



RĪGAS EKONOMIKAS AUGSTSKOLA
STOCKHOLM SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS IN RIGA

SSE Riga Working Papers
2005:4 (72)

**THE STUDY OF THE SELF-GIFT
CONCEPT IN LATVIA**
**A COMPARISON BETWEEN GENDER
AND ETHNIC FACTORS**

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ISSN 1407-0162
ISBN 9984-590-80-1

November 2005
Riga

The Study of the Self-gift Concept in Latvia

A Comparison between Gender and Ethnic Factors

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Bachelor Thesis

April 2005
Stockholm School of Economics in Riga

Acknowledgement

First of all we would like to express gratitude to David Glen Mick for inspiring us to write about self-gifts with his work. We want to express thanks to Roberts Kīlis, our supervisor, for guiding us through the jungles of the thesis writing process.

We are grateful to all of our respondents for providing us with interesting material for analysis. We would also like to show appreciation to our experts, Anna Lebedoka and Jānis Sproģis, and to the administration of shopping mall Alfa and sport-gym Reactor for being responsive to our requests. We are thankful to Aiga Arste-Avotiņa for providing us with scarce material. Special thanks go to our beloved families and friends for their support and to Tanja Suhinina for adding a bit of art to our thesis. And, finally, we would like to express thanks to ourselves and let it be a little self-gift for the work accomplished.

Abstract

The aim of this paper is to establish the effects of ethnic and/or gender factors on the choice of self-gifts. We were particularly interested in differences and similarities between the Latvian and Russian-speaking population in Latvia. As a theoretical base for this research we used studies by Mick, DeMoss, Faure, and Faber. We also used data from DDB's "Value Research in Latvia".

Firstly, via preliminary interviews we identified the most popular products and services purchased as self-gifts and factors that affect purchase of self-gifts in Latvia. Secondly, we conducted projective interviews using the tailored Thematic Apperception Test and analyzed similarities and differences between ethnic and gender groups in their self-gift purchasing behaviour.

We came to the conclusion that effects of gender are more evident than effects from ethnicity. Only a few noticeable ethnic differences were observed among women. Major personal values demonstrated through self-gifts were monetary freedom and the wish to change something in life.

1 Introduction

Since the beginning of the 20th century, society can be described by increasing consumerism. Consumerism is a “theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically beneficial” (WordNet). Additionally, it is interconnected with the fact that consumption goes “beyond what is reasonable to meet human needs”. The act of consuming goods becomes to the person an end in itself (Centre for Alternative Development Initiatives).

There has been identified a considerable consumerism trend – gift-giving. Gift-giving is a voluntary transfer of goods or money without requiring something in return. It has not only a cultural, but also a significant economic impact. As early as 1965, gifts constituted 10 percent of North American retail sales (Belshaw qtd. in Mick, DeMoss, Faber, 1992, 123). Moreover, as consumers become more self-oriented in their purchase and consumption behaviour (Mick, DeMoss, Faber, 1992, 122), they tend to devote more resources to gifts for themselves – self-gifts. Self-gifts are a form of personally symbolic self-communication through special indulgencies that tend to be premeditated and highly context bound (Mick, DeMoss, 1990, 322).

Various researches about consumerism concluded that modern society is more self-oriented than the same society half a century ago. This trend is also reflected in the consumption patterns of individuals. One of its exposures is that people tend to present more gifts to themselves instead of intra-personal gifts. Another appearance of individualism is in increasing need for self-assurance. In some cases this is achieved with the help of self-gifts. That is why the main trend of modern marketing is aimed at emotional reasoning as opposed to rational. This makes the topic of self-gifts even more crucial.

As almost all studies on self-gifts were done in the United States of America, the question arises – is self-gift behaviour similar in every country and culture, or are there some major differences? The aim of this research is to establish the effects of ethnic and/or gender factors on the choice of self-gifts.

Firstly, we identified the most popular types of self-gifts, which products most often are purchased as self-gifts, and which factors affect purchase of self-gifts in Latvia. Secondly, we looked at the similarities and differences between ethnic and gender groups in their self-gift purchasing behaviour.

Such study adds to the knowledge base and to the overall understanding of the self-gift concept. Moreover, we widen the geographical borders of self-gift studies by carrying it out in the Baltic countries. The reason why we are interested particularly in the Baltic States is the rapidly growing consumer society. This is due to the fact that Latvia turned to the capital economy only 15 years ago. Under these conditions, individualism is encouraged which in turn encourages self-oriented behaviour.

In addition, the study allows for more thorough cross-cultural comparison. We also claim that companies underestimate the importance of self-oriented consumers. Companies usually do not use self-gifts as a separate concept in their marketing strategies; still, self-gift trends appear in advertisements. For example, the latest “Laima” advertisement for chocolate encourages people to bring themselves joy every day (LNT, 2004).

In this paper we will first take a look at relevant literature and secondary data. Afterwards we will describe the methodology of our research. This will be followed by the results of our study. Next, we will turn to analysis of our results and draw conclusions.

2 Literature review

A significant part of our research is based on papers written by David Glen Mick, Professor of Marketing at the University of Virginia. He is known as President of the Association for Consumer Research 2005 and originator of the self-gift theory.

In his research, Mick identified four main types of self gifts: puritanic, therapeutic, romantic, and holiday. Puritanic self-gifts are “typically based on a perceived successful task completion”. They usually communicate rewards, incentives or stress relief. Romantic self-gifts are used mostly to be nice to oneself. Therapeutic self-gifts are the result of negative sentiments, and their goal is to cheer oneself up. Holiday self-gifts are acquired in order to celebrate public and private holidays (1991, 105).

In the USA from these types the predominant ones are puritanic and therapeutic self-gifts, with special emphasis on rewards for accomplishments and cheer-ups for disappointments. Most self-gifts are not bought impulsively. The buyers are mostly women. The most popular products to become self-gifts in USA are cosmetics, fragrance products, bath items, jewellery, fashion clothing, food and grocery products, entertainment products, and recreational products (Mick, 1991, 107).

There are three categories of factors affecting self-gift behaviour identified in previous researches of Mick, DeMoss, and Faber (1992, 128) – pre-store factors, in-store factors and post-purchase factors. The first two are directly connected with the purchase of self-gift, while the latter is connected to evaluation of purchase and the further possibility of repetitive buying.

In research done by Mick and DeMoss (1992, 145), a negative correlation between self-gift buying behaviour and age, as well as a positive correlation of self-gifts with income was proposed. The researchers also claimed that women tend to acquire more therapeutic and romantic self-gifts, while men purchase mostly puritanic self-gifts.

2.1 Secondary Data

The “Brand Capital” research by DDB (2004) was used as a source of secondary data. The subject of this survey was not self-gifts, rather consumer behaviour in general; however, several questions were related to them. We did not have full access to the data and had no opportunity to run a statistical regression; however, we got summarized results to the questions we were interested in.

One of the statements was “I like to be nice to myself” (“Man patīk sevi palutināt”). 78% of females and 73% of males agreed with this statement. Thus we can consider this to be quite widespread behaviour. Somewhat less than half of respondents (47% of males and 49% of females) confirmed that they often buy something to reward themselves for some work achievements (“Es bieži kaut ko nopērku, lai palutinātu sevi par kādu darbu sasniegumu”). This question relates to the puritanic type of self-gifts subtype of reward for job achievements and implies that almost half the population not only acquires puritanic self-gifts but often do it.

The statement “I like to please myself with tasty sweets” (“Man patīk sevi lutināt ar gardiem saldumiem”) was answered in the affirmative by 57% of males and 64% of females. From these results one can see that sweets are very popular self-gifts and they are even more common among women.

3 Methodology

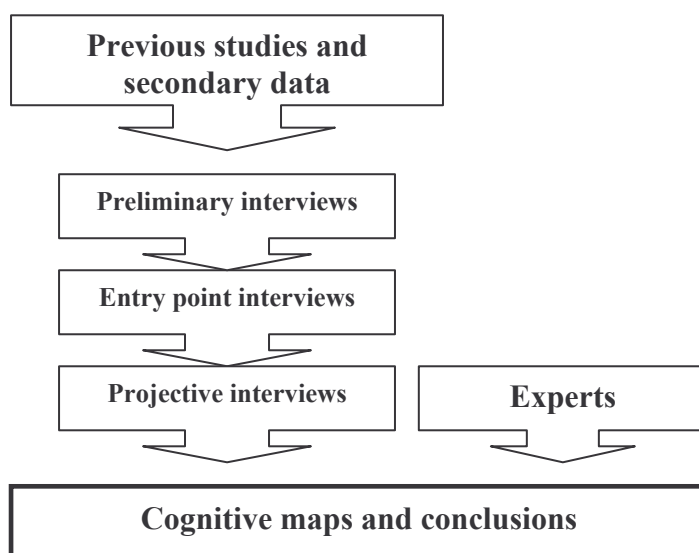
The research was carried out using the framework of qualitative research. This methodological framework was chosen for this topic because we are interested mostly in interviewees’ point of view and investigated the motivation behind peoples’

choices. Additionally, it is more appropriate for topics that were not studied before (Bryman, Bell, 2003, 282).

Due to historical events, a unique ethnic combination was created in Latvia. At the moment two major language groups exist in Latvia, namely, Latvian- and Russian-speaking (later in the research the term ‘Russians’ is used for simplicity). The aim of our research is to investigate differences between the two main ethnic groups in Latvia. The main criterion for dividing people into ethnic groups was how respondents identified themselves. We avoided cases when a person came from a mixed family. Another parameter we explored was gender. Due to some external circumstances, the time of our research partly coincided with the Christmas and New Year celebrations. This might significantly change consumer behaviour, thus we needed to account for it in our study.

The research consisted of three main stages (see Figure 1 for graphically depicted stages of research). Firstly, we identified the main types of self-gifts in Latvia. This was done via preliminary interviews. The second stage was aimed at developing the draft of a logical scheme of framework that people use in relation to self-gifts. This was carried out via group interviews at the entry points which are “a place(s) where an action is begun to be executed” (TekSci). In our case by entry

Fig. 1. Research methodology.



Source: Self-developed.

points we mean a place where a self-gift is acquired. The draft of the logical scheme was tested at the third stage of the research, which consisted of projective interviews. A cognitive map is a mental construct of the physical and social world and the position of a person in it (Look at Modern Human Origins). After that we carried out validity tests to gain confidence over our results¹.

¹ A detailed description of validity tests as well as their results appears in Appendix 9.

Since the focus of our research was consumer behaviour in Latvia, we delimited ourselves to Latvian inhabitants. As we tried to reduce the influence of other factors on our research, our study was located in Riga and Riga district. This region was chosen due to various reasons. First of all, 38% of the Latvian population lives there (Monthly Bulletin of Latvian Statistics, 2005, 48-49). Secondly, the average income in Riga and Riga district is significantly higher than in other parts of Latvia (Monthly Bulletin of Latvian Statistics, 2005, 52). As was established during the study of Mick and DeMoss (1992, 144), income has a positive effect on self-gift behaviour. Moreover, a person living in Riga or Riga district has significantly better access to self-gift obtaining places.

Although self-gift behaviour depends on age (Mick, DeMoss, 1992, 145), the goal of our research was not to analyze the differences between age groups. That is why we delimited our population to individuals from 18 to 34 years old. This group was chosen because of several factors. First of all, people of this age have the most varied family status, they can be equally likely married or not, have children or not, and so on. Secondly, during this period of life the income of person is growing at the highest rate.

3.1 Preliminary interviews

Our first goal was to identify the list of products/services that are most often encountered as self-gifts. We also checked the reasons for buying self-gifts and whether these match the types previously identified by Mick (1991). Additionally, we attempted to identify words or phrases used to denote the term “self-gifts”. For this purpose, preliminary semi-structured interviews were carried out. This allowed us to cover the main topics of interest and we were open to new insights. This was especially important in case new type of self-gifts exist. The interviews were carried out in the native language of the respondent (Russian or Latvian). Interviews were audio tape-recorded. Interviewers had a list of questions, which was used during the interview (see Appendix 1 for list of questions).

There were two types of preliminary interviews. First, we used the snowball sampling technique. Initial interviews were made with our friends and later on their friends were interviewed. The main reason for interviewing our friends and their acquaintances was to test our questionnaires to find out whether all our goals could be covered. As the self-gift issue is quite personal, it was more likely that people you personally know would speak more openly.

Secondly, we interviewed single shoppers in two of the popular shopping malls. This was done in order to differentiate the sample and thus to widen the perspective of the inquiry. People were interviewed not inside specific shops, but rather in the passageways of shopping malls. We avoided group interviews at the first stages of our research because we were more interested in the point of view of individuals. Single shoppers were more likely to have some spare time for interviews. These interviews were carried out in order to test whether widening of the perspective would add value to the previous interviews. In case of value added, interviews were carried out until theoretical saturation is reached.

During our preliminary interviews, we first asked general questions about consumption. As these warm-up questions were easy to answer, the person would feel relaxed, confident, and more likely to answer further questions. Then we asked the person about his/her shopping habits. Only after that did we turn to the questions directly related to self-gifts. In order to investigate self-gift behaviour and motivation according to the types of self-gift, we asked respondents about their consumption behaviour in different moods. Self-gifts have several links to moods, while the general goal of self-gifts is to elate. Therapeutic self-gifts have a strong link to a bad mood. Questions about puritanic self-gifts were asked in the form of celebration of achievement. Romantic and holiday self-gifts can appear in both good and bad mood.

3.2 Entry point interviews

Based on the information gathered during preliminary interviews, we identified entry points, where self-gifts are more likely to appear. The number of entry points studied depended on the variation of the services and products identified during the interviews. From preliminary interviews we found out which services are more likely to appear as self-gifts. We were interested in services, because when self-gifts are services there is more communication between the person and the staff. Most common service providers, which were chosen in our research as the entry points, were beauty salons, hairdressers, and sport gyms.

At the entry points we interviewed service staff. These people were chosen because they are the ones who are present when self-gifts are acquired. Moreover, as was noticed by Mick (1996, 113), service staff can influence self-gift decision, which is why their opinion can be even more interesting. Interviews were audio tape-recorded and additionally the researcher took notes.

As mentioned before, the goal of entry point interviews was to draw the draft of a cognitive map. Already at this stage we tried to identify the difference in factors of our interest. Moreover, as entry points can be providers of several self-gifts, we searched for combinations of self-gifts that are used together, if such exist.

3.3 Projective interviews

The foundation of our research is interviews using factorial design and projective techniques (for more detail see Figure 2). The factors used for identifying the groups of interviewees were gender and nationality. We delimited influence of other possible variables by choosing people of the same age.

Moreover, as terms of the research clashed with Christmas and New Year, interviews were held in two sessions. The first session was scheduled during the Holiday period from mid-December till the beginning of January, with the second after the Holiday period. We believed that during Christmas and New Year

Fig. 2. Factorial design of projective interviews

	During Holiday period			After Holiday period	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
Latvian			Latvian		
Russian			Russian		

Source: Self-developed.

consumption behaviour might change as people spend more time in shops, visit parties, and so on. In addition, Orthodox and Catholic/Lutheran calendars and traditions differ, and this difference might reflect on self-gift behaviour. Most Latvians are Catholic or Lutheran, but most of the Russian speaking population is Orthodox or Old Believer. This might have had an impact on our research, since these confessions celebrate Christmas at a different time. That is why we conducted the first part of our research in such a way that Latvians would be interviewed in between Catholic Christmas and New Year, while Russian-speaking respondents would be contacted starting from New Year till Orthodox Christmas.

The goal of this part of the research was to update the previously designed cognitive maps, include changes caused by Holidays, and develop a more detailed description of the motivation behind self-gift behaviour. Three interviewees represented each of the groups described above, which in total amounted to 24 interviews.

As a prototype of the research we used the study by Mick in 1992 described in *A Projective Study of Motivations and Meanings of Self-Gifts: Implications for Retail Management*. The Tailored Thematic Apperception Test was used in order to observe the reasoning behind self-gifts. “The Thematic Apperception Test assesses personality through projective technique focusing on dominant drives, emotions, sentiments, complexes, attitudes and conflicts. The subject is shown pictures one at a time and asked to make up a story about each picture” (Common Psychological Tests). The essence of the projective technique is based on the tendency of people to interpret uncertain situations in accordance with their experience and pattern of behaviour. The true value of this test is that it reveals hidden motives and feelings that the respondent would like to keep secret or does not realize him/herself. We also undertook the Mick technique to put a sentence underneath the picture. This text allowed us to guide respondents to think in a self-gift direction. The text included the name of the character, the identification of what product/service the person acquires, and whether the person buys it for himself or herself.

Pictures used during the interviews were developed based on the example provided in Mick’s research. However, the test was adjusted to study gender and ethnic differences. The hero depicted in the picture was of the same gender and approximate age as the respondent. The name of the personage was chosen on the basis of the most common Latvian and Russian names. The products and services used during projective interviews were chosen based on the results of preliminary interviews. We chose the products and services which were mentioned most often during our preliminary interviews, so we can say that material was developed in accordance with the present Latvian situation. After the material was developed, it was approved by V. Reņģe, Associate Professor of Psychology at the Latvian University.

When conducting our research, TAT guidelines from Harvard University were used (Murray et al, 1943) (See Appendix 3). Each of the interviewees was shown six pictures. The first two pictures were warm-up pictures. Another goal of these pictures

was to find out the respondent's opinion about the groups defined by our factorial design. The groups shown to the respondent were different only by one parameter in order to avoid cross-influence by several factors. For example, to the Latvian male we first of all showed a Russian male buying perfume and then a Latvian female buying underwear. And to the Russian female we showed first of all the Latvian female buying perfume and then Russian male buying a Parker pen. The last four pictures were devoted to the person's self-gift behaviour. These pictures were shown in mixed order in order to avoid sequence bias.

The samples of materials given to the respondents were pre-tested in order to guarantee that these were fully and correctly understood by the public. Interviews were recorded on audio-tape so that analysis of the results could be done without missing any details. After interviews were carried out, and data was grouped according to picture, gender, and nationality, analysis of data was performed using cognitive mapping method.

First of all we identified the reasons for self-gift behaviour for each of the stories. After that, we created the chronological chain of major events for each story – a flow chart. As significant events that are worth mentioning, we considered critical points, which change the flow of the story as well as the events, which were described by respondents in detail. After each individual story was studied, for each of the pictures a list of reasons and chronological chains of events were developed for each group of our factorial design. These flow-charts formed the basis of our findings. Based on the flow-charts, we developed cognitive maps and analyzed our results.

We used cognitive maps to capture individual perspectives on the subject of self-gifts, to identify factors influencing the decision, and finally we developed a collective map.

4 Findings

4.1 Preliminary interviews

Preliminary interviews were carried out at the end of October – beginning of November so as to avoid the possible effect of Christmas and New Year celebrations. Interviews were performed in two steps. Firstly, interviews with friends and acquaintances were performed, followed by interviews with people in the shopping malls “Domina” and “Alfa”. A total of 45 interviews were carried out, 26 out of them being interviews in shopping malls (6 – “Domina” and 20 – “Alfa”) and 19 were

interviews with friends. The length of interview with friends varied from 5 to 15 minutes, while length of interview in shopping mall varied from 2 to 5 minutes. This was mainly dependent on the responsiveness of interviewee.

Interviews with friends turned out to be more productive, since people were more relaxed and willing to talk, as opposed to people in the shopping malls, who were more reserved towards interviewers. This is supported both by the length of interviews as they were much shorter in the shopping malls, as well as by the rejection rate – 44 rejections received in “Alfa” and 14 rejections in “Domina”.

Out of 6 interviews in “Domina”, one was with men (Latvian) and 5 were with women (4 Russian and 1 Latvian). In “Alfa” we interviewed 5 men (2 Russian and 3 Latvian) and 15 women (6 Russian and 9 Latvian). In both places, respondents were mostly from 20 to 40 years old. The relatively small number of male respondents can be explained by the high rejection rate among them, as well as by the fact that there were more unaccompanied women observed in the shop as compared to unaccompanied men.

As a result of interviews, a list of products to become self-gifts was developed (see Table 1). Several products were mentioned by more than one respondent; however, the respondents were of the same gender, which implied the probability of gender-specific self-gifts. Such products were lingerie, accessories, jewellery, and cosmetics for women and technical devices for men.

Woman-specific self-gift services were beauty salon, solarium, manicure, and hair-dresser, which were mentioned by more than half of women; however, no men admitted these services as self-gifts.

Table 1. List of self-gifts sorted according to the frequency of mentioning.

	Products		Services	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Mentioned more than 5 times	Technical devices Food Beverages Clothes	Lingerie Accessories Jewellery Cosmetics Perfume Food Clothes	Rest with friends Sports club Café/ pub Night club	Cinema Beauty salon Hair-dresser Rest with friends Night club
Mentioned 2-5 times	Music CDs	Music CDs Books Beverages	Cinema Swimming pool	Café Restaurant Sports club
Mentioned once	Hobby-related items Additions to	Mobile phone Photo camera China	Theatre Concert Restaurant	Trip Journey Billiards

	collection Small souvenirs Perfume	Toilet closet lid		Bowling
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Source: Self-developed.

During the interviews we identified the main driving forces of self-gift acquisition. These were to reward oneself (puritanic self-gift), to alleviate stress and bad feelings (therapeutic self-gift), to change something in appearance (therapeutic or romantic self-gift), to celebrate something (holiday self-gift), to acquire something new, that one did not have before and was dreaming of (romantic or puritanic self-gift). Another reason for acquiring self-gifts was spare money or just-received salary, which implied being nice to oneself or reward for hard work done to earn it (romantic or puritanic self-gift).

Differences between products acquired as different self-gift types were also noticed. No type-specific products or services were identified, rather the same ones are likely to become different self-gifts in accordance with purchase conditions and psychological condition of the individual.

Therapeutic self-gifts had a tendency to be more expensive and fancy as they were bought to compensate for bad feelings. Holiday self-gifts also tended to be more expensive; however, these purchases were more occasion based and were made only on special dates (such as Christmas, birthday, or wedding anniversary). Puritanic self-gifts were comparably less expensive and less fancy; however, the degree of expensiveness varied a lot with feelings of deserving-ness. Romantic self-gifts were the cheapest ones (in most cases food or small souvenirs).

Differences in therapeutic self-gift behaviour for men and women were noticed. While feeling depressed, men try to avoid public places like shopping malls and restaurants and spend more time with their friends or in sports clubs to take away the stress. By contrast, women tend to spend less time with friends and more time for shopping, going to beauty salons, going to cinemas, theatres, and concerts. No significant gender-specific differences were noticed for other types of self-gifts.

During preliminary interviews an attempt was made to uncover exact words or phrases used to denote self-gifts. However, people avoided naming personal purchases “a gift” even if these had all the characteristics of self-gifts. Thus we turned to experts for help with translating the term. This was translated into Russian as “подарок себе”, while into Latvian as (“pašdāvana”, “dāvana sev”) - with the help of

V. Skujiņa, the Chairwoman of Terminology Commission of the Latvian Academy of Science (2004).

As a result of preliminary interviews, the first insights were gained in the form of list of products and services most likely to become self-gifts (for a more detailed list see Appendix 5). Brief insights into motivation behind self-gift purchases were gained. These data were used in subsequent interviews at entry points, as well as forming the basis for development of the Self-gift Thematic Apperception Test.

4.2 Entry point interviews

Entry point interviews were conducted straight after preliminary interviews in mid-November. It was planned to carry out group interviews; however, as people working in these places were quite busy, personal interviews were chosen as the most suitable way of approaching them. Two places of interest were visited – hair-dressing salon (2 group interviews) and sports club (9 interviews). The goal of the interviews was to identify the motivation of people visiting entry points from the service staff's point of view. Here we will present the collective opinion mentioned by several persons during the interviews.

Improvement of outlook, health as well as mood (therapeutic self-gift) were identified as the main reasons for visiting a sports club. As admitted by several trainers, people visit sports clubs to spend extra money and free time (romantic self-gift), and sometimes these activities are just a matter of fashion.

Friends were identified as the most significant party involved in the decision process apart from the person him/herself. Some people visit sport clubs in order to make new friends, some come together with friends, and some come because they like the outlook of their friends (all types of self-gifts).

As admitted by the service staff whom the authors interviewed, in the beauty saloons there are many more people during the weekend and holidays, which implies that more holiday and romantic self-gifts are purchased there. During holidays, people are more likely to agree to add something extra to their usual choice. In sports clubs, the situation is the opposite, as people usually spend their holidays at home. In sports clubs there are many more people during the summer time and before it, because people want to look better on the beach, but this can be hardly considered as self-gift behaviour. In addition, both in the gym and in the beauty salons, around salary days the number of visitors increases significantly (romantic or puritanic self-gifts).

Respondents did not recognize any ethnic difference among their clients, although gender difference was noticeable. Males come more regularly than females and are more serious about what they are doing. Females come more because of the outlook or mood and more tend to treat a sports club visit as a self-gift.

With respect to mood, people mention that it is hard to exercise in a bad mood (therapeutic self-gift is less common). However, if the person likes exercising then the mood will get better. Overall, respondents came to the conclusion that the services they provide improve clients' mood and relieve them from stress (more in the way of puritanic self-gifts).

Entry point interviews were used to widen the understanding of self-gift purchase behaviour gained during preliminary interviews and served as additional support for development of the Self-gift Thematic Apperception Test.

4.3 Self-gift Thematic Apperception Test

As was planned before, interviews based on self-gift TAT were carried out in two sessions. The Christmas session lasted from 25th December 2004 until 9th January 2005. the after-Christmas session was conducted from 24th January until 7th of February. A total of 12 interviews during each session were conducted, taking into account all pre-set conditions such as age, gender, and ethnicity (for more details see Appendix 6).

During the Christmas session, the first week of interviewing was devoted to Latvians and the second was devoted to Russians because of the difference in timing of Lutheran/ Catholic and Orthodox Christmas. During the second session, both Latvians and Russians were interviewed during the same period. After being partly transcribed, interviews were analyzed and compared (for examples of fully transcribed interviews see Appendix 7).

During comparison of the Christmas and after-Christmas sessions, no significant differences between results were noted, thus results from both sessions were presented jointly in the tables. The only difference noted was the length of interviews, which were 10 to 20 minutes during the Christmas session and 15 to 30 minutes during the after-Christmas session. This difference can be explained by lack of time during the Holidays and tiredness of interviewees as many gifts had to be purchased.

Results of interviews were summarized using the framework described in detail in the methodology part. Each six interviews gave a basis for creating a flowchart. For all gender and nationality groups we developed separate charts. These flowcharts

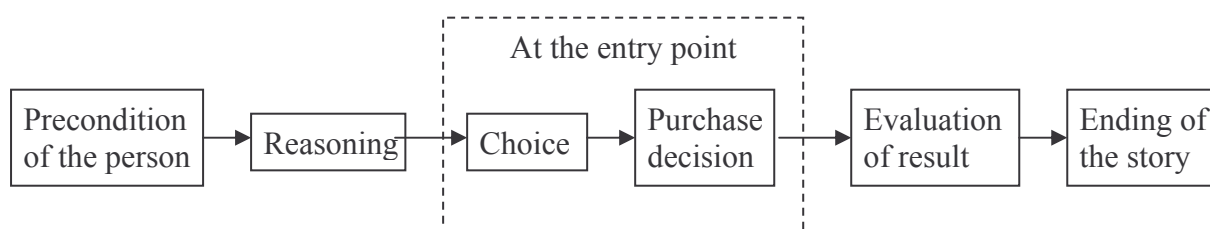
show chronological development of events for each picture². Detailed charts were generalized regardless of the type of self-gift and according to gender and nationality. Using such approach, they were transformed into cognitive maps, which were used as a basis for analysis.

5 Analysis

5.1 Females

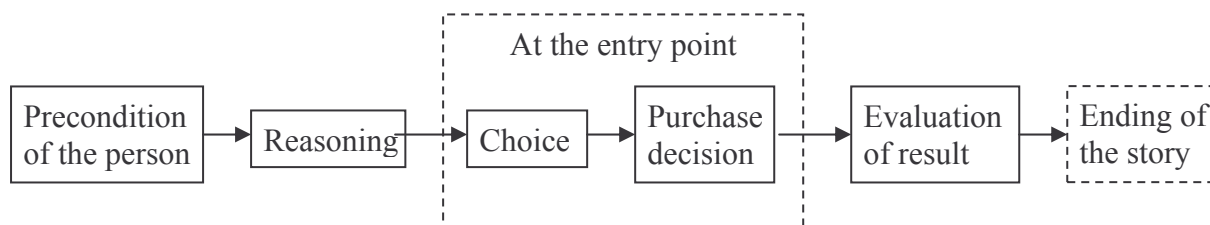
We start our analysis with females as they were the most talkative and on average their stories were longer than of the other groups.

Fig. 3. Cognitive map, Russian-speaking females.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 4. Cognitive map, Latvian females.



Source: Self-developed

Pre-store factors

Most of the stories started with a description of the precondition, which in the case of females included not only the events that led to the situation depicted on the picture; on the contrary, emphasis was rather put on the feelings of the personage about the situation. Providing reasoning in favour of buying something did not cause any problems. Most common reasons were improvement of mood, bringing joy to oneself, and acquiring something new.

At the entry point

² A summary of our findings is presented in the analysis part. A more detailed description of findings as well as flowcharts can be found in Appendix 8.

Inside the entry point the problem of choice was specially stressed. Females spoke about the choice much longer and in more detail relative to the other parts of the story. The respondents seemed to follow the heroine in this process, the choice was long and problematic, and opinion had been changed several times. The decision whether to buy or not was in most cases resolved positively, or the person decided to go to a different store and buy a self-gift there.

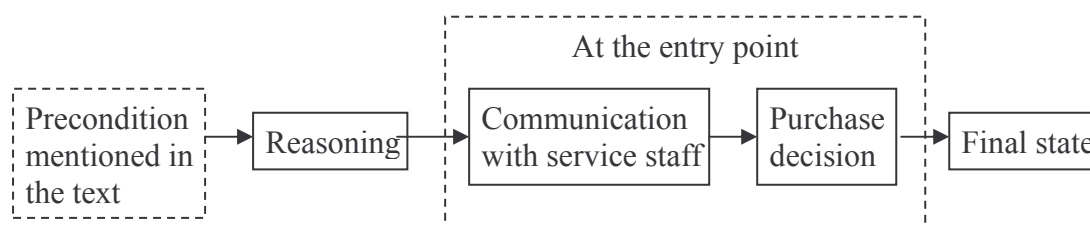
Post-purchase factors

After the self-gift was acquired, females evaluated the results. This stage includes whether a person is satisfied or not with their decision and the result and what additional feelings the acquisition of self-gift aroused inside them. In most cases, the person felt satisfied, happier, more attractive, and more confident about herself.

5.2 Males

The difference between Latvian and Russian males was even less noticeable than between females, thus a collective cognitive map was developed.

Fig. 5. Cognitive map, males.



Source: Self-developed

Pre-store factors

The first significant observation about males is that the major part of the story was based on the objects or words that were present in the material. It seemed that they tried to find in the picture something special or unusual to talk about.

Sometimes stories started with a description of the fact written in the accommodating sentence, for example, promotion or why a person was in a bad mood. However, not a lot of time was devoted to this, neither was it described in detail. Most of the stories started with reasons, although the number of reasons for purchase was noticeably smaller than for females. On the other hand, it seems that more attention was devoted to how important the reason is, rather than how many reasons there could be in order to buy a product.

At the entry point

In the shop, the role of shop assistant was specially emphasized. It could be the sequence of the fact that most of the shop assistants depicted on the picture were females and that is why they added additional sexual relationships to the stories. However, in the picture where a person acquires a mobile phone, the shop assistant is male and in the club the barman is a guy – still the interaction between the characters was noticed. Thus, there may be two reasons. First, for males service staff play a significant role in the process of acquiring a self-gift, with the second option being the same observation mentioned before, as service staff was depicted on the picture, stories included additional description about them.

In the same way as with females, the person described the story of how they acquired the product. One of the possible explanations could be that in some of the sentences provided together with a picture, the purchase decision is already stated.

Post-purchase factors

The after-purchase part of the story consisted of a description of the emotional condition of the person. With the exception of the picture with a bottle, respondents were mostly positive about the results. Still, in a lot of the stories the final state of the person was not specified.

5.3 Gender differences

In comparison to females, males' flow charts were much less complex and more straightforward. Stories told by males were mostly events-based, and even when we asked respondents to think more about motivation, it was problematic for them. Females on the other hand tended to think more about motivation and the sensible part of the story. This fact would have to be especially taken into while conducting further research.

As compared to women, who rarely mentioned thoroughly pre-planned purchases, men in their stories mentioned purchases planned half a year in advance. Planning not always implies that exactly that product is bought at the moment of acquisition. It is rather a motivation to do something, a well pre-planned reward on a special occasion (holiday, work done). The choice itself is influenced not by the price of the product but by its features and whether a person thinks it is "cool" and showing his social status or not. Feelings after the acquisition are always very good.

Table 2. Gender Differences.

Females	Males
Emotional story	Event-based story

More complicated flow-charts	Less complex and more straightforward flow-charts
Long stories	Short
More imaginative story	Story closely based on the material
Sometimes purchase was pre-planned, but not long in advance	Purchase was pre-planned for a long time in advance
Many reasons	Few but important reasons
Long and complicated choice	Communication with shop assistants
Final condition of the person and logical ending of the story	Final condition of the person or not specified at all

Source: Self-developed.

5.4 Ethnic differences

Pictures showing a person of the other nationality did not cause any effect as opposed to the expectations of the researchers. Probably this was due to the fact that the only indicator of nationality used was the name of the person; however, no other possibility to depict nationality was uncovered. The fact that respondents did not recognised ethnic differences and did not mention it at all during the interviews can mean that there are no such differences in people's mind and they do not divide people according to the ethnic factor. Thus we had no possibility to explore the opinion of respondents about the other ethnic group. Differences between nationalities were drawn from comparison of projective interviews.

Females

In comparison to Russian females, additional reasons were those connected to the opposite sex, attracting somebody or bringing joy or pleasing the boyfriend. However, the reasoning of spending some extra money was not so common among Latvian females.

The process of choosing an exact product was also rather long, but not as problematic as in the case of Russian females. It was additionally emphasised that Latvian females seemed to enjoy the process of choice more.

The main difference between Russian-speaking and Latvian females was in the ending of the story. In our request to talk not only about what was going on in the shop but also afterwards, we did not specify at which point the story should end. Russian speaking females differ from other persons interviewed by the tendency to make a logical ending to the story. For Latvian females the story was continued only in case a relationship with the opposite sex was involved; in other cases the final events described in the stories were the feelings of the person.

This fact might mean that the final goal of a self-gift for Russian females is not the feeling or mood created, but rather that satisfaction and good mood should lead to a successful ending.

As appears from our analysis, the general results of Latvian and Russian females do not differ significantly. However, while analysing the data, we came across a noticeable diversity of results from the picture with the Club. The pre-club description of the situation was rather similar, with both groups emphasising the lonely feeling of the person and the wish to relax. However, after entering the club the chain of events went in two unlike directions. All interviewed Russian females told that in the club the heroine of the story would meet a guy. Relationships Described were not serious and rather short-term; however, in most cases at the end of the evening the heroine felt much better. Five out of six Latvian females told the story when the heroine would drink or dance and drink, and the final outcome was a hangover and overall disappointment. Only a few of the Latvian females mentioned the possibility to meet a guy in a club. This difference was rather significant, so it should be tested in the quantitative study in order to eliminate the influence of possible problems with our sample.

Males

There were few noticeable ethnic differences between males. As one of the ethnic differences among males we could mention the fact that some of the Russian-speaking males preferred to tell the stories in the form of fairy tales. Latvians more often mentioned the precondition described in the sentence under the picture. Nevertheless in the case of perfume, where the reason for acquiring a self-gift was not mentioned, they tended not to look for preconditions. So this can be also linked to the desire to connect the story to the material as much as possible.

5.5 Personal values indicated by self-gifts

Via buying self-gifts, people demonstrate what values are important to them and how they want to perceive themselves. One of such values, which we noticed while analysing our projective interviews, was monetary freedom. People tended to buy something on the day when they received salary - not because they did not have the money for this purchase before, but in order to celebrate that day. Moreover, they expressed that they do not depend on anyone and are free in their purchasing decisions.

Another meaning, which people accentuated during the interviews, was the wish to change something in their lives. For example, most of the women went to the hairdresser believing that a change in their appearance would encourage changes within the person and help to deal with their problems. Sometimes acquisition of a self-gift marked changes that had already happened. For instance, a woman bought gifts for herself and for family members when her first grandson was born.

One more issue raised during the interviews was relationships with the opposite sex. Most of the females thought of a self-gift as an additional means of attracting males. Males likewise associated acquisition of a self-gift with the additional opportunity to contact females. In both cases we can say that the value that respondents were marking was attractiveness to the opposite sex.

5.6 Self-gifts and friends

One of the most popular types of self-gifts was spending time with one's friends. This fact also has economic value because meeting friends involves additional expenditure, e.g., going to a club, pub, having a trip, visiting friends on special occasions like holidays, which involves additional purchases. Such behaviour was more common to males.

Sometimes friends encouraged self-gift behaviour in several ways. There were occasions when they were mentioned as advisers. For example, friends advised hairdressers and that was why the person decided to visit this place in particular; they advised to take care of oneself and to buy some particular good like perfume.

In many cases friends were involved in the process of self-gift acquisition and consumption. While telling about clubs, people usually mentioned their friends. Another example was when males were consuming alcohol together with their friends.

5.7 Self-gifts as painkillers

The most controversial self-gift set identified was represented by alcohol and chocolate. These self-gifts are purchased mainly when in a bad mood and their aim is to serve as a therapeutic means. However, therapeutic outcome is achieved only during the process of buying and eating/ drinking. Post usage feelings are grief, sorrow, and head-aches (in more than 50% of outcomes). Feeling bad after using these types of self-gifts was admitted by most respondents as known prior to acquisition, but no intention not to buy the product was shown. The most probable

explanation is that people choose them considering short-term gains only. Such self-gifts serve as pain killers – a person uses one and forgets his/her grief for a moment hoping for better times to come. In research by Mick (1990) there was no mention of therapeutic self-gifts that have such a negative and unhealthy perception.

5.8 Self-gifts and brands

During our survey people mostly spoke about general groups of products. However, two brands were often mentioned as self-gift products. These were Coca-Cola and Parker.

Parker was mentioned while speaking about puritanic self-gifts. Usually it communicated a reward for a job achievement. Comments for Coca-Cola were different; this brand was mentioned by people on different occasions, and so could correspond to any of the four types of self-gifts. For example, in one situation Coca-Cola was purchased as a reward for working hard all day (puritanic self-gift), while in another it was bought with the intention just to be nice to oneself (romantic self-gift).

5.9 Self-gifts and time

Decisions to acquire a self-gift differed significantly with respect to time. Sometimes, they were spontaneous, but sometimes it was thought of for a half a year. A longer-lasting decision process was typical for males. For example, one of the respondents was thinking about acquiring a mobile phone for half a year and only after that made a purchase on the occasion of Christmas.

Females called attention to the time devoted to the choice of self-gifts. This period seemed to be of utmost importance to them and was emphasised in almost all stories. This was shown in two ways: firstly, describing the choice process took relatively long as compared to other parts of the story; secondly, females used expressions to denote the length of the choice, e.g., “she was choosing for a long time”, “it took a lot of time to choose”.

Usually the effect of self-gifts was rather short, they improved mood for approximately one day. However, some of the reward products such as lingerie and perfume had a longer effect, though steadily diminishing.

Another topic connected to time that arose during interviews was the availability of free time. People noted that the presence of free time was one of the most important conditions in order to acquire self-gifts. For example, one person told that

he wanted to go to the hairdresser in order to improve his mood, but was too busy to do so.

5.10 Self-gifts and money

Products identified as puritanic self-gifts were rather expensive, while romantic self-gifts were cheap. Although holiday self-gifts were not so common, they were rather expensive. Therapeutic self-gifts were not expensive products; however, these products had premium value. Premium value is the extra worth of an object for “having or reflecting superior quality” or being ascribed certain characteristics (WordNet). For example, while buying chocolate as a mean of comforting oneself, people were able to afford to buy more expensive ones than usually.

5.11 Other words for self-gifts

One of our goals was to find out the words denoting self-gifts. It was problematic to do so during preliminary interviews. However, during projective interviews several notions of self-gifts appeared. Self-gifts were referred to as “to please oneself”, “to pamper yourself”, “to love yourself”, “to be nice to oneself”, “to comfort oneself”, “to compensate oneself for something”, and “to make a gift to oneself”.

5.12 Opinion about the opposite gender

The picture showing a person of the opposite gender, as opposed to the picture with a person of different ethnicity, was recognised by respondents. Because people spoke about gender differences, we can judge that people do divide the population by the gender factor.

An interesting difference was noticed between males in the evaluation of females' behaviour. The difference was in reasons why the female buys lingerie. All of the Latvian males as one of the significant reasons to buy underwear mentioned the desire to please a boyfriend. However, Russian-speaking males tended to explain it by the wish to spend some extra money, and none of the Russian males mentioned the wish to please the woman's boyfriend. If we turn to the results of interviews with females, we can see the same tendency, but not so explicitly stated. Latvian females indeed as one of the major reasons for acquiring underwear mentioned the wish to make a boyfriend happy, but few of the Russian females mentioned that as well. Russian females also mentioned that the heroine has the money, which is why she buys it. Both Russian males and females linked the availability of money with the

premium, which most probably was received after the project had finished. It is nice to know that at least males and females of the same ethnicity understand each other.

6 Experts

After discussion with experts, we came to the conclusion that the self-gift is not used as a separate concept in the Baltic States. Nevertheless, companies are partly aware of this concept and it appears as an addition to their marketing strategies. Companies usually think about self-gifts while developing special offers or looking for ideas for lottery prizes. They noted that it is rather problematic to find out which self-gifts their target audience will appreciate.

Anna Lebedoka, Brand Development Director for McCann-Erickson Riga, found the painkiller result interesting, and assumed that other addictive products such as cigarettes and coffee should have the same effect. Painkillers could be used directly in advertisements in different ways. Firstly it could be done via informing people and bringing their attention towards this phenomenon in the form of an anti-advertisement or social ad. Secondly, producers of these addictive products should also be aware of this affect, and avoid it.

Jānis Sproģis, Marketing Manager for JTI Marketing and Sales in Latvia, noted that in his practice he is dealing with the holiday type of self-gifts. As an example he mentioned that when people visit clubs, they are more likely to buy more expensive cigarettes. This could be explained twofold: first, some self-gifts are complementary products; second, it is a good example of the premium value of self-gifts. People could buy cheap cigarettes to meet their needs; however, they choose more expensive ones because they perceive some additional value.

Mr. Sproģis was interested in the study and noted that for his practice it would be useful to find out the difference between age groups and relationships between self-gifts and brands.

7 Conclusions

The main purpose of our research was to investigate differences and similarities in the self-gift behaviour of Latvian inhabitants. We were focusing on the effects of gender and ethnicity in self-gift behaviour.

In line with Mick's research, we came to the conclusion that effects of gender are more evident than effects from ethnicity. The decision-making process described by males was less complex and more straightforward than females'. Stories made up

by males were picture-based; however, females did not take so much into account the picture but rather made up their own stories. Females stressed the motivation and choice process, while males spoke about events rather than about emotions. Shop assistants played a significant role in males' stories.

Major ethnic differences were noticed among women. The differences occurred in the situations when relationships with the opposite gender were involved. For many Latvian women, the motive itself was to be appealing to the opposite gender, while for Russian women it was one of the likely outcomes but not the goal itself. Another difference was that Russian females in some of the situations reasoned their actions as spending spare money.

One of the most unexpected results appeared while analysing therapeutic self-gifts. When cheering themselves up, people acquire products knowing that in the long run they will not solve problems; however, they still acquire them in order to gain short-term results. This phenomenon might be considered as an additional sub-type of self-gifts. This might add new insights to Mick's theoretical framework of self-gifts.

Summing up our results in comparison to Mick's, first of all we should say that the tailored TAT methodology of studying self-gift behaviour proved itself and it can be applied in any country regardless of ethnic differences. The significance of the gender difference confirmed itself. And finally, we added to Mick's framework the additional sub-type of therapeutic self-gift.

We also discovered that people in Latvia link to self-gifts the following values: monetary freedom, changes in life, and attractiveness to the opposite sex. This information can be useful to companies that wish to develop a marketing strategy based on the self-gift concept.

Another implication of our research is special offers and lotteries about which we were told by both of our experts. They put the emphasis on difficulty related to the search for an appropriate self-gift. In our research we provided a list of common self-gifts, which should be a useful tool in similar situations.

One more of our findings can be used in communication and advertising. We discovered that males and females structure their stories in different ways. Females spoke more about emotions and males structured their stories as more event-based. If one interprets data in such a way, then information provided to him/her would be assimilated better if it were correspondingly structured. For example, advertisements for females should be based on emotions, yet for males they should depict events.

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Appendix 1

Questions to use as a basis for conducting **preliminary interviews**

Questionnaire in English

1. General questions about shopping:
 - a. How often do you go to grocery stores? (E.g., every day, once in a week)
 - b. How often do you go to garment/ shoes stores? (E.g., once in a week, once in a month)
 - c. How often do you go to electrotechnics stores? (E.g., once in a week, once in a month)
 - d. How often do you go to other stores? (E.g., once in a week, once in a month) Which ones?
 - e. With whom do you go shopping?
 - f. (If sometimes goes with somebody) Does the presence of other person influence your purchases? In what way?
 - g. Do you plan your purchases in advance?
 - h. Do you always buy exactly what you were going to buy?
2. What are the main reasons for buying something for yourself?
3. Does your mood influence your purchases?
 - a. Do you go shopping when you are in a good mood? What do you buy?
 - b. What else do you do when you are in a good mood? (For example, go to cinema, hair-dresser)
 - c. Do you go shopping when you are in a bad mood? What do you buy?
 - d. What else do you do when you are in a bad mood? (For example, go to cinema, hair-dresser)
 - e. When you have achieved something, how do you celebrate it? (For example, go to cinema, hair-dresser)

Questionnaire in Latvian

1. Vispārīgi jautājumi par iepirkšanos:
 - a. Cik bieži Jūs ejat uz pārtikas veikaliem? (Piemēram, katru dienu, reizi nedēļā)
 - b. Cik bieži Jūs ejat uz apģērbu/ apavu veikaliem? (Piemēram, reizi nedēļā, reizi mēnesī)
 - c. Cik bieži Jūs ejat uz tehnikas veikaliem? (Piemēram, reizi nedēļā, reizi mēnesī)
 - d. Cik bieži Jūs ejat uz citiem veikaliem? (Piemēram, reizi nedēļā, reizi mēnesī) Kādiem?
 - e. Ar ko Jūs ejat iepirkties?
 - f. (Ja dažreiz iet kopā ar kādu citu) Vai tas, ka neejat viens/a ietekmē Jūsu pirkumus? Kādā veidā tas ietekmē Jūsu pirkumus?
 - g. Vai plānojat savus pirkumus?
 - h. Vai Jūs vienmēr nopērkat tieši to, ko bijāt iecerējuši pirkt?
2. Kādi ir galvenie iemesli, lai nopirktu kaut ko sev?
3. Vai Jūsu pirkumus ietekmē Jūsu garastāvoklis?
 - a. Vai Jūs iepērkaties, kad Jums ir labs garastāvoklis? Ko Jūs pērkat?
 - b. Ko Jūs vēl mēdzat darīt, kad Jums ir labs garastāvoklis? (Piemēram, ejat uz kino, frizētavu)

- c. Vai Jūs iepērkaties, kad Jums ir slikts garastāvoklis? Ko Jūs pērkāt?
- d. Ko jūs darāt, kad jūtaties slikti vai esat nomākti? (Piemēram, ejat uz kino, frizētavu)
- e. Kad esat sasnieguši kādu mērķi, kā Jūs to svinat? (Piemēram, ejat uz kino, frizētavu)

Questionnaire in Russian

1. Вопросы о покупках:
 - a. Как часто вы посещаете продуктовые магазины? (На пример, каждый день, раз в неделю)
 - b. Как часто вы посещаете магазины одежды и обуви? (На пример, раз в неделю, раз в месяц)
 - c. Как часто вы посещаете магазины электротехники? (На пример, раз в неделю, раз в месяц)
 - d. Как часто вы посещаете другие магазины? (На пример, раз в неделю, раз в месяц) Какие?
 - e. С кем вы ходите по магазинам?
 - f. (Если иногда ходите с кем то) Влияет ли то, что вы идете с кем то, на ваши покупки? Как это влияет?
 - g. Планируете ли вы свои покупки?
 - h. Всегда ли вы покупаете то, что вы собирались купить?
2. На чем основываются ваши решения купить что-нибудь себе?
3. Влияет ли ваше настроение на ваши покупки?
 - a. Ходите ли вы за покупками когда у вас хорошее настроение? Что вы покупаете?
 - b. Что вы еще делаете когда у вас хорошее настроение? (На пример, идете в кино, парикмахерскую)
 - c. Ходите ли вы за покупками когда у вас плохое настроение? Что вы покупаете?
 - d. Что вы еще делаете когда у вас плохое настроение? (На пример, идете в кино, парикмахерскую)
 - e. Когда вы достигли какую-то цель, как вы это празднуете? (На пример, идете в кино, парикмахерскую)

Appendix 2

Entry point questionnaire

Latvian

- 1) Kā jums liekas, kas ir galvenie iemesli kāpēc cilvēki apmeklē frizētavu/ sporta klubu/ veikalu?
- 2) Lielākā daļa no jūsu klientiem ir regulārie vai neregulārie? Kā jums liekas, vai regulārie un neregulārie klienti nāk vienu un to pašu iemeslu vadīti? Kāda varētu būt atšķirība iemeslos?
- 3) Vai klienti parasti ir sievietes vai vīrieši? Kuri vairāk nāk, kuri nāk regulāri? Vai ir kādas atšķirības tajā ko izvēlas sievietes un vīrieši? Kādas atšķirības tajā cik daudz viņi iztērē?
- 4) Vai ir kādas atšķirības tajā, ko izvēlas krievi un latvieši? Vai ir atšķirības iemeslos kādēļ viņi nāk pie jums, kā jums liekas?
- 5) Vai svētku laikā klientu skaitā un viņu motivācijā ir vērojamas kādas atšķirības?
- 6) Garastāvoklis:
 - a. Kādā garastāvoklī klienti nāk biežāk?
 - b. Vai ir kāda atšķirība starp
 - i. Sievietēm/ vīriešiem?
 - ii. Krieviem/ latviešiem?
- 7) Vai ir kādi produkti/ pakalpojumi, kurus cilvēki izvēlas komplektā?

English

- 1) According to you, what are the main reasons why people come to the hair dresser/ sports club/ shop?
- 2) Do you have mostly regular or non-regular clients? How do you think - do regular and non-regular clients come because of the same reasons? What are the differences, if any?
- 3) Are clients most often men or women? Who are coming more frequently, who are coming more regularly? Are there any differences between products/ services men and women choose? What are the differences in the amounts they spend?
- 4) How do you think, are there any differences in the choices of Latvians and Russians? Are there any differences in reasons why do they come to you?
- 5) Is there any difference in number of clients or their motivation during the holidays?
- 6) Mood:
 - a. In what mood do clients come most often?
 - b. Are there any differences between
 - i. Women/ men?
 - ii. Russians/ Latvians?
- 7) Are there products which are most likely to be chosen in a complex?

Russian

- 1) По вашему мнению, что является главной причиной для посещения парикмахерской/ спортивного клуба/ магазина?

- 2) Большинство ваших клиентов приходят регулярно или нет? Как вам кажется постоянные и непостоянные клиенты приходят по тем же причинам? Какова разница?
- 3) Клиенты чаще мужчины или женщины? Кто чаще приходит, кто ходит более регулярно? Есть ли разница в том, что выбирают мужчины и женщины? Какова разница в суммах, которые они тратят?
- 4) Есть ли разница в том что выбирают русские и латыши? Как вам кажется, есть ли разница в причинах почему они приходят к вам?
- 5) Есть ли какая-нибудь разница в количестве клиентов или в их мотивации во время праздников?
- 6) Настроение:
 - a. В каком настроении чаще приходят люди?
 - b. Есть ли разница между
 - i. Женщинами/ мужчинами?
 - ii. Русскими/ латышами?
- 7) Есть ли продукты, которые чаще всего выбирают в комплекте?

Appendix 3

Thematic Apperception Test – a guidance to be presented to the respondent at the beginning of interview (extract from Harvard University TAT guidelines with translations).

Руководство

Это тест на воображение, одну из форм интеллекта. Я намерена показать Вам несколько картин, по одной, а Ваша задача придумать рассказ, насколько возможно драматичный. Расскажите, что привело к событиям, изображенным на картине, что происходит в изображаемый момент, а затем – результат. Высказывайте Ваши мысли так, как они возникают в Вашем сознании. Понимаете ли Вы задачу? Вы можете посвятить рассказу около 5 мин., вот первая картина.

Pamācība

Šis tests pārbaudīs iztēli – vienu no intelekta formām. Es pa vienai parādīšu Jums dažas bildes, bet Jūsu uzdevums būs izdomāt stāstu cik vien iespējams dramatiskāku. Pastāstiet, kas kalpoja par iemeslu notikumiem, kas attēloti bildē, kas notiek attēlojamā brīdī, un tad – kāds ir rezultāts. Izsakiet savas domas tā kā tās parādās Jūsu prātā. Vai Jūs saprotat uzdevumu? Jūs varat veltīt katram stāstam aptuveni 5 minūtes, lūk pirmā bilde.

Guidance

This test will check your imagination, one of the forms of intellect. I will show you several pictures one by one, and your task is to come up with a story as dramatic as possible. Tell what was the reason that led to the events displayed in the picture, what is happening at the depicted moment, and then – the result of the events. Speak out your thoughts as they appear in your mind. Do you understand the task? You can spend around 5 minutes on each story. Here is the first picture.

Appendix 4

Pictures used in Thematic Apperception Test

Under the picture are texts in both languages with translation into English (all names in English are translated as Jane and John).

Picture 1



Piektdienas vakarā Juris aizgāja atpūsties uz klubu.

В пятницу вечером Маша пошла отдохнуть в клуб.

В пятницу вечером Саша пошел отдохнуть в клуб.

Piektdienas vakarā Līga aizgāja atpūsties uz klubu.

On Friday evening Jane/ John went to club to rest.

Picture 2



Svētkos Ilze nolēma aiziet pie friziera.

На праздник Настя решила пойти в парикмахерскую.

During holidays Jane decided to go to hair-dresser.

Picture 3



На праздник Андрей решил купить себе мобильный телефон.

Svētkos Andris nolēma nopirkt sev mobilo telefonu.

To celebrate holidays John decided to buy himself a mobile phone.

Picture 4



Sliktā garastāvoklī Kaspars iegāja veikalā un nopirka sev pudeli.
В плохом настроении Костя пошел в магазин и купил себе бутылку.
Being in a bad mood, John went to shop and bought himself a bottle.

Picture 5



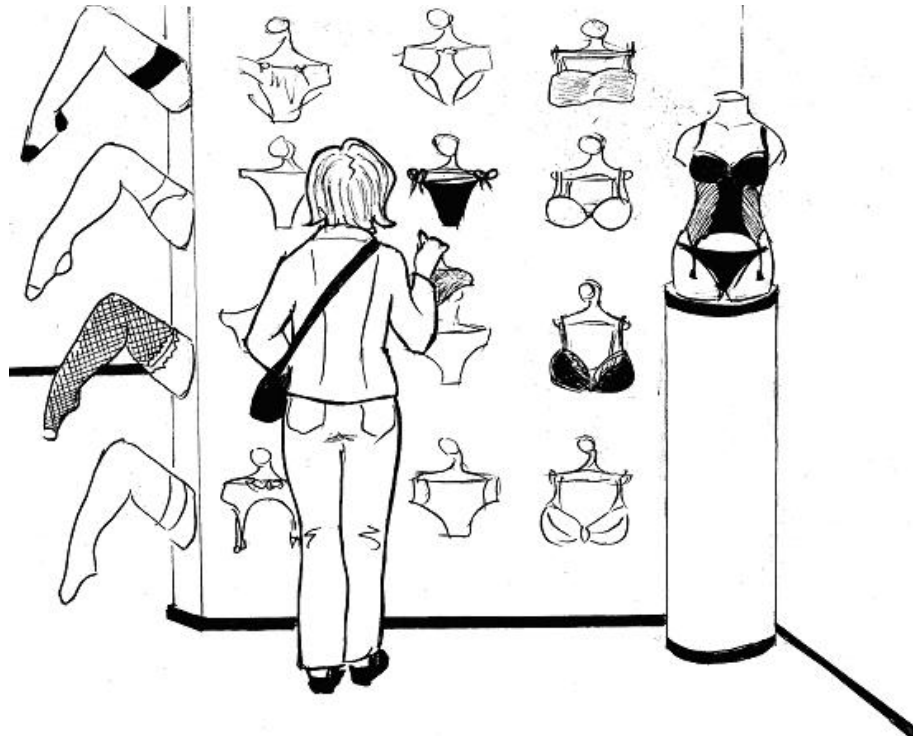
Ира поссорилась с парнем и решила купить себе шоколадку.
Aija sastrīdējās ar puisi un nolēma nopirkt sev šokolādes tāfelīti.
Jane had a quarrel with her boyfriend and decided to buy a chocolate.

Picture 6



Saņēmis paaugstinājumu, Mārtiņš nolēma nopirkt sev „Parker” pildspalvu.
Получив повышение по службе, Юра купил себе ручку «Паркер».
After being promoted, John decided to buy a “Parker” pen.

Picture 7



Pēc veiksmīgas dienas, Laura aizgāja nopirkt sev apakšveļas komplektu.
После удачного дня, Наташа пошла купить себе комплект нижнего белья.
After having a successful day, Jane went to buy herself lingerie.

Picture 8

Янис пошел в магазин купить себе флакон духов.
Dima aizgāja uz veikalu nopirkt sev smaržas.
John went to shop to buy himself perfume.

Picture 9

Sveta aizgāja uz veikalu nopirkt sev smaržas.
Даце пошла в магазин купить себе флакон духов.
Jane went to shop to buy herself perfume.

Appendix 5

List of self-gifts

Products mentioned during preliminary interviews as self-gifts:

- Accessories (hand bag, scarf)
- Books
- CDs
- China (women only)
- Clothes
- Cosmetics (women only)
- Drinks (beer, alcoholic beverages, coca-cola)
- Food (candies, chocolate, ice-cream)
- Hobby related items (instruments, CDs)
- Jewellery/ bijouterie (women only)
- Lingerie (women only)
- Perfumes
- Shoes
- Some small souvenirs
- Technique (accessories for computer, mobile phone, photo camera)

As to services, the most likely self-gifts are

- Beautician
- Billiard/ bowling with friends
- Hair-dresser
- Restaurant/ pub/ café with friends
- Sport gym
- Swimming pool
- Theatre/ cinema/ concert
- Trip/ journey

Brief insights into motivation behind self-gift purchases were gained. The main motives for purchases in general were:

- Adds to collection, buys for a hobby
- Buys to drive away bad mood (compensate)
- Has free time, there is nothing to do
- Have earned something (to remunerate oneself)
- Have money to buy something (especially, after getting salary)
- Just to change something in appearance
- Need something
- Has seen advertisement in magazine or on TV
- Spontaneously/ just to buy
- To acquire something new, which did not have/try before
- To celebrate something
- Wants something for a long time and finally buys

Additionally main products and services to become self-gifts in two different moods (good or bad) were identified:

Good mood

- Clothes and shoes
- Shopping (especially, men)
- Café/ pub/ restaurant
- Cinema/ concert/ theatre

- Go somewhere with friends

Bad mood

- Sports gym
- Beautician/ hair-dresser
- Buy something expensive
- Buy something tasty (food/ beverages)
- Change something in oneself
- Go somewhere to change environment/ people around
- Shopping (females only)

Appendix 6

Table 1. Names and age of interviewees participating in projective interviews.

	Females				Males			
	During Holiday		After Holiday		During Holiday		After Holiday	
Latvian	Daniela	21	Ketija	18	Jurģis	22	Austris	23
	Māra	23	Ilze	21	Imants	28	Ansis	24
	Karīna	26	Diāna	24	Igors	33	Kristaps	25
Russian	Ekaterina	20	Irina	18	Aleksej	22	Dmitrij	18
	Ilona	24	Marina	22	Andrej	25	Vladimir	22
	Tatjana	34	Ludmila	31	Vitalij	30	Mihail	27

Source: Self-developed.

Table 2. Socio-demographic data of interviewees participating in projective interviews.

married	9	15	not married
have children	2	22	have no children
have high education	12	12	no high education
live in Riga	16	9	live in Riga's district

Source: Self-developed.

Appendix 7

Example of interviews (picture – club)

Latvian female (21)

Piektdienas vakars. Aiz muguras ir gara darba nedēļa. Viņa ir pārgurusi. Viņa aizgāja atpūsties uz klubu, es domāju, ka viņa varētu nevis stutēt leti, bet dejot. Nu lūk. Mēs ejam uz klubu, lai izdejotos, lai aizmirstos, lai atpūstos bet tajā pašā laikā, lai būtu starp cilvēkiem. Tad viņa uz turieni gāja, lai pēc tās nedēļas atpūstos, darba nedēļas. Un pēc tam kā varētu būt? Vai nu viņa par daudz lietas šampanieti, ne jebkuru alkoholisko dzērienu, viņa nolūzīs mājā. Viņa aizies mājā un gulēs. Tā būs tā atpūtas otrā daļa. Ja viņai izdotos dabūt kādu džeku foršu, tad varbūt viņai tas vakars kā citādāk beigtos. Un kā viņa jutīsies – es domāju, ka vai nu sūdiģi, vai nu labi, vai nu atpūtusies.

Latvian male (24)

Jurim ir jubileja tajā vakarā. Viņš nevarēja izdomāt, kur aiziet droši vien. Tā viņi darbā bišķi paņēma un iesildījās, un tad ar kolēģiem aizgāja uz klubu. Visi kolēģi piekrita nosvinēt viņam vārda dienu klubā, arī viņa brūte droši vien. Nu ko tad, droši vien pielējās. Izālējās. Un ap kādiem četriem ar taksometru aizbrauca visi uz mājām. Tur nav ko stāstīt – tur bija skaļa mūzika noteikti. Jābļauj bārmēnim ausī pēc 100 gramiem. Nezinu, ko lai saku. Viņš neko, nē tomēr atcerējās. Atmiņas palika noteikti pozitīvas, kolēģi bija blakus.

Russian male (18)

1) В пятницу вечером Саша пошел отдохнуть в клуб. Месяц назад Саша расстался со своей девушкой. Он в начале плакал, все такое. Потом он соскучился по отношениям и решил сходить в клуб и заодно может найти свою вторую половинку. Тот со стаканом. В начале придя в клуб довольно таки нормально выпил у барной стойки, поразговаривал там с девушкой вызывающе одетой, но она ему чем то не понравилась и он пошел за стаканом. Скорее всего он купил что-то крепкое, чтобы ему было легче общаться с девушками. Легче познакомиться и поддерживать разговор. Сейчас он скорее всего выпьет, допьет свой стакан. Танцевать, ну может быть немного будет, а так скорее всего искать одиноких девушек. Скорее всего он поговорит, ну довольно с многими девушками он пообщается, но он не запомнит ни имя, ни их телефонов так как он слишком много выпил. Может быть один телефон с именем на листочке он все таки найдет, позвонит, встретится – ну скорее всего встретится – но он вообще ее даже не узнает и скорее всего у них ничего не выйдет. То, что он доволен, он отдохнул нормально, но он ни с кем не познакомился. Скорее всего он пойдет знакомиться в клуб еще раз, точно таким же образом.

2) Он почти не танцевал, народу было довольно таки много. У бармена разговаривал про одиночество и несправедливую жизнь. Бармен был гей, он это понял, по этому ушел.

Russian female (31)

Маша была тем человеком, который учась в школе довольно необъективно оценивал своих окружающих. Ей почему-то кто то не нравился, ее постоянно кто то раздражал, она в чем то чувствовала себя несчастной, хотя не понимала, что в ее жизни был просто комплекс. У нее не было такой благополучной семьи, как у ее одноклассников. У нее не было такого хорошего материального положения как у ее как бы подруг. И каждый раз приходя в свой класс, приходя в тот коллектив в котором она находилась, она ощущала какой то комплекс,

какую то недостатку, какую то внутреннюю пустоту. И закончив школу и став довольно свободным человеком Маша не пошла учиться, Маша пошла работать. Ей хотелось какого-то стойкого материального благополучия. И чтобы как то вечером проводить время, так как она не заимела друзей среди своих одноклассников, она стала посещать различные ночные клубы.

С утра она пыталась – если у нее было свободное от работы время – пойти в спортивные клубы, получить удовольствие там от общения с теми, кто рядом с ней бы занимался. Получить удовольствие от спорта, от того что она слушала приятную музыку и двигалась ритмично. А вечером чтобы сократить одиночество, которое ее ждало дома, она стала ходить в клуб. И клуб ей давал своеобразный отдых. Там она нашла новых друзей, там она получила новые впечатления. Там она опять таки ритмично двигалась под музыку и уже испытывала удовольствие от того, что она просто танцует не глядя на окружающих. В конце концов клуб стал ее самой любимой привычкой. Она стала все больше и больше времени проводить в клубе и она стала все больше и больше чувствовать себя в них своей. Там она нашла новых друзей, там она встретила свою первую, неожиданно яркую и сильную любовь – того молодого чуловека, который как и она оказывается очень любил клубы. И они стали ходить туда вместе и каждый раз получали великолепный отдых.

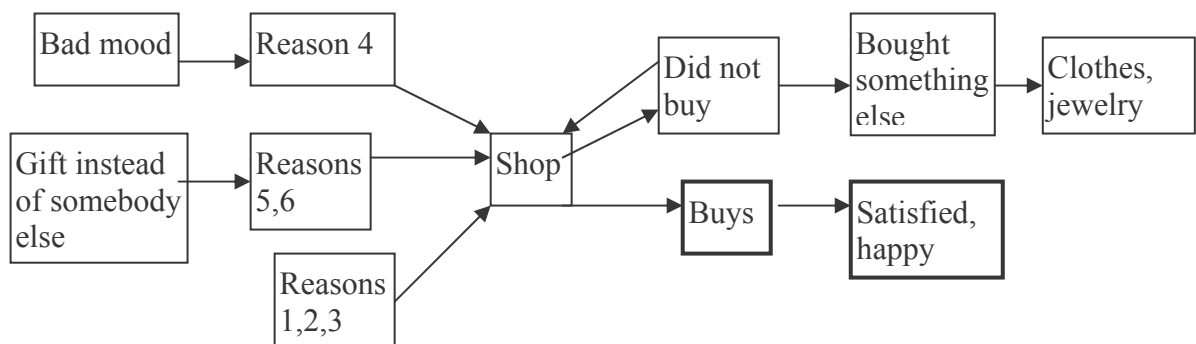
Appendix 8

Flowcharts summarising findings

Flowcharts are accompanied with short description of main reasons leading to acquisition and identification of possible self-gift types. The box 'reasons' denotes reasons leading to self-gift purchase. These reasons are described in more detail in the accompanying text. Frames denoted in bold are those mentioned by four or more interviewees out of six. There were situations when one story included a number of various outcomes. In such case, all possible outcomes were included in the analysis of results and were depicted in the flowchart. In several cases, numbers were put next to the arrow or box in order to depict the exact number of responses for a particular motive/ outcome. The box 'not specified' denotes that no mentioning of after-purchase feelings was noted during the interview.

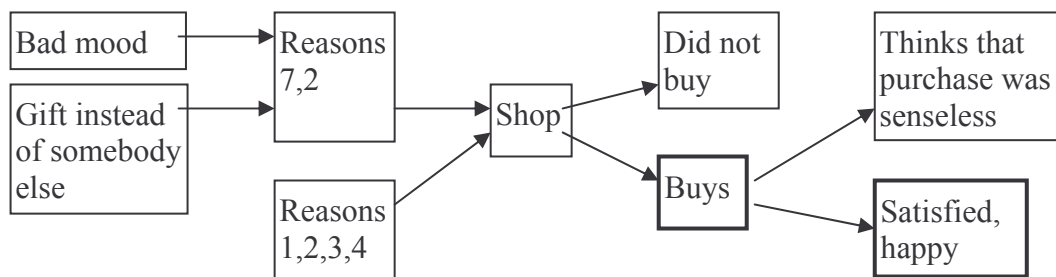
Perfume – females

Fig. 1. Russian female, perfume.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 2. Latvian female, perfume.



Source: Self-developed

Main reasons for woman buying perfume were to express love towards herself (Reason 1), give herself a treat (2), to acquire something new and modern (3) and to

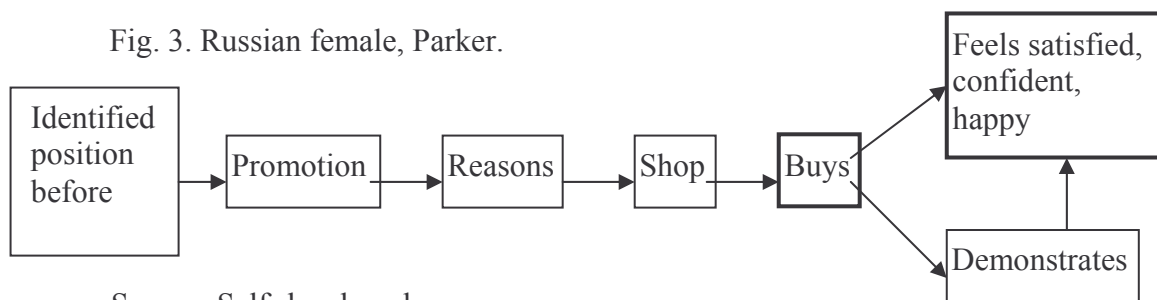
improve mood (4). These reasons suggest that perfume in this situation was described as therapeutic and a romantic self-gift.

Russian females additionally mentioned receiving salary and having spare money (5), as well as giving oneself a gift on a certain occasion instead of somebody else (6). These motives outline romantic and holiday self-gifts. Latvian females also mentioned as one of the reasons a desire to attract the opposite sex (7).

While in the shop, women tended to search for the right purchase for a very long time and were unsure about their choice. However, once the choice was made, the purchase turned to be very successful and brought happiness.

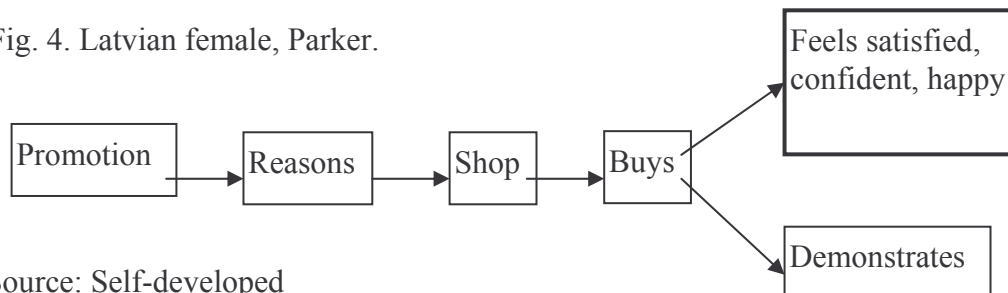
Parker – females

Fig. 3. Russian female, Parker.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 4. Latvian female, Parker.

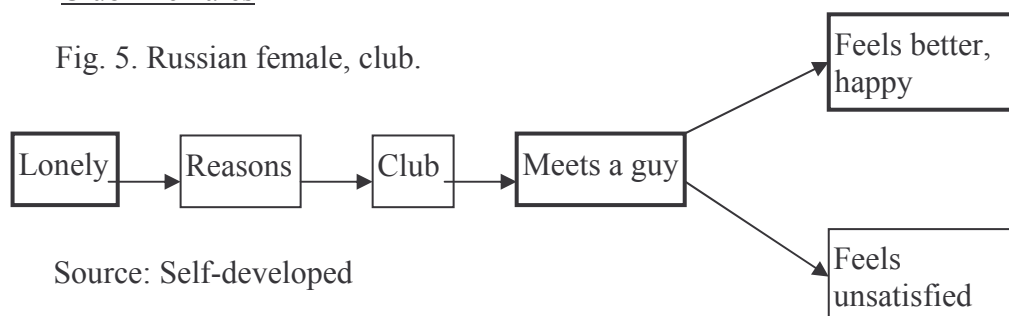


Source: Self-developed

Main reasons for men buying a Parker pen according to women were a desire to look more solid and important, to show and confirm one's social status, and increased amount of money received after career rise (puritanic self-gift). In several interviews it was mentioned that the Parker brand signifies solid and lasting values. In five Christmas session interviews it was also mentioned that after the purchase a person will use the pen as much as possible and will demonstrate it to people around.

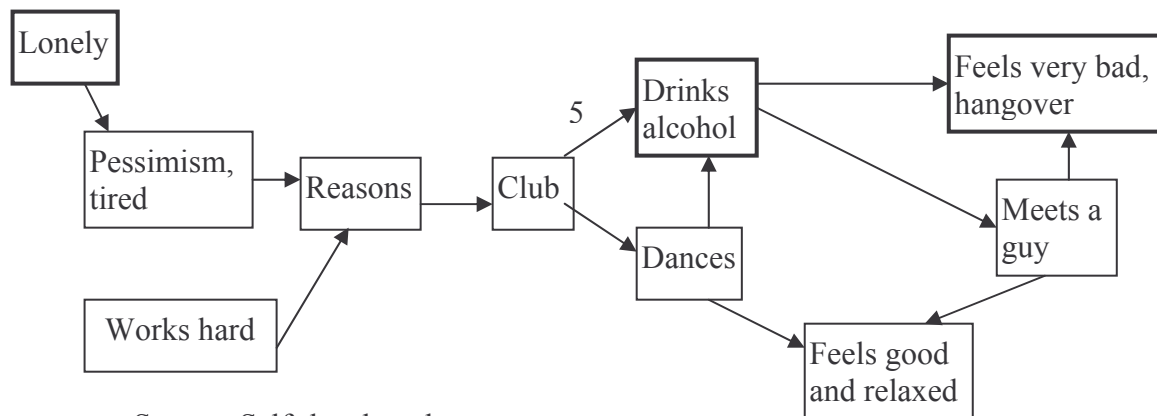
Club – females

Fig. 5. Russian female, club.



Source: Self-developed

Fig 6. Latvian female, club.

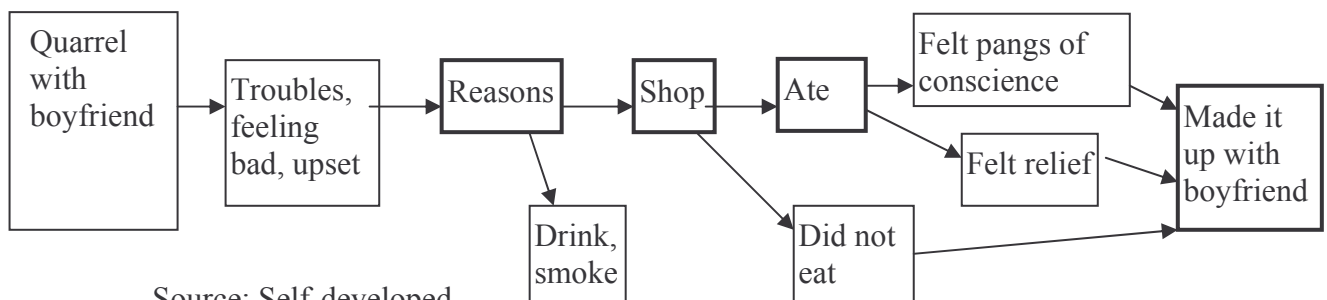


Source: Self-developed

As main reasons for going to a club were mentioned the desire to relax, desire to meet somebody in order to get rid of loneliness, as well as the wish to spend some time meeting friends and relaxing with them (therapeutic self-gift). In case of meeting someone and spending time together, no serious relationships were developing, rather it was pleasant spending of time.

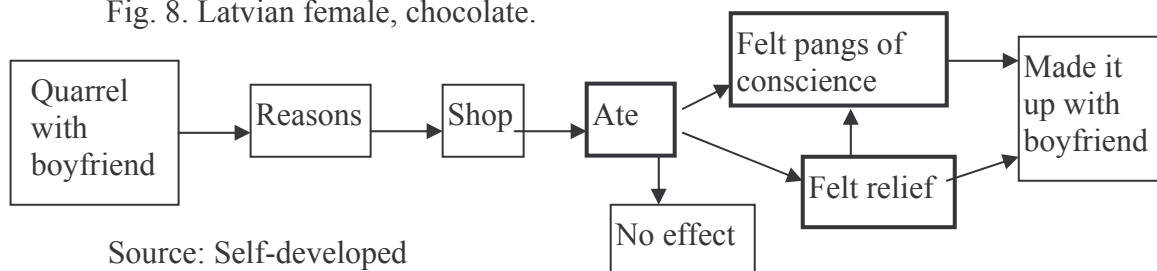
Chocolate – females

Fig. 7. Russian female, chocolate.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 8. Latvian female, chocolate.



Source: Self-developed

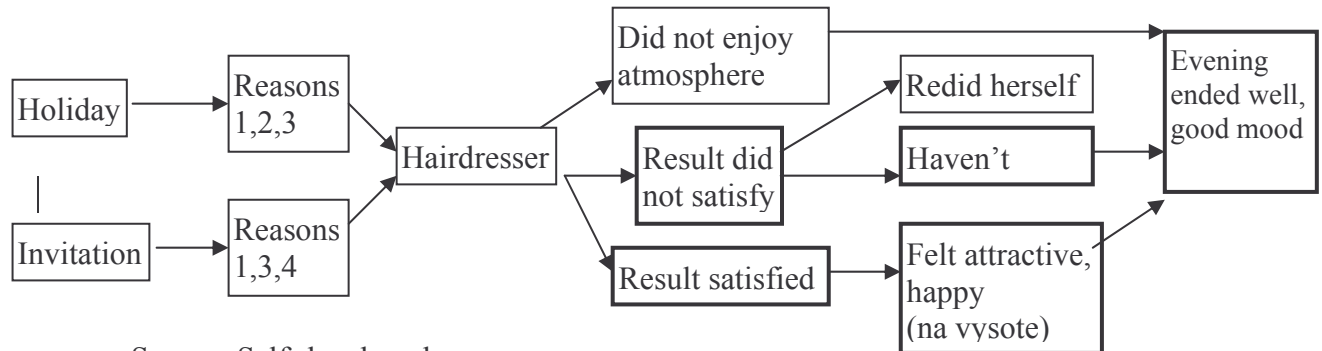
The reasons for buying chocolate after having a quarrel with a boyfriend were the wish to compensate for the bad feeling one has with something sweet, to improve the bad feeling, to relieve stress and forget about trouble (therapeutic self-gift). Many

women mentioned that chocolate increases the level of “somekind of substance in the blood, which increases happiness” thus attempting to justify their actions.

As possible substitutes for chocolate, alcohol and cigarettes were mentioned. Additionally for several Russian women the choice of chocolate in the shop was quite a long process involving a search for the best taste and nicest-looking package.

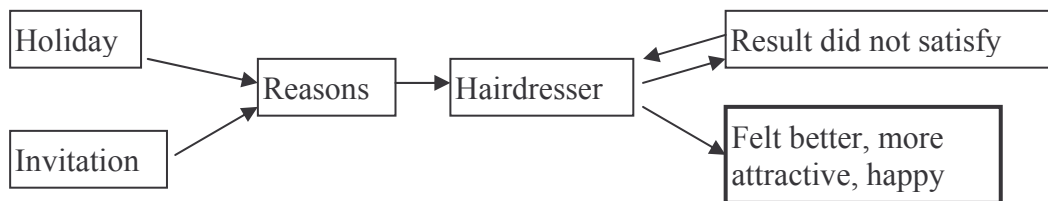
Hairdresser – females

Fig. 9. Russian female, hairdresser.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 10. Latvian female, hair-dresser.



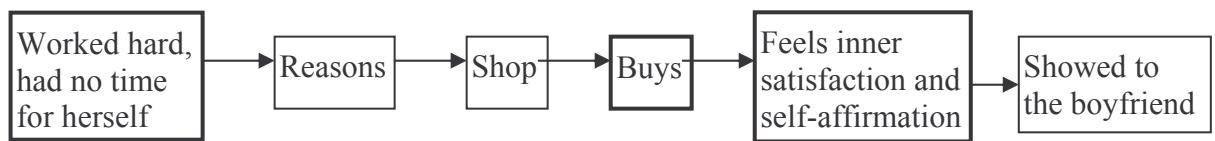
Source: Self-developed

Main motives for visiting the hairdresser during the holiday were to look good (1), to give a treat to oneself (2), and to change something in oneself (3)(romantic/holiday self-gift). In case a person was telling about invitation to visit friends, an additional wish to make friends happy and to be appealing to others was expressed. In the after-Christmas session more emphasis was placed on happy holiday feelings than during the Christmas session.

Russian women placed more emphasis on holiday feelings and need to look good, while Latvian women emphasized more the pleasure gained from being cared for. Russian women also spent more time describing chatting with other clients and/or personnel at the salon.

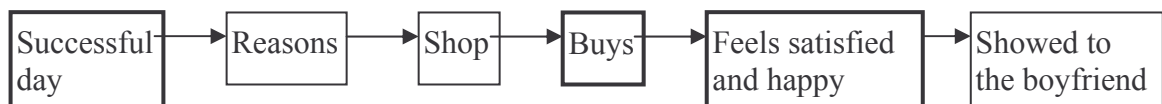
Lingerie – females

Fig. 11. Russian female, lingerie.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 12. Latvian female, lingerie.

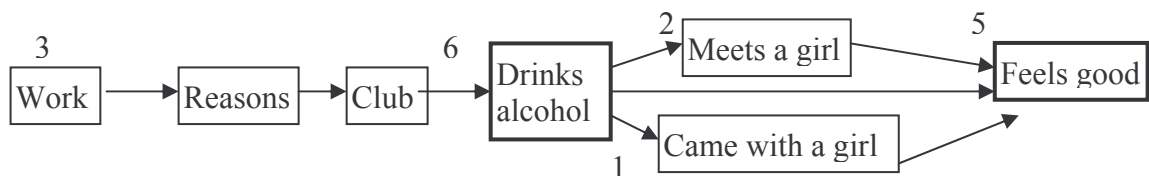


Source: Self-developed

Common reasons for women to buy lingerie were a wish to reward oneself, to be nice to oneself, and to acquire something new, more colourful and more sexy (romantic and puritanic self-gift). An additional reason mentioned by Russian females was spare money, which they wanted to spend. For Latvian females an additional reason for buying lingerie was a desire to make her partner/ boyfriend happy. When at the shop, a woman spent a long time choosing the right purchase, however, no help from shop-assistant was usually asked.

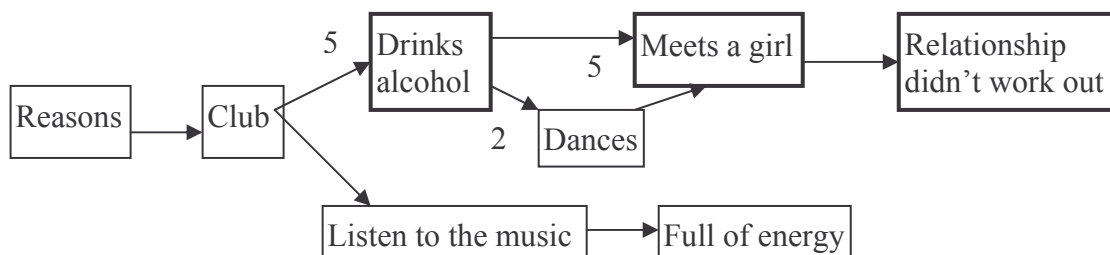
Club – males

Fig. 13. Latvian male, club.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 14. Russian male, club.

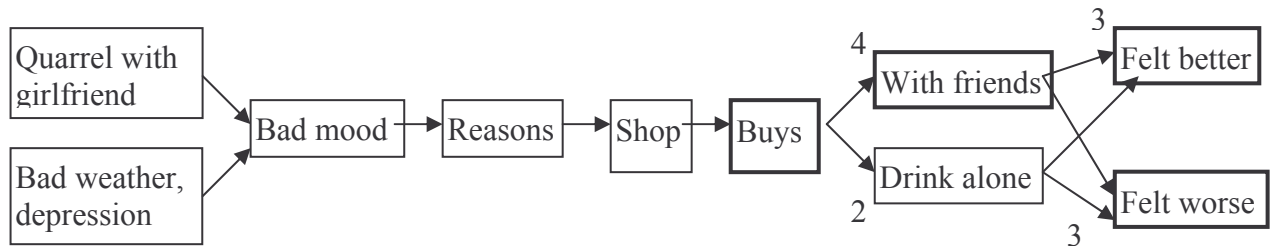


Source: Self-developed

In line with the wish to relax while going to the club expressed by all respondents in their stories, several other reasons were mentioned such as the wish to meet someone of the opposite sex, the wish to look at women dancing in the club, and a desire to improve one's mood (therapeutic/ puritanic self-gift).

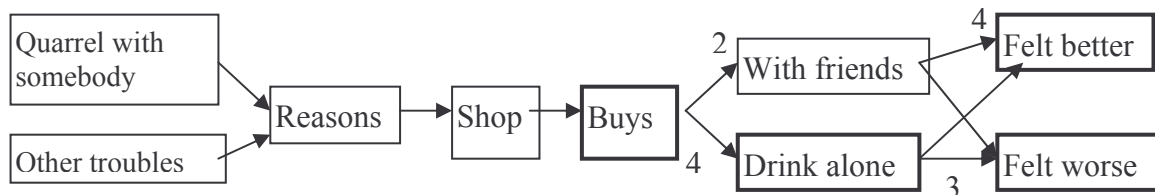
Bottle – males

Fig. 15. Russian male, bottle.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 16. Latvian male, bottle.

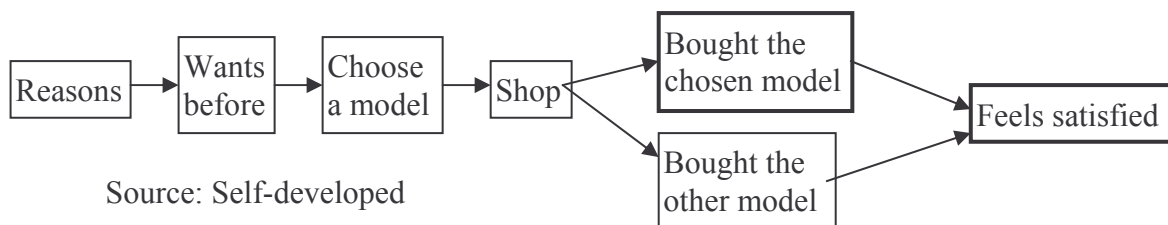


Source: Self-developed

Main reasons for buying a bottle of alcohol were to relieve stress, to forget about all troubles in one's life, to improve mood, and to talk freely with a friend about problems one has (therapeutic self-gift). In addition to alcohol, two Russian men mentioned cigarettes as an attribute necessary while drinking.

Mobile phone – males

Fig. 17. Russian male, mobile phone.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 18. Latvian male, mobile phone.



Source: Self-developed

While telling the story about purchase of a mobile phone, the most common reason mentioned was the need for a phone. Additionally, the wish to change the old model for a new one was expressed as a mobile phone can have features of a prestigious and exclusive accessory. Even in cases when need was mentioned as a main motivating factor, the purchase itself was intended to make oneself feel happier and make a holiday present for oneself (holiday/ therapeutic self-gift).

Perfume – males

Fig. 19. Russian male, perfume.

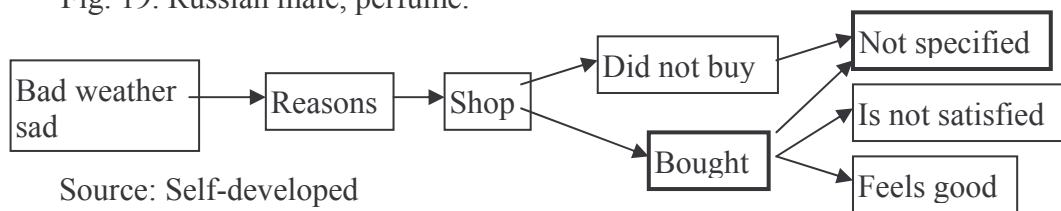
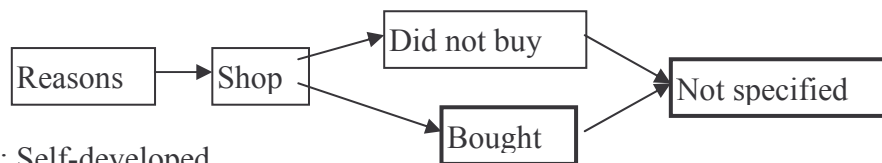


Fig. 20. Latvian male, perfume.



Main reasons for purchase of perfume were the need for some and the wish to be attractive to the opposite sex. Russian males mention also a desire to be nice to oneself (romantic self-gift/ no self-gift at all). The purchase process itself is connected with close contact with the female shop assistant, who advises on correctness of choice. In several interviews with Russian males, the purchase is accompanied by development of long-term romantic relationships with shop assistant.

Parker – males

Fig. 21. Russian male, Parker pen.

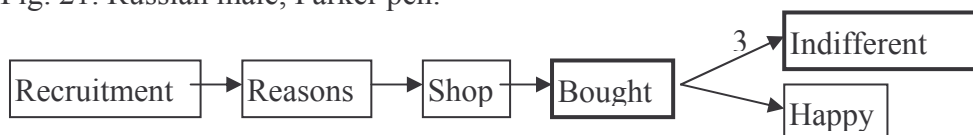


Fig. 22. Latvian male, Parker pen.

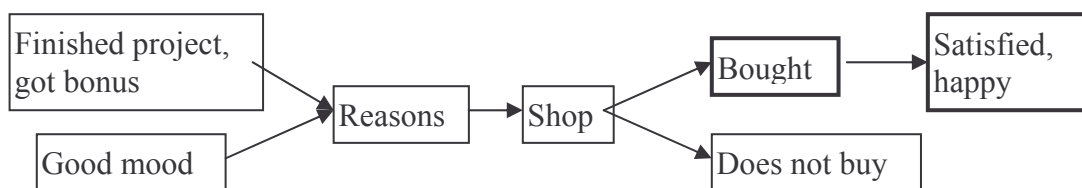


Motives behind purchase of a Parker pen were the need to increase self-esteem, the wish to acquire a working instrument, and the wish to express power via using an attribute with a symbolic meaning, as mentioned during one of the interviews: “Parker is a symbol of power”. For several reasons it was also noted that the wish to acquire exactly a Parker as a unique attribute arose after seeing other people to whom the subject of the story feels respect or who are his supervisors using this pen (puritanic/therapeutic self-gift).

Attributing a symbolic meaning to the Parker pen was common among Latvian males. Russian males also mentioned the symbolic meaning of Parker, while several of them admitted the pure wish to buy a pen irrespective of the brand, with Parker being one among many similar pens. Quite close contact was established between the shop assistant and the customer during the process of selecting the pen in Russian males’ interviews.

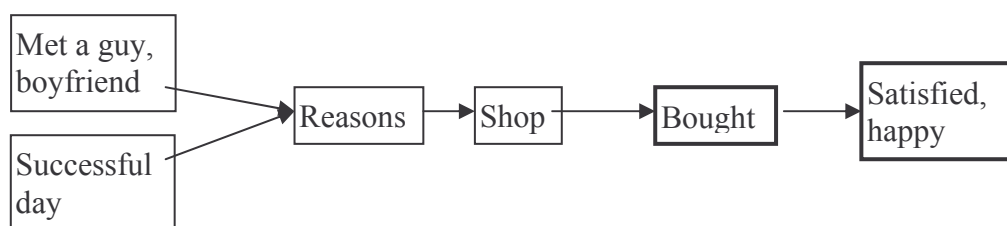
Lingerie – males

Fig. 23. Russian male, lingerie.



Source: Self-developed

Fig. 24. Latvian male, lingerie.



Source: Self-developed

While explaining motives behind women making purchases of lingerie, the main reasons mentioned were to be nice to herself and to make herself happier (romantic/therapeutic self-gift). Additionally, Russian males mentioned having spare money to spend, while Latvian males mentioned the wish of a woman to become more attractive to the opposite sex or to make her partner happier.

Almost in all interviews it was mentioned that the choice is not made quickly, rather it is a very long process, in which men do not like to take part as judged from expressions like “chooses too long”.

Appendix 9

Validity tests

In order to validate our results, we carried out two additional tests – a validity test and a positioning test. The **validity test** consisted of presentation of the results to our respondents and receiving feedback from their side. The purpose of this validity test was to ensure the understandability and appropriateness of our results. This was especially important for our research, as we constructed cognitive maps that suppose to reflect how people interpret data. If our cognitive maps were not understandable to our respondents, then such cognitive maps have no value.

We were also interested in respondents' point of view in our results and their possible explanations. Respondents found most of the results rather interesting and some of the results even surprising. People were mostly surprised by the results from other groups of respondents and sometimes considered them as naive. Overall they agreed with our conclusions and considered cognitive maps as an appropriate summary of their stories.

The **positioning test** was run in order to find out whether a number of depicted persons on the picture in any way could influence the results. The majority of pictures used during projective interviews included two personages – the hero and the shop assistant. However, in the picture with a club six persons were depicted. Stories about the club usually included more personages than other stories. In order to test whether it was the result of this picture in particular or whether it was specific to the club, we obscured the picture and left only two persons clearly seen – the hero and the barman.

After conducting additional interviews with this picture, we came to the conclusion that the number of person depicted did not influence the story. Stories were approximately the same as previously. The only difference noted was that interviewees did not divide roles between particular persons in the picture, rather spoke about additional personages more abstractly.

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