards were used as the gift options participants chose from in study 1. Thirteen brands were pretested to determine the most appropriate brands to use in study one (n = 70). Six brands were eliminated due to gender differences (being perceived as significantly more identity congruent with either males or females). Banana Republic and Starbucks were perceived as more identity-congruent for females, while GameStop, Dick’s Sporting Goods, and Best Buy were perceived as more identity-congruent for males (all p’s < .05). Congruence with females approached significance for Barnes and Noble (p = .06), so it was also eliminated. One brand was eliminated due to low familiarity (Fandango), and one brand was eliminated in effort to include only one restaurant brand (Applebee’s). The five selected brands were: American Eagle Outfitters, Olive Garden, Ticketmaster, Wal-Mart, and Apple i-Tunes. Identity congruence means, standard deviations, skewness, and mean familiarity for the five selected brands from the pretest appear in Table 6.

### TABLE 6: PRETEST RESULTS FOR BRANDS USED IN STUDY 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Self-Congruence</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Other-Congruence</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Skew</th>
<th>Familiarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Eagle Outfitters</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>1.57</td>
<td>-0.449</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>-0.201</td>
<td>6.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Garden</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>5.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketmaster</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>-0.438</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>-0.173</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>-0.445</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apple i-Tunes</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>-0.244</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>-0.349</td>
<td>6.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants

One hundred fifty one dyads (302 individuals) participated in study 1. A sample size of 360 dyads was desired, as a 10:1 ratio of participants to parameters is recommended in structural equations modeling (Kline, 1998). If the ratio is less than 5:1 (180 dyads or 360 participants), the statistical stability of the results becomes questionable (Kline, 1998). However, Kenny, Kashy and Cook (2006) recognize the difficulty in recruiting such a large number of dyads. A survey by the authors found that the number of participating dyads ranged from 25 to 411, with a median of 101 and an average of 80 dyads. Further, the authors’ power analysis suggests that the minimal number of dyads necessary for sufficient (80%) power to detect a small effect is 783 dyads. As an alternate strategy, Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) recommend using consequential nonindependence as a guide. Consequential nonindependence is the level of nonindependence that results in the probability of committing a Type I error being .10 when it should be .05. They conclude that 44 dyads are required for a two-tailed test of nonindependence at an alpha of .05 with a between-dyads independent variable. They also suggest adopting a liberal test of nonindependence (two-tailed alpha of .20), which would result in a sample size requirement of 28 dyads. Therefore, a sample size of 151 dyads is sufficient.

In the recruitment procedure, participants were first recruited from business courses at Kent State University. Each participant recruited from business courses at KSU was required to recruit a close friend to participate with them in the study. The recruited close friend was required to be the same gender as the initially recruited participant, and could neither be a relative nor a current or former romantic partner. The recruited close friend was not required to be a KSU student. Participants recruited from KSU business courses received extra credit for
participation. Non-KSU student participants were entered into a drawing to win one of five $100 gift cards from their choice of brands employed in the study. Within each dyad, one individual was randomly assigned to the recipient condition, while the other individual was assigned to the giver condition. Only data from complete dyads meeting the recruitment requirements were analyzed in study 1.

Descriptive statistics regarding the participants were assessed. Fifty two dyads (34.4%) were male, and 99 (65.6%) dyads were female. Participants had known their close friend for an average of 5.3 years (sd = 5.46; range 0 years to 28 years), and had an average of 6.2 close friends (sd = 4.73; range = 1 to 40). The average age of participants was 21.5 years (sd = 5.21; range = 18 - 61).

Procedure

Participants completed the measures in study 1 via two online surveys in Zoomerang, with a one-week lag time between surveys. In the first survey, each participant’s attachment style was assessed. Next, within each dyad, the label ‘recipient’ was randomly assigned to one of the individuals. The other individual was be classified as the giver. In the second survey, participants rated the identity congruence to him or herself and to his or her close friend of five pretested, branded gift cards. Following a mathematical distractor task intended to clear short-term memory, participants were exposed to a scenario corresponding to their role as giver or recipient, and were asked to choose one of the gift cards.

Recipients were exposed to the following scenario:
“Imagine that it is your birthday. The friend you are participating in this survey with wants to get you a birthday gift, and has enough money to do so. Your friend has decided to give you a $25 gift card to one of the following brands. Assume that the gift card format and dollar-value are not important in making your choice. Please select the one gift that you most prefer to receive from your friend.”

Givers were exposed to the following scenario:

“Imagine that it is the birthday of the friend you are participating in this survey with. You want to get your friend a birthday gift, and have enough money to do so. You have decided to get your friend a $25 gift card to one of the following brands. Assume that the gift card format and dollar-value are not important in making your choice. Please select the one gift that you most prefer to give to your friend.”

Measures

Independent Variables – Attachment Style

Attachment style was assessed using a revised version of Fraley, Waller, and Brennan’s (2000) revised Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR-R) scale. The scale was revised to be appropriate for friendship relationships (pretest $\alpha = .959$, $n = 35$; study one $\alpha = .948$, $n = 302$). The authors of the ECR-R note that revision of the scale is appropriate for use of the scale in
nonromantic relationships. Attachment style is operationalized as scores on the two dimensions of anxiety and avoidance, such that higher scores indicate higher anxiety and avoidance. The original ECR-R scale items are included in Appendix A. The revised ECR-R scale items employed in study 1 appear in Table 7.

Mean-centered scores on the two dimensions of the ECR-R (anxiety and avoidance) served as independent variables in study 1. Mean-centering of the independent variables is recommended by Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) in order to render the unit of measurement the same for both givers and recipients. However, it is important to note that mean centering in dyadic analysis is around the grand mean (i.e., the mean across both givers and recipients, or the mean of the two means) rather than the around the mean of each group givers and recipients separately. These mean-centered variables were multiplied to form the interaction terms (giver and recipient anxiety x avoidance).
### TABLE 7: THE ECR-R REVISED FOR FRIENDSHIPS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I’m afraid that I will lose my friendships.</td>
<td>2. I prefer not to show friends how I feel deep down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I often worry that my friends will not want to continue our friendship.</td>
<td>4. I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I often worry that my friends don’t really care about me.</td>
<td>6. I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I worry that friends won’t care about me as much as I care about them.</td>
<td>8. I am very comfortable being close to friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I often wish that my friends’ feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.</td>
<td>10. I don’t feel comfortable opening up to friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I worry a lot about my friendships.</td>
<td>12. I prefer not to be too close to friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. When my friend is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become better friends with someone else.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. When I show my feelings for friends, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me.</td>
<td>14. I get uncomfortable when a friend wants to be very close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. I rarely worry about my friends leaving me. (R)</td>
<td>16. I find it relatively easy to get close to my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. My friends make me doubt myself.</td>
<td>18. It’s not difficult for me to get close to my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. I do not often worry about being abandoned. (R)</td>
<td>20. I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. I find that my friends don’t want to get as close as I would like.</td>
<td>22. It helps to turn to my friends in times of need. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Sometimes friends change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
<td>24. I tell my friends just about everything. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.</td>
<td>26. I talk things over with my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. I’m afraid that once a friend gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I really am.</td>
<td>28. I am nervous when friends get too close to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. It makes me mad that I don’t get the care and support I need from my friends.</td>
<td>30. I feel comfortable depending on friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. I worry that I won’t measure up to other people.</td>
<td>32. I find it easy to depend on friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. My friends only seem to notice me when I’m angry.</td>
<td>34. It’s easy for me to care about my friends. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. My friends really understand me and my needs. (R)</td>
<td>38. My friends really understand me and my needs. (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Adapted from Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000).*
Dependent Variables – Identity Congruence

Participants were asked to rate the identity congruence of the five gift options in terms of self-identity congruence and identity congruence to the friend using an adapted version of the self-image congruence scale developed by Sirgy, Grewal, Mangleburg, Park, Chon, Claiborne, Johar, and Berkman (1997). This measure is selected because it measures image (identity) congruence between a target person and a given product or brand globally rather than using the discrepancy between the person and product/brand on several listed characteristics (such as personality traits). The use of a global measure eliminated the need to pretest each of the five products to develop lists of the characteristics commonly associated with each brand, and reduces participant fatigue caused by responding to lengthy lists of characteristics for each brand. Further, the use of discrepancy scores is problematic, as the common characteristics associated with a particular brand may or may not be the characteristics a particular individual sees as most important for image congruence with the brand (Sirgy et al., 1997). The global measure instead encourages participants to construct their own brand image and respond (on Likert scales, where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 4 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree) with the extent to which the brand matches their self-image.

Thus, the global measure also captures image congruence directly rather than indirectly (by measuring brand image and participant image separately) (Sirgy et al., 1997). The global, direct measure has been shown to have better predictive accuracy than other measures of image congruence (Sirgy et al., 1997). The self-image congruence instructions appear below, and are followed by the items in Table 8:

“Take a moment to think about [brand X]. Think about the kind of person who typically uses [brand X]. Imagine this person in your
mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of [brand X]. Once you’ve done this, indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements:”

### TABLE 8: IDENTITY CONGRUENCE MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Self Identity Congruence Measure</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. [Brand X] is consistent with how I see myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am very much like the typical user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I can identify with other users of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I am not at all like the users of [brand X] that I know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The image of the typical user of [brand X] is very dissimilar from the kind of person I am.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel my personal profile is similar to a user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I do not have anything in common with a user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Friend Identity Congruence Measure</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. [Brand X] is consistent with how I see my friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My friend is very much like the typical user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I identify my friend with other users of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My friend is not at all like the users of [brand X] that I know.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The image of the typical user of [brand X] is very dissimilar from the kind of person my friend is.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I feel my friend’s personal profile is similar to a user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My friend does not have anything in common with a user of [brand X].</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Sirgy, et al. (1997).

**Estimation**

The previously described Actor Partner Interdependence Models were estimated using both structural equation modeling (SEM) and multilevel modeling (MLM). Either method is appropriate for testing the hypothesized relationships. The focus of MLM is parameter estimates and tests, while SEM typically focuses on finding the best fitting model. However, fit statistics in
the APIM are irrelevant, as the APIM model is always saturated or just-identified (Ackerman, Donnellan, and Kashy, 2010). Just-identified models have exactly as many parameters as observations, and therefore have unique solutions that will perfectly fit the data. The parameter count in Figure 2 (36) is equal to the number of observations (36). Details of the parameter count appear in Appendix B. Because a saturated or just-identified model will always fit the data perfectly, the absence of relevant fit statistics can be considered problematic. Due to this, MLM analysis was also conducted.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

An examination of the descriptive statistics reported in Table 9 reveals that givers and recipients did not differ (all $p$’s $>.29$) in terms of anxiety (Giver $M = 2.84$, Recipient $M = 2.84$), avoidance (Giver $M = 2.67$, Recipient $M = 2.57$), or the extent of self-congruence exhibited in their preferred gifts (Giver $M = 5.01$, Recipient $M = 5.08$). Givers and recipients did differ in the extent to which partner-congruence was exhibited in their preferred gifts (Giver $M = 5.29$, Recipient $M = 4.75$, $t(300) = 3.927$, $p < .001$). This reveals that, in general, givers prefer the recipient’s identity to be represented in the gift to a greater extent than recipients prefer the giver’s identity to be represented.
The percentage of givers who were able to choose the same gift that recipients selected was also assessed. Only 42% of givers chose the gift that recipients wanted, out of the confined set of five brands.

Descriptive statistics also revealed highly peaked distributions of the identity congruence to self and other for the brands employed in study 1 that were not revealed in pretesting. Means around the scale midpoint and a high degree of kurtosis suggests that many participants perceived all five brands as not particularly self- or other-congruent or incongruent, suggesting a problem with the operationalization of the dependent variable. These statistics are presented below in Table 10.

### TABLE 9: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recipients</th>
<th>Means</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Congruence</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner-Congruence</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Givers</td>
<td>Means</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Congruence</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner-Congruence</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TABLE 10: MEANS AND KURTOSIS OF BRANDS IN STUDY 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Self-Congruence</th>
<th>Other-Congruence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i-Tunes</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Eagle</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ticketmaster</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive Garden</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wal-Mart</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Paired Samples t-Test

A paired samples t-test was conducted to examine differences in the extent to which givers prefer self-congruence and recipient-congruence in their preferred gifts. Results demonstrated that, in general, givers prefer significantly higher recipient-congruence ($M = 5.29$) than self-congruence ($M = 5.01$), $t(150) = 3.42$, $p = .001$.

A second paired samples t-test was conducted to examine differences in the extent to which recipients prefer self-congruence and giver-congruence in their preferred gifts. Results showed that, in general, recipients prefer significantly higher self-congruence ($M = 5.08$) than giver-congruence ($M = 4.75$), $t(150) = 3.38$, $p = .001$.

Correlations

There are several correlations in the models. Attachment style dimensions may be correlated within the individual, and across individuals. Within the individual, the giver’s anxiety and avoidance may be correlated, and the recipient’s anxiety and avoidance may be correlated. Between individuals, the giver’s anxiety may be correlated with the recipient’s anxiety, the giver’s avoidance may be correlated with the recipient’s avoidance, the giver’s anxiety may be correlated with the recipient’s avoidance, and the giver’s avoidance may be correlated with the recipient’s anxiety. Additionally, correlations exist that are not graphically depicted in the model shown in Figure 2. These correlations are not graphically depicted because they complicate the pictorial representation of the model and do not directly relate to the hypothesized effects. All independent variables were correlated in the models. Correlations appear in Tables 11 and 12.
TABLE 11: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Giver Avoidance</th>
<th>Recipient Anxiety</th>
<th>Recipient Avoidance</th>
<th>Self-Congruence</th>
<th>Partner-Congruence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giver Anxiety</td>
<td>.550***</td>
<td>.298***</td>
<td>.262**</td>
<td>.059 (NS)</td>
<td>-.085 (NS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver Avoidance</td>
<td>.185*</td>
<td>.310***</td>
<td>-.015 (NS)</td>
<td>-.074 (NS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Anxiety</td>
<td>-.375***</td>
<td>-.201*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 12: CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recipient Self-Congruence</th>
<th>Giver-Partner Congruence</th>
<th>Recipient Partner-Congruence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giver Self-Congruence</td>
<td>.236**</td>
<td>.594***</td>
<td>.164*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Self-Congruence</td>
<td>.179*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.523***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver Partner-Congruence</td>
<td></td>
<td>.087 (NS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001.

Correlations reveal that givers’ anxiety and avoidance are positively related (r = .550, p < .001), and recipients’ anxiety and avoidance are also positively related (r = .545, p < .001). Correlations further demonstrate positive relationships between givers’ and recipients anxiety (r = .298, p < .001) and avoidance (r = .310, p < .001), indicating that more anxious individuals tend to be paired with a more anxious friend, and more avoidant individuals tend to be paired with a more avoidant friend. Further, positive relationships between recipients’ anxiety and givers’ avoidance (r = .185, p < .05), and recipients’ avoidance and givers’ anxiety (r = .262, p < .01), indicate that more anxious individuals tend to be paired with more avoidant friends. Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) suggest that such correlations may be due to a compositional effect: similarities between the two dyad members prior to their being paired together. In other words, the friends are paired together non-randomly. Evidence for such dyadic configuration effects are supported by prior attachment theory research which asserts that dyads with certain attachment style configurations are more likely to naturally occur than other configurations (Collins and Read, 1990; Kirkpatrick and Davis, 1994).
Correlations also show that recipient anxiety is associated with a preference for less self-congruent gifts ($r = -.199, p < .05$), and that recipient avoidance is also associated with a preference for less self-congruent gifts ($r = -.375, p < .001$). Recipient anxiety is also associated with a preference for less partner-congruent gifts ($r = -.226, p < .01$). Recipient avoidance is associated with a preference for less partner-congruent gifts ($r = -.201, p < .05$). Givers’ anxiety and avoidance were not associated with self-congruence or partner-congruence (all $p$’s > .09).

Further, Table 12 shows the extent of self-congruence in the preferred gift to be correlated between givers and recipients ($r = .236, p < .01$). The extent of partner-congruence is not correlated between givers and recipients ($p > .28$). For givers, the extent of self-congruence and recipient-congruence is correlated ($r = .594, p < .001$). For recipients, the extent of self-congruence and giver-congruence is correlated ($r = .179, p < .05$). Finally, giver-congruence is correlated between givers and recipients ($r = .164, p < .05$), and recipient-congruence is correlated between givers and recipients ($r = .523, p < .001$).

*Assessing Interdependence*

Because the extent to which the giver’s and the recipient’s identity are expressed in the preferred gift are correlated between givers and recipients, there is evidence of non-independence (interdependence). However, Kenny, Kashy, and Cook (2006) also recommend the outcome variables be correlated using a partial correlation, controlling for the effects of the independent variables. The extent to which the giver’s identity was represented in givers’ and recipients’ preferred gifts was correlated after controlling for anxiety and avoidance, $r = .151, p < .06$, given a liberal test of non-independence recommended by the authors ($p < .20$). The extent to which the recipient’s identity was represented in givers’ and recipients’ preferred gifts was
also significantly correlated after controlling for anxiety and avoidance, partial $r = .195, p < .05$.

According to Cohen (1988), correlations of .50 or greater indicate large, .30 - .49 indicate medium, and .10 - .29 indicate small amounts of non-independence. Partial correlations indicate that the data are appropriate for dyadic analysis.

**APIM Results using Structural Equation Modeling**

The APIM depicted in Figure 2 was run twice using AMOS 17.0: model 1 employed self-congruence as dependent variables, while model 2 used partner-congruence as dependent variables. In both models, no significant actor interaction effects were found. Therefore, H1a-d and H2a-d are not supported. In model 1, no significant partner interaction effects were found. Therefore, H3a-d and H4a-d are not supported. Exploring the significant main effects did provide some interesting findings that are discussed in detail.

In model 1, only one path (path f) was significant. Recipient avoidance significantly predicted the amount of self-congruence in the preferred gift to receive, $b = -.472, p < .001$. This indicates that more avoidant recipients prefer to receive gifts that are less self-congruent. The correlation ($r = .32$) between the disturbances (path m in Figure 2) indicates that model 1 explained 68% of the variance in self-congruence ($p < .01$).

In model 2, only one path (path b) was significant. Recipient anxiety significantly predicted the amount of giver-congruence preferred in the received gift, $b = -.271, p < .05$. This indicates that more anxious recipients prefer to receive gifts that are less giver-congruent. However, the correlation ($r = .12$) between the disturbances (path m) was not significant ($p > .25$).
An interaction approached significance in model 2. There was a marginally significant partner effect of giver anxiety x avoidance on giver-congruence of the preferred gift to receive (path k), $b = .186$, $p = .098$. Although the interaction was not significant at $p = .05$, probing the interaction term provided some additional insight.

Probing the interaction using the procedure advocated by Aiken and West (1991) revealed that when giver anxiety is low (one $sd$ below the mean), the effect of giver avoidance is marginally significant, $b = - .295$, $p = .091$. This result indicates that, when the giver is low in anxiety, as the giver increases in avoidance, less giver-congruence may be preferred by the recipient. When giver avoidance is high, the effect of giver anxiety is significant, $b = .346$, $p = .038$. This indicates that when the giver is high in avoidance, as the giver increases in anxiety, the more the recipient prefers to receive a giver-congruent gift.

*APIM Results using Multilevel Modeling*

The multilevel modeling approach to analyzing the APIM permits the analysis of only a single dependent variable. Unlike the SEM approach, identity congruence is not separated into the giver’s and the recipient’s perceptions. Rather, both the giver’s and recipient’s perceptions of identity congruence are combined into self-congruence and partner-congruence variables. Therefore, the two models are estimated – one for each dependent variable. Separating giver and recipient is accomplished through dummy coding an independent variable for condition, where 0 = giver and 1 = recipient. Again, anxiety and avoidance for both givers and recipients were grand-mean centered.
Self-Congruence. Results revealed that the individual’s own avoidance significantly predicted self-congruence of the chosen gift, \( b = -.474, t(146.731) = -3.704, p < .001 \), suggesting that as avoidance increases, self-congruence of the preferred gift decreases. Further, this was qualified by an avoidance x condition interaction, \( b = .379, t(243.114) = 2.057, p < .05 \), suggesting that more avoidant individuals’ preference for less self-congruent gifts was stronger for recipients than givers. This mirrors the finding from the SEM analysis.

Partner-Congruence. Results revealed a significant effect of condition, \( b = .518, t(145.046) = 3.903, p < .001 \), indicating that, in general, givers prefer higher recipient-congruence than do recipients. Results also revealed that anxiety significantly predicted partner-congruence of the preferred gift, \( b = -.265, t(145.932) = -2.169, p < .05 \), suggesting that as anxiety increases, partner-congruence of the chosen gift decreases. No significant interactions between anxiety and condition were found, suggesting that anxiety affects both givers and recipients similarly. This mirrors the result found for recipient anxiety in the SEM analysis, and also reveals an effect of anxiety for givers that was not found in the SEM analysis.

Results also revealed an interaction effect of partner anxiety x partner avoidance on partner-congruence that approached significance, \( b = .145, t(286.447), p = .059 \). This indicates that the extent to which an individual’s preferred gift expresses their partner’s identity depends on their partner’s levels anxiety and avoidance.

Probing the interaction using the Aiken and West (1991) procedure reveals that, when considering the effect of partner avoidance at low partner anxiety, the effect of partner avoidance becomes marginally significant, \( b = -.262, t (189.69) = -1.68, p = .095 \). This indicates that, for individuals’ whose partners are low in anxiety, as partner avoidance increases, individuals may
prefer gifts lower in partner-congruence, mimicking the results from SEM analysis for recipients. When considering the effect of partner anxiety at high partner avoidance, the effect of partner anxiety becomes significant, \( b = .315, t (180.97) = 2.07, p < .05 \), indicating that, for individuals whose partners are high in avoidance, as anxiety increases, so too does a preference for gifts higher in partner-congruence. This mimics the results found in the SEM analysis.

Discussion

The paired samples t-test revealed that givers do realize they should focus on the recipient when selecting gifts, as givers preferred significantly higher recipient congruence (\( M = 5.3 \)) than self-congruence (\( M = 5.0 \)), \( t (150) = 3.42, p = .001 \). Recipients, in general, want gifts that express their own identities, as they prefer significantly higher self-congruence (\( M = 5.1 \)) than giver-congruence (\( M = 4.75 \)), \( t (150) = 3.38, p = .001 \). Further, MLM results demonstrated that givers preferred significantly higher recipient congruence than did recipients (\( b = .518, t(145.046) = 3.90, p < .001 \)). These results suggest that givers are attempting to select gifts that match their recipients’ identities.

While only 42% of givers were able to choose the gift their recipient wanted, the effects may not be completely explained by assuming givers are bad predictors of which brands match their recipients’ identities. Rather, some recipients do not want gifts that express their identity. Specifically, results from both SEM and MLM estimation of the APIM reveal that avoidant recipients prefer to receive less self-congruent gifts.

Results from both SEM and MLM estimation of the APIM also reveal that more anxious recipients generally prefer to receive gifts that are lower in giver-congruence, particularly when
the giver is high in avoidance. This indicates that recipients’ preferences for self-congruence and giver-congruence may depend who the gift is from. When givers are high in avoidance and high in anxiety (i.e., fearful), recipients seem willing to accept higher giver-congruence in the preferred gift.

Results from MLM estimation of the APIM additionally demonstrate that the gifts preferred by higher anxiety givers are less recipient-congruent. Further, MLM analysis also suggests that the extent to which the giver’s and recipient’s identity is represented in a giver’s chosen gift to give may depend on the attachment dimensions of the recipient. Specifically, givers with dismissing recipients (low anxiety, high avoidance) may prefer to give gifts that are lower in recipient-congruence. Givers with fearful recipients may prefer to give gifts that are higher in recipient-congruence.

Taken together, results suggest that avoidance influences recipients to prefer less self-congruent gifts (particularly when the giver is more avoidant), and anxiety influences recipients to prefer less giver-congruent gifts. However, when a giver is fearfully-attached, recipients may be willing to accept more giver-congruence in the gift. More anxious givers exhibited lower recipient-congruence in their preferred gift to give. However, when a recipient is fearfully attached, givers may attempt to express higher recipient-congruence.

Because some findings were directionally opposite the predicted directions, alternative explanations are offered. First, recipient anxiety was posited to decrease self-congruence and increase giver-congruence of the preferred gift to receive, due mainly to a negative model of self and a positive model of others. However, if receiving a self-congruent gift acts to confirm, and receiving a giver-congruent gift acts to disconfirm, the anxious recipient’s identity, the observed results may be explained.
Second, recipient avoidance was posited to increase self-congruence and decrease giver-congruence of the preferred gift to receive, due mainly to a positive model of self and a negative model of others. However, if an avoidant recipient seeks to distance him or herself from others, a lower preference for self-congruent gifts may result. In other words, a less self-congruent gift may support the avoidant recipient’s efforts to avoid closeness and co-dependence.

Giver anxiety was also predicted to increase recipient-congruence in the preferred gift to give, as anxiety influences givers to hyperactivate the importance of choosing the right gift. However, anxiety also decreases the giver’s expectation of giving a liked gift (Wooten, 2000). Therefore, perhaps higher anxiety givers prefer less recipient-congruence because they discount their ability to select a giver-congruent gift.

Finally, the findings that recipients may be willing to accept higher giver-congruence from fearfully attached givers, and that givers may focus more on recipient-congruence for fearfully attached recipients, also warrant additional consideration. Perhaps, since fearfully-attached individuals are the “least securely” attached, recipients are willing to accommodate for these insecurities by accepting a giver-congruent gift, and givers are especially attuned to giving recipient-congruent gifts in order to validate the recipient’s place in the relationship, encouraging them to feel more secure. Future research should be conducted to address these potential alternative explanations.

There are several limitations of study 1. First, participants were recruited from undergraduate courses at Kent State University. Although the recruited friend was not required to be a student, the results may not be generalizable to other populations. Second, study one relied on the use of a limited set of five branded gift cards in order to standardize the product. Gift cards are sometimes popularly viewed as less personal gifts. Although participants were
instructed to ignore the gift card format and focus on the brand, the exclusive use of gift cards as gift options could have affected the results. Participants were told that the gift cards were valued at $25 in effort to make the brands comparable on price. Although participants were told to ignore the dollar amount of the gift card, results may have nevertheless been affected. Finally, recipients’ actual reactions to the giver’s selected gift were not assessed. Future research should address recipients’ actual reactions to receiving gifts that differ in identity-congruence.

The results of study 1 demonstrate the manner by which givers’ and recipients’ attachment styles are dyadically associated with preferences for gifts that differentially express identity. This provides a potentially unexplored explanation for why asymmetry between givers’ and recipients’ gift preferences has been observed – namely, that differences in the desired level of relationship intimacy between giver and recipient result may in different preferences toward the identity congruence of gifts given and received. Importantly, study 1 helps further establish the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange as a relationship-level phenomenon and demonstrates the usefulness of the APIM for dyadic research in consumer behavior.
CHAPTER 6

FACILITATING PERSUASION BY MATCHING PERSUASIVE MESSAGES AND ATTACHMENT STYLE IN THE GIFT GIVING CONTEXT

The goal of study two is to provide a practical application of the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange by demonstrating that persuasion can be facilitated by matching advertisements to gift givers’ attachment styles.

Theoretical Development

Relationship-relevant events make relationship thoughts salient, resulting in the automatic activation of an individual’s attachment style (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996). Attachment style guides the individual’s cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses to the event in order to help the individual maintain a consistent and coherent view of the environment (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996; Guerrero, 1996). Gift exchange has been shown to be a relationship-relevant event that activates attachment style (Nguyen and Munch, 2011).

Individuals who differ in attachment style also differ in the way they process information, such that they generalize their attachment-related beliefs to the processing of new information (Mikulincer, 1997). Further, individuals with secure attachment styles are more open to new information that conflicts with their existing attachment-related beliefs, while individuals with less secure attachment styles (those who are higher in anxiety, avoidance, or both) resist new information that conflicts with their existing attachment-related beliefs (Mikulincer, 1997).
Support for these findings reveals that individuals with less secure attachment styles rely on their existing knowledge structures to a greater extent than securely attached individuals, and are therefore less prone to integrating conflicting information into their knowledge structures (Mikulincer, 1997). Taken together, this research demonstrates that individuals process information in-line with their attachment styles, rejecting information that conflicts with their existing attachment-related knowledge, in order to maintain consistent world-views (Collins and Read, 1994; Collins, 1996; Guerrero, 1996).

Much research has shown that when a persuasive communication matches the manner in which individuals naturally process information, the “fit” between the communication and the information processing style result in greater persuasion because the information is easier to process (Reber, Schwartz & Winkielman, 2004; Higgins et al., 2003; Cesario et al., 2004; Lee & Aaker, 2004; Thompson & Hamilton, 2006; Kim, Rao, & Lee, 2008). Indeed, increased value from ease of processing is perceived when a message matches the individual’s preexisting feelings (Higgins et al., 1997).

Gillath et al., (2006) reveal that individuals higher in anxiety exhibit a faster recognition of words related to anxiety goals (plead, possess, cling, demand, merge), and individuals higher in avoidance exhibit a faster recognition of words related to avoidance goals (avoid, distance, dismiss, withdraw, detach). This finding suggests that information matching an individual’s attachment style may be easier to process.

Cognitive closure refers to the extent to which people prefer information that matches their existing knowledge structures and reject new information that may create confusion and ambiguity (Kruglanski, 1989). Mikulincer (1997) finds that individuals with less secure attachment styles display a greater need for cognitive closure than do securely attached
individuals. This suggests that the message “fit” may be more influential on persuasion for less securely attached individuals.

In summary, previous research indicates that attachment styles may influence the persuasiveness of incoming information. Relevant research suggests that, when a persuasive message matches an individual’s attachment style, the information should be easier to process than information that does not match an individual’s attachment style, resulting in enhanced persuasiveness of the message. Further, these effects should be evident for less securely-attached individuals, but not securely attached individuals.

Hypothesis Development

*The Anxiety Dimension of Attachment Style*

Individuals high in anxiety have a tendency to discount their gifting capacity (i.e., the confidence in their ability to select a gift the recipient will like), are likely to perceive their partners as more powerful in the relationship, persistently seek their partners’ approval, and are especially attuned to potential threats to the intimacy of the relationship (Wooten, 2000; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005), such as giving a gift the recipient does not like. Indeed, anxious attachment activates the goal of attaining security in order to reduce the effects of their anxiety (Mikulincer, 1998). Further, highly anxious individuals are likely to employ hyperactivation strategies in response to gift giving (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988), maximizing the importance of the gift exchange situation and its impact on the ongoing relationship.

As individuals high in anxiety discount their gifting capacity and maximize the importance of choosing the right gift, high anxiety givers may experience increased processing
fluency in response to information that supports their goal of feeling more secure (less anxious) in their capacity as giver. Therefore, we propose that information supporting the notion that the recipient will like the gift (termed a “recipient-focused” advertisement) will match the anxiety dimension of attachment style.

**The Avoidance Dimension of Attachment Style**

Individuals high in avoidance persistently maintain their independence and self-reliance (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991), and are likely to exhibit hubris, or an exaggerated sense of pride, in response to relationship-relevant events (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). When positive events occur in the relationship, such as choosing a gift the recipient likes, highly avoidant individuals are prone to take credit for the event. Indeed, avoidant attachment activates the goal of attaining personal control (Mikulincer 1998). Further, highly avoidant individuals employ deactivation strategies in response to relationship-relevant events (Cassidy & Kobak, 1988), minimizing the impact of the gift giving situation on the relationship.

As individuals high in avoidance are likely to focus on their own independence and take credit for choosing the right gift, high avoidance givers may experience increased processing fluency in response to information that supports the goal of being in control over choosing the right gift. Therefore, we propose that information supporting the notion that the giver will be proud to give the gift (termed a “giver-focused” advertisement) will match the avoidance dimension of attachment style.
Interaction Effects

As described above, individuals with an anxious attachment style (high anxiety, low avoidance) should exhibit more persuasion when exposed to a recipient-focused advertisement, and individuals with an avoidant attachment style (low anxiety, high avoidance) should exhibit more persuasion when exposed to a giver-focused advertisement. The remaining two interactions between these dimensions describe the fearful attachment style (high anxiety, high avoidance), and the secure attachment style (low anxiety, low avoidance).

Individuals with a fearful attachment style exhibit the tendencies of both high anxiety and high avoidance. We propose that fearfully attached individuals will experience increased processing fluency when exposed to an advertisement that addresses both the attachment-related goals of attaining security and maintaining personal control. Therefore, information that supports both notions that the recipient will like the gift and that the giver will be proud to give the gift (termed a “both-focused” advertisement) will match the fearful attachment style.

Individuals with a secure attachment style do not exhibit the previously described tendencies of high anxiety and high avoidance. Further, they are more receptive and more open to new information and have a lower need for cognitive closure (Mikulincer, 1997). Therefore, processing fluency and the resulting message persuasiveness should not differ across the advertisements.

Hypotheses

H1: Advertisements that match gift givers’ attachment styles will result in enhanced message persuasiveness.
H1a: Due to increased fit, a recipient-focused advertisement will enhance message persuasiveness for gift givers with anxious attachment styles (high anxiety/low avoidance).

H1b: Due to increased fit, a giver-focused advertisement will enhance message persuasiveness for gift givers with avoidant attachment styles (low anxiety/high avoidance).

H1c: Due to increased fit, a both-focused advertisement will enhance message persuasiveness for gift givers with fearful attachment styles (high anxiety/high avoidance).

H1d: The three advertisement types will not result in differential message persuasiveness for gift givers with secure attachment styles.

Measures

Independent Variables

Attachment Style. Anxiety and Avoidance were measured using the same revision of Fraley, Waller, and Brennan’s (2000) revised Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR-R) scale employed in study 1.

Message Type. Three advertisements were developed: a recipient-focused ad, a giver-focused ad, and a both-focused ad. Further, male participants viewed ads with male models, while female participants viewed ads with female models, with all other information (headline, text) being identical. The stimulus ads are depicted in Appendix C.
Pretesting on the headline, picture, text, and the full ad were conducted to examine the extent of perceived giver- and recipient-focus (n = 102). These individual measures were averaged to create a composite index. Results for the individual measures corresponded to the composite measures, so they are not reported.

Pretest results revealed that the recipient-focused ad \((M = 4.74)\) was perceived as significantly more recipient-focused than the giver-focused ad \((M = 2.91, p < .001)\), but not significantly more recipient-focused than the both-focused ad \((M = 4.68)\).

The giver-focused ad \((M = 5.96)\) was perceived as significantly more giver-focused than the recipient-focused ad \((M = 3.66, p < .001)\), and significantly more giver-focused than the both-focused ad \((M = 4.60, p < .001)\). While the giver-focused ad was perceived as more giver-focused than the both-focused ad, the both-focused ad was perceived as more giver-focused than the recipient-focused ad \((p < .01)\).

No differences in ad evaluations due to gender were found. Further, no differences in ad evaluations were found with respect to favorability, likeability, positivity, appropriateness, expectations, believability, convincingness, and acceptability. Thus, the ads seem equivalent.

Dependent Variables

The persuasiveness of the advertisement was evaluated based on commonly used measures of attitude toward the ad \((A_{Ad})\), attitude toward the brand \((A_{Brand})\), attitude toward the act of purchasing \((A_{AP})\), and purchase intentions \((PI)\), (e.g., Mitchell and Olson, 1981; Mitchell, 1986).
Attitude toward the Ad. A_Ad was measured using three items on seven-point semantic-differential scales. Participants were asked to rate the extent that the advertisement was: favorable/unfavorable, not at all likeable/likeable, and negative/positive. These items loaded on a single factor explaining 81.8% of the variance ($\alpha = .889$).

Attitude toward the Brand. A_Brand was measured using three-items on seven-point semantic-differential scales. Participants were asked to rate the extent that the brand was: bad/good, dislike very much/like very much, and unpleasant/pleasant. These items loaded on a single factor explaining 89.6% of the variance ($\alpha = .94$).

Attitude toward the Act of Purchasing. A_AP was measured using three items on seven-point semantic differential scales. Participants were asked to rate the extent that purchasing the brand as a gift was: bad/good, foolish/wise, and harmful/beneficial. These items loaded on a single factor explaining 85% of the variance ($\alpha = .908$).

Purchase Intentions. PI was measured using a single item on a seven-point semantic differential scale. Participants were asked to rate how likely they were to purchase the brand as a gift, from not at all likely to very likely.

Mediating Variables

Fit. The fit between the advertisements and participants’ views of gift giving was assessed using a five-item, seven-point semantic differential scale. Two items measured expectancy and relevance (unexpected/expected; irrelevant/relevant), the two components of congruency
(Heckler and Childers, 1992). Two more items measuring congruency were adapted from Peck and Johnson (2006): “The fit between the advertisement and the way I view giving gifts is: very bad/very good; very unfavorable/very favorable.” One item measuring fit was adapted from Kim, Rao and Lee (2008), “The advertisement: felt wrong/felt right.”

Principal component analysis on the five-item semantic differential scale revealed that all five items loaded on a single factor explaining 64% of the variance ($\alpha = .85$). However, item 3, measuring expectancy, displayed a lower communality (.311) and a lower factor loading (.558) than the other items, indicating that the expectancy item could be capturing a different construct than the other four items. As item 3 is a popular and commonly used measure of congruence from a seminal piece (Heckler and Childers 1992) and better supported the hypothesized relationships than the five-item scale and a four-item scale with item 3 removed, only item 3 is employed as the fit measure in the analyses.

**Consistency.** Five items were created to measure the extent to which the advertisement was consistent with participants’ views of gift giving, and were measured on seven-point Likert scales. These items were: “The advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving,” “The text in the advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving,” “The picture in the advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving,” “The advertisement is consistent with the way I view friendships,” and “The advertisement is a realistic portrayal of gift giving.”

Principal components analysis indicated that all five items loaded on a single factor explaining 71.3% of the variance ($\alpha = .89$). However, the consistency measure was not significant in the analyses and was dropped from the study.
Affect. Fifteen items were included to capture affective response to the advertisement. Four items were measured on seven-point semantic differential scales: "The advertisement is: not at all enjoyable/very enjoyable, not at all likeable/very likeable, not at all interesting/very interesting," (Zinkhan and Martin, 1983) and "The advertisement: puts me in a bad mood/puts me in a good mood," (Labroo and Lee, 2006). Eleven items were measured on seven-point Likert scales. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed they felt the following emotions while viewing the advertisement: interested, moved, captivated, confident, delighted, enthusiastic, satisfied, confused, irritated, bothered (Derbaix, 1995).

Principal components analysis on the fifteen-item scale revealed a two-factor solution. Items 4, 13, 14 and 15 were removed one by one to arrive at a single factor solution measuring positive affective response, which explained 62% of the variance (α = .94). However, the affect measure was not significant in the analyses and was dropped from the study.

Participants

Four hundred ninety one participants were recruited from an undergraduate business course at Kent State University to participate in study two. One hundred ninety seven participants (40.1%) were male, and 294 participants (59.9%) were female. The average age of participants was 21 years old (sd = 3.14 years, range = 18 to 46).
Method

Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions. One hundred thirty participants were assigned to the recipient-focused ad condition, 124 participants were assigned to the giver-focused ad condition, and 131 participants were assigned to the both-focused condition. A “no ad” condition was also included in study 2, and had 106 participants. Study 2 was administered via online survey using Qualtrics. After exposure to the advertisement, participants completed multi-item scales related to the dependent measures, mediation measures, and independent measures.

Procedure

Participants were asked to access the survey via a hyperlink provided by email. The link corresponded to the condition to which the participant was assigned. Participants first viewed the advertisement that corresponded to the condition: recipient-focused ad, giver-focused ad, both-focused ad, or no ad. In the three ad conditions, participants next completed the dependent measures, mediator measures, and independent variable measure. In the no ad condition, attitude toward the ad and the mediating measures were omitted. Finally, all participants completed demographic information and were thanked for their participation.
Results

*Descriptive Statistics*

Anxiety and avoidance did not differ across condition (all \( p \)'s > .34). Mean anxiety and avoidance by condition are reported below in Table 13.

**TABLE 13: MEAN ANXIETY AND AVOIDANCE BY CONDITION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Ad</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giver Ad</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td>2.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipient Ad</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Ad</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>2.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants’ mean scores on anxiety and avoidance are concerning. The means of anxiety and avoidance are low, indicating that relatively few participants were highly anxious or highly avoidant. Indeed, only 73 participants scored above the midpoint of the scale for anxiety (15%), and only 49 participants scored above the midpoint of the scale for avoidance (10%). Only 13 participants scored above the midpoint on both anxiety and avoidance. The results of study 2 should be considered in light of the majority of participants being neither highly anxious nor highly avoidant.

*Preliminary Analysis*

Preliminary analysis indicated that viewing an ad was more persuasive than not viewing an ad. Multivariate ANOVA revealed participants in the no ad condition held significantly lower attitudes toward the brand \( (M = 4.2) \) than participants in the recipient-focused ad condition \( (M = \)
4.915, \( p = .001 \)), the giver-focused ad condition (\( M = 4.785, p < .01 \)), and the both-focused ad condition (\( M = 4.896, p = .001 \)). No significant differences on attitude toward the brand were found between the Ad conditions (all \( p \)'s > .47).

Participants in the no ad condition also held significantly lower attitudes toward the act of purchasing (\( M = 3.45 \)) than participants in the recipient-focused ad condition (\( M = 4.123, p = .001 \)), the giver-focused ad condition (\( M = 4.105, p = .001 \)), and the both-focused ad condition (\( M = 3.969, p < .01 \)). No significant differences on attitude toward the act of purchasing were found between the ad conditions (all \( p \)'s > .41).

Finally, participants in the no ad condition held significantly lower purchase intentions (\( M = 2.34 \)) than participants in the recipient-focused ad condition (\( M = 2.992, p < .01 \)), the giver-focused ad condition (\( M = 3.097, p = .001 \)), and the both-focused ad condition (\( M = 2.931, p = .01 \)). No significant differences in purchase intentions were found between the ad conditions (all \( p \)'s > .45). These results also indicate that the advertisements themselves were equally persuasive.

**Multiple Regression**

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of anxiety, avoidance, and ad condition on fit. Multiple regression analysis was chosen over ANOVA in order to preserve the continuous nature of two independent variables, anxiety and avoidance. Because anxiety and avoidance were expected to interact with ad condition, anxiety and avoidance were mean centered and ad condition (a categorical variable) was dummy coded.

First, anxiety, avoidance, and ad condition (represented by two dummy variables) were entered into the model, with the giver-focused ad serving as the comparison group. Next, all possible two-way interactions were entered into the model. Finally, the two three-way
interactions were entered into the model. Results revealed that only the four-predictor, main
effects model was significant, $R^2 = .03$, $F(4,380) = 2.969$, $p < .05$. Results showed a positive
association between anxiety and purchase intentions ($b = .211$, $t = 2.369$, $p < .05$), and a negative
association between avoidance and purchase intentions ($b = -.36$, $t = -3.286$, $p = .01$). Ad
condition did not contribute to the regression model.

While the amount of variance in purchase intentions explained by anxiety and avoidance
($R^2 = .03$), as well as the absence of interaction effects and effects of ad condition on purchase
intentions, are concerning, predictions relied on fit as a mediator of the effects of anxiety,
avoidance, and ad condition on purchase intentions. Indeed, Hayes (2009) reports that it is
possible for a mediator to be causally between an independent variable and a dependent variable,
even if the independent and dependent variables are not associated. Therefore, ad condition and
its interactions with anxiety and avoidance may still predict purchase intentions through fit.

Multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of anxiety, avoidance,
and ad condition on fit. First, anxiety, avoidance, and ad condition (represented by two dummy
variables) were entered into the model, with the giver-focused ad serving as the comparison
group. Next, all possible two-way interactions were entered into the model. Finally, the two
three-way interactions were entered into the model. Results revealed that the two-way interaction
model was significant, $R^2 = .112$, $F(8, 376) = 5.924$, $p < .001$.

Results revealed a significant, positive interaction of anxiety and the both-focused ad
condition ($b = .614$, $t = 3.420$, $p = .001$) on fit, indicating that as anxiety increases, fit to the both-
focused ad increases, compared to the giver-focused ad. A significant positive interaction of
anxiety and the recipient-focused ad condition ($b = .530$, $t = 2.826$, $p < .01$) was also found,
indicating that anxiety increases fit to the recipient-focused ad, compared to the giver-focused

ad. No significant difference was found comparing the anxiety x both-focused ad interaction to the anxiety x recipient-focused ad interaction \( (p > .10) \). These results demonstrate that, as anxiety increases, fit to the both-focused ad and recipient-focused ad increases, and fit to the giver-focused ad decreases.

Results revealed a significant, negative interaction of avoidance and the both-focused ad condition \( (b = -.871, t = -4.046, p < .001) \), and a significant negative interaction of avoidance and the recipient-focused ad condition \( (b = -.499, t = -2.138, p < .05) \), compared to the giver-focused ad condition. These results demonstrate that, as avoidance increases, fit to the giver-focused ad increases, and fit to the both-focused ad and recipient-focused ad decrease.

Taken as a whole, these results provide partial support for hypotheses regarding the fit of the persuasive message. Anxiety increases fit to ads that feature the recipient or the relationship (partial support for H1a), while avoidance increases fit to an ad that features only the giver (partial support for H1b).

**Mediation Analysis**

Mediation was assessed using Hayes and Preacher’s (2011) MEDIATE macro in SPSS 16.0. The results for the indirect effect model, based on 5,000 bootstrapping resamples, showed an adjusted \( R^2 = .07, p < .001 \). The model demonstrated a significant effect between the mediator (fit) and the outcome variable (purchase intentions), \( b = .29, t = 4.88, p < .001 \). Additionally, the 95% confidence interval around the omnibus indirect effect model did not contain zero (LLCI = .0129, ULCI = .0583), confirming the expectation that fit mediates the effects of anxiety, avoidance, and ad type on purchase intentions. Further, the omnibus test of the direct effect was not significant \( (p < .25) \), as expected from the multiple regression results.
A second test of mediation was employed to test sequential mediation using Hayes’ (2012) PROCESS macro in SPSS 16.0. PROCES Model 6 enables for testing the effect of fit on purchase intentions sequentially through attitude toward the ad (A_Ad), attitude toward the brand (A_Brand), and attitude toward the act of purchasing (A_AP).

The results for the indirect effect model, based on 5,000 bootstrapping resamples, showed an adjusted $R^2 = .61$, $p < .001$. The model is depicted below in Figure 3.

**FIGURE 3: SEQUENTIAL MEDIATION**

The sequential mediation model demonstrates that the effect of fit on purchase intentions is fully mediated by attitude toward the ad, attitude toward the brand, and attitude toward the act of purchasing. The effect of attitude toward the ad on purchase intentions is partially mediated by attitude toward the brand and attitude toward the act of purchasing. The effect of attitude toward the brand on purchase intentions is partially mediated by attitude toward the act of purchasing.

**Discussion**

Results demonstrate that anxiety, avoidance, and message type affect purchase intentions through fit. Specifically, givers higher in anxiety perceive greater fit with persuasive messages featuring the recipient or the relationship (the recipient as well as the giver). Givers higher in
avoidance perceive greater fit with persuasive messages featuring the giver only. The hypothesized effect of fit on message persuasiveness is supported; greater fit results in greater message persuasiveness.

Study 2 has several limitations. Participants were, as a majority, low in both anxiety and avoidance. Since the effects were predicted to be due to high levels of anxiety and avoidance, the results should be interpreted with caution. Second, all participants were recruited from undergraduate courses at Kent State University, so results may not generalize to other populations. Finally, because the participants attend Kent State University, and the advertisements were for Kent State University, participants may have been affected by social desirability bias or a desire to help the University succeed.

Study 2 demonstrates that attachment style is a significant predictor of the fit of a persuasive message. Practically, this suggests that, when consumer behaviors with respect to a brand are relational in nature, such as giving a brand as a gift, the persuasiveness of that brand’s promotional efforts may depend on the fit between the message and the attachment styles of those in the target market. This indicates that the use of attachment style in predicting message fit may extend to other consumption situations that are relational in nature, such as products that are publicly consumed or products that are shared between individuals. Future research should consider investigating how attachment style may affect information processing in other relational consumption situations.

General Discussion
Taken together, the results of studies 1 and 2 demonstrate that attachment style is an important factor for the study of gift preference and for the processing of persuasive messages related to gift giving. Both studies reveal congruence or fit to be a mechanism by which individuals’ attachment style affects their gifting behaviors. Specifically, study 1 shows that attachment style can affect the identity-congruence of gifts given and received, while study 2 demonstrates that the perceived fit between a giver’s attachment style and a persuasive message can predict their consumer behaviors. Study 1 provides a new potential explanation as to why the gifts givers prefer to give often differ from the gifts recipients prefer to receive; namely, that givers may not be considering their recipients’ attachment styles. In other words, giving a gift that is highly recipient identity-congruent may not always be the best strategy. Study 2 provides a practical tactic that marketers can use to influence the purchase of their brand as a gift by demonstrating that increasing the fit between an advertising message and the giver’s attachment style can result in greater persuasion.

Contributions

The work in this dissertation contributes to the gift exchange literature in consumer behavior in several ways. As gifts are vehicles through which relationships are created, maintained, and altered, we underscore the importance of considering gift exchange phenomena from an attachment theory perspective. This work demonstrates that an attachment theory of gift exchange is consistent with the use of gift exchange to manage dyadic relationships, has the ability to explain gift exchange phenomena, and provides a basis for further quantitative study of gift exchange.
Specifically, this work contributes to our current understanding of gift exchange in four ways. First, a potential explanation for the asymmetry often observed in giver and recipient gift preferences is presented. This explanation is supported by extant research from a variety of fields which demonstrates that gift exchange is a mechanism by which relationship intimacy is dyadically managed. Second, we show that the Actor-Partner Interdependence Model has potential for the study of relationship-level phenomena in the consumer behavior literature. Third, we link self-congruency theory to the gift exchange literature, establishing the importance of identity congruence as a factor relevant to the study of gift exchange. Finally, we reveal a practical implication of the attachment theory perspective of gift exchange by demonstrating that givers’ gift purchases can be influenced by matching a persuasive message to the giver’s attachment style.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

THE REVISED EXPERIENCES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS SCALE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anxiety</th>
<th>Avoidance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that I will lose my partner’s love.</td>
<td>I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often worry that my partner will not want to stay with me.</td>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often worry that my partner doesn’t really love me.</td>
<td>I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that romantic partners won’t care about me as much as I care about them.</td>
<td>I am very comfortable being close to romantic partners. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often wish that my partner’s feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for him/her.</td>
<td>I don’t feel comfortable opening up to romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry a lot about my relationships.</td>
<td>I prefer not to be too close to romantic partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my partner is out of sight, I worry that he or she might become interested in someone else.</td>
<td>I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I show my feelings for romantic partners, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me.</td>
<td>I find it relatively easy to get close to my partner. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rarely worry about my partner leaving me. (R)</td>
<td>It’s not difficult for me to get close to my partner. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My romantic partner makes me doubt myself.</td>
<td>I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my partner. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not often worry about being abandoned. (R)</td>
<td>It helps to turn to my romantic partner in times of need. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find that my partner(s) don’t want to get as close as I would like.</td>
<td>I tell my partner just about everything. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes romantic partners change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
<td>I talk things over with my partner. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away</td>
<td>I am nervous when partners get too close to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that once a romantic partner gets to know me, he or she won’t like who I really am.</td>
<td>I feel comfortable depending on romantic partners. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes me mad that I don’t get the affection and support I need from my partner.</td>
<td>I find it easy to depend on romantic partners. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that I won’t measure up to other people.</td>
<td>It’s easy for me to be affectionate with my partner. (R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My partner only seems to notice me when I’m angry.</td>
<td>My partner really understands me and my needs. (R)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from Fraley, Waller, and Brennan (2000)
PARAMETERS IN STUDY 1 MODELS

The discussion of model properties is guided by the work of Kline (1998). The limit on the number of statistical effects that can be represented in the model is equal to the number of observations, which refers to the number of variances and covariances among the observed variables and is counted using the following equation: \( \frac{v(v + 1)}{2} \), where \( v \) = the number of observed variables. The model in Figure 2 has 36 observations: \((8 \times 9) / 2 = 36\).

The statistical effects represented in the model are called parameters. The number of parameters cannot exceed the number of observations. The number of parameters in the model equals “the total number of variances and covariances (i.e., unanalyzed associations) of exogenous variables that are either observed or unmeasured (i.e., disturbances) and direct effects on endogenous variables from other observed variables,” (Kline, 1998; p. 104).

Exogenous variables refer to what are often called independent or predictor variables in other statistical techniques. These variables are presumed to affect other variables in the model, and their causes are not represented in the model. In Figure 2, the variables representing givers’ and recipients’ anxiety and avoidance and their interactions are exogenous variables (subsequently referred to as X1 – X6). Endogenous variables are the effects of other variables in a model. Endogenous variables may be what are called dependent or outcome variables in other techniques, but also may be mediating variables (i.e., causes of other endogenous variables). The endogenous variables in Figure 2 are the identity congruence levels of givers’ and recipients’ preferred gifts (subsequently referred to as Y1 and Y2). The disturbances (EG and ER) of the
endogenous variables also have unique variances and a covariance. The parameter count is represented in Table 14.

**TABLE 14: MODEL PARAMETERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Parameter</th>
<th>Exogenous Variables</th>
<th>Direct Effects on Endogenous Variables</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Variances</td>
<td>Covariances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X₁, X₂, X₃, X₄, X₅, X₆</td>
<td>X₁ – X₂,</td>
<td>X₁ – Y₁,</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EG, ER</td>
<td>X₁ – X₃,</td>
<td>X₁ – Y₂,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X₁ – X₄,</td>
<td>X₂ – Y₁,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X₁ – X₅,</td>
<td>X₂ – Y₂,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X₁ – X₆</td>
<td>X₃ – Y₁,</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>X₂ – X₃,</td>
<td>X₃ – Y₂,</td>
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<td>X₄ – Y₂,</td>
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<td>X₂ – X₆</td>
<td>X₅ – Y₁,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X₃ – X₆</td>
<td>X₆ – Y₂</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>EG – ER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The parameter count (36) is equal to the number of observations (36). This means that the model is just-identified (a.k.a. saturated) and will perfectly fit the data. Indeed, the SEM approach to APIM estimation is always just-identified (Ackerman, Donnellan, and Kashy, 2010).
APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENTS USED IN STUDY 1

SURVEY 1

Please enter the LAST NAME of the friend you have recruited (who recruited you) to participate in this two-part study.

Please enter the FIRST NAME of the friend you have recruited (who recruited you) to participate in this two-part study.

The friend you have recruited must be the same gender as you, and must be neither a romantic partner nor a relative.

Is this friend the same gender as you?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Is this friend a relative of yours?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Are you or have you ever been romantically involved with this friend?

☐ Yes
☐ No
The statements below concern how you feel in friendships. We are interested in how you generally experience friendships, not just in what is happening in a current friendship. Respond to each statement by clicking a circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Please answer honestly; there are no right/wrong, better/worse answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that I will lose my friendships.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer not to show friends how I feel deep down.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often worry that my friends will not want to continue our friendship.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often worry that my friends don’t really care about me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that friends won’t care about me as much as I care about them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am very comfortable being close to my friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often wish that my friends’ feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t feel comfortable opening up to my friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry a lot about my friendships.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I prefer not to be too close to my friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>When my friends are out of sight, I worry that they might become better friends with someone else.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get uncomfortable when my friends want to be very close.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When I show my feelings for my friends, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it relatively easy to get close to my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rarely worry about my friends leaving me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s not difficult for me to get close to my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends make me doubt myself.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not often worry about being abandoned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps to turn to my friends in times of need.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find that my friends don’t want to get as close as I would like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell my friends just about everything.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes my friends change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk things over with my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am nervous when my friends get too close to me.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that once my friends get to know me, they won’t like who I really am.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable depending on my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes me mad that I don’t get the care and support I need from my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easy to depend on my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that I won’t measure up to other people.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy for me to care about my friends.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends only seem to notice me when I’m angry.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends really understand me and my needs.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</table>
Please select the one description that you feel best describes you.

- It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
- I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

Rounding to the nearest whole year, how many years have you known the friend you have recruited (who recruited you) to participate in this survey?

Please enter numbers only.

Please indicate how similar you feel you are to the friend you have recruited (who recruited you) to participate in this survey.

- Very Dissimilar
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- Very Similar

Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female

Rounding to the nearest year, please indicate your age.

Please enter numbers only.

Please indicate how many close friends you have.

Please enter numbers only.

For extra credit purposes ONLY, please enter your LAST NAME.
For extra credit purposes ONLY, please enter your FIRST NAME.
Please take a moment to think about Apple i-Tunes. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Apple i-Tunes. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of Apple i-Tunes. Once you've done this, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

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<td>I am not at all like the users of Apple i-Tunes that I know.</td>
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</tr>
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<td>The image of the typical user of Apple i-Tunes is very dissimilar from the kind of person I am.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my personal profile is similar to a user of Apple i-Tunes.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>dissimilar from the kind of person I am.</td>
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<td></td>
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<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
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140
Please take a moment to think about Olive Garden. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Olive Garden. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of Olive Garden. Once you've done this, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

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</tbody>
</table>
Please take a moment to think about Wal-Mart. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Wal-Mart. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of Wal-Mart. Once you've done this, please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

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</tbody>
</table>
Please enter the LAST NAME of the friend you are participating with in Parts A and B of this survey.

Please enter the FIRST NAME of the friend you are participating with in Parts A and B of this survey.

Take a moment to think about Apple i-Tunes. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Apple i-Tunes. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of Apple i-Tunes. Next, thinking about the friend you are participating in this survey with, indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements for your friend.

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>My friend is very much like the typical user of Apple i-Tunes.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identify my friend with other users of Apple i-Tunes.</td>
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<td>I feel my friend’s personal profile is similar to a user of Apple i-Tunes.</td>
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<td>My friend does not have anything in common with a user of Apple i-Tunes.</td>
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Take a moment to think about Olive Garden. Think about the kind of person who typically uses Olive Garden. Imagine this person in your mind and then describe this person using one or more personal adjectives, such as stylish, classy, masculine, sexy, old, athletic, or whatever personal adjectives you can use to describe the typical user of Olive Garden. Next, thinking about the friend you are participating in this survey with, indicate your agreement or disagreement with the following statements for your friend.

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<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>I identify my friend with other users of Wal-Mart.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friend is not at all like the users of Wal-Mart that I know.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The image of the typical user of Wal-Mart is very dissimilar from the kind of person my friend is.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel my friend’s personal profile is similar to a user of Wal-Mart.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friend does not have anything in common with a user of Wal-Mart.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please indicate how familiar you are with the following brands.

Apple i-Tunes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissimilar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very Similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

American Eagle Outfitters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissimilar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very Similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Ticketmaster

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissimilar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very Similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Olive Garden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissimilar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very Similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Wal-Mart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Very Dissimilar</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Very Similar</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

[MATHEMATICAL DISTRACTOR TASK]
What is 98 + 75?

- 175
- 173
- 200
- 12

What is the next number in the following sequence?
1, 5, 9, 13, 17, ____

- 21
- 25
- 18
- 3
What is 75 divided by 5?

- 17
- 5
- 7
- 15

What is 5 times 21?

- 100
- 75
- 105
- 215

What is the next number in the following sequence?
2, 6, 10, 14, 18, ____

- 22
- 24
- 14
- 12

GIVER VERSION:
Imagine that it is the birthday of the friend you are participating in this survey with.
You want to get your friend a birthday gift, and have enough money to do so.
You have decided to get your friend a $25 gift card to one of the following brands.
Assume that the gift card format and dollar-value are not important in making your choice.
Please select the one gift that you most prefer to give to your friend.

- Apple i-Tunes
- American Eagle Outfitters
- Ticketmaster
- Olive Garden
- Wal-Mart
Imagine that it is your birthday.

The friend you are participating in this survey with wants to get you a birthday gift, and has enough money to do so.

Your friend has decided to give you a $25 gift card to one of the following brands.

Assume that the gift card format and dollar-value are not important in making your choice.

Please select the one gift that you most prefer to receive from your friend.

- Apple i-Tunes
- American Eagle Outfitters
- Ticketmaster
- Olive Garden
- Wal-Mart

Please explain why you prefer to give this gift to (receive this gift from) your friend.
APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT USED IN STUDY 2

Please think about a close friend who:
1. Is a current Kent State University student,
2. Is the same gender as you,
3. Is neither a current nor former romantic partner, and
4. Is not a relative of yours.
Please enter that person's name in the text box below. This information is confidential.

Please select your gender.
☐ Male
☐ Female

Imagine that the close friend whose name you just entered is close to graduation from Kent State University. You want to get your friend a graduation gift, and have enough money to do so. While you are thinking about the graduation gift you want to get your friend, you come across the advertisement below for the Kent State University Bookstore. Please spend about 30 seconds viewing and reading the advertisement.

[AD DISPLAYED CORRESPONDING TO CONDITION]

How do you feel about the advertisement for the Kent State University Bookstore?

Unfavorable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Favorable
Not at all likeable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Likeable
Negative  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Positive

How do you feel about the Kent State University Bookstore?

Bad  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Good
Dislike very much  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Like very much
Unpleasant  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  Pleasant
How do you feel about purchasing a graduation gift for your friend from the Kent State University Bookstore?

Bad 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Good

Foolish 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Wise

Harmful 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Beneficial

How likely are you to buy a graduation gift for your friend from the Kent State University Bookstore?

Not at all likely 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likely

The advertisement is:

Not at all enjoyable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very enjoyable

Not at all likeable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very likeable

Not at all interesting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very interesting

The advertisement:

Puts me in a bad mood 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Puts me in a good mood

Below is a list of emotional reactions you may have experienced while viewing the advertisement. Please select the option that shows how much you agree that you felt each emotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Reaction</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interested</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Captivated</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delighted</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiastic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bothered</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fit between the advertisement and the way I view giving gifts is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very favorable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advertisement is:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Expected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrelevant</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relevant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The advertisement:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Felt wrong</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Felt Right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very unfavorable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Very favorable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please click the circle that expresses how much you agree with each statement below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The text in the advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The picture in the advertisement is consistent with the way I view gift giving.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advertisement is consistent with the way I view friendships.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The advertisement is a realistic portrayal of gift giving.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statements below concern how you feel in friendships. We are interested in how you generally experience friendships, not just in what is happening in a current friendship. Respond to each statement by clicking a circle to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement. Please answer honestly; there are no right/wrong, better/worse answers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that I will lose my friendships.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I prefer not to show friends how I feel deep down.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often worry that my friends will not want to continue our friendship.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with my friends.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5 6 7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I often worry that my friends don’t really care about me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I worry that friends won’t care about me as much as I care about them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I am very comfortable being close to my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I often wish that my friends’ feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I don’t feel comfortable opening up to my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I worry a lot about my friendships. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I prefer not to be too close to my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When my friends are out of sight, I worry that they might become better friends with someone else. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I get uncomfortable when my friends want to be very close. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
When I show my feelings for my friends, I’m afraid they will not feel the same about me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I find it relatively easy to get close to my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
I rarely worry about my friends leaving me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
It’s not difficult for me to get close to my friends. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
My friends make me doubt myself. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I usually discuss my problems and concerns with my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not often worry about being abandoned.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It helps to turn to my friends in times of need.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find that my friends don’t want to get as close as I would like.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I tell my friends just about everything.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes my friends change their feelings about me for no apparent reason.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I talk things over with my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My desire to be very close sometimes scares people away.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am nervous when my friends get too close to me.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m afraid that once my friends get to know me, they won’t like who I really am.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable depending on my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It makes me mad that I don’t get the care and support I need from my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I find it easy to depend on my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I worry that I won’t measure up to other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It’s easy for me to care about my friends.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My friends only seem to notice me when I’m angry.

My friends really understand me and my needs.

Please select the one option you feel best describes you.

- It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on others and having others depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.
- I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

How involved were you when you viewed the advertisement?

Skimmed it quickly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Paid a lot of attention
Not at all involved 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very involved

How involved were you when you answered the survey questions?

Skimmed it quickly 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Paid a lot of attention
Not at all involved 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very involved
APPENDIX E: STIMULUS ADS USED IN STUDY 2

Recipient-focused ads

A Gift They'll Love to Receive!
KSU graduates will love to receive a graduation gift from the KSU Bookstore!

The KSU Bookstore has many gift options, such as: Kent State t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, desk accessories, diploma frames, bumper stickers, mugs, glassware, and more.

The KSU Bookstore – A graduation gift they'll love to receive!

BOOKSTORE HOURS:
Monday – Thursday 8am – 5pm
Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

A Gift They'll Love to Receive!
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Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm

KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

• 330-672-2762 • 124 Student Center • www.kent.bookstore.com •
Giver-focused ads

A Gift You’ll Be Proud to Give!

You’ll be proud to give a graduation gift from the KSU Bookstore!

The KSU Bookstore has many gift options, such as: Kent State t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, desk accessories, diploma frames, bumper stickers, mugs, glassware, and more.

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330-672-2762 • 124 Student Center • www.kent.bookstore.com

A Gift You’ll be Proud to Give!

You’ll be proud to give a graduation gift from the KSU Bookstore!

The KSU Bookstore has many gift options, such as: Kent State t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, desk accessories, diploma frames, bumper stickers, mugs, glassware, and more.

The KSU Bookstore – A graduation gift you’ll be proud to give!

BOOKSTORE HOURS:
Monday – Thursday 8am – 8pm
Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm

330-672-2762 • 124 Student Center • www.kent.bookstore.com

159
Both-focused ads

A Gift You’ll Be Proud to Give & They’ll Love to Receive!

Both givers and recipients will be happy with a graduation gift from the KSU Bookstore!

The KSU Bookstore has many gift options, such as: Kent State t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, desk accessories, diploma frames, bumper stickers, mugs, glassware, and more.

The KSU Bookstore – Be proud to give the graduation gift they’ll love to receive from the KSU Bookstore!

BOOKSTORE HOURS:

Monday – Thursday 8am – 8pm
Friday 8am – 5pm
Saturday & Sunday 11am – 4pm

• 330-672-2762 • 124 Student Center • www.kent.bkstr.com •

A Gift You’ll Be Proud to Give & They’ll Love to Receive!

Both givers and recipients will be happy with a graduation gift from the KSU Bookstore!

The KSU Bookstore has many gift options, such as: Kent State t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, backpacks, desk accessories, diploma frames, bumper stickers, mugs, glassware, and more.

The KSU Bookstore – Be proud to give the graduation gift they’ll love to receive from the KSU Bookstore!

BOOKSTORE HOURS:

Monday – Thursday 8am – 8pm
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