

Motivational Types of Fashion Self-Gifting Under Social Disruption: The Role of Consumption Values and Narcissism Facets

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Abstract This study explores how narcissism facets and perceived consumption values are related to different motivations for fashion self-gifting. Rather than treating self-gift motivation as a predictor of later responses, the study considers reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting as outcomes to be explained. Data were collected from 104 Korean consumers with self-gifting experience through an online survey conducted in 2023, and the data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling. Superiority was positively related to hedonic and epistemic value, whereas exhibitionism was positively related to hedonic and social value. Hedonic value significantly predicted reward- and therapy-motivated self-gifting, while epistemic value significantly predicted therapy- and celebration-motivated self-gifting. Social value did not significantly predict any of the three motivational types. Hedonic value also significantly mediated the relationship between exhibitionism and both reward- and therapy-motivated self-gifting, whereas the remaining indirect effects were not significant. The results suggest that fashion self-gifting is formed through more than one evaluative route and that different motivations are associated with different value dimensions.

Keywords Fashion self-gifting, Narcissism facets, Consumption values, Self-gift motivation

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Introduction

Self-gifting refers to purchasing a product or experience for oneself in a situation that carries personal meaning, rather than as part of routine consumption. Early work described self-gifts as planned, symbolic, and closely tied to self-communication, especially in reward and therapeutic contexts (Mick & DeMoss, 1990). Later studies reached a similar conclusion and showed that self-gifting is shaped by motives, emotional states, and post-purchase interpretations, suggesting that it is better understood as a psychologically situated form of consumption than as a simple act of indulgence (Clarke & Mortimer, 2013; Heath et al., 2015).

This topic is particularly relevant in the fashion domain. Fashion products are rarely consumed only for practical reasons. They are also used to express identity, manage appearance, create pleasure, and communicate meaning. Research on fashion consumption has repeatedly shown that consumers respond to fashion products in terms of emotional, social, and epistemic value, not just function, which makes fashion a useful setting for studying how self-gift meanings are formed (Sheth et al., 1991; Jung & Lee, 2020).

Prior studies also make clear that self-gifting is not driven by a single motive. Mick and DeMoss (1990) empha-

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sized reward and therapeutic situations, while later work identified a broader set of motives, including celebration, enjoyment, consolation, investment, and extra-money spending (Heath et al., 2015; Lee & Yi, 2013; Mortimer et al., 2015). In the Korean context, Lee and Yi (2013) likewise found that consumers described self-gifting in terms of reward, investment, extra money, anniversaries, and consolation, with several motives often overlapping in one purchase episode. These findings suggest that self-gifting is a multidimensional behavior whose meaning changes across situations.

At the same time, much of the existing literature has treated self-gift motivation as a starting point for explaining later outcomes. For example, Hur and Choo (2016) examined how self-gift motivation was related to preferred product type, and Clarke and Mortimer (2013) linked self-gift motivation to post-purchase regret. That line of work has been useful, but it leaves a more basic question less fully explored: why do different self-gift motivations emerge in the first place?

That question matters because self-gift motivation should not be treated as a fixed label. A consumer may buy a fashion item to reward personal effort, to feel better after stress, or to celebrate an important occasion. These motives reflect different psychological states and different meanings attached to the same act of self-purchase. For that reason, self-gift motivation can be approached not only as a predictor of later responses but also as an outcome shaped by earlier psychological processes.

The present study focuses on three motivational types of fashion self-gifting: reward, therapy, and celebration. These three motives were selected because they capture three common and clearly distinguishable forms of self-directed consumption: achievement-based self-recognition, emotion-regulatory self-comfort, and symbolic acknowledgment of a personally meaningful event. Rather than trying to include every motive discussed in the literature, this study concentrates on the three that best fit the present research purpose and the structure of the proposed model (Heath et al., 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Mortimer et al., 2015).

More specifically, this study examines whether narcissism facets and perceived consumption values help explain differences in self-gift motivation. Instead of assuming that

reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting simply exist as given categories, the study asks whether they are shaped by personality tendencies and by the kinds of value consumers perceive in fashion products. This shift moves attention from the consequences of self-gift motivation to its formation process.

This study is expected to make three contributions. First, it extends self-gift research by treating motivation as an outcome to be explained rather than only as a predictor of later responses. Second, it offers a more differentiated view of fashion self-gifting by examining distinct motivational types instead of treating self-gifting as a single undivided act. Third, it links personality and perceived consumption value in order to explain how consumers come to assign different meanings to fashion self-gifts.

Theoretical Background

Self-gifting in fashion

Self-gifting has long been described as a symbolic form of self-directed consumption. Mick and DeMoss (1990) argued that self-gifts are often tied to special circumstances and function as personally meaningful acts of self-communication. Later studies developed this view and showed that self-gifting is closely related to emotions, personal interpretation, and feelings that follow the purchase (Clarke & Mortimer, 2013; Heath et al., 2015). In other words, self-gifting is not simply buying something for oneself. It usually carries a reason, a feeling, and a meaning.

This understanding becomes more important in the fashion context. Fashion products are highly visible, identity-relevant, and emotionally loaded. Consumers often choose fashion items not only because they need them, but because those items feel expressive, pleasing, or meaningful. Studies on fashion consumption values likewise show that emotional, social, and epistemic value shape fashion-related evaluation and behavior, which supports treating fashion self-gifting as a suitable setting for examining motive formation (Jung & Lee, 2020; Sheth et al., 1991).

Unlike routine purchasing, self-gifting also involves a stronger process of self-justification. Consumers do not

simply decide that they like a product. They also interpret why that purchase is appropriate for themselves at a given moment. This point is consistent with the original view of self-gifts as symbolic self-communication and with later work showing that their meanings are shaped by context, motivation, and emotion (Heath et al., 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1990).

Motivational types of fashion self-gifting

Previous studies suggest that self-gifting has multiple motives. Mick and DeMoss (1990) emphasized reward and therapeutic situations, while later research broadened the picture by adding motives such as celebration, indulgence, investment, extra-money spending, and consolation (Heath et al., 2015; Lee & Yi, 2013; Mortimer et al., 2015). In Korea, Lee and Yi (2013) also found that consumers described self-gift behavior in terms of reward, investment, extra money, anniversaries, and consolation, with several motives often mixed together. These studies make it clear that self-gifting is not a single, uniform behavior.

Among those motives, this study focuses on reward, therapy, and celebration. The choice is deliberate. Reward captures self-recognition after effort or achievement. Therapy reflects self-comfort and mood repair. Celebration marks a meaningful moment or transition. Together, these three motives cover three broad meanings of self-directed consumption that are especially relevant in fashion: acknowledging the self, soothing the self, and marking the self's important moments. They also fit the purpose of this study better than a wider classification system, because the present goal is not to catalogue all possible self-gift motives but to explain why different motivational forms arise (Heath et al., 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Mortimer et al., 2015).

This focus also helps clarify how the present study differs from earlier work. Prior studies often treated self-gift motivation as something that predicts later outcomes. Hur and Choo (2016), for example, examined how self-gift motivation influenced product choice, and Clarke and Mortimer (2013) linked self-gift motivation to post-purchase regret. The present study takes a different route. It treats self-gift motivation itself as the outcome that needs explanation.

Narcissism facets: superiority and exhibitionism

Narcissism is often discussed as a broad self-enhancing trait, but earlier work suggests that it is better understood as a multidimensional construct. Raskin and Terry (1988) identified several first-order components of the Narcissistic Personality Inventory, including superiority and exhibitionism. Later review work in consumer research also notes that narcissism includes distinguishable tendencies related to superiority, vanity, self-presentation, and display rather than a single uniform disposition (Cisek et al., 2014).

This distinction matters in consumer research because narcissism has been linked to self-enhancement, materialism, conspicuous consumption, and status-oriented display. Cisek et al. (2014) describe narcissistic consumers as self-aggrandizing and self-presentational, while Sedikides and Hart (2022) argue that narcissism is connected to conspicuous consumption through status display and positive distinctiveness. These arguments make narcissism especially relevant in the fashion domain, where products often serve visible and identity-expressive functions.

In the present study, two facets are emphasized. Superiority refers to a view of the self as competent, special, and deserving. Consumers high in superiority are likely to interpret consumption in ways that confirm distinction and worthiness. Exhibitionism, by contrast, reflects a stronger concern with visibility, attention, and expressive self-presentation. Consumers high in exhibitionism may therefore be more sensitive to consumption that feels vivid, noticeable, or displayable. Because self-gifting involves self-interpretation and self-justification, these two facets are likely to shape how consumers evaluate the meaning of a fashion self-gift (Cisek et al., 2014; Raskin & Terry, 1988).

Consumption values in fashion self-gifting

Consumption value theory argues that consumer choice is shaped by more than utility alone. Sheth et al. (1991) proposed that consumers evaluate products through multiple value dimensions, including social and epistemic value. This perspective is especially useful in fashion research because fashion goods are often chosen for pleasure, distinctiveness, and social meaning as much as for practical function.

This study focuses on hedonic, epistemic, and social value. Hedonic value refers to pleasure and affective gratification. Epistemic value refers to novelty, curiosity, and the appeal of something different. Social value refers to image-related and socially expressive meaning. These three values fit the present study because fashion self-gifting is likely to depend on whether a product feels enjoyable, special, and socially meaningful to the consumer (Jung & Lee, 2020; Sheth et al., 1991).

In self-gifting, these values are more than simple product features. They can also serve as reasons that make the purchase feel appropriate. Mick and Faure (1998) showed that self-gift likelihood in achievement contexts depends on outcomes, attributions, emotions, and deservingness. More recent work on self-gifting and consumer perceived values also suggests that the values embedded in a self-gift influence how that gift is evaluated and experienced (Seo, 2022). This supports treating perceived consumption values as evaluative mechanisms that connect broader personality tendencies to specific self-gift motives.

Hypothesis development

Narcissism facets and consumption values. An attribution-based perspective helps explain why narcissism facets may be associated with different consumption values. Prior self-gift research suggests that consumers do not respond to situations automatically. They interpret whether a purchase feels deserved, fitting, or emotionally appropriate, and those interpretations affect self-gift likelihood (Mick & Faure, 1998). If so, personality tendencies such as superiority and exhibitionism should shape the kinds of value consumers perceive in a fashion self-gift.

Consumers high in superiority maintain a self-schema centered on competence, exceptionality, and personal merit. From an attribution perspective, such individuals are likely to interpret a fashion self-gift as something they have genuinely earned and deserve, and this sense of deservingness may amplify the affective reward they derive from the purchase. This positive hedonic experience is thus grounded in a self-affirming attribution rather than in mere enjoyment alone. At the same time, because superiority also involves a need to affirm a distinctive self-image, consumers high in

this facet may be especially drawn to products that feel novel, rare, or different from what others typically choose. A fashion item that carries epistemic appeal can function as a fitting expression of an exceptional self, reinforcing the perception that the purchase is uniquely suited to someone of particular distinction. These considerations suggest that superiority is positively associated with both hedonic value, as pleasure that confirms deservingness, and epistemic value, as novelty that affirms distinctiveness (Tian et al., 2001). Consumers high in exhibitionism, by contrast, are primarily motivated by the desire for attention, visibility, and expressive self-presentation (Raskin & Terry, 1988). Their self-evaluation depends more on external perception than on internal appraisal. When evaluating a fashion self-gift, such consumers are likely to respond strongly to the emotional excitement of acquiring something vivid and eye-catching, making hedonic value particularly salient as an immediate affective response to self-presentational stimulation (Morf & Rhodewalt, 2001). At the same time, because exhibitionism is closely tied to concerns about social appearance and group-relevant image signaling, exhibitionistic consumers are also likely to prioritize fashion products that convey a desired impression to others (Leary & Kowalski, 1990). These considerations support the expectation that exhibitionism is positively associated with both hedonic value, as affective excitement tied to a self-presentationally vivid purchase, and social value, as image relevance and outward expressiveness of the fashion item (Cisek et al., 2014; Sedikides & Hart, 2022).

H1a. Superiority is positively associated with hedonic value.

H1b. Superiority is positively associated with epistemic value.

H1c. Exhibitionism is positively associated with hedonic value.

H1d. Exhibitionism is positively associated with social value.

Consumption values and self-gift motivations. Perceived consumption values are expected to relate to self-gift motivations because self-gifting requires an evaluative basis.

Earlier studies showed that reward and therapeutic self-gifts arise in psychologically significant situations rather than in ordinary buying contexts, and later work added celebration and other distinct meanings to the picture (Heath et al., 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Mortimer et al., 2015). This suggests that motivation depends, at least in part, on how a purchase is experienced and justified.

Hedonic value is likely to support reward-motivated self-gifting because pleasure can function as a satisfying acknowledgment of effort or success. It is also likely to support therapy-motivated self-gifting because enjoyment can improve mood and reduce stress. Celebration-motivated self-gifting may be supported by hedonic value when pleasure helps mark a special occasion in a memorable way. These expectations are consistent with prior work that places pleasure and emotional response near the center of self-gift experiences (Heath et al., 2015; Mick & DeMoss, 1990).

Epistemic value may support self-gifting through a different route. A fashion product that feels novel or distinctive can make the purchase seem more meaningful than routine consumption. That may strengthen the sense that the purchase works as a reward, provides refreshment, or marks an important occasion in a special way. Social value may also matter because fashion products often carry visible and image-related meaning, and prior fashion value research shows that socially expressive value can shape consumer evaluation in fashion settings (Jung & Lee, 2020; Sheth et al., 1991).

- H2.** Perceived consumption values are positively associated with motivational types of fashion self-gifting.
- H2a.** Hedonic value is positively associated with reward-motivated self-gifting.
- H2b.** Hedonic value is positively associated with therapy-motivated self-gifting.
- H2c.** Hedonic value is positively associated with celebration-motivated self-gifting.
- H2d.** Epistemic value is positively associated with reward-motivated self-gifting.
- H2e.** Epistemic value is positively associated with therapy-motivated self-gifting.

H2f. Epistemic value is positively associated with celebration-motivated self-gifting.

H2g. Social value is positively associated with reward-motivated self-gifting.

H2h. Social value is positively associated with therapy-motivated self-gifting.

H2i. Social value is positively associated with celebration-motivated self-gifting.

The mediating role of consumption values. A key assumption of this study is that self-gift motivation should be treated as something that is formed, not simply assumed. Earlier studies often used self-gift motivation as an explanatory variable for downstream outcomes such as product choice and post-purchase regret (Clarke & Mortimer, 2013; Hur & Choo, 2016). That work is valuable, but it also implies that the motivation itself requires explanation. The present study therefore focuses on the earlier stage of how distinct motivational forms emerge.

From this perspective, perceived consumption values are expected to mediate the relationships between narcissism facets and self-gift motivations. Attribution-based research showed that self-gift behavior is shaped by interpretation, deservingness, and emotion rather than by situational cues alone (Mick & Faure, 1998). Work on self-gifting and consumer perceived values likewise suggests that the values consumers perceive in a self-gift influence how the self-gift is evaluated and experienced (Seo, 2022). Together, these studies support the view that superiority and exhibitionism may first shape value perceptions, and that those value perceptions then influence whether a purchase is justified as a reward, a therapeutic act, or a celebration.

H3. Perceived consumption values mediate the relationships between narcissism facets and motivational types of fashion self-gifting.

H3a. Hedonic value mediates the relationship between superiority and reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting.

H3b. Epistemic value mediates the relationship between superiority and reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting.

H3c. Hedonic value mediates the relationship between exhibitionism and reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting.

H3d. Social value mediates the relationship between exhibitionism and reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated self-gifting.

Methodology

Measures

All constructs were measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("very much"), with the exception of demographic variables. Narcissism was measured using 14 items adapted from Emmons (1984), Hwang and Ku (2010) and Kim and Lee (2015). The items assessed two facets: superiority (8 items) and exhibitionism (6 items). Motivational types of fashion self-gifting were measured using 12 items adapted from Lee and Yi (2013), Mick and DeMoss (1990), Mortimer et al. (2015), and Park and Oh (2020), with four items allocated to each of the following dimensions: reward, therapy, and celebration. Consumption values were measured using 16 items based on Holbrook (1999, 2006), Jang and Park (2020), and Sheth et al. (1991) encompassing three dimensions: hedonic value (7 items), epistemic value (5 items), and social value (4 items).

Data collection and sample

Data were collected through an online survey administered via the KSDC DB system in mid-April 2023. The survey targeted Korean consumers with prior self-gifting experience. Before beginning the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, and anonymity, and consent was obtained online. No personally identifying information was collected. After excluding incomplete responses, 104 valid cases were retained for analysis.

The demographic and self-gifting behavioral profile of the sample is summarized as follows. Of the 104 respondents, 31.5% were male and 68.5% were female. With regard to age, 59.3% were aged between 20 and 29 years, 35.2%

between 30 and 39 years, and 5.6% between 40 and 49 years. Regarding self-gifting frequency in the past year, 5.8% reported purchasing a self-gift once, 29.8% less than three times, 29.8% less than five times, 11.5% less than seven times, and 23.1% seven or more times.

The study does not aim to estimate the current prevalence of fashion self-gifting. Rather, the 2023 dataset was used to examine the relationships among narcissism facets, perceived consumption values, and motivational types of fashion self-gifting during a period of post-disruption adjustment.

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted for the adapted narcissism items, and reliability and validity were examined using SmartPLS 4.0, including factor loadings, composite reliability, average variance extracted, and HTMT values.

Second, the structural model was tested using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4.0. Direct effects and specific indirect effects were estimated using bootstrapping, and explanatory power was assessed using R^2 and effect size estimates. Because the data were collected through a single-source self-reported survey, common method bias was also considered. Procedurally, anonymity and voluntary participation were ensured. To statistically assess the potential for common method bias, Harman's single-factor test was applied following the procedure recommended by Podsakoff et al. (2003). All measurement items were entered into a principal component analysis, and the proportion of variance explained by the first unrotated factor was examined.

Results

Measurement model assessment

Before testing the structural relationships, the measurement model was assessed. For the adapted narcissism items, exploratory factor analysis supported a two-factor structure consisting of superiority and exhibitionism. Across the full

model, the item loadings were acceptable, and the constructs showed satisfactory reliability and convergent validity, with composite reliability and average variance extracted values above the recommended thresholds. The detailed results are

presented in Table 1.

Discriminant validity was assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratio. All HTMT values were below the recommended cutoff of .90, indicating that the constructs

Table 1. Measurement model results

Construct	Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Superiority	I have a natural leader's temperament.	.871	.930	.584
	I think of myself as a good leader.	.860		
	I am an extraordinary person.	.817		
	I think I am a special person.	.783		
	I am more capable than others.	.775		
	I am confident that I can do everything.	.683		
	I can live my life the way I want to.	.681		
	I will be successful.	.602		
Exhibitionism	I want to be the center of attention.	.844	.883	.616
	I like to show myself to others.	.831		
	I like getting attention from many people.	.807		
	When I get a chance, I want to stand out.	.804		
	I expect others to do a lot for me.	.745		
	I get upset when others don't pay attention to my appearance or how I dress.	.666		
Hedonic value	I am happy when I wear fashion products.	.932	.953	.749
	The fashion products make me happy.	.918		
	Buying fashion products is a pleasure in itself.	.887		
	The fashion products give me aesthetic satisfaction.	.846		
	Buying fashion products makes me feel better.	.832		
	I relieve stress by purchasing fashion products.	.831		
Epistemic value	The fashion products give me confidence.	.806	.869	.615
	I prefer fashion products that feel like they have a rarity.	.890		
	I prefer fashion products with unique design or attributes.	.820		
	I prefer fashion products that are differentiated from other fashion products.	.780		
	I choose fashion products of a new style.	.750		
Social value	I prefer fashion items that feel innovative.	.664	.836	.625
	I consider whether I can be socially recognized when purchasing fashion products.	.866		
	I consider whether it is a product that goes well with the group I belong to when I buy a fashion product.	.820		
	I consider whether it is suitable for my status and dignity when I purchase a fashion product.	.743		
Reward-motivated self-gifting	I consider how I will be seen by people when I buy fashion products.	.725	.950	.851
	I buy special fashion products to reward myself after I achieve my goals.	.975		
	I buy fashion products to reward myself after solving hard work well.	.940		
	I buy fashion products to compensate for my hard work over a period of time.	.908		
Therapy-motivated self-gifting	I buy expensive fashion products to reward myself for being faithful to life.	.862	.876	.670
	I buy fashion products to comfort myself when my self-esteem is low.	.890		
	I buy fashion products for myself to relieve stress when I'm stressed out.	.838		
	I buy fashion products to comfort myself when I don't get a gift for an anniversary.	.820		
Celebration-motivated self-gifting	I buy my own special fashion products to comfort myself when I am depressed.	.716	.845	.667
	I buy fashion products to congratulate and commemorate my achievement, even if it is a small goal.	.879		
	I buy expensive fashion products to celebrate and commemorate myself on birthdays and other anniversaries.	.816		
	I buy fashion products to celebrate and commemorate myself on the day I am socially recognized.	.815		
	I buy fashion products to celebrate and commemorate myself at the end of the year or Christmas.	.752		

Table 2. Heterotrait–monotrait (HTMT) ratios

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Celebration-motivated self-gifting								
Therapy-motivated self-gifting	.800							
Epistemic value	.520	.563						
Reward-motivated self-gifting	.756	.838	.491					
Social value	.361	.351	.197	.155				
Hedonic value	.455	.594	.518	.498	.434			
Exhibitionism	.267	.312	.350	.263	.644	.492		
Superiority	.484	.363	.409	.309	.377	.395	.431	

Note. 1 = Celebration-motivated self-gifting, 2 = Therapy-motivated self-gifting, 3 = Epistemic value, 4 = Reward-motivated self-gifting, 5 = Social value, 6 = Hedonic value, 7 = Exhibitionism, 8 = Superiority.

were empirically distinct from one another (Table 2). Harman's single-factor test was conducted as a statistical check for common method bias. The results showed that the largest factor accounted for 31.42% of the total variance, which did not exceed the 50% threshold, suggesting that common method bias was not a serious concern (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

Structural model and hypothesis testing

The structural model was tested using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with bootstrapping in SmartPLS 4.0. Figure 1 presents the standardized coefficients for the hypothesized direct paths, and Table 3 reports the significant specific indirect effects.

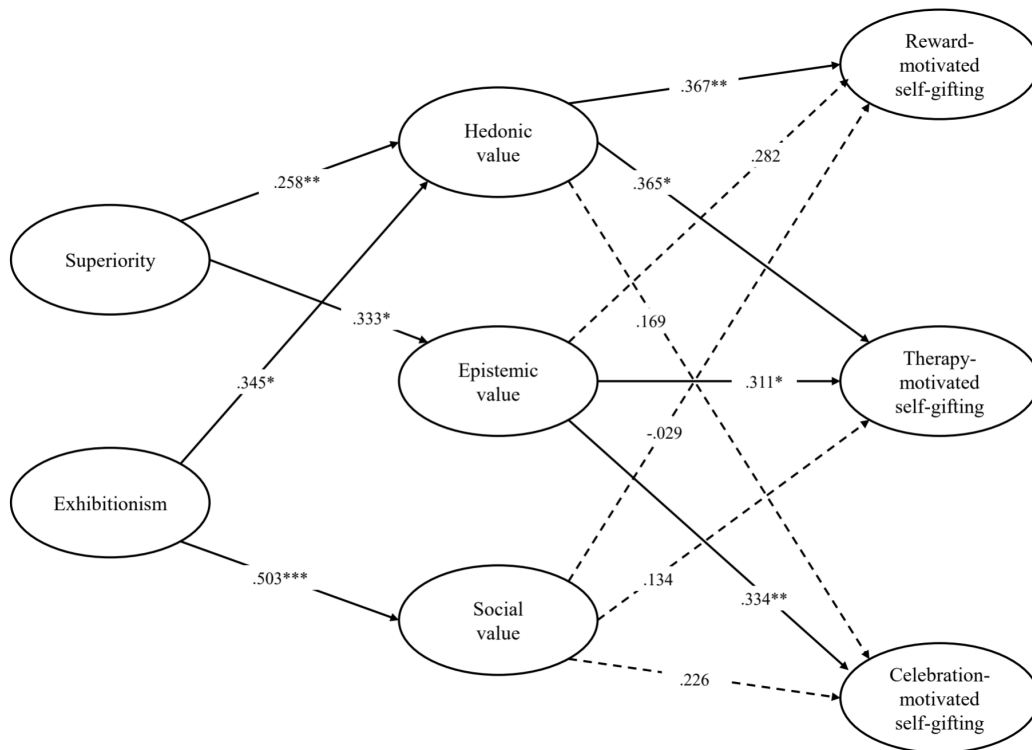
For H1, superiority had significant positive effects on hedonic value ($\beta = .258$, $t = 2.727$, $p < .01$) and epistemic value ($\beta = .333$, $t = 2.335$, $p < .05$). Exhibitionism had significant positive effects on hedonic value ($\beta = .345$, $t = 2.747$, $p < .01$) and social value ($\beta = .503$, $t = 3.228$, $p < .001$). The results show that superiority and exhibitionism were associated with different value dimensions.

For H2, hedonic value significantly predicted reward-motivated self-gifting consumption ($\beta = .367$, $t = 2.611$, $p < .01$) and therapy-motivated self-gifting consumption ($\beta = .365$, $t = 2.361$, $p < .01$), but not celebration-motivated self-

gifting consumption. Epistemic value significantly predicted therapy-motivated self-gifting consumption ($\beta = .311$, $t = 2.121$, $p < .05$) and celebration-motivated self-gifting consumption ($\beta = .334$, $t = 2.173$, $p < .01$), but not reward-motivated self-gifting consumption. Social value did not significantly predict reward-, therapy-, or celebration-motivated self-gifting consumption. In the structural model, hedonic value was related to reward and therapy motives, whereas epistemic value was related to therapy and celebration motives. In summary, H2a and H2b were supported, while H2c was not supported. H2e and H2f were supported, while H2d was not supported. H2g, H2h, and H2i were not supported.

Specific indirect effects

Specific indirect effects were examined using bootstrapping. As shown in Table 3, hedonic value significantly mediated the relationship between exhibitionism and reward-motivated self-gifting consumption, as well as the relationship between exhibitionism and therapy-motivated self-gifting consumption. No other specific indirect effects were statistically significant. This pattern indicates that among the tested paths, only hedonic value significantly mediated the relationship between exhibitionism and self-gift motivations. Accordingly, H3c was partially supported (for reward- and therapy-

Figure 1. Structural model with standardized path coefficients and R² values

motivated self-gifting but not for celebration-motivated self-gifting), whereas H3a, H3b, and H3d were not supported.

Discussion

The results suggest that fashion self-gifting is not organized around a single value structure. Different motivations were associated with different value dimensions, and the two narcissism facets were also linked to different patterns of

value perception. In that respect, self-gift motivation appears to be formed through how consumers interpret and evaluate a purchase for themselves, rather than simply existing as a fixed trait-like tendency.

One of the clearest findings is the contrast between superiority and exhibitionism. Superiority was associated with hedonic and epistemic value, whereas exhibitionism was associated with hedonic and social value. This difference matters because it shows that the two facets do not lead to the same kind of self-gift evaluation. In the case of superiority, a

Table 3. Specific indirect effects

Indirect path	β	t-value	Decision
Exhibitionism → Hedonic value → Reward-motivated self-gifting	.127*	2.199	Supported
Exhibitionism → Hedonic value → Therapy-motivated self-gifting	.126*	1.999	Supported

Note. Only significant specific indirect effects are reported. * $p < .05$.

fashion self-gift seems to be tied to enjoyment and distinctiveness. Such purchases may feel rewarding because they are pleasurable, but also because they seem special enough to fit a positive view of the self. Exhibitionism showed a different pattern. Its links with hedonic and social value suggest that emotionally vivid and outwardly expressive aspects of fashion are more central for consumers who are more concerned with visibility and self-presentation.

The value dimensions were also related to the three motivational types in different ways. Hedonic value was significant for reward and therapy, whereas epistemic value was significant for therapy and celebration. Reward-motivated self-gifting appears to rely most directly on pleasure. That is in line with the basic idea of self-reward, where the purchase functions as something enjoyable after effort or achievement. Therapy-motivated self-gifting was related to both hedonic and epistemic value. This suggests that emotional comfort may come not only from pleasure itself, but also from the sense of refreshment or change that comes from something new or distinctive. Celebration-motivated self-gifting, in turn, was linked to epistemic value rather than hedonic value. In the fashion context, a self-gift used to mark a meaningful occasion may need to feel special enough to stand apart from ordinary consumption.

The result for social value deserves attention. Fashion is a visible and identity-relevant category, so it would not have been surprising if social value had shown consistent effects across the three motivational types. However, social value did not significantly predict reward-, therapy-, or celebration-motivated self-gifting. This suggests that the visibility of fashion does not automatically make self-gifting socially driven. When consumers define a purchase as a gift to themselves, the motivation may shift inward. In that case, the purchase may be justified more in terms of pleasure, comfort, or distinctiveness than in terms of how it appears to others.

This reading is also consistent with the mediation results. The significant indirect effects were limited to the paths from exhibitionism through hedonic value to reward and therapy. Although exhibitionism was related to social value, social value itself did not connect exhibitionism to any of the motivational outcomes. The effect was carried forward by hedonic value. This implies that even when self-presentation

is relevant, the more immediate route to motivational self-gifting may lie in how satisfying the purchase feels. By contrast, no significant indirect effects were found for superiority. This may mean that superiority depends on a different kind of self-justifying process, one that is not fully captured by the value dimensions examined in this study. Deservingness or identity-based self-legitimation may be closer to that mechanism.

The findings also help clarify how self-gift motivation can be treated in future research. Much earlier work used self-gift motivation as a predictor of later outcomes such as product choice or post-purchase responses. The present results point in another direction. They suggest that the motivation itself can be treated as something that requires explanation. In that sense, the study supports a more process-oriented view of self-gifting, one that connects personality, value perception, and motivational meaning.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. The study used a modest sample and relied on cross-sectional self-reported data, so the findings should be interpreted with caution. The sample was drawn from Korean consumers in a specific age range and period, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other demographic groups or cultural contexts. In addition, the data were collected in 2023. The study was designed to examine relationships among variables rather than current prevalence, but the findings still reflect the context in which the survey was conducted. Formal IRB approval was not obtained before data collection. Although the survey was anonymous and voluntary, this remains a procedural limitation. Future research could test the model with larger and more diverse samples, include fuller behavioral profile data, and examine additional mediators that are closer to the logic of self-gift justification.

Conclusion

This study examined how narcissism facets and perceived consumption values are related to reward-, therapy-, and celebration-motivated fashion self-gifting. The results show that these motivations did not arise from a single evaluative

process. Instead, they were associated with different value dimensions, and those value dimensions were linked to different facets of narcissism.

Two points stand out. First, superiority and exhibitionism did not show the same pattern. Superiority was related to hedonic and epistemic value, whereas exhibitionism was related to hedonic and social value. Second, the three motivational types were not explained in the same way. Reward and therapy were linked to hedonic value, while therapy and celebration were linked to epistemic value. Social value did not directly predict any of the three motivations, and the indirect effects were limited to the paths from exhibitionism through hedonic value.

These findings show that fashion self-gifting is better understood as a differentiated process than as a single form of self-indulgence. Even within the same product category, consumers appear to rely on different kinds of value when they justify a purchase as a reward, a form of comfort, or a celebration. The study also shows that self-gift motivation can be examined as an outcome that requires explanation, not only as a predictor of later responses.

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