# INFORMATION TO USERS

# AN INTERNATIONAL EMPIRICAL COMPARISON OF IN-STORE INFORMATION SEARCH ANTECEDENTS FOR A CHRISTMAS GIFT

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# ABSTRACT

An International Empirical Comparison of In-Store Information
Search Antecedents for a Christmas Gift

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This study examines the underlying determinants of in-store information search for a Christmas clothing gift, specifically focusing on cultural differences. A self-administered survey, containing personality, situational and demographic measures, was distributed to actual consumers residing in three culturally similar nations: Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Measurement items were factor analyzed, and country sample differences were assessed using chi-square tests, ANOVAs, MANCOVAs, and multiple regression analyses. Three distinct and reliable indices of in-store information search emerged (macro information search, micro information search, and salesclerk help), along with twenty-two independent factors (eleven personality and eleven situational). Country sample differences were found with respect to the influence of various antecedent factors on information search. Unexpected differences with respect to total information acquisition were also obtained: Canadian subjects achieved higher aggregate search scores than either American or British subjects. Furthermore, information search patterns were found to vary between males and females, and between different age groups. Practical implications and directions for future research are also discussed.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.*

-Kahlil Gibran—The Prophet

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# CHAPTER 1

# INTRODUCTION

For managers operating internationally, an important question is whether information-seeking behaviors depend, at least in part, on culture. As markets increasingly become global in scope, managers need to look for ways to compete effectively in multiple countries, while simultaneously controlling costs. Manufacturers and retailers have a certain degree of control over the amount, sequence, and types of information they can provide for consumers. Thus, from a practical perspective, a better knowledge of the appropriate "mix" of informational/promotional materials to provide consumers with may ultimately result in increased consumer intentions to purchase. Identifying consumer behavior patterns at the national level will permit marketers to develop more rational segmentation and marketing niche strategies.

Despite the large number of studies conducted on cross-cultural differences, the question of how culture might moderate consumer behavior in the context of information search remains largely unanswered. Hence, there is a need for empirical research to determine the characteristics and the relative importance of determinants of information search across cultures.

For the United States, the determinants of consumer information search have been fairly well established (see Newman, 1977; Moore and Lehmann, 1980; Beatty and Smith, 1987; Schmidt & Spreng, 1996, for comprehensive reviews). A substantial amount of

research has shown that situational characteristics as well as individual difference factors (e.g., psychographic and demographic factors) significantly influence the degree and types of information search conducted by consumers. Less is known, however, about how these determinants (and others posited to be unique to gift-purchasing situations) interact to influence the depth and extent of information acquisition for a gift purchase. While sociologists and anthropologists have long studied gift-giving rituals, only recently have market researchers begun to incorporate this knowledge from a managerial perspective.

Because of the high importance placed on gift-giving in Western cultures, consumers are likely to expend considerable time and effort in the selection of gifts. Among all gift-giving occasions in western cultures, Christmas is by far the most significant, both economically and socially. The importance of the Christmas season to retailers, manufacturers, and advertisers is unquestionably large. Additionally, Christmas clearly represents one of the most important celebrations involving family and friends in most western countries. Thus it would seem that a cross-cultural investigation of consumers' information search behaviors for Christmas gift purchases is well warranted.

Problem statement and study objectives:

The following problem statement provides a framework for the current study, and sets the stage for more specific research objectives:

How do various situational and individual difference (psychographic and demographic) variables influence consumers' usage of in-store information sources, and how might these relationships differ across cultures?

This study involves a comprehensive analysis of consumer in-store information search behavior for a Christmas gift purchase, across three western countries: the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The main objectives of this study are fivefold:

(1) to gain a clearer understanding of consumer Christmas gift shopping behavior across the three countries studied,

(2) to achieve a greater understanding of consumers' usage of in-store sources of information with respect to Christmas gift shopping,

(3) to determine the importance of a large number of information search antecedents in the context of a Christmas gift purchase,

(4) to differentially assess the importance of these search antecedents and in-store sources of information across the three countries studied, and

(5) more specifically, to assess the influences of age and gender on information search behaviors across the three countries studied.

# CHAPTER 2

# THE CASE FOR CROSS-CULTURAL RESEARCH ON CHRISTMAS GIFT-GIVING BEHAVIOR

The economic and social significance of Christmas gift-giving:

A number of researchers have identified the need for additional studies in the area

of gift giving. For example, Beatty, Yoon, Grunert and Helgeson (1996) recently stated

that "...several issues require additional research attention, including a consideration of

the antecedents of gift-giving and the development of scales to measure several relevant

gift-giving behaviors" (p. 19).

Understanding ritualistic consumption-related behavior (such as gift-giving) is a

vital and important area of consumer research (Rook, 1985). It has been stated that, aside

from purchases for self and family, gift purchases are the most frequent purchase activity

conducted by consumers (Smith and Beatty, 1985). Researchers have reported that gift

purchases account for a value of 10 percent of all retail purchases in North America

(Belk, 1979; Sherry, McGrath & Levy, 1993). According to a report on shopping by

Household Spending (1997, as cited in Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel, 1999), over 100 billion

dollars per year is spent on gifts in the United States alone. Caplow (1982) found that

among Middletown (Minnesota) families, Christmas was by far the most important

festival occasion, accompanied by the most extensive gift-giving.

The Christmas season constitutes the bulk of gift-purchasing activities. The

Christmas season is crucial for many retailers, often accounting for 40-50% of yearly

sales and profits (Smith and Beatty, 1985). In a 1998 survey involving 18 American retail

companies (including *Toys 'R' Us, Federated Department Stores, Kmart,* and *Barnes & Noble*), Blumenthal (1998) reported that the fourth quarter Christmas holiday season accounted for more than 50% of total operating profit for these companies for all of the year 1997.

According to Otnes (1990) four important characteristics distinguish Christmas from other annual gift-giving occasions:

(1) Christmas has the highest level of cultural recognition among all gift-giving occasions involving more than one giver and receiver;

(2) Christmas generates more media attention than all other annual gift giving occasions (such as Mother's Day or Saint Valentine's Day);

(3) Retailers and advertisers expend more marketing effort for Christmas than for other gift-giving occasions; and

(4) Unlike many gift-giving occasions (including weddings and birthdays), immediate reciprocity (i.e., mutual exchange of gifts) is often expected at Christmas.

The economic and social significance of gift-giving, and more specifically, gift-giving during the Christmas season, clearly justifies the need for a better understanding of the information search processes that consumers go through when considering a gift purchase.

The case for cross-cultural studies on information search behaviors:

As stated recently by Dawar, Parker, and Price (1996, p.501), "Many would agree that information search and exchange are 'universal' behaviors that are observed in all cultures, although the extent and manner with which consumers practice them may vary from country to country". Additionally, Clark (1990, p.66) argues that, "the scientific

study of national character has value in international marketing since (1) national differences exist; (2) these differences can be observed and tabulated; and (3) observed differences have significant bearing on the behavior of both consumers and marketing decision-makers."

For the most part, the international marketer must rely on knowledge of consumer behavior that has largely been developed in the United States. As the world moves more towards an interdependent marketing system, examination of the cross-national applicability of constructs and models developed in the U.S. to other countries becomes increasingly important (Durvasula et al., 1993). Despite the fact that many researchers have called for an examination of the applicability of theories to other countries and cultures (e.g., Albaum and Peterson, 1984; Lee and Green, 1991), few studies have actually done so. Gift giving in particular has received less attention from researchers, especially from a cross-cultural or international perspective, than is warranted due to its economic and social significance (Jolibert & Fernandez-Moreno, 1983).

While some theories of consumer behavior are likely to be applicable across cultures, others may be highly culture bound. As stated by Hoover, Green, and Saegert (1978, p.102), "the problem arises when trying to determine *which* tenets of consumer behavior can be retained when going overseas, and *which* must be revised or discarded."

Furthermore, it is likely that the ability to standardize marketing strategies across cultures will depend on certain product and environmental factors (Green and Langeard, 1975). Thus, it would appear that some basic knowledge of consumer differences among countries would be essential to the development of an effective international marketing effort as evidenced by the following statements:

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"...further research to identify potential cross-national segments and their characteristics is needed. This might, for example, focus on examining whether age, urban residency, socio-economic status, education, international travel, and language are key determinants of similarity in consumer interest and response patterns across countries."

- Douglas and Craig (1992, p. 299)


"The subject of cross-national comparisons of marketing systems is a fertile area for study and warrants further research and conceptualization."

-Kaynak and Wikström (1985, p. 31)


Researchers have also specifically called for additional cross-cultural research in gift giving, as evidenced by the following statements:


"The study of gift-giving cross-culturally is in its infancy, at least in the field of consumer research."

-Beatty, Yoon, Grunert and Helgeson (1996, p.20)


"...additional research on ethnicity and gift-giving needs to be conducted among other age groups in other locations."

-Ruker, Freitas, and Kangas (1996, p. 156)

"Future efforts should concentrate on expanding the gift-giving dimensions and items, as well as assessing how these dimensions or items might vary in different countries."

- Beatty, Yoon, Grunert and Helgeson (1996, p.34)

The above statements clearly justify the need for cross-cultural research on gift-giving. The current study, which involves a comparison of gift shopping behaviors across three countries, addresses a gap that currently exists in cross-cultural in cross-cultural research. The next chapter reviews a number of important studies that have been conducted in the area of gift-giving, with a focus on the functions of gift-giving, the motivations for gift giving, and the gift exchange process.

# CHAPTER 3

# GIFT-GIVING: A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the realms of anthropology and sociology, gift-giving behavior has received considerable attention (Cheal, 1988). While anthropologists have generally studied gift-giving behaviors from a "medium for social as well as economic exchange" perspective (Wolfinbarger, 1990, p. 699), sociologists have primarily studied gift-giving from the perspective of gift-giving norms, social responsibility, and reciprocity (Caplow, 1982).

However, there have been considerably fewer studies on gift-giving from a consumer behavior perspective, especially from a cross-cultural perspective (Beatty, Yoon, Grunert & Helgeson, 1996). From a consumer research perspective, Lutz has described the task of uncovering the motives for gift-giving as "opening the black box".

Heeler, Francis, Okechuku, and Reid (1979) state that because a gift "has evaluative dimensions vis à vis the recipient and that the reciprocity relationship is characterized by a goal structure, it would seem that buyer behavior with respect to objects purchased as gifts would be different to that for objects purchased for own or normal household use" (p. 325). A study on the effect of brand on purchases of clothing gifts by Andrus, Silver, and Johnson (1986) found that on average, consumers were willing to pay 20% more for a gift in order to purchase a status brand. Grønhaug (1972) as well as Clarke and Belk (1978), found that compared to purchases for personal use, gift purchases generally involve visiting more stores, considering more alternatives, and spending more time searching for information.

However, the amount of search time for a gift purchase has been shown to vary depending on who constituted the actual recipient. Ryans (1977) for example, found that

the amount of search time was less when gifts (small electrical appliances) were purchased for non-household members than when gifts were purchased for household members, or purchased for personal use. Smith and Beatty (1985) obtained similar results in a later study. Ryans (1977) also observed that gift purchases were more likely to be made in stores with a quality image than self-purchases.

Heeler, Francis, Okechuku, and Reid (1979) found no significant difference in the amount of information accessed or in the time spent searching between gift (for a close friend) and own-use conditions. However, Lutz (1979) later criticized the validity of their findings, in stating that subjects were presented with a highly artificial task (with no real expectations that either they or their close friends would actually receive the item in question).

Belk's four functions of gift-giving:

In 1979, Belk published what is probably the most comprehensive analysis of gift giving behavior from a consumer research standpoint. He opens his analysis by stating that "gifts are generally given to others in order to symbolize and celebrate important life events, religious history, and family relationships" (p. 95).

Belk (1979) suggests that the situational conditions of gift giving may vary as a consequence of the gift-giving occasion and the specific function that the giving of a gift serves. He delineates four functions which the process of gift giving may serve: (1) gift giving as communication, (2) gift-giving as social exchange, (3) gift giving as an economic exchange, and (4) gift giving as a socializer. Each of these four functions and their relevance to the present research are briefly outlined in the ensuing paragraphs.

*Gift giving as communication*

Belk's first function, gift giving as communication, considers gift giving as a form of symbolic communication between the giver and the recipient. This function is partially built upon Mauss's (1954) notion that gift-giving is often a means of showing honor and respect for the recipient. Schwartz (1967) postulated that a gift represents much more than a physical object, in the sense that it is a symbol of the giver's perception of the recipient, as well as the giver's self-perception. Belk (1979) further states that "there are probably no gifts which are completely devoid of any message about the recipient" (p. 98).

Wolfinbarger (1990) has suggested that in modern western cultures, the primary function of gifts is symbolic. More specifically, she states that, "in societies with well-developed markets, it is hardly surprising that the gift has been at least partially stripped of its economic importance, leaving in a much more prominent position the symbolic value of gifts" (p. 699). Wolfinbarger's (1990) exploratory research yielded four symbolic categories of gifts: (1) gifts which are symbolic of the self of the giver, (2) gifts which are symbolic of the giver's perception of the receiver, (3) gifts which are symbolic of convention, and (4) gifts which are expressive, and have many meanings attached to them.

*Gift giving as social exchange*

The second function, gift giving as social exchange, refers to how the exchange of gifts "aids in establishing, defining, and maintaining personal relationships" (Belk, 1979, p. 100). Often, the recipient of the gift will be required to interpret the gift-giving motives

of the giver (Belk gives the example of a College instructor receiving a gift from a student of the opposite sex: there are a number of different possible interpretations as to the motive behind the gift). A mutual exchange of gifts can also aid in perpetuating and/or clarifying a relationship between two parties, especially in the early stages of a relationship (for example, the mutual exchange of gifts between a dating couple on Saint Valentine's Day). This notion of clarification is often dependent upon the nature of the particular gift selected (e.g., the degree to which the gift is "intimate").

Cheal (1996) argues that gifts help to create and maintain social bonds. Rather than being a practical means for mutual aid, Cheal (1988) believes that gifts are now primarily a symbolic means for managing the emotional aspects of relationships. Similarly, Belk (1979) states that "gift giving, or more accurately, gift receiving, provides tangible proof of being an integral part of others' lives or society" (p. 101). This notion would seem to be particularly appropriate for the celebration of the Christmas season, whereby gifts are exchanged among family members and their close friends. Indeed, Caplow (1982) has suggested that the increasing importance of Christmas in industrial societies is a consequence of the growing threats to family life. Gifts may also be used to indicate the relative importance of the social roles that an individual accumulates over time. For example, over time, a male can acquire the roles of son, brother, husband, father, co-worker, and so on.

*Gift giving as economic exchange*

Belk's third function, gift giving as economic exchange, derives from the reciprocal nature of most instances of gift giving. Levi-Strauss (1969) has argued that

"universal structures of reciprocity are the foundations for all social life" (cited in Cheal, 1988, p.3). Mauss (1954) views gift giving as "a series of obligatory reciprocal exchanges which have become institutionalized as gift giving occasions which further enforce and reinforce the tradition of exchange" (cited in Belk, 1979, p.102). Poe (1977) argues that an important determinant of satisfaction in a reciprocal relationship is the perceived balance. In reviewing the earlier work of Van Baal (1975), Sherry (1983) states that "within culturally prescribed bounds, the reciprocity involved in gift exchange cannot be more balanced than are the respective social positions of the donor and recipient, unless the participants are willing to risk imputations of ostentation or meanness" (p. 158).

In some instances however, there may be exemptions to reciprocate for gift recipients who are of low status or relatively subservient to the donor (Harris, 1972, cited in Sherry, 1983). Caplow (1982) also believes that people (at least Americans) attempt to ensure equality of exchange when giving gifts. However, since most gift transactions are unbalanced at any one point in time, "some mechanism must enable the donor to evaluate the intention of a recipient to reciprocate..."(Sherry, 1983, p.159).

Some researchers (e.g., Andrews, 1953) have suggested that some forms of gift giving can be interpreted as a redistribution of wealth (for example, charitable donations given by the economically well off to the needy). The latter example may reflect latent feelings of guilt on the part of the giver. Levi-Strauss (1969) hypothesized that the need to alleviate guilt is an underlying motive for all gift giving. The current study will therefore incorporate various motivational aspects of the gift exchange (on the part of the giver).

*Gift giving as a socializer*

The fourth function proposed by Belk, gift giving as a socializer, refers to the effect of a gift on the recipient's self-concept (in terms of shaping and or reinforcing an aspect of the recipient's personality). Belk gives the example of the different types of toys given to boys and girls, whereby the toys take on "visible symbols which may communicate adult views of 'appropriate' sex-role identity" (p. 104). Indeed, Belk's (1979) study determined significant relationships between recipient characteristics and gift characteristics. Identity-shaping effects on the gift exchange process will therefore also be considered in the present research.

## The perfect gift:

Many individuals undoubtedly spend time searching for the 'perfect gift'. The defining characteristics of what constitutes a perfect gift are likely to vary from individual to individual and from situation to situation, although certain generalities have been proposed. Belk (1996) characterizes the 'perfect' gift as one which involves a sacrifice of time, effort or money on the part of the giver; is altruistic (in terms of the motivation of the giver); and is perceived as luxurious, appropriate, surprising, and delightful on the part of the recipient.

## Motivations for gift-giving:

In his seminal paper, Sherry (1983) posited that motives for gift-giving are either altruistic (i.e., maximizing the pleasure of the recipient) or agonistic (i.e., maximizing the donor's personal satisfaction). A 1971 study by Lowes, Turner and Willis found that

individuals gave gifts: (1) to give pleasure (42% of subjects), (2) to obtain pleasure (27%), and (3) because it was expected (15%). Finally, Wolfinbarger (1990) identified three types of motivations for gift-giving: (1) altruism, (2) norms, and (3) self-interest. The first and last motivations are conceptually similar to Sherry's altruistic and agonistic motives respectively. The second motivation concerns itself with the expectations of society regarding the behaviors surrounding celebrations of rituals and rites of passage.

It is likely that people who highly value warm relationships with others will probably be more involved in the task of gift-giving (and hence, expend more effort in selecting gifts) than people who are more self-centered. In their cross-cultural study on personal values and gift-giving behaviors, Beatty, Kahle, and Homer (1991) obtained evidence to suggest that one's values have a pervasive influence on gift-giving behavior. More specifically, Beatty et al. (1991) found that individuals in active, social value segments reported higher levels of gift-giving, as well as greater exertion of effort in gift selection, than did individuals in passive, non-social value segments. Furthermore, these relationships held over both cultures studied (American and Oriental Cultures).

Sherry's (1983) model of the gift exchange process:

Sherry (1983) has proposed the most comprehensive model of the gift-giving process to date (Figure 1). He divides gift-giving behavior into three distinct stages: (1) gift search and purchase (gestation), actual exchange (prestation), and gift disposition and realignment of the giver/recipient relationship (reformulation). The following paragraphs briefly review each stage of the model.

The first stage, *gestation*, refers to all behavior associated with the gift process prior to the actual gift exchange. During this stage, "the donor conducts an internal search including conceptions of self, other, and gift, and frequently conducts an external search involving the appropriate shops or agencies" (Sherry, 1983, p. 164). Aspects of external search referred to in this stage by Sherry are the paramount interest in the current study. Sherry stresses the need for investigation into a number of issues that are associated with the gestation stage and relevant to the current study, including the following: (1) how is the gift selected and how is it obtained, (2) who influences selection and who makes the actual purchase, (3) how much time is devoted to search, (4) who gives gifts and who receives them, and (5) how are gifts symbolically encoded.

The second stage, *prestation*, refers to the actual gift exchange. Sherry states that ritual or ceremonial ambiance (for example, Christmas) may heighten the impact of the actual giving, or increase the value of the gift. The giver's greatest concern at this stage is the recipient's response: (1) the decoding of the instrumental and affective content of the gift by the receiver, and (2) the recipient's response to the giver. Both the giver and the recipient experience an affective outcome at this stage, varying from satisfaction to disappointment. When a mutual exchange of gifts occurs (which is often the case at Christmas), the behaviors exhibited are generally more complex, "since the donor and recipient replicate each other's behavior" (p. 164).

The third and final stage of Sherry's model is *reformulation*. This stage considers the characteristics concerning how the gift is used (whether it is consumed, displayed or stored, exchanged, or rejected). At this final stage, "the gift becomes a vehicle by which the relationship of the donor and the recipient is realigned" (in terms of strengthening,

affirming, weakening, or severing the social bond between the giver and the recipient; p.165). Reformulation is not only an outcome of the previous two stages, it is also "an impetus to succeeding levels of those stages" (p. 167).

**FIGURE 1: SHERRY'S (1983) MODEL OF THE PROCESS OF GIFT-GIVING BEHAVIOR**
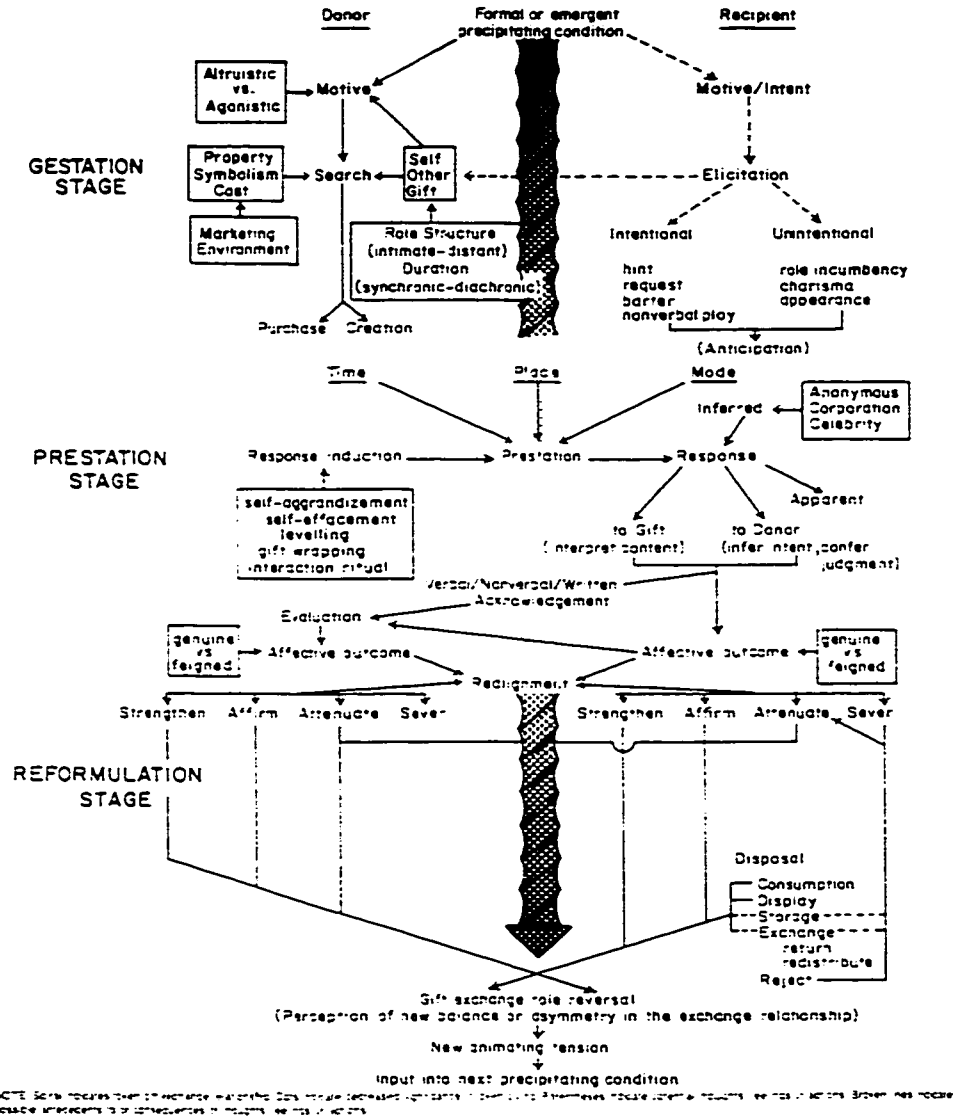
Source: Sherry, John F. Jr. (1983), "Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 10 (September), p. 163.

As suggested by Sherry (1983), it is likely that the social and ritual characteristics of a gift experience impact the way a gift is received, and perhaps ultimately impact the giver/recipient relationship (Ruth, Otnes & Brunel, 1999). In a comprehensive study involving in-depth interviews and surveys of gift shoppers, Ruth, Otnes, and Brunel (1999) identified six relational effects of gift recipient experiences: (1) strengthening (in terms of improving the quality of the giver/receiver relationship); (2) affirmation (validating the giver/receiver relationship); (3) negligible effect (minimal impact on relationship perceptions); (4) negative confirmation (whereby the receipt of a gift validates a negative quality of the relationship); (5) weakening (in terms of harming the relationship); and finally, (6) severing (where the receipt of the gift causes dissolution of the relationship). Among sample participants, affirmation was identified as the most common relational effect, followed by negligible effect, strengthening, and negative confirmation.

Belk (1984) asserts that in its various forms, gift-giving is ubiquitous across all known cultures. Although gift-giving is probably a universal behavior that is found in all cultures, the characteristics and behaviors associated with gift-giving are likely to vary across cultures.

Prior to reviewing the relevant cross-cultural research studies in consumer behavior (including gift-shopping behavior) that have been conducted to date, it is important to investigate the characteristics of consumer information search and purchase behavior. The following chapters examine the purchase process of consumers, the information search behavior of consumers, and the variables posited to influence the extent of information search conducted by consumers.

# CHAPTER 4

# THE PURCHASE PROCESS MODEL AND INFORMATION SEARCH

Purchase process model:

Models describing the process that consumers are thought to go through when purchasing a product have been in existence since at least 1910 (Dewey). Although there exist many models of the consumer purchase process, most generally contain some variation of the following steps outlined by Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (1973, as shown in Figure 2): 1) *problem recognition* by the consumer; 2) a search for alternatives (*information search*) to alleviate the problem recognized; 3) an evaluation *of the alternatives*; 4) actual product purchase (*choice*); and 5) *post-purchase evaluation*. For the purposes of the current research, the focus will be on the second and third steps of the model, that is, information search and evaluation of alternatives.

## FIGURE 2: FIVE STAGE CONSUMER PROCESS MODEL

| PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION | INFORMATION SEARCH | ALTERNATIVE INVESTIGATION | CHOICE | POST EVALUATION |
|---|---|---|---|---|

The utility equation advanced by Stigler (1961) and Engel et al. (1973) states that an individual would continue searching as long as the perceived value of information exceeds the cost of obtaining this information. This view represents a departure from traditional economic theory which states that "the rational consumer will list all conceivable actions and their consequences, choose the best, and consistently stick to his choice" (Katona, 1960, p. 138).

A great deal of research has examined the different choice rules that consumers use in making product choices (see Bettman, Johnson & Payne, 1991; Payne, Bettman & Johnson, 1993, for complete reviews). While some individuals often use simplified shopping strategies (such as buying by brand, or on the basis of a friend's or salesperson's recommendation), others use more complex and compensatory strategies (e.g., weighing information on all relevant attributes for all relevant brands). The choice rule selected by an individual strongly influences the amount of information that will be acquired.

A number of factors interact to influence the choice rule selected by an individual, including: (1) characteristics surrounding the alternatives (e.g., number and/or similarity of alternatives, importance of various attributes, size of evoked set, etc.); (2) personal characteristics of the decision-maker (for example, enjoyment of shopping, shopping experience); and (3) situational characteristics of the task (including the perceived importance of the task, involvement in the task, need to justify decision, time pressure, etc.). These moderating influences are reviewed in greater detail later in this chapter, and in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Information search:

Wilkie and Dickson (1985) point out the importance of the information search stage by stating the following: "Information search represents the primary stage at which marketing can provide information and influence consumers' decisions" (p. 85). Similarly, Lee et al. (1999) state two practical reasons as to why information search patterns should be studied: (1) they are useful for diagnosing consumer choice strategies, and (2) they are linked to many important decision-making variables. In addition, a better

understanding of the determinants of information search is valuable for public policymakers (i.e., regulatory requirements concerning product labeling and pricing, and to improve the quality/accessibility of information for consumers).

*Internal search and external search*

It is important to distinguish between the two distinct forms of information search conducted by consumers: internal search, and external search. Internal search consists of relying on memory for information regarding specific products and/or product categories (such as for repeat-purchase situations), while external search consists of gathering information about products and/or product categories from the environment. Some examples of the latter type of search include seeking advice from friends/family or from store sales personnel, consulting magazines such as *Consumer Reports*, or simply comparing product alternatives on a number of attributes (such as price, quality, etc.).

Generally, consumers are thought to initially rely on internally available information—however if this knowledge is perceived as insufficient upon which to make a decision, consumers will then externally seek information (Bettman, 1979). A good definition for external search has been suggested by Beatty and Smith (1987, p. 85): external search effort is "the degree of attention, perception, and effort directed toward obtaining environmental data or information related to the specific purchase under consideration."

External information search can be further broken down into two types: (1) pre-purchase search conducted prior to visiting a store; and (2) in-store information search.

For purposes of parsimony, the focus of the investigation will be on in-store information search conducted by consumers.

Research has shown that consumers tend to differ on both the extent of actual physical shopping, and the likelihood of using either neutral or personal sources of information (Westbrook and Fornell, 1979; Beatty and Smith, 1987). Consumers have distinctive patterns of information source usage: while some prefer certain kinds of sources, others consider a wider variety of sources (Claxton, Fry, and Portis, 1974; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Westbrook and Fornell, 1979). For example, Kiel and Layton's (1981) study uncovered three main consumer groups according to search intensity characteristics: (1) low information seekers (minimal search activity with purchase made quickly); (2) high information seekers (extensive search activity with purchase made after considerable deliberation); and (3) selective information seekers (for example, engaging in extensive search activity with interpersonal sources, but little retail search).

*Variables hypothesized to influence search*

The number of variables hypothesized to influence search is large. Moore and Lehman (1980) cite earlier research by Newman (1977), which categorized the determinants of external information search into the following six categories:

- Cost (e.g., opportunity cost, cognitive cost)

- Potential payoff (price, style, perceived difference, perceived risk, knowledge and experience)

- Buying strategies (brand and store preference, satisficing versus optimizing, strategy of information acquisition)

- Situational variables (urgency, financial pressure, special buying opportunities, location of residence)

- Personality variables (such as opinion leadership, identity shaper, etc.)

- Other variables (household role, party of major influence, social class, occupation, age, stage of life-cycle).

In reviewing the relevant literature and expanding on the earlier work of Newman (1977), Moore and Lehmann (1980) proposed a comprehensive typology (Table 1) which groups the determinants of external search into six categories: (1) market environment characteristics, (2) situational variables, (3) variables associated with potential payoff/product importance, (4) variables associated with knowledge and experience, (5) individual difference factors, and (6) conflict and conflict resolution strategies. The work of Newman (1977) and Moore and Lehmann (1980) clearly shows that information search is often a function of many variables.

**TABLE 1: DETERMINANTS OF THE EXTENT OF INFORMATION SEARCH
(as cited in Moore and Lehmann, 1980)**

| |
|---|
| Market Environment<br>• Number of alternatives<br>• Complexity of alternatives<br>• Marketing mix of alternatives<br>• Stability of alternatives on the market (new alternatives)<br>• Information availability |
| Situational Variables<br>• Time pressure<br>• Social pressure (family, peer, boss)<br>• Financial pressure<br>• Organizational procedures<br>• Physical and mental condition<br>• Ease of access to information sources |
| Potential payoff/product importance<br>• Price<br>• Social visibility<br>• Perceived risk<br>• Difference among alternatives<br>• Number of crucial attributes<br>• Status of decision-making activity (in the family, organization, society) |
| Knowledge and experience<br>• Stored knowledge<br>• Usage rate of product<br>• Previous information<br>• Previous choices (number and identity)<br>• Satisfaction |
| Individual differences<br>• Ability<br>• Training<br>• Approach to problem-solving (compulsiveness, open-mindedness, preplanning, innovativeness)<br>• Approach to search (enjoyment of shopping, sources of information, etc.)<br>• Involvement<br>• Demographics (age, income, education, marital status, household size, social class, occupation)<br>• Personality/life-style variables (self-confidence, etc.) |
| Conflict and conflict resolution strategies |

Source: Moore, William L. & Lehmann, Donald R. (1980), "Individual Differences in Search Behavior for a Non-Durable," *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 7 (December), 296-307.

For purposes of parsimony, the present study categorizes the variables hypothesized to influence information search conducted by consumers into three broad categories: (1) personality, or individual difference factors; (2) demographic variables (possibly including cultural variables); and (3) situational, or environmental circumstances. The ensuing chapters examine the posited relationships between these groups of variables and consumer information search.

# CHAPTER 5

# PERSONAL (PSYCHOGRAPHIC) FACTORS POSITED TO AFFECT PRE-PURCHASE INFORMATION SEARCH

A review of the literature strongly suggests that personality traits and other individual difference factors have a significant influence on information search and utilization. The personality characteristics of individuals are generally thought to have a significant effect on the procedures that they adopt for approaching, modifying, simplifying, and reacting to their marketing environments (Horton, 1979). Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981), Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) as well as Howard (1977) all concluded that individual differences in search behavior are in part related to personality traits. The following paragraphs investigate the influence of various personal factors on the extent of information search, and more specifically (where supporting research exists), on information search for a gift.

Attachment to the Christmas season:

As discussed in Chapter 2, the social importance of the Christmas season has been fairly well established. However, individuals are likely to vary in the extent to which Christmas is personally relevant. Some individuals are likely to be more emotionally attached to Christmas traditions than others.

Relatively few studies have specifically examined the role that individuals' relative attachment to Christmas traditions may play in influencing information search. Recently however, Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (1999) found a strong positive correlation between respondents' stated love of the Christmas season and the extent of

information search. Overall, it is expected that since traditional Christmas lovers likely enjoy the task of Christmas shopping, they are also likely to engage in more extensive search behavior than those are less personally concerned with Christmas.

Enjoyment of shopping, purchasing self-confidence, and self-esteem:

Clearly, some people enjoy shopping more than others. Babin, Darden and Griffen (1994) define shopping enthusiasm as the enjoyment that an individual feels towards the task of collecting and processing product-related information.

As one might expect, the literature on the relationship between consumers holding a positive attitude towards the shopping process and total search activity has consistently reported a positive correlation (e.g., Katona & Mueller, 1955; Kiel and Layton, 1981; Buttle, 1992). Buttle (1992) has stated that "shopping may be an activity or interest which is an integral component of lifestyle" (p. 359). Some researchers (e.g., Babin, Darden & Griffen, 1994) have argued that some consumers engage in certain shopping behaviors (including information search) because of the 'hedonic value' they receive, as opposed to achieving some purchase goal. The greater a consumer's stated enjoyment of shopping, the greater is the propensity to embark on extensive information search.

In studying the relationship between cognitive personality traits and information acquisition, Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) reported a positive relationship between self-esteem and total information search. More specifically, individuals who had higher measured scores of self-esteem examined a greater number of brand alternatives as well as brand attributes across four product categories. In light of this finding, Schaninger

and Sciglimpaglia suggested that people with higher levels of self-esteem are generally more confident in their abilities to evaluate alternatives and to make purchase decisions.

A review of the literature on purchasing self-confidence and total information search produced mixed results. While Newman and Staelin (1971) as well as Arndt (1967) determined that consumers with the least self-confidence undertook the least search activity, Kiel and Layton (1981) found the exact opposite.

## Consumer beliefs:

Duncan and Olshavsky's (1982) study determined that consumer beliefs about the marketplace (e.g., concerning advertising, selection, benefits of search, store and brand beliefs), and about their capabilities as consumers (e.g., shopping abilities, knowledge, ability to judge), accounted for a substantial portion (50%) of the variance with respect to the extent of external search. Additionally, Duncan & Olshavsky found that the brand and store types considered by a consumer when undertaking a shopping trip were significantly related to the beliefs held.

The degree of external search appears to be at least partially a function of the beliefs held by consumers. For example, a bargain-conscious consumer who believes that he/she is skilled at obtaining the best price is likely to consider shopping in stores that offer a combination of a wide product selection and low prices. Another consumer who holds strong beliefs about the quality of a particular brand may limit his/her search to the preferred brand, since there is little perceived benefits to acquiring additional information on competing brands.

Brand/store preferences:

When the task becomes sufficiently complex, many consumers will often employ heuristic (short-cut) shopping strategies, such as buying by brand and/or by store. It is likely that these strategies reflect knowledge gained by the consumer from prior experience (Newman, 1977).

A number of reasons exist as to why consumers prefer some stores to others. A recent article (*USA Today*, April 1998) listed the reasons cited by a sample of 500 Christmas shoppers for choosing one particular store over another, including the following: store carries a specific item (83%), like the selection and value (81%), heard about sales/promotion (78%), came across store in the mall (54%), received promotional circular (46%), and, was mailed a catalogue at home (35%).

Some researchers (including Bauer, 1967; Cunningham, 1967; as cited in Horton, 1979) have suggested that brand loyalty can be interpreted as a type of risk reduction strategy employed by consumers. While some research has shown that consumers generally acquire less information when brand names are present than when they are not (see Horton, 1979, for a review), most studies examining brand loyalty have shown that non-brand loyal (i.e., generic) shoppers undertake less in-store information search (e.g, Horton, 1979; Locander & Herman, 1979; Laroche, Saad, Kim, and Browne, 1999).

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Bargain consciousness:

Some research has shown that bargain-conscious consumers engage in more information search (e.g., Horton, 1979; Locander & Herman, 1979). Bargain-hunting individuals likely exert more effort when shopping, in order to find the best value for their money. In the context of gift-shopping, Laroche, Saad, Kim & Browne (1999) found that individuals who categorized themselves as bargain-hunters generally spent more time shopping, compared a greater number of alternatives, and sought a greater amount of product-specific information.

Symbolic motivations of the giver:

In his study comparing gift characteristics to self concepts of the giver and to perceived recipient characteristics, Belk (1979) found that the giver's ideal self-concept was highly reflected by the following (in order): (1) the characteristics of the gift chosen, (2) the giver's present self-concept, and (3) the perceived characteristics of the recipient. A later review of the relevant literature also led Belk (1984) to suggest that individual differences in sense of self have strong effects on consumer gift-giving behavior. Gifts may also be symbolic of the giver's identity of the recipient. Schwartz (1967) believes that a gift is one way that an individual can transmit the pictures that he/she holds in mind of the recipient.

Gifts are also a means of conveying a sense of self-importance onto others. Children, for example, are likely to feel valued by their parents upon receiving a gift. Belk (1984) states that, "From the child's perspective, the gift is self-enhancing because it fulfills a want, but more importantly, because the care in selecting such a gift shows

that he/she is seen as a valued person and a valued part of the family group" (p.757). Thus in the course of giving a gift, the giver is often transmitting the message that he or she wishes to establish, develop, or maintain a certain relationship with the recipient.

Other things being equal, it is expected that an individual who is intrinsically motivated by the desire to send a specific message to a recipient, will engage in more extensive information search, with the goal of obtaining a gift that ideally conveys this message.

## Importance of style/appearance:

A number of studies have shown that the number of stores visited by consumers tends to be higher when style and/or appearance are especially important (e.g., clothing items—Dommmermuth & Cundiff, 1967; furniture items—Claxton, Fry & Portis, 1974; cars—Newman & Staelin, 1972). By extension, it is expected that consumers who rank the style and/or appearance as highly important when considering a gift purchase will engage in more extensive information search.

## Involvement/accountability:

Research by Petty and Cacioppo (1979; 1986) has demonstrated that issue involvement has a profound impact on the way in which information is acquired and applied. As the personal relevance or importance of the task under consideration is increased, an individual is increasingly motivated to process information about the task more thoroughly (Petty and Cacioppo, 1979), and hence would be expected to engage in higher levels of external search. Research by Brucks (1985) and Sujan (1985) have also

demonstrated the existence of a positive correlation between issue involvement and prior knowledge—an individual who perceives a particular topic as involving or interesting is more likely to try and learn more about the said topic (Lee, Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1999).

For low involvement decisions (e.g., unplanned or habitual purchases), a consumer will usually make a choice after limited internal information search (Bruner & Pomazal, 1988). However for higher involvement decisions, a consumer will often search for further information from external sources (Bruner & Pomazal, 1988), with the goal of potentially making a better purchase (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). The need to justify one's judgments and decisions to others (accountability) has also been found to promote more complex and effortful information processing, and high quality decision-making (Tetlock, 1983; 1992; cited in Lee, Herr, Kardes & Kim, 1999).

While personality variables play a role in determining the extent and depth of information search that will be conducted by an individual, the relative influence of these variables are thought to be moderated by situational circumstances. The next chapter examines the role that various situational circumstances play in affecting the information search behavior of consumers.

# CHAPTER 6

# SITUATIONAL VARIABLES POSITED TO AFFECT PRE-PURCHASE INFORMATION SEARCH

Situational circumstances have been shown to moderate the extent and depth of information search conducted by consumers. For example, Ryans (1977) determined that perceived risk arises in part from situational characteristics, including the quality of the product, the price of the product, and the store of purchase. This chapter reviews the literature on various situational variables that are posited to affect information search, with a focus on the situational circumstances associated with gift-giving.

## Perceived risk:

There is always some degree of risk inherent in all purchase decisions. A large number of empirical studies have determined numerous relationships between perceived risk and various consumer behaviors (Horton, 1979). The literature identifies two distinct types of risk that are relevant to the present research: social risk and financial risk.

### *Purchase cost (financial risk):*

Most researchers (e.g., Udell, 1966; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Kiel and Layton, 1981) have determined a positive relationship between price and search behavior, such that the greater the final price paid, the longer the search time elapsed and the greater the amount of information sources consulted. In their study of consumers' shopping patterns for women's apparel products, Dommermuth and Cundiff (1967) determined that the proportion of buyers visiting more than one store tends to rise with higher prices of

clothing items. Furthermore, Kiel and Layton (1981) determined that in instances where the purchase price represented a high proportion of total income, the consumer undertook a greater degree of retailer search.

In sum, all other things being equal, consumers generally undertake more search activity when the cost of a product is perceived as high rather than low.

*Perceived social risk:*

Research has generally shown that gift purchases are accompanied by greater feelings of perceived social risk than purchases for self (Heeler, Francis, Okechuku & Reid, 1979; Mattson, 1982). Since a gift purchase is evaluated by more than one person (i.e., in addition to the purchaser), the consequences of a poor purchase decision are likely to loom larger in the giver's mind. Consumers' perceptions of risk have also been shown to be generally higher for fashion items (Cox & Rich, 1964), and this may provide the motivation to visit more than one store (Dommermuth & Cundiff, 1967) to enhance the probability of making a good purchase.

One strategy that gift shoppers have been found to employ in order to reduce perceptions of social risk is to enlist the help of others in the gift selection process, including asking friends and/or family for advice on what the recipient might like, and gift shopping with a companion (Otnes, Lowrey, & Kim, 1993). A commonly cited reason as to why consumers seek the advice of others prior to making a purchase is to obtain credible and objective product information.

Another strategy often employed by gift shoppers to reduce perceived social risk is to set a higher budget for the gift. A study by Vincent and Zikmund (1975) found some

support for this notion—individuals were found to purchase more expensive models when the product was intended as a wedding gift, as opposed to being for personal use. Clarke and Belk's(1979) study also reported higher expenditures for gift rather than personal use products.

Three explanations are offered that may account for this phenomenon. First, the gift shopper may purchase a more expensive model as a means of safeguarding against the consequences of appearing cheap. Second, a gift shopper may purchase a more expensive model to reduce the risk of making a poor purchase decision when information is insufficient. Third, the gift shopper may believe that a more expensive gift stands a higher chance of being favorably received by the recipient.

The concept of perceived risk has also been the focus of a number of cross-cultural studies (see Verhage, Yavas & Green, 1991, for a review). Verhage et al. (1991) found national differences in perceived risk levels among subjects in Turkey, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand. Contrary to their hypothesis, the risk reduction strategy of brand loyalty was not employed by consumer subjects in the countries analyzed, with the exception of Turkish consumers. Verhage et al. concluded that the risk reduction strategy of brand loyalty is not employed universally.

Time pressure:

As stated by Kiel and Layton (1981), an important characteristic of the search process is the time interval during which search occurs. Newman and Staelin (1971) observed that consumers differ considerably in decision and search times, which the researchers attribute in part to the type of product under consideration. Beatty and Smith

(1987) found that increasing time pressure resulted in less search conducted by subjects across the five product categories studied.

Numerous studies (e.g., Newman & Staelin, 1971; Claxton, Fry & Portis, 1974) have demonstrated that consumers will shorten the purchase decision time and reduce information seeking when they perceive time pressure. In particular, Christmas shoppers that wait until the last minute to begin shopping are likely to experience severe time pressure, and hence may find the task hectic and stressful.

Since most studies have reported an inverse relationship between information search and time pressure, gift shoppers who perceive time pressure are likely to spend less time searching for information and/or may restrict their information search efforts to one or two sources (such as store sales personnel). Mattson (1982) for example, found that salesclerk assistance and a broad product selection within a particular store were highly valued by shoppers that stated high time pressure. Salespeople represent a quick source of relevant product-related information and advice, while a broad product selection permits the consumer to examine more choices within the same retail store, thus saving time that otherwise might have been spent examining alternatives from store-to-store (Mattson, 1982). Another strategy used by consumers when facing time pressure (or alternatively, to reduce feelings of risk) is to purchase the same or a similar item as was given in the past (for example, a son giving his father a tie on every Fathers' Day).

Pre-determined gift selection or gift ideas:

A pre-determined gift selection may result from a number of factors. For example, the giver may have: (1) seen a particular product at some earlier time (and categorized it

as an appropriate gift for someone when a gift-giving occasion arose); (2) surreptitiously observed the recipient for needs prior to shopping; (3) obtained a list or suggestions from the recipient; (4) obtained suggestions from family members and/or friends on gift ideas prior to shopping; (5) decided on a product category and researched it prior to shopping; or (6) been exposed to publicity for a particular product that was subsequently deemed appropriate as a gift. With respect to total information search, the underlying assumption is that when an individual has a pre-determined gift selection in mind, he/she will be less motivated to conduct information search, as he/she may already have a clear idea of what to purchase.

In fact, a number of researchers have shown that many individuals have an idea of what to purchase prior to visiting a store. Banks (1979) for example, reported that most gift purchases are planned prior to visiting any stores, and that in many instances, gifts are purchased after visiting only one store. Similarly, Rigaux-Bricmont's (1993) study found that 44% of subjects knew exactly what they wanted to buy for a recipient, 43% of the remaining subjects had a general idea about the type of product they were going to purchase as a gift, while only 7% indicated that they had no idea about what they were going to buy. Furthermore, Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) reported that for 37% of the gifts given, the giver had received suggestions directly from the recipient.

Advertising can affect brand positioning as well as top-of-mind awareness. Thus the order that consumers search product alternatives may be a function of media exposure to particular products. In certain instances, a particular brand that is high in the order of search may be the ultimate winner, since the consumer will obtain additional information

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on only the alternatives that are in contention to be the winner (Reiss, 1991, cited in Moorthy, Ratchford, & Talukdar, 1997).

Number of alternatives:

A large number of studies have shown that many consumers restrict their search to only a few alternatives (e.g., Katona & Mueller, 1955; Dommermuth, 1965; Newman & Staelin, 1972). Similarly, Howard and Sheth (1969) provided evidence that a typical buyer's "evoked set" of choice alternatives is generally quite small.

Consumers entering a store that has a broad selection of merchandise, are thought to reduce their extent of inter-store search (the logic being that a large selection negates the need to visit other stores in order to find alternatives), however in-store search within that particular store is likely to be greater (Laroche, Saad, Kim, and Browne, 1999). A broad selection of merchandise within a particular store is likely to be appreciated by shoppers facing severe time pressure.

Similarity of alternatives:

Psychologists, such as Lanzetta (1963) have posited that information search will be greater when the alternatives under consideration are similar, in order to obtain differentiating information which may reduce choice uncertainty. This view represents a direct contradiction of Stigler's (1960) theory, which states that greater perceived similarity between alternatives reduces search effort, due to the lower expected gains from search and lower choice uncertainty (in the context of making a poor purchase decision).

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In cases where the available alternatives are highly similar, the degree of search conducted is likely to be (at least partially) a function of the overall quality of the choice-set (Payne, Bettman & Johnson, 1993, p. 61). If the overall quality is high, less search is likely to be undertaken (since the risk of making a "bad" purchase decision is reduced). On the other hand, given that the quality of the choice set of alternatives is poor, greater search is likely to be undertaken (e.g., the consumer may decide to visit another store in search of a superior set of alternatives). Particularly for gift purchases, the risk of making a bad purchase is likely to be a salient concern for the giver (since he/she must anticipate the reactions of the recipient).

Availability of information:

Bettman (1979b) defines information accessibility as "the extent to which information is available and accessible to the consumer in a format that the consumer can use" (cited in Schmidt & Spreng, 1996, p. 253). The costs associated with searching and processing information are lowered, as information becomes more accessible in the environment (Bettman, Johnson & Payne, 1991).

Mattson (1982) determined that as the amount of available information increases, so does the degree of total information acquisition. Given a plethora of relevant information, some consumers would likely attempt to integrate at least some information to enhance their purchase decision. However, it is also likely that other consumers (particularly those facing severe time pressure), when faced with an abundance of information, may truncate their evaluations and employ a heuristic (for example, consulting a salesclerk for advice) to reduce cognitive effort or to save time.

Purchasing experience/product familiarity:

It has become increasingly clear that a decision-maker's current knowledge of a product affects the processing of new product-related information. Johnson and Russo (1984) have suggested that prior knowledge has an "inverted-U" effect on information acquisition—highly familiar consumers may search less than moderately familiar consumers, with the latter searching more than unfamiliar consumers. Johnson and Russo determined that for moderately familiar consumers, prior knowledge of a product enhances their ability to encode and remember new information, while naïve consumers consider a subset of available information when faced with a large number of alternatives and/or attributes. However, Johnson and Russo also found that experienced (or highly familiar) consumers use their knowledge of a product class to limit their search.

It has generally been accepted by marketers that overall, an inverse relationship holds between product experience and information search. The assumption is that learning on the part of the consumer decreases the necessity for search (Jacoby, Chestnut, and Fisher, 1978). Arndt (1972) suggests "that the greater the number of times a given goal-object has been bought in the past, the lower the consumer's propensity to search for external information..." (p. 10). Consistent with earlier results obtained by Udell (1966), and Newman and Staelin (1972), Kiel and Layton (1981) determined that the greater an individual's previous experience in the market, the less search he or she is likely to undertake (all other factors being equal).

<u>Budget-consciousness:</u>

Many Christmas gift purchasers probably set some type of budget prior to shopping: an overall budget which defines total gift expenditures; a "person" budget, limiting the amount to be spent on a particular individual; and/or a "gift" budget, limiting the amount to be spent on a specific gift. The influence of a strict budget on total information search is somewhat unclear—while Claxton, Fry, and Portis (1974) found that budget-conscious consumers engaged in greater information search, Moore and Lehmann (1980) did not find any evidence of a relationship.

Two explanations may account for these mixed results: on one hand, budget-conscious shoppers may automatically select the cheapest brand available and therefore search less (if pricing information is clearly posted); on the other hand, if pricing information is difficult to obtain, or if the alternatives are more difficult to compare, budget-conscious consumers may undertake greater search effort.

<u>Giver-receiver relationship:</u>

The literature on gift-giving has generally shown that gift-purchasing strategies differ as a function of the giver/recipient relationship (Belk, 1992; Caplow, 1982; Sherry, 1983; Wagner, Ettenson, and Verrier, 1990). As stated by Fischer and Arnold (1990), "one message primarily conveyed by Christmas gifts is love, affection, and esteem for the recipient" (p. 333). In light of this, it is possible that the giver may expend intense effort in order to obtain a gift for the recipient that is reflective of this close relationship.

One can also appreciate how the closeness of a relationship can influence the choice of a gift: more intimate and more expensive gifts become more appropriate with

closer relationships between the giver and receiver (Belk, 1979). Generally speaking, the most valuable gifts are given to close family members, especially spouses (Cheal, 1986). In analyzing kin networks in the context of Christmas gift exchanges, Caplow (1982) found that gifts to non-family members were generally less expensive than those to family members.

Similarly, Sherry (1983) posits that expressive (and more costly) gifts are more likely to be given when there exists a close relationship between the giver and recipient, while utilitarian (and less expensive) gifts are more likely to be given when there is a distant relationship. Cheal (1988) states that long-term relationships involving family and close friends are more intimate than short-term relationships involving new friends, co-workers, and neighbors.

Recipients are often perceived as being "easy" or "difficult" by the giver. According to Otnes, Lowrey and Kim (1993) the perception of recipients as being easy or difficult to choose gifts for is a function of some aspect of the particular relationship between the giver and the recipient. Their study found that the main reason why some recipients are deemed "easy" is the ease by which the giver is able to succinctly identify their (the recipient's) specific social role, and the giver's belief that the "meaning" implied by the gift will be correctly interpreted by the recipient. Children and friends of the same gender were most commonly described by study participants as being easy.

Difficult recipients, on the other hand, either consciously or unconsciously "thwart a giver's attempt to express a particular role through gift exchange" (Otnes, Lowrey & Kim,1993, p. 231). Givers perceive that difficult recipients may misinterpret

the meaning of the gift. Common examples of difficult recipients that were cited by subjects were: in-laws, fathers, and elderly relatives (Otnes, Lowrey & Kim, 1993).

The perception of a recipient as being easy or difficult has also been shown to influence search behavior. A recent study by Sprott and Miyasaki (1995) determined that search time for a particular gift increased as perceived recipient difficulty increased.

Obligation to purchase:

Many individuals undoubtedly feel obligated to reciprocate a gift purchase. For married individuals or individuals in dating relationships, the threat of stained relations caused by one partner's failing to honor the gift-giving custom may create strong feelings of obligation for both partners (Goodwin, Smith, and Spiggle, 1990). Cramer (1977) has suggested that Christmas gift-giving may represent "a means of atonement for past neglect or obligations..." (cited in Goodwin et al., 1990). One might expect that a "guilty shopper" (i.e., an individual holding feelings of guilt arising from perceived past neglect) may undertake a greater amount of search in order to obtain a gift that conveys affection.

Wolfinbarger's (1990) study found that only 6% of subjects would consider the possibility of not giving gifts at Christmas. When asked to contemplate the possibility of not giving to others, most respondents felt that their children, relatives, and/or friends would feel forgotten and unappreciated if they did not receive a gift from the giver.

Goodwin et al. (1990) describe two (non-mutually exclusive) forms of obligation: (1) reciprocity (such as when family members exchange gifts at Christmas), and ritual (non-reciprocal gift-giving, such as the purchase of a wedding or "housewarming" gift). They further suggest that the voluntary/obligatory nature of gift-giving may be best

characterized as a continuum, with most instances of gift-giving falling somewhere in between the distinct endpoints. Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) found partial support for the notion that an individual will generally spend more time and effort in selecting a gift for voluntary as opposed to obligatory reasons.

In addition to psychographic (personality) constructs and situational variables, demographic characteristics have been shown to affect information-seeking behavior. The relationships between demographic variables and information search are reviewed in the next chapter.

# CHAPTER 7

# DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS POSITED TO AFFECT INFORMATION SEARCH

The literature on information search contains much evidence linking demographic variables (such as education, age, gender, income, etc.) to search behavior. A review of these variables and their relationship to search is summarized in this chapter.

Education level:

Most studies have found a positive relationship between the degree of search activity and higher levels of education (Claxton, Fry & Portis, 1974; Hempel, 1969; Katona & Mueller, 1955; Schaninger and Scimpaglia, 1981). In explaining this phenomenon, Schmidt and Spreng (1996) argue that higher levels of education increase an individual's ability to identify, locate, and assimilate relevant information.

Kiel and Layton (1981) reported a positive relationship between education level and search activity for all search indices except retailer search. This relationship agrees with the results of earlier studies conducted by Katona and Mueller (1955), Thorelli (1971), as well as Newman and Staelin (1972). Similarly, Fisher and Arnold (1990) obtained a significant (albeit weak) positive correlation between education and involvement in Christmas shopping.

Income and social status:

A number of studies have found evidence to suggest that lower-status households engage in less search for information. Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) and Robertson

(1970) both state that lower-social-class consumers undertake less in-store information search, and tend to rely more on word-of-mouth communication. In reviewing the relevant empirical research to date, Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) concluded that information search appears to increase with social class, education, and income.

In the context of gift-giving, Fisher and Arnold (1990) found that while income negatively influenced the amount of time spent shopping, it positively affected the amount of money spent per gift recipient.

Marital status, family size, and the presence of children in the household:

Significant changes often occur when a person marries and/or has a child, with respect to the individual's self-perception, as well as changes in the individual's material needs (such as housing, furnishing, and other products: Bruner & Pomazal, 1988).

In examining the determinants of search behavior for a non-durable, Moore and Lehmann (1980) found that overall, married individuals acquired less information than did singles, which they suggest may be attributed to greater experience. In reviewing the relevant literature regarding the relationship between children and family purchase decisions, Swinyard and Sim (1987) concluded that, "Children have a great deal of influence on a remarkable array of products and in all decision stages" (p. 26). This assertion would especially appear to be true today, given the degree of television advertisements targeted towards children and the preponderance of merchandise tie-ins to many movies that are popular with families.

Caplow (1982) determined that the marital status of an individual, and the number of children of an individual both moderate the number of gift recipients that an individual

purchases for. Similarly, Fisher and Arnold (1990) reported a positive relationship between the number of children and the number of gift recipients. In addition, the latter researchers also found that, compared to unmarried individuals, married individuals were more likely to start Christmas shopping earlier and spend more money per recipient.

## Age:

Market researchers have long suspected that, compared to younger people, older people exhibit differences with respect to shopping characteristics such as information acquisition and processing.

Accompanying an advancing age is a reduction of the number and variety of roles an individual assumes, and some of the remaining roles are performed with less intensity (Cummings and Henry, 1961; cited in Phillips & Sternthal, 1977). Subsequently, since older individuals generally experience a reduction in the number and variety of interpersonal sources, the elderly develop an increased reliance on mass media, the extended family, and nearby friends.

Many researchers have also found that, relative to younger people, the elderly exhibit declines in their information processing abilities (e.g., Phillips and Sternthal, 1977; Cole and Gaeth, 1990). Researchers that study aging have generally attributed these declines to a variety of changes that occur in the visual system and cognitive functions of older people (see Yoon, 1997, for a comprehensive review). However, some researchers have suggested that older individuals have the ability to compensate for this weakness by relying on their lifelong experiences in processing diverse types of information (e.g., Phillips and Sternthal, 1977).

Assuming that an individual's processing abilities diminish with age, it is likely that the elderly would tend to rely on less effortful processing strategies. While younger people are thought to undertake a relatively detailed analysis of available information, the elderly are posited to employ heuristic or schema-based forms of processing (Yoon, 1997). Phillips and Sternthal (1977) suggest two reasons why older consumers are likely to process less information than younger consumers: (1) the elderly are less capable of processing large amounts of information, and (2) due to greater market experience, older individuals are more capable of distinguishing between relevant and irrelevant information for familiar products.

In the context of the present research, a number of empirical studies have documented age differences with respect to patterns of personal and informal information sources. Lumpkin and Festervand (1988) for example, found that the elderly were more likely to rely on salespeople and independent sources of information when compared to their younger counterparts. Similarly, Martin (1975) found that when purchasing clothing, older consumers were more likely to rely on mass media as an information source than younger consumers. Both Katona and Mueller (1955), and Kiel and Layton (1981) reported that total information search activity decreases with age. Finally, Schaninger and Scimpaglia (1981) found evidence to suggest that, relative to younger consumers, older consumers processed less information and examined fewer alternatives and attributes.

<u>Gender:</u>

One of the most robust findings as far as demographic variables are concerned is the differential effect of gender on shopping characteristics. Studies have shown that men and women differ in aspects of their consumer behavior, from the products they tend to buy to their responses to advertising and product positioning (Buttle, 1992; Fisher and Arnold, 1990). The selectivity model (forwarded by Meyers-Levy, 1989) suggests that while females attempt to engage in effortful and comprehensive analysis of all available information, males are rather selective or heuristic processors of information.

Shopping is a scene in which sex-role orientations are enacted (Buttle, 1992). In a qualitative study which consisted of interviewing consumers to uncover their motives for shopping, Buttle (1992) concluded that men can be characterized as specialty shoppers (e.g., for insurance, fishing equipment and yard goods) who generally do not enjoy regular shopping, whereby women can be characterised as comprehensive shoppers, who generally have much more positive attitudes towards shopping.

A long held stereotype is the notion that Christmas shopping constitutes "women's work" (Fischer and Arnold, 1990), since traditionally, women have served as the family purchasing agent (Sherry and McGrath, 1989). Studies have generally shown that women are more involved in the task of Christmas shopping. Cheal (1987) found strong evidence to suggest that women are more active in all forms of gift-giving than men. He also found that most male subjects enlisted the help of a woman (generally their spouse or a close female relative) when shopping for gifts.

Fischer and Arnold's (1990) consumer survey on gift shopping patterns specifically considered the effect of gender-related variables on behavior. They found that

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overall, women were more involved in the gift purchasing task than were men, although men who held egalitarian gender-role attitudes were also characterized as being highly involved in the task. However, in their comprehensive analysis of consumer information-seeking dimensions, Kiel and Layton (1981) did not observe any sex-related differences between men and women in search activity.

As stated earlier, one objective of the current study is to examine the differential influences of gender and age on information search behaviors (as pertaining to purchasing a Christmas gift), and to determine whether these effects are (or are not) equally robust across a number of selected cultures.

The next chapter summarizes the literature regarding the antecedent variables (personality, situational, and demographic) found to influence individuals' information acquisition. Also included in the next chapter is the hypothesized directional effect of each antecedent variable on in-store information search.

# CHAPTER 8

## SUMMARY OF VARIABLES AND FACTORS POSITED TO INFLUENCE INFORMATION SEARCH BEHAVIOR

Table 2 summarizes the literature on the variables found to influence information search conducted by consumers. These variables will be measured in the current study, to uncover differences with respect to their relative effects on search between the three countries, and also for control purposes (if necessary) when assessing aggregate country-specific differences. The third column includes the directional influence on search for each variable or construct as hypothesized, based on reviewing the literature. Note that for a number of variables/constructs, no directional hypotheses (in terms to their relationship to total information search) have been proposed. For these variables/constructs, either the literature findings have been mixed (close relationship, income, and occupation), or there is a lack of existing research (guilty shopper).

## TABLE 2:DETERMINANTS OF INFORMATION SEARCH

(+): positively correlated with search; (-): negatively correlated with search

| Variable/Construct | Influence on Search: Literature Review Findings | Hypo Effect |
|---|---|---|
| *Personal Characteristics:* | | |
| Christmas Lover | Laroche et. al. (1999) | + |
| Enjoyment of Shopping | Katona & Mueller, 1955 (+); Kiel & Layton, 1981 (+) | + |
| Purchasing Confidence | Newman & Staelin, 1971 (-), Kiel & Layton, 1981 (+) | ? |
| Value-seeker | Horton, 1979 (+); Locander & Herman, 1979 (+) | + |
| Brand-name Buyer | Horton, 1979 (+); Locander & Herman, 1979 (+) | + |
| Fashion-Conscious | Cox & Rich, 1964 (+); Dommermuth & Cundiff, 1967 (+) | + |
| Self-Esteem/Leader | Schaninger & Scimpaglia, 1981 (+); Kiel & Layton, 1981 (+) | + |
| Influencer/Identity Shaper | Rogers, 1962 (+) | + |
| Guilty Shopper | | ? |
| Store-loyal shopper | Wilkie, 1986 (-) | - |
| Enduring Involvement | Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1986 (+) | + |
| Importance of children | Laroche et al. (1999) | + |
| *Situational Variables:* | | |
| Time Pressure | Sprott & Miyazaki, 1995 (-); Beatty & Smith, 1987 (-) | - |
| Good selection | Bettman et al., 1991 (+) | + |
| Availability of Info. | Mattson, 1982 (+); Russo, 1977 (+) | + |
| Perceived Purchase Cost | Sprott & Miyazaki, 1995 (+); Beatty & Smith, 1987 (+) | + |
| Strict Budget | Moore & Lehmann, 1980 (0); Claxton, Fry & Portis, 1974 (+) | + |
| Perceived Purchase Risk | Hugstad, Taylor & Bruce, 1987 (+) | + |
| Shopping List | McGrath, 1989 (-) | - |
| Shopping Companion | Otnes, Lowry & Kim, 1993 (-) | - |
| Product Familiarity | Kiel & Layton, 1981 (-); Newman & Staelin, 1972 (-) | - |
| Situational Involvement | Beatty & Smith, 1987 (+) | + |
| Need to Justify Decision | Lee, et al., 1999 (+) | + |
| Predetermined Selection | Riguax-Bricmont, 1993 (-); Banks, 1979 (-) | - |
| Difficult Recipient | Sprott & Miyazaki, 1995 (+) | + |
| Close Relationship | Heeler et al., 1979 (-); Ryans, 1977 (+) | ? |
| *Demographic Variables:* | | |
| Gender (m. vs. f.) | Fisher and Arnold, 1990 (-); Caplow, 1982 (-) | - |
| Age (old vs. young) | Schaninger & Scimpaglia, 1981 (-); Otnes, 1990 (+) | - |
| Family Size | Slama & Taschian, 1985 (+); Zeithalm, 1985 (0) | + |
| Presence of Children | Swinyard & Sim, 1987 (+) | + |
| Marital Status (m. vs. s.) | Newman & Staelin, 1972 (+); Moore & Lehmann, 1980 (+) | - |
| Education | Schaninger & Scimpaglia, 1981 (+); Engel et al., 1973 (+) | + |
| Income | Newman & Staelin, 1972 (+); Udell, 1966 (-) | ? |
| Occupation | Newman, 1977 (+,-) | ? |

## Model of the relationship between search antecedents:

Recently, Schmidt and Spreng (1996) proposed a comprehensive model of the relationship between search antecedents and external information search activity. This model (illustrated in Figure 3) is conceptually appropriate for the current study (in the sense that it contains many of the antecedent variables that were discussed in the previous

chapters). Note that in addition to search antecedent variables, the model includes a number of mediating variables: (1) perceived ability to search, (2) perceived benefits of search, (3) perceived costs of search, and (4) motivation to search. The following paragraphs briefly outline the function of these mediating variables in determining external information search.

According to Bettman and Park (1980), information search depends on two factors: ability to search, and motivation. This notion is consistent with Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) *Elaboration Likelihood Model*, which theorizes that "both the ability to process information and the motivation to process information are necessary before someone engages in effortful processing" (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996, p. 248).

However, a major assumption of economic theory (Bettman, 1979; Stigler, 1961) is that "consumers search for information until the marginal cost of obtaining a unit of information is equal to the marginal benefit of processing a unit of information" (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996, p. 248). In other words, as the benefits derived from search increase, so will search effort. Conversely, as the costs associate with searching increase, search effort will decrease.

Overall, external information search activity is the result of a combination of (1) the perceived ability to search, and (2) the motivation to search. The latter is a function of the perceived benefits/costs of search and several individual difference factors (such as need for cognition). Finally, personal, situational, and demographic antecedent variables interact to affect both the aforementioned mediating variables.

It should be noted that for reasons of parsimony (with respect to the measuring instrument), some of the variables contained in Schmidt & Spreng's (1996) model will

not be considered in the current study, including: satisfaction, information required for the choice rule, product complexity, and need for cognition.

# FIGURE 3: MODEL OF THE ANTECEDENTS OF EXTERNAL INFORMATION SEARCH AS PROPOSED BY SCHMIDT & SPRENG (1996)
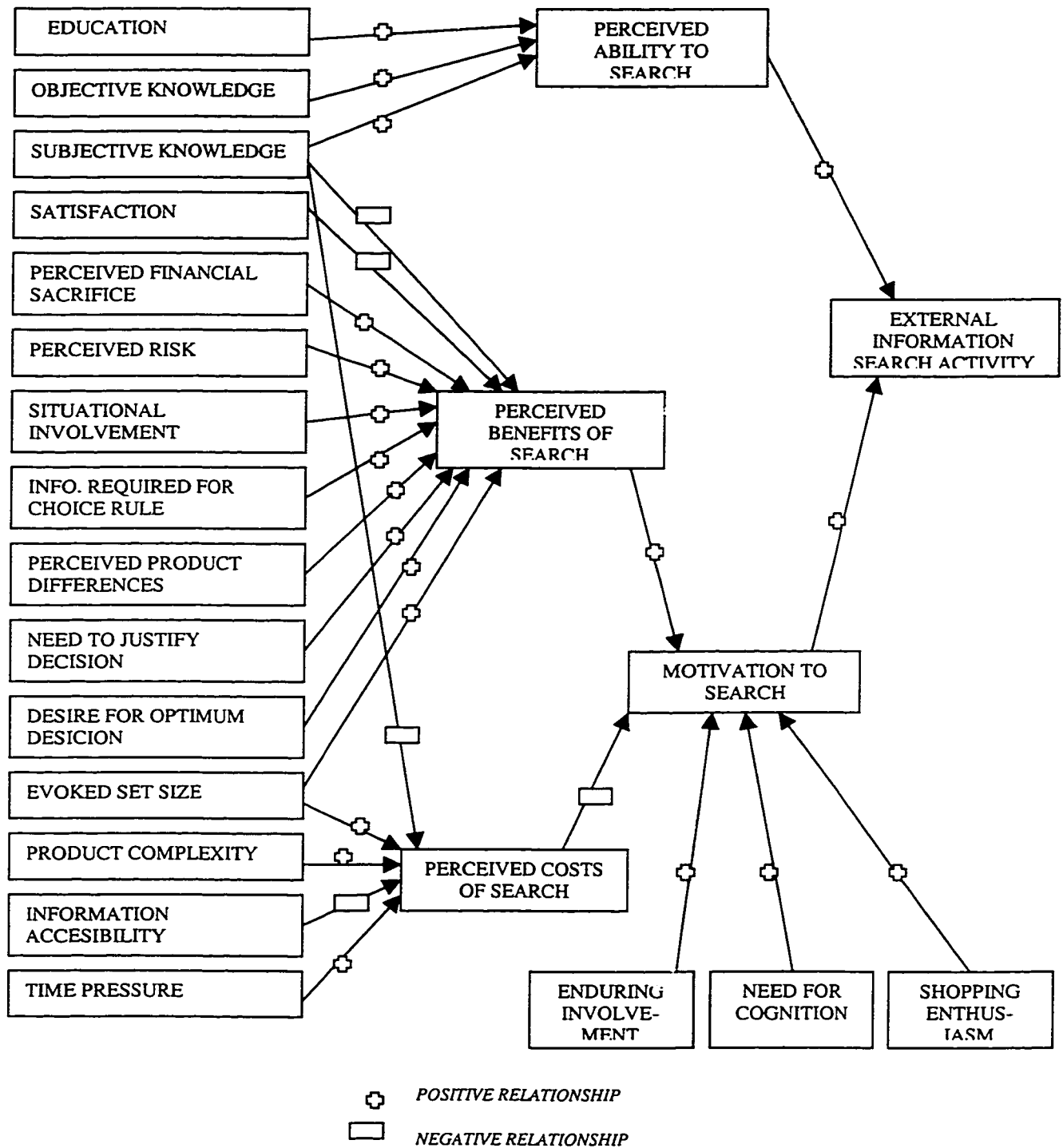


Source: Schmidt & Spreng (1996), "A Proposed Model of External Consumer Information Search, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, Vol. 24, No.3, p. 248.

Chapters 5 through 8 focused on the influence of various antecedent variables on total information acquisition. However, it is important to distinguish between the different types of information that consumers might access prior to making a final purchase decision. The following chapter reviews the different types of in-store information available to consumers.

# CHAPTER 9

# INFORMATION SOURCES

Chapter 4 made the distinction between two types of external information search: (1) pre-purchase search conducted prior to visiting a store, and (2) information search conducted within a store. This chapter reviews actual sources of external information, including (1) various media information sources that consumers may utilize prior to visiting a store, and (2) in-store sources of information. Following these sections is a brief review of various indices of search effort that have been utilized in earlier studies.

Media information sources:

Bruner and Pomazal (1988, p. 59) state that, "Advertising, publicity, personal selling, and displays are all direct attempts to affect consumers' perceptions of their desired state of affairs, and thus increase the likelihood of problem recognition." In the context of the present research, advertising can influence (among other things): (1) the choice and order that stores will be visited by the consumer; (2) the time frame in which the gift may be purchased; (3) the importance that a consumer may hold for a particular product attribute(s), such as price or quality; (4) which brands will be in the consumer's evoked set; and (5) the order by which brands are evaluated by the consumer. Exposure to advertising can be conceptualized as a form of pre-purchase information search.

Common media sources of information include television/radio advertisements, retailer catalogues and advertising circulars, newspaper and magazine advertisements, and more recently, the Internet. Since the current study focuses on in-store information

search, the interest here is whether prior exposure to media sources of information positively or negatively affects the extent of in-store information acquisition.

<u>In-store information sources:</u>

*Personal in-store information sources*

Many researchers have determined that consumers rate personal sources (including salespersons) as among the most important source of information (e.g., Price and Feick, 1984; Robertson, 1971), especially in instances where the consumer perceives high risk (e.g., Lutz and Reilly, 1973), or when consumers are generally susceptible to interpersonal influence (Beardon, Netermeyer, and Teel, 1989; Gilley, Graham, Wolfinbarger, and Yale, 1998). Interpersonal sources are often perceived as more credible than non-personal sources of information (Assael, Etgar & Henry, 1983, as cited in Feick & Price, 1987).

From the perspective of a gift shopper, sales clerks represent a potentially valuable and quick source of information within a retail store. For some gift shoppers, sales personnel may also reduce perceived feelings of risk, since sales clerks represent an objective, knowledgeable source of gift suggestions (Sherry & McGrath, 1989). Indeed, store salesclerks are often trained to answer merchandise- and gift-related questions, to persuade customers to buy, and also to reassure customers about their purchases made within the store. While store sales personnel are often available and constitute a valuable source of information, some research has shown that consumers do not always access them (Sherry & McGrath, 1989).

*Non-personal in-store sources of information*

Non-personal sources of in-store information include the products themselves (brand name, packaging design, presentation, packaging, manufacturer's information, and price) and store displays (retailer and/or brand point-of-purchase information, and product and category signage). The number of alternatives offered within a store seems to be a particularly important criterion for consumers—especially when considering the choice of a second store to visit (Mattson, 1982).

Information accessibility within a store can be enhanced by the number of alternatives offered, merchandise presentation (which can facilitate comparisons), and the overall layout of the store. Sherry & McGrath's (1989) study (analyzing merchandise display and store layout) found that the sales volume of a particular product was partially a function of the product's location within the store. In a field study, Allenby and Ginter (1995) recently found that in-store displays and feature advertisements significantly enhanced the probability that a product would be included in a consumer's consideration set.

Gender differences with respect to the types of information sources accessed have been documented. A recent study by Laroche, Kim, Saad, Browne and Cleveland (2000, in press) reported that while women more extensively accessed general in-store information sources (such as product signage and examining available alternatives), men showed a significant preference for seeking sales personnel assistance. Invoking the notion that men are generally selective processors of information, Laroche et al. theorized that men access sales clerks as a means of quickly obtaining the relevant information necessary for making a purchase decision.

<u>Indices of search effort:</u>

Earlier research conducted on information acquisition has generally operationalized the extent of information search as the number of pieces of information acquired (Moore & Lehmann, 1980; Schaninger & Sciglimpaglia, 1981) with little attention paid to the specific types of information accessed. Other studies have employed a variety of single-item measures, such as the number of information sources used, the number of alternatives evaluated, and the amount of time spent on the purchase decision (see Beatty & Smith, 1987, for a review). However, the use of single-item measures on information search unfortunately limits the extent to which generalizations can be made about the results (Beatty & Smith, 1987). In recognizing this limitation, later studies conducted by researchers included multiple measures of search effort.

A study conducted by Kiel and Layton (1981) obtained four separate search factors: (1) retail search effort, (2) use of commercial information sources, (3) interpersonal search, and (4) a time dimension. A later study on consumer information search also considered multiple measures of information search (Urbany, Dickson, and Wilkie, 1989). These results suggest that there are distinct features of information search that often may be "hidden" in studies that only consider a general index score of search behavior.

Of particular relevance to the current study, Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (2000, forthcoming) uncovered three distinct types of in-store information search by factor analyzing the items used to measure search. The search types were subsequently labeled:

(1) general information search (consisting of comparing alternatives, looking at store displays and merchandise layout, etc.),

(2) specific information search (i.e., seeking specific information on a particular product), and

(3) salesclerk assistance (e.g., asking store sales clerk for assistance and/or advice).

As will be explained in greater detail in the methodology chapter, the present study conceptualizes in-store search as multidimensional, and therefore includes a variety of items to measure subjects' acquisition of in-store information.

To recap, the central purpose of this study is to investigate the relevant situational, personal, and demographic traits that are posited to have an effect on consumers' in-store information search behavior in the context of Christmas gift-shopping, and whether significant differences among these variables emerge between Canadian, American, and British Consumers. The next chapter contains a review of relevant cross-cultural studies conducted in the context of consumer behavior, with a focus on studies comparing the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

# CHAPTER 10

# A REVIEW OF RELEVANT CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES IN CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Most of the literature on cross-cultural differences indicates that the culture in which people are raised can have an influence on the way that they think and behave (O'Grady & Lane, 1995). Bruner and Pomazal argue that, "cultural norms serve as general guidelines, concerning expected behaviors, desired housing, food, clothing, and most other aspects of one's lifestyle" (1988, p. 59). In fact, empirical studies have identified a number of consumption differences across cultures.

In their cross-cultural empirical study, Hoover, Green and Saegert (1978) observed significant differences in levels of perceived risk and brand loyalty between Mexican and American consumers. Other national differences in consumer characteristics have been observed between economically similar nations. Green and Langeard's (1975) study comparing subjects from France and the United States, determined that French and American consumers differed on a number of characteristics, including (among others) willingness to try new products and retail stores, the extent of word-of-mouth communication for both products and retail stores, as well as reliance on traditional media sources for information. The results of their analysis also led them to conclude that the average French consumer is more individualistic than the average U.S. consumer.

In the context of the present research, a number of researchers (e.g., Dawar, Parker, and Price, 1996; Thorelli and Becker, 1980; Anderson and Engeldow, 1977) have suggested that the cultural environment of the consumer may play an important role in determining the types, and extent of information search conducted. In a recent study,

Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (2000, forthcoming) uncovered differences in information search characteristics between English- and French-speaking Canadians in the context of a Christmas gift purchase. For example, while French Canadians generally exhibited a greater use of sales clerk help, English Canadians were more comprehensive in their information search process (in terms of comparing available alternatives, prices, etc.). Given that information search characteristics exhibited significant differences between these two main cultural groups *within* the same country, it is reasonable to expect that information search patterns (as well as the relative importance of various antecedents of search) may differ *between* countries—as will be tested in the current work.

Evidence to support this assertion has been provided by a number of researchers. An early study by Douglas (1976) reported significant differences in the purchase pattern of a number of convenience products between American and French housewives. In their study comparing French and Mexican gift-giving practices, Jolibert and Fernandez-Moreno (1983) found that while wives generally decided on behalf of the married couple (which recipients to give gifts to) in France, husbands and wives appeared to jointly decide on the same in Mexico. Furthermore, they determined that Mexican couples spent a higher proportion of their average monthly income for Christmas gifts than did French couples. O'Grady & Lane's (1995) examination of retail differences between Canada and the United States concluded that compared to Canadians, Americans were more concerned about personalized service when they shopped, and tended to shop where the bargains were. Furthermore, Canadians were more likely than Americans to shop automatically at a national chain.

However, Beatty, Kahle and Homer's (1991) cross-cultural study (involving American and Oriental students as subjects) which analyzed the relationship between gift-giving behaviors and personal values did not find significant main effects of culture on gift-giving behavior. The results from Beatty and al.'s study are limited in terms of generalizability for two reasons: (1) the use of university students as the sample frame, and (2) the fact that both American and Oriental subjects came from universities within the United States. The present study improves on their methodology, by sampling individual consumers from the general population within each of the three countries analyzed: the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Countries under Investigation: The United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom:

Building on the seminal work of Hofstede (1980), Nordstom and Vahlne (1992) conceptualize "psychic distance" as a function of cultural differences (e.g., power distance, masculinity, individualism, and uncertainty avoidance), country differences (i.e., in terms of legal and administrative systems) and language differences. The current study involves analyzing information search behaviors across three countries: Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. The latter two countries are characterized as being relatively close in psychic distance to Canada.

The choice of these three countries has practical value from a retailer's perspective. Since a number of retailing organizations have operations in at least two of these countries (e.g., *Marks & Spencer, Sears-Roebuck, Wal-Mart*, etc.), a better understanding of consumer behavioral characteristics in each country can help these retailers develop more effective marketing strategies.

Surprisingly, there are very few empirical studies comparing the cultural characteristics of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. O'Grady and Lane (1995) state that most of the published work on Canada-U.S. differences are based on observation and historical analysis, as opposed to being based on empirical research. Even less empirical studies exist that specifically compare U.S.—U.K. and Canada— U.K. cultural characteristics.

A review of cross-cultural studies comparing the U.S., Canada, and the U.K.:

In a cross-national survey of consumer attitudes towards marketing systems in six countries, Barksdale et al. (1982) determined that individuals in Canada, England, and the United States (along with Australia) tended to hold similar (albeit skeptical) views on the philosophy of business. Israeli consumers held considerably more negative views, while Norwegian consumers held more positive views. Their study also reported that individuals from the English-speaking countries (especially the U.S.) were much more likely to hold the belief that it was worthwhile to shop around (i.e., to compare products in several stores) than individuals from Norway and Israel.

A fair amount of research has been conducted contrasting attitudes towards advertising and advertising content between the three countries. Weinberger and Spotts' (1989) study involved a comparison of TV advertising content in the United States and the United Kingdom. They found that compared to American ads, British ads had fewer cues per ad and a lower proportion of ads with informational content. Weinberger and Spotts suggested that the results provide some support for the notion that compared to the U.K., the U.S. is more tolerant of a "hard-sell" approach in advertising. A subsequent

study by O'Donohoe (1995) reported differences in attitudes towards advertising between American and British consumers. More specifically, she stated that British people appear to be much more favorably disposed to advertising than Americans are, although these findings may be partially attributable to differences in advertising content.

Johnstone, Kaynak and Sparkman (1987) conducted a cross-cultural comparison of the informational content of television advertisements, involving American, English-Canadian, and French-Canadian commercials. They determined that French-Canadian television commercials generally contained more information (in terms of information cues) than either English-Canadian or American television commercials.

Differences in negotiating behavior between American and British businesspeople have also been documented. Campbell, Graham, Jolibert, and Meissner (1988) conducted a laboratory study involving participants from the United States, France, West Germany, and the United Kingdom. Sharp differences emerged with respect to the characteristics of the negotiating process between American and European subjects. In particular, it appeared that the outcome of negotiations among British participants was largely a function of the status (or role) accorded each negotiator, while for American negotiators, the outcome appeared to be determined primarily by events at the negotiating table. Campbell et al. suggested that these results are related to Hall's (1976, cited in Campbell et al., 1988) cultural dimension of the context of communication. Communication in high-context cultures is posited to be heavily dependent on non-verbal aspects of communication, while communication in low-context cultures depends more on the actual verbally expressed dialogue. In reviewing the literature, the authors state that compared to the U.S., the U.K. has the characteristics of a high-context culture.

One problem in culture-centered national character theories stems from the unit of analysis (Dawar, Parker, and Price, 1996). In fact, culture has proven to be difficult to define and delimit, and this has generally restricted the extent of empirical research. Clark (1990) suggests that nations can be "characterized by behavioral or personality variables which can replace national identity variables when conducting cross-cultural marketing studies" (as cited in Dawar, Parker, and Price, 1996, p. 501). Hofstede's (1980) four dimensions of national culture are probably the best known among cross-cultural.

Hofstede's dimensions of national culture:

Hofstede (1980) points out that among international researchers, there exists little consensus of what represents national cultures. His comprehensive study on the dimensions of national culture involved a massive statistical analysis of more than 116,000 questionnaires. The surveys were gathered from employees in forty countries of a large U.S.-based multinational corporation, across all occupations within the company, between 1967 and 1973. Through the use of factor analysis, Hofstede derived four main criteria that distinguished the countries' national cultures. These four cultural characteristics, all potentially relevant to consumer behavior are: (1) power distance, (2) uncertainty avoidance, (3) individualism, and (4) masculinity.

The first domain of national culture uncovered by Hofstede (1980) is *power distance*. This dimension "indicates the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally" (p. 45). The second dimension, *uncertainty avoidance*, "indicates the extent to which a society feels

threatened by uncertain and ambiguous situations..." (p. 45). The third dimension includes the continuum of *individualism-collectivism*. As described by Hofstede (p. 45), "individualism implies a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and of their immediate families only, while collectivism is characterized by a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-group (relatives, clan, organizations) to look after them, and in exchange for that they feel they owe absolute loyalty to it." Finally, the last dimension, *masculinity*, expresses "...the extent to which the dominant values in society are 'masculine'—that is, assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and not caring for others, the quality of life, or people" (p. 46).

Scores of the U.S.A., the U.K., and Canada on Hofstede's Indices of National Culture:

Overall, it is generally thought that the U.K., Canada, and the U.S. are more similar economically, politically, and culturally, than they are different (Szymanski, Bharadwaj, and Varadarajan, 1993). Hofstede's (1980) study provides strong supporting evidence for this notion. He found that countries in the "Anglo" cluster (which included the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States) generally have a low to medium score on the power distance index, a low to medium score on the uncertainty avoidance index, and high scores on the individualism and masculinity indices. More specifically, Hofstede determined that Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom occupy the same quadrants within each of the following two-dimensional spaces (i.e., maps): (1) power distance & uncertainty avoidance (small power distance/weak uncertainty avoidance); (2) power distance & individualism (small power distance/individualist); and

(3) uncertainty avoidance & masculinity (weak uncertainty avoidance/masculine). The

placement of these countries on these three maps is shown in Figures 4, 5, and 6. Table 3

provides an index of abbreviations used to denote countries. Since the U.S., Canada, and

the U.K. scored very similar to each other in Hofstede's cultural indices, it is reasonable

to assume that there is a substantial degree of cultural similarity between the three

countries.

### TABLE 3: THE 40 COUNTRIES USED IN HOFSTEDE'S (1980) STUDY
**(Abbreviations used in Figures 4, 5, and 6.)**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| arg-Argentina | fra-France | jap-Japan | sin-Singapore |
| aul-Australia | gbr-Great Britain | mex-Mexico | spa-Spain |
| aut-Austria | ger-Germany (west) | net-Netherlands | swe-Sweden |
| bel-Belgium | gre-Greece | nor-Norway | swi-Switzerland |
| bra-Brazil | hok-Hong Kong | nzl-New Zealand | tai-Taiwan |
| can-Canada | ind-India | pak-Pakistan | tha-Thailand |
| chl-Chile | ira-Iran | per-Peru | tur-Turkey |
| col-Columbia | ire-Ireland | phi-Phillipines | usa-United States |
| den-Denmark | isr-Israel | por-Portugal | ven-Venezuela |
| fin-Finland | ita-Italy | saf-South Africa | yug-Yugoslavia |

# FIGURE 4: POSITION OF THE 40 COUNTRIES ON HOFSTEDE'S (1980) POWER DISTANCE AND INDIVIDUALISM SCALES
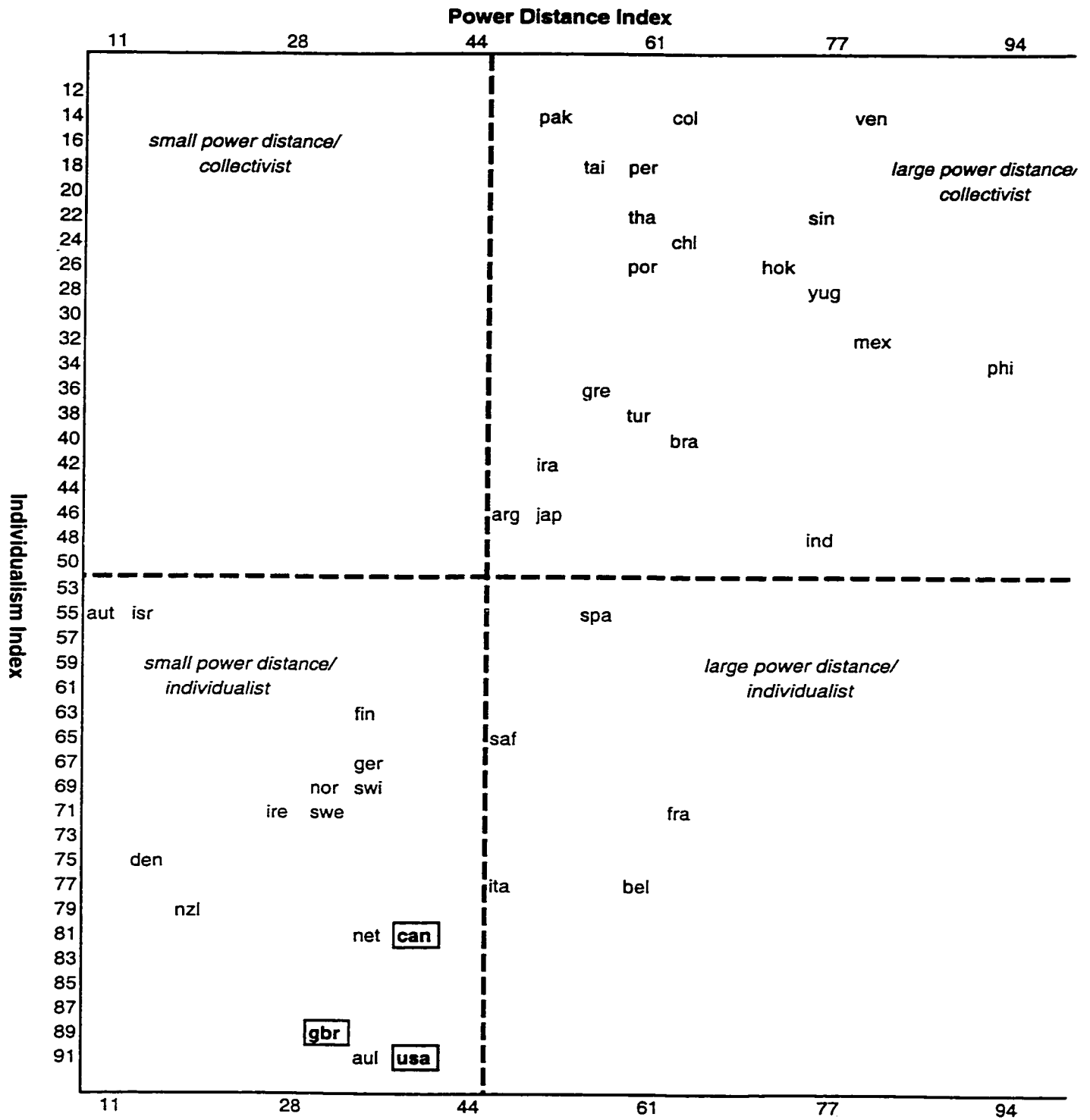
**Power Distance Index**



small power distance/
collectivist

large power distance/
collectivist

small power distance/
individualist

large power distance/
individualist

**Source:** Hofstede, Geert (1980), "Motivation, Leadership and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?" *American Dynamics*, Summer, 42-63.

# FIGURE 5: POSITION OF THE 40 COUNTRIES ON HOFSTEDE'S (1980) UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE AND MASCULINITY SCALES



**Masculinity Index**

| 5 | 23 | 41 | 59 | 77 | 95 |

*weak uncertainty avoidance/ feminine*    sin    *weak uncertainty avoidance/ masculine*

den

swe    hok

gbr ire

ind

usa phi

can nzl    saf

nor    aul

net

fin    ira    swi

tha    ger

tai    pak    aut

bra    ita

isr    col    ven

mex

chl

spa fra tur    arg

yug

per

bel    jap

por

*strong uncertainty avoidance/ feminine*    gre    *strong uncertainty avoidance/ masculine*

Uncertainty Avoidance Index: 8, 11, 13, 16, 19, 21, 24, 27, 29, 32, 35, 37, 40, 43, 45, 48, 51, 53, 56, 59, 61, 64, 67, 69, 72, 75, 77, 80, 83, 85, 88, 91, 93, 96, 99, 101, 104, 107, 109, 112

**Source:** Hofstede, Geert (1980), "Motivation, Leadership, and Organization: Do American Theories Apply Abroad?" *American Dynamics*, Summer, 42-63.

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# FIGURE 6: POSITION OF THE 40 COUNTRIES ON HOFSTEDE'S (1980) POWER DISTANCE AND UNCERTAINTY AVOIDANCE SCALES
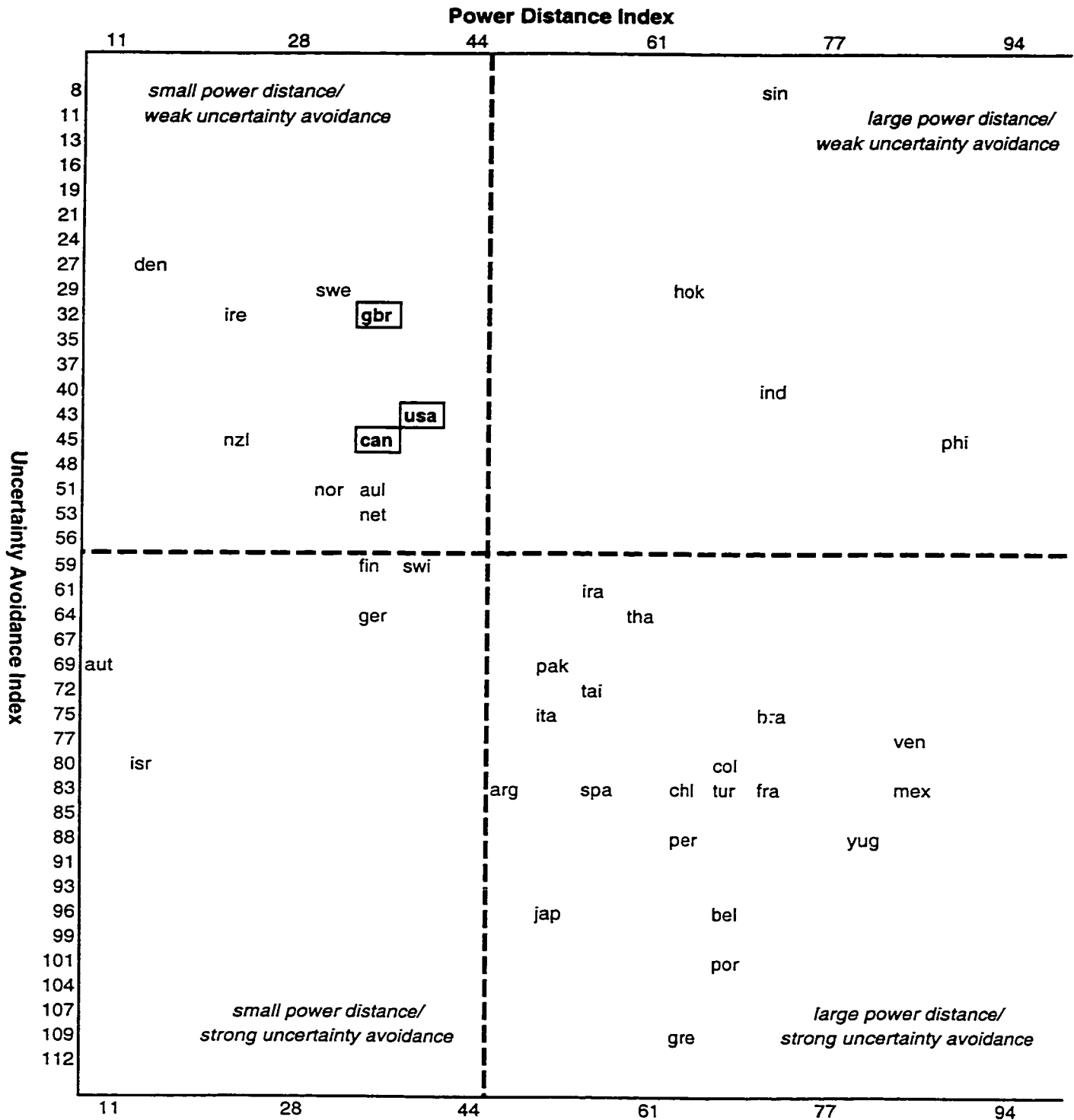
**Power Distance Index**

|  | 11 | 28 | 44 | 61 | 77 | 94 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

*Uncertainty Avoidance Index*

```
         11        28         44          61         77         94
    8                                                sin
   11    small power distance/                          large power distance/
   13    weak uncertainty avoidance                     weak uncertainty avoidance
   16
   19
   21
   24
   27    den
   29               swe                      hok
   32         ire      gbr
   35
   37
   40                                            ind
   43                   usa
   45         nzl       can                                        phi
   48
   51            nor aul
   53                net
   56
   59               fin  swi
   61                        ira
   64               ger        tha
   67
   69 aut                 pak
   72                       tai
   75                     ita           b:a
   77                                          ven
   80    isr                        col
   83               arg    spa   chl tur fra      mex
   85
   88                          per        yug
   91
   93
   96               jap        bel
   99
  101                          por
  104
  107    small power distance/           large power distance/
  109    strong uncertainty avoidance    strong uncertainty avoidance
  112                            gre
```

|  | 11 | 28 | 44 | 61 | 77 | 94 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

O'Grady and Lane (1995) state that an inherent limitation of national cultural indices (such as Hofstede's dimensions) is their high level of aggregation, which may hide important variations (including regional differences that exist within countries, and individual differences and experiences). While some researchers have criticized the use of national units for clustering similar cultures, Ronen and Shenkar (1985) argue that the use of countries is appropriate, since "...national boundaries delineate the legal, political, and social environments within which organizations and workers operate" (p. 444). Gómez-Mejia and Palich (1997) recently stated that, "While criticisms of Hofstede's work have been numerous (e.g., the samples used may not be representative of national populations)...his research arguably remains the most comprehensive and best of its kind..." (p.315). Hofstede's scores on the dimensions of culture are not designed to be applied at the individual level. Rather, they are meant to be applied to groups, as the culture-level dimensions are based on national means. Hofstede's dimensions are therefore applicable in the current study, since it involves analyzing consumer differences in information search patterns at the national level. Clustering countries into groups also helps managers in multinational companies better understand the basis for similarities and differences between countries, and helps researchers to define the extent to which results can be generalized to other countries.

Although Hofstede's work was based on management practices, these dimensions have proved useful in characterizing cultures, and they have been recently used in the marketing literature (see Dawar, Parker and Price, 1996). Other studies have also characterized national cultures along a number of dimensions similar to those determined by Hofstede (as shown in Table 4).

## TABLE 4: DIMENSIONS OF NATIONAL CULTURE

| Emerging Domains | | Inkeles & Levinson (1969) | Hofstede (1980, 1983) | Peabody (1985) | Eysenck & Eysenck (1969) | Kluckhohn & Stodtbeck (1961) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Relation to authority* | 1 | Relation to authority | Power distance | Assertiveness | Psychoticism (tough-mindedness) | Orientation toward human relationships |
| *Relations to self* | 2 | Conceptions of self | Masculinity (social, ego), individualism | Tightness/ looseness | Extroversion | Perception of human nature (good/evil) |
| *Relation to risk* | 3 | Primary dilemmas or conflicts | Uncertainty avoidance | | | |

Source: Clark, T. (1990), "International Marketing and National Character: A Review and Proposal for an Integrative Theory," *Journal of Marketing*, October 1990, p. 72.

It is plausible to suggest that an individual's score on each of the dimensions in Table 4 may indirectly influence the type and extent of information search conducted. For example, given that the United States, Great Britain, and Canada score similarly on Hofstede's (1980) dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, power distance, and individualism, we might expect few, if any, significant overall variations in information search behavior by individuals from these three countries. This notion has not yet been widely subjected to empirical evaluation.

However, in a recent cross-cultural study on interpersonal information exchange, Dawar, Parker, and Price (1996) found that the greater the uncertainty avoidance (UAI) and power distance (PDI) exhibited by a country, the smaller the proportion of consumers who search for product information from impersonal and objective magazines such as *Consumer Reports*. They also determined that cultures high in UAI or PDI had higher uses of personal information sources (as shown in Table 5). Contrary to expectations, however, Hofstede's individualism index was not significantly related to information seeking.

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In the context of the present research, the scores obtained for Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States on impersonal information-seeking were quite similar (at 4, 3, and 4 respectively); although the scores for opinion-seeking (at 77.14, 74.82, and 88.58 respectfully) and opinion-giving (at 29.36, 17.38, and 32.30 respectively) differed somewhat. In particular, the United Kingdom achieved relatively low scores on both opinion-seeking and opinion-giving, relative to the United States and to a lesser extent, Canada.

## TABLE 5: COUNTRY-LEVEL INDICES OF CULTURAL PERSONALITY AND INFORMATION USE

| COUNTRY | UAI[a] | PSI[a] | IDV[a] | IMP. INFO SEEKING[b] | OPINION SEEKING[c] | OPINION GIVING[c] |
|---------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Austria | 70 | 11 | 55 | 2 | - | - |
| Belgium | 94 | 65 | 75 | 3 | 88.88 | 41.18 |
| *Canada** | *48* | *39* | *80* | *4* | *77.14* | *29.36* |
| Denmark | 23 | 18 | 74 | 5 | 76.48 | 25.00 |
| Finland | 59 | 33 | 63 | 5 | - | - |
| France | 86 | 68 | 71 | 2 | 81.30 | 28.24 |
| Germany | 65 | 35 | 67 | 3 | 76.48 | 40.42 |
| Italy | 75 | 50 | 76 | 1 | 93.10 | 7.70 |
| Netherlands | 53 | 38 | 80 | 3 | 75.00 | 14.28 |
| Norway | 50 | 31 | 69 | 5 | 75.00 | 14.28 |
| Portugal | 104 | 63 | 27 | 1 | - | - |
| Spain | 86 | 57 | 51 | 1 | 85.18 | 8.34 |
| Sweden | 29 | 31 | 71 | 5 | - | - |
| Switzerland | 58 | 34 | 68 | 2 | - | - |
| *United Kingdom** | *35* | *35* | *89* | *3* | *74.82* | *17.18* |
| *United States** | *46* | *40* | *91* | *4* | *88.58* | *32.30* |

[a] UAI= uncertainty avoidance; PDI= power distance; IDV= individualism (Hofstede, 1980).
[b] higher numbers indicate greater proportions of the population actively seeking product information from consumer magazines (Thorelli and Becker, 1980).
[c] opinion-seeking (giving) is calculated as a percentage of the sample indicating a high likelihood (scores 5,6,7) of seeking (giving) product information from others minus the percentage indicating a low likelihood (scores 1,2,3).
*italicized figures represent the countries under analysis in the current study.

Source: Dawar, Niraj; Parker, Philip M. & Price, Lydia J. (1996), "A Cross-Cultural Study of Interpersonal Information Exchange," *Journal of International Business Studies*, 3rd quarter, p. 497.

## Scores of the U.S.A., the U.K. and Canada on Other Indices of National Culture:

In addition to Hofstede's work, other studies have found evidence to suggest that the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom are rather similar economically, politically, and culturally. In their cultural analysis of 21 countries, Huszagh, Fox, and

Day (1985) determined that the U.S., U.K., Canada, and five other European countries

formed a distinct cluster on the basis of nine economic and social welfare variables (life-

expectancy, average work week, percentage of population employed in services,

consumer price index, unemployment, government spending per capita, manufacturing

percentage of GNP, urbanization, and private spending percentage of GNP).

An earlier study conducted by Sethi (1971), who clustered 91 countries on the

basis of 29 political, socio-economic, trade, transportation, communication, biological,

and personal consumption variables, placed the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and a number of

European countries in the same cluster. Ronen and Kraut's (1977) study categorized the

U.K., the U.S. and Canada as belonging to the *Anglo* cluster of countries (along with

Australia, India, New Zealand, and South Africa). Similarly, Ronen and Shenkar's (1985)

study, which clustered countries along similar cultural dimensions, the United States,

Canada, and the United Kingdom were categorized as belonging to the "Anglo" group of

countries (as illustrated in Table 6).

**TABLE 6: RONEN AND SHENKAR'S (1985) CLUSTERING OF COUNTRIES
ACCORDING TO CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS**

| CLUSTER | COUNTRIES |
|---|---|
| Anglo | *US, Canada*, New Zealand, *UK*, Ireland, South Africa |
| Latin European | France, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Spain |
| Latin American | Argentina, Venezuela, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Columbia |
| Far Eastern | Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand |
| Arab | UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi |
| Near Eastern | Turkey, Iran, Greece |
| Nordic | Finland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden |
| Germanic | Australia, Germany, Switzerland |
| Independent | Japan, Brazil, India, Israel |

Source: Gardberg, N. & Chandra, R. (1997), "On Measuring Cultural Distance Between Countries," presented at the Sixth
Symposium on Cross-Cultural Consumer and Business Studies, Hawaii.

<u>Other dimensions of culture:</u>

Four other important dimensions commonly used by international marketing researchers to group countries are geography, language, religion, and technological development (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). The significance of each of these dimensions is reviewed in the ensuing section, with a focus on the three countries in the present research: the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

*Geography*

Culture by definition, is very general and abstract. Triandis (1994) argued that a common language and geographical space are necessary conditions for the sharing of cultural norms among group members. In many areas of the world, a culture will spread first to those geographical areas nearest to its birthplace (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). The Atlantic Ocean separates Canada and the United States from the United Kingdom, however the spread of British culture among these two countries can be attributed to colonization and immigration. Indeed, both the United States, and more recently Canada, were formerly colonies of Great Britain, and the descendents of British settlers still account for a significant proportion of the populations of the former two countries. Undoubtedly, the "national" cultures that arose in the United States and Canada are also partially a product of the intensive immigration of individuals from around the world to these countries, and by the presence of native (aboriginal) populations.

*Language*

Language constitutes an integral part of cultures. As a consequence of British colonization, the dominant language of all three countries is English. However, French is widely spoken in Canada, as the first language of the majority of inhabitants of the province of Québec, and as a second language of a significant number of Canadians. Both English and French share official language status in Canada.

In some areas of the United States (particularly in Southern urban areas), Spanish is also widely spoken. Within the United Kingdom, English is almost universally spoken, although there are areas where Welsh, Gaelic, and Irish Gaelic are also spoken. As a consequence of immigration, many other languages are represented in all three countries.

*Religion*

Religious beliefs are often associated with certain values and norms (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985). The dominant religious groups in all three countries are all Christian (as indicated in Table 7), although all major religions are represented to some extent in all three countries.

*Technological Development*

The United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada are among the most technologically advanced nations on earth, as evidenced by their transportation and telecommunications infrastructures, economic characteristics (e.g., per capita income, diverse industrial/services base), education systems, and common membership in the

*Group of Seven* most industrialized economies (G7). In the context of the present research, the retail infrastructures in all three countries are also highly developed.

The above four dimensions are not independent—generally speaking, countries with one of these elements in common will often share all four (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985), as is the case with the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Socio-Demographic characteristics of the U. S., Canada, and the U. K.:

Table 7 provides a comprehensive summary of selected socio-demographic characteristics of each of the three countries. These statistics within the table clearly show that (at least at the macro-level) the three countries are rather similar in terms of economic development, ethnicity, educational attainment, and age structure.

**TABLE 7: SUMMARY OF SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES UNDER INVESTIGATION**

| *Country Statistics* | *Canada* | *United Kingdom* | *United States* |
|---|---|---|---|
| Population (1998)[a] | 30,675,000 | 58,970,000 | 270,312,000 |
| % Urban[c] | 77% | 89% | 76% |
| | | | |
| Main Ethnic Groups[c] | 40% British | 81.5% English | 83% White |
| | 27% French | 9.6% Scottish | 13% Black |
| | 20% Other European | 2.4% Irish | 1% Native |
| | 1.5% Native | 1.9% Welsh | 4% Asian |
| | 11.5% Other | 1.8% Ulster | |
| | | 2.8% Other | |
| | | | |
| Religious Affiliation[b] | 45% Catholic | 46% Anglican | 56% Protestant |
| | 12% United Church | 15% Catholic | 28% Roman Catholic |
| | 8% Anglican | 2.5 % Other Protestant | 10% None |
| | 35% Other | 36% Other | 6% Other |
| | | | |
| Unemployment (Dec. 1999)[g] | 6.8% | 5.9% | 4.1% |
| | | | |
| GDP per Capita, US $ (1998) using PPP[g] | $24, 468 | $21,170 | $30,514 |
| | | | |
| Female Labor-force Participation (1997)[g] | 67.8% | 66.8% | 71.3% |
| | | | |
| Civilian Employment, (1997) per sector[g]: | | | |
| -agriculture, forestry, & fishing | 3.9% | 1.9% | 2.7% |
| -industry | 23.2% | 26.9% | 23.9% |
| -services | 73.0% | 71.3% | 73.4% |
| | | | |
| Sectorial Contributions to GDP (1997)[g] | | | |
| -agriculture | 2.4% | 1.7% | 1.8% |
| -industry | 26.0% | 27.5% | 26.8% |
| -services | 71.6% | 70.8% | 71.4% |
| | | | |
| Age Structure (1997)[g] | | | |
| <15 years | 17.8% | 19.3% | 22.3% |
| 15-64 years | 65.9% | 65.0% | 65.7% |
| ≥65 years | 16.3% | 15.7% | 12.0% |
| | | | |
| TV's per 1000 (1995)[a] | 647 | 612 | 776 |

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## TABLE 7 (CONTINUED): SUMMARY OF SELECTED SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC STATISTICS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES UNDER INVESTIGATION

| Educational Attainment—(highest level) | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Canada* [f] | | *The United States* [d] | | *The United Kingdom* [h] | |
| Elementary-secondary | 52.8% | Not H.S. graduate | 35.7% | Primary and lower secondary | 32% |
| Post-sec. (non-univ.) | 24.2% | H. S. graduate | 27.5% | Upper secondary | 49% |
| University (no degree) | 9.7% | Some college | 16.9% | Non-university/tertiary | 8% |
| University (degree) | 13.3% | Associate's degree | 5.2% | University education | 11% |
| | | Bachelor's degree | 9.7% | | |
| | | Advanced degree | 5.1% | | |

[a] *Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 118th edition (1998). US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of Census, Washington, DC.
[b] *Statistical Abstract of the World*, 3rd edition (1997). Annemarie S. Muth (ed.), Detroit, MI: Gale Research.
[c] *The Europa World Yearbook Volume II*, 38th edition (1997). Surrey, England: Europa Publications Limited.
[d] *The American Almanac—Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 116 edition (1997). Austin, TX: Hoover's Inc.
[e] *The World Almanac and Book of Facts* (1999). Mahwah, NJ: Primedia Reference Inc.
[f] *Canadian Global Almanac* (1999), John Robert Columbo (ed.), Toronto, ON: Macmillan Canada.
[g] *OECD National Accounts* (1999), *Main Aggregates*, Volume 1.
[h] OECD Economies at a Glance—Structural Indicators (1996), Paris, France.

As mentioned earlier, the current study involves a comparison of individuals from three countries. Two methodological approaches to cross-cultural research of this type have been identified in the literature: "etic" and "emic". The distinguishing characteristics of each approach are briefly outlined in the ensuing section.

## "Etic" versus "Emic" Approach to Cross-Cultural Studies:

International marketers are generally interested in identifying behavioral similarities among consumers from different countries, "since these offer the most attractive opportunities for the transfer of products and services and for the integration of strategies across national markets" (Douglas & Craig, 1983, p. 134). Hence, the orientation followed in the present study is reflective of an "etic" philosophy, employing measures that are as comparable as possible across countries. By contrast, an "emic" approach generally assumes that behavioral phenomena are unique to a culture, and therefore examines only one culture (Douglas & Craig, 1983).

An "etic" methodological approach to international comparisons is characterized by the following: (1) the researcher studies behavior from a position outside the system; (2) the study involves comparing a number of cultures; (3) the structure guiding the research is created by the researcher; and (4) the criteria used to compare the behaviors across the cultures are considered absolute or universal (Berry, 1980).

The adoption of an "etic" approach is not without limitations. Chief among these is what Triandis (1972) described as a "pseudo-etic" approach, whereby measures developed in one country are applied with only minimal adaptation to other countries. In light of this, steps were taken to verify the validity of the standardized measures and the equivalence of the modified measures used in this study (including correlational factor analysis of the measures and split-half reliability tests). These steps are described in detail in the methodology and results chapters that follow.

# CHAPTER 11

# RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Table 2 presented the specific directional hypotheses for each variable/construct's relationship to in-store information search. No specific literature was found contrasting in-store information search or Christmas shopping behavior among Canadian, American, and British Shoppers. Most of the studies reviewed in the previous chapter indicated that Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom are more similar than they are different. In particular, the three countries were shown to have relatively similar scores on Hofstede's (1980) four cultural dimensions. Information search behaviors should therefore be relatively similar across the three countries. However, should information search characteristics differ substantially between these three similar countries, one could then logically predict that information search characteristics would exhibit even greater differences between dissimilar cultures.

Given the exploratory nature of this study, and due to the relative absence of literature comparing information search behaviors across the three countries, the following three null hypotheses are forwarded to provide a framework for the statistical analyses:

**H1: Given that Canada, the United States, and Great Britain have similar: (1) levels of economic sophistication, (2) shopping infrastructures, (3) demographic characteristics, and (3) scores on Hofstede's four cultural dimensions, average scores on total in-store information search conducted by respondents across the three countries should not significantly vary.**

**H2: Assuming that in-store information search is multidimensional (i.e., composed of general information search, product-specific information search, and salesclerk assistance), the average scores reported by respondents on each dimension of in-store search should not significantly vary across the three countries.**

**H3: The relative importance and directional effect of in-store search antecedents (personal, situational, and demographic factors/variables) will not differ significantly across the three countries.**

Both gender and age represent two important and differentiating demographic characteristics that marketers commonly use when segmenting markets, and when designing promotional and/or communication strategies. As stated earlier in Chapter 1, two objectives of the current study include assessing the effects of gender and age on information search behavior across the three countries. With respect to gender, the relevant literature has generally shown that compared to males, females are more comprehensive acquirers of information. Similarly, most of the relevant studies on age

have generally reported that compared to older individuals, younger individuals acquire greater amounts of information. Therefore, the following two hypotheses are proposed:

**H4: Irrespective of nationality, female subjects are expected to engage in greater search activity than male subjects.**

**H5: Irrespective of nationality, younger subjects are expected to engage in greater search activity than older subjects.**

The following chapters contain a detailed explanation of the methodology and statistical procedures followed in order to test the five aforementioned research propositions.

# CHAPTER 12

# METHODOLOGY

<u>Methodological considerations:</u>

Although the phenomenon of interest is the differential characteristics of search behavior across national cultures, it is also important to measure personal, situational, and demographic characteristics, for the following reasons: (1) to understand how these factors differentially influence search across cultures; (2) to ensure equivalency in the task, which is an important consideration when search behavior scores are aggregated to broadly assess culture/country differences; and (3) in the case of the demographic characteristics, to control for differences between country samples where necessary (i.e., as covariates when assessing differences). The scope of analysis is limited to the purchase of a specific Christmas clothing gift. A review of the literature indicated that clothing was the most popular gift purchased for others at Christmas.

Belk's (1976) study on gift-giving instances in a major U.S. metropolitan region determined that the clear favorite among gifts selected was clothing, which constituted over one-fourth of the gifts selected (including clothing accessories). The results of a three-year survey of gift purchases by British consumers also revealed clothing to be the most popular gift (Lowes, Turner, and Wills, 1971). A clothing gift may be one of the most effective ways for a giver to communicate his or her perception of the recipient and the giver-recipient relationship, since clothing conveys information about sex, age, status, as well as personality (Sproles, 1979).

The research design considered for this study attempts to ensure that the dimensions under analysis (in-store information search characteristics, as a function of personal, situational, and demographic factors) occur, to some degree, universally in the countries under analysis. However, these same dimensions are expected to exhibit significant variations within groups (between individuals), and between groups (countries). The survey instrument was reviewed by the participating researchers (in the U.S.A. and the U.K.) and also by a number of marketing Professors (in Canada) to ensure that the dimensions included in the measuring instrument adequately captured the domain of the phenomenon under review, namely consumer information search strategies for a Christmas gift.

Sampling procedure:

A field survey was deemed as the most appropriate means of gathering research data for the following reasons: (1) to obtain representative samples of real consumers in each of the three countries under study; (2) to attempt equivalence in the method of data collection in each of the three countries; and (3) to permit the gathering of data in a cost-effective and timely manner. The method of data collection in each of the three countries is outlined in the ensuing sections, and summarized in Figure 7. For purposes of simplicity, one city within each country was selected for surveying (Table 8), on the basis of being the cities of residence of the participating researchers.

## TABLE 8: SAMPLING POPULATION WITHIN CITIES STUDIED

| Country | Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|---|---|---|---|
| State/Province/County<br>　Population | Québec<br>7,334,000[b] | Gloucestershire<br>552,700[c] | Mississippi<br>2,731,000[a] |
| Metropolitan region<br>sampled<br>　Population | Montréal<br>3,326,510[b] | Cheltenham<br>103,109[c] | Hattiesburg<br>106,000[d] |

[a]*Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 118th edition (1998). US Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration, Bureau of Census, Washington, DC.
[b]*Statistical Abstract of the World*, 3rd edition (1997). Annemarie S. Muth (ed.), Detroit, MI: Gale Research.
[c]*The Europa World Yearbook Volume II*, 38th edition (1997). Surrey, England: Europa Publications Limited.
[d]*The American Almanac—Statistical Abstract of the United States*, 116 edition (1997). Austin, TX: Hoover's Inc.

*Canada*

Data collection within Canada was carried out by the author in metropolitan Montréal, a city of approximately 3.5 million inhabitants. Similar to most large North American cities, Montréal is home to many different ethnic groups, however the two predominant languages spoken are French and English. Therefore, copies of the questionnaire and accompanying cover letter were available in French, as well as English, in reflection of the linguistic reality of Montréal. An attempt was made to ensure a broad socio-demographic representation of sample participants. Potential respondents within residential areas of the metropolitan area were surveyed in the following manner.

Individual households (defined as single-family dwellings, including houses, apartments, condominiums, etc.) were approached by the researcher and/or assistant. The person answering the door was greeted, and briefly informed about the nature of the study (if the person answering the door was a child, he/she was asked if the researcher could speak to one of his/her parents). The individual was then invited to participate in the survey (provided that he/she had made a Christmas clothing gift purchase for someone during the most recent Christmas season), and informed that all responses would be treated anonymously. In addition, the individual was informed about the

procedures to return the completed questionnaire, and how long the questionnaire would take to complete (approximately 20-30 minutes). Consenting individuals were then thanked, and left with the questionnaire (including the cover letter) and a return-addressed, postage-paid envelope. It should be noted that respondents were not required to include their name, address, or telephone number when completing the questionnaire.

The cover letter (cosigned by the author and his supervising professor) briefly described the nature of the study ("...a study of the Christmas shopping behavior of Canadians..."), and included instructions for completing the questionnaire. The cover letter also informed potential respondents that their responses would be treated anonymously, and that the accumulated data would be aggregated prior to analysis.

A total of 900 questionnaires were left with consenting individuals. The timeframe for the data collection in Canada was between December 28, 1999, and February 5, 2000. A breakdown of the selected municipalities within the greater Montréal area that were surveyed, and the corresponding number of respondents per municipality, appears in Table 9.

## TABLE 9: QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION WITHIN MONTREAL

| Municipality | Population (1996)† | Number distributed |
|---|---|---|
| Anjou | 37,308 | 34 |
| Beaconsfield | 19,414 | 52 |
| Dollard-des-Ormeaux | 47,826 | 25 |
| Dorval | 17,572 | 28 |
| Kirkland | 18,678 | 130 |
| Lachine | 35,171 | 31 |
| Lasalle | 72,029 | 27 |
| Montréal | 1,016,376 | 351 |
| Outremont | 22,571 | 37 |
| Pierrefonds | 52,986 | 28 |
| Pointe-Claire | 28,435 | 27 |
| Saint Laurent | 74,240 | 78 |
| Verdun | 59,714 | 37 |
| Westmount | 20,420 | 15 |
| *Total* | | *900* |

†*Canadian Almanac & Directory* (2000), Anne-Marie Aldrighieri (ed.), Toronto, ON: Micromedia.

*The United Kingdom*

The survey distribution procedure followed within the United Kingdom was the same as described above for Canada. Data collection was carried out by undergraduate marketing students within the Cheltenham area, a city of approximately 100,000 inhabitants in the county of Gloucestershire. The students were hired by a professor of marketing, who supervised the data collection within the United Kingdom. Surveys were available in English only. A total of 950 questionnaires were left with consenting individuals (in the manner previously described for Canada), between January 6 and February 2, 2000.

*The United States*

Survey distribution within the United States was carried out in a similar fashion to Canada and the United Kingdom. Data collection was carried out by graduate marketing students within greater Hattiesburg, an urban area of approximately 100,000 inhabitants in southern Mississippi. The students distributed the surveys as a part of their coursework, on behalf of a marketing professor at the local university (who supervised the data collection). A total of 900 questionnaires were left with consenting individuals (in the manner previously described for Canada), between January 10 and February 5, 2000.

Development of the measuring instrument:

Most of the questions relating to the personal characteristics of the respondents are adapted from the lifestyle instrument used by Wells and Tigert (1971), and an earlier

study by Hui, Kim, Joy & Laroche (1993). Other questions relating specifically to Christmas or gift shopping have been adapted from the instrument used by Otnes (1990), or developed from scratch (i.e., the items measuring: (1) the type of store where the gift was purchased, and (2) media sources of information). Most of the questions relating to situational aspects of the gift purchase were derived from an earlier study by Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (1999, in press), however, some have been developed anew based on a review of the relevant literature. The last part of the questionnaire included standard demographic questions and descriptive measures.

The survey instrument was first developed in English. While some of the questions were already available in French from the earlier work of Hui et al. (1993) and Laroche et al. (1999), others required translation. A professional translator in the city of Montréal carried out this translation. The grammar and equivalency of the translated measures were verified by three French-speaking people, and through the use of pretests (as described in the succeeding section). The complete English and French versions of the questionnaire appear in Appendices 1 and 2.

Description of the survey:

At the top of the first page of the questionnaire appeared a control question that asked the respondent whether he or she had purchased a clothing gift for someone this past Christmas. Individuals who answered 'no' were directed to ignore the rest of the questionnaire. This question was deemed necessary as a final control to ensure that individuals did not respond to the questionnaire on the basis of another type of gift

purchase (such as a toy purchase), as the type of gift may have an effect on the dependent variables.

The eight-page questionnaire was divided into three parts. The first page of Part I contained seven categorical and quantitative measures that related to characteristics of the specific clothing gift purchase, including the following: (1) for whom the gift was intended, (2) whether the gift was from more than one giver, (3) the cost of the gift, (4) time spent in the store where the gift was purchased, (5) number of stores visited while shopping for the clothing gift, (6) type of store where the gift was purchased, and (7) whether the purchaser was influenced by advertisements or other media sources of information. Four additional questions asked respondents about their overall Christmas shopping characteristics, including: (1) the number of people that they purchased gifts for that Christmas, (2) amount spent on all gifts that Christmas, (3) the approximate date that they started Christmas shopping, and (4) the number of Christmas shopping trips made.

The next three pages of Part I contained 43 questions designed to measure the respondent's actual situation in the course of purchasing the specific clothing gift (including perceived risk, product familiarity, time pressure, budgetary considerations, prior external search, involvement, store environment, etc.). These questions were followed by 11 questions that related to the respondent's use of various in-store information sources in selecting the clothing gift. In addition, there were 4 general questions designed to measure the degree to which respondents felt that their children were important in their lives. Naturally, these questions were only relevant to those individuals that had children; those without children were directed to skip to the next

section. All answers to the above questions were expressed on 10 point Likert scales (anchored by strongly disagree/strongly agree).

Part II of the questionnaire contained 61 statements comprised of various attitudes, opinions, and interests. These items were designed to measure the personal characteristics of the respondents and their feelings with respect to Christmas in general, with the objective of determining how various personality attributes interact to influence information search. Respondents indicated their agreement/disagreement with each statement on 10 point Likert scales.

The final part of the survey (Part III) contained a number of standard demographic measures, including the following: (1) gender, (2) age, (3) marital status, (4) income, (5) family size, (6) the age of the youngest child living at home (if applicable), (7) educational level attained, and (8) occupation/employment status. The Canadian version of the survey included two additional questions designed to differentiate between English- and French-speaking respondents.

Minor modifications to the measuring instrument were required to account for currency and categorization differences in the United States and the United Kingdom. Appendix 3 indicates the modifications to the measuring instrument that existed for all three English versions.

Pretests:

Prior to commencing actual data collection, the measuring instrument was pretested in Montréal on English (n=12) and French (n=10) subjects that were not part of the potential respondent pool. The pretests were carried out during the latter part of

December. Comments and suggestions for improvement and/or local adaptation of the measuring instrument were also solicited from the two participating researchers in the United Kingdom and the United States. The objectives of the pretest were the following: (1) to assess ease of use and comprehension of the instrument; (2) as a final check on the grammar and context of the measurement items; (3) to assess contextual statement equivalency on the measuring items between English and French versions; and (4) to ensure that the dimensions selected for analysis adequately captured the phenomenon under review (namely, consumer information search behavior in the context of a Christmas clothing gift purchase). Subsequent to pre-testing, minor modifications were made to both the English and French versions of the questionnaire, based on the feedback received from pre-test subjects, as well as from the participating researchers in the United Kingdom and the United States. A final pre-test was conducted on the revised versions of the questionnaire (n=5 English subjects, n=5 French subjects); the results of which indicated that the measuring instrument was ready for use.

Upon receipt of the completed questionnaires via mail, they were coded and the data was manually keyed in by the researcher. These procedures are described in more detail in the ensuing chapter.

# FIGURE 7: FLOWCHART OF THE RESEARCH PROCEDURES

| TIMEFRAME: | PROCEDURE: | ANALYTICAL STEPS: |
|---|---|---|
| Oct.-<br>Dec. 1999. | Development of the survey instrument<br>↓<br>Translation into French<br>↓<br>Pre-test of the initial survey instrument in Canada (n=12 English; n=10 French)<br>↓<br>Modification of the initial instrument<br>↓<br>Pre-test of the modified survey instrument in Canada (n=5 English; n=5 French)<br>↓<br>Minor modifications to survey instrument to suit each country under analysis<br>↓<br>Survey distribution | • Review of the relevant literature.<br>• Consultation with professors in Canada, the U.K. and the U.S.A.<br>• Translation of instrument by professional translator. |
| Dec. 1999. | | • Incorporation of feedback from pre-test subjects & participating professors. |
| Jan.–Feb. 2000 | Canada    U. K.    U. S. A.<br>(n=900)   (n=950)   (n=900)<br>↓<br>Receipt of completed surveys via mail | • Consultation with participating professors in the U.K. and U.S.A.<br><br>• Door-to-door solicitation for potential respondents (Montréal, Canada; Hattiesburg, U.S.A.; Cheltenham, U.K.) |
| Jan.-Mar. 2000 | Canada    U. K.    U. S. A.<br>(n=259)   (n=86 )   (n=180)<br>↓ | |
| Mar. 2000. | Surveys sent to Canada for coding and data Entry<br>↓<br>Statistical Analyses<br>↓ | • Data coding scheme developed.<br>• Data entry of surveys by author.<br><br>• Data reduction (factor analysis).<br>• Reliability analysis. |
| Mar.-Apr.2000 | Interpretation and Evaluation | • Multiple Regression, ANOVA analyses.<br>• Linking research findings with past literature findings. |

# CHAPTER 13

# STATISTICAL ANALYSES AND RESULTS

Response rate:

Overall response rates were somewhat disappointing, given that the target response rate for each of the three countries was hoped to be in the range of 25 to 30 percent. For Canada, out of the 900 questionnaires distributed, there were 259 usable returned surveys (for a response rate of 28.8%). The United States yielded 180 usable surveys (out of 900 distributed), for a response rate of 20.0 percent. Finally, the United Kingdom yielded 86 usable surveys (out of 950 distributed), for a response rate of only 9.1%. Overall, there were 524 usable surveys for analysis, which amounts to a response rate of 19.1 percent.

Data coding:

Variables that were measured on nominal scales were converted either into dummy variables or into interval variables, as indicated in Table 10. The cost of the clothing gift, the number of people that gifts were purchased for, and the age of the youngest child, were measured as discrete variables.

# TABLE 10: CODING SCHEME OF NOMINAL SCALE VARIABLES

| Variable: | Dummy/Interval Coding: |
|---|---|
| 1) Whom (gift intended) | 1=primary relation (e.g., son/daughter, father/mother, brother/sister, spouse/common-law), secondary relation (e.g., grandparents/ grandchildren); 2=tertiary relation (e.g., cousin, uncle/aunt, in-law); 3=other (e.g., friend, co-worker, girlfriend/boyfriend) |
| 2) Joint (givers) | 0=single giver; 1=multiple givers |
| 3) Time (spent in store) | 1=0-10mins., 2=11-15mins., 3=16-30mins., 4=31-60mins, 5=60+mins. |
| 4) Spend (total on gifts) | 1=0-199, 2=200-299, 3=300-399, 4=400-499, 5=500-599, 6=600-699, 7=700-799, 8=800-899, 9=900+ |
| 5) Start (Xmas shopping) | 1=sept. or earlier, 2=oct., 3=nov.1-15, 4=nov.16-30, 5=dec.1-15, 6=dec.16-25 |
| 6) Stores (# visited for gift) | 1=0-1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5, 6=6+ |
| 7) Trips (total over Xmas) | 1=0-3, 2=4-6, 3=7-9, 4=10-12, 5=13+ |
| 8) Type (of store for gift) | 1=dept. store, 2=discount dept. store, 3=chain specialty store, 4=local independent store/boutique, 5=other |
| 9) Advertisements/Info: <br> i. TV/Radio ads <br> ii. ret. Catalogue/circular <br> iii. internet <br> iv. newspaper/magazine <br> v. other | 0=no, 1=yes (multiple responses possible) |
| 10) Self-Identification (Canada only) | 1=anglophone, 2=francophone, 3=allophone |
| 11) Gender | 0=female, 1=male |
| 12) Age | 1=0-19, 2=20-29, 3=30-39, 4=40-49, 5=50+ |
| 13) Marital Status | 1=single/widowed, 2=separated/divorced, 3=married/living together |
| 14) Income (Canadian $ or equivalent) | 1=0-19999, 2=20000-39999, 3=40000-59999, 4=60000-79999, 5=80000+ |
| 15) Family Size | 1=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5, 6=6+ |
| 16) Birthplace (Canada only) | 1=Québec, 2=elsewhere in Canada, 3=Europe, 4=USA, 5=other |
| 17) Education (highest level attained, Canadian equiv.) | 1=elementary/highschool, 2=college/CEGEP/Tech/Vocational college, 3=undergraduate degree, 4=graduate or higher degree |
| 18) Employment Status | 1=primarily working (work full time, work part time) <br> 2=primarily student (full time student, student/work part time) <br> 3=primarily not working (retired/pensioned, unemployed, homemaker, homemaker/work part time) |

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Cross-tabs—demographics:

The cross-tabs procedure in SPSS was employed to tabulate sample differences. A test for significant differences between each of the three country samples was conducted on each variable (Chi-square tests for categorical data, and F-tests using ANOVA for discrete data, as indicated in Table 11).

*Gender*

Each of the three country samples were roughly the same with respect to gender proportions. Overall, 74% of the respondents were female, and only 26% of the respondents were male. Differences in gender composition among the three countries were insignificant, as indicated in Table 11.

*Age*

As indicated in Table 11, a chi-square test revealed highly significant differences between the three country samples with respect to age. Canadian respondents tended to be concentrated between the ages of 30 and 50, while American respondents were generally younger and concentrated between 20 and 29 years of age. British respondents also tended to be younger than Canadian respondents, although not as overwhelmingly so as American respondents. Overall, almost 76% of the sample respondents were between 20 and 49 years of age.

*Marital status*

Given the age differences that emerged across the country samples, it is not surprising that significant differences also emerged between the three countries, as indicated in Table 11. A majority of Canadian and British respondents were married, whereas almost two-thirds of American respondents indicated they were single. Overall, almost 52% of respondents described themselves as married (or the equivalent), 40% stated that they were single, and only 7% categorized themselves as separated/divorced or widowed.

*Education*

Education levels among respondents within all three countries were higher than respective national populations. Again however, a Chi-square test revealed significant differences between the three countries. American and Canadian respondents were likely to have a college or undergraduate university educational attainment level. British respondents tended to be the best educated—with almost 63% indicating they had at least undergraduate or post-graduate university degrees.

*Household income*

Significant differences also emerged between the three countries with respect to average household income. It is possible that these findings may be partially attributable to the aforementioned differences in age, education, and marital status between the three countries. Canadian respondents tended to be fairly evenly distributed along the different income intervals, whereas American respondents tended to concentrate in lower income

levels. British respondents tended to cluster at the lowest and highest income intervals. With respect to the overall sample, household incomes were relatively evenly distributed across intervals.

*Family size/age of youngest child living at home*

The results of a Chi-square test showed that significant differences existed between respondents from each of the three countries with respect to average family size. As indicated in Table 11, proportionally more American and British respondents lived alone than Canadian respondents did. This finding is likely related to the lower average age compositions of the American and British samples. More than 53% of Canadian respondents had families that contained four or more individuals; only 44 and 47 percent of American and British respondents respectively, indicated having families as large.

Overall, slightly more than 40% of respondents indicated that they still had children living at home. Evidently, this question only applied to parents. While more than half of Canadian respondents reported having children at home, only 26.8 and 32.6 percent of American and British respondents indicated that they did so. An F-test did not reveal statistically significant differences between the three countries with respect to the age of the youngest child still living at home. Among respondents answering this particular question, the overall mean age of the youngest child was about 12 years old.

*Employment status*

Highly significant differences emerged between the three country sample sets regarding employment status. While more than half of Canadian and British respondents

indicated that they were primarily working, only 31% of American respondents indicated the same. Indeed, 60% of American subjects categorized themselves as students, compared to 13.1% and 26.7% of Canadian and British subjects respectively. In addition, compared to American and British respondents, a significantly higher proportion of Canadian respondents were classified as primarily not working (e.g., homemaker, retiree, etc.). These findings are again likely related to the different age distributions between the three countries.

## TABLE 11: CROSSTABS FOR SAMPLE
## DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISITICS[†§]

| Variable | Range | Canada (n, %) | | U. S. A. (n, %) | | U. K. (n, %) | | Total (n, %) | | Chi-sq. (sig.) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Female | 184 | 71% | 141 | 78% | 66 | 77% | 391 | 74% | 3.248 |
| | Male | 75 | 29% | 39 | 22% | 20 | 23% | 134 | 26% | df=2 |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 180 | 100% | 86 | 100% | 525 | 100% | (.197) |
| Age | 0-19 years | 12 | 4.6% | 13 | 7.2% | 6 | 6.9% | 31 | 5.9% | 141.499 |
| | 20-29 years | 44 | 16.9% | 127 | 70.6% | 34 | 39.5% | 205 | 39.0% | df=8 |
| | 30-39 years | 63 | 24.3% | 9 | 0.5% | 15 | 17.4% | 87 | 16.6% | (.000)[a] |
| | 40-49 years | 72 | 27.8% | 20 | 11.5% | 14 | 16.3% | 106 | 20.2% | . |
| | 50 + years | 68 | 26.3% | 11 | 6.1% | 17 | 19.8% | 96 | 18.3% | |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 180 | 100% | 86 | 100% | 525 | 100% | |
| Marital Status | Single | 68 | 26.3% | 111 | 63.4% | 31 | 36.5% | 210 | 40.5% | 62.525 |
| | Widowed | 2 | 0.1% | 2 | 1.1% | 0 | 0.0% | 4 | 0.1% | df=4 |
| | Separated/divorced | 20 | 7.7% | 7 | 4.0% | 9 | 10.6% | 36 | 6.9% | (.000)[a] |
| | Married/live together | 169 | 65.3% | 55 | 31.4% | 45 | 52.9% | 269 | 51.8% | |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 175 | 100% | 85 | 100% | 519 | 100% | |
| Income ($CAN.) | $  0-19,999 | 24 | 9.6% | 81 | 46.0% | 19 | 22.9% | 124 | 24.4% | 95.153 |
| | $20,000-39,999 | 35 | 14.0% | 24 | 13.6% | 8 | 9.6% | 67 | 13.2% | df=8 |
| | $40,000-59,999 | 67 | 26.8% | 16 | 9.1% | 13 | 15.7% | 96 | 18.9% | (.000)[a] |
| | $60,000-79,999 | 60 | 24.0% | 16 | 9.1% | 11 | 13.3% | 87 | 17.1% | |
| | $80,000 + | 64 | 25.6% | 39 | 22.2% | 32 | 38.6% | 135 | 26.5% | |
| | Total | 250 | 100% | 176 | 100% | 83 | 100% | 510 | 100% | |
| Family size | 1 person | 24 | 9.3% | 38 | 21.6% | 18 | 21.4% | 80 | 15.4% | 43.473 |
| | 2 people | 48 | 18.5% | 31 | 17.6% | 15 | 17.9% | 94 | 18.1% | df=10 |
| | 3 people | 49 | 18.9% | 29 | 16.5% | 11 | 13.1% | 89 | 17.1% | (.000)[a] |
| | 4 people | 96 | 37.1% | 27 | 15.3% | 21 | 25.0% | 144 | 27.8% | |
| | 5 people | 31 | 12.0% | 31 | 17.6% | 15 | 17.9% | 77 | 14.8% | |
| | 6 + people | 11 | 4.2% | 20 | 11.4% | 4 | 4.8% | 35 | 6.7% | |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 176 | 100% | 84 | 100% | 519 | 100% | |
| Education (highest level) (Canadian eq.) | Elementary/High school | 31 | 12.0% | 37 | 21.5% | 21 | 24.4% | 89 | 17.2% | 39.828 |
| | College/CEGEP/tech. | 101 | 39.0% | 41 | 23.8% | 11 | 7.8% | 153 | 29.6% | df=6 |
| | Undergraduate deg. | 102 | 39.4% | 67 | 39.0% | 31 | 36.0% | 200 | 38.7% | (.000)[a] |
| | Graduate deg. + | 25 | 9.7% | 27 | 15.7% | 23 | 26.7% | 75 | 14.5% | |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 172 | 100% | 86 | 100% | 517 | 100% | |
| Employ-ment Status | Primarily working | 140 | 54.1% | 54 | 31.0% | 44 | 51.2% | 238 | 45.9% | 114.269 |
| | Primarily student | 34 | 13.1% | 105 | 60.3% | 23 | 26.7% | 162 | 31.2% | df=4 |
| | Primarily not working | 85 | 32.8% | 15 | 8.6% | 19 | 22.1% | 119 | 22.9% | (.000)[a] |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | 174 | 100% | 86 | 100% | 519 | 100% | |
| Age of youngest child | Mean | 12.4889 | | 11.1667 | | 9.8571 | | 11.8389 | | |
| | Valid N | 135 | 52.1% | 48 | 26.8% | 28 | 32.6% | 211 | 40.3% | |
| | St. deviation | 7.8178 | | 9.1100 | | 7.3319 | | 8.0860 | | |
| | F-Test | | | | | | | | | 1.449 |
| | significance | | | | | | | | | (.237) |
| Canadian Respond-ents | Anglophone | 127 | 49.1% | N/A | | N/A | | N/A | | N/A |
| | Francophone | 106 | 40.9% | | | | | | | |
| | Allophone | 26 | 10.0% | | | | | | | |
| | Total | 259 | 100% | | | | | | | |

[†]Some columns may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.
[§]Country totals may differ across categories due to missing data.
[a] Indicates significance (2-sided, Pearson) at alpha=.05.

<u>Cross-tabs—gift shopping characteristics among the three countries:</u>

*Giver-receiver characteristics*

Statistically significant differences did not emerge between the three countries with respect to the joint-giver variable (i.e., whether a gift was given from one or multiple recipients). Overall, almost 70% of gifts were given by the respondent alone, as opposed to gifts given by two or more people (as indicated in Table 12).

With respect to whom the gift was intended for, minor variations existed between the three countries, however these variations were not significant at a 5% level of alpha. For the entire sample, more than 70% or the gifts given in this survey were either to primary (e.g., mother/father, brother/sister, daughter/son, spouse) or secondary (e.g., grandparents, grandchildren) family relations, about 7% were given to tertiary (e.g., cousin, aunt/uncle, in-laws) family relations, and 22 % were given to non-family members.

*The specific Christmas clothing gift*

Remarkably, the average amount spent on the Christmas clothing gift was almost identical across the three countries (once converted to Canadian currency); an F-test for differences was highly insignificant. Overall, respondents reported spending an average of $108.33 (Canadian funds) on the clothing gift. Within-sample variations with respect to the purchase cost of the gift were quite large, as indicated by the standard deviations in Table 12.

Significant differences did emerge between the countries however, with respect to the amount of time spent shopping (in the particular store where the gift was eventually

purchased). In general, Canadian and American respondents reported spending more time in the store than British respondents. Sixty-seven percent of Canadians and 69% of Americans spent more than 16 minutes in the store shopping, compared to only 47% of British subjects.

Concerning the number of stores visited in conjunction with the specific clothing gift, significant differences were exhibited between the three countries. More than 44% of American respondents visited at least four stores, followed by 42% of British respondents, and 39% of Canadian respondents. Similarly, more than 26% of American subjects and 24 % of British subjects visited six or more stores; only 17% of Canadian subjects did so.

A chi-square test revealed significant differences between the three countries with respect to the type of store where the clothing gift was eventually purchased. Proportionally, Canadian and American respondents were more likely than British respondents to purchase the gift at a department store; American and British subjects were more likely than Canadian subjects to purchase the gift at a chain specialty store. Finally, both British and Canadian respondents were more apt to make the gift purchase at a local independent store (boutique) than American respondents were.

With respect to the influence of various media sources of information, there were significant differences between the three countries. Americans were the most likely to indicate that one or more media sources (e.g., TV/radio ads, newspaper/magazine ads, etc.) influenced their purchase choice, followed by Canadians. Proportionally fewer British subjects were influenced by media sources. Across the sample sets, more than 51% of respondents did not cite any source of media information. Overall, store

catalogues (and/or flyers/advertising circulars) were the most commonly cited source of information, followed by newspaper/magazine ads, and TV/radio ads. Interestingly, Americans were the most likely to indicate Internet-related sources of information (6.7% of respondents)—this probably reflects the greater degree of Internet penetration among American households.

*Christmas shopping in general*

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed highly significant differences between the three countries with respect to the number of people that respondents reported buying gifts for. British subjects purchased gifts for an average of 12.2 different people, followed by Americans at 11.6, with Canadians purchasing gifts for an average of 9.2 people.

Concerning the date that Christmas shopping was started that season, significant differences did not emerge between the three countries. Overall, almost 17% of respondents indicated they began Christmas shopping before November, 35.8% began in November, and more than 47% waited until December to begin shopping.

Significant differences also did not emerge between the three countries with respect to the average amount spent (in Canadian funds) on all gifts during the past Christmas season. As indicated in Table 12, in each country the total amount spent was widely distributed among the different intervals. Overall, approximately 44% of respondents spent between $0-499, 34.5% spent between $500-899, and 21.3% spent more than $900.

Finally, no significant differences emerged between the three countries concerning the number of separate Christmas shopping trips taken during the past holiday season. Overall, 25% of respondents reported taking between zero and three separate trips, almost 55% took between four and nine separate trips, and 20% undertook more than ten separate Christmas shopping trips. These results are fairly consistent with earlier research. For example, a recent survey (April, 1997) of 500 American consumers conducted by *USA Today* reported that consumers averaged seven separate shopping trips that season.

**TABLE 12:DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GIFT SHOPPING CHARACTERISTICS ACROSS THE THREE COUNTRIES**[†§]

| Variable/Range | Canada (n, %) | U. S. A. (n, %) | U. K. (n, %) | Total (n, %) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Joint Givers: | | | | |
| Single giver | 177 (68.3%) | 133 (73.9%) | 53 (61.6%) | 363 (69.1%) |
| Multiple givers | 82 (31.7%) | 47 (26.1%) | 33 (38.4%) | 162 (30.9%) |
| Total | 259 (100%) | 180 (100%) | 86 (100%) | 525 (100%) |
| Chi-Square, df | | | | 4.255, df=2 |
| Significance | | | | (.119) |
| Gift Recipient: | | | | |
| Pri./sec. Relation | 191 (73.7%) | 116 (64.8%) | 64 (74.4%) | 371 (70.8%) |
| Tertiary relation | 21 (8.1%) | 10 (5.6%) | 6 (7.0%) | 37 (7.1%) |
| Other | 47 (18.1%) | 53 (29.6 %) | 16 (18.6%) | 116 (22.1%) |
| Total | 259 (100%) | 179 (100%) | 86 (100%) | 524 (100%) |
| Chi-Square, df | | | | 9.201, df=4 |
| significance | | | | (.056) |
| # of people (gifts): | | | | |
| Mean | 9.21 | 11.60 | 12.21 | 10.50 |
| N | 256 | 169 | 84 | 509 |
| St. deviation | 5.39 | 7.41 | 7.51 | 6.62 |
| F statistic | | | | 10.39 |
| significance | | | | (.000)[a] |
| Gift Cost: | | | | |
| Mean | $109.69 (Can.) | $72.35 (US) | £44.42 (UK) | - |
| Mean (Can.$)[b] | $109.69 | $107.78 | $105.33 | $108.33 |
| N | 258 | 170 | 86 | 514 |
| St. deviation | 96.99 | 143.71 | 100.97 | 114.93 |
| F statistic | | | | .051 |
| significance | | | | (.950) |
| Total spent (Xmas): | | | | |
| ($Can. Equivalent) | | | | |
| $  0-299 | 47 (18.1%) | 52 (29.2%) | 14 (16.7%) | 113 (21.7%) |
| $300-499 | 60 (23.2%) | 34 (19.1%) | 23 (27.4%) | 117 (22.5%) |
| $500-699 | 56 (21.6%) | 34 (19.1%) | 17 (20.2%) | 107 (20.5%) |
| $700-899 | 40 (15.4%) | 19 (10.7%) | 14 (16.7%) | 73 (14.0%) |
| $900+ | 56 (21.6%) | 39 (21.9%) | 16 (19.0%) | 111 (21.3%) |
| Total | 259 (100%) | 178 (100%) | 84 (100%) | 521 (100%) |
| Chi-Square, df | | | | 11.771, df=8 |
| significance | | | | (.162) |
| Time spent (store): | | | | |
| (1) 0-10 mins. | 23 (8.9%) | 23 (13.1%) | 13 (15.3%) | 59 (11.3%) |
| (2) 11-15 mins. | 62 (23.9%) | 31 (17.6%) | 32 (37.6%) | 125 (24.0%) |
| (3) 16-30 mins. | 99 (38.2%) | 62 (35.2%) | 18 (21.2%) | 179 (34.4%) |
| (4) 31-60 mins. | 54 (20.8%) | 36 (20.5%) | 18 (21.2%) | 108 (20.8%) |
| (5) 60+ mins. | 21 (8.1%) | 24 (13.6%) | 4 (4.7%) | 49 (9.4%) |
| Total | 259 (100%) | 176 (100%) | 85 (100%) | 520 (100%) |
| Chi-Square, df | | | | 23.854, df=8 |
| significance | | | | (.002)[a] |
| Start Shopping: | | | | |
| (1)  sept./earlier | 28 (10.8%) | 17 (9.4%) | 10 (11.6%) | 55 (10.5%) |
| (2)  oct. | 15 (5.8%) | 12 (6.7%) | 6 (7.0%) | 33 (6.3%) |
| (3)  nov. 1-15 | 41 (15.8%) | 29 (16.2%) | 11 (12.8%) | 81 (15.4%) |
| (4)  nov.16-30 | 50 (19.3%) | 37 (20.6%) | 20 (23.3%) | 107 (20.4%) |
| (5)  dec. 1-15 | 76 (29.3%) | 62 (34.6%) | 28 (32.6%) | 166 (31.6%) |
| (6)  dec. 16-25 | 49 (18.9%) | 22 (12.3%) | 11 (12.8%) | 82 (15.6%) |
| Total | 259 (100%) | 179 (100%) | 86 (100%) | 524 (100%) |
| Chi-Square, df | | | | 5.970, df=10 |
| significance | | | | (.818) |

## TABLE 12 (CONTINUED): DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF GIFT SHOPPING CHARACTERISTICS ACROSS THE THREE COUNTRIES[†§]

| Variable/Range | Canada (n, %) | U. S. A. (n, %) | U. K. (n, %) | Total (n, %) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **# of Stores visited:** | | | | |
| one | 49 (18.9%) | 43 (24.0%) | 14 (16.3%) | 106 (20.2%) |
| two | 54 (20.8%) | 27 (15.1%) | 17 (19.8%) | 98 (18.7%) |
| three | 54 (20.8%) | 30 (16.6%) | 15 (17.4%) | 99 (18.9%) |
| four | 31 (12.0%) | 19 (10.6%) | 17 (19.8%) | 67 (12.8%) |
| five | 27 (10.4%) | 13 (7.3%) | 2 (2.3%) | 42 (8.0%) |
| six or more | 44 (17.0%) | 47 (26.3%) | 21 (24.4%) | 112 (21.4%) |
| Total | **259 (100%)** | **179 (100%)** | **86 (100%)** | **524 (100%)·** |
| Chi-square, df significance | | | | 19.402, df=10 (.035)[a] |
| **Separate trips:** | | | | |
| (1) 0-3 | 64 (24.7%) | 52 (29.1%) | 16 (18.6%) | 132 (25.2%) |
| (2) 4-6 | 89 (34.4%) | 61 (34.1%) | 35 (40.7%) | 185 (35.3%) |
| (3) 7-9 | 51 (19.7%) | 34 (19.0%) | 17 (19.8%) | 102 (19.5%) |
| (4) 10-12 | 32 (12.4%) | 12 (6.7%) | 11 (12.8%) | 55 (10.5%) |
| (5) 13+ | 23 (8.9%) | 20 (11.2%) | 7 (8.1%) | 50 (9.5%) |
| Total | **259 (100%)** | **179 (100%)** | **86 (100%)** | **524 (100%)** |
| Chi-square, df significance | | | | 7.976, df=8 (.436) |
| **Type of store:** | | | | |
| Dept. store | 119 (45.9%) | 82 (46.3%) | 35 (40.7%) | 236 (45.2%) |
| Discount store | 13 (5.0%) | 13 (7.3%) | 2 (2.3%) | 28 (5.4%) |
| Chain spec. store | 68 (26.2%) | 64 (36.2%) | 33 (38.4%) | 165 (31.6%) |
| Local indep./bout. | 56 (21.6%) | 14 (7.9%) | 16 (18.6%) | 86 (16.5%) |
| Other | 3 (1.2%) | 4 (2.2%) | 0 (0.0%) | 7 (1.3%) |
| Total | **259 (100%)** | **177 (100%)** | **86 (100%)** | **522 (100%)** |
| Chi-square, df significance | | | | 18.475, df=6 (.005)[a] |
| **Media sources[c]:** | | | | |
| TV/Radio | 28 (10.8%) | 32 (17.9%) | 4 (4.7%) | 65 (12.4%) |
| Catalogue/flyer | 70 (27.0%) | 37 (20.7%) | 15 (17.4%) | 123 (23.5%) |
| Internet | 1 (0.0%) | 12 (6.7%) | 2 (2.3%) | 15 (2.9%) |
| Newspaper/Magaz. | 32 (12.4%) | 26 (14.6%) | 12 (14.0%) | 70 (13.4%) |
| Other | 8 (3.1%) | 5 (2.8%) | 5 (5.8%) | 18 (3.4%) |
| 0 sources cited | 133 (51.4%) | 79 (44.4%) | 56 (65.1%) | 268 (51.2%) |
| 1 source cited | 113 (43.6%) | 87 (48.9%) | 24 (27.9%) | 224 (42.8) |
| 2 + sources cited | 13 (5.0%) | 12 (6.7%) | 6 (7.0%) | 31 (5.9%) |
| Total | **259 (100%)** | **178 (100%)** | **86 (100%)** | **523 (100%)** |
| Chi-square, df significance | | | | 11.615, df=4 (.020)[a] |

[†]Some columns may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.
[§]Country totals may differ across categories due to missing data.
[a] Indicates significance (two-sided, Pearson) at alpha=.05.
[b]exchange rate (March 25, 2000) as per Bank of Canada: $1.00*US* = $1.4862*CAN*; £1.00 = $2.3714*CAN*
[c]shows number of respondents that indicated that this (these) media source(s) influenced their purchase choice.

## Summary:

With respect to demographic characteristics, country-sample differences were observed for age, marital status, income, family size, educational attainment, and

employment status. The three groups were similar in terms of gender and the average age of the youngest child living at home.

Concerning the particular clothing gift and Christmas shopping in general, the three groups were relatively similar in terms of the gift being purchased by one person, for whom the gift was intended (e.g., relations), the average gift cost, the total spent of gifts that season, the date that Christmas shopping was commenced, and the number of separate shopping trips undertaken that season. Significant sample differences were observed in terms of the average number of people that gifts were purchased for, the time spent shopping in the particular store where the gift was eventually purchased, the type of store where the gift was purchased, the relative influence of media sources, and the number of stores visited while searching for the specific clothing gift.

Factor analyses:

Given that the measuring instrument contained a total of 119 Likert-scale questions, a factor analysis was deemed necessary in order to reduce the data into a smaller, more meaningful set of components. The combination of single-item measures into factors also enhances the reliability of the responses.

Separate factor analyses were run for the dependent and independent variables, using SPSS (version 9.0). Both factor analyses employed the Principal Components method and Direct Oblimin rotation. The Direct Oblimin rotation is a type of oblique rotation in the sense that it allows the resulting factors to be correlated with one another. The ensuing sections describe the process by which each factor analysis was carried out.

<u>Dependent measures:</u>

For the dependent measures, the first eleven items on page four of the survey (Appendix 1) and two additional items from Part 1 of the survey ("store sales personnel helped me in making the choice of this clothing gift", "the salesclerks in the store were readily available if I needed any help") were entered into the initial factor analysis. Subsequently, reliability analyses (considering each country sample set) were run for each factor. One item was removed, and the factor and reliability analyses were rerun. Three reliable factors of in-store information search effort emerged (Table 13), all with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The corresponding item loadings on each factor were generally quite high. These three factors were labeled as (1) macro search effort, (2) salesclerk help, and (3) micro search effort. Similar to the results obtained by Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (2000), in-store search effort appears to be a multidimensional construct.

Macro search effort consists of comparing available alternatives, comparing prices, and consulting category-related signage. Salesclerk help consists of personal interaction with store sales personnel (e.g., asking questions and/or soliciting advice). Finally, micro search effort consists of accessing product-specific information (such as examining the packaging, the manufacturer's label, and the texture of the clothing item).

## TABLE 13: FACTORS OBTAINED FOR IN-STORE
## INFORMATION SEARCH EFFORT

| Factor | Factor | Reliability-Cronbach alpha | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Item | Loading | Can. | U.S.A. | U.K. |
| **Macro search effort** | | .7959 | .7526 | .7007 |
| -I walked around the store looking at the display of all the clothing merchandise. | .774 | | | |
| -I read all the signs around the display area of clothing items. | .753 | | | |
| -I checked all the prices of clothing items very carefully. | .753 | | | |
| -I looked at all the items in the display area where I bought the clothing gift. | .701 | | | |
| -I spent a lot of time comparing the brands of clothing items in the store. | .546 | | | |
| **Salesclerk help** | | .8991 | .8441 | .8303 |
| -Store sales personnel helped me in making the choice of a clothing gift. | .889 | | | |
| -I asked store sales personnel for assistance about this clothing item. | .886 | | | |
| -I received a lot of help from the salesclerk on this clothing item. | .883 | | | |
| **Micro search effort** | | .8025 | .7519 | .7850 |
| -I very carefully read the manufacturer's label of this clothing item. | .873 | | | |
| -I very carefully examined the packaging information of this clothing item. | .851 | | | |
| -I carefully examined the feel (texture) of this clothing item. | .671 | | | |
| -I tried to get as much information as possible in the store about this clothing item. | .655 | | | |

## Independent measures:

All scaled items from Parts I and II of the questionnaire (totaling 106 items) were entered into the initial factor analysis (with the exception of the eleven dependent measures on page four and the two items from Part I, as described in the preceding section), which yielded 30 factors. Items loading under each factor were then subjected to a scale reliability analysis. In certain cases, individual items were re-coded (reversed) in order to ensure consistency with respect to the sign direction (positive or negative) of all items loading on a particular factor. A number of items were then removed and the factor and reliability analyses were rerun.

The aforementioned procedure was repeated twelve times, after which the final independent factor solution emerged (incorporating 77 out of the original 106 items). Conceptually, some factors reflected a number of personality (psychographic) constructs described earlier in the literature review, while others were primarily reflective of situational characteristics of the gift-purchasing task. Overall, 22 reliable factors emerged (all of which had eigenvalues greater than 1.0), eleven that were designated personality constructs, and eleven that were designated situational constructs. Separate reliability

analyses were conducted on each factor for each country sample set. For all ensuing analyses, the mean of each factor (shown in Appendix 4) will be used as the construct measure.

*Personality factors*

Table 14 lists the loadings and reliabilities for the personality factors and accompanying items. The label for each factor reflects the compositional mix of the items loading on that factor. Considering that this was a field study, and that the scale items were used without any modifications across the three countries, the results are pleasing. Factor loadings for most of the items on each factor were quite high—in fact, out of 46 items, 29 had loadings greater than 0.70 and only one had a factor loading of less than 0.50. Similarly, reliabilities were also generally quite high and stable across the three country sample sets. Cronbach alphas ranged from a high of .9414 for traditional Christmas lover (Canadian sample) to a low of .5446 for purchasing self-confidence (U.K. sample).

*Situational factors*

Table 15 lists the loadings and reliabilities for the situational factors and accompanying items. As was done for the personality items, the label for each factor was derived from the composition of the items loading on that factor. In general, factor loadings and reliabilities among the three country samples were quite good, although not as high as those were for the personality factors. Out of 31 items, 23 had factor loadings greater than 0.70 and two had factor loadings less than 0.50. Reliabilities for the

situational factors varied somewhat more than the reliabilities for the personality factors between the three country sample sets. Cronbach alphas ranged from a high of .8621 for time pressure (Canadian sample), to a low of .3939 for difficult recipient (U.K. sample). Although the latter reliability score straddles the threshold of acceptability, it was retained since the reliabilities for the other two country samples on that factor were significantly higher.

# TABLE 14: FACTORS OBTAINED FOR PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

| Factor<br>•    Item | Factor<br>Loading | Reliability-Cronbach alpha | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Can. | U.S.A. | U.K. |
| **Traditional Christmas lover** | | .9414 | .9235 | .9368 |
| -I look forward to Christmas every year. | .892 | | | |
| -Christmas is my favorite time of year. | .886 | | | |
| -I am strongly attached to all the Christmas traditions. | .878 | | | |
| -I love the Christmas season. | .866 | | | |
| -When it comes to Christmas, I follow all the traditional customs of the season. | .864 | | | |
| -It is important to get into the Christmas spirit by participating in the season's traditional activities. | .858 | | | |
| **Importance of children** | | .7416 | .8704 | .8419 |
| -My children are the most important thing in my life. | .820 | | | |
| -I take a lot of time and effort to teach my children good habits. | .870 | | | |
| -I try to arrange my home for my children's convenience. | .807 | | | |
| -When my children are ill in bed, I drop everything else to see to their comfort. | .792 | | | |
| **Enjoyment of shopping** | | .8417 | .8514 | .8594 |
| -Shopping is one of my least favorite activities. (reversed) | .860 | | | |
| -I love to shop year round. | .794 | | | |
| -In general, I enjoy spending time browsing while shopping. | .734 | | | |
| -I have little or no interest in shopping. (reversed) | .723 | | | |
| **Brand/store loyal** | | .7105 | .7162 | .5509 |
| -I feel there is a risk in choosing clothing brands other than the ones that I am familiar with. | .763 | | | |
| -I feel that there is a risk in shopping at stores other than the ones I am familiar with. | .714 | | | |
| -I usually end up buying the same brand over and over. | .664 | | | |
| -I do not try brands that I have never tried before. | .412 | | | |
| **Thoughtful giver** | | .7170 | .6916 | .7885 |
| -I like to put a lot of thought into the gifts I buy. | .710 | | | |
| -I watch carefully the people I am buying gifts for, to see what they would really like. | .628 | | | |
| -I conduct a lot of research about what the person would enjoy before I go shopping at Christmas. | .612 | | | |
| -It is important to get gifts that people will enjoy. | .590 | | | |
| **Value Seeker** | | .8046 | .8100 | .7691 |
| -I am willing to spend more time shopping in order to find bargains. | .808 | | | |
| -I feel I can obtain the lowest price by shopping extensively. | .779 | | | |
| -In general, I shop a lot for "specials" or discounts. | .749 | | | |
| -A person can save a lot of money by shopping around for bargains. | .642 | | | |
| -I often use coupons when shopping for household items. | .599 | | | |
| **Identity Shaper** | | .8031 | .6052 | .6783 |
| -I often give Christmas gifts that help to shape the recipient's personality. | .804 | | | |
| -I often give Christmas gifts to people in order to reinforce some aspects of their identity. | .798 | | | |
| **Fashion Conscious** | | .7122 | .6557 | .7505 |
| -The brands of goods that I buy make very little difference to me. (reversed) | .723 | | | |
| -I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style. | .698 | | | |
| -The brand name is a very important factor in selecting a clothing item. | .583 | | | |
| -When I must choose between dressing for fashion or comfort, I choose the former. | .540 | | | |
| -An important part of my life and activities is dressing smartly. | .519 | | | |
| **Budget-minded** | | .7465 | .6118 | .6589 |
| -I had a definite budget in mind before shopping for this clothing gift. | .705 | | | |
| -Money was no object for this particular clothing gift. (reversed) | .700 | | | |
| -Price is the last thing I consider when I am buying a gift. (reversed) | .690 | | | |
| -If an item is too expensive, I will not buy it as a gift. | .631 | | | |
| -I was reluctant to exceed my budget for this gift. | .568 | | | |
| **Purchasing self-confidence** | | .6452 | .5684 | .5446 |
| -I often worry about what can happen if I buy a Christmas gift for someone and they do not like it. | .782 | | | |
| -I would feel really bad if I bought someone a gift and they did not like it. | .696 | | | |
| -I often feel that I run a high risk of buying someone a Christmas gift they will not like. | .640 | | | |
| **Leader** | | .7007 | .7244 | .7127 |
| -I like to be considered a leader. | .819 | | | |
| -I am more independent than most people. | .802 | | | |
| -I think I possess more self-confidence than most people. | .750 | | | |
| -My friends and/or neighbors often come to me for advice. | .571 | | | |

## TABLE 15: FACTORS OBTAINED FOR SITUATIONAL VARIABLES

| Factor | Factor | Reliability-Cronbach alpha | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Item | Loading | Can. | U.S.A. | U.K. |
| **Time pressure** | | .8621 | .7895 | .7591 |
| -When I was Christmas shopping for this clothing item, I was really pressed for time. | .896 | | | |
| -I felt pressed for time when I was shopping for this particular gift. | .887 | | | |
| -I felt rushed while Christmas shopping for this clothing item. | .802 | | | |
| -There was not enough time to get all of my Christmas shopping done. | .592 | | | |
| **Product/store familiarity** | | .6177 | .6375 | .5253 |
| -I have bought this type of clothing often in the past. | .828 | | | |
| -I felt quite knowledgeable about this clothing type before I began shopping for the gift. | .656 | | - | |
| -I often shop at the store where I bought this clothing gift. | .492 | | | |
| **Shopping List** | | .6830 | .5383 | .6497 |
| -I bought this item from a list given to me by the recipient. | .868 | | | |
| -The recipient gave me a list to choose from. | .848 | | | |
| -When shopping for Christmas gifts, I generally bring a shopping list with me. | .765 | | | |
| **Shopping companion** | | .8403 | .7200 | .8447 |
| -I was shopping with someone else who helped me in choosing this clothing gift. | .888 | | | |
| -When I was shopping in the store, I consulted with a friend in choosing this clothing gift. | .848 | | | |
| -I usually bring someone with me to help me pick out Christmas gifts. | .765 | | | |
| **Symbolic gift** | | .6920 | .6224 | .7440 |
| -In choosing this clothing gift, I took into account the personality of the recipient. | .853 | | | |
| -The clothing gift was reflective of the recipient's personality. | .830 | | | |
| -It is very important that I get just the right gift for this recipient. | .585 | | | |
| **Pre-determined selection** | | .6099 | .5650 | .5740 |
| -I had everything decided about this garment before I got to the store. | .773 | | | |
| -I knew exactly what to buy for this recipient. | .660 | | | |
| -I had no idea what I was going to get as a gift for this person before I started shopping. (reversed) | .536 | | | |
| **Reciprocal purchase** | | .5925 | .5486 | .4929 |
| -I often buy people Christmas gifts because I know they are buying one for me. | .740 | | | |
| -If I expect to receive a gift from someone, it is important that I also purchase a gift for that person. | .733 | | | |
| -I anticipated receiving a Christmas gift from the person that I bought this clothing gift. | .709 | | | |
| **Costly gift** | | .7241 | .5909 | .6480 |
| -The budget for this gift of clothing was higher than I usually set for other gifts. | .833 | | | |
| -This clothing gift was very expensive. | .714 | | | |
| -The cost of the actual gift exceeded my budget for it. | .691 | | | |
| **Availability of information** | | .4628 | .6980 | .6568 |
| -The signs in this store were very helpful. | .814 | | | |
| -The pricing of items in this store was easy to find. | .769 | | | |
| **Difficult recipient** | | .5557 | .4857 | .3939 |
| -It is especially risky to buy gifts for this recipient. | .876 | | | |
| -This recipient is easy to buy gifts for. (reversed) | .470 | | | |
| **Good selection** | | .4658 | .4372 | .5181 |
| -There were many brands to choose from once I had decided what to buy for this recipient. | .788 | | | |
| -It was very easy to shop around and compare other similar clothing items. | .711 | | | |

The factors obtained in this study were in many instances quite similar to those derived by Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (2000). With respect to personality characteristics, Laroche et al. also obtained factors that were conceptually similar to traditional Christmas lover, importance of children, value seeker, identity shaper, fashion conscious, thoughtful giver, and leader. Conceptually similar factors were also obtained

for the following situational characteristics: time pressure, costly gift, product/store familiarity, pre-determined gift selection, difficult recipient, shopping list, shopping companion, and good selection. As mentioned previously, many of the measuring items used in the current study were borrowed from Laroche et al.'s earlier work. The fact that many of the factors (and compositional items) shared similarities between the two studies further enhances the validity of the measuring instrument from a methodological perspective.

Regression analyses:

Relationships between the independent variables and each dependent variable were assessed by stepwise multiple regression analyses, using SPSS (version 9.0). Regression analysis is an accepted and commonly employed statistical procedure that determines the influence that one or several predictor (independent) variables have on the response (dependent) variable. In the context of the present research, the objective is to determine how relevant personal, situational, and demographic variables (independent variables) might influence the acquisition of each type of in-store information sources (dependent variables).

The stepwise variable selection procedure was used for all regression analyses. This procedure allows for variables to enter and leave the model depending on specific criteria, therefore providing the best fit and minimal error. At each step during the regression procedure, each variable in the model is reexamined to ensure that the specified criteria are met; variables are also subsequently deleted or reselected as necessary. For the current study, variables entering the model required a significance level of 0.10 or less; variables were removed from the model if their significance level

was in excess of 0.101. In addition, the stepwise procedure will only allow new variables into the model if they significantly contribute (i.e., improve) in explaining the amount of variance in the dependent variable. This effectively reduces the degree of multicollinearity among the independent variables selected for inclusion into the regression equation, since highly correlated variables will not significantly explain more variance than the variables already included in the model.

For each dependent variable (macro information search, micro information search, and salesclerk help), separate regression analyses were conducted on each country sample set. A list of the independent variables/factors that entered into each regression analysis is provided in Table 16.

The data coding for the nominal and categorical/ordinal variables was maintained (as shown earlier in Table 10), with the exceptions of employment status and marital status. The former variable was split into two sub-variables, and dummy-coded (employment: 0=primarily not employed, 1=primarily employed; student: 0=primarily not a student, 1=primarily a student), while the latter variable was collapsed and dummy-coded (0=not married, 1=married).

## TABLE 16: LIST OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES
## INCLUDED IN REGRESSION ANALYSES

| Personality variables: | # it. | Situational variables: | # it. | Demographic variables: | # it. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Traditional Xmas lover | 6 | Time pressure | 4 | Sex | 1 |
| Importance of children | 4 | Product/store familiarity | 3 | Age | 1 |
| Enjoyment of shopping | 4 | Shopping list | 3 | Marital status | 1 |
| Brand/store loyal | 4 | Shopping companion | 3 | Household income | 1 |
| Thoughtful giver | 4 | Symbolic gift | 3 | Education | 1 |
| Value seeker | 5 | Predetermined selection | 3 | Family size | 1 |
| Identity shaper | 2 | Reciprocal purchase | 3 | Age of youngest child | 1 |
| Fashion conscious | 5 | Costly gift | 3 | Employment status | 2 |
| Budget-minded | 5 | Availability of info. | 2 | | 9 |
| Purch. self-confidence | 3 | Difficult recipient | 2 | | |
| Leader | 4 | Good selection | 2 | | |
| | 46 | Whom (gift intended)[a] | 1 | | |
| | | Gift cost ($CAN.)[b] | 1 | | |
| | | | 33 | | |

[a]Nominal scale item; [b]Disrete item (actual dollars)

Nine separate regression analyses (3 search type x 3 countries) were undertaken. The results from each analysis were then checked for possible influential observations by a number of diagnostics (including Cook's distance, leverage values, and standardized residual values). A total of four outlying cases were removed, and where necessary, the regressions were rerun.

Results of regression analyses:

Tables 17, 18 and 19 summarize the results of the regression analyses for each of the three countries. Each table is divided into three sections, with each section representing a particular type of information search, with the corresponding significant antecedent variables. The ensuing sections review the findings for each dependent variable, with a focus on the similarities and differences that emerged between the three countries with respect to the independent variables.

## TABLE 17: RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION
## ANALYSES—CANADIAN SUBSAMPLE

| Dependent variable | Independent variables | Coefficient | T | Sig. (p)[*] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Macro Information Search | Value seeker | .274 | 3.933 | .000 |
| | Identity shaper | .154 | 3.410 | .001 |
| | Budget-minded | .186 | 2.971 | .002 |
| | Thoughtful giver | .245 | 3.009 | .002 |
| | Good selection | .155 | 3.026 | .002 |
| | Shopping companion | .184 | 4.543 | .000 |
| | Product/store familiarity | .128 | 2.423 | .008 |
| | Marital status | .583 | 2.372 | .009 |
| | Education | .265 | 1.862 | .032 |
| | Constant | -3.502 | -3.678 | .000 |
| | F-value: 16.884 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$=.357 | | | |
| Micro Information Search | Thoughtful giver | .300 | 3.094 | .001 |
| | Budget-minded | .236 | 3.602 | .000 |
| | Importance of children | .445 | 2.472 | .007 |
| | Availability of information | .238 | 3.412 | .001 |
| | Costly gift | .283 | 4.889 | .000 |
| | Symbolic gift | .199 | 2.421 | .008 |
| | Good selection | .116 | 2.013 | .023 |
| | Age | .414 | 3.853 | .000 |
| | Family size | .266 | 2.481 | .007 |
| | Income | -.103 | -1.845 | .033 |
| | Constant | -9.492 | -5.290 | .000 |
| | F-value: 12.417 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ =.307 | | | |
| Salesclerk Help | Brand/store loyal | .297 | 3.260 | .001 |
| | Costly gift | .339 | 4.430 | .000 |
| | Availability of information | .376 | 4.339 | .000 |
| | Product/store familiarity | -.256 | -3.386 | .001 |
| | Time pressure | .163 | 2.430 | .008 |
| | Sex | 1.369 | 3.531 | .000 |
| | Family size | -.225 | -1.690 | .046 |
| | Constant | -.368 | -.389 | .698 |
| | F-value: 16.790 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ =.300 | | | |

[*] One-tailed, except for F-values and constants.

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## TABLE 18: RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION ANALYSES—AMERICAN SUBSAMPLE

| Dependent variable | Independent variables | Coefficient | T | Sig. (p)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Macro Information Search | Thoughtful giver | .292 | 2.849 | .003 |
| | Value seeker | .171 | 2.298 | .012 |
| | Good selection | .248 | 3.799 | .000 |
| | Product/store familiarity | -.169 | -2.511 | .007 |
| | Sex | -.836 | -2.138 | .017 |
| | Constant | 2.299 | 2.343 | .020 |
| | F-value: 11.062 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ =.220 | | | |
| Micro Information Search | Thoughtful giver | .263 | 2.852 | .003 |
| | Brand/store loyal | .177 | 2.193 | .015 |
| | Shopping list | .276 | 4.304 | .000 |
| | Good selection | .267 | 4.211 | .000 |
| | Costly gift | .126 | 1.687 | .047 |
| | Product/store familiarity | -.158 | -2.403 | .009 |
| | Constant | -.754 | -.845 | .399 |
| | F-value: 11.810 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ =.267 | | | |
| Salesclerk Help | Identity shaper | .230 | 3.080 | .001 |
| | Budget minded | -.164 | -1.842 | .034 |
| | Costly gift | .472 | 5.651 | .000 |
| | Product/store familiarity | -.222 | -3.068 | .002 |
| | Shopping list | .168 | 2.285 | .012 |
| | Symbolic gift | -.325 | -3.228 | .001 |
| | For whom (gift intended) | .480 | 2.575 | .006 |
| | Status—student | -.705 | -1.999 | .024 |
| | Constant | 4.130 | 3.521 | .001 |
| | F-value: 12.121 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ =.333 | | | |

*One-tailed, except for F-values and constants.

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## TABLE 19: RESULTS OF THE REGRESSION
## ANALYSES—BRITISH SUBSAMPLE

| Dependent Variable | Independent variables | Coefficient | T | Sig. (p)[*] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Macro Information Search | Value seeker | .317 | 3.656 | .000 |
| | Budget minded | .296 | 3.152 | .001 |
| | Traditional Christmas lover | -.296 | -3.845 | .000 |
| | Thoughtful giver | .423 | 3.770 | .000 |
| | Leader | -.211 | -2.234 | .014 |
| | Good selection | .214 | 2.902 | .003 |
| | Age of youngest child at home | .128 | 3.052 | .002 |
| | Constant | -.809 | -.703 | .485 |
| | F-value: 11.127 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ = .441 | | | |
| Micro Information Search | Thoughtful giver | .565 | 3.991 | .000 |
| | Purchasing self-confidence | .282 | 2.333 | .011 |
| | Traditional Christmas lover | -.266 | -2.535 | .007 |
| | Brand/store loyal | -.286 | -2.072 | .021 |
| | Difficult recipient | -.251 | -2.395 | .010 |
| | Age | .448 | 2.842 | .003 |
| | Constant | 1.654 | 1.107 | .272 |
| | F-value: 8.534 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ = .358 | | | |
| Salesclerk Help | Brand/store loyal | .495 | 3.726 | .000 |
| | Costly gift | .394 | 4.143 | .000 |
| | Product/store familiarity | -.217 | -2.259 | .014 |
| | Status-employment | -1.040 | -2.525 | .007 |
| | Constant | .992 | 1.086 | .281 |
| | F-value: 11.922 | | | .000 |
| | Adj. $R^2$ = .350 | | | |

[*]One-tailed, except for F-values and constants.

## Macro information search:

*Canada*

Nine independent variables, explaining 36% of the variance, were found to significantly influence macro information search. As shown in Table 17, four of the predictor variables were personality characteristics (value seeker, identity shaper, budget-minded, and thoughtful giver), three were situational factors (good selection, shopping

companion and product/store familiarity), and two were demographic characteristics (education and marital status). The F-statistic for the model was highly significant (F=16.884; p=.000), which indicates a good fit. The final estimated regression model is represented below with the non-standardized coefficients of each predictor variable and the label of each corresponding variable represented in parentheses.

$\overline{Y}$ (macro info. search)$_{can}$= -3.502 (*constant*) + .274 (value seeker) + .154 (identity shaper) + .155 (good selection) + .184 (shopping companion) + .583 (marital status) + .265 (education) + .186 (budget-minded) + .245 (thoughtful giver) + .128 (product/store familiarity)

*The United States*

Five significant independent variables, accounting for 22% of the variance, were found to influence macro information search. Two of the variables were personality factors (thoughtful giver and value seeker), two were situational characteristics (good selection and product/store familiarity), and only one was demographic (sex), as shown in Table 18. The significance of the F-statistics indicates a good fit (F=11.062, p=.000) for the regression equation illustrated below.

$\overline{Y}$ (macro info. search)$_{us}$= 2.299 (*constant*) + .292 (thoughtful giver) + .248 (good selection) + .171 (value seeker) - .169 (product/store familiarity) - .836 (sex)

*The United Kingdom*

Seven significant predictor variables, accounting for more than 44% of the variance, appeared in the final regression for macro information search. Five variables were personality factors (value seeker, thoughtful giver, traditional Xmas lover, leader, and budget-minded), one was situational (good selection), and one was demographic (age

of youngest child at home), as shown in Table 19. Once again, the regression equation (shown below) provided a good fit for the variables (F=11.127, p=.000).

$$\overline{Y \text{ (macro info. search)}}_{uk} = -.809 \text{ } (constant) + .317 \text{ (value seeker)} + .128 \text{ (age of youngest child)} + .214 \text{ (good selection)} + .296 \text{ (budget-minded)} - .296 \text{ (traditional Xmas lover)} + .423 \text{ (thoughtful giver)} - .211 \text{ (leader)}$$

*Comparing the three countries*

In terms of significant predictor variables, there were some similarities exhibited among the three country sample sets. Thoughtful givers (individuals who expend effort in order to obtain a gift that the recipient will like) as expected, generally gathered more product-category information and compared a greater number of brands. Similarly, value seekers (i.e., bargain-hunting individuals) also undertook a greater degree of macro information search, in order to obtain a suitable gift at a reasonable price. Lastly, when encountering store environments that provided a good selection, individuals were more likely to compare alternatives and prices.

Differences also emerged between the three countries with respect to the importance of various search antecedent variables. Though the budget-minded construct (describing individuals that are likely to hold a budget in mind when shopping for a gift) appeared for both Canadian and British samples, it did not appear for the American sample. As expected, budget-minded individuals generally gathered a greater amount of macro information prior to making a purchase.

In Canada, subjects characterized as being identity shapers (individuals who seek gifts that are reflective of the recipient's personality) also reported acquiring more macro-information prior to purchasing, as did those individuals that were accompanied by a

shopping companion. In the latter case, it is possible that more information was acquired since there was more than one individual deliberating over the purchase decision. In the United Kingdom, an individual characterized as a leader generally gathered less macro information, perhaps in part due to his/her higher confidence level. Rather unexpectedly, traditional Christmas lovers in the latter country were less apt to acquire in-store general information. It had been thought that individuals that truly enjoyed the Christmas season would in turn spend more time gathering information and comparing alternatives. Finally, Canadian and American shoppers that were highly familiar with the product and/or the specific retail store were, as expected, less inclined to compare alternatives or consult category information.

In Canada, two demographic characteristics were significantly related to macro information acquisition, while only one appeared for the United States and the United Kingdom. Both married and highly educated Canadians reported exerting more effort acquiring macro information. Female American gift shoppers were more apt to conduct a greater amount of macro information search. Finally, there was a positive association between the age of the youngest child living at home and macro information search among British shoppers. In the latter case, respondents with older children generally acquired a greater amount of macro information.

Micro information search:

*Canada*

As shown in Table 17, ten independent variables, accounting for approximately 30% of the variance, were found to be significantly associated with micro information

search. Three of these variables were personality factors (thoughtful giver, budget-minded, and importance of children), four were situational factors (availability of information, costly gift, symbolic gift, and good selection), and three were demographic characteristics (age, family size, and household income). The regression equation that appears below had a good fit, as indicated by the F-statistic (F=12.417, p=.000).

Y (micro info. search)$_{can}$= -9.492 (*constant*) +.300 (thoughtful giver) + .414 (age) + .238 (availability of info.) + .283 (costly gift) + .236 (budget-minded) + .445 (importance of children) + .199 (symbolic gift) + .116 (good selection) + .266 (family size) - .103 (income)

## The United States

A good fit was also obtained for the six variables (accounting for almost 27% of the variance) that appeared in the American regression for micro information search (F=11.810, p=.000), as shown in Table 18. Two of the variables were personality constructs (thoughtful giver and brand/store loyal), and four of the variables were situational factors (shopping list, good selection, costly gift, and product/store familiarity), as shown in the following regression equation.

Y (micro info. search)$_{us}$= -.754 (*constant*) + .276 (shopping list) + .267 (good selection) + .263 (thoughtful giver) + .126 (costly gift) - .158 (product/store familiarity) + .177 (brand/store loyal)

## The United Kingdom

Table 19 lists the six predictor variables (explaining almost 36% of the variance) that significantly affected micro information search among British subjects, four of which were personality factors (thoughtful giver, purchasing self-confidence, traditional Xmas

lover, and brand/store loyal), with one being situational (difficult recipient), and one being demographic (age). The following regression equation provided a good fit for the variables (F=8.534, p=.000).

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Y (micro info. search)$_{uk}$= 1.654 (*constant*) + .565 (thoughtful giver) + .448 (age) - .251 (difficult recipient) + .282 (purchasing self-confidence) - .266 (traditional Xmas lover) - .286 (brand/store loyalty)

*Comparing the three countries*

Compared to the findings for macro information search, there were fewer variables that were equivalently significant across the three countries. As expected, thoughtful givers engaged in greater effort to acquire micro (product-specific) information. Brand/store loyal individuals differentially acquired micro information in the United States and the United Kingdom (Americans tended to gather more micro information, yet Britons tended to gather less). Both Canadian and American respondents were more apt to search for a greater amount of product-specific information when considering a costly gift, and/or when there was a good selection of clothing merchandise to choose from. Finally, older respondents in both Canada and the United Kingdom were more apt to scrutinize micro information.

The remaining significant variables that influenced the degree of micro information search were country-specific. As expected, budget-minded Canadians generally acquired more micro information, as did Canadians that accorded a high personal importance to their children. Britons that characterized themselves as generally having confidence in their purchase decisions were also more likely to gather more micro information. Perplexing however, was the negative association between the traditional

Christmas lover construct and micro information search among British respondents. As was the case with macro information search, British subjects holding an attachment to the Christmas season were less apt to acquire product-specific information. Perhaps these findings are a result of greater shopping expertise that may be acquired by traditional Christmas lovers.

Among the remaining situational factors, Canadians searching for a symbolic gift (e.g., one that conveys a specific message to the recipient), and/or encountering an abundance of information were more likely to gather micro information. Americans shopping from a gift list acquired more product-specific information, while those highly familiar with the product and/or store acquired less. Finally, British respondents considering a gift for a difficult recipient (e.g., a recipient that is not easy to purchase for) were less likely to search for micro information. This latter finding was rather surprising—it had been expected that individuals would search more (and not less) under this situation, in order to reduce the risk of a poor purchase decision.

Aside from age (which appeared in both Canadian and British regression outputs), significant demographic correlates with micro information search were obtained only for Canada. Canadians with larger families tended to spend more time examining the specific clothing article, while Canadians with higher household incomes were less apt to do the same.

Salesclerk assistance:

*Canada*

Seven predictor variables, accounting for 30% of the variance in the dependent variable, were obtained for salesclerk help (as shown in Table 17). One personality factor (brand/store loyal), four situational factors (costly gift, availability of information, product/store familiarity, and time pressure), and two demographic characteristics (sex and family size) appeared in the regression equation shown below. A good fit was obtained for the model, as evidenced by the F-statistic (F=16.790, p=.000).

$\hat{Y}$ (salesclerk help)$_{can}$= -.368 (*constant*) + .339 (costly gift) + 1.369 (sex) + .297 (brand/store loyalty) + .376 (availability of info.) - .256 (product/store familiarity) + .163 (time pressure) -.225 (family size)

*The United States*

A good fit was also obtained for the eight independent variables (accounting for more than 33% of the variance) that appeared in the American regression for salesclerk help (F=12.121, p=.000), as listed in Table 18. Two personality factors entered into the final regression (identity shaper and budget-minded), followed by five situational factors (costly gift, product/store familiarity, shopping list, symbolic gift, and for whom the gift was intended), and one demographic characteristic (student status), as shown in the following regression equation.

$\hat{Y}$ (salesclerk help)$_{us}$= 4.130 (*constant*) + .472 (costly gift) -.222 (product/store familiarity) + .168 (shopping list) + .230 (identity shaper) - .325 (symbolic gift) + .480 (whom-gift intended) - .705 (status—student) - .164 (budget-minded)

*The United Kingdom*

Table 19 lists the four predictor variables (explaining 35% of the variance) that significantly influenced the degree to which salesclerk assistance was sought among British respondents. The regression equation (shown below) had a good fit (F=11.922, p=.000), and contained one personality factor (brand/store loyal), two situational factors (costly gift and product/store familiarity) and one demographic variable (employment status).

$$Y \text{ (salesclerk help)}_{uk} = .992 \text{ (constant)} + .394 \text{ (costly gift)} + .495 \text{ (brand/store loyal)} - 1.040 \text{ (status—work)} - .217 \text{ (product/store familiarity)}$$

*Comparing the three countries*

Among the three countries, similarities for this type of information search behavior emerged for two situational factors. In situations where the gift under consideration was expensive, individuals were more apt to consult salesclerks for assistance and advice. Conversely, salesclerks were less likely to be sought when the consumer was highly familiar with the product and/or the retail store. The findings for these two variables were as expected. In Canada as well as in Great Britain, brand/store loyal shoppers were more likely to use store sales personnel as a source of information, perhaps as a final check on their gift choice.

The remaining significant predictor variables were country-specific in nature. Americans characterized as identity shapers generally sought out salesclerk assistance. Similar to the findings for micro information search, Canadian shoppers encountering an abundance of information generally consulted salesclerks, perhaps as a means of quickly obtaining relevant information. Americans shopping with a gift list, or looking for a gift

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for a distant relation (or non-kin acquaintance) also were more apt to seek out salesclerks for advice, although those searching for a symbolic gift were less apt to do the same. Finally, Canadian shoppers facing time pressure used store sales personnel in order to help them quickly make a purchase decision. It is rather surprising that the time pressure construct was not significant in any of the other regression equations, and for the other countries.

Demographic correlates of the likelihood of using in-store sales personnel were obtained for all three countries. In Canada, male shoppers were much more likely to consult sales personnel than were women. This latter result is consistent with the earlier findings of Laroche, Saad, Cleveland, and Browne (2000, forthcoming). Canadians with larger families however, tended to avoid seeking salesclerk assistance. Finally, American student respondents tended to avoid store salesclerks, as did employed British respondents.

Summary:

While some similarities were exhibited among the three country samples, overall the results strongly suggest that different antecedent variables play a role in influencing the type and extent of in-store information acquisition in each of the three countries, thus contradicting the third null hypothesis. To summarize:

(1) A greater number of antecedent variables influence information search among Canadian respondents (26 variables) than American (19 variables) or British (17 variables) respondents.

(2) Personality variables figured prominently in terms of influencing the search behavior of British subjects (10 variables out of 17, or 59%), compared to Canadian (8/26, or 31%) and American (6/19, or 32%) subjects.

(3) The information search behavior of Americans tended to be primarily a function of situational characteristics (11/19, or 58%), compared to Canadians (11/26, or 42%) and Britons (4/17, or 24%).

(4) Demographic characteristics tended to play a greater role in influencing Canadians' search behavior (7/26, or 27%) than either for British subjects (3/17, or 18%) or for Americans (2/19, or 11%)

(5) Among the predictor variables, one factor differentially influenced one type of information search. Brand/store loyal shoppers in the U.S. gathered more micro information, while in the U.K, these types of shoppers tended to gather less.

Mean scores by country on in-store information search:

To assess the mean scores attained for each country on the dependent variables, a MANCOVA (multiple analysis of covariance) was conducted, using the Univariate Analysis of Variance procedure in SPSS (version 9.0). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, significant differences were observed between the three countries with respect to a number of demographic characteristics. Therefore, these variables (age, marital status, income, family size, education, and employment status) were entered as covariates into the MANCOVA.

## TABLE 20: RESULTS OF THE MANCOVA ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES BETWEEN CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

| Information Search Type: | | Adjusted means*: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Canada** | **U.S.A.** | **U.K.** | **Significance** |
| Macro information search | | 5.503 | 5.589 | 5.287 | p=.076 |
| Micro information search | | 4.989 | 4.368 | 5.018 | p=.000 |
| Salesclerk help | | 4.067 | 3.314 | 2.917 | p=.036 |
| *Total (mean of search types)* | | 4.845 | 4.433 | 4.226 | p=.000 |
| **Comparison:** | Post-hoc Contrasts (Scheffe Method) | | | | |
| *Macro information search* | **Mean diff.** | **Std. error** | **95% C. I. (lower)** | **95% C.I. (upper)** | **Significance** |
| Canada/U.S.A. | -.1031 | .2126 | -.6249 | .4188 | .889 |
| Canada/U.K. | .3875 | .2771 | -.2928 | 1.0678 | .377 |
| U.S.A./U.K. | .4906 | .2916 | -.2253 | 1.2065 | .244 |
| *Micro information search* | | | | | |
| Canada/U.S.A. | 1.0345[a] | .2303 | .4691 | 1.6000 | .000 |
| Canada/U.K. | .3948 | .3003 | -.3424 | 1.1319 | .422 |
| U.S.A./U.K. | -.6398 | .3160 | -1.4155 | .1359 | .130 |
| *Salesclerk help* | | | | | |
| Canada/U.S.A. | .6326[b] | .2753 | -.0431 | 1.3083 | .072 |
| Canada/U.K. | 1.2961[a] | .3588 | .4152 | 2.1770 | .002 |
| U.S.A./U.K. | .6635 | .3776 | -.2635 | 1.5905 | .215 |
| *Total search* | | | | | |
| Canada/U.S.A. | .5214[a] | .1653 | .1156 | .9271 | .007 |
| Canada/U.K. | .6928[a] | .2155 | .1639 | 1.2217 | .006 |
| U.S.A./U.K. | .1714 | .2267 | -.3852 | .7280 | .752 |

*Covariates: Age, Marital Status, Income, Family Size, Education, Employment status.
[a]The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
[b]The mean difference is significant at the .10 level.

As shown in Table 20, significant differences emerged with respect to the mean average scores attained by each country on each type of information search. The second null hypothesis (which stated that there would not be significant variations between the countries regarding the types of information search conducted) is therefore rejected. For macro information search, Americans generally reported the highest scores, followed by Canadians and Britons. With respect to micro information search, the opposite was true— British respondents tended to report higher scores than either Canadians or Americans. Finally, Canadians appeared to access personal sources of information more than Americans, and especially more than British respondents. Overall, Canadians reported the highest scores in obtaining in-store information, followed by Americans, with British

respondents yielding the lowest scores. These results were unexpected and contrary to the first null hypothesis (which theorized that the average scores would be approximately the same across the three countries).

To obtain a clearer picture of information search differences between the three countries, post-hoc comparisons were performed. Differences were tested using the Scheffe method (which is appropriate when comparing unequal sample sizes). Concerning micro information search scores, significant differences existed between Canadian and American respondents, with the former reporting the highest scores. Similarly, Canadian respondents generally accessed salesclerks to a greater degree than American respondents (although this latter result was only marginally significant). Sharper differences in accessing store sales personnel were obtained for Canadian and British respondents, with the former reporting the highest scores. Concerning total search scores, statistically significant differences were observed for Canada and the United States, and for Canada and the United Kingdom (with Canadian respondents reporting higher total search scores than either American or British respondents).

Gender differences in information acquisition:

Gender differences in information acquisition were assessed in a similar fashion to that described in the preceding section. Differences between male and female sub-samples with respect to demographic characteristics were analyzed using chi-square tests and ANOVAs (analysis of variance). Significant differences between males and females across the country samples were obtained for family size, educational attainment, and

employment status. These demographic variables were therefore entered as covariates into the MANCOVA.

**TABLE 21: RESULTS OF THE MANCOVA ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES BETWEEN CANADA, THE U.S., AND THE U.K.—GENDER DIFFERENCES**

| Country; search types: | Adjusted means*: | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Canada** | **Female** | **Male** | **Significance** |
| Macro information search | 5.650 | 5.205 | .089 |
| Micro information search | 5.332 | 4.710 | .002 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.362 | 5.605 | .000 |
| n | 184 | 75 | |
| **The United States** | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.990 | 4.606 | .006 |
| Micro information search | 4.324 | 3.640 | .494 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.198 | 4.171 | .139 |
| n | 141 | 39 | |
| **The United Kingdom** | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.187 | 4.858 | .557 |
| Micro information search | 5.005 | 4.153 | .299 |
| Salesclerk help | 2.618 | 2.962 | .525 |
| n | 66 | 20 | |
| **All Countries** | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.685 | 4.998 | .001 |
| Micro information search | 4.948 | 4.282 | .002 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.189 | 4.790 | .000 |
| n | 391 | 134 | |

*Covariates: Family Size, Education, and Employment Status.

As shown in Table 21, there were a number of differences with respect to the mean scores on each type of information search. Significant differences were observed for the scores on all three types of in-store information sources for the Canadian sample. Compared to males, females had higher average scores on both macro and micro information search. However, males were much more likely than females utilize store sales personnel as an important source of information.

The results obtained for the United States and the United Kingdom were generally not significant, with the exception of macro information search for the American sample. Similar to Canadian females, American females generally acquired macro information to a greater extent than did American males.

The most probable explanation for the lack of significant gender differences for the American and British samples is the small number of males that participated in the survey in these two countries (n=39 males for the U.S.; n=20 males for the U.K.). Although not significant, the mean scores obtained for micro information search and salesclerk help for Americans, and for all three information sources for British subjects, followed the same pattern as the Canadian sample. In each country, females tended to acquire macro and micro information to a greater degree than males, while males showed a preference for using store sales personnel. This notion is supported by the aggregate scores (all countries) for males and females, and this latter result was highly significant. Research hypothesis four is therefore only partially supported—females accessed more non-personal information sources, while males accessed more personal information sources.

Age differences in information acquisition:

Another MANCOVA was performed to assess age differences in in-store information acquisition between the three countries. In order to enhance the interpretability of the results and to ensure that sufficient counts occurred in each cell, the age intervals were collapsed into three groups. Since there were significant differences among the three age groups (0-29; 30-49, 50 + years) with respect to marital status, income, family size, education, and employment status, these variables were entered into the MANCOVA as covariates.

**TABLE 22: RESULTS OF THE MANCOVA ON THE DEPENDENT VARIABLES BETWEEN CANADA, THE U.S., AND THE U.K.—AGE DIFFERENCES**

| Country; search types: | Adjusted means*: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Canada** | **0-29 years** | **30-49 years** | **50 + years** | **Significance** |
| Macro information search | 5.226 | 5.693 | 5.284 | .154 |
| Micro information search | 3.965 | 5.159 | 5.989 | .000 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.537 | 4.299 | 3.783 | .142 |
| n | 46 | 135 | 68 | |
| **The United States** | | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.880 | 5.178 | 4.011 | .255 |
| Micro information search | 4.154 | 4.503 | 3.788 | .871 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.633 | 2.186 | 3.991 | .276 |
| n | 140 | 29 | 11 | |
| **The United Kingdom** | | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.385 | 4.908 | 4.804 | .802 |
| Micro information search | 4.987 | 4.306 | 5.224 | .054 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.219 | 2.466 | 1.784 | .272 |
| n | 40 | 49 | 17 | |
| **All Countries** | | | | |
| Macro information search | 5.645 | 5.491 | 5.058 | .030 |
| Micro information search | 4.186 | 4.979 | 5.639 | .000 |
| Salesclerk help | 3.407 | 3.845 | 3.544 | .501 |
| Average total | 4.412 | 4.772 | 4.747 | .046 |
| n | 236 | 193 | 96 | |

| Age groups (all countries) | Post-hoc Contrasts (Scheffe Method) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Macro information search* | **Mean diff.** | **Std. error** | **95% C. I. (lower)** | **95% C. I. (upper)** | **Significance** |
| 0-29/30-49years | .0812 | .2133 | -.6050 | .4424 | .930 |
| 0-29/50+ years | .3151 | .2664 | -.3389 | .9691 | .497 |
| 30-49/50+ years | .3964 | .2745 | -.2776 | 1.0703 | .353 |
| *Micro information search* | | | | | |
| 0-29/30-49years | -.8422[a] | .2286 | -1.4032 | -.2811 | .001 |
| 0-29/50+ years | -1.5083[a] | .2855 | -2.290 | -.8075 | .000 |
| 30-49/50+ years | -.6661[b] | .2942 | -1.3882 | .0599 | .078 |
| *Salesclerk help* | | | | | |
| 0-29/30-49years | -.2401 | .2796 | -.9264 | .4462 | .692 |
| 0-29/50+ years | .0975 | .3492 | -.7596 | .9547 | .962 |
| 30-49/50+ years | .3376 | .3598 | -.5456 | 1.2209 | .644 |
| *Total search* | | | | | |
| 0-29/30-49years | -.3878[b] | .1672 | -.7982 | .0225 | .069 |
| 0-29/50+ years | -.3652 | .2088 | -.8777 | .1473 | .218 |
| 30-49/50+ years | .0262 | .2151 | -.5055 | .5508 | .994 |

*Covariates: Marital Status, Income, Family Size, Education, Employment Status.
[a]The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.
[b]The mean difference is significant at the .10 level.

Among the three age groups in each of the three countries, the results were inconclusive (with the exception of micro information acquisition among Canadian and British respondents). The lack of significance for these analyses is most likely

attributable to the relatively small number of individuals that fell into some of the age intervals. Significant differences did emerge however, when the country samples were aggregated across age intervals, as shown in Table 22. As expected, relative to older subjects, younger subjects generally acquired more macro information. Interestingly however, the exact opposite occurred with respect to micro information acquisition—older subjects acquired more, and not less information, than younger subjects. Perhaps older consumers compensate for their inherent difficulties in integrating large amounts of information from multiple sources (i.e., different products), by scrutinizing product-specific information. Significant differences did not emerge between the different age groups with respect to the degree of acquiring sales personnel assistance. Overall, the fifth research hypothesis is only partially supported—relative to younger individuals, older individuals generally gathered less macro information, but gathered more micro information.

Pair-wise differences in information acquisition for the three age groups (overall sample) were tested using the Scheffe method. Among the three search types, statistically significant differences existed only for micro information search. Younger respondents (0-29 age group) reported acquiring a greater amount of micro information than middle-aged respondents (30-49 age group), but acquired less micro information than older respondents (50+ age group). Concerning total search scores, marginally significant differences were obtained for only the comparison between the younger and middle age groups. In the latter case, younger individuals generally reported lower total search scores than middle-aged individuals.

<u>Summary—directional hypotheses:</u>

Table 23 summarizes the effects of each predictor variable on in-store information search. The effect of each significant variable on the three specific types of information search is listed for each country. The predicted directional hypotheses, as shown earlier in chapter 8 are also listed. Note that some of the factors listed in Table 23 are labeled differently than those presented in Table 2 (Chapter 8). Recall that the factor labels were based on the composition of items appearing in each derived factor. The following differences are listed with the conceptually closest predicted factors (from Table 2) and accompanying directional hypothesis:

- Budget-minded (+)→strict budget (+)

- Thoughtful giver (+)→enduring (+) and situational (+) involvement

- Brand/store loyal (+)→brand-name buyer (+)

- Costly gift (+)→perceived purchase cost (+)

- Product/store familiarity (-)→product familiarity (-)

- For whom (gift-intended) (?)→close relationship (?)

The last column on Table 23 summarizes the directional predictions that were made for 21 out of the 28 independent variables/factors. The directional effects on search were in the predicted direction for 18 out of 24 significant instances for the personality variables, for 17 out of 23 significant instances for the situational variables, and for 3 out of 8 significant instances for the demographic variables.

Overall, the hypothesized directional effects on in-store information search were supported for eight variables: value seeker, identity shaper, thoughtful giver, importance of children, good selection, availability of information, costly gift, and education. The

findings for eight variables were in the opposite direction of the hypothesized effect: traditional Xmas lover, leader, shopping companion, time pressure, shopping list, difficult recipient, age, and marital status. Mixed findings were found for five variables: budget-minded, brand/store loyal, product/store familiarity, sex, and family size.

In addition, there were six variables that significantly influenced in-store information search, for which the directional effects were not specified a priori (due to either mixed or a lack of findings from the relevant literature): purchasing confidence, for whom (gift intended), age of youngest child, employment status, student status, and household income. The symbolic gift construct was not a priori conceptualized as a distinct situational dimension, yet it proved to be significant in two of the regression equations. Finally, five variables that entered into the regression analyses were not significantly related to in-store information acquisition: enjoyment of shopping, fashion conscious, predetermined gift selection, reciprocal purchase, and actual gift cost. These results are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

# TABLE 23: SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ANTECEDENT VARIABLES

| Independent variable | Hypo. | Canada | | | The United States | | | The United Kingdom | | | Ratio |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Macro | Micro | SCH | Macro | Micro | SCH | Macro | Micro | SCH | |
| *Personality Variables:* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Value seeker | + | + | | | + | | | + | | | 3:3 |
| Identity shaper | + | + | | | | | + | | | | 2:3 |
| Budget-minded | + | + | + | | | | - | + | | | 3:4 |
| Thoughtful giver | + | + | + | | + | + | | + | + | | 6:6 |
| Importance of children | + | | + | | | | | | | | 1:1 |
| Brand/store loyal | + | | | + | | + | | | - | + | 3:4 |
| Traditional Xmas lover | + | | | | | | | - | - | | 0:2 |
| Leader | + | | | | | | | - | | | 0:1 |
| Purchasing confidence | ? | | | | | | | | + | | Ø |
| | | | | | | | | | | | **18:24** |
| *Situational Variables:* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Good selection | + | + | + | | + | + | | + | | | 5:5 |
| Shopping companion | - | + | | | | | | | | | 0:1 |
| Availability of info. | + | | + | + | | | | | | | 2:2 |
| Costly gift | + | | + | + | | + | + | | + | | 5:5 |
| Symbolic gift | n.h. | | + | | | | - | | | | Ø |
| Product/store familiarity | - | + | | - | - | - | - | | | - | 5:6 |
| Time pressure | - | | | + | | | | | | | 0:1 |
| Shopping list | - | | | | | + | + | | | | 0:2 |
| For whom (gift intended) | ? | | | | | | + | | | | Ø |
| Difficult recipient | + | | | | | | | | - | | 0:1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | **17:23** |
| *Demographic Variables:* | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Sex (m. vs. f.) | - | | | + | - | | | | | | 1:2 |
| Age (o. vs. y.) | - | | + | | | | | | + | | 0:2 |
| Education | + | + | | | | | | | | | 1:1 |
| Marital status (m. vs. s.) | - | + | | | | | | | | | 0:1 |
| Age of youngest child | n.h. | | | | | | | + | | | Ø |
| Family size | + | | + | - | | | | | | | 1:2 |
| Status: -Employment | n.h. | | | | | | | | - | | Ø |
|     -Student | n.h. | | | | | | - | | | | Ø |
| Household Income | ? | | - | | | | | | | | Ø |
| | | | | | | | | | | | **3:8** |

| Non-significant variables initially entered into regression models (hypothesis): | |
|---|---|
| Personality Variables:<br>Enjoyment of shopping (+)<br>Fashion conscious (+) | Situational Variables:<br>Predetermined gift selection (-)<br>Reciprocal purchase (n.h.)<br>Gift cost ($Can) |

(+)=positive correlation; (-)=negative correlation; (?)=direction not specified; (n.h.)=not hypothesized *a priori*.

## Summary—research propositions:

Table 24 provides a summary of the findings for each research hypothesis. The discussion chapter that follows provides interpretations for the obtained results.

## TABLE 24: SUMMARY OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

| Hypo. | Finding | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Significant differences in aggregate search scores between the three countries were obtained. | Null hypothesis rejected. |
| 2 | Significant country sample differences existed with respect to the amount of each type of search undertaken. | Null hypothesis rejected. |
| 3 | Variations existed between the three countries with respect to the relative importance of various search antecedents. | Null hypothesis rejected. |
| 4 | Compared to males, females were more apt to conduct macro and micro information search, but less likely to seek salesclerk assistance. | Hypothesis partially supported. |
| 5 | Compared to younger individuals, older individuals conducted less macro information search, but more micro information search. | Hypothesis partially supported. |

# CHAPTER 14

# DISCUSSION AND STUDY LIMITATIONS

<u>Discussion:</u>

The discussion portion of this chapter is divided into five parts. Each part addresses one of the five research objectives that were outlined in Chapter 1. Practical implications for retailers and advertisers as well as for researchers are also included in each discussion section.

*Objective 1—Understanding consumer gift shopping behavior across the three countries*

The results obtained in this study help to provide a clearer understanding of the Christmas gift shopping behaviors of consumers in three countries.

It is interesting to note some of the similarities observed among respondents from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. First, most of the clothing gifts were given by one person (as opposed to being given by multiple givers). Second, the average clothing gift cost (in Canadian funds) was almost identical across the three countries. Third, the results indicated that the total amount spent on Christmas gifts (in Canadian funds) across the three countries was relatively similar. Fourth, respondents from the three countries generally began their holiday shopping around the same time (e.g., more than 50% of participants began their Christmas shopping between November 16 and December 15). Finally, the average number of separate holiday shopping trips undertaken did not vary substantially between the three countries. The aforementioned information should be of interest to retailers that may have operations in each of the three countries

(or to retailers that are considering entering any or all of these countries), from a planning and/or market forecasting perspective.

Equally interesting, are a number of differences observed with respect to shopping patterns between the three countries. For example, British shoppers tended to purchase gifts for a greater number of people than either American or Canadian shoppers. While this result may be in part attributable to the sample differences in average family size, it may also be partially attributable to cultural differences. Perhaps individuals in Britain (and to a lesser extent, the United States), are more inclined than Canadians to exchange gifts with a larger number of people as a means of conveying symbolic messages, or as a means of maintaining relationships.

Of greater practical importance to retailers and advertisers however, are the country differences that were obtained for: (1) the average amount of time spent in the store where the gift was eventually purchased, (2) the number of stores visited while searching for the gift, (3) the type of store where the gift was purchased, and (4) the different media sources accessed prior to shopping for the gift.

Compared with British shoppers, Canadian and American shoppers reported spending more time within the particular store where the gift was purchased. However, the underlying reason for this finding is unclear. It is possible that the latter two sample groups also used the time to gather information for other purchases. Perhaps Canadians and Americans are more apt to combine gift and/or other purchases than British shoppers are. This behavioral explanation was unfortunately not measured in the survey.

Americans tended to visit the greatest number of stores when searching for the clothing gift. In addition, among the three countries, Americans were the most likely to

purchase at a discount store, but the least likely to purchase at a local independent store (boutique). Finally, sharp differences emerged between the three countries regarding media sources of information. Compared to British respondents, American (and to a lesser extent, Canadian) respondents were much more likely to indicate that media sources of information influenced their final purchase decision. Furthermore, Americans were more likely to cite TV/radio sources, while Canadians were more likely to cite store catalogue/flyer sources.

## Objective 2—Determining consumers' usage of in-store information sources

The results of this study provide further support for the notion that in-store information search is not uni-dimensional, but rather multidimensional. Clearly, it is important for researchers to provide multiple measures of search when conducting research of this nature. In-store information search appears to take on three distinct forms: macro information search, micro information search, and salesclerk assistance. These findings provide confirmation for the results obtained by Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (1999).

On the surface, it appears that the propensity for consumers to conduct macro information search is primarily a function of personality characteristics, and to a lesser extent, situational and demographic factors. Micro information search appears to be largely influenced by both situational and personality characteristics, while the likelihood of accessing store sales personnel is mainly a function of situational circumstances and certain demographic variables.

*Objective 3—Determining the importance of various information search antecedents*

This section examines the relative importance of each antecedent search variable, and provides both interpretations and links to findings from earlier studies.

*Value seeker, budget-minded, and costly gift*

The value seeker personality construct was found to have a positive effect on macro information acquisition in each of the three countries. Clearly, bargain-conscious consumers are more likely to compare different alternatives, with the objective of finding the best value for their money. However, this personality variable did not significantly influence the other two types of information search.

These results generally provide support for the earlier findings of Horton (1979), Locander and Herman (1979), and Laroche, Saad, Kim and Browne (1999), although the latter study also found that value seekers engaged in greater micro information search.

Reflecting the earlier findings of Claxton, Fry and Portis (1974), budget-minded subjects in Canada and the United Kingdom were found to engage in greater macro information search, and also to engage in greater micro information search in the former country. However, Americans holding a budget in mind generally avoided salesclerks (perhaps thinking that store sales personnel would try to persuade them to purchase a more expensive clothing gift). Finally, in situations where the clothing gift under consideration was perceived as expensive, individuals tended to acquire more product-specific information (in Canada and the U.S.), and seek the advice of store sales personnel (in all three countries).

One possible implication for retailers is that they should offer a broad selection of merchandise, as value seeking individuals might be more inclined to patronize stores that offer a wide product selection and different price points. Store sales personnel should also be on hand in stores that offer relatively expensive alternatives, since they are likely to be accessed in situations where the individual is considering an expensive purchase.

*Identity shaper and leader*

Where applicable, these personality variables had a different influence on information search—identity shapers gathered more macro information (in Canada) and sought out salesclerk advice (in the U.S.), while individuals self-characterized as leaders were less apt to undertake macro information search (at least in the U.K.). While the directional influence of the identity shaping characteristic on search is consistent with earlier research (e.g., Rogers, 1962), the influence of the leadership characteristic was in the opposite direction of earlier work (e.g., Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia, 1981; Kiel and Layton, 1981). It is possible that leaders, being more confident of their initial choice, do not perceive the need to search for information on other product alternatives. It is also possible that the shopping behavior of leaders varies from country to country—this is certainly an area that requires further research.

*Thoughtful giver and traditional Christmas lover*

Given the consistency of the findings from earlier studies (e.g., Hawkins, Best & Coney, 1986; Beatty & Smith, 1987), it is not surprising that this study determined that individuals characterized as thoughtful givers are more inclined to engage in both macro

and micro information search. These effects were obtained for all three countries. Clearly, thoughtful givers are more motivated to examine alternatives and to scrutinize product-specific attributes, in order to ensure the best possible gift selection.

Inexplicably, traditional Christmas lovers were less inclined to do the same, at least among British respondents. Although these results are not entirely conclusive (since they were applicable only for Britons), they contradict the earlier findings of Laroche, Kim, Saad, Browne, and Cleveland (2000).

*Brand/store loyal*

In most instances, it appeared that brand and/or store loyal shoppers engaged in greater search (supporting Locander & Herman's [1979] results), although the findings were different for each country. One unexpected finding was the negative correlation between brand/store loyalty and micro information search among British respondents. It is possible that the inherent multidimensionality of the construct is the cause of this discrepancy—while studies have generally shown that brand-loyal shoppers generally acquire more information, some research (e.g., Wilkie, 1986) also suggests that store-loyal shoppers acquire less.

*Importance of children, age of youngest child living at home*

The first factor proved significant only for micro information search among Canadians. Individuals that accorded a high importance to their children were more apt to scrutinize product-specific information. Similarly (at least for Britons), the second factor was determined to be positively associated with macro information search. As suggested

by Swinyard and Sim (1987), older children in particular appear to influence the purchasing habits of parents (for a number of products). In the context of the present findings, parents with older children living at home spent more time comparing product attributes and alternatives, perhaps as a means to ensure that the right gift was chosen for their child.

*Good selection and availability of information*

As expected, individuals encountering a wide variety of clothing gift merchandise generally acquired more macro and micro information. This finding was relatively consistent across all three countries. Similarly, Canadian shoppers were more likely to acquire micro information and seek salesclerk assistance when the store environment provided an abundance of information. These findings provide for Mattson's (1982) postulation: as information becomes more accessible, so does the degree of total information acquisition.

*Product/store familiarity, and purchasing confidence*

The first factor was found to negatively influence information acquisition to some extent in all three countries, with the exception of macro information search for Canadian respondents. Highly familiar Americans were less apt to acquire macro and micro information, while highly familiar Britons were less likely to seek sales personnel assistance. Canadians that were familiar with the clothing type and/or retail store were also less likely to use salesclerks, but more apt to conduct macro information search. One possible explanation for the contradictory findings in the latter case is the "inverted-U"

relationship between prior knowledge and information acquisition (Johnson and Russo, 1984). Prior knowledge of a product may enhance the abilities of moderately familiar consumers to encode and remember new information, hence making it easier for these individuals to compare a greater number of alternatives.

Purchasing self-confidence was found to be positively related to in-store information acquisition in one case, thus providing some support for Kiel and Layton's (1981) findings. For British subjects, individuals that had greater confidence in their purchasing abilities tended to undertake more micro information search.

*Symbolic gift*

This situational characteristic was not conceptualized a priori as a unique construct, but it was uncovered through factor analysis. As might be expected, Canadian shoppers tended to acquire a greater amount of micro information in the course of searching for a symbolic gift. Rather surprisingly, American shoppers were less apt to access salesclerk assistance when searching for the same. Given that individuals seeking a symbolic gift would likely be highly involved in the task (Wolfinbarger, 1990), it had been expected that they would be more motivated to undertake greater information search. However it is possible that in these situations, the giver relies more on internally available information and selects the gift based on intuition. Further research is required in order to better understand the relationship between the need for a gift to convey a symbolic message and information search.

*Shopping companion and gift shopping list*

It had been predicted that individuals shopping with a companion or with a gift list would have less of a need to acquire in-store information, since a companion and a list in themselves both represent sources of information. The results obtained did not support these hypotheses. Canadian respondents were found to acquire more macro information when shopping with a companion, and American respondents were more apt to search for micro information and seek salesclerk assistance when shopping with a gift list.

Explanations can be offered for these two observations. In the former case, it is possible that when individuals shop in groups, they actually compare a greater number of alternatives, since the opinions and preferences of more than one person may come into play. In the latter case, it is possible that many shopping lists contain extremely generalized information, thus necessitating the need for additional search. For example, the gift purchaser may see on his/her list that his/her son requires a winter coat. Even if the brand name is known in advance, product attributes still require evaluation and salesclerk assistance may be sought, especially if the purchaser is relatively uninformed about the quality or other attributes of the selected brand.

*Time pressure*

The results for the time pressure construct were somewhat disappointing. Most research has generally shown that as individuals face increasing time pressure, they tend to acquire less information (e.g., Sprott & Miyazaki, 1995; Beatty & Smith, 1987). Given the tendency for many individuals to procrastinate the start of their Christmas shopping, it

had been expected that this factor would emerge as highly significant in all regression analyses. However, the time pressure variable was obtained for only the Canadian sample, where it positively influenced the likelihood of seeking salesclerk assistance.

This latter finding, although contrary to the hypothesized effect, has been reported in the literature. Mattson (1982) found that time-pressured shoppers were generally more likely to seek sales personnel assistance. Thus, it appears that time-pressured shoppers view salesclerks as a valuable source of information that can save them time.

*For whom (gift intended) and difficult recipient*

American respondents selecting gifts for more distant family members (e.g., cousins) or non-kin individuals (e.g., friends) were more likely to consult store sales personnel. It is possible that in situations where the giver was less familiar with the personality and/or needs of the recipient, he/she perceived the need to ask store salesclerks for gift ideas or advice.

Contrary to what was hypothesized, gifts purchased for recipients characterized as "difficult" involved less search, in the single case where this variable was significant. British shoppers were less likely to acquire micro information when obtaining a gift for a difficult recipient.

The literature offers a possible explanation for the latter observation. Reactance theory (Brehm, 1966) posits that in some instances, individuals reduce effort when faced with a situation that presents a threat to their freedom (e.g., a difficult task), in order to restore freedom. In cases where the gift recipient is characterized as being difficult, the

giver may attempt to restore freedom by limiting the search effort associated with the requisite gift (Clee and Wicklund, 1980).

*Demographic variables*

As hypothesized, more educated individuals tended to acquire more macro information, however this relationship was only observed for only the Canadian sample. Marital status was also found to influence information search, but again only for the Canadian sample. This latter observation was contrary to expectations. Earlier research has generally shown that non-married individuals tend to search more than married individuals (Newman & Staelin, 1972; Moore and Lehmann, 1980), however this study found that married Canadians acquired more macro information than single Canadians.

Employed Britons were less apt to seek salesclerk assistance—perhaps these individuals faced greater time pressure and substituted internally available information. Concerning the student-status variable, students in the United States tended to avoid seeking salesclerk assistance (although it is possible that store sales personnel were less inclined to approach students to offer help).

Mixed results were obtained for family size, although this demographic variable was only significant for the Canadian sample. Canadian respondents from large families tended to acquire more micro information (providing support for Slama & Taschian's [1985] findings), but were less likely to seek salesclerk assistance. Household income was also significantly associated with information search, but again only for the Canadian sample. Similar to the results obtained by Udell (1966), wealthier Canadians tended to acquire less product-specific information. Perhaps individuals in the latter case instead

relied on a heuristic, such as purchasing the most expensive brand (e.g., "if it is the most expensive, it must be the best").

The relative influence of age and gender on in-store information search patterns is addressed later in this chapter.

*Non-significant variables*

As stated earlier in Chapter 13, five independent variables that were entered into the regression analyses were not significant predictors of in-store search behavior for any country sample set. First, enjoyment of shopping did not appear to influence search; it had been hypothesized to positively affect the extent of information acquisition. Similarly, fashion consciousness did not emerge as a significant predictor of in-store search. Prior research has generally reported a positive correlation between this variable and information acquisition.

Among the situational variables, pre-determined gift selection, reciprocal purchase, and the actual gift cost were insignificant. The first variable had been hypothesized to reduce the amount of search undertaken. Individuals may have a pre-determined selection in mind, but still require information in order to distinguish between alternatives, or to pick out certain product attributes (such as color, pattern, etc.). Concerning the second variable, it appears that information search patterns do not vary substantially for one-sided versus two-sided gift exchange situations. The third variable, actual gift cost, was found to be highly correlated with costly gift, which is probably why it did not appear separately in the regression equations.

*Objective 4—Determining country differences with respect to the importance of various search antecedents and in-store sources of information*

On the basis of the results obtained in the current study, it appears that the relative importance of many independent variables vary from country to country. As stated in chapter 13, a larger number of variables played a role in influencing Canadians' search patterns (26 variables), than either Americans' (19 variables) or Britons' (17 variables) search patterns. All three groups of variables (personal, situational, and demographic) appeared to play a role in determining Canadian search behavior, while American search behavior tended to be mostly a function of situational factors, and British search behavior was largely a function of personality characteristics.

Of greater practical interest were the unexpected differences regarding total information search between the three countries. Canadian respondents reported the highest aggregate scores, followed by American and British respondents. A potential explanation can be found in looking at the mean country scores for each type of in-store search (Table 20). British respondents in particular showed an aversion to accessing store salesclerks, and the low average score on this search index likely contributed to the lower overall index score. Recall that Dawar, Parker and Price (1996) determined that compared to American and Canadian subjects, British subjects achieved lower scores on opinion-seeking. Given the results from the current study and Dawar et al.'s study, it seems that on the whole, Britons are less inclined to utilize personal sources of information.

Since information-seeking behaviors showed substantial variation between these three culturally similar nations, it is highly probable that even greater differences exist

between culturally dissimilar nations. These findings clearly point out the need for further cross-cultural research regarding this important aspect of consumer behavior.

From a practical perspective, these findings (albeit tentative) suggest that international retailers may need to adjust the amount and types of in-store information they provide to consumers, from country to country. The findings also draw into question the applicability of standardized advertising and in-store communication strategies across even culturally similar nations. As shown in Table 12 (chapter 13), far fewer British respondents were influenced by media sources of information than either Canadians or Americans. Evidently, cross-cultural differences with respect to the influence of various media on shopping behavior represents an important area for future research.

*Objective 5—Do age and gender significantly influence the extent of information acquisition?*

In short, the answer appears to be that they do. Age and gender were found to be significant predictor variables in a number of regression analyses. In summary, the following relationships were obtained: (1) compared to men, women generally gathered more macro information (in Canada and the U.S.); (2) men were more likely than women to consult with salesclerks for advice (in Canada); and (3) compared with younger consumers, older consumers generally gathered more micro information (in Canada and the United Kingdom).

The MANCOVAs provide a more complete picture of the effects of age and gender on in-store information acquisition. With respect to gender, females appeared to be comprehensive searchers, acquiring more macro and micro information than males.

Males showed a preference for seeking salesclerk assistance. Although these differences were not statistically significant for all cases, the pattern was directionally the same in all countries. Furthermore, when the scores across the three countries were aggregated, the results were highly significant.

It is plausible to suggest that females may prefer to patronize stores that offer sufficient amounts of in-store information (including a wide variety of alternatives, and highly visible product signage and point-of-purchase displays). Men may prefer to patronize stores that have knowledgeable salesclerks available as a quick source of information. Perhaps retailers should instruct their sales personnel to immediately approach and offer men advice, while allowing women the time to consider alternatives and other information before approaching them.

The results for age, although not as clear as those obtained for gender, also suggest an interesting pattern. Relative to younger consumers, older consumers generally gathered less macro information, but a greater amount of micro information. Older consumers appear to be compensating for their difficulties in integrating large amounts of information from multiple sources (i.e., comparing brand attributes), by scrutinizing product-specific information (i.e., product packaging and manufacturer's information). Thus, stores that cater to different age groups need to ensure that they provide a balance of sufficient macro information for younger consumers and sufficient micro information for older consumers. The findings regarding age and salesclerk assistance are less clear—further research needs to explore the role that salesclerks play in providing information to young and old consumers.

<u>Limitations:</u>

In light of their complexity, international studies are fraught with a number of limitations. In the context of the present study, one major limitation concerns the differences in sample composition between the three countries. This has the double effect of reducing the degree to which the results can be externally generalized, and increases the probability that different results might have been obtained given more similar sample sets. Some of the results are also limited in terms of reliability, since certain subgroups were either under- or over-represented in each country sample set. For example, the American sample was composed of a high percentage of students, and both the American and British samples had relatively small numbers of men, as well as small numbers of individuals falling into certain age intervals. However since the samples in this study were composed of real consumers, they are an improvement over the samples of many other cross-cultural studies (which often restricted their samples to university students).

The generalizability of the results is also compromised by the low response rate among individuals sampled in the United States and the United Kingdom. Two possible explanations for the low response rate are: (1) response fatigue, and (2) the lack of any incentives for respondents to complete the questionnaire. The exploratory nature of the study, coupled with the broad scope of the search antecedent variables, necessitated that a large number of measuring items were included in the questionnaire. The higher response rate for the Canadian sample was likely due to the fact that most of the questionnaire distribution in Canada was carried out personally by the author. Consenting individuals often stated that they were happy to participate since the survey was for my thesis.

Future research of this kind should employ a shorter survey and perhaps consider providing an incentive for individuals to complete the survey.

It is possible that the use of recall data to construct the antecedents of information search behavior is somewhat limited in terms of reliability. Newman and Lockeman (1975) reported significant differences between self-reported behavior and observed behavior. In the context of the present study, considerable effort was made to minimize the errors associated with recall by selecting a purchasing event that is relatively high in consumer involvement, and also by surveying individuals soon after the actual purchase. As suggested in an earlier study by Kiel and Layton (1981), the present research could be improved methodologically by the implementation of longitudinal measures of search behavior based on observation rather than self-reports.

The results should be interpreted with caution. We cannot claim causality in the relationships because the data are correlational, not experimental. Experimental or direct observation methods would be required to properly assess causation. In addition, the derived factors were based on inter-item correlations between the independent measures, therefore it is possible that the number and compositional makeup of the factors could vary from sample to sample. It should be noted however that since the study was exploratory in nature, the resulting factors were in fact quite good in terms of reliability.

This study represents a first tentative step in assessing cross-cultural differences with respect to the informational search patterns of consumers. The next chapter provides a number of interesting avenues for future research in this important area of consumer behavior.

# CHAPTER 15

# FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Future Research Directions:

An obvious area for future research would be to include other less similar countries for comparison. Due to the methodology of the research design, as well as the phenomenon under analysis, many regions/countries cannot be studied without substantial modifications to the current measuring instrument (for example, less-developed countries, since their shopping "infrastructures" may be quite different from those in more-developed countries). Other European nations such as France, Germany or Italy, would be suitable for study with only minor changes to the measuring instrument (including translation). Further cross-cultural gift-giving research should also consider examining Oriental versus Western cultures, since the antecedents for gift purchasing in the former cultures are likely to vary in relative importance. In Japan, for example, there exists a strong tradition of reciprocation and moral obligations with respect to gift-giving (Beatty, Kahle & Homer, 1991).

When considering the application of this type of research to culturally more distant nations, it is important to note that measuring instruments (such as the one used in the current study) may have emic (culture-bound) properties as opposed to etic (culture-free) properties. Particular attention must be paid to the type and format of the measuring scales used. Yu, Keown and Jacobs' (1993) analysis of measurement scale effects across four countries (China, South Korea, Japan, and the U.S.) revealed significant main effects attributable to country and type of scale used (Likert and semantic differential).

The present research did not specifically consider the need for a gift to be unique. Sherry and McGrath (1989) as well as Wolfinbarger (1990) have suggested that uniqueness is a symbol that is commonly attached to gifts. In the context of the present study, future research should incorporate specific measures of "gift uniqueness" and attempt to ascertain whether this specific motivation is differentially important across cultures.

Future research should extend the methodology of the current study to determine whether cross-cultural differences affect other gift-giving occasions, such as birthdays, weddings, and other annual holidays (such as Mother's Day, etc.). Other non-gift purchasing "events" for future cross-cultural or international studies might include: (1) the purchase of an expensive, complex product (such as an automobile); and (2) the purchase of a consumer durable (e.g., appliances, home entertainment systems, etc.). These purchasing events represent sufficiently complex situations that would require a certain level of involvement on the part of the consumer, as well as a degree of comprehensive search. Additionally, purchasing situations of these types are likely to be encountered in many cultures, and for large proportions of the populations under study (e.g., across age groups, genders, etc.).

In my opinion, one important culture differential domain that was excluded from earlier work by Hofstede and others (see Appendix 1) was time orientation. As stated by Hall (1983), western cultures are characterized as having a monochronic (or linear-separable) time orientation (characterized by schedules, time as a fixed resource that can be saved or wasted, doing one thing at a time, etc.). Other cultures (for example, Mediterranean Europe, South American countries, and the Middle-East) are described as

having a polychronic time orientation (characterized by doing many things at once, less concern for schedules or time itself, etc.). Since situational variables such as time pressure are posited to negatively influence the extent of information search, it would be interesting to determine whether individuals in polychronic-time oriented cultures are less affected by this situational circumstance. In addition to incorporating the culture-specific measures derived by Hofstede (1980) and/or other researchers, future research of this kind should attempt to assess the specific time orientation of the cultures under analysis (as an additional possible explanatory variable).

As many researchers have acknowledged, because of the difficulty of measuring extent of search, the development of measures of external information search remains a high priority (Schmidt & Spreng, 1996). Clearly, more research needs to be conducted in order to develop reliable and valid measures of search that can be applied with minimal modifications to different cultures.


Conclusions:

This research is among the most comprehensive cross-cultural assessment of information search strategies conducted by consumers. The findings obtained in this study strongly suggest that information search strategies differ from country-to-country, between males and females, and various age groups. Given the exploratory nature of the study, confirmatory research is required before the results can be externally generalized.

International advertisers and retailers should resist the temptation to directly apply communication strategies that have been primarily developed in the United States to different cultures. Since information is more ubiquitous than ever before, it is

increasingly important that consumers be given quality information, in the proper format, and at the right time.

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# APPENDIX 1

## English Measuring Instrument

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**We are very interested in learning about your Christmas shopping behavior. Please answer the following questions, for the most recent Christmas gift of <u>CLOTHING</u> that you bought for a particular recipient.**

**Did you purchase a clothing gift for someone this Christmas?** \_\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_\_No
(if you answered no, please disregard this questionnaire)

## PART 1

For WHOM was the clothing gift intended (relationship to you: for example, spouse, son/daughter, friend)? _____

Was the clothing gift from JOINT GIVERS (e.g., from both you and your spouse/partner)?
Yes_____ No_____

How much did the clothing gift COST (tax included) to the nearest dollar? $_____

Approximately how much TIME did you spend in the store where you purchased the clothing gift?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-5 minutes_____ | 11-15 minutes_____ | 31-60 minutes_____ |
| 6-10 minutes_____ | 16-30 minutes_____ | 60+ minutes_____ |

How MANY people did you buy presents for this past Christmas? _____ People

Approximately how much did you personally SPEND on all gifts you purchased this past Christmas? (include your share of any gifts you gave with another person)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| $ 0-$199_____ | $400-$499_____ | $700-$799_____ |
| $200-$299_____ | $500-$599_____ | $800-$899_____ |
| $300-$399_____ | $600-$699_____ | $900+ _____ |

Approximately when did you START shopping for gifts this past Christmas?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____August or earlier | _____November 1-15 | _____December 1-15 |
| _____September | _____November 16-30 | _____December 16-25 |
| _____October | | |

In total, approximately how many separate STORES did you visit while shopping for this particular clothing gift?
0-1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____ 6+_____

Approximately how many separate Christmas shopping TRIPS did you make this past Christmas season?
None_____ 1-3_____ 4-6_____ 7-9_____ 10-12_____ 13+_____

The TYPE of store where I purchased the clothing gift is best described as a (please choose only one):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____department store | _____chain specialty store | _____other |
| _____discount department store | _____local independent store/boutique | |

In choosing your clothing gift, were you influenced by any of the following ADVERTISEMENTS or SOURCES OF INFORMATION?

| | |
|---|---|
| _____television /radio advertisement(s) | _____the internet (world-wide-web) |
| _____retailer's catalogue /advertising circular (flyer) | _____newspaper / magazine advertisement(s) |
| _____other (please specify:_____) | |

**Please circle the answer which best described your situation when shopping for this particular clothing gift for this particular recipient.**

|  | strongly disagree | | | | | | | | | strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

The recipient gave me a list to choose from                              1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I had a definite budget in mind before shopping for this clothing gift      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I felt rushed while Christmas shopping for this clothing item               1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I knew exactly what to buy for this recipient                              1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have one or two favorite stores that I shop in for this type of clothing   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
item

I anticipated receiving a Christmas gift from the person that I bought
this clothing gift for.                                                    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I will not like the consequences if the recipient does not like the clothing
gift                                                                       1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This clothing gift was very expensive                                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am not very familiar with this type of clothing                          1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I got ideas for the clothing gift from other people (not the recipient)     1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

In choosing this clothing gift, I took into account the personality of
the recipient.                                                             1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I had everything decided about this garment before I got to the store       1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I devoted considerable time and energy in choosing this clothing gift       1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

There was a large selection of gifts I could have bought for this recipient  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The pricing of items in this store was easy to find                        1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The signs in this store were very helpful                                  1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It is very important that I get just the right gift for this recipient      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was concerned about what other people would think about the clothing
gift                                                                       1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When I was Christmas shopping for this clothing item, I was really
pressed for time                                                          1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Money was no object for this particular clothing gift                      1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I bought this clothing gift as a means of expressing my affection for the
recipient                                                                 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The clothing gift was reflective of the recipient's personality. 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I had no idea what I was going to get as a gift for this person before I
started shopping 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Store sales personnel helped me in making the choice of a clothing gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have never bought gifts for this recipient before 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I felt pressed for time when I was shopping for this particular gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I consulted others for ideas before shopping for this clothing gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The cost of the actual gift exceeded my budget for it 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

This recipient is easy to buy gifts for 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I have bought this type of clothing often in the past 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I like to devote considerable time when making a product choice such as
this 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

While I was shopping in the store, I consulted with a friend in choosing
this clothing gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

There were many brands to choose from once I had decided what to buy
for this recipient 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I felt quite knowledgeable about this clothing type before I
began shopping for the gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The budget for this gift of clothing was higher than I usually set for other
gifts 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I bought this item from a list given to me by the recipient 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It is especially risky to buy gifts for this recipient 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often shop at the store where I bought this clothing gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It was very easy to shop around and compare other similar clothing
items 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The salesclerks in the store were readily available if I needed any help 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

There was not enough time to get all of my Christmas shopping done 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was reluctant to exceed my budget for this gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I was shopping with someone else who helped me in choosing this
clothing gift 　1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Before making my final selection for this clothing gift, I....

|  | strongly disagree | | | | | | | | strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| asked store sales personnel for assistance about this clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| spent a lot of time comparing the brands of clothing items in the store | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| checked all the prices of clothing items very carefully | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| read all the signs around the display area of clothing items | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| walked around the store looking at the display of all the clothing merchandise | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| received a lot of help from the salesclerk on this clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| very carefully read the manufacturer's label of this clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| carefully examined the feel (texture) of the clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| very carefully examined the packaging information of this clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| tried to get as much information as possible in the store about this clothing item | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| looked at all the items in the display area where I bought the clothing gift | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |

## If you have children, please indicate your agreement with the following questions. If not, please skip to the next section.

|  | strongly disagree | | | | | | | | strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| My children are the most important thing in my life. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| I take a lot of time and effort to teach my children good habits. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| I try to arrange my home for my children's convenience. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| When my children are ill in bed, I drop everything else to see to their comfort. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |

## PART II
**The following statements describe some attitudes, opinions, and interests. Please read through each and circle how strongly you personally agree or disagree with it.**

|                                                                                                      | *strongly disagree* |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | *strongly agree* |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|:---:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:-:|:---:|
| I love the Christmas Season                                                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I am strongly attached to all the Christmas traditions                                               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| In general, I enjoy spending time browsing while shopping                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I have little or no interest in shopping                                                             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| A person can save a lot of money by shopping around for bargains                                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Prior to shopping, I check all the newspapers and magazines for gift ideas and prices                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Store brand clothing items are as good as nationally advertised clothing brands                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| The brands of goods that I buy make very little difference to me.                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Higher-priced clothing items are generally of a higher quality                                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Generally speaking, I am not a particularly knowledgeable shopper                                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I sometimes influence what my friends buy                                                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| When I see a new brand on the shelf, I often buy it                                                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style                                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| When I must choose between dressing for fashion or comfort, I choose the former                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I feel that there is a risk in shopping at stores other than the ones I am familiar with             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I often give Christmas gifts that help to shape the recipient's personality                          | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Price is the last thing I consider when I am buying a gift                                           | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| I would feel really bad if I bought someone a gift that they did not like                            | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| When shopping for Christmas gifts, I generally bring a shopping list with me                         | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

I often buy people Christmas gifts because I know they are buying
    one for me

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

The brand name is a very important factor in selecting a clothing item

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Christmas is my favorite time of the year

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

When it comes to Christmas, I follow all the traditional customs
    of the season

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I like to try new and different things

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My friends and/or neighbors often come to me for advice

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I visited a number of stores while shopping for this clothing gift

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I watch carefully the people I am buying gifts for, to see what they would
    really like

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

In general, I don't worry about getting the best deal when I go
    shopping

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I like to be considered a leader

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am more independent than most people

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Shopping is one of my least favorite activities

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I need to look at all the available product choices if I am to tell which is
    the best one

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I usually bring someone with me to help me pick out Christmas gifts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If an item is too expensive, I will not buy it as a gift

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

People come to me more often than I go to them for information
    on brands

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I do not buy brands that I have never tried before

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

An important part of my life and activities is dressing smartly

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often give Christmas gifts to people in order to reinforce some aspects
    of their identity

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

If I expect to receive a gift from someone, it is important that I also
    purchase a gift for that person.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

|  | strongly disagree | | | | | | | | strongly agree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

I often worry about what can happen if I buy a Christmas gift for someone and they do not like it

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am willing to spend more money for a gift the recipient will really like

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I usually end up buying the same brand over and over

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I feel there is a risk in choosing clothing brands other than the ones that I am familiar with.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I feel I can judge quality differences between different clothing brands

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I always stick to my budget when buying gifts for others

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I think I possess more self-confidence than most people

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

In general, I shop a lot for "specials" or discounts

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It is important to get gifts that people will enjoy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I like to put a lot of thought into the gifts I buy

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often feel that I run a high risk of buying someone a Christmas gift they will not like

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often give Christmas presents as a way to show family and friends that I want to be close to them

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I conduct a lot of research about what the person would enjoy before I go shopping at Christmas

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Store brands provide good value for what I pay

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I look forward to Christmas every year

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

It is important to get into the Christmas spirit by participating in the season's traditional activities

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I love to shop year round

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often use coupons when shopping for household items

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I feel I can obtain the lowest price by shopping extensively

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I often try new brands before my friends and neighbors do

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I am willing to spend more time shopping in order to find bargains

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I would not feel guilty if someone gave me a Christmas present and I did not give them one in return

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## PART III
## Please complete the following :

You consider yourself to be:

_____anglophone                              _____francophone

_____allophone (other than English or French, please specify:_____)

You are:                    female_____              male_____

Your age is:

          0-19 years_____            30-39 years_____           50-59years_____

          20-29 years_____           40-49 years_____           60 + years_____

You are:           single  _____           separated / divorced  _____

                widowed _____            married / living together _____

Your gross annual household income is:

_____$    0-$9 999            _____$30 000-$39 999          _____$60 000-$69 999

_____$10 000-$19 999         _____$40 000-$49 999          _____$70 000-$79 999

_____$20 000-$29 999         _____$50 000-$59 999          _____$80 000-$89 999

                                                                      _____$90 000+

The size of your family is:

_____ 1          _____ 2          _____ 3          _____ 4          _____ 5          _____6+

If you have children living at home, what is the age of the youngest child?  _____years

What is your place of birth?

_____Quebec                _____Elsewhere in Canada

_____Europe                _____The United States

_____Other (please specify:_____)

Please indicate your highest level of education attained:

_____ elementary school

_____ high school

_____ community college/ CEGEP / technical school / diploma

_____ undergraduate (bachelor's) university degree

_____ graduate (master's, or higher) university degree

What is your employment status (please choose the **one that best describes you**):

_____ work full time (30 or more hours per week)

_____ work part time (less than 30 hours per week)

_____ retired / pensioned

_____ full time student

_____ student / work part time

_____ unemployed

_____ homemaker

_____ homemaker / work part time

## THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP.

# APPENDIX 2

## French Measuring Instrument

**Nous sommes très intéressés à connaître vos habitudes lors de vos achats de cadeaux de Noël. Veuillez SVP répondre aux questions suivantes, pour un cadeau VESTIMENTAIRE que vous avez acheté pour une personne particulière.**

**Avez-vous acheté un vêtement en cadeau pour quelqu'un ce Noël?** \_\_\_\_Oui \_\_\_\_Non
(si votre réponse est négative, s.v.p. ignorez ce questionnaire)

## PARTIE I

Le cadeau a été acheté à l'intention de:(relation familiale, ami(e), etc...)_____

Le cadeau a été <u>donné</u> par plus d'une personne: _____Oui \_\_\_\_\_Non

Ce cadeau a <u>coûté</u> combien (taxes incluses)? _____

Combien de TEMPS approximativement avez-vous passé dans le magasin où vous avez acheté ce vêtement pour donner en cadeau?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 0-5 minutes_____ | 11-15 minutes_____ | 31-60 minutes_____ |
| 6-10 minutes_____ | 16-30 minutes_____ | 60+ minutes_____ |

Pour combien de PERSONNES avez-vous acheté des cadeaux de Noël cette année?
_____personne(s)

Environ combien avez-VOUS dépensé pour tous les cadeaux de Noël que vous avez achetés cette année? (inclure votre part si vous avez fait des cadeaux avec une autre personne)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| $ 0-$199_____ | $400-$499_____ | $700-$799_____ |
| $200-$299_____ | $500-$599_____ | $800-$899_____ |
| $300-$399_____ | $600-$699_____ | $900+ _____ |

Quand avez-vous COMMENCÉ à faire les achats pour Noël cette année?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____Août ou avant | _____Novembre 1-15 | _____Décembre 1-15 |
| _____Septembre | _____Novembre 16-30 | _____Décembre 16-25 |
| _____Octobre | | |

Au total, approximativement combien de différents MAGASINS avez-vous visités pour acheter ce vêtement à donner en cadeau?

0-1_____ 2_____ 3_____ 4_____ 5_____ 6+_____

Environ combien de FOIS êtes-vous allé(e) magasiner pour des cadeaux de Noël cette année?

0_____ 1-3_____ 4-6_____ 7-9_____ 10-12_____ 13+_____

Le TYPE DE MAGASIN où j'ai acheté le cadeau est mieux décrit comme (choisir une seule réponse s.v.p.):

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| _____magasin à rayons | _____magasin à chaîne spécialisé | _____autre |
| _____magasin à rabais | _____magasin local indépendent / boutique | |

En choisissant votre cadeau, avez-vous été influencé(e) par une PUBLICITÉ ou SOURCES D'INFORMATION suivantes?

| | |
|---|---|
| _____publicité: à la radio / télévision | _____internet (world-wide-web) |
| _____catalogue / dépliant publicitaire du détaillant | _____publicité dans les revues / journaux |
| _____autres (s.v.p. spécifiez:_____) | |

**SVP encerclez votre degré d'accord ou de désaccord avec les énoncés suivants en décrivant votre situation quand vous choisissiez ce cadeau vestimentaire, pour cette personne.**

|  | entièrement en désaccord | | | | | | | | entièrement d'accord | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Cette personne m'a donné une liste de cadeaux pour elle.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'avais un budget précis avant d'aller magasiner pour ce cadeau vestimentaire.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je me suis sentie pressée lorsque j'ai magasiné pour ce vêtement.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je savais exactement quoi acheter pour cette personne.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai un ou deux magasins préférés où je magasine pour ce type de vêtement
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je m'attendais à recevoir un cadeau de Noël de la personne pour qui j'ai acheté ce vêtement en cadeau.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je ne serais pas très heureux(se) si cette personne n'aimait pas ce cadeau vestimentaire.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Le cadeau vestimentaire que j'ai acheté était très cher.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je ne connais pas tout à fait ce type de vêtement.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D'autres personnes (et non cette personne) m'ont donné des idées de cadeaux.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

En choisissant ce vêtement en cadeau, j'ai tenu compte de la personalité du récipiendaire.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'avais tout décidé concernant ce vêtement avant d'aller au magasin.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai dépensé énormement de temps et d'énergie à choisir ce cadeau vestimentaire.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il y avait un grand choix de cadeaux que j'aurais pu acheter pour cette personne.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Les prix dans le magasin ont été faciles à trouver.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Les panneaux dans le magasin m'ont aidé à faire mon choix.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il est très important que je trouve le cadeau idéal pour cette personne.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je m'inquiétais de ce que les autres personnes penseraient de ce vêtement donné en cadeau.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Lorsque je faisais mon magasinage de Noël pour ce vêtement, j'étais vraiment à cours de temps.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

En choisissant ce vêtement, le prix n'avait aucune importance.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai acheté ce vêtement en cadeau pour démontrer mon affection au récipiendaire.
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Le vêtement donné en cadeau réflétait la personalité du récipiendaire. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je n'avait aucune idée quel cadeau à acheter pour cette personne avant de commencer à magasiner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Le commis du magasin m'a aidé à choisir ce cadeau vestimentaire. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je n'ai jamais acheté de cadeau pour cette personne auparavant. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'étais très pressé(e) quand je choisissais ce vêtement. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai consulté les autres pour avoir des idées avant de magasiner pour ce vêtement. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Le coût réel de ce vêtement a dépassé mon budget initial. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Acheter des cadeaux pour cette personne est très facile. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai souvent acheté ce genre de vêtement dans le passé. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'aime prendre beaucoup de temps lorsque je dois faire le choix d'un cadeau semblable. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Dans le magasin, j'ai consulté un(e) ami(e) avant de choisir ce vêtement 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il y avait plusieurs marques à choisir lorsque j'avais décidé quoi acheter pour cette personne. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'étais bien informé sur ce type de vêtement avant de commencer à magasiner pour ce cadeau. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Le budget pour ce cadeau vestimentaire était plus éléve que mon budget normal pour les autres cadeaux de Noël. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai acheté ce vêtement parce qu'il se trouvait sur la liste que cette personne m'avait donnée. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

C'est assez risqué d'acheter des cadeaux pour cette personne en particulier. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Habituellement je magasine dans le même magasin où j'ai acheté ce cadeau vestimentaire. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

C'était très facile de magasiner et de comparer d'autres vêtements similaires. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Les vendeurs(euses) du magasin étaient disponibles si j'avais besoin d'une aide quelconque. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il n'y a jamais assez de temps pour faire tous mes achats de Noël. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'étais peu disposé(e) a dépasser mon budget pour ce cadeau. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai magasiné avec quelqu'un d'autre qui m'a aidé à choisir ce vêtement. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## Avant de faire mon choix final pour ce vêtement, j'ai....

|  | entièrement en désaccord | | | | | | | entièrement d'accord | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| demandé l'assistance du commis concernant ce type de vêtement. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| passé beaucoup de temps à comparer les marques et les autres vêtements dans le magasin. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| examiné avec soin tous les prix. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| lu tous les panneaux près de l'endroit où j'ai acheté le cadeau. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| fait le tour du magasin en regardant toute la marchandise disponible. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| reçu beaucoup d'aide du (de la) vendeur(euse). | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| lu avec soin l'étiquette du manufacturier. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| examiné attentivement la texture de ce type de vêtement. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| lu avec soin l'information sur l'emballage. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| essayé d'obtenir le plus d'information possible dans le magasin sur ce vêtement. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| regardé tous les produits situés a l'endroit même où j'ai acheté ce cadeau. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |

**Si vous avez des enfants**, veuillez SVP indiquer votre degré d'accord ou de désaccord avec les énoncés suivants. Sinon, allez à la partie suivante.

|  | entièrement en désaccord | | | | | | | entièrement d'accord | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mes enfants sont ce qu'il y a de plus important dans ma vie. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Je dédie beaucoup de temps et d'effort à apprendre à mes enfants de bonnes habitudes. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| J'essaie de rendre ma maison commode à mes enfants. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |
| Lorsque mes enfants sont malades, je m'occupe en priorité de leur comfort. | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | | | | | | | |

## PARTIE II

**Les phrases suivantes décrivent quelques attitudes et opinions. SVP indiquer votre degré d'accord ou de désaccord avec chaque énoncé.**

|  | entièrement en désaccord | | | | | | | | entièrement d'accord | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| J'aime beaucoup la période de Noël. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Je suis fortement attaché(e) a toutes les traditions de Noël. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| En général, j'aime prendre mon temps lorsque je magasine. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| J'ai peu ou aucun intérêt dans le magasinage. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| On peut épargner beaucoup d'argent si on recherche des aubaines. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Avant de magasiner, je vérifie tous les journaux et revues afin d'obtenir des idées et les prix des cadeaux. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Les marques vestimentaires du magasin sont aussi bonnes que les marques populaires. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Les marques des produits que j'achète font peu de différence pour moi. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Les vêtements à prix plus élevé sont généralement de qualité supérieure. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| En généralement, je ne suis pas un acheteur bien informé. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Parfois j'influence le choix de mes amis. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Quand je vois un nouvel article sur les tablettes, je l'achète souvent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Habituellement, je possède au moins un vêtement à la mode. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Si je dois choisir de m'habiller soit à la mode, soit pour le confort, je choisis plutôt de m'habiller à la mode. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Je trouve qu'il y a un risque de magasiner dans des boutiques autres que celles dont je suis familière. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Je donne souvent des cadeaux de Noël pour influencer la personalité des personnes qui les reçoivent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Je considère le prix en dernier quand j'achète un cadeau. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Je serais désolé(e) si j'avais acheté un cadeau que la personne n'aime pas. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Lorsque je magasine pour des cadeaux de Noël, en général j'apporte une liste avec moi. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

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Souvent, j'achète des cadeaux de Noel aux personnes
particulières parce que je sais qu'elles vont m'en offrir un.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

La marque de manufacturier est un facteur très important dans le
choix d'un vêtement.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Noël est la periode de l'année que j'aime le plus.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

A Noël, je participe à toutes les traditions de la saison.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

J'aime essayer des choses nouvelles et différentes.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Mes amis et mes voisins me demandent souvent des conseils.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

J'ai visité un grand nombre de magasins lorsque j'ai magasiné
pour ce cadeau vestimentaire.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

J'observe avec soin le comportement des personnes pour qui
j'achète des cadeaux poir voir ce qu'elles aimeraient vraiment.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

En général, je ne me préoccupe pas d'obtenir la meilleure offre
lorsque je vais magasiner.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

J'aime être considéré(e) un "leader".

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Je suis plus indépendent(e) que la plupart des gens.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Magasiner c'est une activitée que j'aime le moins.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

J'ai besoin de regarder tous les choix disponibles avant que je puisse
dire quel est le meilleure achat.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Je magasine souvent avec une autre personne pour m'aider
à choisir les cadeaux de Noël.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Si un produit est trop cher, je ne l'achète pas comme cadeau.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Ça arrive plus souvent que les gens viennent me demander des
renseignements sur des produits plutôt que l'inverse.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Je n'achète pas des marques que je n'ai jamais essayées auparavant.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Etre vêtu(e) élégamment constitue un aspect très important
de ma vie et de mes activités.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Je donne souvent des cadeaux de Noël à des gens pour
renforcer un aspect de leurs personalités.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Si je prevois recevoir un cadeau de quelqu'un, c'est important
que j'achète un cadeau pour cette personne en retour.

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Je m'inquiète beaucoup des réactions de la personne si je lui
    achète un cadeau de Noël qu'elle n'aime pas.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je suis prêt(e) à payer plus cher pour un cadeau que la
    personne va vraiment aimer.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Par habitude j'achète toujours la même marque de produits
    courants.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai l'impression qu'il y a un risque de choisir une marque de
    de vêtement autre que celles dont je suis familière.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je trouve que je peux apprécier la difference de qualité entre
    différentes marques de vêtements.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je respecte toujours mon budget quand j'achète des cadeaux.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je pense que j'ai plus de confiance en moi que la plupart des
    gens.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je magasine beaucoup pour profiter des prix spéciaux.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il est important d'acheter des cadeaux qui vont faire plaisir
    aux gens.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'aime beaucoup réflechir aux cadeaux que j'achète.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je sens souvent qu'il y a un grand risque d'acheter un cadeau
    de Noël que la personne ne va pas aimer.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je donne souvent des cadeaux de Noël pour montrer à ma famille et
    mes amis que je me sens proche d'eux.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je fais beaucoup de recherches sur ce que la personne aimerait
    recevoir avant d'aller magasiner pour un cadeau de Noël.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Les marques maison procurent un bon rapport qualité-prix.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Chaque année j'ai hâte que Noël arrive.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Il est important de se mettre dans l'esprit de Noël en participant
    à toutes les activités traditionnelles de la fête.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'aime magasiner pendant toute l'année.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'utilise souvent des coupons quand je magasine pour des
    articles ménagers.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J'ai l'impression que je peux obtenir le meilleure prix en
    magasinant beaucoup.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Très souvent, j'essaie de nouvelles marques avant que mes
    amis ou voisins le fassent.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je suis prêt(e) a magasiner davantage pour trouver des
    aubaines.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Je ne me sentirais pas coupable si quelqu'un m'offre un cadeau
    de Noël et que je ne lui en offrirait un en retour.    1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

## **PARTIE III**

Je me considère:

_____francophone _____anglophone _____allophone (spécifier:_____)

Êtes-vous? _____femme _____homme

Votre âge est:

0-19 ans_____ 30-39 ans_____ 50-59ans_____
20-29 ans_____ 40-49 ans_____ 60 + ans_____

Êtes-vous? _____célibatire _____séparé(e) / divorcé(e)
_____veuf(ve) _____marié(e) ou l'équivalent

Veuillez SVP indiquer le revenu total brut de votre famille:

_____$ 0-$9 999 _____$30 000-$39 999 _____$60 000-$69 999
_____$10 000-$19 999 _____$40 000-$49 999 _____$70 000-$79 999
_____$20 000-$29 999 _____$50 000-$59 999 _____$80 000-$89 999
_____$90 000+

Combien de personnes y-a-t'il dans votre famille?

_____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____6+

Si vous avez des enfants demeurent avec vous, quel est l'âge du plus jeune? _____ans

Où êtes-vous né(e)?

_____Québec _____Autre province dans le Canada
_____Europe _____États-Unis
_____Autre (s.v.p. spécifiez:_____)

Veuillez SVP indiquer votre niveau le plus élevé de scolarité:

_____école élémentaire
_____école secondaire
_____diplôme du CEGEP / école téchnique / collège
_____diplôme d'université, premier cycle (baccalauréat)
_____diplôme d'université, deuxième ou troisième cycle

Concernant votre situation d'emploi, est que vous... (s.v.p. choisir celle qui vous décrit le mieux):

_____travaillez à temps plein (30 heures ou plus par semaine)
_____travaillez à temps partiel (moins de 30 heures par semaine)
_____êtes retraité ou pensionné
_____êtes étudiant(e)
_____êtes étudiant(e) / travaillez à temps partiel
_____êtes en chômage
_____au foyer (êtes ménagère)
_____au foyer / travaillez à temps partiel

# **MERCI BEAUCOUP DE VOTRE PARTICIPATION.**

## APPENDIX 3: COUNTRY MODIFICATIONS TO
## SURVEY INSTRUMENT (ENGLISH VERSION)

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|

*i.* *Approximately how much did you personally spend on all gifts you purchased this past Christmas? (include your share of any gifts you gave with another person).*

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
| $ 0-$199___ $200-$299___ $300-$399___ $400-$499___ $500-$599___ $600-$699___ $700-$799___ $800-$899___ $900+ ___ (*$CAN*) | £ 0-£ 89___ £ 90-£129___ £130-£179___ £180-£219___ £220-£259___ £260-£299___ £300-£339___ £340-£379___ £380+ ___ (*£ Sterling*) | $ 0-$139___ $140-$209___ $210-$279___ $280-$349___ $350-$419___ $420-$489___ $490-$559___ $560-$629___ $630+ ___ (*$US*) |

*ii.* *Your gross annual household income is.*

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
| __$ 0-$9,999<br>__$10,000-$19,999<br>__$20,000-$29,999<br>__$30,000-$39,999<br>__$40,000-$49,999<br>__$50,000-$59,999<br>__$60,000-$69,999<br>__$70,000-$79,999<br>__$80,000-$89,999<br>__$90,000+ (*$CAN*) | __£ 0- £2 999<br>__£3 000-£ 6 999<br>__£ 7 000-£10 999<br>__£11 000-£14 999<br>__£15 000-£18 999<br>__£19 000-£22 999<br>__£23 000-£26 999<br>__£27 000-£30 999<br>__£31 000-£34 999<br>__£35 000+ (*£ Sterling*) | __$ 0-$6,999<br>__$ 7,000-$13,999<br>__$14,000-$20,999<br>__$21,000-$27,999<br>__$28,000-$34,999<br>__$35,000-$41,999<br>__$42,000-$48,999<br>__$49,000-$55,999<br>__$56,000-$62,999<br>__$63,000+ (*$US*) |

*iii.* *You consider yourself to be:* ___anglophone ___francophone ___allophone

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
| As above. | N/A, did not appear | N/A, did not appear |

*iv.* *What is your place of birth?*
___Québec ___Elsewhere in Canada ___Europe
___The United States ___Other (please specify:_____)

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
| As above. | N/A, did not appear. | N/A, did not appear. |

*v.* *Please indicate your highest level of education attained.*

| Canada | United Kingdom | United States |
|--------|----------------|---------------|
| __elementary school<br>__high school<br>__community college/<br>CEGEP/technical school/<br>diploma | __minimum school leaving age (currently16)without qualification<br>__minimum school leaving age (currently16)with qualification<br>__upper school leaving age (currently 18 in England) without qualification<br>__ upper school leaving age (currently 18 in England) with qualification<br>advanced further education (e.g. HNC, HND)<br>__undergraduate (bachelor's/ Dip. H.E.) degree<br>__graduate (postgraduate diploma, master's, or higher) degree<br>__other, professional qualification | Same as Canada |

# APPENDIX 4: FACTOR MEANS

| Factor: | Factor means: | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Canada: | U.S.A.: | U.K.: | Overall: |
| Availability of information | 7.16 | 7.99 | 7.23 | 7.46 |
| Budget-minded | 5.68 | 6.09 | 6.03 | 5.88 |
| Importance of children | 9.06 | 8.45 | 7.89 | 8.76 |
| Shopping companion | 3.68 | 4.73 | 3.32 | 3.98 |
| Purchasing self-confidence | 6.10 | 5.78 | 5.85 | 5.91 |
| Costly gift | 4.47 | 4.19 | 4.25 | 4.34 |
| Difficult recipient | 4.26 | 3.74 | 4.07 | 4.05 |
| Product/store familiarity | 6.20 | 7.06 | 6.40 | 6.53 |
| Fashion conscious | 5.88 | 6.06 | 5.26 | 5.85 |
| Identity shaper | 5.30 | 6.00 | 4.78 | 5.46 |
| Leader | 6.39 | 7.05 | 5.57 | 6.49 |
| Shopping list | 3.97 | 3.97 | 3.60 | 3.91 |
| Brand/store loyal shopper | 4.87 | 4.79 | 3.97 | 4.70 |
| Macro information search | 5.52 | 5.62 | 5.13 | 5.49 |
| Micro information search | 5.15 | 4.11 | 4.75 | 4.73 |
| Predetermined gift selection | 6.23 | 5.79 | 6.03 | 6.05 |
| Reciprocal purchase | 5.49 | 6.79 | 6.88 | 6.16 |
| Salesclerk help | 4.01 | 3.37 | 2.71 | 3.58 |
| Good selection | 6.04 | 5.97 | 5.70 | 5.96 |
| Enjoyment of shopping | 6.71 | 7.28 | 7.07 | 6.96 |
| Symbolic gift | 8.00 | 7.90 | 7.98 | 7.96 |
| Thoughtful giver | 7.54 | 7.31 | 7.04 | 7.38 |
| Time pressure | 4.14 | 3.91 | 4.10 | 4.06 |
| Traditional Xmas lover | 6.95 | 8.19 | 6.27 | 7.27 |
| Value seeker | 5.81 | 6.32 | 5.43 | 5.92 |