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GIFT GIVING BEHAVIOR AMONG MILLENNIALS, THE USE OF PHOTO ELICITATION INTERVIEW TO DISCOVER CONSUMER INSIGHT

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ABSTRACT

Manuscript type: Research paper

Research Aims: This paper aims to explore gift-giving activities among millennials at the perspective of gift-giver using the photo elicitation interview. The typology of the relationship between gift givers and receivers and the effects of this relationship to the types of products given in gift-giving activities are also evaluated.

Design/methodology/approach: This paper is using phenomenological approach and photo elicitation interview with purposive convenience sampling method to obtain gift-givers decision making process in searching gift products.

Research Findings: The process of searching, preparing, and delivering of gifts is influenced by several factors, namely the closeness of the relationship, past experiences and the moment of giving the gift. The structure of intimacy creates hierarchy of gift giving given by gift givers. The position and social class of the gift receiver affect the shape, price, and gifts delivery process.

Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This research is expected to provide an understanding of the consumer decision-making process in giving gifts at certain moments experienced by consumers.

Practitioner/Policy Implication: This paper give insights to the practitioner about the promotional and products design that are associated with the closeness between consumers and gift givers to attract gift-givers giving a gift to the special people around them

Research limitation/Implications: This study is only discuss gift-giving behavior from gift-givers and does not pay attention to the recipient perspective so it is less comprehensive in discussing gift-giving behavior in the millennial generation.

Keywords: Gift-giving, millennials, photo elicitation interview, consumer behavior, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Gift-giving Rituals are practiced by individuals. Special moments such as religious celebrations (Eid al-Fitr, Christmas, Chinese New Year, etc.), Valentine's Day, birthdays (birthdays, births, etc.), class graduation, and weddings are moments when gift giving are practiced. Although gift-giving activities are common, the significance of gift-giving is determined by economic and symbolic values inherent in the cultural norms in which the gift-giving is carried out (Joy, 2001). For example: give a money in a red envelope by married family members for unmarried extended family members is an important ritual for Chinese people during Chinese New Year celebrations.

Gift-giving activities are common in the community and found among various classes like senior generations who appreciate gift giving rituals to strengthen relationship and younger generation to impress their peers. According to Fromm and Garton (2013: 27) the Millennials are the generation born between 1977 - 1995, they are generation who have more friends and higher relationship intimacy with their friends. This typical characteristic makes them involve in high exchange activity. They tend to be more concerned with the moments that are passed together and want to make the moments special. This generation exchanges more information, build relationships, and maintain relationships with people around them (Fromm and Garton, 2013).

The number of relationships builds among millennials causes various types of relationships. This causes the forms of emotional closeness between them are also different. Differs based on the interests and intimacy and show it in the form of gift-giving activities (Belk and Coon, 1993).

There have been several studies about gifts, especially in the area of increasing peoples gift giving desire through promotions and store ambience set up (Buil., Et.al, 2013). There also research on the benefits of gifts giving activities and forms of gift from the socio-cultural side (Joy, 2001). However, insightful empirical research regarding the decision-making process behind gift-giving behavior has not been found. Yet an understanding of the decision-making process behind gift-giving behavior helps marketers design forms of promo-

tions, gift products, or gimmicks that fit their market needs. Therefore, this research needs to be done.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gift-Giving activities are a complex process and activities that need foundation to explore and explain. There are concepts used in this research to be used as foundations in explaining gift-giving activities.

Consumer Behavior

Consumer behavior is a science that studies the processes that occur when individuals or groups choose, use, or spend products, services, ideas, or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants (Solomon, 2011: 7). According to Hawkins and Mothersbaugh (2010: 6), consumer behavior understands more about the influence of the environment on purchasing decisions and the consequences for consumers and producers including for gift giving activities. On the gift-giving activities consumer behavior concepts gives various explanation about consumer decisions process based on many things such as culture, social, psychology that influence consumers in managing their needs, wants and how to fulfill them. Consumer behavior involves products, services, activities, experiences, and ideas so that the consumption process that is wanted to be understood through the study of consumer behavior is not limited to the consumption of visible objects but also objects that are not visible (Hoyer and McInnis, 2008: 3).

Consumer Decision Making Process

Consumer behavior shows that consumers go through many processes in a purchase decision making. There are many things that affect consumers before deciding to consume goods. According to Solomon (2011: 306) consumers go through several stages to decide. The decision-making process does not only happen once or several times but every time. Consumers carry out these stages automatically and take place continuously. In the decision-making process, many things affect consumers. This can come from within the consumer or from the consumer's environment. These processes also explain the gift-givers consideration process before giving a gift.

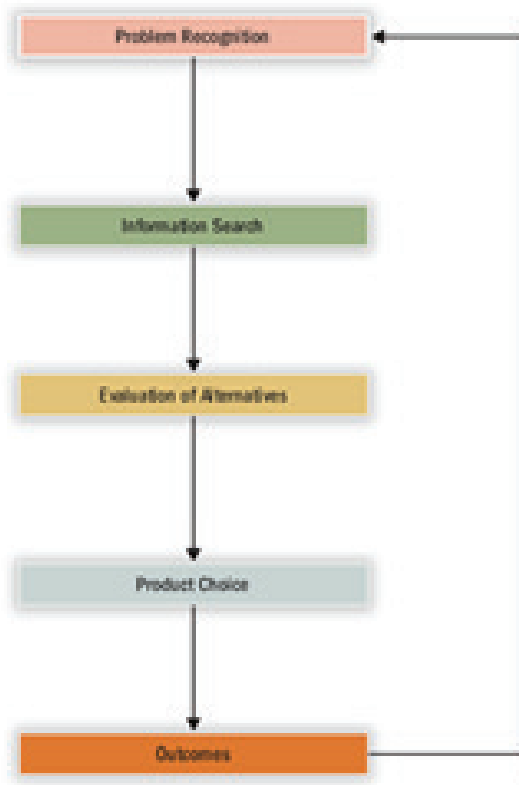


Figure 1 Consumer Decision Making Process

Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1974) states that the rewards given to someone for a certain action will encourage that person to do the same in the future. Homans argued that humans tend to act if they get a reward or reciprocity for their actions. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) state that each individual voluntarily enters and lives in social relations only as long as the relationship is satisfactory in terms of rewards and costs. Humans will only trade with others as long as the exchange provides enough reason for them to do so. In the concept explained by Thibaut and Kelly (1959), there are four main concepts that underlie the occurrence of social exchange activities, namely reward (reward), cost (cost), profit (profit), and comparison (level of comparison).

On the process to give gifts to others, gift-givers consider several aspects related to the action they take. The gift giver considers the kind of relationship he has with the potential recipient of the gift. This considers their reasons for giving gifts to others. Therefore, a form of marketing encouragement can also provide consideration before giving a gift.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study aims to explore into the gift giving phenomenon and understand consumer behavior that follows the phenomenon. This study uses an exploratory research approach, with the main objective of getting a new picture and understanding the problem situation faced by researchers which emphasizes the collection of ideas and inputs. (Malhotra, 2010: 103).

Phenomenology involves small numbers of subjects with an in-depth approach and engagement to interpret patterns and relationships that emerge (Creswell 2009: 13). This is a phenomenological research because it examines a small number of subjects with deep involvement to explain the experience of the informants in giving gifts.

This research tries to understand the behavior of the participants and encourage them to share their experiences, thus a tool that can facilitate the speakers to tell stories, explore their habits, and experiences is used, a visual stimulus. Through visual stimulus, the data obtained will be in-depth and focus on the research topic. Visual research method is the use of visual media such as pictures, photography, film, and other visual media as instruments to extract information from sources (Banks, 2001).

The use of visual media can make it easier for researchers to obtain information that cannot be obtained through ordinary methods, because with the presence of visual media, researchers and resource persons can focus more on research topics and deeper information (Banks, 2001: 88). In addition, by using visual media, researcher subjectivity can be reduced because both the researcher and the resource person have a medium that is the focus of the interview. This research will use photo media to draw meaning about gift giving activities. Photo media is considered appropriate because it can provide a stimulus to the source to bring up the memory in his or her thoughts and draw it out to be expressed during the interview process.

Photo Elicitation Interview

Photo Elicitation Interview focuses on the use of photo media in interviews so that photos become important in photo elicitation interview techniques. There are two methods of obtaining photos in a photo elicitation interview,

photos provided by researchers or provided by participants itself. If the photos are provided by the participants, the participants will become more familiar with the photos used so that the insights gained from the interview are more (auto driven). The weakness of auto-driven is that researchers cannot control the photos used and their relevance to research (Clark-ibanez, 2004).

According to Hinthorne (2012), if the photo is provided by the researcher, the researcher can adjust it to the theory used as well as the predetermined framework so that the direction of the research becomes clear and focuses on the theory or concept used in research (theory driven). According to Matteuci (2012), there are four ways to collect photos in photo elicitation interviews, namely photos produced by researchers, photos collected by researchers, photos produced by sources, and photos collected by sources. In addition, researchers can also collaborate with sources by collaborating to obtain photos used during interviews (Banks, 2001: 127).

During the collaboration process, the researcher provides photos that are used based on the concepts and theories used and the resource person provides or takes photos related to and supports the research according to the instructions of the researcher. Banks (2001: 99-100) suggests that iparticipants can also help provide additional photos of the interview based on their archives.

Provision of additional photos by sources can strengthen the information they provide based on the memory they have. Apart from direct collection of photos by researchers, resource persons, and researchers together with sources, photos can be obtained through external sources. External sources can come from outside the research environment or from online sources (Best., Et al, 2012).

Photo Elicitation Interview Process

Photo Elicitation interview (PEI) has several stages in the process of collecting photos and data (Clark-Ibanez, 2004; Epstein., Et al, 2006; Hinthorne, 2013; Padgett., Et al, 2013; Richard, 2014)

1. Sourcing photographs

The first stage in this research is to prepare

photos that will be used during the interview process, in PEI, there are two ways of preparing photos, provided by the researcher or taken by the participants themselves. This study uses both methods of providing these photos. Researchers find photos from external resources using internet, but researchers inform the participants about basic information such as the gift photos and activity about gift, so they are also expected to participate in providing photos. In addition, during the interview process, informants can add the photos they have if they think it is relevant.

2. Selecting photograph

The researcher then compiled the photo to create photo interview kit, which was grouping the photos based on photos theme.

4. Preparing interview schedule

The interview will be conducted at a location determined by the participant because by conducting PEI in a location that is familiar with them, they will fell comfort and they may provide additional material in the interview.

5. Conducting Interview

During the interview process, the interviewer gave a Photo Interview kit to the participant and allowed them to observe the photo while make a note about the expression given by participnts towards photo given. After they finish, interviewer began to ask about participant's response to the photos provided.

After conducting the interview process, the researcher made a verbatim transcription, which made a detailed transcript of the results of the interview conducted. The results of this transcription will then be analyzed using the thematic analysis method. The theme captures something important in the data related to the research question, representing several levels of the respondent's response patterns and describing the data groups in detail.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

There are several main key findings that determine gift-givers process to decide the suitable gift to be given.

1. The process of searching, preparing, and delivering of gifts is influenced by several factors, namely the closeness of the relationship, past experiences, and the moment of giving the gift

There are several factors that were considered by the participants in the process to find suitable gift to be given to the gift recipient. These factors are the closeness of the relationship between the gift giver and gift receiver, previous gifts made by the recipient of the gift, and the moment of the gift giving activities. Joy (2001) states that there are four kinds of patterns of closeness of the relationship between gift givers and recipients. This pattern of closeness of the relationship between the giver and recipient of the gift gives a different feeling between the giver and recipient of the gift, so the effort the giver puts in when looking for the appropriate gift differs for each pattern of closeness.

The participant considers the moment when the gift is given. Each moment brings meaning and symbol. The previous gift, given by the recipient of the gift creates a standard about the value of the gift. At least a similar or better value, because this is related to the identity and pride.

2. The structure of intimacy creates hierarchy of gift giving given by gift givers

The close relationship between the gift giver and recipient in giving gifts becomes a consideration for the gift giver to choose the appropriate gift. In a closer relationship, the gift giver will give the gift recipient a gift of better quality. This was done by the sources in this study because they thought they needed to give gifts of good quality to build and maintain relationships with the recipients of the gifts. According to Segev, et., Al (2013), there are three the motives for the gift giver in giving the gift, one of which is to position himself in a social relationship. To be able to place oneself, it can be done by giving gifts in accordance with the proposed association.

The hierarchy that is formed is in the form of willingness to allocate their time, resources, and mind in finding and getting the appropriate gift. In ordinary friendships, participant tend to find gifts without allocate

more effort. In higher relationships, such as close friends, informants are willing to allocate more resources in the form of money and time than in normal friendships. They are willing to spend more time getting the appropriate gift. Meanwhile, at the highest level of relationship, such as romantic other and family, gift givers are willing to spend resources extensively to be able to give gifts according to what the recipient of the gift wants.

3. The position and social class of the gift receiver affect the shape, price, and gifts delivery process.

The position, and social class of a person shows the level of a person in the eyes of others. Social class is a person's rank in general (Solomon, 2011: 461). The higher a person's position, people around them will automatically adjust to that person's position. It also affects the judgment in giving gifts to people of a certain position and social class. The participants in this study also stated that they would adjust the gifts they gave regarding to the position of the prize recipients. This is because someone who comes from the same social class tends to have relatively the same product preferences (Solomon, 2011: 462).

Gift apart from being a symbol in a relationship between the gift giver and recipient also gives meaning to the environment and acceptance of the gift-giver's social environment (Ruth., Et al, 2004). Consumption patterns and views of what is appropriate and inappropriate are different to the people with different social positions and classes. It can vary and depend on the social community. Therefore, participant consider the position and social class in giving gifts because they want to impress the recipient and to establish a relationship with the recipient of the gift.

CONCLUSION

From the research data interpretation can be found that:

1. The closeness of the relationship between the giver and the recipient of the gift is a factor that is considered by the gift giver in

finding his gift. The closer the relationship between the giver and the recipient of the gift, the greater the effort and effort given by the gift giver in finding an appropriate gift for the recipient of the gift.

2. The gift giver will consider the meaningful moment to give a gift because each gift giving moment has its own meaning so that the form of the gift given at each moment is different and there are certain ob-

jects identified with certain moments and certain objects that are inappropriate to be given at another moment.

3. Past gift giving factor by the gift recipient becomes the standard for goods given at the next gift giving moment because a gift contains certain symbols that indicate the identity of the gift giver.

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