

**IN-STORE INFORMATION SEARCH STRATEGIES
PERTAINING TO A CHRISTMAS GIFT PURCHASE**

Elizabeth Browne

A Thesis
In
The Faculty
of
Commerce and Administration

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science in Administration at
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

August 1996

© Elizabeth Browne, 1996



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file *Voire référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-612-18376-9

Canada

ABSTRACT

In-Store Information Search Strategies Pertaining to

A Christmas Gift Purchase

Elizabeth Browne

This study examines consumers' usage of in-store information sources while Christmas gift shopping. Psychographic, demographic and situational variables were tested using partial correlations, t-tests, ANOVAs, and regression analyses. These included personal characteristics including gender and culture, the giver-recipient relationship, perceived risk, time pressure, external search effort, and the gift's budget and cost. A self administered survey was distributed to a sample of English and French respondents in the greater Montreal area. Significant relationships were found between in-store information search effort and several psychographic and demographic variables, product familiarity, time pressure, difficult recipients, the importance of the relationship, and the budget. Exploratory factor analysis revealed three distinct types of in-store search: general search, specific search, and sales clerk usage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To my son, Shane, for riding in the carriage on cold nights in January distributing surveys, and for putting life into perspective;

To my husband, Tirdad Shariati, for enduring evenings and week-ends with an absent or distracted wife;

To my parents, Jan and Dave Browne, for your help and support with the research; and to my siblings, Kim and Jamie, for adding levity;

To Isabelle Miodek, for your invaluable guidance and assistance with this research, to my committee members, for your help throughout the process, and to the anonymous respondents, for giving your time to answer the survey:

Thank you all very much.

The Husband

I need a very special gift,
And I need it now, if you catch my drift.
So show me something right away
That'll be a hit on Christmas day.
I don't have time to stop and read
The price is all I really need.
If I were a woman and I liked to shop
I'm sure I'd take the time to stop.
But it's Christmas Eve, so here's the thing:
My wife is expecting a sapphire ring.
I need your help to pick one out.
You'll know what's best, I have no doubt.

Yes that'll do just fine, I'm sure.
And I need it wrapped -- that's important to her.

Well, that's my Christmas shopping done.
Thanks a lot; I gotta run!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF TABLES	xi
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Overview	1
(i) Economic Significance	1
(ii) Social Significance	2
(iii) Purpose of This Study	3
B. Problem Statement and Objectives	4
C. Practical and Theoretical Importance	5
II. LITERATURE REVIEW	7
A. Models of Gift-Giving	7
(i) Bagozzi's Exchange System	7
(ii) Belk's Model of Balance in Gift-Giving	8
(iii) Bank's Interactive Gift-Giving Paradigm	9
(iv) Sherry's Model of the Gift Exchange Process	10
(v) A Model of Gift Selection Strategies by Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey	13
(vi) Otnes' Model of Search Strategy Selection During Christmas	17
B. The Proposed Model of Gift Purchase Information Search	18

Chapter	Page
II. C. Motivations for Gift-Giving	22
(i) Altruism	22
(ii) Economic Motivations	23
(iii) Obligation, Norms, and Socialization	26
(iv) Social Exchange	27
(v) Communication	28
(vi) The Christmas Occasion	31
D. Situational Variables Impacting Information Search	32
(i) Perceived Risk and Task Involvement	32
(ii) Time Pressure	36
(iii) Pre-determined Gift Selection	38
(iv) The Giver-Recipient Relationship	40
(v) Product Familiarity	42
(vi) Gift-Giving Experience	43
E. Psychographic and Demographic Variables	44
(i) Psychographic Variables	44
(ii) Demographic Variables	45
(iii) Gender	46
(iv) Culture	48
F. External Search	50
G. In-Store Information Sources	52
H. Research Questions and Hypotheses	54
 III. RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN	 61
A. Research Design	61
C. The Sample	63
D. Survey Instrument	64
E. Administration of the Survey	67

Chapter	Page
IV RESULTS	71
A. Factor Analysis	71
(i) Method	71
(ii) Psychographic Factors	72
(iii) Situational Factors	74
(iv) In-Store Information Search Effort Factors	77
B. Descriptive Statistics	79
(i) Age	79
(ii) Gender	81
(iii) Marital Status	81
(iv) Education	81
(v) Occupation and Employment Status	81
(vi) Income	82
(vii) Family Size and Age of the Youngest Child	82
(viii) Giver-Receiver Relationship Variables	82
(ix) Cost	83
(x) The 1994 Christmas Season	83
(xi) Summary	83
C. Partial Correlations	85
(i) The Giver-Recipient Relationship: H1 to H4	85
(ii) Time Pressure: H5	88
(iii) Cost of the Gift: H6	89
(iv) Product Familiarity: H7	89
(v) Help from a Companion: H8	90
(vi) Prior External Information Search: H9	90
(vii) The Store Environment: H10 and H11	91
(viii) Gender: H12	92

Chapter	Page
IV. D. Regression Analysis	93
(i) Method	93
(ii) Results	96
(a) General information search among English respondents	96
(b) General information search among French respondents	98
(c) Specific information search among English respondents	100
(d) Specific information search among French respondents	101
(e) Sales clerk usage among English respondents	102
(f) Sales clerk usage among French respondents	103
(g) Summary	104
 V. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION	 106
A. The Dependent Variable	106
B. Examination of Hypotheses	106
(i) Mixed Results Regarding Same Gender	107
(ii) Less General In-Store Search for Difficult People	109
(iii) Relationship Closeness Has No Impact	110
(iv) Salience of Relationship Affects In-Store Search	110
(v) Time Pressure Affects In-Store Search Effort	112
(vi) Increased In-Store Search for Costly Gifts	113
(vii) Product Familiar Consumers Search for Specifics	114
(viii) Companions Not Helpful	115
(ix) Prior External Search Effect Partially Supported	116
(x) Higher Sales Clerk Usage When Easily Accessible	117
(xi) More Comparison With Broad Product Selection	117
(xii) Gender Differences	118

Chapter	Page
V. C. Interpretations of the Regression Analyses	119
(i) Situational Variables	120
(ii) The Budget	121
(iii) Psychographic and Demographic Variables	122
(iv) The Store Environment	123
D. Relation of Findings to the Model	124
E. Application of the Research Objectives	126
F. Limitations of This Study	128
G. Suggestions for Future Research	130
H. Implications for Academics and Practitioners	132
(i) Implications for Academics	132
(ii) Implications for Practitioners	134
REFERENCES	136
APPENDIX A. Survey Instruments	143

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Title	Page
1.	Belk's Gift-Giving Digraph	8
2.	Sherry's Model of Gift-Giving	11
3.	Gift Selection Strategies Used for Difficult People	16
4.	Otnes (1990): Search Selection Strategy	18
5.	Model of Gift Purchase Information Search	19
6.	Model of Communication for a Gift	29
7.	Model of In-Store Information Search for a Christmas Gift Purchase	125

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Title	Page
1.	Questionnaire Distribution	70
2.	Returned Questionnaires	70
3.	Factors for Personal Characteristics	73
4.	Factors for Situational Variables	75
5.	Identified Factors for In-Store Information Search Effort	78
6.	Crosstab Results	80
7.	Descriptive Statistics	84
8.	Partial Correlation Results and ANOVA Significance	86
9.	List of Independent Variables for Regression Analyses	95
10.	Results of Regression Analyses	97
11.	Conclusions of Hypotheses	108

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Overview

Economic Significance

Manufacturers and retailers in North America understand the importance of the Christmas season. Christmas holiday sales can account for between 30% and 50% of a retailer's total yearly sales (Gifts & Decorative Accessories, 1987; Ryans, 1977 and 1990, Banks, 1978). Pollay (1986) distinguishes these sales for the month of December, indicating that they account for "40% of annual sales of toys ... 28% of candy ... and 25% or more of ... toiletries, stationery, greeting cards, books and art" (p. 140). Reports of a survey conducted by the Conference Board of New York indicated that in 1989, consumers were predicted to spend approximately \$39 billion (unadjusted for inflation) on Christmas gifts (Eskey, 1989). Individuals have been estimated to spend from \$280 (Banks, 1979) to \$300 (Caplow, 1982) to \$442 (Giftware News, June 1993) per year on Christmas gifts. A brief look at some advertising figures indicate heavy expenditures in the final quarter for certain industries. In a recent issue of Marketing Magazine (1995), European advertising expenditures were quoted. Forty percent of the \$75 million spent on ads for toys and board games occurred in the last quarter of the year. For electronic games, 60% of the \$30 million budget was spent in the last three months, with 30% being allocated for November alone

Total gift expenditures have also been analyzed. Gift purchases have been placed at 10% of all retail purchases in North America (Belk, 1979, Sherry, McGrath and Levy,

1993) Further, Belk (1979) reports among his findings that almost 30% of gift-giving occasions reported were for Christmas. The gift industry, and in particular the Christmas holiday season, deserves more than a cursory glance.

Social Significance

Gift-giving, including Christmas gift-giving, is important to the North American culture. Apart from the economic importance described above, Christmastime and the giving of gifts are also notable social mechanisms. Caplow (1982) found that, during the year of the study, respondents gave and received an average of 27 and 13 Christmas gifts respectively. In Belk's (1979) study, respondents were asked to identify a gift and the occasion on which it was presented. Almost 28% of the gifts reported were for Christmas, and 61% of these cost over \$10. These figures clearly indicate the significance of Christmas gift-giving to Americans. Otnes (1990) distinguished Christmas from other annual gift-giving occasions by the following four characteristics:

- 1) Of all the gift-giving occasions featuring more than one giver and receiver, Christmas has the highest level of cultural recognition;
- 2) Christmas gift-giving receives more media attention than other annual gift occasions;
- 3) Christmas gift-giving is the focus of substantially more marketing effort than giving for other occasions -- as evidenced by the presence of its own "shopping season";
- 4) Christmas gift-giving is the only pervasive exchange occasion where immediate reciprocity is expected among multiple givers and receivers. (p. 8)

Otnes concludes that "this type of exchange could be described as the most sociologically significant gift-giving in modern American culture" (p. 8)

Mauss (1970) studied various gift-giving occasions in ancient cultures. He discussed, aside from economic reasons for gift exchange, the social benefits of the rituals associated with gift exchange. It was common in certain cultures to hold feasts and perform grand ceremonies in connection with gift-giving, particularly when the exchange involved neighbouring societies. The objective may not entirely have been to impress the other society. Rather, a particular gift exchange ceremony may have occurred only once or twice a year, and served as a motivational factor to both tribes. The guests enjoyed the gifts received, and the hosts took pride and experienced a stronger sense of belonging, having contributed to the whole exchange.

Purpose of This Study

Sociologists and anthropologists have long studied the giving of gifts from different perspectives. Marketing researchers have only begun building on their knowledge from a business perspective. While there exist several theories for the reasons or motives for gift-giving, little research has been conducted on the processes and behaviours involved in selecting, presenting, and evaluating gifts. This thesis will focus on the selection stage.

The above discussion of the economic and social significance of Christmas gift-giving forms the basis for the following postulate. Because of the high importance of Christmas gift-giving to our culture, we are likely to spend considerable time and effort in the selection of gifts at Christmastime. There has been support that shows that consumers

develop strategies for external information search to help them in the purchase of Christmas gifts (e.g., Otnes, 1990). Otnes significantly identified three types of information searchers: selective searchers, non-searchers, and "eclectic" searchers. It is proposed here that consumers may alter their shopping behaviour depending on the situation as well. The purpose of this study is to explain differences in consumers' external information search strategies while Christmas gift shopping in terms of relevant situational and personal variables. The research will be limited to in-store information search behaviours for a Christmas gift of clothing. In-store information sources are controllable, and thus of interest to practitioners.

Problem Statement and Objectives

The problem statement identifies the concerning question to be studied, and includes restrictions. This study will be limited to Christmas gift shopping behaviour and to in-store information search behaviour. Below is the problem statement which will guide the present research.

Are there significant differences in consumers' usage of in-store information sources while Christmas gift shopping, and can we explain these differences in terms of situational and personal variables?

In addressing the problem statement, the study will meet the following objectives:

Objective 1. To achieve a greater understanding of consumers' usage of in-store sources of information relating to Christmas gift shopping.

Objective 2. To determine if variables that have been found to influence gift-giving, such as the giver-recipient relationship, perceived risk, gift-giving experience, and

gender, also influence the usage of controllable in-store variables accessible to gift buyers; as well as to explore the influences of other variables, such as culture, and pre-determined gift selection.

Objective 3. To achieve a greater understanding of an important buying phenomenon in North America; namely Christmas gift buying.

Practical and Theoretical Importance

The benefits to marketers of gaining a better understanding of gift shopping behaviour are obvious. Marketers, including retailers, would be interested to know which in-store information sources are most effective. Money is spent on providing the consumer with certain in-store information. One of the objectives of this information is to help describe the product or service offered. The other is to help persuade the consumer to purchase the product or service as a gift. At Christmastime, the stores are crowded with customers buying gifts, store shelves are stocked with merchandise, and retailers are vying for the customer's attention. It would be useful to know, of the many sources available to them, which information is used by gift buyers in helping them make their final choices.

Gift purchasing is important to all societies. As noted in the preceding sections, in North America, Christmas gift buying is a significant economic activity. Studying gift buying behaviour enables the drawing of conclusions about the effectiveness of marketing communications. From these conclusions, practitioners may focus efforts on the most effective communications, thus increasing the potential for higher sales; as well, practitioners may focus less effort on ineffective communications, thus saving time and money.

In summary, there are three major benefits of studying Christmas gift buying in terms of in-store information search: (a) We will gain a better understanding of consumer usage of in-store information sources for gift purchases; (b) in-store information sources are controllable and are an important issue for competing marketers during the Christmas selling season in this society, the economic implications for retailers include the potentials for cost savings and sales increases; and (c) naturally, the study will provide some insight into consumer behaviour within a specific temporal context.

CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

Models of Gift-Giving

Before delving into the details of certain gift-buying activities, it is important to understand the entire process of gift-giving. To this effect, several models of gift-giving have been developed and will now be presented.

Bagozzi's Exchange System

Bagozzi's (1974) concept of an exchange system was represented in the salesperson-customer dyad. In this model, several variables mediate both the customer's and the salesperson's decision to make an exchange. These influential variables are: (a) the attraction between the customer and the salesperson, based on their exchange history and similarity in attitudes; (b) the other party's resources multiplied by his or her intentions; (c) the other party's expertise or esteem; (d) the other's legitimate authority or status; which relates to (e) the credibility of the message; and finally, (f) the subjective evaluation of the cost-benefit difference. All of these six subjective factors mediate each party's subjective evaluation of the utility of the exchange.

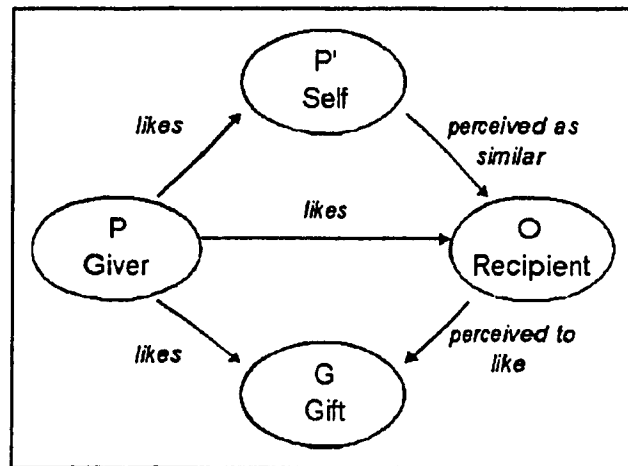
In the case of a gift purchase, the buyer must consider the receiver's needs as well as the motivations for buying the gift. Bagozzi's model is simplistic from a gift-giving perspective. While the model is so basic that it is sensible for almost any situation, it does not specifically address situational variables. The simplicity of the model is a major limitation of its usefulness.

Belk's Model of Balance in Gift-Giving

Belk (1976, 1979) described a model for gift selection which accounted for giver preferences, and the giver's perceptions of self preferences and receiver preferences (see Figure 1). Balance between these three factors is sought in selecting a gift.

Figure 1

Belk's Gift-Giving Digraph



(Belk, 1976, p.157).

Belk contended that gift selection can help define the degree of recipient importance that is communicated with the gift, and also that gift selection characteristics help to portray a more complete picture of: (a) the giver's perception of the recipient, and (b) the giver's self-perception. Thus, a gift may communicate the giver's perceptions of the identities of both himself or herself and the recipient. According the model, balance is sought between the triangles (P-P'-O) and (P-O-G), and the outer diamond (P-P'-O-G). Complete balance would occur when each of these loops has all positive relationships (0 negative), or 2 or 4 negative relationships. For example, a situation with two negative relationships would be

where the giver likes himself or herself and the gift, but does not like the recipient, perceives that he or she is dissimilar to the recipient, and that the recipient will not like the gift. Balance is achieved in each of the triangles: P likes P', but is not similar to O and does not like O. P likes G, but P does not like O and O does not like G. The left side of the outer diamond is positive, and the right side is negative in this example. Therefore, the model is balanced.

Belk's model can be useful for discriminating gift buying from other purchasing activities. The giver's perceptions of both self and recipient play a vital role in gift selection. The model also identifies gift-giving as a way of communicating. This will be further discussed in a later section on motivations.

Banks' Interactive Gift-Giving Paradigm

Banks (1979) described a four-stage process of gift-giving: (a) the purchase stage, (b) the interaction-exchange stage, (c) the consumption stage, and (d) the communication-feedback stage. The purchase stage involves recognition of the reason for giving or the gift occasion, internal and external search, and the actual purchase of the gift, wrapping, card, and mailing if necessary. All these activities lead to built-up suspense and anticipation. In the interaction stage, the gift is exchanged, which leads to the receiver's interpretation of the gift, conspicuous display, and influence of a return gift. At the same time, the giver interprets the receiver's reaction which influences future gift purchases. The consumption stage simply involves the usage, storage, or return of the gift. The giver may or may not be aware of which action is taken. In the communication stage, the receiver communicates to others about the gift and gives further feedback to the giver.

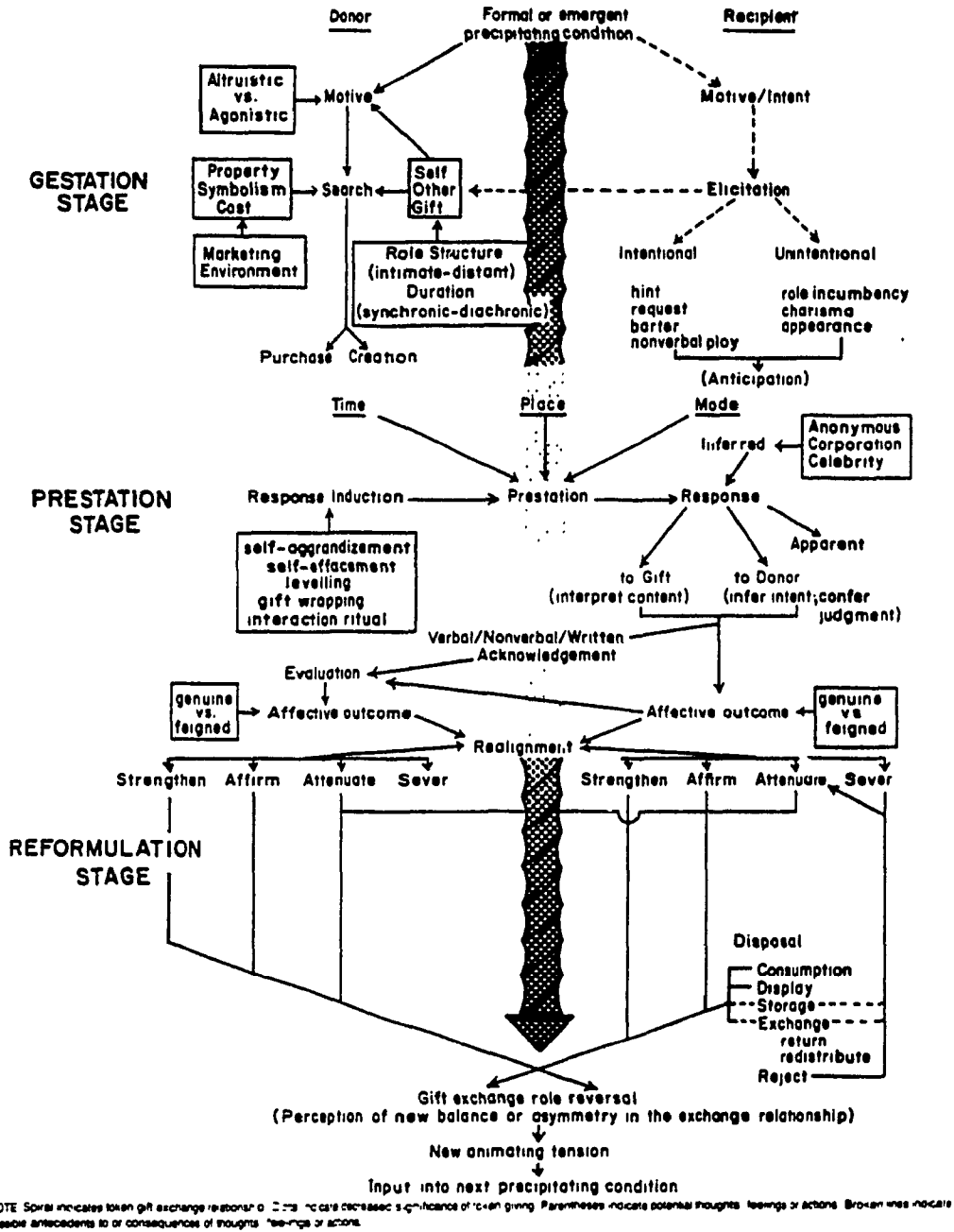
Banks attempted to describe the gift-giving process with her model. However, the model is generally considered as incomplete. Lutz (1979) noted that the study failed to reveal underlying determinants of gift-giving behaviour. A more systematic approach would address, for example, the motivations for gift-giving behaviour. Lutz further proposed that, at the level of brand choice, gift-giving models should consider the budget decision and product class selection. In his paper, Sherry (1983) cited the "misarticulation of the stages" (p. 162) as a limitation to the model's effectiveness. He provided examples wherein communication may occur throughout the transaction, and the purchase may include a larger process explicit in the presentation. To address these problems, Sherry developed a more complex model.

Sherry's Model of the Gift Exchange Process

Sherry's (1983) model of the gift exchange process is the most complete model found in the literature. The model described in detail the process of giving in terms of three stages: (a) the gestation stage, (b) the prestation stage, and (c) the reformulation stage. The full model depicting the process of gift-giving, according to Sherry, is presented in Figure 2. This model is obviously far more complex than the previous ones.

Figure 2

Sherry's Model of Gift-Giving



(Sherry, 1983, p. 163).

The gestation stage incorporates all behaviour antecedent to the actual gift exchange. A precipitating condition, such as the structural Christmas occasion, is perceived. This condition permits the expression of some motivational state through a giving strategy. Search efforts may then begin with a guidance strategy, for example, where hints are requested from the recipient. As described in Belk's model, the donor frequently conducts an external search as well. It is this external search which will be of most interest in this study. Some of the factors affecting search effort in Sherry's model include: the motive, the marketing environment, the symbolism and cost of the gift, the role structure and duration of the relationship between the donor and the recipient, and the giver's perception of self, recipient, and gift.

Although Sherry clearly defined three distinct stages, the stages were interdependent. Following all the motivations, attitudes, and activities of the gestation stage, the gift is actually exchanged during the prestation stage. In the case of Christmas gifts, the time, place, and ceremonial rituals are usually very important to both parties. As the gift is exchanged, the recipient forms judgements about both the gift and the donor. During the gestation stage, the donor considers the recipient's future evaluation of the gift. The donor must weigh the benefits of the gift against the risks of selecting a gift that will be evaluated poorly. Sherry also noted that simultaneous giving, as often occurs at Christmas, "increases the complexity of the operations performed during [the prestation] stage, since donor and recipient replicate each other's behaviour" (p. 164).

The reformulation stage is the final stage in a unique gift exchange process, although Sherry indicated that it influences future exchanges. Here the gift is consumed,

and the social relationship between donor and recipient is realigned. Future gift purchases for both parties are heavily influenced by the change, either good or bad, in the relationship.

Despite its complexity, the model has some obvious gaps. It is unlikely that the intention was to describe an exhaustive model, but rather to provoke questions and suggest areas for further investigation. Of interest to the present study is the area of search in the gestation stage. As this research will attempt to show, search activities can include variables other than the ones described by Sherry, such as time pressure, perceived risk, and previous experience. Time pressure and perceived risk can each vary depending on the situation, which can affect the amount of search done. Regarding experience, Sherry did note that the reformulation stage has effects on future purchases, but this is not clear in the description of the gestation stage. Search can be a lengthy process, involving several trips to stores, observation, discussions with the recipient, and so forth. On the whole, the model gives an accurate picture of the gift-giving process and some of the variables involved at each stage.

A Model of Gift Selection Strategies by Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey

Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992) conducted a study on Christmas gift selection for "difficult" recipients. Difficult recipients were defined as people for whom selecting gifts was perceived as a difficult task. A combination of interviews and observation was used to determine reasons why some recipients were considered difficult, and strategies used when shopping for difficult people. The reasons for perceiving a recipient as difficult included: (a) perceived lack of necessity or desire for the gift; (b) fear of the gift being

unappreciated, (c) different tastes or interests; (d) unfamiliarity with the recipient; (e) perceived recipient limitations, (f) limitations imposed by the giver; (g) imbalance, as described in Belk's theory; (h) personality conflicts; and (i) subsequent thwarting of a selected gift. All of these reasons are quite sensible, and some have been supported in previous literature, such as gift rejection, different tastes or interests, and imbalance (e.g., see Belk, 1976; Sherry, 1983; Beatty, Kahle, and Homer, 1991).

Pertinent to the present study are the shopping strategies used when making purchases for difficult gift recipients. These are now described in detail. Latching on was the most common strategy found by the researchers. It involved conducting extensive external and/or internal search for a gift idea, then additional search to find an acceptable (or ideal) representation of that idea. Once an idea for the gift had been conceived, it was not relinquished, thus latching on may be used for either a new gift idea or a gift that has been given in the past. Employing a latching on strategy, the giver's perception of the recipient as difficult is directly related to search effort, including in-store search. Unfortunately the study did not examine the relationship between search effort and perceptions of "easy" recipients. It merely suggested that a latching on strategy was often used when shopping for difficult people. A second strategy used was impulse buying following "sudden enlightenment." The gift idea had not been previously formulated, but upon seeing an item in the store, the buyers instantly matched the gift with what they knew about the recipients. As a "last resort," some gifts for difficult people were made rather than purchased, such as food. Some gift selections in the study were "pawned off," meaning the task was delegated to other buyers. A fifth strategy used by respondents was

simply to buy what they liked themselves. With no other information about the recipient, the buyer simply bought an item that he/she would like for himself/herself. Another selection strategy used was to group difficult recipients, and purchase only one gift for the group. Joint giving was also used, where givers teamed up to buy one gift. Recycling unwanted personal items as gifts for (usually unliked) difficult recipients was yet another identified strategy. Habitual buying involved little or no search effort. With this strategy, givers simply bought the same thing for the same person every year. A typical example is a tie for Father every Father's Day. A final strategy described in the study involved buying relationship-affirming gifts, such as a mug that says "Grampa" on it for a grandfather.

In their model of gift selection strategies used for difficult people, Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992) distinguished the strategies described above along two dimensions (a) giver-centered versus recipient-centered strategies, and (b) minimization of social risk versus psychological risk. The model is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Gift Selection Strategies Used for Difficult People

	Alleviates Social Risk	Alleviates Psychological Risk
Source of Gift Idea	Latching On (New This Year)	Pawning Off
Giver's Taste	Relationship Affirming Gifts	Buy What I Like
		Joint Recipients
		Recycling
		Joint Giving
Recipient's Taste	Latching On (Same as Last Year)	Impulse Purchasing
		Habitual Buying

(Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey, 1992, p. 487).

To minimize social risk, extended search (e.g., latching on) is used as a selection strategy. Psychological risk was defined by the authors as "the perceived level of internal discomfort that a gift-giver experiences when he or she must grapple with an onerous buying task" (p. 486). Strategies here involved minimizing effort, sometimes to the point of delegating the task (pawning off). The authors argued that the strategy used depends on the nature and salience of the giver-receiver relationship. In terms of search effort, more demanding selection strategies are likely to be used when the relationship is more salient to the giver.

This model is certainly relevant to the present study. Selection strategies were described for the situation where the recipient was perceived as difficult. The obvious major limitation of this model, however, is that there is no distinction for "easy" recipients.

It is unknown whether selection strategies would differ if the donors were shopping for gifts intended for recipients they consider to be easy.

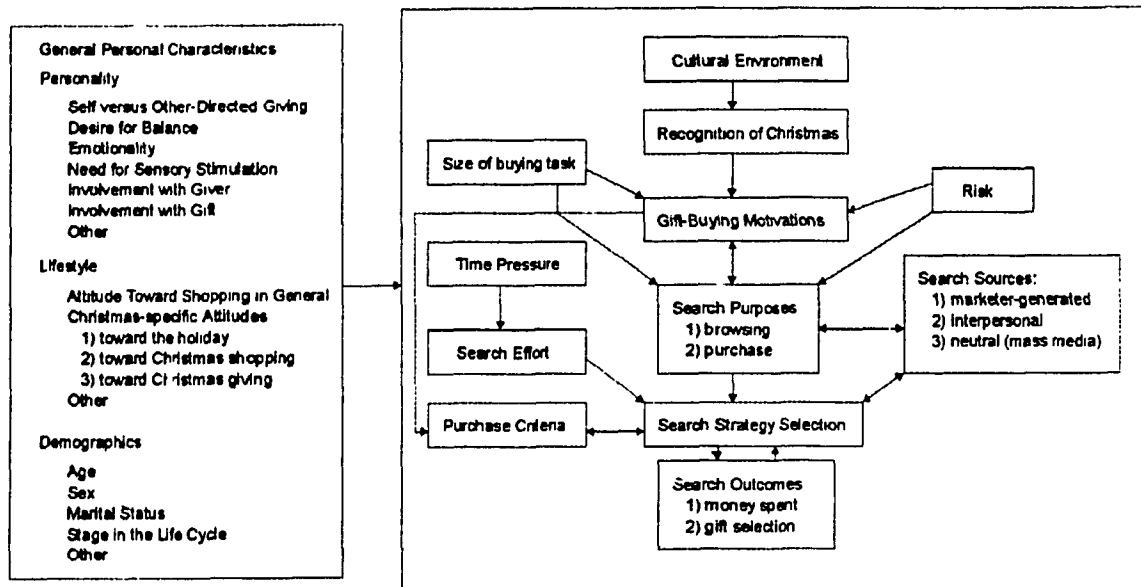
Otnes' Model of Search Strategy Selection During the Christmas Buying Season

Otnes (1990) developed a search strategy model that recognized situational and individual variables. The model, which was intended as a complement to Sherry's broader model of gift-giving, is shown in Figure 4. Otnes defined external search for Christmas shopping in terms of five stages: (a) recognition of Christmas as a gift occasion, (b) triggering of a motive(s) to buy a Christmas gift, (c) designation of the purpose(s) of information search, (d) selection of a search strategy; and (e) outcome of search.

A unique aspect of this model is the distinction of search purposes. Not all search effort is directly related to purchase. At times, the consumer may simply be looking for gift ideas. Bloch, Sherrell, and Ridgway (1986) showed that consumers may regularly gather product information to build stores of product knowledge and to experience pleasure. The left-hand side of the Otnes model suggested several personal characteristics that can influence any stage of the search selection process. The traits include personality, lifestyle, and demographic characteristics. As an example of a lifestyle trait, a consumer's attitude toward Christmas shopping can impact on the search purpose. Someone who likes Christmas shopping may intend to spend time browsing and gathering information before actually purchasing any gifts.

Figure 4

Otnes (1990): Search Selection Strategy



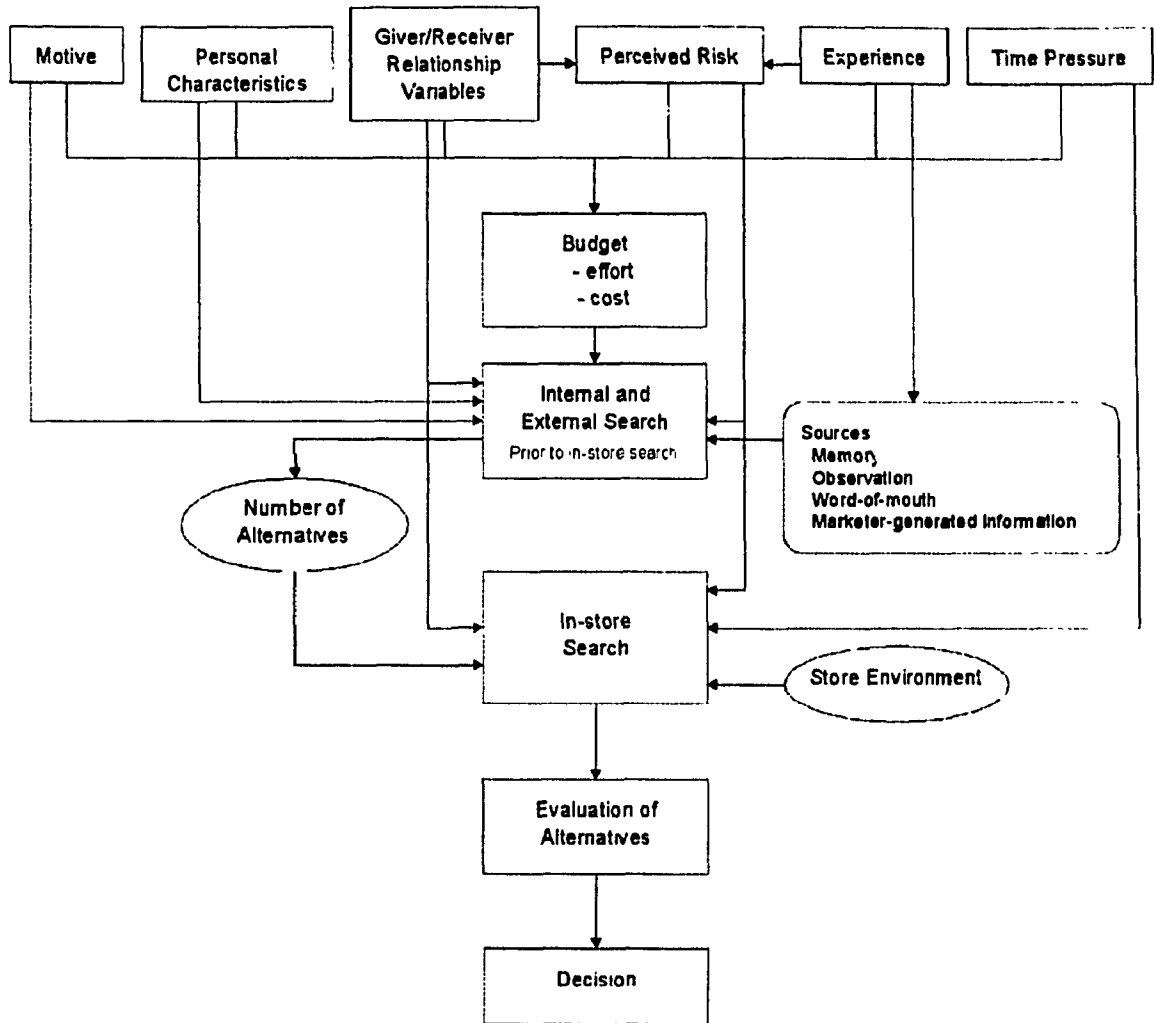
(Otnes, 1990, p. 107).

The Proposed Model of Gift Purchase Information Search

Borrowing from several previously developed models, a new model has been developed for this study (see Figure 5). This model, depicting influences on information search for a gift purchase, will form the basis for the research questions proposed in the study. It focusses only on the area of search effort in the gestation stage of the Sherry (1983) model. The level of easiness or difficulty of the recipient will be included among other giver-recipient relationship variables, extending the research by Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992). The proposed model differs from Otnes' (1990) by narrowing the scope to information search effort conducted strictly in the store environment.

Figure 5

Model of Gift Purchase Information Search



The top row represents personal traits plus situational variables that affect information search, both directly, as well as indirectly through the formation of a budget for the gift. The budget comprises both effort and cost allocations. Preliminary internal and external information search is conducted, and the outcome is one or more gift alternatives. Internal search is a complex process which is not fully understood. For an in depth discussion of internal search, see Bettman (1979), who distinguished between memory search and external search. Internal search effort is not the focus of this study, although clearly it is related to external search. A consumer will internally search in his or her memory to recall previous gift experiences related to the recipient, or other pertinent experiences. Sometimes, search may stop here if, for example, a successful experience is recalled and the consumer decides to give exactly the same gift again. In this case, in-store information search might consist of only finding the desired item in the store and selecting the brand with the best price. In other situations, observation, word-of-mouth, and marketer-generated information are combined with memory search in the consumer's quest for gift alternatives. Observation can take place any time after a motive for giving is recognized. In the case of Christmas gifts, it is common for the giver to begin watching for the receiver's needs well in advance of actually purchasing the gift. Word-of-mouth can come from other people or even from the recipient. Some recipients provide a list of desired items to the giver. Gift lists are a common practice for wedding gifts, and retail marketers have created gift registries to address the phenomenon. A registry service greatly helps to reduce the social risk for the giver. A final information source used during external search is marketer-generated information, such as advertising. Some marketer-

generated information is actively sought by consumers. For example, many consumers browse through store catalogues in search of gift ideas. Other marketer-generated information is more passively absorbed, as in the case of television commercials.

Following the preliminary external search, the consumer will visit one or more stores, if the intention is to buy a gift in a retail setting. This model does not consider hand-made gifts or gifts purchased from mail-order catalogues. More information may be sought in the store. The amount and the kind of in-store information search conducted will be moderated by whether the giver has already formed some gift ideas. If no gift ideas have yet been formed, the consumer may spend time browsing in several stores in order to generate ideas or gather more information on what is available. In the store, the consumer will evaluate all of the alternatives, and will make a decision to buy a gift or gifts, or will acquire additional in-store information. For recent studies concerning the decision of when to stop acquiring additional information and commit to a choice, see Saad (1994), and Saad and Russo (1996). It is suggested here that in-store information search effort will be moderated by store variables, such as access to information sources and brand or gift selection.

In-store search is influenced by situational, psychographic, demographic, and store variables. It is proposed that the specific variables which affect search effort are: (a) the motive for buying the gift, (b) the personal characteristics of the giver, (c) giver-receiver relationship variables, (d) the perceived risk, (e) the giver's gift-giving experience, (f) time pressure felt by the giver, (g) the previous external search conducted, and (h) the store environment. These will each be briefly described in the ensuing sections.

Motivations for Gift-Giving

Substantial research has been conducted in anthropology, sociology, and marketing concerning the motivations for gift-giving. Among the many motivations cited for gift exchange, five major categories have emerged. (a) altruism, (b) economic motivations, (c) obligation, (d) social exchange, and (e) communication. The categories are not necessarily exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Each will now be discussed.

Altruism

Altruism has been suggested as one motive for gift-giving. Controversy surrounds this issue for two reasons. First, giving with no expectation of future gain is entirely inconsistent with theories of rational economic thought. (For a contrast between substantivist and formal economists, see Schneider, 1974.) Economists assume consumers are rational thinkers who calculate the gains against the losses of each decision and make purchases or trades which leave them ahead or at least no worse off from the exchange. Altruistic giving would therefore be completely irrational. It could be argued, however, that a gain from the exchange is personal satisfaction obtained from making another person happy. The second issue is that most studies rely on self-reports of motivations. Reactivity could occur where social desirability dictates altruism in gift-giving as an acceptable motive and purely self-interest motives are shunned. It is likely that altruism will be over-reported. A case of true altruism may be when a charitable gift is given anonymously, with no other observers of the act, and the tax credit is not obtained. Unfortunately the anonymity makes these cases difficult to study.

Wolfenbarger (1990) studied altruism as a motive for gift-giving. Gifts that were

perceived as being altruistically given were considered to be favorite gifts by the recipients. These gifts were thought to be given out of the desire to show love, often they were surprises, described as something that the giver would not normally buy, and of great cost to the giver. In these cases, the motive was actually to communicate some symbolic message through a gift. However, the Wolfenbarger study consisted of personal interviews, and may therefore have been subject to the self-report reactivity limitation.

A study by Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) separated gifts into those that are given freely and those that are given from a sense of obligation. This overly simplistic distinction merely suggests a motivational continuum along which some situational variables are identified. Altruistic and self-serving motives were defined in Sherry's (1983) research as the altruistic and agonistic dichotomy. Voluntary motives may include altruism (e.g., a parent expresses esteem for a child), as well as self interest (e.g., a husband seeking to regain affection from an alienated wife)

Economic Motivations

At the opposite pole from altruistic motives are self-serving or economic motives. Belk (1979) recognized economic utility as a distinct function of gift-giving, although he admitted that gift-giving provides less economic satisfaction than simply directing the same funds to personal consumption. Economic utility seems to become more of a supporting motivation to other more compelling motivations such as obligation or social exchange. Some gift exchange could be moderated by economic considerations or financial self-interest. For example, once an obligation to give is recognized, perhaps for fear of social disapproval, the giver may seek to spend the least amount of effort and

money to acquire the minimum acceptable gift for an unwanted recipient. Thus, while obligation would be the primary motivation here, the giver is driven by economic motivations once the decision has been made to give a gift. Belk (1979) further noted that a reciprocal gift exchange must be fair. Unfair exchanges create imbalance in the relationship. Mauss (1966) described a "potlatch" system in archaic societies where gift exchanges were expected to occur in festive rituals, and much importance was placed on the value of the gifts given. Recipients in the societies described in the research expected to receive a greater value than what they had given previously, and intended to give again a greater value at the next ceremony than what they had received. Thus, gifts were exchanged "with interest." It was not mentioned in the research precisely what the repercussions were if the society could not afford the interest. Schneider (1974) summarized the system as a "generalized reciprocity in that repayment is with friendliness" (p. 102).

Cheal (1987) used a "utility maximization" argument in explaining the gift-giving selection strategy. The giver tries to match the gift as closely as possible to the needs or desires of the recipient. The dilemma of utility arises once the decision has been made to exchange a gift. This theory supports the issues of economic utility raised by Belk (1979). Using personal interviews, Cheal (1988) found that people felt obliged to give return gifts if they had received one, and accordingly tried to balance the value of gifts given with those received. Cheal theorized that the reasons "have to do with the more general desire to maintain balanced relationships with significant others" (p. 52).

Poe (1977) described gifts as economic commodities "because in the final analysis,

the recipient ends up with something, usually a material object, that he would probably not have bought for himself' (p. 51). This perspective is attenuated in the case of a gift where reciprocation is not expected. The best examples of gifts as economic tools are weddings, showers, and first homes. The recipients are given gifts which are meant to help them through financially difficult times in the future or to help them get started in a new lifestyle. Immediate reciprocation is not expected, however, if givers have similar experiences, past recipients will be invited to celebrations and expected to bring gifts. In the long-term, givers of gifts may rationally conclude that throughout a lifetime, the value of gifts given will be roughly equal to or possibly less than the value of gifts received. Economically they will be no worse off in the end.

In an exploratory study, Wolfenbarger (1990) proposed three general categories of motivations: (a) self-interest, (b) social norms, and (c) altruism. The premise of the paper was that gifts are valued more for the symbols involved than for the material benefits exchanged, or "it's the thought that counts." Some self-interest motives cited were to establish wealth and social status, to advance one's consumption scale, to ingratiate one's self with the receiver or to reinforce a highly valued but insecure relationship, or simply to create receiver indebtedness. The findings of the study indicated that the symbolic value of a gift appears to dominate its economic value. This complements Cheal's (1988) observations that it is unlikely that gift givers consciously seek control over others. Rather, they tend to be guided by customs, traditions, and other social norms. These guiding forces are discussed in the next section.

Obligation, Norms, and Socialization

As mentioned in the previous section, a strong motivation for giving gifts is a sense of obligation felt by the giver, to meet the requirements of social norms. The obligation to give gifts has been heartily discussed in the gift literature (e.g., Belk, 1979; Caplow, 1982; Cheal, 1987; 1988; Goodwin et al., 1990; Mauss, 1966; Scammon et al, 1982). Mauss (1966) defined three obligations in terms of gift exchange: the obligation to give, the obligation to receive, and the obligation to repay. "Failure to give or receive, like failure to make return gifts, means a loss of dignity" (p. 40). These obligations seem to be universal in principle, even if traditional practices vary somewhat between cultures. We all understand that we are expected to give gifts to certain people on specific occasions, and the value of the gift depends on the occasion and our relationship with the recipient. Traditional practices are dictated by the customs and norms of our society. Caplow (1982) concluded that the people of Middletown "are expected to give a Christmas gift every year" to certain close relations, and that "this expectation is not a matter of legal or religious sanction, but it is so compelling that we were not able to find any breeches that were not accounted for by special circumstances" (p. 389). Goodwin, Smith and Spiggle (1990) define two types of obligations. The first, reciprocity, is similar to Mauss' obligation to repay. Someone who has received a gift, or expects to receive one as part of a mutual exchange system, is expected to give a return gift. The most typical example is when family members exchange gifts at Christmas. Often associated with reciprocity, ritual is the second form of obligatory gift-giving. Again, the Christmas ritual is the most common example. The authors found that people were more likely to give obligatory gifts

on appropriate gift-giving occasions, versus voluntary gifts which were given outside of these occasions.

An aspect of gift-giving related to norms is socialization. Members of a society can socialize with others through the gifts they give. Belk (1979) suggested socialization as an important gift-giving motivation, although mainly pre-school aged recipients are likely to be significantly affected. Children can be highly socialized by the toys or other items that they are given as gifts, particularly if it conforms to sex-role stereotypes. Gifts help the child interpret his or her identity as well as many values and attitudes (Belk, 1979; Caron and Ward, 1975). Otnes (1990) found that the motivation to shape the identity of the recipient helped discriminate between the three types of information searchers.

Social Exchange

By giving gifts, the giver is sending the message that he or she wishes to establish, develop, or maintain a certain relationship with the recipient. The kind or the extent of the relationship can also be communicated through the type or the price of the gift. A relationship can be defined by the gift's cost to the giver. Generally, the higher the cost of the gift, the dearer the relationship is to the giver (Belk, 1979). As well, the intimacy of the relationship defines limits on the acceptable intimacy of the gift type (Belk, 1979). Undergarments, for example, would not be given to a casual acquaintance, but would be appreciated by a spouse.

Caplow (1982) stressed that gift-giving maintains social solidarity, especially as the gift is a visible symbol of the relationship. The symbolic message of the gift is conveyed not only to the recipient but to all spectators. Frequently gifts are presented at ceremonial

rituals, where all in the pertinent society can witness the exchange and evaluate the gift, the giver, and the recipient's reaction. It is conceivable that someone would give a gift simply to enhance a relationship with a third party observer. For example, a husband may give a gift to his in-laws in order to please his wife only, with no concern for the actual recipients.

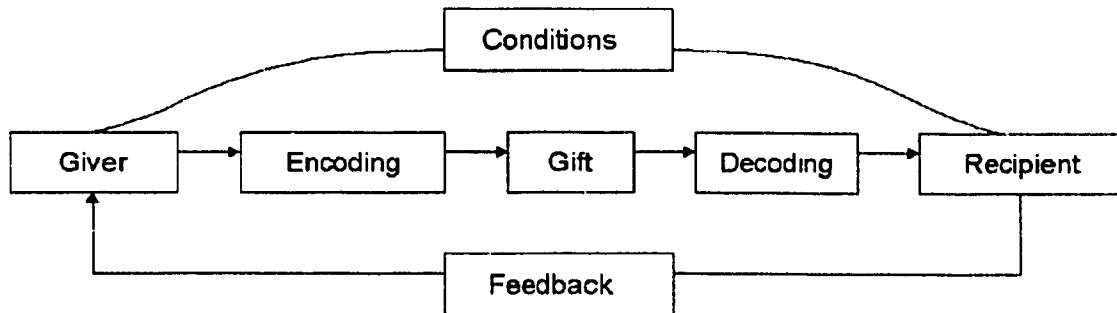
Cheal (1987) studied gift transactions in terms of the social reproduction of intimacy. The finding supported his hypothesis that gifts are given to communicate love and to strengthen social ties. Cheal (1988) maintained that "gifts are used to construct certain kinds of voluntary social relationships" (p. 14). Within our changing and increasingly complex world, people have shown a desire to stabilize their relationships. Cheal suggested that this is done through an increased ritualization of family life, in turn lending greater importance to gift-giving events.

Communication

The most commonly cited motivation for gift-giving is to communicate or to convey a symbolic message. Often a giver wishes to convey a message with the gift, and is at the same time motivated to give the gift by some other force, such as one of the motivations mentioned in the previous sections. In presenting a gift, the giver is sending a message to the receiver. Typical messages are "you are important to me" and "congratulations". Belk (1979) demonstrated gift-giving as communication (see Figure 6). The model followed the traditional models proposed in communication theories (e.g., DeFleur, 1970).

Figure 6

Model of Communication for a Gift



(Belk, 1979, p. 97).

In the special case of gift-giving, there is a greater risk of encoding or decoding errors because the message must be translated through the gift object rather than through the more flexible language medium (Belk, 1979). Thus, other signals also become important, such as the ceremony or the circumstances surrounding the actual presentation to the receiver, gift wrapping, whether a card is included, etc. These other factors compound the message of the gift itself and help the receiver interpret the intended message. Wolfenbarger (1990) drew our attention to the removal of price tags. Even if the recipient knows the price of the item, the giver will remove the price tag before presenting the gift. This is true for all gifts, at all price levels. The removal of the tag symbolizes the non-market, non-economic ideal of gift-giving, and failure to do so conveys very negative messages, bringing social censure.

Feedback is usually an immediate verbal expression of thanks, or it could be a return gift. The feedback only indirectly indicates the recipient's understanding of the intended message (Belk, 1979). Goodwin, Smith, and Spiggle (1990) reported that givers

of voluntary gifts were more likely to expect an emotional response, but that about 14% of both voluntary and obligatory givers expected verbal expressions of gratitude. Belk and Coon (1991) conducted personal interviews to explore some decoded messages of gifts. One insightful respondent observed, "gifts are used as an expression for they carry meaning" (p. 525). The interpretation of the meaning, however, can at times differ from the intention. One respondent in that study ended a relationship with a partner who gave many expensive gifts but did not give her of his time. In that case, the gifts were not enough since they were being given in lieu of a time commitment. Cheal (1987) found that one strategy used to enforce a message of the recipient's importance was to give multiple gifts. This also helps to make an impression on the recipient. Cheal posits that gifts must attract the attention of the recipient to be successful communicators.

Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) found that 70% of the time, the principal motive for offering a gift was to express emotions. Other motivations included conformity (12%), reciprocity (7%), and to celebrate an occasion (3%). As Scammon, Shaw and Bamossy (1982) noted, "it is important that the giver choose the 'right' gift to convey the desired message to the recipient" (p. 531). Otherwise, there is the risk that the gift will be misinterpreted. It becomes important for the giver to consider the reaction of the gift recipient. Poe (1977) explained that the degree of "reactance" experienced by the recipient is a function of the strength of the perceived threat to freedom, the importance of the threatened freedom to the individual, and the perceived probability of future threats to the individual's freedom. Some well-meant gifts can actually threaten the freedom of the recipient. Poe offered the example of a student considering a career choice between civil

engineering and chemistry, who is given a drafting set as a gift. The nature of the gift may compel the student to choose a career in civil engineering, resulting in the perceived threat to his or her freedom for this important decision.

The Christmas Occasion

As we have seen, there may be several reasons for participating in a gift exchange. For this study, the Christmas occasion has been selected as the primary motivating context. As a result of social norms, the need to buy Christmas gifts for specific people is recognized by Christians in our society. While the motive is known throughout the year, Christmas gift buying becomes salient at various times for different people. Some consumers purchase Christmas gifts throughout the year, and only present them at the appropriate time. Others will wait until Christmas Eve to go shopping. In many instances, gift-giving is reciprocal. This phenomenon of reciprocity could add to the stress, particularly if the recipient is difficult.

In his comprehensive study on gift-giving behaviour, Belk (1979) reported on many aspects of gift shopping, including Christmas gift shopping. Among his findings, almost 30% of gift-giving occasions reported were for Christmas, while birthday gifts reached 35%. All other gift-giving occasions reported in the study had frequencies under seven percent. Compared with birthday gifts, Christmas gifts in the study were more practical, more prestigious, more personal, more expensive, more fashionable, of higher quality, and longer lasting. The importance given by consumers to Christmas gifts is obvious.

Caplow (1982) found several interesting results in his study of Christmas gift

purchasing. Supporting previous results obtained by Belk (1979), Caplow found that clothing was the most popular item given at Christmas. While Belk found that 61% of all Christmas gifts given cost over \$10 (unadjusted for inflation), almost three quarters of all the gifts reported in Caplow's study cost less than \$25 (30% under \$5). More expensive gifts were given to closer kin, and there existed strong expectations to exchange gifts with all immediate family with whom there was an ongoing face-to-face relationship (Caplow, 1982).

Situational Variables Impacting Information Search

The model proposed for this study outlines several situational variables that have effects on in-store information search effort. These include perceived risk, time pressure, the giver-recipient relationship, and the donor's gift-giving experience. For the purpose of this study, the motive will be considered fixed, and the emphasis placed on the other situational, psychographic, and demographic variables impacting in-store information search behaviours. Literature on the situational variables will now be discussed.

Perceived Risk and Task Involvement

There is some risk inherent in all decisions. The risk tends to increase as less information about the decision is known. In the case of gift selection, the buyer must anticipate the desires of the recipient. It is generally accepted that risk is a function of uncertainty concerning the decision and the salience of the consequences of the decision (see Bauer, 1960). Strategies to reduce risk include conducting information search and/or practicing certain purchase strategies such as brand loyalty or new product avoidance (Hansen, 1972). It is possible to show preference for certain brands when buying gifts, as

it is to avoid buying new products, however these strategies may not always meet the goals of a gift buying situation. When a consumer is buying for other people, the shopping behaviour becomes quite different from habitual shopping for oneself. Increased information search would help reduce the risk of a gift purchase. Therefore, consumers shopping for gifts are probably more likely to engage in deeper information search than consumers shopping for themselves. Some conflicting results have been obtained in this regard. Clarke and Belk (1979) observed higher effort expenditures for gift purchases, while Heeler et al. (1979) reported no significant difference in search effort. Lutz (1979) noted that while these two experiments used similar personal use versus gift instructions, the task environments and dependent measures were quite different, making a comparison of the two studies difficult. Belk (1982) found that involvement alone was unable to account for differences in gift purchases and personal-use purchases, due to differences in gift-giving situations. Specifically, involvement varied with the gift occasion, affecting the amount of care and money devoted to the purchase.

In terms of gift buying, perceived risk may be related to the importance of the relationship between the giver and the receiver. The consequences of a poor decision will seem greater when the relationship is important. To compensate for higher risk, the consumer may set a higher budget for the gift, rationalizing that if more money is spent, the chances are better that the recipient will react favorably to the gift. Vincent and Zikmund (1975) found that respondents bought a more expensive model when the item was intended as a wedding present than when the item was intended for personal use. Oddly, risk is also usually perceived as greater for high-ticket items. Thus risk is reduced

by setting a higher budget, but risk is increased by a higher cost. The difference is that in the former case, social risk is reduced, and in the latter, personal risk is increased. Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) addressed this issue in their study of gift information search activities. Although results in the study were weak, the authors attempted to distinguish between selection regret and price regret, or the social risk of a bad purchase and the personal risk of paying too much. They found that respondents conducted greater information search for higher priced items (to reduce price regret). In Banks' (1979) review of the literature, the author reported higher risk and consequently greater information search for gift purchases, although she also acknowledged conflicting results with a study by Weigl (1975). Banks also discriminated between social risk and financial risk. Respondents did not attempt to reduce financial risk for gift purchases. Buying a more expensive model is a social risk reduction strategy used by gift consumers, possibly to safeguard against the consequences of appearing cheap or to avoid making a bad decision where information is lacking. Some conclusive evidence was found by Grønhaug (1972) relating risk and information search. The study was conducted on gift shoppers of tableware. It was found that gift buyers sought more advice from both friends and dealers, presumably to reduce the uncertainty of the situation. Sherry, McGrath, and Levy (1992) explained that the fear of giving a bad gift, one that is unwanted or inappropriate, is rooted in the giver's anticipations of the receiver's or others' reactions to the gift. Social norms dictate that the recipient should suppress any negative reactions to a gift. Children are taught to refrain from making any negative comments upon opening a gift, and to always thank the giver afterwards. So why is there the fear of a negative reaction? The fear is

actually for the true reaction to the gift which may or may not be exhibited. Revenge can be exacted in several ways: by returning an unacceptable counter-gift, by ostracizing the giver, by breaking the relationship, etc.

Another type of risk, psychological risk, was defined by Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992) as the internal discomfort of the actual buying task. At Christmas, the psychological risk could be greater than at other times, because the consumer is shopping for several recipients, there is a time limit, and the stores are usually more crowded, which can all add to the pressure felt by the consumer. Shopping for a birthday present, for example, may be perceived as less psychologically risky because the particular task involves buying only one gift, and the consumer can shop at his or her leisure, although the time limit remains. As previously described, Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992) reported several gift selection strategies for both social and psychological risks.

The time invested in shopping and subsequently choosing is generally determined by social intimacy and can be related to the reduction of risk. It is logical that the risk of a bad decision is greater when one is considering a gift for someone who is very close or important (such as a spouse), as opposed to a gift for someone who is less important (such as an unliked in-law who lives far away). The perceived risk of the situation thus is a mediator of task involvement and measured by the consumer's time investment in decision-making. From the few studies related to time investment for gift shopping (e.g., Heeler et al., 1979; Ryans, 1977), it appears that gifts to more distant people involve less effort for the purchaser, although the evidence is circumstantial.

Beatty, Kahle, and Homer (1991) studied gift-giving effort in terms of perceived

gift selection effort and perceived amount of gift-giving. The results showed that individuals endorsing warm relationships and self respect perceived that they gave more gifts and put more effort into gift selection. Respondents perceiving themselves as exerting less effort endorsed a sense of belonging, fun, enjoyment and excitement, and security. Although the results seem somewhat diverse, it can generally be concluded that those who exert effort in gift selection do so either because it feels good (self respect) or to endorse a warm relationship. Spending effort for self respect can be likened to task involvement. Neither the recipient nor the relationship necessarily has to be important to the giver in order for him or her to feel highly involved in the task and to spend more effort in search activities. Clarke and Belk (1979) studied both task and product involvement for gift and personal use purchases. They proposed that giving the product as a gift would automatically make the purchase a high task involvement situation. The results showed that gift-giving was able to transform a normally low involvement purchase into an important decision. Effort expenditures for gifts were reported as higher than expenditures for personal use products.

Time Pressure

A familiar element adding to the stress of Christmas shopping is the time pressure perceived by shoppers. Particularly for those givers who "wait until the last minute" to shop for gifts, Christmas shopping can seem hectic, stressful, and quite unenjoyable. This can have an effect on the amount of information search a consumer is willing to conduct, as well as whether the search is conducted mainly in the store, elsewhere or internally. Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) proposed that as a consumer's level of short-term felt time

pressure increases, shopping activity will decrease. Results suggested that felt time pressure, mediated by general shopping activity, did affect the search time for a particular gift. Consumers spent less time conducting external information search, as felt time pressure increased. Beatty and Smith (1987) also found that with increased time availability, total search effort across five similar product categories increased.

The effects of time pressure and store knowledge on in-store grocery shopping behaviour were examined by Park, Iyer, and Smith (1989). The two dependent variables were studied together for effects on purchase intentions and outcomes. Hypotheses were based on the arguments of two theories in terms of time pressure: (a) time constraints limit the extent to which in-store information processing can occur, and (b) felt time pressure increases the consumer's arousal or stress which in turn interferes with memory recall. The results showed that respondents in the high time pressure - low store knowledge condition experienced the highest rate of failure to purchase intended products. Additionally, it was suggested that time pressure alone affected search difficulty, resulting in the failure to purchase intended products. This indicates a causal relationship between time pressure and purchase outcomes, mediated by in-store information search effort. Unplanned purchases in the study were highest among shoppers with low store knowledge and low time pressure, indicating that people shopping under this condition engaged in more in-store information processing. Although the study of grocery shopping allows for the study of in-store behaviours, the nature of the task is usually routine. While gift shopping differs in many respects from a routine purchase, the effects of time pressure on in-store information search effort may nonetheless be similar.

As perceived time pressure increases, the total amount of in-store information search conducted should decrease. Consumers will likely spend more time conducting other external search or internal search, or simply reducing all information search in order to meet the deadline. A study by Mattson (1982) indicated that certain variables become more salient for time-pressured shoppers. The findings showed that attention from salespeople and a broad product selection were highly valued by time-pressured shoppers. The theory is that people who shop while feeling pressured for time view the salesperson as a valuable information source that can save them time, and view a broad product selection as a one-stop time saver as well. Salesperson attention was more important for gift shoppers versus personal use shoppers in the study, although the results for generally time-pressured versus non time-pressured shoppers were more marked.

Pre-determined Gift Selection

Related to the concept of risk reduction for a gift purchase is pre-determination of the gift. This is actually a form of external search effort, conducted before visiting the store. The proposed model shows a direct link between previous external search effort and in-store search effort. Various strategies are to obtain a list or suggestions from the recipient, to observe the recipient for needs prior to shopping, or to decide on a product category and research it prior to shopping. Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) reported that in 44% of the cases, the giver knew exactly what to give and where to find it. In 43% of the remaining cases, the giver had an idea of the type of product, and spent time searching in stores specializing in that type. Thus, generally the more that had been determined prior to visiting the store, the less in-store search was conducted. Only 7% of the respondents in

this study began shopping with no idea of what to give. One quarter of the respondents (27%) indicated that the recipient had never made any suggestions, while 37% of the gifts given were the result of a direct suggestion by the recipient.

One strategy used by the respondents in the study by Otnes, Lowrey, and Kim (1993) to help reduce the risk of selecting a bad gift was to engage the help of others, either by soliciting the advice of others or obtaining a list from the recipient. Banks (1979) reported that most gift purchases are planned prior to shopping in the store, and in many instances, gifts are purchased after visiting only one store. The implications are that store image becomes quite important for gift purchases. The shopper must be fairly certain that brand selection for the product class will be sufficient, and perhaps that in-store information will be adequate enough to distinguish the brands and help make a specific choice.

Belk (1979) found much lower rates of aided gift selection, although aided purchases were still fairly substantial. In about one third of the cases, the giver had received hints or was aware of the recipient's desire for a specific gift. Aided selection was more common for closer relatives. About 40% of the givers in this study had made up their minds about a particular gift before shopping. McGrath (1989) (see also Sherry and McGrath, 1989) conducted personal interviews with consumers in two gift stores. They found that husbands often shopped with a list of potential gifts or purchased specific previously determined items for their wives. The gifts were not intended as a surprise, rather the husband simply acted as a purchasing agent. One male consumer remarked, "...I used to try to be creative and buy things I liked. It was a disaster. Now I just ask for a list,

and she's happy" (p. 434). In the case of a list with specific items, one might expect in-store information search to be nil. However, if the item is known but the brand or the colour, for example, have not yet been selected, in-store search could be important.

The Giver - Recipient Relationship

The relationship between the giver and the receiver can affect gift buying behaviour. If the actors are close, they understand each other's needs better, making the buying task somewhat easier. A deeper understanding of the recipient's desires decreases uncertainty, which can reduce the search effort needed. In their brief review of the literature, Heeler et al. (1979) deduced that "close friends and relatives appear to be treated equally with one's self in shopping" (p. 325). People tend to interact more frequently with close friends and with relatives who live with them. This provides a better opportunity to investigate their needs and desires. Cheal (1987) noted that in our rapidly evolving society, needs and tastes also change quickly, so it is necessary to keep in touch with the details of others' daily activities. One must attune gift characteristics to the unique characteristics and situations of the recipient, creating balance in Belk's (1976) terms. This is easier to do in closer relationships. Otnes et al. (1993) reported that the givers' perceptions of recipients as easy or difficult stemmed from some aspect of the relationship between them. For example, gift recipients described as difficult were older, easy recipients were often children, close relatives, or same-gender friends.

Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) reported that the perceived difficulty of the recipient affected the search time for a particular gift. The confirmed hypothesis was that more difficult recipients require greater amounts of gift search, to be certain that the most

suitable gift is selected. Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) studied the satisfaction with a gift exchange as a function of the intimacy of couples. The level of emotive intimacy between the couple, as perceived by the giver, positively affected the global satisfaction of the giver. Therefore, couples who felt closer or more intimate were generally more satisfied with their gift exchanges. Consistent with the theory of fear of blundering a gift selection, Shurmer (1971) noted that people give more conservative gifts in a newer relationship. Belk (1979) also suggested that for relationships in earlier stages, the risk of one-sided exchange is greater, especially where simultaneous giving occurs.

Caplow (1982) conducted an extensive study of kin networks in Christmas gift exchanges. Relationships were described in four levels. Primary kin are those who can be described using one word (e.g., mother, brother, wife, son, etc) Secondary kinships use two terms (e.g., mother's brother). Tertiary kinships use three terms (e.g., mother's brother's son). Non-kin are friends or unrelated people. The study yielded several interesting findings. Respondents were expected to give Christmas gifts every year to all primary kin and secondary kin with whom they had on-going face to face relationships. Parents were expected to give multiple gifts to young children, and spouses were expected to give multiple gifts to each other. The incidence of multiple gifts to other relationships decreased with kinship distance. The cost of a gift was expected to be roughly proportional to the closeness of the relationship, except parents spent more on children; and men tended to give more valuable gifts than women. Gifts to non-kin were of lesser value than gifts to kin members. The study showed that the legal relationship between the parties can affect the number and the value of gifts given, and even whether a gift is given

at all.

Product Familiarity

Product familiarity has been studied in terms of information search behaviour (e.g., Brucks, 1985; Johnson and Russo, 1984). Brucks found that prior knowledge of a product class facilitated the acquisition of new information and increased search efficiency.

Johnson and Russo found that the effect of product familiarity depended on the decision strategy. Familiarity facilitated learning when consumers rated each alternative. However, when consumers were instructed to choose one alternative, an inverted U relationship between familiarity and information recalled occurred. The authors concluded that in a choice situation, higher levels of familiarity result in reduced search effort and therefore less learning. When the consumer is very familiar with the product category, extensive search effort is not necessary; incremental learning wanes after a certain point. These issues have not been studied in a gift purchase situation.

One of the motivations for buying a gift may be to strengthen or affirm the recipient's identity (see Otnes, 1990). Sometimes this is done by giving a gift which is linked to a special part of the recipient's personality. For example, if the recipient is an artist, the donor may wish to give an art supply item. The giver's specific knowledge of art supplies will affect how much information search he or she will conduct, especially in the store itself. The giver may approach a salesperson for advice or read the packaging very carefully to determine the uses of an item and whether it would be appropriate for the recipient.

Gift-Giving Experience

Previous gift-giving experience in terms of in-store information search has never been explicitly studied. As mentioned earlier, one gift selection strategy is simply to purchase the same or a similar item as was given in the past. Each time a giver presents a gift, he or she gains experience. The reaction of the receiver is monitored and stored in memory for future gift-giving occasions. At Christmas there are no special norms dictating the type of item to be given to certain people, such as there are for funerals, for example. Therefore, a giver must build experience to know what will be acceptable and well-received. Information search should be reduced with more experience. An inexperienced giver will likely have to spend much time researching gifts before making a purchase. Another factor affecting information search is the giver's experience with the product category for the gift itself, or product familiarity.

Belk (1979) alludes to experience in his study: shopping time "may have been shortened by the fact that over three-fourths of the gift-giving instances involved a recipient with whom the giver had exchanged gifts previously" (p. 108). A further study by Belk (1991) indicated general agreement among respondents that the nature of gift-giving changed over the course of a relationship. As a relationship progresses, the gifts given become more intimate and more costly to the giver. Although it was not mentioned in the study, there may be peak points where the intimacy declines (e.g., a new sewing machine for a wife of ten years versus lingerie for a wife of two years), or where the cost plateaus. The conclusion was that as the giver gains experience (watching reactions to previous gifts given as well as gaining a better understanding of the recipient's tastes), he or she can be

more sure of gift decisions in the future.

Psychographic and Demographic Variables

In addition to the situational variables described, the model proposed in this study allows for influences by psychographic and demographic variables, included under the personal characteristics heading. Existing research is now presented on these two topics as they relate to in-store search effort and Christmas gift shopping behaviour.

Psychographic Variables

Psychographic variables can be defined as personality traits or lifestyle characteristics that influence shopping behaviours. Very little research has been conducted on how such variables affect gift shopping behaviour. The most detailed analysis of psychographic variables was conducted by Otnes (1990). Three clusters were identified that discriminate between groups of people in terms of their extent and type of external information search for a Christmas gift. The clusters were: (a) selective searchers, who tend to prefer newspaper and magazine sources plus television commercials; (b) non-searchers, who tend to shun all available information sources while Christmas shopping; and (c) eclectic searchers, who make use of all information sources except television commercials and friends or family members. Unfortunately, no lifestyle variables were retained by the model as discriminators among the clusters of information searcher. However, the variables which did emerge in the factor analysis were: (a) attitude toward or liking for shopping, (b) tendency to use gifts for social bonding or identity formation, and (c) attitude toward the riskiness of gift-giving. As well, the mean for the "like Christmas" variable was lowest for the cluster described as eclectic searchers. Apparently,

people who conducted the most extensive and the broadest information search liked Christmas the least. Two possible explanations given by Otnes were that the extended search effort had a negative effect on attitude, or this group may have been more anxious about giving and thus had some negative feelings towards Christmas. It appears from this study that lifestyle does not discriminate between the three clusters that were found. However, the magnitude and direction of the means for liking to shop and the anxiety of gift-giving do indicate possible relationships with search behaviour.

Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) studied cognitive personality traits in terms of information acquisition. They concluded that higher self-esteem was related to information acquisition. People who were measured as having higher self-esteem examined more brand cues and alternatives across four product categories. The proposed reasoning was that people with higher self-esteem are more confident in their ability to evaluate alternatives and make purchase decisions, and perceive less risk during decision making.

Demographic Variables

In the study by Otnes (1990), some demographic variables were analyzed as potential discriminators between the clusters. The number of children, the age, and the education of the respondents were found to discriminate among cluster membership. Selective searchers had the most children. They also reported being very busy. This may explain why they searched for information from only a few sources. The eclectic searchers gathered information from a wide variety of sources, including in-store sources. This group was older, and had a higher income than the other groups although their education was not higher. They also reported more available hours per week to devote to various

activities. Therefore, Otnes noted that it is possible that these people may exert more effort for search activities simply because they have more time available to search.

Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) examined the influences of various demographics and personality traits on consumer information acquisition. The results confirmed that older consumers processed less information and examined fewer brand attributes than younger consumers, contradicting the results by Otnes (1990). Also, younger, more educated housewives who were earlier in the family life cycle and of higher social class examined more cues and alternatives.

In terms of gift-giving demographics, Caplow (1982) observed that the mean number of gifts given and received by a person was fairly constant throughout most of his or her adult life. However, Caplow described the "extremely unbalanced relationship between generations" (p. 391). Parents were expected to lavish their children with gifts, while the children were not expected to reciprocate equally, if at all. Further, the median number of gifts given and received by respondents younger than 60 ranged between 40 and 45 gifts for the Christmas of 1979. For those over 60, the median fell to 28 gifts.

Gender

The gender of the giver is an important factor in gift-giving. Fischer and Arnold (1990) concluded that women are much more involved in Christmas gift shopping than men. In their study, women gave more gifts, began shopping earlier, and spent more time shopping than men. Women also reported more success or satisfaction with their gift purchases. Rucker et al. (1991) found that females actually paid more for gifts on average than their male counterparts, although males tended to underestimate the partner's

contribution. In this study, males also placed more importance on price while females were more concerned whether both partners liked their gifts.

Cheal (1987) described the unequal participation of men and women in a gift-giving situation:

Men and women are not equal participants in this joint action. Men are more dependent upon co-operation with women than women are upon co-operation with men. Four-fifths (81 percent) of the gifts that men give are given with women (as a joint donation). On the other hand, just under half (49 percent) of the gifts that women give are given with men. Clearly, women are the principal actors in gift transactions. (p. 153)

That women are more involved or retain more of the traditional responsibility for gift-giving is repeated frequently throughout the literature. Sherry and McGrath (1989) defined gift shopping as "the work of women." They noted that the ritual transactions necessary to the maintenance of the domestic economy in traditional American society are conducted principally by women. Women continue to be responsible for maintaining relationships, particularly the family unit. Part of this responsibility is the purchasing of a major proportion of gifts and the organization of gift-giving ceremonies, such as Christmas, birthday parties, etc. Caplow (1982) reported that alone or jointly, females gave 84% of all the gifts recorded, but they received only 61%. Females gave evenly to male and female recipients, while male givers concentrated on female recipients. Of interest to the present study are gender differences pertaining to the use of in-store information sources while gift shopping, a topic which has been rarely addressed in the

literature.

Culture

In today's world where emigration is relatively easier and more common than has been the case historically, it is not surprising that a consumer's ethnicity is gaining prominence. This study was conducted in Montreal and its surrounding areas. The population in this geographical area can generally be divided into two predominant groups: the French and the English markets. As many studies have indicated, there exist significant consumption pattern differences between these two markets (e.g., Mallen, 1977; Schaninger et al., 1985; Hui et al., 1993). The markets are sufficiently different that certain promotional appeals may have differential effects across markets. The in-store shopping behaviours may also differ significantly. Saint-Jacques and Mallen (1981) noted that "language is not the only differentiating factor" (p. 10), and the entire culture, or the way of life, must be considered when comparing the two markets. "In order to get at the 'flavour' of a market, one must understand its cultural environment" (Mallen, 1977, p. 2).

Mallen (1977) defines three general traits differentiating the French-Canadian from the English-Canadian cultures: (a) the "sensate" trait involves the use of any or all of the five senses; (b) the "conservative" trait is described in the family orientation and brand loyalty; and (c) the "non-price rational" trait is concerned with factors such as price, the implication to health, and the medical efficacy of products. The non-price rational trait was seen as an outcome of the other two traits. Mallen suggested that cold, rational appeals, especially those based on price may have less effect on the French-Canadian market. However, a sensate appeal to sweet taste or nice smell would be more effective to French

as opposed to English Canadians. Likewise, a "family" appeal would be more effective than a convenience or career girl appeal. As well, French Canadians were found to be more brand loyal and less price sensitive.

Among other factors, Schaninger et al. (1985) studied the shopping behaviour and media exposure of French Canadians. They found that compared to English-speaking families, French-speaking families shopped at fewer independent grocery stores, read newspapers less often, and watched more television, however they did not appear to be more deal prone or price sensitive. This last finding is incongruent with Mallen's findings. Shopping at fewer, independent grocery stores supported the brand loyalty of French consumers. The general belief is that this more conservative, less price-sensitive attitude stems from the Catholic and minority roots of the French in Canada.

Past findings and conjectures were concisely summarized by Hui et al. (1993), regarding French- and English-Canadian lifestyle differences. Among them.

1. French-Canadians are more strongly oriented toward the home, the family, and children and the kitchen.
2. French Canadians are more brand loyal.
3. French Canadians are more fashion conscious and more concerned about personal appearance and home cleanliness.
4. French Canadian women are more religious ...
- ... 7. Views are mixed regarding the relative price sensitivity of French Canadians.

(p.19) .

The study involved an analysis of lifestyle patterns for four ethnic groups in Canada:

English, French, Italian, and Greek. Of primary interest to the present research are the results regarding English- and French-Canadians, as these are the two groups to be studied in this thesis. Compared with the other groups, English Canadians demonstrated less concern for children, less innovativeness, less opinion leadership, less fashion consciousness, greater price consciousness, liking for use of credit, and liking for canned foods. Meanwhile, French Canadians showed higher opinion leadership, tendencies to be a "homebody," greater fashion consciousness, less favourable attitudes toward cooking and baking, and (interestingly) less brand loyalty. Previous studies had shown that French Canadians were very brand and store loyal. This more recent research showed a clear reversal of this tendency. It is possible that the culture has changed in this regard from the time that the earlier studies were conducted.

No specific research literature was found pertaining to in-store information search or to Christmas shopping among French and English Canadians. Of greatest interest from the available findings is the strong religious background of French Canadians, which seems to have an impact on various aspects of their consumer behaviour, as well as on their general attitudes and values. Clearly, the Catholic root helps to strengthen their concern for family and children. As Christmas is a very important religious and family event, it should be expected that Catholics (ergo most French Canadians) will place a high importance on Christmas gift shopping, increasing their task involvement.

External Information Search

The focus of this study is the impact of situational, psychographic and demographic variables on in-store information search effort. A review of the literature on

external information search, particularly in relation to gift shopping, will now be presented.

Economists first viewed information search from a utility or cost-benefit perspective. Stigler (1961) proposed the then-novel theory that consumer information search behaviour influenced a market's price structure. In terms of price differentials, consumers seek information up to the point where the marginal cost of search equals or exceeds the marginal return. Urbany (1986) elaborated on this theory by examining the interaction effects on the number of stores visited of price dispersion, cost of search, and prior store knowledge. The results of the study were mixed, lending only partial support or contradicting the hypotheses. The results indicate that while they are broadly consistent with a cost-benefit model, the search process is much more complex. The model proposed by Urbany considered only the costs, savings, and gains of money or time. Social behaviourists have begun to study information search from different perspectives. In fact, the present study attempts to test relationships previously studied in other research as well as identify possible new influences on in-store information search behaviour.

In the marketing literature, Beatty and Smith (1987) conducted an extensive study of external search effort across several product categories. In their review of the information search literature, they identified a comprehensive list of external search effort determinants. Included in the major headings were: market environment, situational variables, potential payoff or product importance, knowledge and experience, individual differences, conflict resolution strategies, and cost of search. Some of these factors have been addressed in the gift selection literature. In terms of situational variables, time

pressure, social pressure, and budgets have been examined, while under product importance, perceived risk has been studied. In the Beatty and Smith study, four of the five hypotheses were supported. First, product class knowledge was negatively associated with total search effort across product categories. The more knowledgeable the consumer was about the product, the less search was necessary to make a decision. Second, time availability was positively associated with total search effort across product categories. Third, purchase involvement was positively associated with total search effort across product categories. This is generally supported in the gift literature, which concludes that for more involving gift purchase situations (e.g., the recipient is very important to the giver), more search effort is expended. Finally, individual attitudes toward shopping were positively associated with total search effort across product categories.

In-Store Information Sources

While there have been relatively few studies conducted on the use of in-store information sources, this research attempts to increase our understanding of this particular area. This section describes the existing literature and defines issues that have not been addressed in the gift literature.

Sales clerks are a valuable source of information within the store. They have been trained to answer questions about the merchandise, to persuade customers to buy, and to reassure customers about purchases in the store. For a gift selection, they may make suggestions about what the recipient might like, reducing the perceived risk for the giver. Sherry and McGrath (1989; see also McGrath, 1989) conducted an ethnographic study of two gift stores based on personal interviews with customers and salespeople. They

qualified the salesperson's actual role in this scenario as more subtle, never aggressive.

This potentially demonstrates that while salespeople can be informative, this source is not always accessed by the customer. Ryans (1977) found that for in-home gifts (gifts for people living with the respondent) versus personal use purchases, respondents reported a greater proportion of their information, after weighting sources by reported importance, was provided by in-store information sources (i.e., salesperson and store display).

However the findings for out-home gifts were not significant.

Store display is a second in-store information source which has been examined in terms of gift shopping. In the Sherry and McGrath study (1989), the merchandise display and store layout were investigated. The merchandise in certain areas of each store either sold well or did not, seemingly dependent on its location in the store. Both stores in the study frequently rearranged the merchandise, to maintain a fresh look. The informants reported looking diligently at items on display. Mattson (1982) found that broad product selection is extremely important to gift shoppers, particularly when choosing a second store to visit (perhaps when they have finished gathering information and are ready to make the actual purchase). Other merchandising possibilities, such as prominent signs, or special point of purchase displays, have not been studied in terms of gift purchases. Likewise, the effect of packaging for gift items has not been discussed in the literature. This thesis will attempt to address a variety of in-store information usage, including salespeople, pricing, display, signs, and packaging.

In conclusion, the literature has shown that gift purchases differ from personal use purchases in terms of (a) the motivations behind the purchase, (b) the kind and amount of

risk perceived, (c) the task involvement experienced, and (d) some of the external search strategies employed, including salesperson usage.

Variables found to affect information search strategy selection for a gift purchase include: (a) the motive for giving a gift; (b) the perceived social risk; (c) the perceived time pressure; (d) the closeness and difficulty of the recipient; (e) the extent to which the final choice has already been decided; (f) the giver's attitude toward shopping; (g) the giver's tendency to use gifts for social bonding or identity formation; (h) the giver's age, income, education, and number of children; (i) the giver's familiarity with the product; and (j) gender.

Other variables to consider that may relate to in-store information search effort include: (a) culture, (b) gift-giving experience, (c) cost of the gift, (d) availability and ease of access to in-store information sources, (e) the amount of category or brand selection, and (f) whether or not the giver is alone while shopping. In the following section, hypotheses are formulated based on the previous findings, and address issues that have not been studied in terms of in-store search effort for a gift purchase.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

A model was presented earlier in this chapter which expands on some of the previous research as well as narrows the focus of this study to external search strategies employed within the store environment while consumers are engaged in Christmas gift-buying tasks. The model is quite elaborate, allowing for the development of many research questions and hypotheses. Because this study is mainly an extension of the existing literature rather than exploratory research, it was deemed appropriate to examine specific

hypotheses rather than concentrate exclusively on more general research questions.

The posited hypotheses do not make up an exhaustive list, as more research questions emerged from the model than could possibly be examined in one study. A brief description of each of the twelve hypotheses that will be examined in this study will now be presented.

H1: Gifts intended for opposite sex recipients will result in greater in-store information search effort.

The first hypothesis refers to one aspect of the giver-recipient relationship. The needs and desires of a person of the opposite sex would likely be less understood than those of a same-sex person, making gift selection more difficult. It is logical, then, that search effort will increase when choosing a gift for someone of the opposite sex. Gender differences between the giver and the recipient have not been studied in terms of information search effort.

H2: Gifts intended for recipients regarded as difficult will result in greater in-store information search effort.

H3: Gifts intended for recipients regarded as psychologically "distant" will result in greater in-store information search effort.

While H2 is more general than H1, it also refers to the giver-recipient relationship. Actually, recipients of the opposite sex are often regarded as more difficult. It is posited here that for difficult recipients, the giver will attempt to gather specific information in the store that will help him or her make a decision. In this situation, the help of a salesperson may be especially beneficial, both in providing information as well as reducing dissonance by confirming the choice made (regardless of whether the salesperson's feedback is honest or not). Similar reasoning applies to H3. In a close relationship, the needs and desires of

the recipient are better understood, so less information is sought. Although Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992) examined various search strategies employed for difficult recipients, a comparison was not made between difficult and easy recipients. H2 will test the results obtained by Sprott and Miyazaki (1995); H3 will expand on the results obtained by Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) in terms of linking in-store information search with the closeness of the relationship.

H4: Relationships that the giver views as important will result in greater in-store information search effort.

This hypothesis is also related to the giver-recipient relationship as well as to the risk factor. A more important relationship increases the perceived risk of making a bad decision and therefore increases task involvement. In this situation, the giver should attempt to reduce risk by accessing more information before making a final decision. This hypothesis will attempt to provide conclusive evidence supporting the studies of Heeler et al. (1979), and Ryans (1977).

H5: Increased time pressure will result in greater in-store information search effort, as opposed to other external search effort.

As discussed in the literature review, there is often a high amount of time pressure felt while shopping for Christmas gifts. To combat some of this pressure, consumers may tend to rely more on information gathering within the store environment (salespeople could be particularly useful), rather than exerting effort in other pre-purchase information search activities. In fact, under time pressure, total information search should decrease; however, since gift purchases are inherently risky, some information search will be conducted. It is posited here that the information search conducted when the consumer is

pressed for time will mainly be conducted within the store. This hypothesis is based on a combination of the results of Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) who found that external information search time decreased with an increase in felt time pressure, and the results of Mattson (1982) who found that certain in-store information sources such as salespeople and broad product selection became more salient with an increase in felt time pressure. As well, Beatty and Smith (1987) found that total search effort increase with an increase in time availability, and Park et al. (1989) observed a decrease in the purchase of intended products with an increase in time pressure.

H6: Higher priced gift items will result in greater in-store information search effort.

It is expected that the results from this study will confirm the results found in many other studies regarding price and information search (see Beatty and Smith, 1987). To help compensate for the higher risk involved in purchasing a higher-priced item, the consumer will gather more information prior to choosing a gift. This hypothesis will attempt to clarify the results found by Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) who found that higher priced gifts resulted in greater external information search, and Urbany (1986) who observed higher search effort when price dispersion was low and the cost to search was low.

H7: Higher knowledge level of the gift product category will result in less in-store information search effort.

Previous knowledge about the product category should reduce the need for extensive information search before making a final decision. It would seem logical that a consumer who is already familiar with the product will not need to gather as much

information in the store as would a consumer who is unfamiliar with the product, although the literature is contradictory and the exact nature of the relationship is ambiguous (see Brucks, 1985; Grønhaug, 1972; and Johnson and Russo, 1984). An example in the context of this study would be a husband who wants to buy underwear for his wife as a Christmas gift. The wife will already know from past purchases what brand, colour, size, and the approximate price of the underwear she wants. The husband, however, will likely be unfamiliar with this product category and will need more information before he can make a final decision.

H8: Shopping with a helpful companion will decrease the use of in-store information search effort.

It is hypothesized here that a consumer who shops with a trusted companion will substitute in-store information sources with the companion's advice. For example, the companion would replace a store clerk as an information resource. The companion must be one whose advice and opinions are trusted by the purchaser. Sherry and McGrath (1989) noted that often couples will shop together, however the decisions are made by the women and the opinions of the men are not requested or are not regarded as meaningful. Therefore shopping with a companion who is helpful should reduce the amount of information accessed by the purchaser in the store.

H9: Less prior external search for the current purchase will result in greater in-store information search effort.

It would appear logical that a consumer who has gathered less information prior to visiting the store will want to make up for this lack of information by conducting more in-store search. Returning to the example of the husband purchasing underwear for his wife,

the husband could: (a) research the product by looking at advertisements or asking his wife questions prior to visiting the store, or (b) ask the advice of a salesperson, compare pricing and colours, and gather other information in the store. For a gift purchase, the consumer will generally tend to reduce the risk by gathering information. If less information has been sought through previous external search, the consumer should conduct more information search within the store. This hypothesis applies the Johnson and Russo (1984) theory of a U-shaped relationship between familiarity and learning.

H10: Easily accessible in-store information sources will have higher usage.

In line with traditional cost-benefit considerations, the information sources that are more easily accessible will be used more than those requiring more effort by the consumer. For example, a consumer who shops for a gift in a warehouse type outlet will not be able to consult a salesperson for information because this service is not offered in this type of store environment.

H11: Greater gift and brand selection will result in higher in-store information search effort.

This is rather straightforward. When there is a large selection of items or brands from which a consumer may choose, the consumer would spend more time comparing. When there is more choice, there is a greater amount of information which can be readily accessed (e.g., price comparison), hence the consumer will be more likely to use the information available.

H12: Women will conduct more in-store information search than will men.

Since women have more gift-shopping experience, they may be more confident.

However it has been shown that many men tend to shop for gifts which have been previously specified by women. Since the item has already been specified, there would be no need to conduct much information search within the store environment. It is hypothesized here that on average men will spend less effort in the store searching for information about intended gifts. Although women carry more of the gift shopping burden (Caplow, 1982; Cheal, 1987; and Sherry and McGrath, 1989), and may be more time constrained, Fischer and Arnold (1990) found that women started shopping for Christmas gifts earlier and they also spent more time shopping than men.

As a more general research question, it is also posited here that certain personal characteristics will influence the amount and the type of in-store information search conducted by a gift purchaser. This research will be conducted in an exploratory manner, rather than testing specific hypotheses concerning explicit personal characteristics.

These hypotheses were developed in conjunction with the research instrument and the selection of the statistical procedures. The research method and design are addressed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

Gift consumers were surveyed by means of a questionnaire that considered situational, demographic, psychographic, and in-store information search variables. Correlational, analysis of variance, and regression statistics were employed to determine relationships between the variables.

To examine the research questions and test the hypotheses defined at the end of chapter II, it was necessary to design an appropriate research method that would effectively meet the objectives of the study. This involved: (a) proposing a model as a theoretical basis for this study; (b) choosing the research method; (c) selecting a sample, and (d) developing a reliable and valid research instrument. The model is described in Chapter II. The remainder of this chapter will detail the study's methodology and design.

Research Design

The goals of this research were two-fold: hypothesis-testing and exploratory. The purposes of exploratory studies are: (a) to identify significant variables in the situation, (b) to discover relationships among variables, and (c) to lay the groundwork for further systematic study and hypothesis-testing (Kerlinger, 1986). In addition to meeting the objectives of the research, the method ultimately chosen had to meet certain criteria (adapted from Otnes, 1990). A method was sought that:

- 1) allows for a large number of independent and dependent variables to be examined simultaneously;
- 2) provides appropriate data for analysis regarding the research questions;

- 3) could be subjected to both reliability and validity tests;
- 4) allows for the efficient gathering of data to minimize the effects of memory over time among respondents (i.e., will the respondent remember a situation that occurred more than two months before the time of the survey); and
- 5) allows sufficient data to be gathered for reliability, given time, money, and labour constraints.

To meet the above criteria, it was decided that a quantitative analysis technique should be used. While some qualitative information might have been useful in identifying unfamiliar issues, time constraints prevented the exploitation of any qualitative analysis as a preliminary tool. Consequently, focus groups and other exploratory pre-test devices were not employed. A qualitative method alone would not provide sufficiently reliable or valid information to answer the research questions. There exist numerous quantitative analysis techniques from which to choose, all appropriate for a study of this scope. Of all types of studies, field studies are closest to real life (Kerlinger, 1986). The theories established in a field study can be applied in realistic settings. A serious weakness of field research is its nonexperimental character, lacking control mechanisms. Notwithstanding the weaknesses, it was decided that a field survey would be most appropriate for this study. Information was obtained through the vehicle of a self-administered questionnaire. The data obtained is limited by the extent to which the respondents understood or were willing to answer the questions contained in the questionnaire. Cause-and-effect relationships cannot be proven when using this type of instrument, although relationships can be determined.

Due to the very large number of variables in the model, it was decided that factor analysis would be a necessary first step in the data analysis. The main objective of a factor analysis technique is to reduce data into a smaller, more meaningful, set of components. In addition, it helps improve reliability by combining single-item variables into factors. Therefore, a research method that provides data which can be factored was required. This addresses the first and second criteria as enumerated above.

Once factors are obtained for each of the constructs described in the model, the relationships between the factors form the basis of the research. To test the relationships described in the hypotheses, correlations test for significant relationships and indicate direction, and analysis of variance or t-tests examine significant relationships between the dependent variable and a selected independent variable. Regression analysis is an accepted data analytic technique used to examine the existence and size of relationships between variables. It was thus determined that regression analysis would be the most appropriate tool for analyzing the data in this study. Simple or multiple regressions can be used to examine the size of a relationship between two or more variables. The factors would be used as inputs for the regression analyses. Factor, analysis of variance, and regression analyses can be subjected to statistical tests of reliability and validity (the third research method criterion). The computer statistical package used for the data input and analysis was SPSS for Windows. This package was readily available and familiar to the researcher.

The Sample

The sample selected was required to satisfy the fourth and fifth research method criteria, namely to allow for the efficient gathering of data while minimizing the memory

effects; and to allow sufficient data to be gathered for reliability, given time, money, and labour constraints. The data collection was confined to the city of Montreal, Quebec, and its surrounding area. Due to the bilingual nature of the area, it was possible to collect data from both the English and the French populations. In light of the differences in consumption habits between the two cultures, conducting the study in Montreal provided obvious advantages. Given the nature and purpose of this research, a demographically diverse sample of adults was determined to be most appropriate.

Survey Instrument

The self-report questionnaire is shown in Appendix A. Self-administration was chosen as the most efficient method in terms of time, labour, and cost considerations. Telephone administration was deemed too time and labour intensive. Likewise, personal interviews posed logistical as well as time and money problems. The survey questionnaires were distributed personally, necessitating that return postage be pre-paid. Although this method increased the costs of the study, it was considered necessary because each questionnaire required approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Three sets of items were required to address the hypotheses. The questionnaire was therefore divided into three parts: situation, personal, and demographic subsections. Part I consisted of a total of 46 questions designed to measure the respondent's actual situation during the purchase of a specific Christmas gift, as well as his or her use of in-store information sources for the same purchase. It was deemed that the data would be too complex to analyze if more than one type of Christmas gift was involved, as the type of gift may have an effect on the dependent variables. Thus, respondents were requested

to think of a particular gift of clothing that they had actually purchased for Christmas. Clothing was selected because a review of the literature indicated that clothing was the most popular type of gift purchased, particularly at Christmas (Belk, 1979; Caplow, 1982).

The variables measured in Part I were: giver/receiver relationship variables, perceived risk, gift-giving experience, product familiarity, felt time pressure, budget variables, previous external search, and the store environment, plus the dependent variable: in-store information search. While the motive for the gift purchase is shown as a variable in the proposed model, it has been established for the purpose of this study, namely the Christmas occasion. All but three of the questions in this sub-part of the survey were expressed using a 10-point Likert scale. The first 37 questions addressed purchase-specific situational variables. These included a variety of randomly-placed questions about the situational variables. It was expected that the responses to these questions could be factored into smaller sets for easier analysis and greater reliability. The next nine questions were each intended to measure the dependent variables, actual in-store information search conducted by the respondent for the specific Christmas gift purchase. The dependent variables could also be factored for further analysis. Included among the nine questions was a single question regarding the respondent's overall evaluation of his or her total in-store information search. This can be used as a single-measure item or to check against the other items.

Part II, comprising 61 questions, was designed to measure the personal characteristic variables indicated in the model. The first fifty-two and the last four

questions (total 56 questions) in Part II of the instrument were designed to measure various aspects of an individual's tastes, preferences, or attitudes, that could be related to that person's Christmas shopping behaviour. Most of these questions were adapted from the instrument used by Hui et al. (1993) in their study of the lifestyle characteristics of four separate cultures found in the Greater Montreal area. Other questions relating specifically to Christmas or gift shopping, and attitude toward time pressure were either invented or adapted from the instrument used by Otnes (1990).

In addition, five other questions were included which were designed to measure various aspects of the respondent's total Christmas shopping experience. These were: (a) the total number of gift recipients for the respondent during the 1994 Christmas season; (b) the total amount spent on these gifts; (c) the start and (d) the finish of the gift-shopping period; and (e) the total number of gift-shopping trips made.

As in Part I, the data collected in this subsection of the questionnaire will be factored into fewer variables. The five questions relating to the total Christmas experience were included as exploratory questions. They will be analyzed individually to gauge whether any relationships exist between these variables and either the dependent variable or certain independent variables.

The third and final part of the survey instrument concentrated on demographic variables. Language and culture, as described in the culture section of Chapter II, play a very important role in Christmas shopping. Thus it was necessary to accurately measure the primary language used by the respondent, as well as some cultural aspects, particularly those relating to religion. The first question involved evaluating the usage frequency of

English, French and other languages across several different activities. The next section of 24 questions, on a 10-point Likert scale, requested information on the respondent's perceptions of language and religion. These questions were all taken directly from the instrument used by Hui et al. (1993).

Finally, standard demographic information was requested. Questions included information about the respondent's gender, age, marital status, household income, place of residence, place of birth, number of years lived in Quebec, education, and occupation. Additional questions included the family size, and the age of the youngest child at home. These questions were deemed important in view of the existing literature which indicated a strong sense of family and children during the Christmas gift-giving experience.

The questionnaire was first written in English, then translated into French by the researcher, except for questions that were taken from the study by Hui et al. (1993), which were already available in French. All questions were subsequently verified for spelling, grammar, and interpretation. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, there was no opportunity to further verify the French by translating these questions back into English, although each question was checked for content and meaning by two French-speaking people.

Administration of the Survey

Data collection was conducted as follows: beginning the day after Christmas day, December 25, 1994, the author and one research assistant individually approached households on randomly selected streets in various neighborhoods in the Montreal area; a brief description of the study was given to an adult who answered the door and that

person's help was solicited; a questionnaire written in either French or English (the respondent's choice) was left with the respondent to be completed and mailed back (postage-paid) at his or her convenience. An alternative procedure was also employed: individuals were approached randomly in the hallways of a large shopping mall (a mall-intercept technique); the same description of the study was given and accordingly their help solicited; once again the questionnaire was to be mailed back at the respondent's convenience. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose and benefits of the study, as well as emphasizing that participation was anonymous and strictly voluntary. To lend more credibility to the study, the cover letter was co-signed by both the researcher and the supervising professor, accompanied by the professor's business telephone number.

Equal numbers of English and French respondents were sought. A total of 1026 questionnaires were distributed using the procedures described earlier; 493 in English and 533 in French. It was deemed that this would yield a sufficient response. For the scope of this study, a minimum of 150 respondents in each language was desired. All the questionnaires were distributed between December 26, 1994, and February 12, 1995. Beyond the latter date, interest among potential respondents had substantially diminished, and it was considered that memory effects could alter the results. Questionnaires were distributed in a large shopping mall in the west end of Montreal plus various municipalities in Montreal and the surrounding area, as shown in Table 1. The distribution of the questionnaire at the shopping mall provided a very broad sampling of respondents from various geographical areas. Table 1 also summarizes the number of respondents from each

municipality.

Due to the bilingual nature of Montreal, some English-speaking respondents returned questionnaires written in French, and vice-versa. Thus, it was necessary to evaluate the primary language spoken by the respondent, rather than rely solely on the language of the questionnaire returned. For this purpose, the first three scaled questions of Part III of the questionnaire were used. Table 2 provides the breakdown of French and English respondents, as well as the overall return rates.

Following the data collection, responses were coded and entered directly into a data file in SPSS for windows. The data file was ready for examination by June, 1995. Input errors were corrected at this point, and the data were subsequently ready for analysis.

Chapter IV will discuss the procedures used to assess the reliability and validity of this study. The data analyses and results will be discussed in Chapter V.

Table 1
Questionnaire Distribution

<u>Municipality</u>	<u>No. Distributed</u>
Anjou	71
Boucherville	27
Longueuil	71
Candiac	95
Westmount	49
St-Bruneau	78
Nun's Island	88
Laval	8
St-Hubert	44
Montreal West	7
Montreal	13
Beaconsfield	66
Pointe Claire	9
Dollard des Ormeaux	48
Lachine	47
Notre Dame de Grace	10
Fairview Shopping Center (Pointe Claire)	<u>295</u>
Total	1026

Table 2
Returned Questionnaires

	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Total</u>
Number of questionnaires distributed:	493	533	1026
Number of questionnaires received by mail:	N/A	N/A	408
Number of usable questionnaires:	168	198	366
Rate of return:	34%	37%	36%
Percent of total sample:	46%	54%	100%

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

In this chapter, the factor analyses conducted on Parts I and II of the data will be described. Descriptive statistics will then be given for the sample as a whole, as well as for subsets of the sample, followed by the correlation and t-test analyses performed to test the hypotheses. Finally, the results of the regression analyses will be presented.

Factor Analysis

In addition to reducing the data into a smaller, more meaningful set of components, the reliability of the data can be improved by factoring the data. The factors that emerged from the analysis were subsequently used as indices measuring the various constructs described in the model. The method will now be detailed and the results described for the factor analyses run for the psychographic, situational, and in-store search effort variables.

Method

To begin, a factor analysis (FA) was run using certain sections of the data. The entire data set could not be used for a general FA because it was too large. Thus, separate FAs were conducted to confirm measurement of the model constructs. The first constructs to be determined fell under the heading of personal characteristics. All of the scaled questions in Part II of the questionnaire, except questions concerning attitude toward time pressure, were included in the analysis. The FA was completed using the principal components method and varimax rotation. Subsequently, a reliability analysis was run for each factor, individual items were purified, and the FA was repeated with the remaining

items. For the personal characteristics constructs, this procedure required only two FA runs. The same procedure was used to obtain factors for the remaining constructs in the model. For these, a FA was run using all of the scaled questions in Part I of the questionnaire except for the nine in-store information search questions, as well as three questions from Part II regarding time pressure. In addition to these three items, a total of 34 situation-related questions were included in this analysis.

Psychographic Factors

For the personal characteristics analysis, thirteen factors were identified, after deleting seven of the original 52 items and recoding certain items accordingly. Eigenvalues were greater than 1.0 for each of the factors. The highest eigenvalue (for the first factor) was 6.94. Table 3 lists the thirteen factors, with their respective Cronbach's alphas, plus the retained items and their respective factor loadings. For future analyses, the mean of each factor will be used as the construct measure.

Particularly considering that this was a field study, the results of the factor analysis were pleasing. Factor loadings for each item in the thirteen factors were high: although the lowest factor loading was 0.40; more than half of the loadings were greater than 0.70. As well, most of the Cronbach's alphas were high, ranging from 0.91 for traditional Christmas lover to 0.46 for brand loyal. Labeling the factors was relatively easy, and the grouping of the items was satisfactory.

Table 3
Factors for Personal Characteristics

<u>Description</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cronbach</u> <u>Alpha</u>	<u>Factor</u> <u>Loading</u>
Traditional Christmas Lover	- I am strongly attached to all the Christmas traditions.	0.9136	0.87878
	- I love the Christmas season.		0.848890
	- I look forward to Christmas every year.		0.84528
	- Christmas is my favorite time of the year		0.81616
	- When it comes to Christmas, I follow all the traditional customs of the season		0.81416
	- It is important to get into the Christmas spirit by participating in the season's traditional activities		0.71791
Generics Buyer	- Generic products provide good value for what I pay.	0.7882	0.83412
	- Generics are often as good as advertised brands.		0.83110
	- Generics (no-name brands) are not much different from name brands except for the packaging		0.75256
Influencer	- I sometimes influence what my friends buy.	0.7776	0.76993
	- People come to me more often than I go to them for information on brands		0.76985
	- I often try new brands before my friends and neighbours do.		0.64689
	- My friends and/or neighbours often come to me for advice.		0.61888
Fashion Conscious	- An important part of my life and activities is dressing smartly	0.7652	0.78183
	- I usually have one or more outfits that are of the latest style		0.75550
Leader	- I think I possess more self-confidence than most people	0.7484	0.80548
	- I am more independent than most people		0.73216
	- I like to be considered a leader		0.72643
Shopper	- Christmas shopping is one of my least favorite activities.	0.7372	0.64318
	- I love to shop all year around		0.62846
	- I love to Christmas shop		0.51924
Bargain Hunter	- In general I shop a lot for "specials" or discounts	0.7313	0.80290
	- I am willing to spend more time shopping in order to find bargains		0.72507
	- A person can save a lot of money by shopping around or bargains		0.69114
Importance of Children	- I take a lot of time and effort to teach my children good habits	0.7090	0.77886
	- My children are the most important thing in my life		0.76121
	- I try to arrange my home for my children's convenience.		0.69311
	- When my children are ill in bed, I drop everything else to see to their comfort		0.68547
Thoughtful Giver	- I conduct a lot of research about what the person would enjoy before I go shopping at Christmas	0.7025	0.68835
	- I watch carefully the people I'm buying gifts for, to see what they would really like.		0.66759
	- I like to put a lot of thought into the gifts I buy		0.56120
	- I would feel really bad if I bought someone a gift that they did not like		0.54372
	- I often worry about what can happen if I buy a Christmas gift for someone and they do not like it		0.49030
Identity Shaper	- I often give Christmas gifts that help to shape the recipient's personality	0.6580	0.81888
	- I often give Christmas presents to people in order to reinforce some aspect of their identity		0.75920
Budget-Buster	- I always stick to my budget when buying gifts for others (reversed)	0.5866	0.62710
	- Price is the last thing I consider when I am buying a gift		0.62471
	- I am willing to spend more money for a gift the recipient will really like		0.58528
	- If an item is too expensive, I will not buy it as a gift (reversed)		0.55639
Innovator	- When I see a new brand on the shelf I often buy it	0.5601	0.73468
	- I often buy other brands to see if they are better than the brand I typically buy		0.72336
	- I like to try new and different things		0.40189
Brand Loyal	- I usually end up buying the same brand over and over.	0.4597	0.67879
	- I do not buy brands that I have never tried before.		0.67723
	- I feel there is a risk in choosing a brand other than the one I am familiar with		0.65099

Among the factors obtained for the lifestyle measures, a few of them can be related to the previous research. Otnes (1990) found that eclectic searchers may not like Christmas; traditional Christmas lovers was the first factor identified. Also relating to the variables studied by Otnes, the data revealed factors for shoppers and identity shapers. Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981) related information search effort with self-esteem. The data here identified factors measuring influencers, leaders, and innovators. These three personal characteristics could be related to an individual's self-esteem.

Situational Factors

Measuring the situational variables, factors were obtained for perceived time pressure ($\alpha = 0.79$), perceived risk ($\alpha = 0.46$), and product familiarity ($\alpha = 0.42$). Relating these factors back to the top row of the proposed model, the time pressure factor measured the time pressure construct; the perceived risk factor measured both the perceived risk construct plus the importance of the giver-receiver relationship; and the product familiarity factor measured a part of the experience construct. Other aspects of these constructs were not reliably measured by the factors, and thus were subsequently analyzed using single item measures. The results of the factor analysis for all of the situational constructs are summarized in Table 4. It had been hoped that more giver-recipient and perceived risk variables would be generated in the factor analysis. Unfortunately, the data did not reliably measure the anticipated concepts. While the factor loading for the three factors were all high, Chronbach's alphas for perceived risk and product familiarity were merely acceptable.

Table 4
Factors for Situational Variables

<u>Description</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cronbach Alpha</u>	<u>Factor Loading</u>
List	- The recipient gave me a list to choose from. - I bought this item from a list given to me by the recipient.	0.8666	0.93070 0.91366
Helpful Companion	- I was shopping with someone else who helped me in choosing this clothing gift. - While I was shopping in the store, I consulted with a friend in choosing the clothing gift.	0.8107	0.91280 0.90213
Time Pressure	- When I am Christmas shopping, I am always pressed for time. - I always feel rushed while Christmas shopping - There is never enough time to get all of the Christmas shopping done.	0.7916	0.85406 0.85390 0.78034
Costly Gift	- This clothing gift was very expensive. - The budget for this gift of clothing was higher than I usually set for other Christmas gifts. - The cost of the actual gift exceeded my budget for it	0.7694	0.83958 0.81205 0.79130
Strict Budget	- I had a definite budget in mind before shopping for this clothing gift - I was reluctant to exceed my budget for this gift - Money was no object for this particular clothing gift (reversed)	0.7414	0.84759 0.80409 0.74245
Pre-determined Gift Selection	- I knew exactly what to buy for this recipient - I had no idea what I was going to get as a gift for this person before I started shopping (reversed) - I had everything decided about the garment before I got to the store	0.7087	0.80656 0.79639 0.75168
Access to Info Sources	- Everything I needed to know about the clothing item was available in the store. - The salesclerks in the store were readily available if I needed any help. - The pricing of items in the store was easy to find	0.5849	0.79462 0.73932 0.65236
Perceived Risk	- I will not like the consequences if the recipient does not like the clothing gift. - It is very important that I get just the right gift for this recipient	0.4600	0.81812 0.72060
Comparison / Selection	- There were many brands to choose from once I had decided what to buy for this recipient. - It was very easy to shop around and compare other similar clothing items	0.4354	0.83087 0.70359
Product Familiarity	- I am not very familiar with this type of clothing (reversed) - I have bought this type of clothing often in the past	0.4249	0.81843 0.70125

In terms of a budget for the gift, two factors were obtained: costly gift ($\alpha = 0.77$) and strict budget ($\alpha = 0.74$). The actual cost of the gift was measured by a single item. The costly gift factor measured the respondent's perception of the gift's value compared with the budget or other gifts. The strict budget factor measured the respondent's conviction to stay within the budget for the gift. The factor loadings for both of these factors were very high, lending confidence to the measures for the budget constructs.

We were also interested in the other external search in which the giver participated. Three useable factors were obtained: the giver received help from a companion ($\alpha = 0.81$), the selection was pre-determined ($\alpha = 0.71$), and selection was aided by use of a list ($\alpha = 0.87$). The companion and list factors are self-explanatory. Pre-determined selection means that the respondent had decided at least some of the aspects of the gift before visiting the store. Again, the results here were notable. The alphas were all over 0.70, and the factor loadings were all greater than 0.75.

This study concerned the external search conducted within the store for the gift. It was therefore important to know whether the store environment was conducive to external search effort, and whether the store environment provided easy access to information sources. Two reliable factors were generated to address these two aspects: access to in-store information sources ($\alpha = 0.58$) and selection/comparison availability ($\alpha = 0.44$). Concerning the store environment, the instrument was designed to measure precisely these two constructs. These results were therefore well received, regardless of the relatively low alphas. The factor loadings were nevertheless quite respectable.

In-Store Information Search Effort Factors

Recall that the dependent variable in this study was in-store information search effort. To this end, nine scaled questions were incorporated into the questionnaire. An exploratory FA was run on these nine items. In the final analysis, two factors emerged: search for general information ($\alpha = 0.83$), and search for specific information ($\alpha = 0.83$). For a summary, see Table 5. The general information was obtained through such sources as the store display, signs, and brand selection. Specific information was accessed through the manufacturer's label and the item's packaging. Both of these constructs involve information search that can be conducted alone by the giver, with no interaction with other people. Information accessed from a salesclerk (requiring personal interaction) was measured separately by a single item, as was a general question on the overall amount of information sought for the particular gift. Chronbach's alphas for the two factors were very high, both around 0.83. Correspondingly, the loadings on each factor were also high. While a breakdown among different types of in-store information search had not been anticipated, this is an interesting finding. In all further analyses, the in-store information search construct will be categorized by three variables: general in-store information search effort (a factor), specific information search effort (a factor), and information search effort through store sales personnel (a single item).

In summary, reliable and significant factors were found for psychographic and situational variables, as well as for in-store information search effort. Most of the factor loadings and Chronbach's alphas were appreciatively high. Results for the psychographic variables were robust; results for the situational variables were satisfactory; and results for

the in-store information search variables were interesting.

Table 5
Identified Factors for
In-Store Information Search Effort

<u>Description</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Cronbach</u> <u>Alpha</u>	<u>Factor</u> <u>Loading</u>
General	- I looked at all the items in the display area where I bought the gift.	0.8330	0.83537
Information	- I walked around the store looking at the display of all merchandise.		0.79783
Search	- I checked all the prices very carefully.		0.76146
	- I spent a lot of time comparing the brands of clothing items in the store.		0.68931
	- I read all the signs around the display area.		0.58128
Specific Info	- I very carefully read the manufacturer's label.	0.8336	0.89553
Search	- I very carefully examined the packaging information.		0.84185
Single item measuring sales clerk usage:			
Sales Clerk	- I received a lot of help from the salesclerk.	N/A	N/A

Descriptive Statistics

The statistics describing the sample were examined for two purposes. The first purpose was simply to describe the demographic composition of the sample for this study. The second purpose was to determine whether significant differences existed between French and English respondents, requiring a separation of the sample in further analyses for situational control. A non-homogeneous sample set would necessitate dividing the sample into the two groups.

The crosstabulation (crosstab) technique was used to test for differences between the French and English respondents based on various demographic variables. The significance level considered for the Pearson statistic was 0.05. In some cases, the data categories were collapsed into smaller groups from the original responses. Frequencies and basic descriptives were also examined for certain variables. A brief description of the results for each of the variables examined will now be presented. Crosstab tables with corresponding Pearson statistics for each of the variables discussed are provided in Table 6.

Age

In terms of the age of the sample, significant differences existed between the French and English respondents. Generally, the French respondents were concentrated in the mid-range categories, between 30 and 49 years old, while the English respondents were more evenly distributed.

Table 6
Crosstab Results

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Range</u>	<u>English (%)</u>	<u>French (%)</u>	<u>Total (%)</u>	<u>Pearson (sig.)</u>
Age	0 - 29 years	22.6	18.1	20.0	0.0032 (a)
	30 - 39	18.7	35.2	28.2	
	40 - 49	31.6	29.5	30.4	
	50 +	27.1	17.1	21.4	
Gender	female	82.6	74.3	77.8	0.5942
	male	17.4	25.7	22.2	
Marital status	single	25.5	12.9	18.2	0.0034 (a)
	wid. / sep. / div.	9.8	7.1	8.3	
	married	64.7	80.0	73.6	
Education	up to high school	22.6	16.1	18.9	0.0821
	CEGEP / college	29.7	24.6	26.8	
	univ / grad.	47.7	59.2	54.4	
Occupation	white collar	55.8	69.5	63.9	0.0185 (a)
	blue/pink collar	18.8	17.5	18.0	
	student	10.1	6.5	8.0	
	other	15.2	6.5	10.1	
Employment status	full-time	55.8	64.8	61.0	0.2263
	part-time	13.0	10.5	11.5	
	at home	31.2	14.3	27.5	
Household income	0 - 19 999	11.2	2.6	5.3	0.0000 (a)
	20 000 - 39 999	18.9	8.3	12.8	
	40 000 - 59 999	28.7	19.8	23.6	
	60 000 +	41.3	69.3	57.3	
Family size	1 person	8.6	2.4	5.0	0.0091 (a)
	2 people	16.6	22.2	19.8	
	3 people	14.6	22.2	19.0	
	4 or more people	60.3	53.1	56.1	
	1 - 2 people	25.2	24.6	24.9	0.9091
	3 or more people	74.8	75.4	75.1	

(a) indicates significance at 0.05.

Gender

There were no significant differences between the French and English sample sets regarding gender. Most of the respondents for this survey were female (about three quarters of the total sample). This is appropriate for the purposes of this study, because it has been shown that women are the primary Christmas shoppers in the family unit. Gender may still be used as an independent variable, using the sample as a whole, to test for relationships with in-store information search effort.

Marital Status

Significantly more English respondents were single, and more French respondents were married. Only about 8% of the total sample indicated a widowed, separated, or divorced status. The single status of the English subset is not very surprising when education and occupation are considered.

Education

Although no significant differences were found in terms of education, the whole sample was fairly well-educated, and the French seemed to be slightly more so. Fifty-nine percent of French respondents were university graduates, as opposed to 48% of English respondents.

Occupation and Employment Status

About 10% of the English respondents listed their occupation as student, as opposed to only 6% of the French respondents. Complementing the significant differences in occupation, significantly more English respondents were not employed (31% versus 14% for the French). Slightly more French respondents were employed full time, and

slightly fewer worked part time. As well, there were more white collar workers among the French respondents, which is further supported by the income findings.

Income

Almost 70% of the French sample set indicated household earnings over \$60 000, while only 41% of English families earned this much. Significantly more English respondents earned less than \$40 000 or less than \$20 000 per year. In general, the English respondents were still concentrated in the higher income levels, however not nearly as much as were the French.

Family Size and Age of the Youngest Child

There was no significant difference between the groups in terms of families with children and families without: about one quarter of the sample were families of one or two people only, and the remainder had three or more people in the household. It was loosely decided that a family of three or more indicated the presence of children. Significantly more English respondents indicated only one person in the household. Again, this matches the single status observed among the English group. There was no difference in terms of the age of the youngest child. The average age of the youngest child was 10 years old.

Giver-Receiver Relationship Variables

Table 7 exhibits the results for the remainder of the demographic variables examined. Almost 70% of the gifts given in this survey were given to a member of the opposite sex. Nearly 80% were to primary kin, 10% to secondary kin, and the remaining to non-kin. The gifts were mostly given by the respondent alone (70%), as opposed to gifts given by two or more people.

Cost

The average cost for the clothing gifts described in the survey was \$93.00, however the range was very large, from a minimum of \$5.00 to \$1400.00. The standard deviation for this variable was 128. Three quarters of the gifts in the survey cost less than \$100.00.

The 1994 Christmas Season

For the entire 1994 Christmas season, about half of the respondents spent less than \$500.00 on total gift purchases, to an average of 10 people for each respondent. About 65% of all respondents had started shopping for Christmas gifts by the end of November; the remainder began shopping in December.

Summary

Sufficient significant differences existed between the French and English respondents to justify separating the two groups for the regression analyses. Differences were observed for age, marital status, occupation, income, and family size. The two groups were similar in terms of gender, education, employment status, and the age of the youngest child.

Table 7
Descriptive Statistics

Age of youngest child:			
no significance between French and English groups (t-test)			
	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Total</u>
mean age:	10.9 years	9.8 years	10.2 years
 Pertaining to the clothing gift described in the survey:			
1) the gift was given to:	primary kin		78.4%
	secondary kin		9.9
	tertiary kin		0.3
	non kin		11.5
	same sex recipient		31.9%
	opposite sex recipient		68.1
2) the gift was given by:	the respondent alone		70%
	two or more people		30
3) the cost of the gift was:	<u>minimum</u>	<u>maximum</u>	<u>mean</u>
	\$5.	\$1400.	\$95.
			<u>standard deviation</u>
			128
		<u>cumulative percent</u>	
	under \$25.	10%	
	under \$40.	25	
	under \$60.	50	
	under \$100.	75	
	under \$500.	98	
4) total trips made for the 1994 Christmas shopping season:	<u>number of trips</u>	<u>percent of sample</u>	<u>cumulative percent</u>
	0 - 3 trips	22.1%	22.1%
	4 - 6 trips	34.7	56.8
	7 - 9 trips	23.0	79.8
	10 + trips	20.2	100.0

Partial Correlations and T-tests

Two-tailed partial correlations were run using the three information search variables plus selected relevant variables, and controlling for language (anglophone versus francophone). These correlations examined direct relationships between in-store search strategies and items designed to measure the variables described in the stated hypotheses. The results are presented in Table 8, and will be discussed in relation to each hypothesis in the ensuing paragraphs. In addition, T-tests and analysis of variance (ANOVA) procedures were applied to the three in-store search variables and the same independent variables as for the partial correlations.

The Giver-Recipient Relationship: H1 to H4

The first hypothesis states that Christmas gift shoppers will search more when the item is intended for a member of the opposite sex. The results from the partial correlations show that, when language is controlled, the recipient's gender makes no significant impact on any of the in-store search strategies. The t-test comparing the means between general in-store information search and the opposite sex item showed that a significant relationship existed. Apparently, more effort was expended in the store searching for general information when the recipient was the same sex as the giver. This contradicts the hypothesis. Only one significant relationship was observed, and it was not supported by the partial correlations. This indicates that when language has already been considered, the effect of the recipient's gender did not make a sufficient additional impact on search effort. The results, therefore, are fairly weak.

Table 8
Partial Correlation Results and ANOVA Significance

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>	<u>D.F.</u>	<u>General Info</u>	<u>Specific Info</u>	<u>Sales Clerk</u>
	General Info	5		1.0000		
	Specific Info	2	363	.4231 .000	1.0000	
	Sales Clerk	1	363	.0754 .151	.0305 .562	1.0000
H1	Same sex recipient	1	295	-.0958 .100 (.048)	-.0677 .244 (.256)	.0615 .290 (.222)
H2	Easy recipient	1	361	.1150 .028 (.317)	.0435 .408 (.968)	-.0373 .479 (.832)
H3	Close relationship	1	363	-.0448 .394 (.653)	.0529 .314 (.078)	.0318 .545 (.866)
H4	Risk	2	363	.0768 .143 (.537)	.0991 .059 (.149)	.1551 .003 (.038)
H5	Time pressure	1	363	-.0028 .958 (.393)	-.1169 .026 (.378)	.1233 .018 (.016)
H6	Cost	1	358	.0170 .748 (.420)	.0130 .807 (.300)	.1869 .000 (.001)
H6	Costly gift	3	363	.0840 .109 (.879)	.0155 .767 (.701)	.3375 .000 (.000)
H7	Product familiarity	2	363	.0899 .086 (.727)	.1193 .023 (.019)	-.1311 .012 (.215)
H8	Help from a companion	2	363	.0403 .442 (.503)	-.0114 .828 (.996)	-.0195 .711 (.711)
H9	List	2	363	-.0084 .873 (.384)	.0176 .737 (.860)	.0901 .086 (.084)
H9	Pre-determined selection	3	363	-.0564 .282 (.124)	.1897 .000 (.006)	-.0524 .318 (.037)
H9	Researched the gift	1	363	-.0987 .060 (.112)	-.1594 .002 (.076)	-.1071 .041 (.027)
H10	Access to sources	3	363	.0466 .375 (.802)	.0419 .425 (.786)	.2939 .000 (.000)
H11	Compare/selection	2	363	.1730 .001 (.013)	.1843 .000 (.027)	.0379 .471 (.318)
H12	Gender	1	362	.1964 .000 (.000)	.1876 .000 (.000)	-.1073 .041 (.029)

Coefficient / 2-tailed correlation significance (ANOVA F probability)

Easy recipients were significantly positively correlated with general information search, according to the partial correlations. These results were not confirmed by the ANOVAs (no significance was observed), indicating that language has a strong influence on the relationship between these two constructs. It was posited that when shopping for a difficult recipient, the consumer would engage in more in-store information search. While the difficulty of the recipient had no impact on specific search or sales clerk usage, general information search showed a strong positive partial correlation with this single item, contradicting the hypothesis. Perhaps there is an interaction effect which has not been considered, such as enjoyment of the shopping task. A possible scenario is that gift consumers will spend more time in the store browsing or searching for information when shopping for an easy recipient, simply because they enjoy the task.

The first scaled item in the questionnaire measured the respondent's perception of the closeness of the giver-recipient relationship. The third hypothesis regarding psychologically distant recipients received no support from either the partial correlations or the ANOVAs. The lack of significance regarding this hypothesis could be due to the non-normal distribution of the independent variable: 75% of the cases assigned the highest rating on the ten-point scale for the closeness of the relationship, and 95% assigned a rating of seven or higher. Naturally, more gifts are bought for recipients of close relationships than for those of distant relationships.

The importance of the relationship was related to the closeness between the giver and the recipient (coefficient = .1726, $p = .001$). While the previous three constructs were each measured by single items, relationship importance was measured by the risk factor.

The partial correlations showed that higher risk was associated with an increase in both specific in-store information search ($p < 0.10$) and information search through a sales clerk ($p < 0.05$). The ANOVAs indicated a significant relationship between risk and sales clerk search activities. Thus, while the importance of the relationship does not affect broad in-store search effort, it does influence search through sales personnel and to some extent the product's packaging and label. These results support H4.

Despite the efforts made in the survey instrument to measure several aspects of the giver-recipient relationship, much of the hypothesis-testing analyses relied on single item measures. The results were not as strong as had been hoped. The recipient's gender and difficulty both showed modest evidence of relationships with general in-store information search, in the reverse directions as those hypothesized. The closeness of the giver-recipient relationship had no apparent impact. The strongest results were seen for the factor measuring the importance of the relationship, which influences sales clerk usage and specific in-store information search.

Time Pressure: H5

The time pressure factor measured the respondent's attitude toward time pressure during Christmas shopping. The time pressure that was actually felt while shopping for the particular gift specified was measured by a single item in Part I of the questionnaire. The factor and the single item were very strongly correlated, however only the single item was used to test the hypothesis. This item was correlated negatively with specific information search effort and positively with sales clerk usage. The ANOVAs demonstrated a significant relationship with sales clerk usage only. There was also a negative correlation

(coefficient = -0.1427, $p = 0.006$) between the time pressure item and the pre-determined gift selection factor, controlling for language. These results may indicate that under time pressure, total information search may decrease (i.e., the typical time-pressured purchaser had not determined the gift category before going shopping), and for the information that is sought in the store, the giver will tend to seek out a sales clerk rather than use the other in-store information sources, as was hypothesized.

Cost of the Gift: H6

The sixth hypothesis states that costly gifts will result in greater in-store search effort, as a risk reduction strategy. Two measures were used to test this hypothesis: the actual dollar amount paid for the gift, as indicated in Part I of the questionnaire; and the "costly gift" factor described in the Factor Analysis section. The partial correlations indicated very strong positive relationships between the sales clerk item and the actual cost as well as the costly gift factor. The same results were obtained from the ANOVAs. While there were no significant relationships with either the general or the specific information search factors, it is clear that gift buyers are accessing information through store sales personnel when the gift cost is high. Perhaps when the cost of the gift is extraordinarily high, additional information is required that cannot be obtained from the usual in-store sources. For example, sales personnel are knowledgeable about a clothing article's designer status, quality guarantee, or exchange policies if the item does not fit.

Product Familiarity: H7

Mixed results were obtained in terms of in-store information search related to product familiarity. While it was hypothesized that buyers would engage in less search for

products about which they were familiar, the correlations showed that the respondents engaged in more specific in-store information search, and were much less likely to consult a sales clerk. However, while the ANOVAs indicated increased specific in-store search, the results for general search and sales clerk usage were not significant. The increase in specific search could mean that because the buyer is familiar with the product, he or she knows what to look for in terms of specific information, and may in fact enjoy this type of information search (as suggested by Bloch et al., 1986). Language or culture seems to have a strong interaction effect with product familiarity on sales clerk usage.

Help from a Companion: H8

The eighth hypothesis posited that shopping with a trusted or helpful companion would lessen the need for in-store information gathering. In fact, the results showed that there was no significant relationship between information search and shopping with a companion. Therefore, H8 was not supported.

Prior External Information Search: H9

External search prior to the store visit was measured by a few variables reflecting different aspects of external search effort: the "list" factor, the "pre-determined gift selection" factor, and a single item from the questionnaire concerning "research on what to buy." The partial correlations for these variables indicated that the single research item was significantly related to specific in-store information search and sales clerk usage. The ANOVAs showed a strong relationship with sales clerk usage, but only a weak relationship with specific search. Respondents who reported doing less research on the gift before shopping tended to rely heavily on store sales personnel for information, lending

partial support to H9.

The pre-determined selection factor was positively correlated with specific in-store information search effort. The ANOVAs indicated increased specific search and decreased sales clerk usage. Respondents who had everything determined about the gift before going shopping tended to search significantly more for specific information about the product and avoid the store's sales clerks. It is logical in this situation that the buyer would not need to consult a sales clerk, but would rather verify the purchase by checking the clothing's packaging and manufacturer's label. Again, H9 was partially supported.

The list factor was only moderately positively correlated with sales clerk usage, and the ANOVA for this relationship was only significant for $p < 0.10$. While a strong relationship does not exist, it can be concluded that when the giver uses a Christmas list, they may have slight tendency to consult a sales clerk. This is incongruent with H9. Using a list had no effect on the other in-store search types.

The Store Environment: H10 and H11

The next two hypotheses addressed the issue of store environment. It was confirmed in terms of sales clerk usage that the information sources must be easily accessible in order to be used. The "access" factor was highly significantly correlated with the sales clerk item. Therefore H10 was confirmed for sales clerk usage: for consumers to consult with sales clerks in the store, the clerks must be available. Because it is impossible to prove causality in a field study, the interpretation of this result could also be that sales clerks were consulted simply because they were available. The difference is whether consumers sought out the sales clerks or the sales clerks approached the consumers. The

environment during the Christmas season, described as hectic and busy, favors the interpretation that consumers must make an effort to seek out the sales clerks, and the easier it is to find an available clerk, the more likely it is that the consumer will ask for their help.

In terms of comparison or selection availability, this factor was significantly related to both the general and the specific information search factors, confirmed by the ANOVA results. Similar to the availability of sales personnel, when greater product or brand selection exists, consumers will spend more time in search activities like brand comparison. These results support H11.

Gender: H12

The final hypothesis proposed that women will tend to search more for information in the store than men. This was generally supported by the correlations and t-tests. Significant relationships appeared between gender and general and specific information search. Also, a more moderate but still significant relationship appeared between gender and the sales clerk item. The last correlation was negative, indicating that men will use sales clerks more than women. The spirit of the hypothesis was confirmed. men did not spend time comparing brands, checking labels, etc. Rather, they sought the information source that could provide all the necessary information quickly and easily, namely, sales clerks. Thus, H12 was partially supported.

The hypotheses that received at least some support from the results were: H4, H5, H6, H7, H9, H10, H11, and H12. The first two hypotheses, H1 and H2, were contradicted, and the remaining hypotheses, H3 and H8 were not supported at all. These

results were based on the partial correlation coefficients, controlling for the respondent's spoken language, analyses of variance, and t-tests. Strict testing of the hypotheses was difficult due to the findings of the factor analysis conducted on the nine in-store information search items. While the hypotheses addressed in-store search as one construct, it was found that three significantly different types of in-store search existed. The tests were examined mainly to provide supporting evidence to the regression analyses that were conducted on the three in-store search types using the French and the English separated data sets.

Regression Analysis

To test the main research question in this study, the data were analyzed for relationships between the many independent factors and the three dependent variables related to in-store information search effort. To examine such relationships, it was determined that multiple regression analysis would be the most appropriate technique. Regression analysis is a statistical technique used to analyze the relationship between one dependent variable or factor and one or more independent variables or factors, and is popularly recognized by practitioners and academics alike as a powerful analytical tool (Hair et al, 1992).

Method

The main objective of a multiple regression analysis is "to use the independent variables whose values are known to predict the single dependent value the researcher wishes to know" (Hair et al., 1992, p. 25). The resulting equation of weighted independent variables best predicts the dependent variable. In this study, the objective was

to determine which factors were related to in-store information search, and could be used as predictors. To best meet this goal, a stepwise regression technique was employed. This technique selects into the equation only those variables that meet certain criteria for the best fit and minimal error. During a stepwise regression procedure, each variable in the model is re-examined at each step to ensure it always meets the criteria, and variables are deleted or re-selected as necessary.

As discussed in the factor analysis section, there were three dependent variables: general in-store information search, specific in-store information search, and information search through a sales clerk. Separate regressions were run for each dependent variable.

Recall that the crosstabs showed significant demographic differences between the English and French data sets. Because the entire sample was not homogeneous, further analyses required a division of the data into two subsets based on language. Therefore, in terms of the regression analysis, six procedures were run: the three information search variables for each of the English and French subgroups. A list of the independent variables entered for the regression analysis is provided in Table 9.

Table 9
List of Independent Variables for Regression Analyses

<u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>	<u>Variable</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>
Personal Characteristics:			
Christmas lover	6	Acculturation	1
Generics buyer	3	Language self identity	1
Influencer	4	Age	1
Leader	3	Education	1
Bargain hunter	3	Employment status	1
Importance of children	4	Family size	1
Thoughtful giver	5	Income	1
Fashion conscious	2	Religion	1
Identity shaper	2	Gender	1
Budget buster	4		
Innovator	3		
Shopper	3		
Brand loyal	3		
Situational Variables:			
Recipient's gender	1		
Perceived risk	2		
Sensitivity to time pressure	3		
Costly gift	3		
Actual cost	1		
Product familiarity	2		
Helpful companion	2		
List provided	2		
Pre-determined gift selection	3		
Access to info sources	3		
Comparison/selection availability	2		
Strict budget set	3		
Kinship of the recipient	1		

Results

General information search among English respondents

Results for each of the six regression analyses are summarized in Table 10. In terms of general in-store information search, the English data set revealed seven significant variables directly affecting the dependent variable, according to the final regression equation represented here by the beta coefficients:

$$\begin{aligned} Y = & 0.259(\text{gender}) + 0.237(\text{strict budget}) + 0.225(\text{bargain hunter}) \\ & - 0.161(\text{pre-determined selection}) + 0.154(\text{brand loyal}) + 0.145(\text{costly gift}) \\ & + 0.138(\text{acculturation}) \end{aligned}$$

High general information seekers can be characterized as budget-oriented females who were unsure of what they wanted to give and bought a costly gift. The dependent variable was also associated with brand loyalty and higher levels of acculturation. Brand loyalty could represent risk-averse consumers who compensate by conducting more general in-store information search. Almost 30% of the variance in the general information search factor was explained by the seven independent variables. While this may seem to be a rather low figure, the F statistic indicated a high significance level. Also, an examination of the correlation matrix showed significant correlations among many of the independent variables included in the regression analysis. The stepwise regression method selects new variables into the equation only on the basis of significant improvement in explaining the variance in the dependent variable. Therefore, multicollinearity among regression variables is reduced because highly correlated variables will not explain significantly more variance than that which is already explained by the variables in the equation.

Table 10
Results of Regression Analyses

Data Set	Dependent Variable	Independent Variables	Coefficient	T (sig T)	Adj. R ²	F	Sig. F
English	General Info	Strict budget set	0.234	3.264 (a)	0.29752	10.32	0.0000
		Search	Gender	1.677			
		Pre-determined gift selection	-0.172	-2.310 (a)			
		Bargain hunter	0.277	3.123 (a)			
		Costly gift	0.145	2.084 (a)			
		Brand loyal	0.213	2.228 (a)			
		Acculturation	0.034	1.982 (a)			
		Constant	0.745	0.621 (b)			
French	General Info	Strict budget set	0.203	3.051 (a)	0.25212	18.70	0.0000
		Search	Thoughtful giver	0.308			
		Budget buster	-0.274	-2.586 (a)			
		Bargain hunter	0.194	2.534 (a)			
		Constant	2.602	2.296 (a)			
English	Specific Info	Age	0.763	4.635 (a)	0.26760	10.38	0.0000
		Search	Gender	1.370			
		Strict budget set	0.303	3.345 (a)			
		Innovator	0.397	2.872 (a)			
		Identity shaper	-0.348	-3.490 (a)			
		Thoughtful giver	0.309	2.058 (a)			
		Constant	-2.733	-2.078 (a)			
French	Specific Info	Comparison / selection availability	0.283	3.310 (a)	0.19443	11.14	0.0000
		Search	Pre-determined selection	0.272			
		Budget buster	-0.388	-3.203 (a)			
		Innovator	0.387	3.175 (a)			
		Education	-0.520	-2.460 (a)			
		Constant	3.932	2.989 (a)			
Note: Bargain hunter entered equation in step 2, and exited in step 7.							
English	Sales Clerk	Access to information sources	0.583	5.259 (a)	0.23469	12.81	0.0000
		Usage	Costly gift	0.244			
		Education	0.505	2.598 (a)			
		Risk	0.207	2.148 (a)			
		Constant	-5.002	-3.996 (a)			
French	Sales Clerk	Costly gift	0.458	6.454 (a)	0.28974	11.71	0.0000
		Usage	Access to information sources	0.513			
		Bargain hunter	-0.297	-3.066 (a)			
		Time pressure	0.137	1.857 (b)			
		Product familiarity	-0.207	-2.542 (a)			
		Influencer	0.240	2.377 (a)			
		Budget buster	-0.259	-2.272 (a)			
		Same sex recipient	0.957	1.974 (a)			
	Constant	0.203	0.128 (n)				

(a): p < 0.05; (b): p < 0.10, (n): non-significant

High correlations occurred between some factors and the dependent variable: high product familiarity (contradicts H7), comparison or selection availability (H11), shoppers, and traditional Christmas lovers. As mentioned in the hypothesis-testing section, increased search effort by consumers who are familiar with the product category could be due simply to the pleasure gained from the shopping experience (Bloch et al., 1986). Also, the availability of more brands to compare induces more brand comparison. Traditional Christmas lover and shoppers might have been associated with French Canadians, as mentioned in the literature review on culture. However, acculturation appeared in the equation, indicating that these respondents had been more acculturated into the French culture. Naturally, people who enjoy Christmas and also like to shop, will spend more time in the store browsing for Christmas gifts.

In terms of the stated hypotheses, the results of this regression lend support to H6 (costly gift), H9 (prior external search), and H12 (gender), as well as introduce some personal characteristics and the strict budget variable. In summary, general in-store information search for a Christmas clothing gift among English Canadians can be predicted by budget factors, prior external search, gender, and psychographic variables including bargain-hunter, brand loyalty, and acculturation. This type of search is strongly associated with high product familiarity, brand comparison availability, and people who enjoy Christmas and shopping.

General information search among French respondents

The French general information seekers were budget-oriented, as the English respondents were, and they researched the gift purchase, apparently worried about making

a bad selection. The final regression equation was:

$$Y = 0.222(\text{strict budget}) + 0.221(\text{thoughtful giver}) - 0.192(\text{budget buster}) \\ + 0.166(\text{bargain hunter})$$

There were two factors that were selected for both the English and the French general information search equations: strict budget and bargain-hunters. These two variables were highly correlated with each other and negatively correlated with the budget-buster variable, which is logical. About 25% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variables for the French data regression.

Correlations of interest in this regression were: comparison or selection availability (H11), same sex recipients (contradicts H1), females (H12), shoppers, traditional Christmas lovers, fashion-consciousness, like to shape the identity of the recipient, influencers, innovators, and Catholics. The French Catholics are likely to be traditional, opinion leaders, and fashion-conscious (Hui et al., 1993). The psychographic makeup of the respondents in this study supports the results of the previous study, suggesting good reliability for these items in the instrument (test-retest). From these correlations, catholic French Canadian women who are on the cutting-edge of fashion, like to shop, and enjoy a traditional Christmas, will engage in general in-store information search activities, particularly when there is greater brand selection available. These variables indicate that these women may engage in more information search in the store because they it brings them pleasure. Regarding influencers and innovators, these characteristics may be likened to higher self-esteem, supporting the findings of Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981). General in-store information search involves examining more brand cues and alternatives

across product categories, which were shown to be related to self-esteem.

While this regression equation did not directly support any of the stated hypotheses, the strict budget variable plus three personal characteristics emerged as factors which directly impact general in-store information search effort.

Specific information search among English respondents

Using the English data set, the following regression equation was obtained:

$$Y = 0.321(\text{age}) - 0.264(\text{identity shapers}) + 0.236(\text{strict budget}) + 0.213(\text{innovator}) \\ + 0.163(\text{gender}) + 0.158(\text{thoughtful giver})$$

High correlations occurred with the factors describing budget-busters (negatively) and higher education. Therefore, the respondents of this survey who more actively sought detailed information about the gift tended to be older, educated, innovative, budget-minded, females (H12) who researched the gift and worried about a bad selection. Otnes (1990) found that selective searchers tended not to give gifts that help shape the identity of the recipient, supporting the findings here. The positive relationship with the age variable contradicts the findings of Schaninger and Sciglimpaglia (1981). Perhaps the next generation of older individuals is wiser -- higher education was associated with increased specific in-store information search for these English respondents.

About 27% of the variance in the dependent variable was explained by the independent variables. This regression equation supported H12 (gender) and identified three personal characteristics, the strict budget variable, and the age demographic as significant predictor variables.

Specific information search among French respondents

The factor for innovators was the only predictor that appeared in both the English and the French data sets for specific information search. The regression using the French data set was:

$$Y = 0.209(\text{comparison availability}) + 0.204(\text{pre-determined selection}) \\ - 0.202(\text{budget buster}) + 0.199(\text{innovator}) - 0.155(\text{education})$$

Some more implicit similarities may exist between the two data sets, however, as extrapolated from the correlations. Highly significant correlations occurred with bargain-hunters, strict budget, identity shapers, females (H12), and thoughtful givers, plus product familiarity (contradicting H7), same sex recipients (H1), and Catholics. Again, gender played an important role, as did the budget. Not surprisingly, the strong Catholicism of the French Canadians is important in relation to in-store search behaviour for this Christmas gift purchase. The consumers in this group were also predominantly female innovators who liked to shape the identity of the recipient. Perhaps this identity shaping is a form of carrying on the traditions of this conservative culture. Otnes (1990) found that eclectic information searchers tended to use gifts to bond socially or shape the identity of the recipient, as well as bargain shop, supporting the evidence found in this regression. As with general in-store search, the brand selection had to be wide enough to permit extended brand comparison (H11).

Although the F value indicated high significance, the adjusted R squared statistic was the lowest obtained for the six regressions: 19.4%. For the French-speaking respondents, this regression supported H11 (comparison availability) and identified two

personal characteristics plus the education demographic. However, the results seemed to contradict H9 (prior external search) by indicating that a pre-determined gift selection will increase the tendency to conduct more in-store specific information search, as was discussed for the ANOVAs. An explanation for this phenomenon is that people who are already familiar with the product do not need to seek broad information about the category, but may want to focus only on the specific information for the particular item.

Sales clerk usage among English respondents

A regression analysis was also run using the single item measuring the respondent's usage of the store's sales personnel as an information source. This was the only item involving information search within the store requiring personal contact. The regression equation obtained for the English data set was:

$$Y = 0.372(\text{easy access to info sources}) + 0.204(\text{costly gift}) + 0.184(\text{education}) \\ + 0.158(\text{risk})$$

Supporting many of the results observed in the ANOVAs, the regressions demonstrated relationships between sales clerk usage and costly gift, risk, and availability of the information source. As well, strong correlations occurred with cost (H6), lack of a pre-determined gift selection (H9), and lack of product familiarity (H7). Apparently, consumers who lack product familiarity will consult a sales clerk, but those who are familiar with the product will seek general or specific information in the store. When nothing has been decided about the gift before visiting the store, the consumer will tend to seek a sales clerk for personal advice or general in-store information, but will avoid specific information. While the ninth hypothesis is only partially supported, it is intuitive

that an unsure shopper will prefer to browse first and will not be interested in gathering too much specific information.

The adjusted R squared reached 23.5% for this solution. In addition to identifying the education demographic, three hypotheses were directly supported by this regression: H10 (access to information sources), H6 (costly gifts), and H4 (relationship importance). Of course, the hypotheses were supported only in terms of the information search through store sales personnel.

Sales clerk usage among French respondents

Two factors were selected into the equations for both the English and the French data sets: costly gift and access to information sources. When the gift is very costly, the consumer will wish to gather more information than can be gained from other in-store sources. They will prefer to consult personally with a salesperson, and this will be moderated by the availability of the store salespeople. The regression equation for the French data was:

$$Y = 0.380(\text{costly gift}) + 0.310(\text{easy access to info sources}) - 0.196(\text{bargain hunter}) \\ - 0.152(\text{product familiarity}) + 0.147(\text{influencer}) - 0.141(\text{budget buster}) \\ + 0.116(\text{same sex recipient}) + 0.109(\text{time pressure})$$

As was discussed in the hypothesis-testing section, males tended to favor sales clerk usage more than females and over the other two information types. Although gender was not selected into the equation, it showed a significant negative correlation with sales clerk usage in the French data set, supported by the results witnessed in the ANOVAs. The actual cost of the gift, in addition to the costly gift factor, also demonstrated a high

correlation.

The kind of French shoppers dominating the sales clerks' time at Christmas seem to be mainly men, shopping for a member of the opposite sex (their wives?), probably influential, and may not tend to exceed their budget but do not hunt for bargains. They are rather sensitive to time pressure, are spending a lot of money, and perceive the situation as risky with dire consequences for a bad selection. This description is typical of the husbands described in Sherry and McGrath's (1989) study, who arrive on Christmas eve, in desperate need of a knowledgeable salesperson.

In this regression, almost 29% of the dependent's variance is explained. This regression equation supported H1 (opposite sex recipient), H5 (time pressure), H6 (costly gift), H7 (product familiarity), and H10 (access to sources). It also identified three personal characteristics as influential independent variables.

Summary

Distinct differences were seen in each of the six regression equations. While language was not used as the dependent variable in this study, the evidence showed that English and French Canadians have different in-store shopping patterns for a Christmas gift purchase. Consistent with the previous literature, the strong family and religious orientations, plus the fashion consciousness of French Canadians were important factors. Although previous studies had showed less price-sensitivity among the French, cost and budget factors played important roles throughout this study for both French and English respondents.

Gender was a prominent variable in the regression analyses, as it was in the

ANOVAs. Women tended to conduct more general and specific in-store search, while men concentrated their efforts on sales clerks. In terms of the situational variables, most of the constructs appeared in at least one of the regressions. The giver's experience was represented by the product familiarity factor, which appeared in the sales clerk usage regression for the French respondents, as well as showed significant correlations with the other in-store information search types. Risk and time pressure, although weakly measured, significantly affected sales clerk usage. Budget and cost variables emerged significantly in relation to all three in-store information search types. The extent of pre-determined gift selection significantly affected general and specific in-store information search effort, indicating prior external search has an influence on subsequent in-store search. Finally, the store environment affected in-store search effort in terms of comparison availability and access to information sources.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

The Dependent Variable

There were no hypotheses regarding the separation of in-store information search into more than one factor. However, the results clearly identified three distinct kinds of search activity within the store. (a) General in-store information search involves looking at the display area around the product, comparing prices and other features among brands, and using signs around the area. (b) Specific in-store information search effort involves gathering information about the particular brand, such as reading the manufacturer's label and examining the item's packaging. Both of these types of search can be executed by the purchaser without any other human interaction. (c) The third type of information search involves personal contact with a sales clerk in the store.

Although the hypotheses and the model presented in Chapter I indicate only one type of in-store information search, the three types were each used in separate analyses for this study. The ensuing results were thus more detailed, permitting an analysis and discussion of the independent variables' effects on both the amount and the kind of information sought in the store. In this chapter, first the results of all the analyses will be discussed in terms of the hypotheses, then the regressions will be discussed in terms of predicting the three in-store information search types.

Examination of Hypotheses

To summarize the findings from the partial correlations and the regression analyses, the results supported H4, H5, H6, H10, and H11. Mixed results were obtained

for H1, H2, H7, H9, and H12. There were no significant relationships observed for H3, nor for H8, and H2 was mildly contradicted. The conclusions for each of the twelve hypotheses are summarized in Table 11. This section examines the results in more detail and provides interpretations in terms of each of the stated hypotheses.

Mixed Results Regarding Same Gender

The only significant relationship found between in-store information search and the giver-receiver gender relationship (same or opposite sex), was one positive finding for sales clerk usage among French-speaking respondents. The correlation matrices showed supporting evidence of significant relationships between opposite sex recipients and general and specific information search among French respondents. However, the variable was not selected for the regression equations, and only weakly significant (negatively) in the ANOVAs. Considering these mixed results, it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions regarding the first hypothesis. It is possible that French Canadians will tend to consult more with store sales personnel when a gift purchase is intended for a member of the opposite sex. Conversely, consumers may engage in slightly more general in-store search for a gift for a member of the same sex because they enjoy the task. The gender relationship between the giver and the recipient had not previously been examined in terms of information search. It is recommended that further research be conducted to reconfirm the conclusions drawn here.

Table 11
Conclusions of Hypotheses

<u>Hypothesis</u>	<u>Result</u>	<u>Conclusion</u>
H1	Mixed	When shopping for gift for a member of the opposite sex, the buyer may search less for general in-store information and may increase sales clerk usage.
H2	Contradicted	For an easy recipient, general in-store information search increases.
H3	No effect	There is no relationship between in-store information search and the closeness of the giver-recipient relationship
H4	Supported	When the giver-recipient relationship is important, the giver will use store sales clerks, and will gather more specific in-store information.
H5	Supported	While specific in-store information search decreases, store sales clerk usage increases when the giver is time pressured while shopping.
H6	Supported	When shopping for an expensive gift, the giver will engage in more in-store search effort for general and specific information and through a sales clerk.
H7	Mixed	Regarding increased product familiarity, results for specific in-store information search were mixed, while sales clerk usage decreased
H8	No effect	Shopping with a helpful companion had no effect on in-store information search effort
H9	Mixed	With a decrease in prior external search effort, sales clerk usage increased while specific in-store information search decreased.
H10	Supported	While Christmas gift shopping, increased access to information sources like sales clerks is associated with increased usage.
H11	Supported	While Christmas gift shopping, greater product and brand selection is associated with increased general and specific in-store information search
H12	Mixed	Females engage in more general and specific in-store information search, while males prefer to utilize the sales clerks to gather information in the store.

Less General In-Store Search for Difficult People

Regarding the second hypothesis, that gifts intended for difficult recipients will result in greater in-store information search effort, the evidence showed an opposite effect. General information search decreased for difficult recipients. The single item utilized in the analysis was not selected into one of the factors describing the purchase situation, and so it was not one of the input variables for the regression analyses. However, the partial correlations of this single item and the information search variables showed a significant relationship with general in-store search effort. The results found here seem to contradict those found by Sprott and Miyazaki (1995) that search time for a particular gift increased with recipient difficulty. An explanation for this could lie in the research conducted by Otnes, Kim, and Lowrey (1992). Examining the gift selection strategies employed by consumers for difficult recipients, the researchers identified ten different strategies. The variety in strategies would imply a variety in information search techniques as well. For example, the latching-on strategy versus sudden enlightenment are two quite different techniques used when shopping for difficult recipients.

The use of a single item as the only test for this hypothesis means that reliability tests cannot be performed; caution should be exercised in the interpretation. Thus, for difficult recipients, it cannot be definitively concluded that the gift purchaser will engage in more or less in-store information search activities. Nor can it be concluded with very high confidence that for difficult or easy recipients consumers will show a preference for a certain type of in-store information source. However, for easy recipients, it is possible that the consumer is actually enjoying the task of shopping for the particular recipient, and may

spend more time browsing or searching the general information sources. Further research in this area is recommended.

Relationship Closeness Has No Impact

The third hypothesis that gift purchasers will engage in more in-store information search for psychologically distant recipients received no support from the results. No factor emerged for this concept, and again a single item was used to test the hypothesis. The partial correlations and ANOVAs showed that this single item was neither associated with more nor with less in-store search effort of any kind. The legal distance of the relationship was measured as primary, secondary, tertiary, or non-kin. Usually, one feels "closer" to primary kin members, people with whom one lives and interacts each day. This variable appeared only once, and did not appear significantly in any of the regressions.

While Rigaux-Bricmont (1993) studied the satisfaction gained from gift exchange related to the closeness of the relationship, this study attempted to link relationship closeness to increased information search effort (to ensure buying a suitable gift that will result in satisfaction). Unfortunately the hypothesis was not supported. It is concluded here that the closeness of the relationship has no effect on in-store search. It would be interesting to see a quantitative study conducted that addresses only the issue of information search as it relates to the giver-recipient relationship. The lack of strong results for the first three hypotheses is disappointing.

Saliency of Relationship Affects In-Store Search

Clear results were obtained for the fourth hypothesis, which also addressed the giver-recipient relationship, in terms of its saliency to the giver. Information search

activities were examined in relation to the varying degrees of importance the giver placed on the personal relationship, as measured by the "risk" factor. Both the ANOVAs and the regressions indicated a high tendency to consult the store sales personnel as well as search for specific in-store information when the relationship was important to the giver. Thus, it is concluded that the importance of the personal relationship has a positive effect on in-store information search effort, particularly at the personal level, through store salespeople. The results support those of Ryans (1977) who found that inhome gift purchases were associated with greater in-store search effort (salespeople and store displays) as opposed to personal use purchases. The results here help to clarify those of Heeler et al. (1979), who found lower information search levels for close friends than for personal use purchases, and suggested an interaction effect with product familiarity. Belk's (1976) model can be used to help interpret the results here: to achieve balance, the giver will search more to find a "liked" gift for a "liked" recipient.

When the giver-recipient relationship is very salient to the giver, he or she perceives it as a higher risk situation where the consequences of making a bad selection will be severe. Thus, to compensate for some of this risk, the giver conducts more information search in the store. Consulting with a sales clerk may be especially beneficial in alleviating some of the perceived social risk, because sales clerks can offer advice, suggest alternatives, and reduce dissonance by verbally confirming the purchase decision. Even if the giver is aware that the sales clerk might not be completely honest, the giver may nonetheless feel reassured by the comments given.

Time Pressure Affects In-Store Search Effort

While the results concerning time pressure were not particularly strong, the logic was consistent with the hypothesis. The time pressure factor actually measured the buyer's sensitivity to time pressure in a Christmas buying situation, rather than the actual situational experience. This could account for some of the weakness in the final results. The single situational variable measuring actual time pressure felt was not included in the factor, although it did show a very high correlation with the factor. The time pressure factor was selected into the regression equation for sales clerk usage among French respondents. The single item showed significant positive partial correlations with sales clerk usage and a negative partial correlation with specific information search. It is suggested that Christmas shoppers who are time pressured will not spend their precious time gathering detailed information about the product, but will seek quick and pertinent information from a sales clerk. Mattson (1982) suggested that "time-pressured shoppers view the salesperson as a resource who can save them time by providing guidance in sizing, selection, and order processing" (p. 54).

The hypothesis, as it was worded, was not precisely confirmed by the results. It was clear, though, that while the help of a sales clerk was solicited when dealing with time pressure, specific information search was reduced, partially supporting the results of Beatty and Smith (1987) and Sprott and Miyazaki (1995). The sales clerks are viewed as a time-saving information source. Retailers may be advised to add sales staff in the store at an increasing rate as the deadline for Christmas becomes closer and time pressure increases. As Christmas Eve nears, the focus should be more on ensuring that the staff is

well trained and energetic, and less attention may be paid to other information sources, such as signs or the display.

Increased In-Store Search for Costly Gifts

The cost of the gift was measured by two variables. The third question in the survey asked respondents to state the actual amount paid for the gift, and the "costly gift" factor measured the respondents' overall perception of the gift's expense in relation to the budget and to other gifts. The results indicated highly significant relationships with salesperson assistance, as well as with general in-store information search. There also existed a significant correlation with specific in-store search. These results confirm the hypothesis that higher priced Christmas gifts will result in greater in-store information activity, particularly in terms of accessing information via store salespeople. The results confirm Sprott and Miyazaki's (1995) findings that higher-priced items prompted increased information search (they had predicted increased search effort would result in lower prices paid for an item).

It is possible that consumers desire more personal information about the product when they perceive they are spending a lot of money. The salesperson may reduce the fears associated with buying highly priced items, and they can also provide more specific information about the product that may not otherwise be conveyed, such as designer status, possible colour or accessory coordinates, etc. Mattson (1982) found that apparel gift shoppers valued salesperson attention, return policies, and prestige brands. The store's return policies and prestige brands may not be visibly evident in the store. In many cases, the consumer must ask the salesperson for details about these issues. Mattson's findings

reflected the risk perceived between gift versus personal use purchases. The same outcome is seen here for higher costs (associated with higher perceived risk). This study therefore supports Mattson's findings.

A causal relationship cannot be confirmed by a field study. In some cases, the direction of the relationship could be reversed, meaning that the salesperson may be responsible for the higher amount spent on the gift rather than the higher cost inducing the solicitation of sales assistance. If the consumer is given a choice of brands and prices, the salesperson may try to persuade the customer to purchase the higher-priced brand.

Retailers who specialize in high-end gift products should not neglect any of the information sources, as all three types were significantly related to the cost of the gift. Salespeople in the store should be knowledgeable, but the store environment must also encourage browsing, and item-specific information must be clear and easy to use.

Product Familiar Consumers Search for Specifics

Concerning product familiarity, the hypothesis stated that higher knowledge levels of the product category will result in less in-store search effort. This was partially supported by the results. The tendency to consult with a sales clerk was greatly reduced with higher familiarity, but specific and general in-store information search were increased. In hindsight, the results are intuitive: someone who is familiar with the category is better equipped to make brand comparisons and will thus seek detailed information such as price and feature differences in order to make the best final selection among various brand choices or as part of on-going information search as described by Bloch et al. (1986). These results are consistent with Brucks' finding that prior knowledge facilitates the

acquisition of new information as well as increases search efficiency. Presumably, knowledgeable consumers will not avoid gathering information, they will simply gather it more efficiently. In this case, a salesperson would not efficiently provide the kind of detailed information the purchaser is seeking, and since salespeople at Christmastime are extremely busy, their help will not be solicited by people who are already familiar with the product. These results also support the finding of Grønhaug (1972) that gift buyers who had previous experience buying the product category sought significantly less advice from dealers, and of Johnson and Russo (1984) that experienced consumers use their knowledge to limit information search that may be redundant. Therefore, when the consumer is familiar with the product, specific brand information will be sought and sales clerks avoided.

Companions Not Helpful

The eighth hypothesis proposed that shopping with a helpful and trusted companion would replace the need for consulting with sales personnel. The partial correlations showed no evidence to either confirm or deny the hypothesis. Although the items in the questionnaire attempted to specify only trusted companions, perhaps the respondent's interpretations of the question played a role. As noted by Sherry and McGrath (1989), women often shop with their husbands, and ask for their opinions, but in truth these wives only want confirmation of their decisions, and do not fully trust their husbands' opinions. Due to the lack of significant results, the inevitable conclusion drawn here is that shopping with a helpful companion has no effect on the amount or kind of information sought by the purchaser in the store environment. Future research may

explore the companion variable further.

Prior External Search Effect Partially Supported

Within the scope of this study, which concentrated on in-store information search, it was difficult to adequately measure prior external search. Some of the mixed results obtained for the ninth hypothesis may be accounted for by the inadequacy of the external search measures. The three variables used were the list factor, the pre-determined selection factor, and a single item from the questionnaire regarding prior research about the gift. Apparently, pre-determining aspects of the gift purchase resulted in decreased sales clerk usage, decreased general in-store information search effort, and increased specific in-store information search effort. The first two effects support the hypothesis, while the third contradicts the direction of the proposed relationship. Consumers who had already established what they wanted to give tended to concentrate search efforts on specific information in the store, such as packaging and the manufacturer's label. The more that had been decided, the more specific the information. Consumers who reported doing "a lot" of research avoided sales clerks. As with the product familiarity factor, sales clerks are avoided as an inefficient information source for those who are relatively more knowledgeable.

Surprisingly, using a gift list had no effect on in-store information search. Perhaps the list only affects search effort before visiting the store by suggesting product categories, while upon arrival, the same amount of brand comparison is required. From these mixed results, it is obvious that the link between previous information search and in-store information search is more complicated than a simple direct relationship.

It is suggested that further research be conducted focussing only on this area to help determine what kind of previous external search affects in-store search effort for a gift purchase, and what interaction effects exist.

Higher Sales Clerk Usage When Easily Accessible

The tenth hypothesis stated simply that in-store information sources would be used more if they were more easily accessible to consumers, following a simple cost-benefit model. The results confirmed the hypothesis, particularly in the case of sales personnel. Due to the crowds in the stores at Christmastime, it can often be difficult to get the attention of busy sales clerks. The results from this study clearly showed that when information sources were more accessible, usage significantly increased. The implication is that if the retailer wants the information provided to be used by the consumer, it must be easy to access.

More Comparison With Broad Product Selection

The other factor addressing the store environment's impact on information search was the availability of brand selection for comparison. The results strongly supported this hypothesis as well. The reasoning is intuitive: if the selection is there, consumers will compare. As can be seen from the results confirming the last two hypotheses, the store environment has a significant impact on the amount and kind of information search conducted within the store. Information sources must be easily accessible and greater brand selection will result in greater search activity. For retailers, a greater brand or product selection means potential buyers remaining in the store longer, browsing, which could result in increased sales. At Christmas, many shoppers are looking for gifts for more

than one recipient. If the store environment encourages browsing, multiple purchases could increase. The merchandise display should be attractive and fresh; signs should be eye-catching and informative; pricing should be easy to find. For manufacturers, the label and packaging are also important: they should provide all necessary information, such as fabric content, care instructions, designer's name, etc.

Gender Differences

It was hypothesized that women would conduct more in-store information search than men. Loosely, the hypothesis was supported, confirming some of the previous research (Fischer and Arnold, 1990). Women conducted significantly more general and specific information search.

The results are not generalizable to non-gift purchases, although they are consistent with typical previous ethnographic studies. Male respondents in this study showed a significant preference for informing themselves by seeking the assistance of a sales clerk. McGrath (1989) noted that "males were distinguished by both their desperation, abruptness, tardiness, and discomfort with the ritual process" (p. 436). It is generally accepted that men will tend to leave their Christmas shopping until the last minute, then will enter a store, list in hand, desperate, with no time or enthusiasm for extensive information search. They will solicit the help of a sales clerk who will, hopefully, immediately point out precisely what his wife wants, and he will pay for it. (The male's situation is improved further if the store offers to gift-wrap it for him.) Conversely, women are accustomed to the gift-buying task, and usually express an enjoyment of the Christmas season or shopping in general. These relationships were supported in the results of this

study as well. Women will tend to take the time to gather more information about the item in the store before making a purchase, while men view the sales clerk as a time-saving information source. For retailers, the implications of this are to train sales clerks at Christmas to attempt to approach men in the store first, and be available but more subtle with female customers. If the majority of customers in the store are women, the other information sources should be readily available and clear.

In conclusion, it is recommended that more research be conducted to clarify the relationships between in-store information search, and the giver-recipient relationship and prior external information search. Factors that increase in-store search activities are costly gifts, a store environment which is conducive to search, and the female gender. Affecting the kind of in-store search conducted (sales clerk versus non-personal) is time pressure, product familiarity, and gender. A common theme among the results is that sales clerks seem to be viewed as a time-saving information source when the consumer is not very familiar with the product category. They possess an abundance of information about the products in the store, and they have the ability to make suggestions and offer advice to indecisive consumers.

Interpretations of the Regression Analyses

As discussed in the results chapter, three separate regression analyses were run for each of the two data sets, for a total of six analyses. The English-speaking respondents behaved quite differently from the French-speaking respondents. Although a few of the variables were duplicated for each dependent variable among the two data sets, there were also many differences. An interpretation of each of the regression results will now be

discussed.

To begin, it was clear that the English and the French respondents in the study did not form a homogeneous group. Neither did the two groups behave in the same way in terms of in-store information search for a Christmas gift purchase. Because of these differences in behaviour, it would not be wise to generalize the results of the study to all English- or French-speaking cultures. Therefore, the conclusions drawn here will be limited to the populations represented by the sample.

In general, the three types of in-store information search activities are each dependent on quite different independent variables. There are certain situational variables as well as personal characteristics of the shopper that affect search effort.

Situational Variables

The significant situational variables seen in the regressions were the extent of pre-determination for the gift affecting general in-store information search negatively and specific in-store search positively. Apparently, when the consumer knows what he or she wants, there is a tendency to look mainly for specific item information, and there is no need to browse.

The risk factor emerged only in the sales clerk usage regression among English respondents. This is encouraging, considering that a more robust risk factor had been desired. An important relationship results in the risk-reducing strategy of soliciting the aid of store sales personnel.

Sensitivity to time pressure was also seen as a predictor of sales clerk usage. Again, sales clerks are viewed as a time-saving device, particularly when the consumer is

not familiar with the product category. These factors have been discussed for the fifth and seventh hypotheses respectively.

The Budget

The budget and the cost for the gift had strong effects on the amount of each type of in-store search conducted. The factor indicating that a strict budget was set was strongly related to both general and specific in-store search across the two cultures. As was observed in the hypothesis tests, the gift's cost had strong effects on all three in-store search types, especially sales clerk usage. While shoppers of expensive gifts do not avoid other (perhaps more neutral) in-store information sources, the emphasis is placed on salespeople.

Bargain-hunters and people who stick to their budget (non-budget-busters), plus a strict budget appeared significantly throughout the general and specific search regressions. The first two variables seemed to be contradictory in terms of sales clerk usage among French respondents: People who do not exceed their budget, but do not hunt for bargains appeared in the sales clerk regression equation. These last results are admittedly confusing. Indeed, an explanation is difficult to devise. It appears that bargain-seeking gift shoppers who are concerned with getting the best price are motivated to thoroughly examine all information sources in the store except sales clerks. It is possible that the advice of a store sales clerk is not trusted by the shopper who is driven by the budget. Salespeople who are paid by the store to sell the merchandise, and who could earn commissions on each sale, may be viewed by the shopper as an information source that is counter-productive to their best price objective. Another explanation is that there may be

other mediating factors, such as the difficulty of access to store personnel, that cause a lack of significance or conflicting relationships between the budget factors and the sales clerk variable. The results clearly show, however, that regardless of culture, budget-minded Christmas gift shoppers tend to use more in-store information sources than those who are not concerned with the budget. A strict budget will result in increased in-store information search effort. A high cost will result in increased in-store search effort, especially through a sales clerk.

Psychographic and Demographic Variables

Along with the cost and the budget for the gift, bargain hunters and budget busters figured prominently in many of the regressions. Clearly, the marketer's pricing strategy plays a key role at Christmas.

Some of the other personal characteristics, in addition to the important gender variable, that were evident in the regression analyses included: thoughtful givers, shoppers, traditional Christmas lovers, influencers, and innovators. These personality types seemed to strongly favor general or specific in-store search and to neglect sales clerks. These people seem to enjoy the shopping task, they probably gather information about apparel on an on-going basis (the French Canadians seeking general in-store information were fashion-conscious as well), and therefore do not require the assistance of the sales clerks. Thoughtful givers can also be likened to risk averse consumers. They are concerned about making a bad gift selection, and compensate for this by conducting extensive information search in the store environment.

It appears that females tend to search more than males do in the store environment,

except through the store sales personnel. For an exploration of this phenomenon, consider that gender showed high correlations with the "like shopping" and the "traditional Christmas lover" factors. Women simply enjoy the Christmas shopping task, and thus exert more effort in information gathering while shopping in the store, although they avoid sales clerks. Males recognize the expediency the sales clerks can provide, and thus concentrate search effort on this one source, which probably requires the least effort on their part.

English general information searchers are brand loyal (indicating possible risk aversity) and acculturated into the French culture. English specific information searchers are older, and do not attempt to shape the identity of the recipient through gift-giving. More educated English Christmas shoppers seek assistance. The French are distinguished by their influencer status.

The Store Environment

As discussed for H10 and H11, store environment has a very strong impact on the amount and the type of information search conducted, independent of the culture of the shopper. During the Christmas shopping season, the sales clerks must be available, and prices must be readily apparent on the item. Busy shoppers are looking for time-savings. This does not mean that if the information sources are easily accessible that they will necessarily be used, but there will be an increased tendency to this effect. The clear results that were obtained regarding the store environment have direct implications for practitioners, as previously discussed. In retail businesses, much planning goes into the marketing mix for the Christmas season, and close attention is paid to the controllable

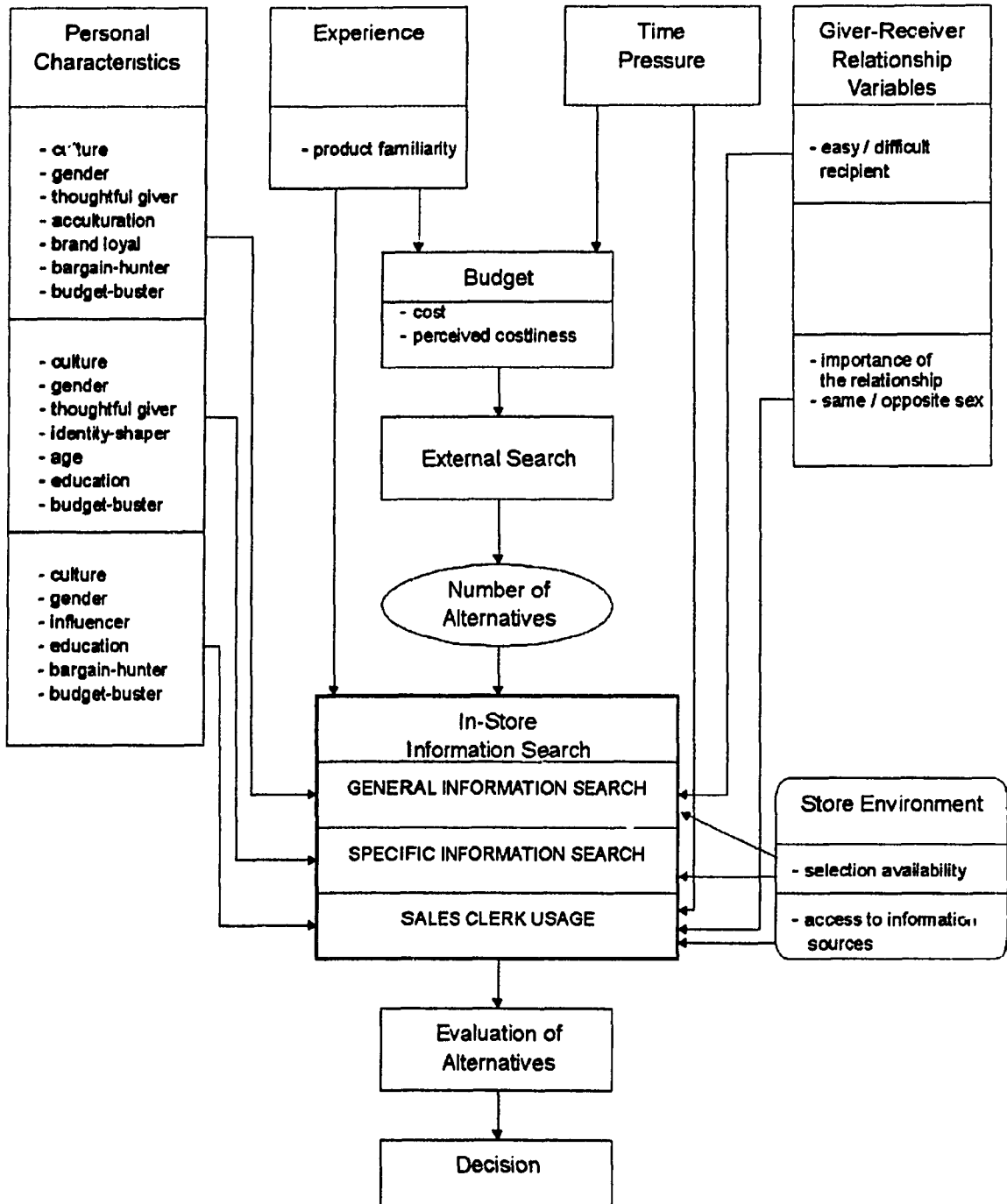
aspects of the store environment. It was therefore particularly pleasing these heretofore unstudied relationships yield strong results.

Relation of Findings to the Model

The proposed model for this research study was presented in Chapter II. In general, most of the hypothesized relationships were supported by the findings. Some of the relationships or headings are slightly different from those proposed, and the relationships are more detailed, following the evidence that surfaced from the study. The revised model is presented in Figure 7.

As can be seen from Figures 5 and 7, certain personal characteristics, giver-receiver relationship variables, experience, and time pressure were retained in the model as factors that influence in-store information search for a Christmas gift purchase. In-store information search effort has been separated into the three search types. The motive was eliminated from the model because the study involved only Christmas gift purchases. Motivations could still have an effect on in-store search effort: both non-Christmas and non-gift purchase behaviour should be studied. The perceived risk factor was not included in the revised model. There was no clear risk factor that emerged from the data analyses, however the importance the giver placed on the giver-receiver relationship was equated with perceived risk in this study.

Figure 7
Model of In-Store Information Search for a Christmas Gift Purchase



As proposed, the budget for the gift was directly affected by experience, time pressure, and the giver-receiver relationship. While the effects of personal characteristics on the budget were not included in the analysis for this study, they may be influential. The budget, in turn, affects external search effort from which a number of gift alternatives emerge, followed by in-store information search effort. Several direct relationships were observed between the various factors and in-store search. The revised model describes which personal characteristics and which giver-receiver relationship variables influence general in-store search, specific in-store search, and search via a sales clerk respectively. Time pressure affects specific information search and search via a sales clerk, while product familiarity affects all three types of information search. As well, the store environment factors influence in-store search effort, as shown in the model. Upon completing the information search within the store, the consumer evaluates the available alternatives and makes a decision. The decision could be to choose one of the gift alternatives, or not to buy anything at this time and return to other external search or revise the budget.

Application of the Research Objectives

The main problem statement governing this study stated: "Are there significant differences in consumers' usage of in-store information sources while Christmas shopping, and can we explain these differences in terms of situational variables?" Based on the results as they have been presented and discussed, the answer is a confident yes; certain situational variables help explain Christmas gift consumers' usage of in-store information sources. Both the amount and the type of information sought are affected.

In terms of the research objectives, the study met each of the three stated objectives. First, a greater understanding of in-store information usage in a Christmas gift buying situation was achieved. Christmas gift buying behaviour had been studied in the past, but not in terms of in-store information search strategies. This study addressed that particular issue, providing insight in the areas of gift buying behaviour and external search.

The second objective was to determine whether similarities could be found between variables influencing gift-giving behaviours and variables influencing in-store search behaviours, as well as to identify possible other variables relating to in-store search. Again, this objective was met. For example, culture and gender were shown in previous research to be related to gift-giving. These two variables had very strong effects in this study on the respondents' in-store search strategies. The results also clearly identified several other significant variables that impact on a gift buyer's search behaviour in the store.

The third objective was to expand on the knowledge of Christmas gift buying. While our understanding of this vast topic is still somewhat limited, there exist many studies that have addressed particular steps in the gift-giving process. The entire process is undoubtedly interdependent, however each study in the field has contributed to our overall appreciation of it. Individual studies can be pieced together, and perhaps tested for supporting results. This study also, by focussing on one small aspect, has shed some light on the gift-giving process. It has thoroughly examined the existing literature, and has expanded on it.

Limitations of This Study

Although the objectives for the study were generally met, and the results were quite favourable, there remain some limitations. First, the scope of the study is limited to a Christmas gift purchase of clothing only. While some of the results may be extendable to other types of purchases, this study specifically addressed only clothing gifts bought for Christmas to give to another person. Areas not examined here include: non-Christmas purchases, non-gift purchases, purchases for oneself (gift or otherwise), non-retail purchases (e.g., mail orders), and non-clothing purchases. On the other hand, Christmas is the most important retail season, where sales can reach up to 50% of the total yearly sales; and clothing was shown in previous studies to be the most popular gift item.

The time frame for the research was quite strict, due to the nature of the topic. Christmas shopping is usually done only during one season of the year. Its salience to the consumer exists only for a limited time. The survey instrument had to be distributed soon after the gift had been purchased. Some of the weaknesses in the instrument could have been improved given more time for perfection. A pre-test of the instrument was not conducted. The pre-test would have identified weak questions or inadequate construct measurement, as well as possibly identified new concepts to include that might have been beneficial. There was also a limit on the latest appropriate date to distribute the surveys. After a certain time, consumers forget how they behaved when they actually purchased Christmas gifts. It was determined that beyond mid-February, memory effects would be too strong for reliability and interest among respondents had dwindled.

While the return rate was acceptable, some respondents commented that the

survey instrument was very long. The length (30 minutes) may account for some of the questionnaires not being returned or being returned incomplete. For the scope of this study, the sample size was satisfactory.

While much of the previous research was supported by the results found here, certain areas failed to be significant. One particularly disappointing construct was perceived risk. A risk factor was included in the analysis, but it measured mainly the risk associated with an important giver-recipient relationship. There are other facets of perceived risk that did not show significant reliability to be included in the risk factor.

The time pressure measurement was poorly planned in the survey instrument. Three tendencies to feel time pressured emerged in the factor analysis, however they measured sensitivity to time pressure rather than the actual situational experience, somewhat decreasing the validity for the time pressure results. A single item measure which measured actual time pressure and was strongly correlated with the factor was used for felt time pressure in the partial correlation analysis to test the hypothesis.

The experience of the giver was another area that provided meager measurement. The giver's product familiarity was adequately measured by the factor, but other experience such as overall gift-giving experience was poorly measured. Because women tend to have much more gift-giving and more gift buying experience than men, some generalizations can be made in this regard, however more concise testing for this factor was desired for the study. Related to the experience of the giver is the internal and external search he or she conducts prior to visiting the store. Internal search was not measured at all in this study, other than the product familiarity construct. Single items

were used to measure previous external search effort, because a factor for this construct did not significantly emerge from the data.

The relationship between the giver and the recipient was hypothesized to be significantly related to the budget and to in-store search effort. However, mixed results were obtained in this study, thus not permitting strong conclusions to be drawn. Perhaps further research concentrating only on the in-store search effort, the budget, and the giver-recipient relationship will yield more concrete evidence.

Given the scope of the study, notwithstanding the limitations, the results have supported the previous research, expanded on our knowledge of the topic, and have identified new aspects of in-store information search that had not been studied previously. This study provides a basis for future research on Christmas gift buying behaviour by establishing significant relationships, exploring new concepts, and identifying limitations and potential improvements.

Suggestions for Future Research

The conclusions drawn from this study open up many areas for future research. As well, future research should address some of the limitations encountered here. Regarding the limitations, a pre-test is strongly advised since the topic is still fairly undeveloped. A pre-test would ensure that the anticipated factors in the model were adequately measured in the instrument. Also, focus groups or personal interviews could be used to explore the more nebulous topics, such as the giver-recipient relationship where the results in this study were weak. Qualitative research potentially introduces new concepts that may have been unanticipated by the researcher, and makes a study much richer.

Other aspects of the dependent variables should be studied in relation to in-store search effort. Interesting research questions might include: (a) How does in-store search during the Christmas season differ from in-store search at other times of the year? (b) Are the significant variables found in this study the same for wedding gifts or birthday gifts? (c) Does in-store search effort for clothing gifts differ from in-store search effort for other product types? (d) Which in-store information sources affect the store choice for gift certificate donations at Christmas or at other times of the year? (e) Does in-store search effort for self-gifts differ from that for gifts intended for other people? A study in this area would help clarify the conflicting results found in the studies by Clarke and Belk (1979) and Heeler et al. (1979). (f) What variables at the point of purchase are salient to givers of service gifts? (g) What variables affect in-store search effort for habitual purchases or for non-gift purchases?

The model in this study was rather large and fairly complicated. A suggestion for future studies would be to break the model down into subsections to be studied separately. Each construct can be thoroughly measured and tested for a relationship with the various in-store search strategies. This would be particularly useful for the giver-recipient relationship construct, perceived risk, and previous external search.

This study addressed only variables affecting in-store search effort. Researchers should further explore the effects of the three in-store search types found in this study on the final decision. For example, some possible research questions would be: (a) Does increased availability of sales personnel in the store result in a higher incidence of high cost purchases? (b) Does the presence or absence of signs affect which brand is chosen? (c)

How does the layout of the merchandise display affect traffic in the store at Christmas, or store choice? (d) Are there certain gift product types for which sales clerk assistance is more or less desired than others? (e) How does the display of pricing affect whether a sale is made or not, and how is this related to time pressure?

While the model proposed in this research was developed on the basis of many previous studies, some of the constructs analyzed were more exploratory. Some relationships have been confirmed and others have been introduced. There are many opportunities for future research on this topic. The revised model can be incorporated into a larger model of the gift-giving process or information search strategy; parts of the model can be confirmed or re-tested using the same or different survey techniques; or various aspects or relationships in the model can be further explored. This study has made a significant contribution to the study of gift purchasing and information search strategy. It remains for future research to provide more in-depth information about these interesting and practical domains.

Implications for Academics and Practitioners

Implications for Academics

The implications of this research study for academics take several forms. The findings would be of interest to behavioural scientists in sociology, psychology, and administration. Most generally, the model of the entire gift-giving process is more complete. A better understanding of external search within the store environment has been gained. In terms of Sherry's (1983) model, this study has introduced many new variables into the gestation stage. The search variable can be separated into internal and external

search. The latter can in turn be distinguished by search prior to the store visit, and in-store search. The variables directly affecting search effort in the store include personal characteristics, the giver-recipient relationship, time pressure, product familiarity, the budget, previous external search, and the store environment.

One aspect of the study that had not been anticipated was the finding that in-store search involved three distinct types of search. Particularly for the purchase of a clothing Christmas gift, consumers will engage in information search via a store sales clerk, general information search, or specific information search. Different types of in-store search effort had not been studied previous to this research. The findings, therefore, open new possibilities for future research in this area. Certain previous studies attempted to measure in-store search effort by simply defining it as seeking pricing information, seeking the aid of sales personnel, or asking survey respondents to rate their overall in-store search effort. The results of this study show that these definitions are naive. Academics must be careful in future studies to adequately define the type of in-store search effort, as this study shows that the type as well as the amount of search effort depends on several variables.

The results of this study clearly lend major support to the existing literature. Otnes (1990) identified three distinct profiles of external searchers pertaining to a Christmas gift purchase. The present research takes that study one step further to identify situational variables as well as psychographic and demographic characteristics that affect in-store search effort. Most of the literature regarding Christmas gift-giving notes the predominance of women's involvement at all stages of the process. This study showed not only a predominance of women, but also that gender is a strong discriminating factor in

terms of search effort. This study also placed more importance than previous research on the cost and the budget for the gift. Indeed, the results confirmed that the budget is both a moderator and a mediator of in-store search effort. Some of the independent variables in this study have direct relationships with search effort as well as indirect relationships through the gift's budget. The budget for the gift should be given more importance in future models of gift-giving.

Implications for Practitioners

This study provides marketing practitioners with insights into some of the variables affecting consumers' behaviour while gift shopping for Christmas. Interested practitioners include clothing and gift manufacturers, advertisers, and retailers. The study focussed on clothing gifts only, however some of the results may be extendable to include other Christmas gifts. Since most gift sales occur during the Christmas season, practitioners can potentially use the information in this study to substantially increase sales or lower advertising costs. Each of the eight individual items included in the three in-store information search factors are controllable by practitioners. The findings show that depending on the target market and certain other situational factors, more or less emphasis should be placed on the various information sources. For example, if the target market is males, little money should be spent on packaging, signs, merchandise display, and other point of purchase sources, but the retailer should increase store personnel to make that source as available and easily accessible as possible. In general at Christmas, store personnel should be trained to approach men more than women, to ask if they require assistance. Where women are the primary target market, all other information sources

should be made easily accessible. Pricing on each item should be easy to find and easy to read; packaging should be attractive and provide clear information about the product; on clothing, the manufacturer's label should give all necessary content information and care instructions; signs and the display area should attract attention and be informative; sales personnel should be available and prepared but not intrusive. The marketing strategy should also differ depending on the target market's budget, culture, and relationship with the recipient. Overall, this study provides guidelines to practitioners for the development of a marketing strategy in terms of Christmas gifts of clothing.

REFERENCES

- Bagozzi, R.P. (1974). Marketing as an Organized Behavioural System of Exchange. Journal of Marketing, October, 77 - 81.
- Banks, S.K. (1979). Gift-Giving: a review and an interactive paradigm. in W. Wilkie (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 6, pp. 319 - 324). Ann Arbor, MI, Association for Consumer Research.
- Bauer, R.A. (1960). Consumer Behaviour as Risk Taking: Dynamic marketing for a changing world. In R.S. Hancock (Ed.), Proceedings of the 43rd Conference of the American Marketing Association. (pp. 389 - 398). Chicago: American Marketing Association.
- Beatty, S.E., Kahle, L.R., & Homer, P. (1991). Personal Values and Gift-Giving Behaviors: A study across cultures. Journal of Business Research, 22, 149 - 157.
- Beatty, S.E., & Smith, S.M. (1987). External Search Effort: An investigation across several product categories. Journal of Consumer Research, 14, 83 - 95.
- Belk, R.W. (1977). It's the Thought that Counts: A signed digraph analysis of gift-giving. The Journal of Consumer Research, 3, 155 - 162.
- Belk, R.W. (1979). Gift-Giving Behavior Research in Marketing, 2, 95 - 126.
- Belk, R.W. (1982). Effects of Gift-Giving Involvement on Gift Selection Strategies. In A. Mitchell (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 9, pp. 408 - 412). Ann Arbor, MI, Association for Consumer Research.
- Belk, R.W. & Coon, G.S. (1991). Can't Buy Me Love: Dating, money, and gifts. In R. Holman & M. Solomon (Eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 18, pp. 521 -

527). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Bettman, J.R. (1979). An Information Processing Theory of Consumer Choice.

Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc.

Bloch, P.H., Sherrell, D.L., & Ridgway, N.M. (1986). Consumer Search: An extended framework. Journal of Consumer Research, 13, 119 - 126.

Brucks, M. (1985). The Effects of Product Class Knowledge on Information Search Behavior. Journal of Consumer Research, 12, 1 - 16.

Caplow, T. (1982). Christmas Gifts and Kin Network., American Sociological Review, 47, 383 - 392.

Cheal, D. (1987). Showing Them You Love Them: Gift giving and the dialectic of intimacy. Sociological Review, 35, 150 - 169.

Cheal, D. (1988). The Gift Economy. New York, Routledge: Chapman and Hall, Inc.

Clarke, K. & Belk, R.W. (1979). The Effects of Product Involvement and Task Definition on Anticipated Consumer Effort. In W. Wilkie (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 6, pp. 313 - 318). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

DeFleur, M.L. (1970). Theories of Mass Communication, 2nd ed. New York: David McKay.

Eskey, K. (1989). Families With Children To Spend \$400 on Gifts. Knoxville News-Sentinel, (December 17, p. D6).

Fischer, E. & Arnold, S.J. (1990). More than a Labor of Love: Gender roles and Christmas gift shopping. Journal of Consumer Research, 17, 333 - 344.

Garner, T.I. & Wagner, J. (1991). Economic Dimensions of Household Gift Giving. Journal of Consumer Research, 18, 368 - 379.

Gift Retailing: Here Come the Nineties, (1987). Gifts and Decorative Accessories, (December, pp. 156 - 186). New York: Geyer-McAllister Publications.

Grønhaug, K. (1972). Buying Situation and Buyer's Information Behavior. European Marketing Research Review, 7, 33 - 48.

Goodwin, C. Smithe, K.L. & Spiggle, S. (1990). Gift Giving: Consumer motivation and the gift purchase process. In M. Goldberg et al. (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 17, pp. 690 - 698). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Hair, J.F. Jr., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L., & Black, W.C. (1992). Multivariate Data Analysis with Readings. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 19 - 77.

Hansen, F. (1972). Consumer Choice Behavior: A Cognitive Theory. New York. The Free Press.

Heeler, R., Francis, J., Okechuku, C., & Reid, S. (1979). Gift Versus Personal Use Brand Selection. In W. Wilkie (Ed.). Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 6, pp. 325 - 328). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Holiday Shopping. (1993). Giftware News, (June, p. 161). Chicago: Talcott Communications Corp.

Hui, M., Joy, A., Kim, C., Laroche, M. (1993). Equivalence of Lifestyle Dimensions Across Four Major Subcultures in Canada. Journal of International Consumer Marketing, 5, (3). 15 - 35.

- Johnson, E.J. & Russo, J.E. (1984). Product Familiarity and Learning New Information. Journal of Consumer Research, 11, 542 - 550.
- Kerlinger, F.N. (1986). Foundations of Behavioral Research. Orlando, FL: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- McGrath, M.A. (1989). An Ethnography of a Gift Store: Trappings, wrappings, and rapture. Journal of Retailing, 65, (4), 421 - 449.
- Mallen, B. (1977). French Canadian Consumer Behaviour: Comparative lessons from the published literature and private corporate marketing studies. The Advertising and Sales Executives Club of Montreal, (October).
- Mattson, B.E. (1982). Situational Influences on Store Choice. Journal of Retailing, 58, (3), 46 - 58.
- Mauss, M. (1966). The Gift. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd.
- Mick, D.G. & DeMoss, M. (1990). Self-Gifts: Phenomenological insights from four contexts. Journal of Consumer Research, 17, 322 - 331.
- Lutz, R.J. (1979). Consumer Gift-Giving: Opening the black box. In W. Wilkie (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 6, pp. 329 - 331). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.
- Otnes, C., Kim, Y.C., & Lowrey, T.M. (1992). Ho, Ho, Woe: Christmas shopping for "difficult" people. In Sherry & Sternthal (Eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 19, pp. 482 - 487). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.
- Otnes, C., Lowrey, T.M., & Kim, Y.C. (1993). Gift Selection for Easy and Difficult Recipients: A social roles interpretation. Journal of Consumer Research, 20, 229

- 244.

Otnes, C.C. (1990). A Study of consumer External Search Strategies Pertaining to Christmas Shopping. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Tennessee.

Park, C.W., Easwar, S.I., & Smith, D.C. (1989). The Effects of Situational Factors on In-store Grocery Shopping Behavior: The role of store environment and time available for shopping. Journal of Consumer Research, 15. 422 - 433.

Poe, D.B. Jr. (1977). The Giving of Gifts: Anthropological data and social psychological theory. Cornell Journal of Social Relations, 12. 47 - 63.

Pollay, R. (1986). It's the Thought That Counts: A case study in Xmas excesses. In Wallendorf & Anderson (Eds.). Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 14, pp. 140 - 143). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Rigaux-Bricmont, B. (1993). Intentions de Celui Qui Offre, Interprétation de Celui Qui Reçoit et Satisfactions Respectives dans l'Échange de Cadeaux de Noël Entre Conjointes. Congrès 1993 de l'ASAC. Château Lac Louise: AB. 258 - 267.

Rucker, M., Leckliter, L., Kivel, S., Dinkel, M., Freitas, T., Wynes, M., & Prato, H. (1991). When the Thought Counts: Friendship, love, gift exchanges and gift returns. In R. Holman & M. Solomon (Eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 18, pp. 528 - 531). Provo, UT: Association for Consumer Research.

Ryans, A.B. (1977). Consumer Gift Buying Behavior: An exploratory analysis. In O. Bellinger & B. Greenberg (Eds.), Contemporary Marketing Thought, (Vol. 44, pp. 99 - 104). Chicago, American Marketing Association.

Saad, G. (1994). The Adaptive Use of Stopping Policies in Sequential Consumer

Choice. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Cornell University.

Saad, G. & Russo, J.E. (in press). Stopping Criteria in Sequential Choice.

Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes.

Sain-Jacques, M. & Mallen, B. (1981). The French market under the microscope.

Marketing Magazine, May 11, 10 - 15.

Schaninger, C.M., Bourgeois, J.C., & Buss, W.C. (1985). French-English Canadian Subcultural Consumption Differences. Journal of Marketing, 49, 82 - 92.

Schaninger, C.M. & Sciglimpaglia, D. (1981). The Influence of Cognitive Personality Traits and Demographics on Consumer Information Acquisition. Journal of Consumer Research, 8, 208 - 216.

Scammon, D.L., Shaw, R.T., & Bamossy, G. (1982). Is a Gift Always a Gift?: An investigation of flower purchasing behavior across situations. In A. Mitchel (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 9, pp. 531 - 536). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Schneider, H.K. (1974). Economic Man: The anthropology of economics. New York: The Free Press.

Sherry, J.F. Jr. (1983). Gift Giving in Anthropological Perspective. Journal of Consumer Research, 10, 157 - 168.

Sherry, J.F. Jr. & McGrath, M.A. (1989). Unpacking the Holiday Presence: A comparative ethnography of two gift stores. In E. Hirschmann (Ed.), Interpretive Consumer Research, (pp. 148 - 167). Provo, UT: Association for consumer Research.

Sherry, J.F. Jr., McGrath, M.A., & Levy, S.J. (1992). The Disposition of the Gift

and Many Unhappy Returns. Journal of Retailing, 68, (1) 40 - 65.

Sherry, J.F. Jr., McGrath, M.A., & Levy, S.J. (1993). The Dark Side of the Gift. Journal of Business Research, 28, 225 - 244.

Shurmer, P. (1971). The Gift Game. New Society, 23, 1242 - 1244.

Sprott, D.E. & Miyazaki, A.D. (1995). Gift Purchasing in a Retail Setting: An empirical examination. AMA Winter Educators' Conference, February, American Marketing Association, 1 - 19.

Stigler, G.J. (1961). The Economics of Information. The Journal of Political Economy, 69, (3), 213 - 225.

Tigert, D.J. (1979). Three Papers on Gift-Giving: A comment. In W. Wilkie (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 6, pp. 332 - 334). Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.

Urbany, J.E. (1986). An Experimental Examination of the Economics of Information. Journal of Consumer Research, 13, 257 - 271.

Vincent, M. & Zikmund, W. (1975). An Experimental Investigation of Situational Effects on Risk Perception. In M.J. Schlinger (Ed.), Advances in Consumer Research, (pp. 125 - 129) Chicago: Association for Consumer Research.

Wolfenbarger, M.F. (1990). Motivations and Symbolism in Gift-Giving Behavior. In M. Goldberg et al. (Eds.), Advances in Consumer Research, (Vol. 17, pp. 699 - 706). Provo, U: Association for Consumer Research.

APPENDIX A
Survey Instruments

English Survey

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

PART I

For whom was the gift intended (i.e., the relationship to you)? _____

Was the gift from joint GIVERS (e.g., from both you and your spouse)? yes _____ no _____

How much did the gift cost (tax included) to the nearest dollar? _____

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

	strongly disagree											strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
I have a close relationship with this recipient.												
I knew exactly what to buy for this recipient.												
There was a large selection of gifts I could have bought for this recipient.												
I got ideas for the clothing gift from other people (not the recipient).												
I have never bought gifts for this recipient before.												
I was pressed for time when I was choosing this clothing gift.												
I will not like the consequences if the recipient does not like the clothing gift.												
I had everything decided about the garment before I got to the store.												
It is very important that I get just the right gift for this recipient.												
There were many brands to choose from once I had decided what to buy for this recipient.												
I bought this item from a list given to me by the recipient.												

	strongly disagree												strongly agree
	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			
I had a definite budget in mind before shopping for this clothing gift.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
The pricing of items in the store was easy to find.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
It does not matter what clothing I get for this person because I know s/he will return it later to the store.	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			
The cost of the actual gift exceeded my budget for it.	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			
This recipient is easy to buy gifts for.	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			
It is especially risky to buy gifts for this particular recipient.	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			
Money was no object for this particular clothing gift.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
The recipient gave me a list to choose from.	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 Christmas gifts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
The signs in the store were very helpful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
I did a lot of research on what to buy for this recipient before I actually went shopping.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			

	strongly disagree									strongly agree
While I was shopping in the store, I consulted with a friend in choosing the clothing gift	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I was absolutely certain that what I bought was the perfect gift for this person.	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
Once I had decided what to give this person, I did not spend much time comparing brands.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Everything I needed to know about the clothing item was available in the store.	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
 Before making my final selection for this clothing gift, I ...										
	strongly disagree									strongly agree
received a lot of help from the salesclerk.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
very carefully examined the packaging information.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
walked around the store looking at the display of all merchandise.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
looked at all the items in the display area where I bought the gift.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
checked all the prices very carefully.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
read all the signs around the display area.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
spent a lot of time comparing the brands or clothing items in the store.	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
very carefully read the manufacturer's label.	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	
	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
Generics (no-name brands) are not much different from name brands except for the packaging.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Generic products provide good value for what I pay.	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
My friends and/or neighbours often come to me for advice.	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
I like to be considered a leader.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I often try new brands before my friends and neighbours do.	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
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 love to shop all year around.	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
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 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 for comfort, I choose the former.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I always feel rushed while Christmas shopping.	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

	strongly disagree		strongly agree
I am willing to spend more time shopping in order to find bargains.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
I love the Christmas season.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
Generics are often as good as advertised brands.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
I feel there is a risk in choosing a brand other than the one I am familiar with.	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 do not buy brands that I have never tried before	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
When I see a new brand on the shelf I often buy it.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
People who buy generic products tend to be cheap.	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 am strongly attached to all the Christmas traditions.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
I love to Christmas shop.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
I often buy other brands to see if they are better than the brand I typically buy.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
I watch carefully the people I'm buying gifts for, to see what they would really like.	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
I often give Christmas gifts that help to shape the recipient's personality.	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
Christmas shopping is one of my least favorite activities.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10
When I am Christmas shopping, I am always pressed for time.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	10

	strongly disagree											strongly agree
	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		
When it comes to Christmas, I follow all the traditional customs of the season.	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 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		
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 like to try new and different things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
There is never enough time to get all of the Christmas shopping done.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
I often give Christmas presents to people in order to reinforce some aspect of their identity.	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		
Christmas is my favorite time of the year.	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 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		
I look forward to Christmas every year.	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		
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		
I usually bring someone with me to help me pick out Christmas gifts.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		

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 - \$49	_____	\$200 - \$299	_____	\$500 - \$599	_____
\$50 - \$99	_____	\$300 - \$399	_____	\$600 +	_____
\$100 - \$199	_____	\$400 - \$499	_____		

In what month did you first START shopping for gifts this in past Christmas season? _____

When did you FINISH shopping for gifts in this past Christmas season? _____

Approximately how many separate Christmas shopping trips did you make this past Christmas?

none _____ 1 - 3 _____ 4 - 6 _____ 7 - 9 _____ 10 + _____

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

	strongly disagree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	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 III

In this section, we would like to know the extent to which you use English, French, and other languages in your normal daily activities. Please give a distribution in percent of time from 0 (never) to 100 (all the time). Allophones refer to those other than Anglophone or Francophone (use the one that applies to you).

	<u>English</u>	<u>French</u>	<u>Other</u> (specify _____)	<u>Total</u>
At home: with spouse	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	100%
with children (if you have any)	_____	_____	_____	100
With relatives	_____	_____	_____	100
At work	_____	_____	_____	100
With close friends	_____	_____	_____	100
When you went to school	_____	_____	_____	100
Watching television	_____	_____	_____	100
Listening to radio	_____	_____	_____	100
Reading newspapers	_____	_____	_____	100
Reading magazines or books	_____	_____	_____	100
Shopping. with salespeople	_____	_____	_____	100
reading packaging / signs	_____	_____	_____	100

Please indicate your degree of agreement with the following statements:

	strongly disagree										strongly agree									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be Anglophone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be Francophone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be Allophone (specify: _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My parents are Anglophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My parents are Francophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My spouse is Anglophone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
My spouse is Francophone	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I am very comfortable dealing with Anglophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I am very comfortable dealing with Francophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I grew up in mostly Anglophone neighbourhoods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I grew up in mostly Francophone neighbourhoods	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I like to go to places where I can be with Anglophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I like to go to places where I can be with Francophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I often participate in the activities of Anglophone community or political organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I often participate in the activities of Francophone community or political organizations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be a strong Protestant believer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be a strong Catholic believer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I consider myself to be a strong (other) believer(specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	strongly disagree									strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I had a strong Protestant childhood upbringing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I had a strong Catholic childhood upbringing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I had a strong (other) childhood upbringing (specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Protestant beliefs are an important part of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Catholic beliefs are an important part of my life	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(Other) beliefs are an important part of my life (specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

You are female _____ male _____

Your age is: 0 - 19 years _____ 30 - 39 years _____ 50 - 59 years _____
 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 + _____
 \$20 000 - \$29 999 _____ \$50 000 - \$59 999 _____

The size of your family is: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 + _____

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

Which municipality do you live in? _____

What is your place of birth:
 Quebec _____ Western Canada _____ Europe _____
 Ontario _____ Atlantic Provinces _____ Other _____ specify: _____

How many years in total have you lived in Quebec? _____ years

Please indicate your highest level of education attained:
 _____ elementary school
 _____ high school
 _____ community college / CEGEP / technical school / diploma
 _____ undergraduate university degree
 _____ graduate university degree

Your current occupation is: _____

What is your employment status:
 _____ work full time (30 or more hours per week)
 _____ work part time (less than 30 hours per week)
 _____ retired / pensioned
 _____ student
 _____ unemployed
 _____ homemaker

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

French Survey

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.

PARTIE I

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

Le cadeau a été donné par plus d'une personne. Oui _____ Non _____

Ce cadeau a coûté combien (taxes incluses)? _____

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		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me sens très proche de cette personne.										
Je savais exactement quoi acheter pour cette personne.										
Il y avait un grand choix de cadeaux que j'aurais pu acheter pour cette personne.										
D'autres personnes (et non cette personne) m'ont donné des idées de cadeaux.										
Je n'ai jamais acheté de cadeau pour cette personne auparavant.										
J'étais très pressé(e) quand je choisissais ce vêtement.										
Je ne serais pas très heureux(se) si cette personne n'aimait pas ce cadeau vestimentaire.										
J'avais tout décidé concernant ce vêtement avant d'aller au magasin.										
Il est très important que je trouve le cadeau idéal pour cette personne.										
Il y avait plusieurs marques à choisir lorsque j'avais décidé quoi acheter pour cette personne.										
J'ai acheté ce vêtement parce qu'il se trouvait sur la liste que cette personne m'avait donné.										

	entièrement en désaccord					entièrement d'accord				
	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
J'avais un budget précis avant d'aller magasiner pour ce cadeau vestimentaire.	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
Le choix de cadeau n'est pas important, car je sais qu'il(elle) le rendra au magasin.	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
Le coût actuel de ce vêtement a dépassé mon budget initial.	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
Acheter des cadeaux pour cette personne est très facile.	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
C'est assez risqué d'acheter des cadeaux pour cette personne en particulier.	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
En choisissant ce vêtement, le prix n'avait aucune importance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Cette personne m'a donné une liste de cadeaux pour elle.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Le budget pour ce cadeau vestimentaire était plus élevé que mon budget normal pour les autres cadeaux de Noël.	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
J'ai fait beaucoup de recherches sur un cadeau pour cette personne avant d'aller magasiner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	entièrement en désaccord					entièrement d'accord				
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
J'étais absolument certain(e) que j'ai acheté le cadeau idéal pour cette personne.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'étais peu disposé(e) à dépasser mon budget pour ce cadeau.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Dès que j'avais décidé quoi donner à cette personne, je n'ai pas perdu de temps à comparer les différentes marques.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tous ce que je voulais savoir concernant ce vêtement était disponible dans le magasin.	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
 Avant de faire mon choix final pour ce vêtement, j'ai ...										
	entièrement en désaccord					entièrement d'accord				
reçu beaucoup d'aide du(de la) vendeur(euse).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
lu avec soin l'information disponible sur l'emballage.	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
regardé tous les produits situés à l'endroit même où j'ai acheté ce cadeau.	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
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
essayé d'obtenir le plus d'information possible dans le magasin sur ce vêtement.	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

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				
	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
A part l'emballage, il n'y a pas de grande différence entre les produits sans marque et les autres.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les produits sans marque sont très avantageux pour leur prix.	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
Mes amis et mes voisins me demandent souvent des conseils.	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
J'aime être considéré(e) un "leader".	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
Parfois j'influence le choix de mes amis.	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
J'aime magasiner pendant toute l'année.	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
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
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 me sens toujours bousculé(e) quand je fais mes achats de Noël.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	entièrement en désaccord					entièrement d'accord				
Être 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 suis prêt(e) à magasiner davantage pour trouver des aubaines.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'aime beaucoup la période de Noël.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les produits sans marque sont souvent aussi bons que ceux qui sont annoncés.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je sens qu'il est risqué de choisir une marque différente de celle que je connais.	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
Je n'achète pas de produits que je n'ai jamais essayé auparavant.	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
Souvent, quand je vois une nouvelle marque sur les étagères, je l'achète par curiosité.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les gens qui achètent des produits sans marque sont un peu chiches.	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 suis fortement attaché(e) à toutes les traditions de Noël.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'aime beaucoup magasiner pour des cadeaux de Noël.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'achète souvent d'autres marques pour vérifier si elles sont meilleures que celles que j'achète habituellement.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'observe avec soin le comportement des personnes pour qui j'achète des cadeaux pour voir ce qu'elles aimeraient vraiment.	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
Je donne souvent des cadeaux de Noël pour influencer la personnalité des personnes qui les reçoivent.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	entièrement en désaccord					entièrement d'accord				
Je sens souvent qu'il ya 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
Faire des achats pour Noël est l'une des activités que j'aime le moins.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Quand je fais des achats pour Noël, je suis toujours pressé(e).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Souvent, j'achète des cadeaux de Noël aux personnes particulières parce que je sais qu'elles vont m'en offrir un.	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
Je considère le prix en dernier quand j'achète un cadeau.	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
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
J'aime essayer des choses nouvelles et différentes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Il n'y a jamais assez de temps pour faire tous mes achats pour Noël.	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 personnalités.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je suis plus indépendant(e) que la plupart des gens.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Noël est la période de l'année que j'aime le plus.	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 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
Chaque année j'ai hâte que Noël arrive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'aime beaucoup réfléchir aux cadeaux que j'achète.	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
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

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 acheté cette année?
(Inclure votre part si vous avez fait des cadeaux avec une autre personne)

0\$ - 49\$	_____	200\$ - 299\$	_____	500\$ - 599\$	_____
50\$ - 99\$	_____	300\$ - 399\$	_____	600\$ +	_____
100\$ - 199\$	_____	400\$ - 499\$	_____		

Quel mois avez-vous COMMENCÉ à faire les achats pour Noël cette année? _____

Quand avez-vous TERMINÉ de faire vos achats pour Noël cette année? _____

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

0 _____ 1 - 3 _____ 4 - 6 _____ 7 - 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 prochaine partie.

	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 confort.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

PARTIE III

Dans cette section, nous souhaitons connaître le degré d'emploi du français, de l'anglais, et des autres langues dans vos activités courantes. Veuillez SVP indiquer votre réponse en fonction d'une distribution de pourcentage de temps, de 0 (jamais) à 100 (tout le temps). Allophone est une langue autre que le français et l'anglais; indiquez celle qui s'applique à vous.

	<u>anglais</u>	<u>français</u>	<u>autre</u> (spécifier _____)	<u>Total</u>
A la maison: avec époux/épouse	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	100%
avec les enfants (si vous en avez)	_____	_____	_____	100
Avec les autres membres de votre famille	_____	_____	_____	100
Au travail	_____	_____	_____	100
Avec de bons amis	_____	_____	_____	100
Quand vous êtes allé(e) à l'école	_____	_____	_____	100
A regarder la télévision	_____	_____	_____	100
A écouter la radio	_____	_____	_____	100
A lire des journaux	_____	_____	_____	100
A lire des revues et des livres	_____	_____	_____	100
A magasiner: avec des vendeurs(ses)	_____	_____	_____	100
à lire l'emballage / les panneaux	_____	_____	_____	100

Veuillez SVP indiquer votre degré d'accord avec les énoncés suivants:

	entièrement en désaccord										entièrement d'accord									
Je me considère francophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me considère anglophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me considère allophone (spécifier: _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mes parents sont francophones.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mes parents sont anglophones.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mon (ma) conjoint(e) se considère francophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mon (ma) conjoint(e) se considère anglophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me sens très à l'aise dans mes relations avec des francophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me sens très à l'aise dans mes relations avec des anglophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'ai grandi dans un voisinage principalement francophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'ai grandi dans un voisinage principalement anglophone.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'aime aller aux endroits où je me trouve en compagnie de francophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'aime aller aux endroits où je me trouve en compagnie d'anglophones	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je participe souvent aux activités des organisations communautaires ou politiques francophones.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je participe souvent aux activités des organisations communautaires ou politiques anglophones.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

	entièrement en désaccord										entièrement d'accord									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me considère fortement croyant(e) catholique.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me considère fortement croyant(e) protestant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Je me considère fortement croyant(e) (autre) (spécifier _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'ai été élevé(e) dans un milieu très catholique.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'ai été élevé(e) dans un milieu très protestant.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
J'ai été élevé(e) dans un milieu très (autre). (spécifier _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les croyances catholiques sont une partie importante de ma vie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les croyances protestantes sont une partie importante de ma vie.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Les croyances (autres) sont une partie importante de ma vie. (spécifier _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Etes-vous? femme _____ homme _____

Votre âge est: 0 - 19 ans _____ 30 - 39 ans _____ 50 - 59 ans _____
 20 - 29 ans _____ 40 - 49 ans _____ 60 + ans _____

Etes-vous? célibataire _____ 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 + _____
 \$20 000 - \$29 999 _____ \$50 000 - \$59 999 _____

Combien de personnes y-a-t'il dans votre famille? 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 + _____

Si vous avez des enfants demeurant avec vous, quel est l'âge du plus jeune? _____ ans

Vous habitez dans quelle municipalité? _____

Où êtes-vous né(e)?

Québec _____ Canada de l'ouest _____ Europe _____
 Ontario _____ Provinces de l'Atlantique _____ Autre _____ spécifiez _____

Combien d'années au total avez-vous habité au Québec? _____ ans

Veuillez SVP indiquer votre niveau le plus élevé de scolarité:

_____ école élémentaire
 _____ école secondaire
 _____ diplôme du CEGEP / école technique / collège
 _____ diplôme d'université, premier cycle (baccalauréat)
 _____ diplôme d'université, deuxième ou troisième cycle

Quelle est votre profession? _____

Présentement, est-ce que vous ...

_____ 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 en chômage
 _____ êtes ménagère/ homme à la maison

MERCI BEAUCOUP DE VOTRE PARTICIPATION.