

# Shopping for Oneself

## : Motives and Orientations of Small Luxury Purchase as Self-Gifting

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Eunyoung Ahn · Jiwon Chae · Hyun-Hwa Lee\*

Undergraduate Student, Dept of Fashion Design & Textiles, Inha University, Incheon, Korea

Undergraduate Student, Dept of Fashion Design & Textiles, Inha University, Incheon, Korea

Associate Professor, Dept of Fashion Design & Textiles, Inha University, Incheon, Korea

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**Abstract** *Small luxury purchase as self-gifting is one of the latest consumer trends in self-gifting. Although this consumption trend continues to grow in various fields, little research has been conducted on related consumer behavior. As such, this study was conducted to empirically investigate the current consumer behavior involved in purchase of small luxury self-gifts. The objectives of this study are to determine the current status of self-gifts markets, identify motives and orientations of self-gifting, and investigate the effects of the motives on self-gifts orientations. A total of 199 respondents were used in data analyses. Regarding motives for self-gifting, four motives — self-comfort, self-reward, anxiety, and showing off — were identified; regarding self-gifting orientations, five factors — rationalization (emotional comfort, product attributes, self-defense, and conformity) and the luxury being within one's spending limit — were identified. The study determined the effects of the motives on the orientations, and the effects of the motives and the orientations on post-purchase consumer reaction. This study conducted an empirical investigation on small luxury self-gifting and moreover, the study determined the motives, orientations, and consequences of self-gifting, which have not yet been explained in the literature.*

**Key words** *Small Luxury, Self-Gifting, Motive, Orientation, Post-Purchase Behavior*

### **Introduction**

Schwartz (1967) defined self-gifts as gifts for oneself. A recent consumer trend toward small luxury products and services can be seen as a similar consumer trend in that they are self-gifts - gifts from me to me (Y. S. Kim, 2013). Seeking small luxuries as self-gifts indicates a preference for the top-of-the-line products for one's own pleasure and desire, and includes spending on clothes, beauty products, and travel (H. J. Kim, 2015). This consumption behavior exists in various fields including performing arts, beauty services, exercise, flowers, home decoration, travel, dining, beverages, and electronics (H. P. Lee, 2015).

Purchasing small luxuries as self-gifts refers to buying the product that feels most luxurious within

one's spending limit (H. J. Choi, 2015). This consumer behavior became more common because of the recent economic downturn, especially by consumers with low spending limits for the purpose of meeting their needs and psychological comfort (Y. S. Kim, 2013). Accordingly, small luxury purchasing can be defined as the tendency of extravagant, yet reasonable everyday spending made selectively by a consumer, within the limit of his or her spending (Shin & J. A. Hong, 2014).

From this self-gifting point of view, small luxury purchase is manifested in the form of recession-based spending as the consumer culture formed by the gloomy outlook and anxiety experienced by the present young generation. While ordinary luxury shopping for expensive durable or luxury products is driven by the desire to show off, small luxury purchasing can be thought of as spending for comforting oneself and satisfying ones' needs (Dong, 2015; Y. S. Kim, 2013; C. H. Lee, 2015). Small luxury purchase is also proposed to serve to ease the boredom of monotonous lives by realizing the consumers' desire for pursuit of happiness (Shin & J. A. Hong, 2014). Analogous to self-gifting, small luxury purchase is also a gift "from me to me"; thus, this study investigates consumers' motives and orientations concerning small luxury purchase as self-gifting. Regarding previous studies on self-gifting, Yi and S. H. Lee (2013) studied self-gifting motives and process and H. J. Huh (2015) identified self-gifts motives and characteristics, each using a qualitative method; however, quantitative research on the effects of self-gifting motive and orientation on post-purchase behavior is lacking. Therefore, the present study investigates motives and orientations concerning small luxury purchase as self-gifting and the relationships between the motives, orientations, and post-purchase behavior in consumers with the experience of small luxury purchase as self-gifting.

Objectives of this study are as follows. This study will determine the current status of small luxury purchase as a concept of self-gifting, and the motives, orientations, and post-purchase behavior concerning this consumer behavior. In addition, the study will investigate the effects of the motives on the orientations, the effects of the motives and the orientations on post-purchase behavior, and the effects of two post-purchase variables - satisfaction and attitude - on repurchase. In summary, this is an empirical study on consumers' motives and orientations with regard to small luxury as an example of self-gifts.

## *Literature review*

### **Self-Gift**

The concept of the self-gift has been studied extensively since the 1990s, having been introduced by Sherry (1983) and Mick (1986). In Korea, Kang (2012) conducted a study on the current status of self-gifting and the relationship between materialism and self-gifting. Yi and S. H. Lee (2013) conducted qualitative research on the motives, post-purchase experience, and the process of self-gifting, and H. J. Huh (2015) explained the concept, motives, and characteristics of self-gifting, and investigated the differences among the types of fashion products preferred for self-gifting by motive. According to Mick and DeMoss (1990b, p. 328), self-gifting is "personally symbolic self-communication through special indulgences that are premeditated and closely context bound." H. J. Huh (2015) argued that self-gifting is

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a phenomenon caused by the combination of the social climate of seeking respite and recovery due to the tough reality of current times, the shift of the center of attention and affection to oneself due to extreme individualism, increase in one-person households, and weakening interpersonal relationships.

Consumers experience positive emotion (satisfaction) and reduce negative emotion (anxiety) through self-gifting (Luomala & Laaksonen, 1999). Specifically, Luomala and Laaksonen maintained that consumers engage in self-gifts ultimately to regulate their mood. The characteristic of self-gifts as “gifts to oneself” is in line with the concept of small luxuries, and spending on luxury goods or services within one’s spending limit can be considered small luxury purchase. In other words, addition of a monetary aspect to the existing concept of self-gifting is an integral part of the small luxury concept.

#### **Small Luxury Purchase as Self-Gifting: Current Status**

Similar to the concept of self-gifts in the sense of gifts for oneself, small luxury spending is a form of luxury spending. Unlike the ordinary sense of luxury spending as being above one’s spending level, small luxury is a new concept of luxury intended to enable purchase of products or services considered personally valuable within an expenditure level one can afford (H. J. Choi, 2015).

Small luxury purchase is contrasted to conventional luxury purchase in that, unlike conventional luxury, which focuses on showing off through spending on high-end durable goods or luxury brands, small luxury purchasing as self-gifting is more geared toward one’s own psychological comfort and satisfaction—greater satisfaction with smaller investment through more ordinary spending (Dong, 2015; Y. S. Kim, 2013). Moreover, small luxury spending is considered efficient based on value in the context of the current recession in the economy, as demonstrated by the statement of H. J. Park (2015) that sales of products that give large satisfaction with small investment increase when consumer confidence is low. Small luxury purchase as self-gifting has been defined as seeking the top-of-the-line products strictly for the purpose of one’s own desire and pleasure (H. J. Kim, 2015), and seeking psychological satisfaction through affordable spending (C. H. Lee, 2015).

Small luxury self-gifts are expanding their territory from clothing products including coats, hats, and bags to coffee brands, baby milk, accessories, perfume, cosmetics, and plastic surgery (H. J. Choi, 2015). Examples of small luxury in clothing products can be found in buying relatively inexpensive garments, low priced products of luxury brands, products from collaborations between luxury brands or famous designers and clothing companies, and simple accessories or hats instead of high-end clothing (S. Y. Kim, 2015). In other words, purchasing a luxury brand perfume that gives one a sense of uniqueness on a relatively small budget rather than expensive luxury brand clothing or a bag can be an example of small luxury self-gifting (Y. S. Kim, 2013). Moreover, the concept of everyday small luxury purchase is applicable to various fields, such as buying premium yet affordable baby milk products, having Starbucks coffee, getting simple plastic surgery during a holiday break, or getting a nail art service (J. M. Kim, 2004).

**Small Luxury Purchase as Self-Gifting: Motives**

Motives for small luxury purchase fall into four categories: comfort (when feeling stressed or depressed), reward (for having accomplished a goal), anniversary and holiday (birthday or Christmas), and extra money and bonus situation (getting extra money) (Faure & Mick, 1993; Heath, Tynan, & Ennew, 2011; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013; Olshavsky & D. H. Lee, 1993). Mick and DeMoss (1990a) proposed motives including reward, encouragement, celebration, stress relief, and positive emotion.

*Self-Comfort (Depression or Stress)*

People report that they self-gift to sooth negative emotions when they are sad or depressed due to internally attributable factors such as lack of efforts or will, or stressed due to situations they cannot control (H. J. Huh, 2015; Mick & De Moss, 1990a; Sherry, McGrath, & Levy, 1995). In other words, they say self-gifting is an effort to recover themselves from negative emotions. It has been reported that self-gifting for comfort provides encouragement, and the act of giving a gift to oneself per se has a mood-altering effect (Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013). Similarly, small luxury purchase as self-gifting also reduces negative emotions; therefore, depressive or stressful situations serve to motivate small luxury purchase.

*Self-Reward*

Among various motives for self-gifting, the most important is self-reward (Joy, Hui, Chan, & Cui, 2006; B. S. Jun, 2015; Tynan, McKechnie, & Chhuon, 2010; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013). A small luxury self-gift as a reward for accomplishment is most suitable for justifying the regret or remorse people often experience over spending for indulgences (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002; Mick & Faure, 1998; Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2009; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013). Self-gifts for reward have greater legitimacy and occur more frequently when the personal success or accomplishment is attributable to oneself (Mick & Faure, 1998; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013).

People tend to focus on their own happiness and satisfaction more on special days such as birthdays, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. As such anniversaries may be an opportunity for celebration and support by self-gifting. Studies (H. J. Huh, 2015; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013) reported that such behavior is motivated by the intention to prevent a sense of loss or disappointment caused in case their expectations are not met by others, as well as just for celebrating the special day oneself. These findings suggest that small luxury self-gifting on a special day generates positive emotion in them. Since self-reward for accomplishment evokes a sense of pride, and self-reward on an anniversary evokes a sense of joy (Kang, 2012), small luxury self gifting that focuses on personal value in the context results in the sense of happiness generated from investing in oneself as well as simply gifting for oneself (Jang, 2015).

*Anxiety*

Since the financial crisis in the 1990s, the Korean economy has undergone extensive restructuring and generated a high level of unemployment, which has intensified financial anxiety among the young

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generation. On top of the economic anxiety, public anxiety about the lack of systematic management of the society that has lagged behind the fast-growing economy has also grown (H. K. Lee, 2000). When the systems of the society are unstable, members of the society are bound to experience insecurity, as they feel threatened by the risks associated with unstable society (H. K. Lee, 2000). While consumers feel the poor economy with empty wallets due to huge household debts and lack of jobs, consumer needs persists, leading to the small luxury phenomenon (H. J. Kim, 2014). This suggests that consumers may reduce spending through small luxury purchase due to the anxiety experienced by the present young generation. In other words, consumers literally cannot afford high spending and instead spend on small luxury products and services, and consumers' anxiety may serve as a motive for such purchase behavior.

#### *Desire to Show Off*

The desire to show off is a psychological motivator for conspicuous consumption, and refers to the desire to show off the economic power rather than to attain the practical utility of goods or services (Veblen, 1934). In other words, the essence of conspicuous consumption is to gain benefits from spending or extravagance itself, and very much for impressing others (Mason, 1980; Y. M. Lee, 1991; Page, 1992; E. A. Park, 1994). Conspicuous consumption has also been defined with a focus on enjoying certain goods (Mammen & Whan, 1987), or on the symbolic nature of products (Yoo, 1993). Consumers want recognition of their ability or status from others by buying goods from name brands or specialized stores (S. Y. Kim, 2000). M. N. Cho (2015) argued that conspicuous consumption is caused by consumers' desire for social recognition. As the essence of conspicuous consumption is to gain benefits from spending or extravagance itself, it is considered a potential motive for small luxury spending as self-gifting.

#### **Small Luxury Purchase as Self-Gifting: Orientations**

##### *Rationalization*

Many consumers occasionally buy products based on feelings or spontaneously. When consumers make such unplanned purchases, they rationalize them. Kivetz and Siminon (2002) found that consumers regret or feel guilty when they spend simply for pleasure rather than making preplanned purchases. Consequently, consumers who want to stop feeling that way rationalize the purchase in various ways.

The small luxury products consumers bought as self-gifts are rather for pleasure-oriented ones to cheer themselves up than preplanned or rational spending. Unplanned consumer behavior is bound to make consumers to be conscious of how the behavior looks to others (Han, 2012); unplanned spending on luxury goods that they would not buy normally may evoke guilty for self-gifts (B. S. Jun, 2015). These findings confirm that rationalization to reduce negative emotions such as regret and guilt is likely to be an important factor in small luxury self-gifting. Yi and S. H. Lee (2013) reported that consumers justify their pleasure spending to meet their needs by calling it self-gifting.

H. J. Kim (2007) classified rationalization into five categories - self-defense, product attribute, emotional comfort, responsibility avoidance, and other-orientation - and found a close relationship between ra-

tionalization and impulse buying. The categories of rationalization were applied in B. S. Jun's (2015) study on self-gifts. In the present study, rationalization is classified into emotional comfort, product attributes, and self-defense, while using conformity as the fourth category of rationalization for other-orientation (Suh, S. L. Cho, & Noh, 2009; H. J. Kim, 2007). This use of conformity is consistent with the idea that alignment with others helps others help reducing guilt when consumers rationalize their spending.

The emotional comfort-oriented rationalization refers to feeling relieved of stress, experiencing enjoyment, and thinking luxury spending is unavoidable because it is a habit. This type of rationalization is characterized by the desire to relieve the anxiety from purchase behavior (H. J. Kim, 2007). Accordingly, small luxury self-gifting for self-comfort is likely to help reducing spending-related stress and experiencing pleasure. Product attribute-oriented rationalization refers to valuing novel designs and rarity of products. It is characterized by the orientation to control post-purchase regret or anxiety through tangible benefits gained from products (H. J. Kim, 2007). Consumers feel relaxed about products purchased as small luxuries for themselves through product-oriented rationalization. Self-defense-orientated rationalization refers to recognizing the need for spending after purchase, thinking that the spending was reasonable, and comparing one's values and the purchase behavior. This orientation is characterized by trust in one's own judgment and respect for one's own choice (H. J. Kim, 2007). Therefore, consumers are likely to trust in themselves and their purchase behavior through self defense-oriented small luxury purchase.

Conformity refers to the passive form of consumption motivated by the desire to fit in (Suh, S. L. Cho, & Noh, 2009). Conformity-oriented rationalization refers to rationalizing by conforming to the spending of one's reference group to fit in. Small luxury spending is likely to be associated with conformity-based rationalization, as the spending is also subject to influence of reference groups.

#### *The Luxury Being Within One's Spending Limit*

These days, as the amount of information on products within a product group exceeds consumers' cognitive level, consumers often resort to comparative evaluation for purchase based on factors such as features, price, and design. Among such factors, price is the most influential. Accordingly, consumers tend to set a rough budget in spending (Y. M. Kim, 2013). Consumers also usually aim for luxury spending at their income level. However, subjective factors such as personal taste and orientation, lifestyle, trend, and preference also have a large influence on consumer behavior (S. I. Kim, 2005; Knight, 1965; S. J. Oh & T. Y. Huh, 2014). Accordingly, the most luxurious purchases available within a spending limit can be small luxury purchases for display of elegance and sophistication that aims at a minimal level of premium quality without exceeding one's spending limit. As small luxury is also intended for spending the allowable amount, the present study includes the pursuit of the most luxury within a spending limit as one of the orientations of small luxury.

#### **Small Luxury Purchase as Self-Gifting: Post-Purchase Behavior**

Post-purchase behavioral factors of small luxury purchase as self-gifting are classified into three types -

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satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase - which represent emotion, attitude, and behavior, respectively. Positive emotion (satisfaction) or attitude also leads to repurchase (Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013). The emotional and behavioral post-purchase behavioral factors of self-gifting have mainly been studied with qualitative research methods (Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013). As such, qualitative empirical research on this subject is still needed.

#### *Satisfaction*

Consumer satisfaction refers to how much consumers experience positive emotion in the process of purchase and evaluation, and is very comprehensive and multidimensional. In general, the satisfaction and dissatisfaction consumers experience is an important factor for a company (M. J. Park, 2015). Consumer satisfaction must include the satisfaction in all stages, from pre-purchase to post-purchase of products or services (Jeon, 2008). C. W. Lee (2009) proposed that the definition of consumer satisfaction includes satisfaction with the product, store, and clerk, and experience of purchase decision-making. Since consumer satisfaction leads to repurchase, it is used for generating revenues (M. J. Park, 2015).

The present study determines consumer satisfaction from small luxury spending, and investigates how satisfaction leads to repurchase. In the study, satisfaction is defined as consumer's perception or affect after spending on small luxury.

#### *Attitude*

Attitude refers to the consequence of marketing effects, and is a commonly and widely used concept (R. I. Kim, 2012). Attitude has components of favorable or unfavorable affect, and intensity. Therefore, favorable or unfavorable assessments and affects about a specific object or idea comprise attitude (Kotler, 2000). In addition, consumers who have formed an attitude show consistency, and the attitude formed is not innate but acquired (R. I. Kim, 2012; M. H. Oh, 2014). J. Y. Huh (2005) reported that satisfaction determines consumer attitude when consumers meet their needs using the perception of store image. Consumers are more likely to choose a product of a brand to which they show a favorable reaction (S. H. Kim & C. H. Kim, 2005)

#### *Repurchase*

Consumers' post-purchase behavior is closely associated with their pre-purchase psychology and the experience during the purchase process (K. J. Choi, 2001). Repurchase is the behavioral pattern with the intention of repurchasing a product or service when it is provided and reinforces favorable post-purchase attitude based on satisfaction. In other words, repurchase pattern will continue due to positive post-purchase affect, and it continue to influence future interactions (M. N. Lee, 2009). McDougall and Levesque (1999) argued that repurchase refers to consumer's recurring use of a given service. Newman and Werbel (1973) found that dissatisfied consumers make fewer repurchases than satisfied consumers do; Oliver (1980) demonstrated that consumer satisfaction influences attitude formation, and the attitude also influences repurchase behavior.

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### Research Questions

Based on these theoretical underpinnings, the present study conducts an empirical investigation of the motives, orientations, satisfaction, and post-purchase behavior of small luxury purchase as self-gifting. The research questions of this study are as follows.

Research question 1. What are the motives and orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting?

Research question 2. Do motives of small luxury purchase as self-gifting influence its orientations?

Research question 3. Do motives and orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting influence post-purchase behavioral factors (satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase)?

### Method

#### Participants and Procedures

Data were gathered using online survey methods using Google survey in May, 2015. The participants of the study were limited only those who have previous purchase experiences for small luxury purchase as self-gifting. Respondents were exposed to the screen where the definition of small luxury purchases as self-gifting. Afterwards the first question asked whether they had purchasing experience of small luxury as self-gifting in the past year. Only respondents who answered “yes” were lead to the next screen question. A total of 199 data were gathered and analyzed for the statistical analysis. Data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0 and conducted the following analyses: Descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and multiple regression analyses.

#### Instrument

To measure motivation of small luxury purchase as self-gifting, we modified the scales from the previous study. Self-comfort and self-reward was assessed using modified questions from B. S. Jun (2015), four and three items respectively. To measure anxiety we used the questions from J. H. Oh (2015). To assess showing off, we modified three items from E. S. Hong and Jeong (2012), and M. N. Cho (2015). As for the self-gifting orientations, to measure emotional comfort, product attributes, self-defense, we used the items from H. J. Kim (2007) and B. S. Jun (2015). To assess conformity, we modified the items used by Suh, S. L. Cho, and Noh (2009). The authors developed three items to measure luxury being within one’s spending limit based on H. J. Choi (2015) and H. J. Kim (2015). Satisfaction was measured using three items from S. M. Jun (2013), and repurchase behavior was measure using three items from J. O. Lee (2009).

### Results

#### Sample Characteristics

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The characteristics of sample for the study were as follows. The average age of the participants was



22.8 with minimum age of 18 and maximum age of 34. Over half of the sample was female (56.3%) and the rest were male (43.7%). A majority of the respondents were university students (81.4%). Almost 30% of the respondents represent the monthly household income as 4,000,000~6,000,000 KRW and 20.1% of them were both of 2,000,000~4,000,000 KRW and 6,000,000~8,000,000 KRW. The participants of the study expressed that their average monthly expenditure was approximately 580,000 KRW, and average monthly expenditure for fashion products were about 16,000 KRW.

The respondents indicated the following product categories of small luxury as self-gifting: apparel (51.8%), fashion goods (51.3%), beverage (50.8%), cosmetics and perfume (45.2%), dining out (36.2%), travel (25.6%), beauty care (27.1%), drinks (23.1%), performance (22.1%), exercise (14.6%), flower and interior (8.5%). The amount of the money they spent for the latest small luxury purchase was about 160,000 KRW. The frequency of small luxury purchase in once or twice in one month was 36.7% and once or twice in two or three months was 28.1% as followed. The respondents indicated apparel (36.7%), fashion goods (17.5%), and cosmetics and perfumes (11%) as desired product categories for small gifts. In other words, the results showed that the small luxury self-gift items they currently spend on and the items on their wish list were nearly identical. In addition, the spending limit they set for small luxury was approximately 390,000 KRW per month on average. This is over twice the average amount they currently spend for small luxury purchase as self-gifting (160,000 KRW), suggesting that consumers are willing to make small luxury spending at higher prices than the current small luxury spending.

**Table 1.**  
Small luxury purchase as self-gifting: Results of factor analysis for Dimensions of motivation

Factor	Item	Factor loadings	Eigen values	Variance experienced (cumulated variance experienced)	$\alpha$
Self-comfort	I'm depressed.	.794	2.508	17.917 (48.350)	0.813
	My daily life is not as fun as before.	.802			
	I feel stressed.	.820			
	I feel stressed about meeting a deadline at work or achieving a goal.	.651			
Self-reward	I reward myself for accomplishments.	.880	1.721	12.296 (60.646)	0.794
	I want to celebrate anniversaries and holidays (e.g., birthday and Christmas).	.704			
	I occasionally spend money for myself for achieving a goal.	.885			

Anxiety	I feel insecure about my future because of the current low level of job availability.	.731	4.261	30.433 (30.433)	0.877
	I fear I may become a failure.	.874			
	I fear I get no recognition no matter how hard I work.	.880			
	I fear my financial ability won't allow me an economically decent life.	.829			
Show-off	I tend to buy more expensive products than what I can afford.	.715	1.320	9.426 (70.072)	0.710
	I want to buy products that others don't have, even if they are expensive.	.812			
	I go to cafes or restaurants that appear upscale, even if they are expensive.	.813			

**Table 2.**  
Small luxury purchase as self-gifting: Results of factor analysis for dimensions of orientations

Factor	Item	Factor loadings	Eigen values	Variance experienced (cumulated variance experienced)	$\alpha$
Emotional comfort	I seem to reduce my stress through small luxury purchase.	.858	5.925	29.626 (29.626)	0.910
	Small luxury purchase seems to make me less tense.	.904			
	I seem to feel comforted from small luxury purchase.	.885			
	Small luxury purchase seems to uplift my monotonous life.	.699			
Product attribute	I think my small luxury spending makes it possible to buy things are different things from ordinary stuff.	.787	1.764	8.822 (62.484)	0.863
	I think my small luxury spending makes it possible to buy rare things.	.881			
	I think my small luxury spending makes it possible to buy special products that make me stand out.	.849			
Self-defense	I believe the product I bought as small luxury was what I needed anyway.	.753	2.956	14.781 (44.407)	0.730
	I think I deserve the product that I bought as small luxury.	.690			
	I think I deliberate before I make small luxury spending.	.767			

Conformity	I make small luxury spending because those around me do it.	.899	1.851	9.255 (53.662)	0.895
	I make small luxury spending because those who affect my purchases do it.	.884			
	I make small luxury spending because my associates do it.	.915			
Luxury being within one's spending limit	My small luxury spending doesn't exceed my spending limit.	.644	1.076	5.379 (67.863)	0.576
	I make small luxury spending that gives greatest joy for a relatively small cost.	.601			

### Preliminary Analysis

To identify dimensions of the motivations and orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting hoping orientation, we performed principal component factor analysis with a varimax rotation method. The results of factor analysis revealed that there were four motives - self-comfort, self-reward, anxiety, and showing off - were identified and the results were appeared in Table 1. The factor loadings were ranged from .65 to .89, and alpha for each dimensions were above .70 and thus internal reliability was assured. In terms of self-gifting orientations, five factors - rationalization (emotional comfort, product attributes, self-defense, and conformity) and the luxury being within one's spending limit were extracted and the results were presented in Table 2. The factor loadings for the four dimensions were from .70 to .90 and those for the luxury being within one's spending limit were from .60 to .64. Alphas for the dimensions were extracted over .70 except the luxury being within one's spending limit.

**Table 3.**

The effects of motivations on orientations: Small luxury purchase as self-gifting

Dependent variables	Independent variables	$\beta$	$t$	$F$	$Adj.R^2$
Emotional comfort	Self-comfort	.204	3.040**	26.261*	.338
	Self-reward	.473	7.938***		
	Anxiety	.089	1.33		
	Show-off	.138	2.273*		
Product attribute	Self-comfort	.014	.200	16.387**	.237
	Self-reward	.250	3.918***		
	Anxiety	.045	.636		
	Show-off	.374	5.740***		

Self- defense	Self-comfort	.136	1.765	8.624***	.133
	Self-reward	.302	4.435***		
	Anxiety	-.020	-.260		
	Show-off	.146	2.108*		
Conformity	Self-comfort	-.096	-1.207	6.348**	.100
	Self-reward	-.010	-.143		
	Anxiety	.178	2.245*		
	Show-off	.304	4.246***		
Luxury being within one's spending limit Product attribute	Self-comfort	.191	2.554*	12.210***	.185
	Self-reward	.395	5.982***		
	Anxiety	.083	1.123		
	Show-off	-.204	-3.035**		

\* $p < 0.05$  \*\* $p < 0.01$  \*\*\* $p < 0.001$

#### The effects of motivations on orientations: Small luxury purchase as self-gifting

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the effects of four motives - self-comfort, self-reward, anxiety, and showing off - on the orientations (rationalization-emotional comfort, product attributes, self-defense, and conformity-and the luxury being within one's spending limit). Table 3 exhibits the results of the analyses and showed that all regression models were statistically significant ( $F_{\text{emotional comfort}}=26.261$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ,  $F_{\text{product attributes}}=16.387$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $F_{\text{self-defense}}=8.624$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $F_{\text{conformity}}=6.348$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $F_{\text{luxury being within one's spending limit}}=12.210$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Among motive dimensions of small luxury purchase as self-gifting, self-comfort, self-reward, and showing off positively significantly influenced on emotional comfort, and especially self-reward had relatively greater effects on emotional comfort ( $\beta_{\text{self-comfort}}=0.204$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ,  $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.473$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta_{\text{showing-off}}=0.138$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). That is, the consumers in 20's were more likely to have tendency on small luxury purchase as self-gift when they were in the context of self-comfort, self-reward, and showing off. In regards to the orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting, the self-reward and showing off had significant effects on products attributes ( $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.250$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta_{\text{showing-off}}=0.374$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). In other words, those with the stronger needs for self-reward (anniversaries and reward for accomplishment) and showing off rationalized the regret or anxiety after small luxury spending using the design or tangible benefits of the purchased product. As in the product attribute-oriented rationalization, self-defense-oriented rationalization also showed positive effects of self-reward and the desire to show off.

However, there was strong influence of self-reward compared to showing off on self-defense ( $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.302$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ,  $\beta_{\text{showing-off}}=0.146$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results indicated that consumers who had greater self-reward and showing-off tendency had more likely to purchase small luxury as self-gifting. Anxiety

and showing-off significantly predicted conformity dimension ( $\beta_{\text{anxiety}}=0.178$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\beta_{\text{showng-off}}=0.304$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). As conformity refers to spending on small luxury passively to fit in with the group to which the consumer belongs (Suh, S. L. Cho, & Noh, 2009), those with the conformity orientation are bound to be influenced by the desire to show off their status and ability, especially when the level of public and financial anxiety is high. In other words, when people feel insecure financially or about the society, as an attempt to reduce the anxiety, they are more likely to imitate or conform to others' consumer behavior to fit in.

Among the dimensions of self-gift orientations -the luxury being within one's spending limit- was influenced by the three motives dimensions except anxiety. The self-reward, showing-off, and self-comfort had significantly influence on luxury being within one's spending limit ( $\beta_{\text{self-comfort}}=0.191$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.395$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $\beta_{\text{showing-off}}=-0.204$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). In summary, consumers try to achieve maximum satisfaction and enjoyment within their spending limit through small luxury spending when they want to reward their accomplishments, seek recognition from others, or feel depressed or stressed.

**Table 4.**

The effects of motivations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting on post-purchase behavior

Dependent variables	Independent variables	$\beta$	$t$	$F$	$Adj.R^2$
Satisfaction	Self-comfort	.131	.131	15.302***	.224
	Self-reward	.468	.468***		
	Anxiety	-.072	-.072		
	Show-off	.056	.056		
Attitude	Self-comfort	.022	.296	12.836***	.193
	Self-reward	.390	5.929***		
	Anxiety	.039	.525		
	Show-off	.157	2.341*		
Repurchase	Self-comfort	.142	2.051*	22.140***	.299
	Self-reward	.500	8.164***		
	Anxiety	-.056	-.824		
	Show-off	.143	2.300*		

\* $p<0.05$  \*\*\* $p<0.001$

#### The effects of motivations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting on post-purchase behavior

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the effects of four motives - self-comfort, self-reward, anxiety, and showing-off - on the post-purchase behavior (satisfaction, attitude, repurchase). As indicated by the Table 4, all regression models were statistically significant ( $F_{\text{satisfaction}}=15.302$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $F_{\text{attitudes}}=12.836$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $F_{\text{repurchase}}=22.140$ ,  $p<0.001$ ). Only self-reward among motive dimensions sig-

nificantly influence on satisfaction ( $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.468, p<0.001$ ). In regard to attitudes, there were positive significant effects of self-reward and showing-off on attitudes ( $\beta_{\text{self-reward}}=.390, p<0.001, \beta_{\text{showing-off}}=.157, p<0.05$ ). There were significant positive effects of self-comfort, self-reward, and showing off on repurchase behavior ( $\beta_{\text{self-comfort}}=.0142, p<0.05, \beta_{\text{self-reward}}=0.500, p<0.001, \beta_{\text{showing-off}}=0.143, p<0.05$ ).

Outcomes of small luxury purchase as self-gifting (satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase) were all influenced by self-reward. This finding supports Yi and S. H. Lee (2013), who reported that self-reward-oriented consumer behavior generates the feeling that their efforts are rewarded. This suggests that the act of spending itself uplifts one's life, and is consistent with the argument that small luxury consumption is hedonic consumption as mentioned earlier. It was also found that the motive of showing off for small luxury purchase influences attitude and repurchase but not satisfaction. This likely occurs because spending as a display to others rather than for oneself has less effect on satisfaction than attitude and repurchase.

**Table 5.**  
The effects of orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting on post-purchase behavior

Dependent variables	Independent variables	$\beta$	$t$	$F$	$Adj.R^2$
satisfaction	Emotional comfort	.415	6.305***	27.739***	.410
	Product attribute	-.040	-.635		
	Self- defense	.332	5.326***		
	Conformity	-.099	-1.746		
	The luxury being within one's spending limit	.120	1.903		
attitude	Emotional comfort	.341	4.955***	22.461***	.359
	Product attribute	.047	.710		
	Self- defense	.367	5.640***		
	Conformity	-.139	-2.359*		
	The luxury being within one's spending limit	.039	.595		
repurchase	Emotional comfort	.470	7.232***	29.447***	.426
	Product attribute	-.077	-1.233		
	Self- defense	.337	5.4698**		
	Conformity	-.117	-2.099*		
	The luxury being within one's spending limit	.071	1.148		

\* $p<0.05$  \*\* $p<0.01$  \*\*\* $p<0.001$

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### The effects of orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting on post-purchase behavior

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the effects of five orientations - (rationalization -emotional comfort, product attributes, self-defense, and conformity -and the luxury being within one's spending limit) on - on the post-purchase behavior (satisfaction, attitude, repurchase). As indicated by the Table 5, all regression models were statistically significant ( $F_{\text{satisfaction}}=27.739$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $F_{\text{attitudes}}=22.461$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $F_{\text{repurchase}}=29.447$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

Emotional comfort and self-defense had significant effects on satisfaction ( $\beta_{\text{emotional comfort}}=0.415$ ,  $\beta_{\text{self-defense}}=0.332$ ). In regard to attitudes, there were significant effects of emotional comfort and self-defense, and conformity ( $\beta_{\text{emotional comfort}}=0.341$ ,  $\beta_{\text{self-defense}}=0.367$ ,  $\beta_{\text{conformity}}=-0.139$ ). Similar results were also found in repurchase behavior as of emotional comfort and self-defense, and conformity had significant effects on repurchase behavior ( $\beta_{\text{emotional comfort}}=0.470$ ,  $\beta_{\text{conformity}}=0.337$ ,  $\beta_{\text{self-defense}}=-0.117$ ).

Among orientations regarding small luxury purchase as self-gifting, self-defense was found to have a significant effect on all outcomes of small luxury consumption (satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase). However, the effects of the orientation of luxury spending within spending limit and the product attribute oriented rationalization were not statistically significant. This can be interpreted that when spending on small luxury purchase as self-gifting, consumers make a spending for themselves rather than because of product attributes or to conform to others. This suggests that small luxury purchases as self-gifting have a positive outcome when they think that their feelings are comforted, stress is reduced by small luxury, they made a rational judgment in the spending, and when they trust and respect their own choices (H. J. Kim, 2007).

### *Discussion and Implications*

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status and nature of small luxury purchase as self-gifting, which is emerging as a new consumer trend. Specifically, the study identified the motives and orientations of small luxury purchase as self-gifting, the effects of motives on orientation on small luxury, the effects of motives and orientations of small luxury on post-purchase behavioral factors of small luxury spending, and the effects of satisfaction and attitude on repurchase. A summary of the study results is as follows. First, the two product groups that study participants purchased and are willing to purchase in future as small luxuries as self-gifts were clothing and fashion accessories. This suggests the importance of fashion products and markets in the market for small luxury spending. In addition, the average spending limit that consumers think reasonable for small luxury was more than twice the amount they spent most recently for small luxury purchases as self-gifting. This suggests that consumers look to spend more than what they current spend for small luxury self-gifts, which indicates a potential for growth of the market for small luxuries. Second, all orientations of small luxury spending as self-gifts (self-defense, product attributes, emotional comfort, conformity, and the most luxury within spending limit) were influenced by the desire to show off. This finding supports E. S. Hong and Jeong (2012), who claimed that those who value ostentation have a higher level of luxury spending. The find-

ing also supports Son (2010), who reported that consumer spending is influenced by the social climate that value conspicuous consumption.

Unlike the desire to show off, anxiety as a motive for small luxury had a positive effect on conformity only. This can be explained by the human need to feel that one is part of a group for reassurance through sense of belonging instead of seeking individualistic life, when they feel financially insecure or anxious about how the society is. In other words, the more an individual feels anxious, the stronger the orientation to imitate others' spending or conform to others' behavior patterns to fit in. This finding supports Lim and H. M. Lee's (1987) theory that consumers conform to the way others in the group dress, and seek recognition and reassurance from the group to ease the anxiety. In contrast, the self-reward motive had a positive effect on all orientations of small luxury spending except conformity. This likely implies that consumers who spend on small luxury for self-reward are not conformity-oriented. In other words, their spending is little affected by others.

Third, self-reward as a motive for small luxury purchase as self-gifting had a positive effect on all post-purchase behavioral factors (satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase). This indicates that consumers who spend on small luxury for self-reward offer positive responses after purchase, and is consistent with Yi and S. H. Lee's (2013) finding that the act of spending is pleasurable in itself, and gives the sense that their efforts are rewarded. This effect of self-reward factor on post-purchase behavioral factors of small luxury spending suggests the similarity between the effects of small luxury purchase and self-gifting. On the other hand, desire to show off as a motive for small luxury influenced attitude and repurchase but not satisfaction after purchase. This suggests that small luxury spending for the purpose of showing off rather than self-gifting does not lead to satisfaction, and influences only purchase attitude and repurchase behavior.

Among orientations of small luxury spending, the emotional comfort orientation and the self-defense orientation have positive effects on all post-purchase behavioral factors - satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase. This suggests that consumers have positive post-purchase behavioral factors when they make purchases for themselves rationally and independently of others - that is, when experiencing stress relief or enjoyment, or having the tendency to trust their rational judgment (H. J. Kim, 2007). Meanwhile, conformity did not significantly influence satisfaction, and negatively influenced attitude and repurchase. Conformity-motivated spending is a passive form of spending driven by the desire to fit in one's reference group (Suh, S. L. Cho, & Noh, 2009), and the finding suggests that passive consumers who have the conformity orientation in small luxury spending are unlikely to have a positive attitude toward or repurchase the product. Therefore, small luxury spending made because of others is likely to lead to negative outcomes. Meanwhile, product-attribute orientation and the orientation of the most luxury possible within a spending limit did not influence any post-purchase behavioral factors. Product attribute orientation is defined as valuing design, rarity, and tangible benefits of a product (H. J. Kim, 2007). The study finding suggests that tangible benefits of a purchased product do not lead to positive emotion. The most luxury within spending limit refers to trying to spend on most high-end products within spending limit (M. Y. Kim, 2013). The study finding implies that the high level of luxury spending gives a burden, and thus



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does not lead to positive post-purchase behavior, and stays as a one-time purchase.

Implications of this study are as follows. Regarding practical implications, first, the study determined the current status of the small luxury market, identified purchased product groups, and determined spending limits and the amount spent. As it was found that fashion items were the key product group, and consumers plan on spending more on small luxury than what they current spend, strategies to incorporate these considerations need to be prepared. Second, the study findings on consumers' motives, orientations, and post-purchase behavioral factors can be used to build marketing strategies. For example, companies may offer special events for consumers' birthdays or special days, given the strong motives for self-reward, and target consumers with an independent streak since small luxury consumption focuses on oneself rather than others. Regarding theoretical and research implications, first, this study investigated small luxury consumption empirically by employing and expanding the concept of self-gifting based on self-gifting research (Kang, 2012; Yi & S. H. Lee, 2013; B. S. Jun, 2015). The present study is expected to provide a foundation for future research on small luxury consumption, as it determined the motives, orientations, and post-purchase behavioral factors of small luxury purchase as self-gifting.

Despite the significant implications of this study, it also has several limitations. First, the sample of this study was those in their 20s living in the Seoul Metropolitan Area sampled using convenience sampling, which makes it challenging to generalize the study findings. Although consumers engaging in small luxury spending are mostly known to be in their 20s, small luxury spending is highly likely to occur in other age groups; therefore, future studies need to include participants in a greater range of ages and occupations. Second, investigation of motives and orientations of small luxury consumption was explorative due to lack of previous research on the subject, as the previous studies on self-gifts are still in the early stage, and that the topic has attracted attention only recently. Therefore, future studies need to conduct in-depth research on each motive and orientation of small luxury consumption. Third, regarding post-purchase behavior factors, the study focused only satisfaction, attitude, and repurchase, instead of including more comprehensive affective responses. Therefore, further research is needed on the relationship between small luxury and affective dimensions using interviews and other qualitative research methods.

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